

## HISTORY AND HISTORIANS IN THE ERA OF STALINISM: A REVIEW OF MODERN RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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**Abstract.** The problem under discussion is sure to be relevant due to the fact that the Stalinism as a historical phenomenon represents a significant element of the Soviet and Russian reality without understanding of which the comprehensive research of problems of the present seems to be impossible. "The Stalinism era" is a definition that covers a phenomenon that attracts the unflagging attention of modern Russian society, as well as the wide thematic range of researches of modern Russian historians united by this term that has developed in historical science. This determines the problematic nature of the proposed review, in which historiography is viewed not as a closed system, but as a mobile research field that is subject to both external (social, political) and internal (scientific, historical, methodological) influence. The purpose of the article is to characterize modern national historical literature, which examines the history of Stalin's influence and Stalinism as a system for historical science in general and for certain aspects of it in particular. The authors came to the conclusion that modern Russian historians characterize this influence as a whole as negative (narrowing of pluralism, appearance of "forbidden" topics, repressions against historians), but some researchers also highlight positive aspects (restoration of the system of historical education). Equally contradictory assessment historians give to the position of historical science in the 1930s-50s: starting with the loss of history its status of science to an important element in the system of government and society. The materials of the article can be useful for historians, university professors, teachers who deal with the history of Soviet (Russian) historical science and the history of Russia during the era of Stalin.

**Key words:** Stalinism, history, historians, historiography, the cult of personality, totalitarianism.

### INTRODUCTION

J.V. Stalin, his personality and era, a system of power in a huge country created by him, his domestic and foreign policy, were studied and will be studied. "He left a mark in history, and a huge number of very different works dedicated to Stalinism," writes A.L. Litvin, - is the evidence of the constant interest of researchers in this historical era [1, 322]. The discussion of the era of Stalinism in the social life of modern Russia builds on the scientific basis of historical research on this topic. Moreover, as A. A. Linchenko and A. G. Ivanov noted "the number of books about Stalin, written in different genres, over the past 15 years has increased significantly, and this is not only journalistic, but also scientific literature. For example, in the publishing house "ROSSPEN" only in the period from 2008 to 2016, 159 books were published in the "History of Stalinism" series, which were studies of individual aspects of Soviet society in the 1930s-1950s" [2, 126]. The relevance of the issue shows the role of J.V. Stalin and the degree of his influence on the processes that took place in the country during his reign. According to O. Khlevnyuk: "Numerous" sensations, "such as the claim that Stalin was almost unininvolved with the system that bore his name, remain, one can say only hope, and the thing of the past." [3, 319]. The problem of "Stalinism and historical science in the USSR in the 1920s-50s" became the subject of focused attention of Russian historians at the present stage [4, 5, 6].

### METHODS

The methodological basis of the research is the scientific principles of a systematic, holistic and comprehensive approach to the issues under consideration. **The systemic approach** assumes the study of the modern Russian historiography as a complex organization where all directions and schools are interrelated, perform certain functions and take their place in the structure of the system. Complex analysis of this system involves the application of **the principle of historicism**, which implies the study of any historiographic phenomenon in development and in connection with the factors that caused it. For this research, **the principle of integrity** became important, which focuses on the need to study each period of development of historical science as a system of connected components of scientific knowledge and the causes that determine their change. A study of the views of scientists on Stalinism and the historical science of the period under consideration suppose an analysis of the concepts of researchers, the problems of their work, the source base, methods, etc. **The principle of comprehensiveness** is based on the study of the influence on the problem-theoretical content of the concepts of historians of both internal and external social, political, intrascientific factors. The main **methods** of research were historiographic analysis and historiographic synthesis, which helped to identify and understand specific concepts of scientists and to compare them among themselves, to determine the private and general ones.

### RESULTS

The problem of the influence of J.V. Stalin on the historical science was touched upon in the 1930s. On December 17, 1939 at a meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences, A.M. Pankratova read the report "Stalin and Historical Science." She divided the credits of J.V. Stalin for the historical science "into the administrative, which consisted of the creation of policy documents, and research ones. The latter

included a consistent disclosure of the possibilities of applying the historico-typological method designated by Lenin and the formulation of estimates of various phenomena in the economic and political life of Russia [5, 254-255].

The report and its follow up discussion were confined to the 60th birthday of J.V. Stalin. Even "the most authoritative researchers of Russia's economic and political history considered it necessary to emphasize that acquaintance with Stalin's works radically influenced their outlook" [5, 258]. In modern Russian historiography, various aspects of this problem are considered: "the relationship between the scientist and the totalitarian-communist regime, including Stalin himself" [4, 125]; "professionalism and ethics of the historian in the conditions of authoritarian regime, the extreme ("totalitarian") version of which was the period of Stalinism" [7, 117]; "features of the influence of the ideology of Stalinism on the views of Soviet researchers of the economic history of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century" [5, 248]; "Stalin's personal attitude to M.N. Pokrovsky and his views" [8, 294]. Modern researchers are in two minds about the status of history as a science in this period. Some write about the absolute subjection of historical science to the requirements of the party-ideological system and claim that "history" wasn't a science anymore "[6, 67]. On the other hand, in the 1930s, history was considered to be "a powerful tool of state-patriotic propaganda among the broad masses of the population" [9, 84-85]; history played an important role in the ideology and practice of government. S.G. Osmachko singled out two levels of "use" of history: a historical justification of the importance of the leader, the correctness of his policy ("apologetic level"); history as a means of state-patriotic mobilization ("educational level") [6, 65]. An important role was given to scientific institutions that were to become "a part of the system of leadership of public life" [5, 248]. I.B. Orlov notes that "different scenarios for the formation of historical memory" were played out in Stalin's "political theater": "the class approach against science," "the battle for" Marxism, "" the change of "historical elements" [7, 119-125]. The influence of J.V. Stalin on historical science was multifaceted. J.V. Stalin was the initiator of various ideological campaigns in historical science, for example, a campaign against the historian M.N. Pokrovsky [8, 296].

J.V. Stalin also showed himself as a historian: he was "the first major domestic historian of collectivization"; his ideas formed the basis of the "Short Course" and became a "program for all historians engaged in the history of collectivization until the death of the" leader "in 1953" [10, 174-175].

Stalin's letter to the editorial staff of the journal "The Proletarian Revolution" strengthened the "theoretical reconfiguration of the development of Soviet historical science" [5, 249].

Stalin's interests determined the subject of research by historians. His special attention to the biographies of Ivan IV and Peter I led to the fact that "the history of their rule was under the focused attention of official ideologists" [11, 201-202]. First and foremost modern domestic historians distinguish the negative aspects of the influence of Stalin and Stalinism on historical science - the pressure of the personality cult of J.V. Stalin, the impossibility of "dissidence", the domination of "dogmatized Marxism, refracted by Stalinist ideologists in the political interests of the totalitarian regime" [12, 51]. The 1930s were the time of the completion of "relatively free discussions in scientific life, the comprehension of historical events were built within the framework of Stalinism" [13, 178]; the creative opportunities of historians were limited [5, 249]. Some topics turned out to be under a kind of prohibition, for example, "the problem of the Moscow-Kazan relations of the XV-XVI centuries" [13, 180]. Historians also pointed out positive trends in the development of historical science: the creation of scientific institutions and the system of university training [5, 249], as well as the turn to national history from the international one as "the direction to the continuation of imperial policy in the Stalin version" [12, 52]. The article by S.O. Tarasov "proves an unconventional conclusion about the progressive influence of J.V. Stalin on the development of the Soviet theory of political genesis" [14, 102].

## DISCUSSION.

The problem touched upon in this study was considered in the domestic historiography mainly in terms of analyzing a particular topic - the content of the concept of "Stalinism", the vectors of its influence on historical science and historians themselves, the training of historians, the ideology of methodology, etc. In the monograph by J. Kip and A. Litvin "The Epoch of Joseph Stalin in Russia. Modern historiography" [1] the first part was written by a professor of the University of Toronto and is devoted to the work of Western researchers, and the second professor of Kazan University - about the Russian historiography of the problem. When analyzing the scientific research of the national historical science, A.L. Litvin adheres to the concept explaining Stalinism in terms of the theory of totalitarianism, that is, as a regime of personal power in a totalitarian state. Other historiographical works make it possible to retrace the process of the origin of "Stalinism", the "cult of personality", the existence of a real alternative to Stalin's dictatorship, to determine the influence that they had on the spiritual life of that period, and the process of their scientific study [15]. In addition, some of these studies contain other important aspects of the problem, for example, the development of historical science in the 1920-50s under the pressure of Stalinism, both in the country as a whole and in certain regions, particularly in Siberia. [5; 6; 9] Foreign historiography "has traditionally shown great interest in the Stalin period of Russian history" [16, 4]. At the present stage, there remains an interest in the study of historiography in the USSR [17; 18; 19], as well as thoughts about Stalin and Stalinism in general [20]. The following problems can be figured out: as ideological campaigns in one scientific branch (for example, "Lysenkoism" in biology), influenced historians of science [21, 359]; the problem of the interaction of a historian and power, which is considered on the example of the creativity of I.I. Mints [22]; the problem of "The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia" [23]; activities of non-Russian historians under Stalinism [24]; the role of local historians "in the construction of national narratives" [25, I]. The collaborative works of Russian and foreign historians should also be mentioned. The article by L.D. Shirokorad, J. Zweynert, is devoted to Izrail G. Blyumin, whom these authors consider to be "one of the 'silent' victims of Stalinism" [26, 653]. I. Boldyrev, M. Kragh on the example of the biography of Isaak Rubin - the historian of economic thought, show "how the decline in the social science tradition in Russia and the USSR as well as the Stalinization of the Soviet social science emerged as a process over time" [27, 363]. D. Brandenberger, M.V. Zelenov paid attention to the problem of disclosing the national question through the prism of a brief course in the history of the All Union Communist Party (b) [28, 859].

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

The study of the problem of "Stalin and historical science" covered by modern Russian historiography is important for understanding the features of the ideology and practice of Stalinism in the USSR. History was under pressure of the ideological press, it was subordinated to practical tasks, due to the important role it played in the ideology and practice of government. Modern domestic historians distinguish various aspects of Stalin's influence on historical science in the USSR: the initiator of ideological campaigns, the researcher of certain topics of Soviet history, the originator of new theoretical ways for historians. Equally varied was the influence of Stalinism on historical science: the elimination of pluralism, the tabooing of certain topics, the transformation of the professional ethics of historians. The influence of Stalinism on historical science is an actual and sufficiently studied historical problem, the influence of history as a science on Stalinism is a promising direction for further research.

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