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## **SOVIET UKRAINE IN THE EYES OF WESTERN TRAVELERS (1920'S — 1930'S)**

*Радянська Україна очима західних мандрівників  
(1920-ті — 1930-ті рр.)*

*Based on newspaper articles, archival materials, published memoirs, and specialized literature, the paper describes the image of Soviet Ukraine among Western travelers (journalists, professionals, writers, workers, etc.) during the interwar period. It presents representations of Ukrainian SSR made by Americans and Europeans who had visited that part of the Soviet Union.*

Keywords: Western travelers, Soviet Ukraine, USSR, everyday life, 1932–33 Famine, United States of America.

Формування позитивного образу України в очах іноземців є одним із ключових завдань сучасної інформаційної політики нашої держави. Україна віддавна зацікавлювала іноземних мандрівників. Встановлення більшовицької влади та соціально-економічні експерименти владної партії у 1920–1930-х рр. притягували представників західних країн на ці терени. У міжвоєнний період Українську СРР\РСР відвідали тисячі західних туристів, серед них: журналісти, письменники, інженери, робітники, культурні діячі. Мета презентованої статті — на основі газетних статей, архівних матеріалів, опублікованих спогадів та фахової літератури, охарактеризувати враження іноземців із подорожі по території радянської України у 1920–1930-х рр. Автор використав опубліковані мемуари (Е. Вілсона та ін.) та публіцистику (В. Дюранті, Г. Нікербокер та ін.) західних мандрівників, а також публікації в українській пресі США («Народне Слово» (Пітсбург), «Народна Воля» (Скрентон) та Польщі («Новий час» та «Діло» (Львів) зі згадками про візити іноземців до України. До уваги було взято й матеріали українських колекцій Центру дослідження історії імміграції (Університет Міннесоти). Залучено було й спеціальну історичну літературу, присвячену історії

*СРСР. У статті розглянуто, як радянську Україну описували мандрівники зі США, Канади, Великої Британії, Німеччини, Польщі, Франції та Італії. Більшість представників заходу (а особливо США) не особливо відрізняли українців від росіян у межах Радянського Союзу, хоча декотрі з них позитивно відгукувалися саме про Українську РСР. На початку 1920-х рр. іноземні оглядачі ринули в Україну, щоб спостерігати за новим економічним та соціальним ладом. У 1930-х рр. сюди все частіше прибували закордонні спеціалісти для допомоги в розгортанні радянських п'ятирічок. Західні мандрівники найбільше звертали увагу на умови життя робітників у містах та брак найелементарніших побутових речей; катастрофічну ситуацію в сільському господарстві, а особливо часто закордонні журналісти згадували про голодомор 1932–1933 рр.*

Ключові слова: західні мандрівники, радянська Україна, СРСР, повсякденне життя, Голодомор 1932–1933 рр., Сполучені Штати Америки.

Ukraine was always a place of interest for foreign scholars and travelers. This land and its people were mentioned in different written sources starting from Homer's «Odyssey». Little, however, is known about the image of Soviet Ukraine among those who visited the USSR. Thanks to American and European journalists, scholars, workers, writers, Soviet Ukraine appeared on the Western agenda during the 1920<sup>s</sup>–1930<sup>s</sup>.

The main goal of the paper is to investigate the image of Soviet Ukraine among western travelers who had been there during the 1920<sup>s</sup>–1930<sup>s</sup>.

Many books and scientific papers describe «adventures» of Westerners in the Soviet Union during the interwar period. However, there is a lack of materials about those who have been to Soviet Ukraine. The analysis relies on the articles published in some American-Ukrainian and Ukrainian newspapers («Narodna Volia» (Scranton), «Narodne Slovo» (Pittsburg), «Novyi Chas» (Lviv) that mentioned the publication of foreigners about Soviet Ukraine. Another important source — memoirs and publications of those who personally witnessed life in Soviet Ukraine, published in the 1920's–1930's (Duranty, W. & Chamberlin, W. & Knickerbocker, H. 1932). Recent research on the general history of the Soviet Union was also included in this paper (O. Figes, R. Gerwarth, etc.). Some unpublished correspondence from Ukrainian collections of Immigration History Research Center Archives (University of Minnesota) was used too.

Newly established Bolshevik state (states) on the territory of former Romanov Empire magnetized Westerners. By late 1918 there were few Western diplomats or foreign newspaper correspondents left there to verify rumors or separate fact from fiction. Although the reality of the new regime was so terrible that it hardly needed any embellishment, fantastical stories about Bolshevik rules flourished and drifted westwards. A social order turned upside down of a never-ending

cycle of atrocities and retribution amid the moral collapse in what had previously been one of the Great Powers of Europe. Several American newspapers reported that Bolsheviks had introduced an electrically operated guillotine designed to decapitate 500 prisoners an hour, while in Britain, a variety of publications featured apocalyptic reports from eyewitnesses that underlined the limitless evil of which the Bolsheviks were supposedly capable. The Bolsheviks, or so it was suggested, had «nationalized» middle- and upper-class women who might now be raped at will by any member of the proletariat, Orthodox churches had been turned into brothels in which aristocratic women were forced to offer sexual services to ordinary workers, Chinese executioners had been recruited by the Bolsheviks for their knowledge of ancient oriental torture techniques, while inmates in the infamous Cheka prisons had their heads stuck into cages filled with hungry rats in order to extort information (Gerwarth, R. 2016, p. 98). The influential «The New York Times» referred to V. Lenin and his followers as «human scum» while in London the conservative «Morning Post» described the Bolshevik regime as one in which «emancipated criminals, wild idealists, Jewish Internationalists, all the cranks and most of the crooks, have joined hands in an orgy of passion and unreason». A German newspaper published a lengthy article on the Bolsheviks' «unlimited terrorism» against everything considered «middle class» (Gerwarth, R. 2016. p. 99). Bolshevik atrocities in Ukraine were also described by Red Cross sisters who worked in one of the Kyiv's prison. They were able to observe prisoners in their everyday surroundings. «The physical conditions were very hard. The cells were crowded, filthy, airless and dark, and without beds» — one of the sisters admitted (In the Shadow... 1919, p. 10). Sometimes even foreigners experienced harsh conditions of the Soviet penitentiary system. Ukrainian military and public activist Yurii Horlis-Horskyi, mentioned in his memoirs, an American of Polish origin whom he met in one of Ukrainian prison. «I worked as a barber in Chicago and for five years was a member of the American Communist Party... gave a fifty percent of income for party needs... I was sent out of States and now end up in Soviet prison» (Горліс-Горський, Ю. 1937, с. 71) — the confessed.

Books about a new order in the Soviet Union were trendy abroad. «I enjoyed reading Mr. Griffith's account of his trip [to the USSR — D. K.] in the autumn of 1931» (Lodder, J. 1932. p. 839) — that is how «Spectator» reviewed travel book by Hubert Griffith. That is why, starting from the end of the turn of 1930s, more and more foreign tourists and professionals traveled to the USSR and Soviet Ukraine particularly. In 1929 the «Intourist» was established, which had a tourist services monopoly for all international citizens regardless of their status: businessmen, engineers, etc. Since 1933 the «Intourist» had its network that included hotels and even vehicles. During a 1929–1939 the «Intourist» served one million foreigners (Кизима, М. & Кизима С. 2018).

Theodore Campbell was an American who visited USSR in 1929 and 1930 to advise the Soviet authorities on agricultural questions. His general impressions were mostly confined to surprise at discovering evidence that the revolution has not destroyed all the amenities of civilization. He was simple-minded enough to take everything he is told and shown at its face value. His account of agricultural conditions followed the lines of the official publications so that even on his subject, the author had no independent analysis of the situation to provide (Campbell, Th. 1932, p. 56). American writer and critic Edmund Wilson posted his experience of visiting the USSR in the early 1930<sup>s</sup>. Despite that the author did not separate Ukraine from Russia, he left some interesting details about everyday life in the Soviet Kyiv and Odesa: «The people in Kyiv gave me the impression of being happier than any others I had seen in Russia... The couples were all talking to one another in a manner much livelier than in the North [*Russia — D. K.*]; yet their voices were so low that I could hardly hear them» (Wilson, E. 1936, p. 315). The author got sick during his Ukrainian trip, so he ended up in one of Odesa's hospital, leaving his depiction of a facility and a people outdoors. E. Wilson frostily praised his hospital diet (potatoes and fruits) and complained about the absence of «real coffee». We could hardly find any mentions about starving peasants or on-going repressions in this book. In return, the author stated that the Five-Year Plan gave the people of the USSR more sense of time. Exciting details about Odesa's health care left another American. Journalist W. Chamberlin personally experienced staying in one of the biggest hospitals in Odesa (he had scarlet fever): «Sinks at this hospital were terribly dirty, and there were thousands of flies in the rooms, and nobody tried to get rid of them. A single dishwasher was used to clean cutlery as well as patient's bodies... and also it was used for throat rinsing»<sup>1</sup>.

E. Wilson was not the only American who praised USSR and did not see human suffering behind Stalin's modernization. The Soviet Union won over many sympathizers in the West. Soviet propaganda portrayed the USSR as a leader of «progressive humanity», as the world's only socialist state, and as its main hope against the fascist threat. At this time, Western intellectuals (the so-called «fellow-travelers») allowed their left-wing sympathies and fears of fascism to cloud their judgment of Soviet political realities. They saw progress in the Soviet Union but were blind to the famine and terror (Figes, O. 2014, p. 211). American artist Frank A. Warren had written: «Most liberals had been vaguely sympathetic to Russia during the twenties, but they had not felt its impact directly. Significantly the Five-Year Plan did not generate intense excitement until 1930 — two years after it had begun. What happened to cause this excitement was 1929 and the depression, the real impetus in turning the liberals eastward toward Russia». The diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by F. Roosevelt in 1933 was made possible

<sup>1</sup> Американець про порядки в Советях // Народне Слово. Пiтсбург, 4 лютого 1937. С. 2.

«... by the early thirties, open-mindedness had finally surpassed hostility toward the USSR» (Hollander, P. 1981, p. 77). Perhaps the most famous American that sympathized USSR was Pulitzer journalist Walter Duranty. He once wrote: «Theoretically speaking, the United States of American and the Soviet Union should form an ideal combination for mutually profitable business relations» (Duranty, W. & Chamberlin, W. & Knickerbocker, H. 1932, p. 311).

However, not everyone who traveled to the USSR was blind to the real situation there. Hubert Knickerbocker — an American journalist who has been to the USSR and published his reports. «The Red Trade Menace», one of the most important books of this Pulitzer author, was noticed by Ukrainians on West. Eugene Onatsky — a former diplomat of the Ukrainian People's Republic and «Svoboda» correspondent in Rome wrote to his chief-editor in New Jersey: «Have you seen the book that was published in German, French, and English under the title «Red Menace». This is a very well composed book with a lot of statistic material that proves that the world crisis and primarily American crisis on a big scale depends on the Soviet menace. It was written by an American journalist Knickerbocker, but this is a pseudo. In fact, the book was written by one Jesuit who spent a few years in the Soviet Union and has analyzed data from many European countries»<sup>1</sup>.

Two chapters from the mentioned book tackled the industrialization of Ukrainian SSR. Part expressively called «The largest power plant in the world» was dedicated to the construction of Dnipro Hydroelectric Station. American engineers played a significant role on-site. Actually, there was the oldest of the American colonies in the Soviet Union. They were the only Americans in this country who created an almost 100% American living environment for themselves: «The group of brick cottages each with six rooms, kitchen and bath, central heating, hot and cold water would grace an American garden city development. The shipload imported their food through Odesa» (Knickerbocker, H. 1931, p. 179). Nicholas Kupensky — modern scholar of Soviet cultural studies notes that many books appeared right after visiting Soviet giant construction sites erected during the First Five Year Plan by Western travelers. Mentioned Dnipro HES — played a crucial role in the reorganization of the South Ukrainian energy, metallurgical, manufacturing, and agriculture industries (Купенський, Н. 2019).

The chapter «In a Soviet Coal Mine» informs about H. Knickerbocker's personal experience while visiting the Donbas region. The journalist underlined the prominent role of the Ukrainian Communist Youth International in developing the Don Basin, «which was the only place in the Soviet Union where the workers can buy all the cigarettes they want without limit» (Knickerbocker, H. 1931, p. 195). Even more details about Stalin's modernization in Ukraine could be found in the book «I Search the Truth in Russia» by Walter Citrine — president

<sup>1</sup> Immigration History Research Center Archives (University of Minnesota), Onatsky E. papers, Box. 42 (Onatsky E. — letter to «Svoboda» Rome, 5.06.1932).

of the International Federations of the Trade Unions (1928–1945). Although the author did not separate the Ukrainian nation from Russian, he left some exciting description of Ukrainian landmarks on his way from Moscow in 1935. «Once we were in the Ukraine, we noticed that the peasant's houses became smarter with their thatched roofs and lime-washed walls», he wrote (Citrine, W. 1937, p. 166). On the Ukrainian soil, he had visited Kharkiv, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, Zaporizhia and Dnipro Dam.

It was indeed sporadic that a European from beyond USSR saw the worst of the Soviet crimes and then came back to Europe to talk about them. Arthur Koestler — British journalist of Hungarian and Jewish descent was one of them. He has seen forced collectivization and famine. He was one of a few intellectuals who saw with his own eyes the worst of the Soviet project (Koestler, A. 1954). And then he arrived in Paris when it was impolite to talk about such things (Judt, T. 2016, p. 184).

Soviet Union censorship didn't allow transferring news via telephone because it was illegal. When journalists tried to leave USSR and send news messages from abroad, they were not allowed returning there. Correspondents to avoid censorship had to use some ambiguous expressions that were understood only for the particular group of readers. Such «bad» words like «famine» or «forced labor» must be avoided, and changed into «lack of food», «diseases caused by malnutrition» or «labor of prisoners»<sup>1</sup>. More than a few foreign correspondents mentioned the Soviet censorship problem. For example, English journalist Spencer Williams for a decade was a «Daily Gerald» correspondent in the USSR, but he has left this position because of the Soviet censorship. He stated that all of his news messages were censored<sup>2</sup>.

Already mentioned above well-known American journalist William Henry Chamberlin posted few articles about his experience in the Soviet Russia where he lived for ten years (he was married to a Moscow woman)<sup>3</sup>. Articles were published in London «Fortnightly Review», also he was a correspondent of Boston «Christian Science Monitor». Chamberlin describes his autumn 1932 trip through Ukraine and Northern Caucasus. One woman near Poltava told him about dead bodies on the streets, and «everyday local authorities send a truck to clean the city of those who died from starvation»<sup>4</sup>. Based on official Soviet documents, he calculated that about 4–5 million people died from famine.

«Chicago Tribune» and other American newspapers published Henry Hale's articles about the Soviet Union. He traveled through the country (from Arhangelsk to the Black Sea) using railroads: «In Ukraine, I visited collective farms and saw terrible conditions there. Even local communists asked Moscow to low

<sup>1</sup> Американец про порядки в Советях // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 4 лютого 1937. С. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Англієць про москалів // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 19 жовтня 1940. С. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Американец про порядки в Советях // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 4 лютого 1937. С. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Американец про голод на Україні // Народна Воля. 10 листопада 1934.

pressure and limit grain transfers leaving some harvest for local peasants. I saw those farmers in their houses without windows, and I saw their carelessness caused by malnutrition. Thousands of peasants used the “passive resistance” method like did Germans during the French occupation of Ruhr region. They just refused to work»<sup>1</sup>.

Other travelers, too, noticed the miserable situation in the Soviet Ukraine agricultural sector. Vasył Franko — a nephew of famous Ukrainian poet and intellectual Ivan Franko, returned to Galicia from the Ukrainian SSR. He, as a member of Selrob (pro-Communist party), worked on a state collective farm near Kyiv. He described deplorable conditions there. The farm had about 3 000 pigs: «Elder ones looked like a nightmare because they were fed only during wintertime»<sup>2</sup>. Tractors needed repair, so the workers plowed the ground with a help one thin horse. All women were working on the farm, so they left their little children in daycare, were many of them died because of stomach diseases evolved by malnutrition. American journalist DeMari Bess described the economic situation: «For Westerners, it is even hard to imagine how people suffer from constant food shortages as a result of bad mechanization of the agricultural sector, which led to lower yields»<sup>3</sup>. Canadian Colonel George Alexander Drew from Toronto posted his memoirs about Soviet farmers in the English journal «Saturday Night». According to him, all Soviet peasants «... are slaves now, because every one of them has to have a passport, but not for trips abroad. Only a few Soviet officials were abroad after the October Revolution. Those passports only allow you to go from one county or town to the other. Those my compatriots who get used to travel through our country can only imagine what that means»<sup>4</sup>.

Famine in Ukraine was one of the most important topics among Western travelers. «New York Journal», which belonged to the Willem Hearts media corporation, published materials about famine in Ukraine written by Thomas Walker. He traveled through «Southern Russia» and witnessed the poverty of the Ukrainian peasantry. He had a camera and took many pictures (they complemented the articles). According to the «Narodna Volia», W. Hearts allowed this publication because of political motives. He conflicted with the F. Roosevelt administration, which recognized the Soviet Union. In the article, we can find an expression such as «Ukraine, Russia» (just like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and the author called Great Famine a «Russian Famine»<sup>5</sup>. We have to admit that plausibility of those articles and a whole personality of Th. Walker is quite uncertain (Colley, 2007).

«The New York Times» correspondent Harold Denny sent few reports from Soviet Ukraine in 1934: «There are no evidences about new possible famine... still many peasants will have to tighten belts and eat food they do not prefer till

<sup>1</sup> Американський кореспондент про Росію // Народна Воля. Скрантон, 11 липня 1931. С. 3.

<sup>2</sup> На совітському фільварку // Новий Час. Львів, 28 листопада 1932. С. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Добробут СССР // Народне Слово. Пiтсбург, 30 червня 1940. С. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Край примусової праці // Народне Слово. Пiтсбург, 21 грудня 1939. С. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Гирет і голод на Україні // Народна Воля. Скрантон, 21 лютого 1936. С. 4.

1935 harvest time»<sup>1</sup>. That opinion of H. Denny was based only on Bolsheviks' promises. His reports were censored by Moscow officials (especially H. Denny's letters from Zaporizhia). Even one of the main agitators for USSR recognition Allen Dwight sincerely confessed that he was not allowed to write about people dying from famine, only about «increased mortality caused by decreased immunity as a result of malnutrition»<sup>2</sup>. The power of the world's public opinion (which included Ukrainian protests and agitation abroad) forced Bolsheviks to reassure foreigners that «There will be no new famine».

1932–1933 Great Famine researchers did not pay much attention to memoirs of Jewish origin American journalist and writer Mendel Osherovych «How People live in the Soviet Union» (New York, 1933). The author was born in Podillia and knew the Ukrainian language. He witnessed the suffering of both Ukrainians and Jews during the genocide. Dozens of book pages depicting overcrowded trains and train stations where the author found peasants who were trying to reach cities. «Paradoxically, that Ukraine always was the granary of Russian Empire, and now farmers are looking for bread outside Ukraine» (Москович, М. 2017). Rhea Clyman — Canadian reporter whose reports about famine in Ukraine are still little known among scholars. On 20 September 1932, the Toronto daily newspaper, The Evening Telegram, devoted its front-page banner headline to a report that its Moscow-based correspondent, Rhea Clyman, had been «Driven From Russia» and attacked as a «Bourgeois Troublemaker». Miss Clyman was kicked out on the order of a Politburo resolution issued on 17 September 1932, giving her two days to leave the country on charges of publishing defamatory articles about the U.S.S.R. The «malicious» pieces cited were an article about the «nationalization of women» that was said to have appeared in an unidentified Canadian periodical, and a story about «uprisings and hunger rebellions» (Balan, J. 2018. p. 1)

American and European travelers left their description of cities and city life in Soviet Ukraine. «The House of State Industry in Kharkiv is very good illuminated, even deep in the night so that all foreigners could notice it. At the same time thousands of persons in need live in hovels and someone even in real caves... Those Soviet skyscrapers stay like pyramids in the desert» — wrote an Italian observer in his book «General look on the Soviet experiment»<sup>3</sup>. «In Kharkiv, I saw very beautiful workmen's blocks with fascinating modern architecture, but I also saw that unbelievable dwelling tightness there»<sup>4</sup> — stated another traveler. Lack of living space in Ukraine was also underlined in popular Milan daily «Corriere della Sera». Its correspondent who visited USSR wrote: «Real life of Soviet people could be seen only in the city's periphery and in provinces... Four square

<sup>1</sup> Не буде нового голоду // Народна Воля. Скрантон, 20 жовтня 1934. С. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Не буде нового голоду ... С. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Італійці про більшевизм // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 16 травня 1935. С. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Як живеться робітникам в СССР? // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 3 вересня 1936. С. 3.



meters for a person — that was personal living space for those people»<sup>1</sup>. Czech journalist, I. Shrom in Prague weekly «Pritomnost» («Present Day»), observed: «City dwellers have very bad looking clothing... In one of the theatre I've noticed barefoot person in first rows»<sup>2</sup>.

Archaeologist and Lviv University professor Tadeusz Sulimirski visited Kyiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Poltava, Berdychiv, Zhytomyr, Odesa, Yalta, and Simferopol. He stated that cities were pretty clean and quite good illuminated. There were a lot of dirty red propagandistic posters on the streets. The Soviet system was «famous» for its primary goods deficit: «Selling process has much in common with lottery because sometimes, shops could sell, for example, men's shirts of only one size, and only that exact size was available in all the other shops around the town... It is hard to find butter in Ukraine, only in Odesa (harbor)»<sup>3</sup>. Other tourists complained about the lack of sugar<sup>4</sup>. City dwellers looked «grey and colourless», even women<sup>5</sup>. V. Franko also paid attention on this phenomenon: «All people are so sad and hopeless that I didn't hear any laugh and I didn't see any smile»<sup>6</sup>. US Federal Treasury employee Eliot Windsworth tried to explain that: «Soviet citizen can't live, eat, socialize with another citizen without the agreement of the government. As a result, people walk on the streets without a smile on a face, in silence and loneliness»<sup>7</sup>.

In the book «French miner among Moscow ones», collier Cleber Leger (French «Miner's National Union» secretary) witnessed working and living conditions of local pitmen in the Eastern Ukrainian city of Horlivka. French delegation found dozens of women working hard in mines. One communist made a drastic comment: «It's better for women to work in mines than to become prostitutes like in France»<sup>8</sup>. C. Lager could not find any furniture in workers' apartments except beds, sometimes few of them were in one living space.

In general, according to the foreigners, citizens of «worker's paradise» lived and felt very bad. One tourist, US citizen of Ukrainian descent, had a conversation with a worker in the street: «Our life is good... and we are happy» ensured me the worker, but he said it in such tone, that it almost made me laugh. His income was 256 roubles, and the price of shoes is approximately 150–200 roubles... In Yalta, I noticed that some people worked more than 12 hours per day»<sup>9</sup>. German architect D. Shulz who helped Soviet authorities in developing mod-

<sup>1</sup> Божко М. Побут в совітському раю. Вражіння італійського журналіста з подорожей по СССР // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 28 березня 1935. С. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Червоні міста-фантоми // Народна Воля, Скрентон. 2 лютого 1933. С. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Совітська Україна в очах чужинця // Новий Час. Львів, 1 грудня 1934. С. 3.

<sup>4</sup> На совітському фільварку // Новий Час. Львів, 28 листопада 1932. С. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Совітська Україна в очах чужинця // Новий Час. Львів, 1 грудня 1934. С. 3.

<sup>6</sup> На совітському фільварку // Новий Час. Львів, 28 листопада 1932. С. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Американець про совітську індустрію // Народна Воля. Скрентон, 12 вересня. С. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Олена, Ш. З робітничого «Раю» // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 3 березня, 1938. С. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Як живеться робітникам в СССР? // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 3 вересня 1936. С. 3.

ern cities stated in front of the public in Stuttgart that ninety percent of Soviet workers dreamed of returning to the old order and cursed Soviet power<sup>1</sup>. Wien's organ of Social-Democratic party «Arbeite Zeitung» published a report of Adolf Schreier — worker who visited the USSR: “Communists announce that masses work and sacrifice with great enthusiasm, but I didn't see this enthusiasm neither in Kharkiv nor Moscow»<sup>2</sup>.

Jokes and anecdotes were also part of everyday life in Soviet Ukraine. Jan Berzon Otmar lived in the USSR as a Polish correspondent. He described things he seen through the eyes of fictitious character Rabinovich the Jew. Here is a conversation between Rabinovich and his fellow communist: «You'll see comrade that we will reach and overtake the whole capitalistic world». Rabinovich replied: «When you'll level with it, just let me know, and I will step out and stay there, while you can move forward»<sup>3</sup>.

In the presented paper, we briefly described the image of Soviet Ukraine among travelers from North America and Europe. Publication limits allowed us to focus only on not very well-known memoirs and reports regarding this topic. For example, we did not mention Edouard Herriot (French Prime-Minister) visit to Ukraine during 1932–1933 Great Famine, because Yaroslav Papuha has investigated this episode (Панюра, Я. 2017). Well-known British reporter Gareth Jones who witnessed famine in Ukraine also has some bibliography (Gamache, R. 2018). As we might see, there was a great misunderstanding among many journalists, scholars, and intellectuals about what Ukraine was and who Ukrainians were. Westerners who have been to Ukraine could not separate Ukrainians from the Russian nation, though almost everyone felt a difference between these two territories. They were interested in the everyday life of the Soviet citizens, industrial growth of the USSR, the situation in agriculture, moods of the working class. Everyone paid attention to the very bad supply of essential goods for city dwellers, terrible conditions of the peasantry, and countless victims of famine, which, according to them, was caused by bad management of the Soviet authorities. Also, foreign journalists complained that they could not send reports from USSR because of the official Soviet censorship. In Ukraine, they usually visited big cities (Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odesa), industrial sites (Dnipro dam), and agricultural provinces. Of course, we did not cover all the publications of Western travelers about Soviet Ukraine. Discovering new ones (especially from Scandinavia or Spain) in the future will provide unknown details to Soviet Ukrainian history.

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<sup>1</sup> Червоні міста-фантоми // Народна Воля, Скрантон. 2 лютого 1933. С. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Шість місяців у Совітському Союзі // Народна Воля. Скрантон, 30 липня 1932. С. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Про большевиків // Народне Слово. Пітсбург, 11 червня 1936. С. 4.

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## ДО ПИТАННЯ ПОЧАТКУ ДРУГОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ: ДИСКУСІЙНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЇ

*Revisiting the Beginning of the World War II:  
Debating Issues of the Contemporary Historiography*

В статті йдеться про політичні та військові механізми Другої світової війни, яка стала найбільш руйнівною катастрофою в історії людства. Домінує авторська думка, що в передвоєнні роки мала місце реальна можливість зберегти мир і запобігти нацистській агресії. Долучившись до іс-