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“TO REFLECT THE HISTORY OF THE PARTY AS IT WAS”¹

THE UKRAINIAN BRANCH OF THE MARX-ENGELS-LENIN INSTITUTE IN CRITICAL TIMES (1945–1949)

In the Soviet Union, Party history was indeed official history as the Communist Party had “the role of organizer and leader of the proletarian revolution” in 1917 and then “direct[ed] the first Socialist State of Workers and Peasants in the world”.² These lines are taken from *The Short Course of History of The Communist Party of The Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* which became compulsory reading for millions of Soviet people when it was published in 1938 and until it was repudiated in 1956. In dealing with such an important subject, Party historians set themselves apart from their colleagues.

Since the 1920s they had worked within the framework of several Commissions for the History of the October Revolution and of the Communist Party (Istpart).³ These commissions became institutes in the 1930s when they merged with the bodies responsible for the publishing of official Marxist literature and with those managing Lenin’s legacy. They were eventually centralized as a Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute (IMEL) with

¹ Savchuk, 14 January 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 8, Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine (hereinafter: TsDAHO-U).

² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), 1, 355. [Editor’s note: The titlepage of the *Short Course* can be found on the cover of this anthology.]

³ Eric Aunoble, ‘Commemorating an Event That Never Occurred: Russia’s October in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s’, in *Echoes of October International: Commemorations of the Bolshevik Revolution 1918–1990*, eds. Jean-François Fayet, Valérie Gorin, and Stefanie Prezioso (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2017), 26–53.

local branches.⁴ The leaders of these institutions seem to have been the watchdogs of state power in the field of historiography. In Ukraine, for instance, Mykhailo Rubach, the head of the local Istpart, stood against the “Revision of the Bolshevik scheme concerning the driving forces and the character of the 1917 revolution in Ukraine” in 1930 and put an end to the influence of Matviï Iavors’kyi in historiography.⁵ In 1944, Fedir Ienevych, the would-be director of the Ukrainian Branch of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, attacked Maksym Ryl’skyi, a famous poet, for his supposedly nationalist views on “Kyïv in the history of Ukraine”.⁶

Besides that, what do we know about Party historians? Those who handled the books they published would notice a relatively up-market quality and a bigger circulation than was normal for Soviet academic books, regardless of the real interest of these works. These publishing privileges could be linked with social privileges as the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute appears to have been a department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Hence their members stood in the official gallery on Labour Day or on 7 November⁷ because they belonged to the high *nomenklatura*. They were certainly conscious of it. “People say of us: because you work in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute that means you are on the gravy train and that you do not do anything”. This last quotation is from the minutes of the Kyïv branch of the IMEL Party cell meeting in September 1947. The file is among dozens of others issued by the Communist Party organiza-

⁴ “Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS (IML)” & “Istpart”’, in *Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, ed. Aleksandr Prohorov, 3rd ed. (Moskva: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1969–78), vol. 10, 293–4; Nataliia Moskovchenko, ‘Dvoznachnist poniattia “iedynyi derzhavnyi arkhivnyi fond” (rol’ Istpartu v rozvytku arkhivnoi spravy Ukraïny)’, *Studii z arkhivnoi spravy ta dokumentoznavstva* 13 (2005), available at https://web.archive.org/web/20190315101604/http://www.archives.gov.ua/Publicat/Studii/Studii_2005.13.01.php (last visited 3 July 2020); Iurii Shapoval, ‘Instytut Istorii Partii pry TsK Kompartii Ukraïny’, in *Entsyklopediia istorii Ukraïny*, ed. Valerii Smolii (Kyïv: Vydavnytstvo Naukova dumka, 2005), vol. 3, 489–90.

⁵ Mykhailo Rubach, ‘Proty revizii bil’shovyts’koï skhemy rushiinykh syl ta harakteru revol’iutsii 1917 roku na Ukraïni’, *Litopys revoliutsii*, 5 (1930), 5–98. See also TsK KP(b)U, ‘Dokladnaia zapiska istorika M. A. Rubacha o diskussii po voprosam istorii Ukraïny’, 1929, F. 1, op. 20, s. 2920, TsDAHO-U.

⁶ Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 56.

⁷ Spiski vydelennykh sotrudnikov na poluchenie propuskov na torzhestvennye zasedaniia i pravitel’svennuiu tribunu v sviazi s revoliutsionnymi prazdnikami, 1 May to 7 November 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 41, ark. 1, 4, TsDAHO-U.

tion within the Institute since 1944.⁸ These archival records have never been perused by historians,⁹ which means that our knowledge of Party historians may be quite superficial.

This paper therefore aims to fill this gap by considering the Kyiv IMEL as an institution defined both by its function and the way in which it functioned. It is focused on the crucial 1945–9 period. These five years encompass the Institute's recovery from the war and the tightening of Stalin's rule in the form of Zhdanovism. This short period had a particular resonance in Ukraine in redefining the entanglement of national and Soviet identities especially in the field of history. This paper will first tackle historiographical questions, shedding light both on the working methods of historians and on the conceptual debates between them. Then the focus will shift to their activities, from writing books and reviews to participating in social agitation.

Finally, the staff of the institute will be studied because the role of individual characters and their career interests appears to be as important as their ideological motives. This paper will also shed light on the major crisis faced by the Kyiv IMEL during these years, a crisis which obliged the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine to intervene, with the personal involvement of Lazar' Kaganovich and Nikita Khrushchev.

A Ukrainian Soviet Post-War Institution

The Kyiv IMEL was set up in March–April 1945, a few weeks before the capitulation of Nazi Germany. It was one of the bodies which local Soviet power wanted to restore as an attribute of Ukrainian statehood.¹⁰ In this respect it indicated the special rank of the republic: it seems that only in Moscow and Kyiv the Party History Institute officially retained the name of 'Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute' from 1945 whereas in Belarus it quickly

⁸ Pervynna orhanizatsiia Kompartii Ukraïny Instytutu istorii partii pry TsK KPU – filialu Instytutu marksyzmu-leninizmu pry TsK KPRS, Kyïv, 1944–87, F. 319, TsDAHO-U.

⁹ With the exception of a Moscow-based historian who ordered two files in the early 1970's.

¹⁰ For a similar phenomenon, see Éric Aunoble, 'Ukrkinokhronika: ispytanie voïnoi', in *Perezhit' voïnu: Sovetskaia kinoindustriia 1939–1949*, ed. Valérie Pozner (Moskva: Rosspeñ, 2018), 130–43.

lost this title.¹¹ It was a real renaissance for the Ukrainian Istpart which had previously gone through troubled times. Like many Ukrainian cultural institutions, the Istpart was on the brink of collapse in 1933. Its journal, *The Chronicle of Revolution (Litopys Revoliutsii)*, had ceased publication and its activity thereafter appeared negligible. Only in 1939, when Ukrainian history became a main concern in order to justify the Sovietization of the 'new western regions', could a certain revitalization be felt. The Istpart took the name of the Ukrainian Branch of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and it appointed a new group of collaborators.¹²

It was no easy task to restore such an institution in 1945. The gathering and hiring of staff took a whole year, judging by Party membership figures: from 10 people in March 1945 and 20 in December, it reached 35 in September 1946 and did not rise afterwards although it still lacked qualified technical employees such as typists. The living conditions of those involved in the work of the Institute were appalling, as were those of other Kyïv city dwellers. People had to live in overcrowded rooms in strangers' flats. The Institute had to organize people to collect wood and potatoes so that they could have heat and food. This deprivation lasted at least until 1947¹³ and it had consequences for the work itself. The Institute, which was organized into three departments (one for the archive, one for the translation of Marxist-Leninist classics, and one for history¹⁴), also suffered from material precarity although it was housed in the building of the Central Committee: there were no locks on the archival depositories, basic furniture was lacking or in poor condition, and there was no maintenance worker.¹⁵ Staff compared their conditions to those in other

¹¹ The *Filial Instituta K. Marksa, F. Engel'sa, V. Lenina*, Minsk existed from February 1945 until August 1946. Then it took back its pre-war name: *Institut istorii partii pri Tsentral'nom komitete Kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov) Belorussii (TsK KP(b)B)*. See the description of the F. 1440 fond of the National Archive of Belarus, available at <http://fk.archives.gov.by/fond/108475/> (last visited 24 April 2018).

¹² Shapoval, 'Instytut Istorii Partii' (see note 4), 489.

¹³ Protokoly zasedanii partiinogo biuro, 11 June 1945, F. 319, op. 1, s. 4, ark. 4, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 4 March 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 2, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 10 Feb. 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 13, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 17 Jan. 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 11, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 14 Aug. 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 53, TsDAHO-U.

¹⁴ Materialy k protokolam Politbiuro TsK KP(b)U, K sessii 20.06.1947, 'Otchet o rabote Ukrainskogo filiala Instituta Marksa-Engel'sa-Lenina pri TsK VKP(b) - Insituta Istorii Partii pri TsK KP(b)U', F. 1, op. 6, s. 1121, ark. 3-9, TsDAHO-U.

¹⁵ Protokol i rezoliutsii obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 21 June 1945, F. 319, op. 1, s. 3, ark. 18-21, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5-8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 62, TsDAHO-U; Vypiska iz protokola biuro gorkoma KP(b)U po

institutes; some were disappointed and inferred a radical moral: "The stomach comes first and the rest afterwards".¹⁶

The Soviet Organization of Work

Despite this situation, the activity of the Ukrainian Branch of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute was organized as in any other Soviet enterprise, according to a model of integrated production and work planning. In order to accomplish the task of developing "Party historical scholarship",¹⁷ the Institute was set up as a *kombinat* encompassing a complete process from raw material to ready-to-use end-product. The Party archive was kept under the control and authority of the Institute¹⁸ as the basis for research by Institute historians who were the only ones allowed to work with it. Even though translations of the works of great revolutionary thinkers and leaders had essentially an agitational character for the masses, they also provided useful guidelines for Party historians who were sure to find the books they needed in the Institute's library.

Like all Soviet workers, Party historians were dispatched in brigades (*brigady*) headed by a brigadier (*brigadir*). Each brigade was dedicated to a specific task, usually the preparation of a book, a chapter of which was assigned to every member of the brigade.¹⁹ This meant that writing was not a matter of individual creation but a collective process consisting of standardized phases. The author of a chapter had first to submit theses of his future work, which were discussed by the brigade or even by the entire collective. When the manuscript was completed, it had to go through a similar vetting process: colleagues reviewed material and then

voprosu vypolneniia postanovleniia TsK KP(b)U 'O politicheskikh oshibkakh i neudovletvoritel'noi rabote Instituta istorii Ukrainy AN USSR', 12 July 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 26, ark. 53, TsDAHO-U.

¹⁶ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 33, ark. 15, 27, TsDAHO-U.

¹⁷ As in the title of this study: S. S. Dibrova, *U istokov istoriko-partiinnoi nauki na Ukrainie* (Kyiv: Politizdat Ukrainy, 1984).

¹⁸ This seems not to have been the case in Belarus, see the description of the F. 551-P Fund of the Party archive (*Tsentral'nyi partiinyi arkhiv Glavarkhiva Respubliki Belarus'*, Minsk), available at <http://fk.archives.gov.by/fond/85558/> (last visited 24 April 2018).

¹⁹ For instance see *Protokoly zasedanii partiinogo biuro*, 7 December 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 85, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 22 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 14, TsDAHO-U.

meetings and special commissions gave their opinion. Some collaborators asserted that writing theses was a waste of time, which sounds sensible considering the long process involved. However, it was regarded by the Institute as a necessity, thereby implying that historians should work collectively and that they must accept criticism.²⁰

Indeed, a Party historian had to be ready for criticism as his work could be controlled in detail at any stage. He would even have to report at a meeting how he had noted down quotations from archival sources and how he stored his papers in folders and so on. “There is no need to request from every author a unique method for work and systematization, but research work and systematization work should correspond according to strictly scientific principles”.²¹ Alongside this kind of control seeking to improve the historian’s skills, there was also a proposal to implement personal work plans as a means of steering research work at an all-Institute level. It would have been a way of ensuring that everyone would participate in tackling certain ideologically important issues.²²

The Historians’ Method

During these numerous Party meetings and production conferences, historians had the opportunity to exchange views both about methods and about key points of revolutionary history. Since they took place when Stalinism was at its height, recurrent remarks about the use of references and quotations are particularly interesting in helping us to understand how historians worked. Lenin’s and Stalin’s works were considered as the “Holy of Holies (*sviataia sviatykh*) of our Party”. Hence their translation had “an enormous and decisive importance in the struggle of the whole KP(b)U for the further education of the Ukrainian peo-

²⁰ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 20 November 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 42, TsDAHO-U; Protokol i rezoliutsii obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 17 January 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 1-3, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 10 January 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 1, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5-8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 5, 54, 94, TsDAHO-U.

²¹ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 3 February 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 11, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 23 March 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 27, TsDAHO-U for another case of checking individual work.

²² Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5-8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 12, TsDAHO-U.

ple in the spirit of the most advanced Marxist-Leninist ideology".²³ One can guess how careful an historian must have been with quotations.

As Institute colleagues criticized one another sharply, there was dangerous innuendo in saying that someone "distorted quotations and articles by Vladimir Il'ich Lenin".²⁴ General methodological advice could also have political meaning. When reading that it is necessary "to check quotations carefully, to check the surnames of participants in the struggle and of political figures in order to avoid political mistakes",²⁵ one had to bear in mind that Bolsheviks who would later be qualified as 'enemies of the people' should not be mentioned and should be absent from all history books. Actual knowledge of the purges was essential even though 1937 as such was never mentioned.

Still, political correctness was not enough for the writing of a good paper and some 'professional ethics' were recognized as such by the institution. This is made obvious by the case of Il'ia Premysler, a Party historian who appears to be in a marginal situation. He is one of four out of thirty scientific colleagues who were not affiliated to the Communist party. He was criticized for that, with one of his colleagues saying that his depiction of the past was "classless" and that his positions about "October in Ukraine" were "non-Party" ones. While questioning his right to write about political topics, she repeated that she "respected" him.²⁶ And Premysler must have been respected by the institution indeed for he worked there immediately before the war and was employed again in 1946.

Notwithstanding his weak institutional position, Premysler could defend his position against ideological conformism as late as 1949, stating that "one must not write a monograph only by relying on material by Lenin, but on the contrary one should peruse all the available factual material", including "factual material from enemy sources", as he added on another occasion. He concluded that "it is hard to evaluate a piece of

²³ Otchet o rabote biuro partorganizatsii ukrainskogo filiala IMEL (...) za period s noiabria 1946 g. do dekabria 1947 g., December 1947, F. 319, op. 2, s. 3, ark. 12, TsDAHO-U.

²⁴ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 2 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 9, TsDAHO-U.

²⁵ Protokol i rezoliutsii obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 17 January 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 1, TsDAHO-U.

²⁶ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 41, TsDAHO-U.

work by arithmetically counting quotations”.²⁷ As the acknowledgement of the importance of archival materials did not outweigh the need for political correctness, the Party historian faced a double bind. This can be felt in a statement about the making of a book to be entitled *Lenin and Stalin Inspiring and Organizing the Victory of Soviet Power in Ukraine*. A chapter was devoted to the Sovietization of western Ukraine in 1939. Real issues about the Communist movement in Galicia and Volhynia were taboo. For instance, the existence of a Communist Party of Western Ukraine (KPZU), which had been disbanded by the *Komintern* with the Communist Party of Poland in 1938, is never mentioned. Still, this blindness to facts may have had other causes than mere political correctness.

In the immediate post-war period, there was as yet no historian from western Ukraine. Party historians still had an outside view on western Ukraine in 1949. This may explain why this chapter is described as “reaching a dead end with archival material which is not examined (even including our own archive). There should be direct (or at least indirect) evidence of the way Stalin’s name did mobilize workers from western regions for the struggle”.²⁸ One may doubt that such evidence existed. More than Stalin’s influence, historians tended to show “the idea of liberating western Ukraine as submission to the military and strategic interests of the Soviet state”. This was surely closer to historical truth, but it was considered as politically incorrect by the reviewer.²⁹

These discussions about the use of sources show that things were a bit more subtle than one might expect. In a previous research paper, I studied how Ukrainian newsreel makers perceived their job during the same period. Shooting ‘real people’ in their own environment, they crafted news reports far from journalistic naturalism but nonetheless excluding any *instsenirovka*, i.e. obvious staging.³⁰ Historians faced the same double

²⁷ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 10 May 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 2, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 28 June 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 21, TsDAHO-U.

²⁸ Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 28 June 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 21, TsDAHO-U.

²⁹ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 7 December 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 87, TsDAHO-U. See also: Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³⁰ Éric Aunoble, ‘Faire de l’étranger un Soviétique grâce au cinéma: La soviétisation de l’Ukraine occidentale aux actualités filmées (1939–1949)’ in *L’Étranger dans la littérature et les arts*, ed. Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu (Lille: Les presses du Septentrion, 2014), 145–6.

bind as they were obliged to comply both with an *a priori* narrative and to rely on real sources such as archival material.

Historiographical Debates

We saw that Party historians were on a slippery slope, trying not to fall over the precipice into professional ineptitude or mechanical dogmatism. This should lead us to consider their arguments over historical analysis quite seriously. As in the 1920s, the nexus of all disputes is the relative importance of the Ukrainian factor in the revolution which occurred in 1917–21. Some proposed insisting on the relationship between the “national-liberation movement and bourgeois nationalism” but the official line, voiced by Director Ienevych, was to highlight the “protracted character of the October Socialist Revolution in Ukraine”. A series of lectures for the working collective was scheduled, including one about “the specificities of the formation and development of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat in Ukraine” implying that social development could explain “the conditions and difficulties of the struggle” for the socialist revolution, as another lecture is titled.³¹

This approach was a way to avoid tackling the national question as a decisive factor in the revolution and corresponded with the analysis officially promoted since the publication of Rubach’s article in 1930. It also answered the need to renew the fight against ‘bourgeois nationalism’. Western Ukraine had recently been Sovietized but was not yet under total control as the Banderist guerrilla struggle continued for years after 1945. Hence in 1947, a special publication was planned, a collection of documents about *The Struggle of the KP(b)U Against Bourgeois Nationalism*.³² Still, a fundamental question remained: what is nationalism and where does it begin? Obviously, the definition was so broad under Stalin that even an orthodox communist was at risk of contamination. In discussion over a book on *The Struggle for the Creation of the RSDRP and of Working-Class Organizations in Ukraine*, a radical point of view was voiced: “Is it

³¹ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 3 July 1947, F. 319 op. 1, s. 32, ark. 60, TsDAHO-U ; Plan raboty partiinoi organizatsii, March–December 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 29, ark. 8, TsDAHO-U.

³² Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 55, TsDAHO-U. On the same topic, see also Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 28 April 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 19, 21, TsDAHO-U.

possible to speak about the eradication of nationalism and induce / infer that we fought to a certain extent for social-democratic organizations in Ukraine apart from the RSDRP? ... This smells like nationalism.”³³

One can therefore understand the reason why some “just fear to raise the question of nationalism”.³⁴ This kind of discussion could not proceed much further, as any form of Ukrainian agency was considered nationalist. No specific Ukrainian revolutionary history could exist. For instance, to claim that “the agrarian question in Ukraine was solved somehow differently from the agrarian question in Russia” was a “wrong statement”.³⁵ There is no evidence that such a ‘hard-line’ stance on the national question resulted from the pressure of Moscow colleagues. The fact that some historians were Civil War veterans (as will be shown later) is a more convincing reason: except for *Borotbist* grafting, the first generation of Ukrainian communists was insensitive to Ukrainianness.

Publications and Activities

The description of an integrated research centre practising planned and collective work might sound positive. However, just as in the Soviet economy as a whole, the picture of real activity is quite different when one looks beyond the front window. Besides translation of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and the works of Stalin, the Institute planned the publication of at least nine jointly-written books between 1945–9:

A Short History of the KP(b)U

Resolutions and Documents of the KP(b)U

Bolshevik Organizations in Ukraine in the Struggle for the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution

October in Ukraine

Lenin and Stalin Inspiring and Organizing the Victory of Soviet Power in Ukraine

Lenin and Stalin. Speeches About Ukraine

The Struggle of the KP(b)U Against Bourgeois Nationalism in Ukraine

The KP(b)U During the Great Patriotic War,

and a journal, *Nauchnye Zapiski IMEL*.

³³ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 40, TsDAHO-U.

³⁴ Protokol i rezoliutsii obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 28 April 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 20, TsDAHO-U.

³⁵ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 7 December 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 87, TsDAHO-U.

Of these, only two were actually published: *Bolshevik Organizations in Ukraine in the Struggle for the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution* in 1949 and *Volodymyr Il'ich Lenin and Iosyp Visarionovych Stalin: Organizers and Leaders of the Great October Socialist Revolution* in 1951. We can also include two brochures not mentioned in the plan: *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905–1907* (1947) and *Iskra Organizations in Ukraine: A Collection of Documents* (1950).³⁶ Approximately a mere 36% of the plan was carried out.

An easy rationalization of this low productivity would be to blame the numerous meetings, as if there was too much talk and not enough action. In fact, the problem seems to have depended not on formal organizational processes requiring discussion and review of the manuscripts but on their actual circulation. They were never passed from colleague to colleague but only via the central administration of the Institute. When the theses or the draft of a chapter were completed, they had to be passed to the director who appointed a reviewer. As the director did not always show willing, this implied a huge loss of time. Reviewers were appointed in haste after manuscripts had been locked for several months in the director's office. Afterwards, reviews and corrections had to be made in very short order.³⁷ Work schedules were also disrupted for another reason: the director constantly changed the tasks he delegated, switching priorities from one project to another and redistributing the chapters between the different members of staff.³⁸

This disorganization had a profound impact on the collection of essays titled *Bolshevik Organizations in Ukraine in the Struggle for the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution*. In fact, this book which was eventually published in early 1949 had been ready for print in October 1941. Of course, the war froze the project and in 1946 it was decided to improve the material with a new foreword. After a conflict rose between the author of a new foreword and the Director, the whole project went through a series of negative peer reviews implying the rewriting of several chapters. From this point on, the project management seems erratic. A

³⁶ All published in Ukrainian by Derzhpolitydav publishing house.

³⁷ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 6 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 8, TsDAHO-U; Protokol i rezoliutsii obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 17 January 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 1, TsDAHO-U.

³⁸ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 96, TsDAHO-U.

draft of the book was even sent to the Central Committee before being corrected and approved, giving an impression of offhandedness.³⁹ This shows how loose internal control was in an institution supposed to exert a totalitarian monitoring over historical scholarship.

Yet Institute authors did participate as historians in ideological policing at different levels. They were asked to review articles and books written by non-Party colleagues. Sources on this are scarce, maybe due to Stalinist compartmentalization: as in the Institute itself, direct dialogue was avoided or kept under strict control. It is difficult to determine, however, whether review by IMEL historians was a form of political censorship or a relatively normal type of academic relationship.⁴⁰

The only document commenting at length on an essay is titled ‘Remarks About the Material Prepared by Profesor Petrovs’kyi on the “Dismemberment and Enslavement of Ukrainian Land in the Historical Past”’.⁴¹ It is particularly interesting because it concerns a renowned modern-era historian⁴² and it tackles historical events far outside the realm of Party history, beginning with Bohdan Khmelnyts’kyi’s revolt. Nevertheless, the comments mainly concern form rather than politics and their tone is far milder than it might have been on the subject of papers written by colleagues at the Institute.

Ambiguity between political activism and professional involvement in other duties did not exist for Party historians. They were fully committed as agents of official propaganda, especially during elections to the Supreme Soviet. They gave lectures outside the Institute about the 1936 Constitution, the role of the Communist Party, the status of women, the international situation and the ‘friendship of nations’. They were also required to

³⁹ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 31 July 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 20, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 29 May 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 33, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 3 July 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 41, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 9, 48, 54, 94, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 1 February 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 6, TsDAHO-U.

⁴⁰ Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 20 Jan. 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 3a, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 7 December 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 85, TsDAHO-U.

⁴¹ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 7 December 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 90a–94, TsDAHO-U.

⁴² Iurii Pinchuk, ‘Petrovs’kyi Mykola Neonovych’, in *Entsyklopediia Istorii Ukraïny*, available at http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=Petrovskiy_M (last visited 24 April 2019).

officiate at polling stations.⁴³ Inside the Institute, too, colleagues were subject to the propaganda they also helped to disseminate. Appearing under the name of 'conferences on theory', it may seem difficult to distinguish them from further academic meetings. The main difference lay in the agenda, which did not rely on the Institute's work plan but depended closely on themes promoted by the regime.

In 1947–8, they had to study the life of Stalin and chapters of the first volume of his *Collected Works* were distributed among the Institute's authors in order to organize a special conference on the topic. Stalinism did not consist only of the Stalin personality cult. One reads repeated warnings against "servility toward western bourgeois culture". In 1949, the political atmosphere became even more suffocating when a lecture was planned on "the anti-popular essence of cosmopolitanism".⁴⁴

Career Strategies

The anti-semitic campaign which began in early 1949 could indeed have had severe consequences in an Institute where there were four Jews out of 30 research staff. There were no consequences, however, at least until the end of the year. In a workplace where the question of anti-semitism was twice raised publicly in 1946–7, as a result of professional or family squabbles, this sounds astonishing. It indicates that the human factor might ultimately have been of more importance than 'high politics' and is a spur to look more closely at the persons comprising the staff.

⁴³ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 31 Oct. 1945, F. 319, op. 1, s. 4, ark. 5, 9, TsDAHO-U; ibid., 31 October 1945, F. 319, op. 1, s. 3, ark. 13, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego sobraniia sotrudnikov instituta, politinformatsiia, (...) po vyboram v verkhovnyi sovet, 2 Januray–27 February 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 10, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, F. 319, op. 1, s. 16, ark. 1–6, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 21 Nov. 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 78, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 37–39, TsDAHO-U.

⁴⁴ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 20 March 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 21, TsDAHO-U; Politinformatsiia o priniatii pis'ma tovarishchu Stalinu ot Ukrainского naroda. Tematicheskii plan o provedenii teoriticheskikh konferentsii, 25 October–6 November 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 34, ark. 3, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 29 June 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 31, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 12, 109, TsDAHO-U; Plan raboty, March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 24, ark. 2, TsDAHO-U.

A list of research staff of the three departments established in 1947⁴⁵ is made up of 9 women and 21 men. It indicates that the oldest was 51 years old and the youngest 26, the mean age being 40. Ukrainians were an overwhelming majority of 22, compared with four Jews, three Russians, and one Belarusian (while one *tsygan* – Romani – worked as an historian but at another period). All except four were members of the Party or of the Komsomol. Except for one archivist, all had higher education, though for two translators it was incomplete. These figures bear witness to a great sociological homogeneity: the average scientific collaborator was a Ukrainian male in his forties with a postgraduate degree.

The main discrepancies among the staff concerned career. A third of the staff (10 people) were *kandidaty nauk* (PhD) and nearly half had the status of lecturers. Rank and status issues created tension inside the institution, especially among historians.

The “improvement of academic qualifications” was claimed to be a priority and it concerned mainly the junior research staff. Out of twelve historians, there were four of them. They were required to be helped to learn at least one foreign language and particularly in preparing for a PhD and needed to work under the guidance of a senior researcher, a *konsul'tant*. Despite this wishful thinking, the reality was very different: they were usually busy with purely technical tasks in the archive; besides that, junior research staff were pressured just like the others to return theses and papers and they were switched from project to project, each time changing their *konsul'tant*. This is why only one or two junior researchers at the Kyïv IMEL were actually preparing for a PhD.⁴⁶

Senior researchers who already enjoyed a better position could be inclined to look for further sources of income, even at the expense of the Institute. Four of them taught at university, some conducting seminars at the Evening University of Marxism. The Director wanted to prevent any researcher from teaching more than four hours a week, which was a full-time position. However, it seems that at least one collaborator held two

⁴⁵ Materialy k protokolam zasedanii Politbiuro za avgust 1947, F. 1, op. 6, s. 1130, ark. 53, TsDAHO-U.

⁴⁶ O povyshenii nauchnoi kvalifikatsii, 12 June 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 16, ark. 36-9, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 20 November 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 42, TsDAHO-U; Protokoly obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 17 January 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 3, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 14 October 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 33, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 8 December 1947, F. 319, op. 2, s. 3, ark. 4, TsDAHO-U; O rabote mladshikh nauchnykh sotrudnikov, 2 March 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 20-2, TsDAHO-U.

full-time teaching positions besides his research work at the IMEL. Consequently, he was unable to “provide quality content” and his attitude was compared to an “Italian strike”, meaning here a go-slow at work. As mentioned above, the post-war period was a time of deprivation and it seems that teaching was indeed a welcome source of additional income even though ‘slashing’ (*sovместitel'stvo*) was considered harmful for the Institute.⁴⁷

There was another way to earn more money without receiving censure: historians could publish newspaper articles popularizing their research.⁴⁸ This reveals an interesting aspect of their activities about which very little is said in Party meetings. Alongside collective work, Institute researchers published essays and monographs under their own names. Even though this content is barely discussed, it surpasses by far the official publication output of the Institute. Over the same period when the Kyiv IMEL issued only four books, its historians published seven.⁴⁹ Party historians seemed to do just as Soviet peasants did: while working little for the collective farm, they showed much greater energy on their private allotments.

The Individual's Role in Historiography

Once the importance of personal motives has been highlighted, it might be interesting to see how individual characters interacted with the institu-

⁴⁷ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 84, TsDAHO-U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 16 November 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 42, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 1 February 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 5, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 17 February 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 8, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 30 May 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 32, TsDAHO-U.

⁴⁸ Protokoly obshchego partiinogo sobraniia: 28 April 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 22; *ibid.*, 23 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 29; *ibid.*, 14 October 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 34.

⁴⁹ I. D. Nazarenko, ed., *Na dopomohu propahandystam* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1945); I. T. Kulyk, *Borot'ba robotnykiv i selian za vstanovlennia i zmitsnennia Radians'koï vlady na Ukraïni 1917–1920* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1947); I. P. Bystrenko, *Kyïvskyi ‘Soiuz borot'by za vyzvolennia robotnychoho klasu’* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1947); I. M. Premisler, *Lenins'ka Iskra na Ukraïni* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1950); V. M. Samofalov, *Peremoha Lenins'ko-Stalins'koï stratehii i taktiky u velykii Zhovtnevii Sotsialistychnii Revoliutsii: Stenogramma lektsii* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1950); F. Los' and I. M. Premisler, eds., *Revoliutsiia 1905–1907 rr. na Ukraïni: Zbirnyk dokumentiv* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1950); I. T. Kulyk, *Borot'ba trudiashchych zakhidnoi Ukraïny za Radians'ku vladu i vozz'iednannia z Radians'koiu Ukraïnoi* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1951).

tional administration. Since the Kyïv IMEL faced a major crisis stemming from a conflict between the director Fedir Ienevych and the historian Anna Stankevich, it seems logical to shed light on these two. For comparison, the trajectory of one historian who did not suffer from this conflict will be described.

The latter historian is Ivan Tykhonovych Kulyk, who managed to publish two books during this troubled period, one in 1947 about the 1917 Revolution and the Civil War and the other in 1951 about the 1939 Sovietization of western Ukraine. Born in 1902, he was one of the old guard: he was a factory worker who had participated in the Civil War and had duties in the Cheka in the early 1920s. He joined the Party in 1924 during the ‘Lenin levy’ and soon became a full-time Young Communist League and Union representative. He started to teach history at Dnipropetrovsk University in the 1930s. He started working at the Institute in 1937 and defended his PhD in 1940. That same year he published two books on the political agenda, one about the Denikin expedition in Ukraine in 1919 and the other about the Soviet–Polish war in 1920.⁵⁰ Having fought once again, in the Great Patriotic War, he returned to the IMEL. He was admitted in 1950 to the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences where he finished his career in 1963.⁵¹

This professional success seems paradoxical given the archival documents about him. There he appeared to be a very rude and awkward person who did not fit well into the collective. Six months after returning to the Institute from the war he was expelled from the Communist Party for personal misbehaviour: he wanted to abandon his wife and daughter. When asked to justify his behaviour toward his wife, Kulyk answered that he “would not live with a Kike” (*zhidovka*). When his daughter went to live in Kyïv, he even refused to take her in and she slept on a sofa at the Institute or was housed by some of his colleagues. He was also regularly criticized for his professional selfishness, not participating in collective work and publishing papers or giving lectures without permission.⁵²

⁵⁰ I. T. Kulyk, *Pokhid Denikina i joho rozhrom* (Kyïv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1940); idem, *Proval pol'skoho planu v 1920 r* (Kyïv: Derzhpolityvdav, 1940). The topicality of the latter is self-evident. The former book was also politically acute in 1940 in praising the Red Army.

⁵¹ *Ukrains'ki Istoryky. Biobibliografichnyi dovidnyk. Vypusk I. Vcheni Instytutu Istorii Ukraïny. (Do 60-richchia ustanovy)* (Kyïv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 1996), 126.

⁵² Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 3–6 April 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 16, ark. 22–32, TsDAHO–U; Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 21–2, TsDAHO–U; Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 17 January 1947,

Why was he allowed to stay at the Institute after being denied ideological work following his anti-semitic statement? Why was he reinstated in the Party against the decision of the *Raïkom* (the district Party committee)? It seems that Director Ienevych saved him. As for criticism about his professional behaviour, he could always say that at least he really was working, with a colleague confirming that he was one of only two Institute researchers busy digging through material in the archive.⁵³ Apart from that, one might think that his career path and political rectitude were his best features.

Even if Kulyk was a true Stalinist,⁵⁴ this ‘virtue’ does not suffice to explain his career success, for people with a similar profile had a much less desirable fate. Anna Nikolaevna Stankevich was born in 1897 near Minsk. Even though information about her early years is unavailable, we are inclined to believe that she was deeply committed to Bolshevism, due to the fact that she became a Party member in 1920, which also earned her social promotion in the 1920s–30s. In 1936, she graduated from the Institute of Red Professors and entered the Ukrainian IMEL in 1940. That same year, she published a guide to the Kyïv Lenin Museum. In March 1945, she was one of the first to be appointed to the restored Kyïv IMEL. At the same period, she was appointed as secretary to the Institute Party cell, thereby becoming the number two in the institution. She was chosen to write the foreword for *Bolshevik Organizations in Ukraine in the Struggle for the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution*, which confirms her leading role.⁵⁵

F. 319, op. 1, s. 31, ark. 3, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 10 February 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 10, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 17 March 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 14, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 1 June 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 27, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 16 November 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 47, TsDAHO-U; *Otchet o rabote biuro partorganizatsii za dekabr' 1947 – noiabr' 1948*, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 70, TsDAHO-U; *Protokoly zasedaniia partiinogo biuro*, 2 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 8–11, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 22 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 15, TsDAHO-U.

⁵³ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 107, 128–9, TsDAHO-U; *Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia*, 8 December 1947, F. 319, op. 2, s. 3, ark. 5, TsDAHO-U.

⁵⁴ The fact that he was dismissed from the History Institute of the Academy of Science in 1963, officially due to overstaffing (compare *Ukraïns'ki Istoryky* (see note 51)), inclines us to think that he was a ‘victim’ of destalinization.

⁵⁵ *Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro*, F. 319, op. 1, s. 4, ark. 1, TsDAHO-U; *Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia*, F. 319, op. 1, s. 3, ark. 14, TsDAHO-U. Her name does not appear as author of *Muzeï V. I. Lenina: Filial pri TsK KP(b)U – Putevoditel'* (Kyïv:

This paper would become a bone of contention between the Party Secretary and the Institute Director. In Spring 1946, she was late in submitting her first draft. She had serious health problems which forced her to resign from her leading Party position in September. As she was not able to work on her paper, Director Ienevych succeeded in having her officially censured. He tried to have her removed from the task of writing the foreword for the prestigious collection of essays and even stated that she should be dismissed. Some colleagues tried to advocate on her behalf. One said that she suffered from “harassment” (*izdevatel'stvo*) and another was “wondering where Comrade Stankevich could find the willpower to work, but for the fact that she is an old Bolshevik”. This was not enough to ensure her position. Even though she stayed for a while at the Institute, she never recovered her earlier status of an acknowledged collaborator.⁵⁶ The director who harassed her had a very similar profile to hers. Born in 1905 into a poor peasant family, Ienevych became a Komsomol activist and entered the Party in 1928. Almost like Stankevich, he graduated from the Institute of Red Professors in 1937 and joined the Ukrainian IMEL in 1940. As a philosopher, he published a book about the influence of Communist adult education on political consciousness (1940)⁵⁷ and in 1941 defended his PhD on the Marxist theory of concepts. During the war, he held high positions in the ideological field in civilian institutions.⁵⁸ When the Kyïv IMEL was restored, he was appointed as director.⁵⁹

The harshness of Director Ienevych toward Anna Stankevich is obvious and it seems that they hated each other for years.⁶⁰ However, one might receive the impression that he used this enmity as a diversion. As soon as March 1946, Party meetings started to become a “people’s trial”

Gospolitizdat, 1940). Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 29 May 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 33–6, TsDAHO-U.

⁵⁶ Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 33–6, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 16 September 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 17, ark. 25, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5–8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 29–30, 43, 45, 57, 93–115, TsDAHO-U.

⁵⁷ *Komunistychnye vykhovannia trudiashchykh i podolannia perezhlytkiv kapitalizmu v svidomosti liudei* (Kyïv: Polityvydav, 1940).

⁵⁸ He published a brochure about the 1812 Patriotic War: Fedir Ienevych, *Vitchyzniiana viïna 1812 roku* (Kyïv: Polityvydav pry TsK KP(b)U, 1941).

⁵⁹ O.S. Rubl'ov, ‘Ienevych Fedir Fedorovych’, in *Entsyklopediia istorii Ukraïny*, available at http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=Enevych_F (last visited 24 April 2019).

⁶⁰ Otchet o rabote biuro partorganizatsii s noiabria 1949 po dekabr' 1947, F. 319, op. 2, s. 3, ark. 27, TsDAHO-U.

against him. He was accused of "considering the Institute as his fiefdom", behaving as though he did not have to obey Party instructions. The Institute found itself at an impasse as permanent delays with translations and publications made the situation more obvious. In June 1947, Lazar' Kaganovich, then First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, paid a visit to the Institute, as a neighbour working in the same Central Committee building, and visited every department.⁶¹

In July, the Central Committee of the KP(b)U listened to the Director and issued a resolution. It incriminated the management of the Institute, namely Ienevych, in quite general terms, only urging them to fulfil the publication plan.⁶² Since Ienevych stayed in position, nothing changed. He even felt strong enough not to tell the staff about the resolution. When a special Party meeting was called in September, Ienevych had to endure two days of criticism from everybody (even from the Assistant Director) but he did not change his mind or his approach. He was forced to resign in November, but since he became Assistant Director, he retained much of his influence and could let things continue to rot: inner conflicts carried on while Ienevych even ceased to pay his Party membership fee. In any case, the Party cell was also in decline, unable to come to terms with the dismissal of Anna Stankevich and Ienevych's unrelenting doggedness.⁶³

He finally lost power in November 1948 when Khrushchev himself intervened after Ienevych's brother had made an official complaint. The fact that the two brothers had been living together (with their families) since the war apparently helped Fedir Ienevych move to a bigger flat. When he had had enough, he tried to force his brother's family out of the joint household by breaking the door and the heaters.⁶⁴ As one colleague commented: "Comrade Ienevych thinks he is a Marxist theoretician and he can lecture anyone about communist morality, but he is always break-

⁶¹ Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 8 October 1946, F. 319, op. 1, s. 16, ark. 58, TsDAHO-U; Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5-8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 28, 31, 45, 110, TsDAHO-U.

⁶² Protokol zasedanii Politbiuro, 11 July 1947, F. 1, op. 6, s. 1057, ark. 6-11, TsDAHO-U.

⁶³ Stenogramma partiinogo sobraniia, 5-8 September 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 30, ark. 111, TsDAHO-U; Protokol zasedaniia partiinogo biuro, 7 October 1947, F. 319, op. 1, s. 32, ark. 61, TsDAHO-U.

⁶⁴ Otchet o rabote biuro partorganizatsii za dekabr' 1947 - noiabr' 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 10, ark. 70, TsDAHO-U.

ing the most basic rules of Party ethics.”⁶⁵ At this point, he was finally issued with a warning.

* * *

Once Ienevych was no longer a leading figure the productivity of the Institute improved and “the [work] collective entered the complex phase of writing monographs”:⁶⁶ there were plans for new books about the dissemination of Marxism in Ukraine, about the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine in 1919, and about collectivization.⁶⁷ The crisis was over. Still, against a background of high Stalinism, Ienevych’s step back would not solve all their problems. For instance, the collection of Party resolutions since its foundation in 1918 was issued only for the Party’s 50th anniversary and the *Short History of the KPU* was published in 1961, at the climax of Khrushchevian thaw when it was possible to ‘wash out’ some ‘white stains’ of history.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the deep crisis that the Kyiv IMEL faced at its post-war rebirth was not directly one of politics, ideology, or historiography, but one of management. As a director, Fedir Ienevych used what we would call today a policy of workplace harassment. He used administrative procedures and the individual failures of others in order to strengthen his own power, even though this approach prevented the Institute from working properly. His ability to counteract Party decisions and to survive

⁶⁵ Protokol zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 11 May 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 41, TsDAHO-U. See also *ibid.*, 11 May 1948, F. 319, op. 2, s. 11, ark. 42–3, 55, 59–62, TsDAHO-U.

⁶⁶ Protokol obshchego partiinogo sobraniia, 28 June 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 22, TsDAHO-U. See also *ibid.*, 1.02.1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 25, ark. 6, TsDAHO-U about six publications being ready for print. A new director, Giller, was appointed, he was not from the team established in 1945 (Vypiska iz protokola..., 12 July 1949, F. 319, op. 1, s. 26, ark. 53, TsDAHO-U).

⁶⁷ Plan raboty p/o na fevr. 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 24, ark. 1, TsDAHO-U; Protokoly zasiedaniia partiinogo biuro, 6 March 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 5, TsDAHO-U; *ibid.*, 30 May 1949, F. 319, op. 2, s. 26, ark. 35, TsDAHO-U.

⁶⁸ *Institut istorii partiï TsK KP Ukraïny – filial Instytutu marksyzmu-leninizmu pry TsK KPRS, Komunistychna partiia Ukraïny v rezoliutsiakh i rishenniakh z’izdiv i konferentsiï, 1918–1956* (Kyiv: Polityvydav URSR, 1958); I. D. Nazarenko, ed., *Instytut istorii partiï TsK KP Ukraïny – filial Instytutu marksyzmu-leninizmu pry TsK KPRS, Narysy istorii Komunistychnoi partiï Ukraïny* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvydav URSR, 1961). This book was reissued for a third time in 1972. See also Iu. V. Bab’ko, *Soldat Partiï (Pro O. M. Skrypnyka)* (Kyiv: Derzhpolityvydav URSR, 1961).

sanctions proves that he had support from the apparatus, even though archival sources do not reveal enough evidence to draw a precise portrait of those who backed him. Still, he had proved his harshness was useful when he attacked Ryl's'kyi in 1944 and he would serve again as a Party watchdog in order to maintain control in the field of history.⁶⁹

That being said, the link between Stalinist ideology and everyday Stalinism appears. The administrative procedures of compartmentalization allowed Ienevych to handle the Kyiv IMEL like a personal fiefdom. Even the Moscow IMEL seemed to challenge his intellectual authority, not to mention Ukrainian non-Party historiographical institutions. Inside the Kyiv IMEL, strict centralization and compartmentalization of tasks also gave exorbitant power to Director Ienevych. Finally, his roughness, not to say brutality, appears as one of the required qualities of a Stalinist cadre. Besides ideology, many factors helped Ienevych to behave like a little Stalin within the framework of the Institute.

If Ienevych can be described as implementing official history in post-war Ukraine, the same cannot be said about the Ukrainian Branch of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute as a whole. Its collaborators' commitment to the Communist Party was real but it also suited their research interests. It coexisted alongside methodological concerns and what can be considered the professional ethics along the lines of which they really sought to 'reflect the history of the Party as it had been'. As a matter of fact, they rarely intervened beyond their actual historiographical expertise. They did promote the Stalinist *Weltanschauung*, as they obviously shared it, which is not surprising in an institution directly linked with the highest local political body. Nonetheless, the propagation of the Party's historical policy was not their task as IMEL collaborators. Moreover, when they participated in it as lecturers, they did it not for ideological reasons but for financial ones.

This confirms the importance of the professionalization of their career path. Most of the IMEL historians were typical *vydvizhentsy*, people from the lower layers of society promoted by the Soviet regime during the 1920s–30s. Their commitment to the regime was strengthened by their participation in harsh social conflicts such as the Civil War and the 'Great Turn' (including presumably Collectivization). This might explain both why they considered the national question as subsidiary to the social one

⁶⁹ Oleksii Ias', *'Na choli respublikans'koï nauky...'. Instytut Istorii Ukraïny (1936–1986): Narysy z instytucional'noi ta intelektual'noi istorii (Do 80-richchia ustanovy)* (Kyiv: NAN Ukraïny. Instytut istorii Ukraïny, 2016), 216–7.

and why they endorsed violent action as a means to change the course of history. One key event, the Sovietization of western Ukraine in 1939, is all the more praised since all the Party historians were from eastern Ukraine.

Even though the beginning of their promotion was due to political involvement, their social rise coincided with the acquisition of the technical skills of the historian's craft. Lecturing at university and / or graduating from the Institute of Red Professors did transform their career trajectories. Before they had been Party or Union *apparatchiki*, but only afterwards did they become professional historians. Even though the IMEL was part of the Central Committee's apparatus, they worked only as historians and not as Party activists. Even when they participated in the ritual of Soviet electoral campaigns, there was a clear difference between the conferences they gave as historians and the polling stations they ran as activists.

This professionalization is evident when summing up the way Party historians worked. We can assert that they relied on the benevolence of a supervisory authority which appointed researchers and provided subsidies. They complied formally with bureaucratic procedures which were supposed to enhance intellectual production, including participation in criticism and in the evaluation of colleagues' work. One can understand why their research did not run counter to the dominant stream of thought. However, despite management pressure and personal enmities, they tried to complete research relevant to their area of interest. Far from fitting into the production plan, they fundamentally implemented strategies to promote their own careers and self-interest. One might say *nihil novi sub sole*.