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## **POLITICAL MOOD OF THE UKRAINIAN POPULATION IN THE COLD WAR DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS**

Słowa kluczowe: *nastroje polityczne, wojna światowa, Ukraina, Związek Radziecki, „obraz wroga”*

Key words: *political sentiments, world war, Ukraine, Soviet Union, “image of the enemy”*

The end of the Second World War had a significant impact on reformatting the world's political map. The most substantial changes in interstate borders took place in Europe. The Soviet Union's became part of the victorious camp after World War II what allowed Stalin to make several attempts to expand the Soviet country's sphere of influence in the world. One of these manifestations was the formation of the so-called “socialist camp” in Eastern Europe. Their existence meant the construction of a “buffer zone” that could delay the invasion of Soviet territory and the creation of a springboard for an attack on Western Europe.

Stalin believed in the prospects of an armed confrontation with the West which could lead to redistribute the world further – this attitude led subsequently to the beginning of the Cold War. The Cold War gave rise to an unprecedented arms race that required significant investments and successes in the scientific and technological spheres. One of the conditions for active participation in the Cold War was forming an “enemy image” among citizens. It was essential to define the relevant priorities in foreign policy and to spread the belief in the practicality of large-scale production of military equipment. The attitude of citizens to the prospect of participation in a large-scale armed confrontation could significantly affect the implementation of relevant plans by the top leadership of the USSR.

The following data testify to the preparation of the Soviet country for a new armed conflict. Even before the Second World War, the propaganda widely exploited the thesis that the country was “in a hostile environment”. This statement helped to justify the growing funding of the military-industrial complex in the eyes of the population. After the end of the Second World War, the formation of appropriate people’s sentiments continued to serve the awareness of the need to maintain a large armed forces. Our content analysis of the mass media discourse shows the effort to justify a large army and its modern equipment expenses in the Soviet media. However, the idea of such parity, widely publicized by Soviet propaganda, did not seem well-balanced. The accumulation of mass destruction weapons could finally destroy the planet in the long run.

Further development of the latest deadly equipment seemed absurd to society. However, the idea of parity in the arms race with the United States allowed for some time to justify colossal military spending in the eyes of ordinary citizens. But the price for this was high. It included the policy of limiting the living standards growth for the general public.

Another critical factor in preparing for the large-scale expansion of the USSR’s spheres of influence was the repeated attempts to test the readiness of the former allies to resist the relevant actions of the Soviet leadership. As early as May 1945, the idea of annexing part of the Turkey territories became popular among the members of the Politburo. The Soviet leadership planned to establish Soviet power in Asia Minor. Consequently, on June 7, 1945, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. Molotov demanded from Turkish Ambassador S. Sarper to hand over Kars and Ardagan to the USSR. He hinted at the possibility of resolving such an issue in the same way as it was done in regard to Poland. In addition, there was a proposition to give the USSR the right to establish a military base in the Black Sea Straits. Turkey, with the support of its Western allies, was ready for a violent confrontation. Disregarding this fact, the Soviet Union increased its troops along the Soviet-Turkish border to 20 elite divisions. On July 22, 1945, the leaders of the USSR discussed the issue of Soviet-Turkish relations. However, the impression of the USA atomic bombing of Japanese cities probably influenced Stalin’s decision to freeze the subject of territorial claims to Turkey. But only after Stalin’s death did Moscow officially renounce its territorial claims to Turkey on May 30, 1953, and reconsidered its position on the Black Sea Straits.

The successful USA test of nuclear weapons in the war against Japan put the Soviet Union in a difficult situation. Without the technology to produce such weapons, the Soviet Union resorted to using a spy network capable of stealing the necessary knowledge from the United States. The success of this activity allowed in 1949 to test Soviet nuclear weapons. Supposedly, even before nuclear tests Stalin knew of the advantageous results of its invention. This confidence might be one of the reasons for the escalation of the confrontation during the Berlin crisis of 1948-1949.

The Soviet 14th Army was deployed in the extreme northeast of the Soviet Union. There were attempts to design amphibious submarines capable of transporting marine troops and armoured vehicles. Soviet expeditions to the North Pole worked out the

possibility of creating military airfields on drifting ice. And while the Alaska offensive could only be a distraction, its threat would likely baffle American plans to protect Europe from Soviet invasion.

Another critical factor that later influenced the nature of population sentiment was the failure of the USSR to implement the creation of a “Jewish country”. The initial plan was to make Crimea “liberated” from the indigenous Crimean Tatar people due to deportation in 1944. The deportation opened the way for the practical implementation of the so-called “Jewish plan” because there was a belief that a large Russian population in Crimea could not be the obstacle. However, the performance of such a plan could lead to unpredictable consequences. However, further preparations for the proclamation of the state of Israel on the territory of Palestine made the organization of the Jewish Socialist Republic in Crimea impossible. The Soviet leadership perceived formation of Israeli state and its location as a defeat on foreign policy. The most important negative factor was Israeli alliance with the United States. It also created several problems for the foreign confrontation policy of USSR in the Middle East. The USSR, as an oil-exporting country, was quite sensitive to the situation in the region. The severance of diplomatic relations with Israel began a subsequent anti-Semitic campaign in the Soviet Union, which led to another “search for enemies”. In this case, the so-called “international Zionism” was added to their list.

Maintenance of a relatively large army involved using it as pressure to expand spheres of influence. At the same time, it was necessary to make Soviet citizens believe in the necessity of a new armed confrontation. Enormous casualties or losses did not stop Stalin during the war. He focused on using force to resolve foreign policy issues which could not go unnoticed in society. Moreover, in the late 1940s, Soviet propaganda claimed the inevitability of World War III.

The Soviet people still had fresh memories of the pre-war repression and the Holodomor. For some of them, the repressive policy of the Soviet leadership before the war was the reason for refusing to resist Germany during the years of armed confrontation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the lands of Ukraine, the non-combat operations did not stop even after the outbreak of World War II. As UPA soldiers continued to fight and soldiers of the Polish Home Army carried out armed attacks. The Ukrainian-Polish armed confrontation in the territories where the two peoples lived together had tragic

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<sup>1</sup> В. Гриневич, *Національні проблеми в Червоній Армії в період визволення України від німецько-фашистських загарбників (грудень 1942–жовтень 1944 р.)*: автореф. дис... канд. іст. Наук, Київ 1994, s. 16; idem, *Суспільно-політичні настрої населення України в роки Другої світової війни (1939-1945 рр.)*, Київ 2007, s. 520; idem, *УПА і Червона Армія. Українська Повстанська Армія і національно-визвольна боротьба в Україні у 1940-1950-х рр.: матер. Всеукр. наук. конф., 25-26 серпня 1992 р.*, Київ 1992, s. 194-200; Ю. О. Ніколаєць, *Дезертирство із лав Червоної Армії в Україні на початкових етапах Великої Вітчизняної війни. „3 архівів ВУЧК, ГПУ, НКВД, КГБ”* 1997, 1-2, s. 169-175; idem, *Морально-політичний стан населення України у перший період Великої Вітчизняної війни*. Вінниця: Х-АРТ, 2004, s. 334; idem, *Моральний стан Червоної Армії в Україні в перший період війни проти німецько-фашистських загарбників. Дезертирство та боротьба з ним*. Київ: Міжнародна фінансова агенція 1998, s. 61.

consequences for the locals. Ukrainians and Poles considered their right for Volhynia, Eastern Galicia, Kholmshchyna, Podlasie, Lemkivshchyna and Nadsyannia territories. Therefore, they were directly interested in the victory of one of the warring parties (UPA or AK), which contributed to the prolongation of the conflict.<sup>2</sup> The top leadership of the USSR, being interested in the mutual destruction of the insurgents, exacerbated the conflict. According to the memoirs of Polish General W. Anders, J. Stalin at a difficult time for the USSR at the beginning of the German-Soviet war, promised the Polish side to destroy Western Ukrainians “by joint efforts”.<sup>3</sup> The Germans did not stay away from the conflict. According to some sources, the Ukrainian insurgents managed to exterminate the Poles with German support.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the German side sought to involve Poles and Ukrainians in the extermination of the Jewish population.<sup>5</sup> About 165 000 Poles were killed in Volyn alone.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, G. Motyka’s publications destroy the myths about either the UPA as an exceptionally heroic organization or as criminals, compared to whom the crimes of the Nazis and the communist regime look pale.<sup>7</sup> But there is no doubt that the Polish-Ukrainian conflict contributed to the achievement of agreements on the legalization of the territorial assets of the USSR during the Second World War. Additionally, it helped to the subsequent forced relocation of the population, designed to consolidate Soviet influence.

The Ukrainian population mood was also significantly influenced by the post-war famine and mass deportations. These events greatly affected the settlement structure of the people of the western Ukrainian lands, its eastern and southern regions.

The belief of Soviet citizens in the second half of the 1940s and early 1950s that the USSR would be the first to start a war in Europe was comprehensive. The materials of special reports on the population’s mood confirmed people’s concern about the possibility of a new large-scale armed confrontation. Officials in charge regularly sent such messages to the Central Committee of the CP/b/U. This is the nature of the most characteristic statements recorded by the proxies of the state security bodies set out in

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<sup>2</sup> І. Льюшин, *Українці і поляки на територіях спільного проживання: політичне та військове протистояння. Україна в Другій світовій війні: погляд з XXI ст. У 2 кн.* Кн. 1. Київ: Наукова думка 2011, s. 567.

<sup>3</sup> W. Anders, *Bez ostatniego rozdziału: wspomnienia z lat 1939-1946*, Lublin 1996, s. 136.

<sup>4</sup> M. Juchniewicz, *Polacy w radzieckim ruchu podziemnym i partyzanckim 1941-1944*, Warszawa 1973, s. 328.

<sup>5</sup> W. Biegański, M. Juchniewicz, S. Okęckis, *Polacy w ruchu oporu narodów Europy 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1977, s. 117.

<sup>6</sup> J. Turowski, W. Siemaszko, *Zbrodnie ukraińskich nacjonalistów dokonane na ludności polskiej na Wołyniu 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1990, s. 180.

<sup>7</sup> G. Motyka, R. Wnuk, *Pany i resuny. Współpraca AK – WiN i UPA w latach 1945-1947*, Warszawa 1997, s. 212; G. Motyka, *Tak było w Bieszczadach. Walki polsko-ukraińskie 1943-1948*, Warszawa 1999, s. 552; tenże, *Problematyka stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w latach 1939-1948 w polskiej historiografii po roku 1989*, [w:] *Historycy polscy i ukraińscy wobec problemów XX wieku*, red. P. Kosiewski, G. Motyka, Kraków 2000, s. 166-178; tenże, *Ukraińska partyzanka 1942-1960*, Warszawa 2006, s. 728; tenże, *W kręgu Łun w Bieszczadach*, Włocławek 2009, s. 200; tenże, *Od rzezi wołyńskiej do akcji Wisła*, Kraków 2011, s. 524.

the special report on the reaction of the population of Lviv to the events of internal and external situation of February 8, 1951. As a confirmation serve the words of associate professor of Lviv Polytechnic Institute V. Rakita, who claimed the imminent start of the war at the initiative of the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> Ordinary citizens believed that the motivation for war resulted from the need of the Soviet Union to control German industry. Main reason was that their country “does not meet the growing needs of machinery production”. The Soviet leadership assessed their intentions to capture West Germany as a forced need and a righteous decision due to the defeat of the Germans in World War II. An analysis of the Ukrainian SSR people’s statements showed their confidence that the specifics of the deployment of Soviet troops in Western Europe allowed a sudden offensive to the West. The only restraining factor for offensive in the western direction was the firm position of the United States.<sup>9</sup> Citizens believed that neither France nor Britain would resist Soviet pressure, which would allow the Communists to “develop Soviet power” in Europe.<sup>10</sup>

“Export of communism” by military action was seen as a good reason for the start of hostilities. Moreover, the presence of the most powerful land army armed with the most modern tanks and artillery promoted the belief that the USSR could start offensive against the countries of Western Europe. At the same time, assessing the prospects for the coming war, people believed in the importance of the USSR’s superiority over the United States in regard to human resources. However, the population critically assessed the ability to counter the “financial power” of the Americans, which could allow the USA military to involve numerous allies in the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

The idea of waging war with a relatively weak understanding of the nature of nuclear war and the development of strategic carriers of atomic weapons, focused people on the concept of future war as a clash primarily of the land armies. The supposed beginning of war on the western borders of the USSR brought the issues of war and peace for the western Ukrainian population. People of the eastern Ukrainian regions expressed their concerns about the aggravation of the international situation as well. Residents of industrial areas, realizing that at the beginning of the war a nuclear strike by enemy strategic aircraft could be against them, expressed concern about the aggravation of international relations. The belief in the unpreparedness of the USSR to repel the attack of enemy strategic bombers led to a negative attitude to the fact that the Soviet Union could be the initiator of a new war. Participants from the party organization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR during the closed meeting noted numerous manifestations of the negative attitude of the population of Ukraine toward the starting the war by the USSR. Citizens were unprepared mentally for next hostilities because the horrors of the last war had not yet faded from their memory.<sup>12</sup> The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine confirmed this

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<sup>8</sup> Центральний державний архів громадських об’єднань України (ЦДАГО України). Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 11.

<sup>9</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 11.

<sup>10</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 12.

<sup>11</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 11.

<sup>12</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 388. Арк 42.

reluctant attitude based on the results of determining the mood of the population of the USSR. According to special reports from law enforcement agencies, Ukrainians have repeatedly expressed fear of a new war and unwillingness to participate in a future conflict.<sup>13</sup>

One can come to a similar conclusion by analysing letters from Ukrainian citizens sent to the *Pravda* newspaper in 1951. Negatively perceiving the possibility of war against Western European countries, they argued that no benefits gained from a new war could replace lost of relatives or friends.<sup>14</sup> Taking into account that the Second World War swept through Ukrainian lands twice, this conviction confirmed the lack of support in the USSR for Stalin's idea of the possibility of further exporting communism by military means. Citizens looked to the future with fear, realizing that the initiative to start conflict could come from the leadership of their country, and they had no way to prevent it.

On the other hand, some OUN supporters believed in the possibility of restoring Ukrainian statehood in the event of a military conflict between the USSR and its former western allies. The special reports of the state security bodies testified to the spread of such beliefs, especially among young people living in the western Ukrainian regions.<sup>15</sup> Ukrainians who supported the UPA struggle hoped that the war between the USSR and the United States would restore the Ukrainian state by arms. The Ukrainian insurgents could become reliable allies of Western countries interested in the prospective defeat of the USSR.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, it is necessary to share the impact of state security bodies on the formation of the USSR population's mood. Generally, one of the essential means of "exporting communism" or as a "repulse of world imperialism" was the possible participation of the USSR in the world armed confrontation. The victorious end of such a war should significantly expand the influence of the Soviet country in the world. Simultaneously, hopes spreading among OUN supporters of the USSR defeat in the war were branded as treason. Thus, the Soviet leadership presented war as a means to achieve the set goals and objectives. The participation of Soviet service members in the so-called low-intensity conflicts in limited (local) war theatres over the world had to serve as a solution to the tasks set for them.

The practice of unleashing local wars has perhaps contributed most to the spread of the belief in the inevitability of a new global armed confrontation. They become the conflict scene between the USSR and the United States during the Cold War. One can mention the so-called Korean War of 1950-1953, in which Soviet and American soldiers fought against each other. After successful actions by the Chinese army against United Nations troops, USA General D. MacArthur even proposed nuclear weapons against the enemy.

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<sup>13</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 9.

<sup>14</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2079, Арк. 5.

<sup>15</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 13.

<sup>16</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 1718. Арк 1-7.

The world community perceived North Korea's attack on the South as an act of aggression. It was perceived like the beginning of communist expansion in Asia and as the offensive of the USSR and China to capture the continent.<sup>17</sup> It is noteworthy that similar assessments of this confrontation were widespread in Ukraine. We cannot forget that one of the results of the Korean War was the creation of the Svoboda and Free Europe radio stations. Their anti-Soviet orientation served the process of forming relevant political sentiments. Moreover, no one among the critically-minded veterans believed in the version of South Korea's attack on the North.

Based on the classified files of the Central Committee of the CP/b/, one can observe a several negative assessments of the conflict in Korea by the Ukrainians. For example, N. Haber, a freshman student at Lviv Polytechnic Institute, said he was disappointed that Chinese volunteers were helping the Democratic People's Army and that Americans were behaving passively. In his opinion, if this continues, "the Communists will conquer the whole world".<sup>18</sup> At the same time, other Ukrainians perceived the events of the Korean War mainly by the guidelines of Soviet propaganda. Like other fighters who fought in Korea, Ukrainian soldiers believed they were performing an international duty in defending the fraternal Korean people. Obeying the oath, they carried out the relevant orders.<sup>19</sup>

Ukrainian citizens were concerned about reports in the Soviet press according to which American aircraft were allegedly dropping special containers of infected rodents and insects over the DPRK and northern China. Such actions were designed to cause an epidemic, encephalitis, anthrax. In March 1952, the Chinese announced more than 800 raids by American aircraft that allegedly used bacteriological weapons. Simultaneously the Soviet delegation to the UN demanded to condemn the United States for using such weapons. In response, the USA offered to conduct an independent investigation involving international experts. Still, China and North Korea refused to allow them into their territory. In the Soviet press, international experts branded how to hire America and published "confessions" of captured American pilots, which confirmed attacks using bacteriological weapons. Stalin deliberately provoked the United States to involve the "countries of imperialism" in a new conflict that could escalate into World War III. Provoking an armed confrontation between the United States and China, he emphasized in a telegram to Mao Zedong on October 5, 1950, that "if war is imminent, let it be now". By this statement, the USSR leader emphasized that the USSR and China are stronger militarily than the United States and Britain. He thus expressed his readiness to go to war based on the provisions of the Soviet-Chinese agreement of February 14, 1950, if the United States declared war on China. In a letter to the Soviet ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Stalin argued that America's involvement in the Korean War would allow the Soviet Union to strengthen its position in Western Europe.<sup>20</sup> Such "strengthening" presupposed the "proper

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<sup>17</sup> Л. Млечин, *Корея: тайная война* „Совершенно секретно” 1990, 10, с. 14.

<sup>18</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк 13.

<sup>19</sup> Л. Млечин, *Корея: тайная война* „Совершенно секретно” 1990, 10, с. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *История России. XX век. 1939-2007*. Москва: Астрель: АСТ, 2009, с. 242.

deployment” of the armies of the socialist countries until 1953, initiated on January 8, 1951, at a meeting of the general secretaries of the Communist Parties and the military leadership organized by the chief of the Soviet general staff, S. Shtemenko.

According to Stalin, one of the tasks of resolving the Korean War was to make people believe that USA military power could surrender. Seeking to cast doubt on the control of the USA military, he sought to convince Soviet citizens that confrontation with America was not a hopeless task. However, he failed in eradicating citizens’ doubts about the USA military superiority over the USSR. It was not possible to win the fight for world public opinion on the assessments of the Korean War.

The events in Korea were not at the centre of the Ukrainian population’s discussion of political events. The war took place far from the republic’s borders. The confrontation between the USSR and the USA and forecasting its consequences was mainly of interest. Such considerations accompanied controversy over the Soviet leadership’s ability to confront the American armed forces and the Soviet Union’s time to launch a global armed confrontation. People raised doubts about the practicality of war against the United States in connection with the Americans’ successful testing of a thermonuclear device in November 1952.

Moreover, the United States during the Korean War sharply increasing military spending and prepared strategic bombers for a devastating strike on the USSR. The Soviet country had nothing to prevent it. American military bases were built in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, what allowed the United States to destroy the Soviet Union by a sudden nuclear strike with its aircraft.

Most Ukrainians considered the war against the United States as a suicide because of the ability of the Americans to carry out atomic bombings of Soviet cities. However, at the same time, they did not want to capitulate to the Americans. Some citizens seem to have distanced themselves from the Soviet leadership in its foreign policy. They emphasized that the confrontation between the USSR and the United States is exclusively for the top leadership of both states and to which ordinary people have nothing to do. Estimates of the Korean War among GULAG prisoners varied in some issues. Many political prisoners enthusiastically welcomed the news of the involvement of UN troops in the Korean War, because they hoped that the organization would fairly assess Stalin’s real intentions.

At the same time, Ukrainian society in the early 1950s expressed opinion that there would be no war soon. One can prompt this statement by a comparison of military resources of the world’s leading countries. Thus, the Lviv Agricultural Institute teacher, M. Listavnychy, claimed that war was impossible without a mighty land army in the United States. According to him Britain and France will not support the United States in the confrontation with the Soviet Union because of the desire to get rid of American influence. And even Japan does not want to help actively America because “it still remembers the horrors of the atomic bomb dropped by America in the last war”.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк. 9-10.

Assessments of military and economic resources in Ukrainian society had a slightly different colour. The most important factor was that the Soviet model of the economy from the very beginning was paramilitary. Significant human, material, financial, scientific, and technical resources were concentrated first on developing nuclear and thermonuclear weapons and later spent on the means of their delivery. The state allocated huge funds for this. In all defence industries, the number of workers and employees increased and at the same time the production capacity grew. A considerable number of specialized research institutes, laboratories, and design bureaus appeared. The military industry was developed by reducing population consumption. Accordingly, society deepened their doubts about the system's effectiveness and the soundness of such sacrifices in peacetime. Young people formed critical opinions about the political conduct of government.<sup>22</sup> For example, among the students of Lviv University, there was a widespread view that “the situation is tense, the war may start and spread to the West, and the fate of local people in this regard is unfortunate, they are not sure about the future”.<sup>23</sup>

Archival documents suggest that the population of Ukraine did not always understand the phenomenon of arms race. The USSR was thus presented solely as an agent of resisting the Western countries' aggressive actions. For example, Shcherbakov, an employee of the Lviv regional trade department, pointed out in 1951: “We will have war rather than reducing prices. Our government is now collecting every penny for the country's weapons, and even the military is taxed”. Evaluating the decision of the Council of Ministers on the income tax as a sign of the imminent war, the store seller from Lviv, Raibach, stated: “Probably the pocket of the Soviet government is not full, if we have reached our only support – the army”.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Ukrainian society ambiguously perceived the increase in spending on the needs of the military-industrial complex. The further evidence confirm that Stalin had failed to convince the general population of the practicality of a new armed confrontation. The desire to raise living standards outweighed among ordinary citizens the mythical benefits of “the domination of communism throughout the world”.

A new impetus for discussing the problems of international politics in the context of the possibility of the beginning of the Third World War was the “case of doctors”. In the context of the Cold War, Jewish diaspora became a suspicious minority for Stalin. According to him the United States could take advantage of against the USSR. Therefore, on February 9, 1953, when unknown individuals detonated a bomb on the territory of the Soviet embassy in Tel Aviv. Despite an apology from the Israeli government the Soviet Union severed ties with that country.

Many facts indicated that the “doctors' affair” was a preparation for a bloody purge of the entire administration, including state security forces and Stalin's closest

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<sup>22</sup> *Економічна історія України: Історико-економічне дослідження*, В 2 т. Т. 2., Київ: Ніка-центр 2011, s. 408.

<sup>23</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк. 14.

<sup>24</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 786. Арк. 12.

associates.<sup>25</sup> The anti-Semitic campaign initiated by Stalin raised confidence in the possibility of large-scale deportation of the Jewish population. However, according to many ordinary citizens, the United States would not understand such actions because there was a relatively solid Jewish diaspora.

Part of the population of Ukraine perceived the “doctors’ case” as part of the confrontation with the Americans. They believed that the intensification of the anti-Semitic campaign aimed at “showing America that it is behaving incorrectly towards the USSR”. G. Malenkov and his associates seemed to follow this tactic.<sup>26</sup> At the same time there were opinions that the “doctors’ affair” resolved the conflict with the United States by putting pressure on the Americans.<sup>27</sup> However, even after the rehabilitation of doctors, there was a belief among Ukrainian citizens that restoration became possible only due to pressure on the Soviet leadership effected by US leaders.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the analysis that characterized Ukrainian citizens’ statements about the “doctor’s case” shows that most citizens fully allowed the possibility of American pressure and its success on the Soviet leadership. Thus, ordinary citizens expressed their attitude to choosing a stronger player on the world stage between the USSR and the USA.

Stalin’s death put an end for some time to the USSR’s preparations for World War III. Objective reasons for this were the country’s unwillingness to intercept American long-range bombers armed with nuclear bombs. And another point is the relative weakness of the Soviet military-industrial complex, which at the time could not create advanced weapons capable of hitting US territory. Stalin failed to convince his people of the prospects of a new war. Soviet citizens’ fear of a possible start of hostilities and dissatisfaction with rise of military spending was also essential factors in the Soviet leadership’s attempt to improve relations with the West after Stalin’s death.

At the same time, ordinary citizens ambiguously assessed the death of the “leader of the peoples” in the context of the impact of this event on the country’s ability to adequately respond to the challenges of international politics. Doubts about the new leadership’s ability to “prevent US aggression” testified to both blind faiths in Stalin’s ability to solve foreign policy problems and distrust of the new leaders. According to the archival materials of the former “classified files” of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the fear of a possible start of the war after Stalin’s death caused particular concern to the citizens. The nation believed that this could soon provoke the United States to fight against the Soviet Union, which had lost its “helmsman”. Such warnings of disbelief in the ability of the top party leadership after the death of Stalin to avert the start of hostilities remained extremely common in Ukrainian society. The fear of a thermonuclear war with the United States was so great that some Ukrainians even expressed the belief in the practicality of “giving up the country” just to avoid conflict.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Н. Бугай, *Народы Украины в „Особой папке” Сталина*, Москва: Наука 2006, с. 116-118.

<sup>26</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2773. Арк. 33.

<sup>27</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2773. Арк. 50.

<sup>28</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2773. Арк. 88.

<sup>29</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2743. Арк. 7.

Stalin's death also caused panic among the Jewish population, many of whom was afraid of the possibility of pogroms or deportations. People hoped to avoid the conflict with the help of the USA position. Some citizens believed that the Americans would start a new war to protect the Jewish population of the USSR. It has become widely known that "we need a war that will save the Jews, this war will be in the spring of 1953, and America will start it".<sup>30</sup> G. Malenkov was accused of intransigence and readiness for open armed confrontation with the United States. However, there were also allegations that there was a "pro-American group" in the upper echelons of Soviet power. Their mission was "to try to resolve the conflict with the United States".<sup>31</sup> "American motives" were also present in the assessments of Beria's arrest. People perceived the power struggle in the highest echelons of the USSR as a chance for enemies to start a war against the USSR.<sup>32</sup> Some believed that a war could break out if Beria did not regain freedom.<sup>33</sup> The motivation for such statements was the belief that Beria was a "good man", a supporter of reform and wanted to make Russia "American-style" country.<sup>34</sup> Such statements showed confidence in USA leadership in addressing complex international policy issues. The USSR could gain such influence on the world stage only in a successful armed confrontation as it was believed. Simultaneously, during 1950-1953, Ukrainian citizens perceived the essential events through the prism of Soviet-American relations. This statement testifies the perception of their country primarily as a "superpower" that has a significant (and sometimes decisive) influence on world events. The successful test of the hydrogen bomb facilitated these beliefs in the USSR. According to citizens, this success allowed to restore parity with the United States in the arms race.<sup>35</sup>

Generally, the intensification of the arms race with the prospect of a new world war did not arouse the approval of the vast majority of Ukraine's population. According to our analysis of archival materials, residents of all regions and representatives of major social groups had the most negative perception of the continuation of hostilities in any form with the use of any slogans (such as the struggle for communism around the world or the restoration of Ukrainian statehood). The desire to preserve a peaceful life dominated the political mood of the people of Ukraine. Discussion of the prospects for the beginning of a new world war and possible options along with fear for the lives of relatives and friends dominated among ordinary citizens of Ukraine. The vast majority of them were pessimistic about the possible resumption of hostilities on a global scale. Involvement of the USSR in the arms race, which led to a slowdown in the production of consumer goods and an increase in the number of scarce goods, did not always find understanding among Ukrainian citizens. Proud of the country's power and influence on the world arena they sought to improve material well-being.

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<sup>30</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2743. Арк. 10-11.

<sup>31</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2773. Арк. 50.

<sup>32</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2775. Арк. 155.

<sup>33</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2775. Арк. 163.

<sup>34</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2775. Арк. 229.

<sup>35</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1, Оп. 24, Спр. 2776. Арк. 1-2, 6-7, 26.

People preferred to raise their living standards rather than a war for the victory of communism throughout the world. These moods testified to Stalin's significant difficulties in convincing Soviet citizens of the practicality of launching new large-scale hostilities. Citizens did not perceive Stalin's Third World war as a means of spreading the USSR's influence in the world or as another "step" to a "bright future". The memories of the losses and horrors of World War II were still relatively fresh in the people's memory.

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#### Summary

### **Political mood of the Ukrainian population in the Cold War development conditions**

Our research determined that the refusal of the Soviet leadership to prepare for participation in the war against the West at the beginning of the Cold War was due to the negative perception of such a prospect by a significant number of Soviet citizens. Significant losses in the Second World War led to a highly negative attitude in Ukraine to the possibility of large-scale hostilities.

Exceptions were usually supporters of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. They relied primarily on the overthrow of Soviet power in the event of hostilities against the United States. Many citizens' misunderstanding of the nature of the thermonuclear war led to hope for an opportunity to survive the war and avoid suffering by changing their place of residence. People believed that the world stage depended on the nature of the confrontation between the USSR and the USA and the flotation of these countries as "superpowers". This attitude determined respect for the power of one's own country while understanding the suicidal nature of the war against the United States. Nurturing hopes for the interest of the USA leadership in the state of affairs in Ukraine led to the belief that the most important decisions of the Soviet leadership were taking into account the position of the Americans.

To achieve parity with the West, many citizens preferred to raise living standards before improving armaments and military equipment. Citizens perceived the increase in spending on the defence industry as a forced action in developing the arms race. At the

same time, successes in developing new weapons have formed a sense of pride for their country. The prevailing negative attitude in society towards participation in the war and the awareness of the technical backwardness determined the position of the Soviet leadership in the international arena after Stalin's death. At that period the USSR refused to prepare for a new world war. The lack of unity of citizens on this issue also determined the vulnerability of the Soviet propaganda machine, proving the impossibility of forming in society any mood favourable for the top leadership.