

Human Losses of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the Great Patriotic War

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Abstract—Historians of Ukraine have long been debating population losses in World War II. Some of them add the losses that occurred as a result of the accession of territories to the Ukrainian SSR in 1939–1940. Others add deaths from hunger in the postwar years. The authors of the publications, with rare exceptions, present an evaluative construction of reality. There are mainly versions in scientific circulation that propose authorial expert opinions based on fragmentary, mostly uncritically comprehended sources. The heated debate, excessive politicization of the topic of Ukraine’s demographic losses, and significant variation in their assessments indicate that this problem has not been solved. The main causes of this historiographical situation are incorrectly chosen methodological approaches to assessing population losses in 1939–1945 (expansion of historical geographical boundaries (at the expense of Crimean and Zakarpattia oblasts, which were not part of the republic in the period under study and were accessioned after the war) and chronological framework) and problems with research sources. Ukrainian historians and demographers largely ignore historical documents stored in Russian federal archives. The conducted “archival reconnaissance” indicates that the calculations of the demography department of the Central Directorate of the UkSSR State Planning Committee and the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR, compiled from the end of 1944 through 1946, are of particular scientific interest. The identified historical sources will make it possible to reliably reconstruct the dynamics and composition of the population and contribute to solving the problem of demographic losses of the Ukrainian SSR in 1941–1945 in the context of the demographic development of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: demographic losses, human losses, population of the Ukrainian SSR, the Great Patriotic War, demographic statistics, historiography, historical sources of population

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Research into the demographic losses of the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War intensified in the late 1980s–1990s; one of the impetuses was the opening of archives with demographic statistics and the preparation of *Books of Memory* in all regions of the country. M. Elman and S. Maksudov correctly note that in Soviet times there was no study of the contribution to human losses during the war in the former Soviet republics.¹ There were no historical and demographic studies of losses, but figures on the losses of the population of the Ukrainian SSR could be found in the literature. The book *The Ukrainian SSR in the Great Patriotic War* contained information about civilian casualties of 3 898 500 people; dead military personnel and prisoners of war, 1 366 600 people; human

losses in Zakarpattia and Crimea, 250 100 people; and a total of 5 515 100 people.² At the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the victory, the report of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the UkSSR V.V. Shcherbytsky provided another figure, 6 750 000 dead residents of the republic.³ In the 8th volume of the 10-volume series *History of the Ukrainian SSR*, published in 1984, it is noted that during the war the population of the republic decreased from 41 million people (January 1941) to approximately 27.4 million (January 1945), i.e., by 13.6 million. Among them, over 3.5 million people went to the east, 4.5 million went to the Red Army, and the rest were people liquidated or driven away to hard labor in Germany by fascist looters. In total, 2.4 million people were transported from Ukraine to slavery in the Reich. On the territory of the

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¹ M. Elman and S. Maksudov, “Soviet deaths in the great patriotic war: A note,” *Europe–Asia Studies* **46** (4), 680 (1994).

² *Ukrainian SSR in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941–1945* (Kyiv, 1969), Vol. 3, p. 150.

³ *Radyans’ka Ukraina*, Oct. 18 (1974).

Ukrainian SSR (without Crimea), 4.5 million civilian Soviet citizens died at the hands of Hitler's butchers. In Crimea, which was not then part of the Ukrainian SSR, more than 135 000 civilians and prisoners of war were killed, and 85 500 people were deported to Germany. In Zakarpattia, 115 000 people died, and 71 000 were taken into fascist captivity.⁴

In the early 21st century, the topic "Ukraine in the Second World War" (which replaced "The Ukrainian SSR in the Great Patriotic War," references to the Great Patriotic War being extremely rare now) became the mainstream of modern Ukrainian historiography. Modern research is updated by the adoption of the European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, which states that the Second World War was provoked by Germany and the Soviet Union (September 19, 2019).⁵

Since 2006, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM), at the suggestion of foreign historians, has been considering this war "alien" for Ukraine. R. Serbin, one of the ideologists of modern Ukrainian historiography, wrote about this back in 2004: "The Red Army conquered Ukraine from Nazi Germany, but by doing so it did not bring freedom to the Ukrainian people but returned Stalin's captivity. Therefore, there is no point in talking about liberation."⁶ The Great Patriotic War is now called the German–Soviet War: two totalitarian regimes fought on the territory of Ukraine to divide the world and establish their dominance. V. Viatrovych (UINM director in 2014–2019) at the opening of the conference in 2015 argued that Ukraine should have its own view, its own vision of the Second World War. He stated that not one but several wars had taken place on the territory of Ukraine in the period from March 1939 to 1954 (German–Polish of 1939–1945, German–Soviet of 1941–1945, underground German–Ukrainian of 1941–1944, Polish–Ukrainian of 1942–1947, and underground Soviet–Ukrainian of 1939–1954), and in all these wars, Ukraine and Ukrainians were considered as a resource; hence the huge number of population losses.⁷ Despite the active intervention of the UINM

in the scientific process of studying the history of the Second World War, two main views on the problem existed for a long time in the modern historiographical situation in Ukraine: (1) Soviet—heroism and liberation; (2) heroic struggle for freedom and self-determination.

Demographic losses are expressed as a combination of losses from increased mortality, decreased fertility, and population decline due to migration outflow. Historians of Ukraine have long been arguing about population losses in the war. Some historians add the human losses that occurred as a result of the accession of territories to the Ukrainian SSR in 1939–1940, as well as the transfer of Zakarpattia and Crimea, which occurred after the war. Others add more deaths from hunger in the postwar years 1946–1947. The authors of publications, with rare exceptions, present an evaluative construction of reality. In scientific circulation, there are mainly versions of their expert opinions, based on fragmentary, mostly uncritically comprehended sources.

Articles by A.L. Perkovs'ky and S.I. Pirozhkov about the demographic losses of the Ukrainian SSR in 1941–1941 stand almost alone. They are based on materials collected and verified by the Extraordinary State Commission for the investigation of the atrocities of the Nazi invaders and their accomplices in the temporarily occupied territories of the Soviet Union and on data from the Statistical Department of the Ukrainian SSR. The authors concluded that the population of the republic had decreased by 13.6 million people from the beginning of 1941 to the beginning of 1945 and by 8.9 million people by the beginning of 1946.⁸ Practically none of the historians of Ukraine, either before or after these publications, provided more reliable data on the losses of the population of the Ukrainian SSR during the Great Patriotic War.

The data cited by the emigrant historian V. Kosyk in the encyclopedic entry about human losses of the Ukrainian SSR during the Great Patriotic War seem quite strange.⁹ He estimates the total demographic losses of the Ukrainian SSR at 14.5 million, including the killed; those who died from disease and hunger; those who were evacuated, deported, and mobilized; emigrants; and losses in natural growth. At the very end of his book, he specifies that the victims (appar-

⁴ *History of the Ukrainian SSR*, in ten vols., Vol. 8: *Ukrainian SSR in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (1941–1945)* (Kyiv, 1984). No references to sources of information are provided.

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html. Cited February 10, 2022.

⁶ R. Serbin, The struggle for the historical memory of the Ukrainian people. <http://www.exlibris.org.ua/vvv/article-end.html>. Cited February 11, 2022; R. Serbin, "The Great Patriotic War: Historical memory and its mythologizing," *Arkhiv Ukr.*, Nos. 1–3, 647–650 (2005).

⁷ V. V'yatrovich, "The Second World War is a war of memories: An introductory word," in *Ukrainian Second World War: Materials of the international scientific conference for the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazism in the Second World War (May 5, 2015, Kyiv)* (Kyiv, 2015), p. 8; *From the Reichstag to Iwo Jima: In the Flames of War: Ukraine and Ukrainians in the Second World War* (Kharkiv, 2017).

⁸ A. L. Perkovs'ky and S. I. Pirozhkov, "Demographic losses of the population of the Ukrainian SSR in the 1940s," *Ukr. Ist. Zh.*, No. 2, 15–25 (1990); A. L. Perkovskii and S. I. Pirozhkov, "From the history of demographic development of the 30–40s (the case study of the Ukrainian SSR)," in *Economy. Demography. Statistics. Research and Problems* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 171–197; S. I. Pirozhkov, "What our human losses are: To assess the demographic consequences of the crisis phenomena of the 1930s and 1940s in Ukraine," *Vestn. Akad. Nauk Ukr. SSR*, No. 1, 31–39 (1991); S. I. Pirozhkov, "Les pertes demographiques en Ukraine dans les annees 1930 et 1940," *Populacion* 51 (4–5), 1032–1040 (1996).

⁹ *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine*, Vol. 2: *G–D* (Kyiv, 2004), p. 324.

ently meaning human losses) of Ukraine in the war amounted to 2.5 million military personnel and 5.5 million civilians, a total of 8 million people.¹⁰ He took the data on population decline not from archives but from an article by M.V. Koval'.¹¹ The famous Ukrainian historian Koval' estimated human losses at 8 million people.¹² S.V. Kul'chitsky increased them to 9 million people by adding the demographic losses of the Crimean ASSR/oblast during the Second World War to the above calculations for the Ukrainian SSR.¹³ Meanwhile, the first volume of the *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine* determines the number of human losses at "more than 9 million people."¹⁴

According to O.E. Lysenko, sources do not make it possible to calculate a more or less accurate number of human losses in the Second World War. He obtained data on human losses by extrapolation. According to his estimates, possibly exaggerated, as he himself noted, from 8 to 10 million people died, and demographic losses ranged from 13 to 14 million people. He believes that the *Book of Memory of Ukraine* for the first time made it possible to formulate at least approximate figures. Two hundred and fifty-seven volumes have been prepared (261 books on all oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR), which contain personal information about those who died, as well as introductory articles—historical essays. The final volume of this grandiose project is entitled *Immortality: Book of Memory of Ukraine*; in it, the total losses of the Ukrainian people amounted to 11.654 million persons. The figure of 6.038 million Ukrainian citizens for military losses was derived on the basis of operational materials included in oblast editions of the *Book of Memory of Ukraine*.¹⁵ According to Lysenko's later note, this publication for the first time made it possible to formulate at least approximate loss figures. I. Mukov's'ky and Lysenko (project participants) prepared the monograph *Valor and Sacrifice: Ukrainians on the Fronts of the Second World War*.¹⁶ A number of collective articles by Lysenko, O. Perehrest, I. Perehrest, and A. Irzhavs'ka contain a description of the components of Ukraine's demographic losses of 13 584 000 people, or sometimes

they write "13–14 million people."¹⁷ Yu.V. Shapoval brings the number of human losses to 14 million people.¹⁸ Note that he, like some other historians, refers to other authors without assessing the published data on population losses.¹⁹

O.G. Laver brought together data on losses in Ukrainian historiography and obtained the following series of losses among the population of Ukraine during the Great Patriotic War: (1) Losses among Ukrainian military personnel range from 1.377 million to 3 million dead; (2) Civilian casualties range from 3.3 to 6.6 million; (3) Total population losses are estimated at 4.7 million to 10 million people.²⁰ The author's calculation method is unclear: sometimes he writes about Ukrainians and sometimes, about the entire population of Ukraine. One thing is evident: the range of estimates of human losses in Ukraine during the Second World War is very wide. Historians, studying the population losses of the Ukrainian SSR, mainly assess them based on publications that rely on representative sources—these are articles by Perkov's'ky and Pirozhkov and *Books of Memory of Ukraine*. No new historical sources are being introduced into scientific circulation. The demographic consequences of the war for Ukraine remain unclear. In scientific circulation, there are mainly versions of authors' conclusions based on fragmentary, mostly uncritically comprehended sources. The huge range of available estimates of the human losses of Ukraine during the Second World War indicates that historians cannot achieve a solution to the problem using only historical methods, mainly the descriptive one.

Demographers showed the greatest scientific results in assessing the losses of the Ukrainian population in the war. F. Meslé and J. Vallin were the first to tackle this problem at the French National Institute for Demographic Studies with the involvement of Pirozhkov, V.M. Shkol'nikov, and others. They calcu-

¹⁰V. Kosyk, *Ukraine and Germany during the Second World War* (Paris–New York–L'viv, 1993), pp. 455, 627.

¹¹M. V. Koval', "Council of Workers' Deputies of the Ukrainian SSR during the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945)," *Ukr. Ist. Zh.*, No. 12, 8 (1973).

¹²M. V. Koval', *Ukraine in the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War (1939–1945)* (Al'ternativi, Kyiv, 1999).

¹³*Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine*, Vol. 2: G–D (Kyiv, 2004), p. 324.

¹⁴*Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine*, Vol. 2: G–D (Kyiv, 2004), p. 667.

¹⁵*Immortality: Book of Memory of Ukraine: 1941–1945* (Kyiv, 2000).

¹⁶I. T. Mukov's'ky and O. E. Lysenko, *Victory and Sacrifice: Ukrainians on the Fronts of the Second World War* (Kyiv, 1997).

¹⁷O. G. Perehrest, O. E. Lysenko, A. P. Irzhavs'ka, and I. V. Perehrest, "Demographic losses of Ukraine during the Second World War," in *Ukraine in the Second World War: A View from the 21st Century: Historical Essays*, in 2 vols. (Hauk. Dumka, Kyiv, 2011), Vol. 2, pp. 737–784; O. E. Lysenko and O. G. Perehrest, "Demographic losses of Ukraine during the Second World War," *Arkhivi Ukr.*, No. 3, 8–34 (2015); A. P. Irzhavs'ka, "Demographic consequences of Nazi physical terror against Eastern Slavs during the Second World War," in *Ukrainian Peasant* (2014), pp. 187–191; A. P. Irzhavs'ka, "The problem of Nazi physical terror against Eastern Slavs during the Second World War in modern foreign historiography," *Vestn. Cherkas. Univ. Ser. Ist. Nauki*, pp. 60–72 (2015).

¹⁸Yu. Shapoval, "World War II: the Ukrainian context," in *Ukrainian Second World War: Materials of the International Scientific Conference for the 70th Anniversary of the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War* (Kyiv, 2015), p. 20.

¹⁹*Ukraine in the Second World War: A View from the 21st Century: Historical Essays* (Kyiv, 2011), Vol. 2, p. 778.

²⁰O. G. Laver, "General losses of the Ukrainian people during the Great Patriotic War," *Nauk. Vestn. Uzhgorod. Univ. Ser. Istoriya*, No. 1, 52 (2014).

lated the losses of the population of Ukraine in the 1930s–1940s. Somewhat earlier, using similar methods on Soviet materials, a similar study was carried out by E.M. Andreev, L.E. Darskii, and T. L. Khar'kova.²¹ Based on government statistics, they built a model of the country's population. From the corrected materials of the 1939 census (a 1% correction for undercounting was introduced), they calculated how the population of the Soviet Union had changed year by year by 1946. The French team, using the demographic balance method based on the 1939 and 1959 censuses, as well as current accounting data of the population of Ukraine in 1947, attempted at estimating the hypothetical losses of Ukraine in the Second World War. The population losses amounted to 13.8 million people. These figures included data on losses from the famine of 1946–1947; the resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland and Poles from Ukraine in 1945–1947; and the return of wartime evacuees, the demobilized from the army, and *Ostarbeiters*. Note that the population of Crimean oblast (ceded to the Ukrainian SSR by the RSFSR in 1954) and Carpathian Ruthenia (annexed after the war on January 22, 1946, and named Zakarpattia oblast) was added to the data for the Ukrainian SSR. In addition, for almost all the main demographic indicators (population of the annexed territories; number of births, deaths, etc.), various unjustified reservations were used by the authors. The research was carried out not within the specific historical boundaries of the Ukrainian SSR during the war. Such a change in administrative–territorial boundaries and, consequently, an artificial increase in the population of the republic led to a significant increase in human losses in Ukraine during the war years. According to their calculations, demographic losses in Ukraine in 1939–1948 amounted to a total of 13.8 million people (4.1 million of birth deficit, 2.3 million of net external migration, and 7.4 million of excess mortality).²²

An attempt to study the demographic consequences of the Second World War for Ukraine was carried out at the Ptukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The results were presented at an international conference in Kyiv on May 5, 2015, in the analytical report “Assessment of the Demographic Losses

of Ukraine during the Second World War.”²³ E. Rudnitsky, a researcher at the Department of Demographic Modeling and Forecasting, told the newspaper *Den'* about a study back in August 2013; according to their calculations, Ukraine lost 9 million of its citizens. This included irretrievable losses of military personnel of the Red Army (2.4 million), red partisans and militias (0.2 million), residents of Ukraine who served in the military formations of other states and in the armed formations of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (0.3 million), and losses as a result of migration of Ukrainian residents outside the Soviet Union (1.7 million). Half of the total number of victims of the war were civilians, 4.4 million (people died from the mass terror of the invaders and from the catastrophic deterioration of living conditions).²⁴ In their opinion, the war for Ukraine began on September 1, 1939, as for all of Europe, but they counted the losses incurred from June 1941 to May 1945. Ukraine was in the center of the theater of operations for almost 3.5 years. During the war, the population decreased by 7.5 million (from 41.5 million on June 22, 1941, to approximately 34 million on May 9, 1945). These are the consequences of the war that lasted 1417 days (Ukraine lived under occupation for 1224 days—from June 22, 1942, to October 28, 1944).

The same figures of human losses are given in the monograph by A.N. Gladun (deputy director of the same institute), although all references to sources are missing in the tables, except for the designation that the data were provided by Rudnitsky. The author claims that “determining human losses only on a documentary basis is an unrealistic task” and that the assessment of losses is mainly based on hypotheses, the accuracy of which depends on the availability of population data in the so-called base (“reference”) years, which, as a rule, are the years of population censuses, but the accuracy of their data also often requires assessment.²⁵

The figures for losses in Ukraine were increased from 9 million people to 10.4 million. This happened due to the inclusion of data on the population of Crimean and Zakarpattia oblasts, as well as data on population losses in the western oblasts annexed from Poland and Romania from September 1939 to June 1941. Data on the population of the Ukrainian SSR at the beginning and end of the war coincide with the data published by Perkov's'ky and Pirozhkov in 1990–1991, only the figures for the population of the

²¹E. Andreev, L. Darskii, and T. Khar'kova, “Estimation of human losses during the Great Patriotic War,” *Vestn. Stat.*, No. 10, 25–27 (1990); E. M. Andreev, L. E. Darskii, and T. L. Khar'kova, *Population of the Soviet Union: 1922–1991* (Moscow, 1993).

²²J. Vallin, F. Meslé, S. Adamets, and S. Pirozhkov, “A new assessment of the losses of the population of Ukraine during the crises of the 1930s and 1940s,” *Demograf. Sots. Ekon.*, No. 2, 7–29 (2005); F. Meslé and J. Vallin, *Death and Causes of Death in Ukraine in the 20th Century* (Kyiv, 2008); F. Meslé and J. Vallin, *Mortality and Causes of Death in 20th-Century Ukraine* (Springer, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York, 2012).

²³“Assessment of demographic losses of Ukraine during the Second World War,” in *Ukrainian Second World War. Materials of the International Scientific Conference for the 70th Anniversary of the Victory over Nazism in the Second World War* (Kyiv, 2015), pp. 203–207.

²⁴Interview with the newspaper *Den'*. <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2013/0565/gazeta011.php>. Cited February 1, 2022.

²⁵O. M. Gladun, *Essays on the Demographic History of Ukraine in the 20th Century* (Kyiv, 2018), p. 148.

Crimean ASSR of 1.180 million people were added to them as of January 1, 1941, and of Crimean oblast—559000 people as of January 1, 1945.²⁶ Thus, the inclusion of data on Crimea alone increases the population decline in Ukraine (as the authors term it, although it would be correct in this case to use the historical name *Ukrainian SSR*) by 621000 people. The same procedure was carried out regarding Zakarpattia: as of January 1, 1941, its population was 854800 people; as of November 1, 1946, 715900,²⁷ a decrease of 138900 people. As a result, the involvement of the population of Crimea and Zakarpattia for 1941–1945 in the calculations increased the population of the republic in 1941 by 2034800 people, and in 1945, by 1274900, and, therefore, the total decrease in the population of Ukraine was greater by 759900 people.

The heated debate, excessive politicization of the topic of Ukraine's demographic losses, and significant variation in their assessments indicate that this problem has not been resolved. The main causes of this historiographical situation are incorrectly chosen methodological approaches to calculating population losses (expansion of historical geographical boundaries and chronological framework) and problems with research sources.

Thus, estimates of Ukrainian human losses in World War II in Ukrainian historiography range from 8 to 14 million. Documents on population statistics found in the Russian State Archive of Economics make it possible to make significant adjustments to the study of the problem. Ukrainian historians and demographers ignore historical documents stored in Russian federal archives. Nevertheless, the calculations of the demography department of the Central Directorate of the USSR State Planning Committee and the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR, compiled in 1944–1946, are of particular scientific interest (Russian State Archive of Economics, fund 1562 of the USSR Central Statistical Directorate, fund 4372 of the USSR State Planning Committee under the Council of People's Commissars). They contain fairly complete information about the demographic situation in the republic as a whole and by oblast at the beginning of 1941, 1945, and 1946. In addition, these funds have preserved reports on the work to restore the population in the territories that were under occupation (report on the population of the Ukrainian SSR at the beginning of 1946; balance calculations of the civilian population separately by oblast; reports on the natural movement of the population of the Ukrainian SSR for 1945 and 1946; and the results of the voter

count in February 1946). The identified documents from Russian archives require careful internal and external criticism to prove their reliability and representativeness.

Analysis of identified historical sources will make it possible to reliably reconstruct the dynamics and composition of the population of the Ukrainian SSR and contribute to solving the problem of demographic losses of the population of the republic in 1941–1945 in the context of the demographic development of the Soviet Union.

The data in Table 1, calculated by the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR and signed by its chief V.V. Ryabichko at the beginning of 1946, show that the difference between the decline and growth of the population of the republic for 1941–1945 amounted to 9.628 million people. Consider that not all residents returned to the territory of the republic by the beginning of 1946 (those evacuated to the rear areas of the Soviet Union and driven to Germany; the resettlement of Ukrainians from Poland and Poles from Ukraine was not completed, as well as demobilization from the Soviet army).

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that after the Germans had captured Soviet territory, a tragedy began for the civilian population. For most oblasts that were occupied, it lasted two to three years. The barbaric extermination of civilians took place in accordance with Hitler's *Ost* plan. According to this plan of Hitler's colonization and Germanization of the "eastern space," not only Ukrainians and Russians but also other peoples who lived on the territory of the republic were subject to destruction. The cruelest attitude was towards the Jews. As a result of the Nazi policy of genocide, over one million Jews were killed. Perkovs'ky wrote that no more than one percent of Jews had survived in the territories occupied by the German armed forces.²⁸ The criminal policy of the fascists was also directed against Gypsies, Moldovans, and other ethnicities. During the war, the birthrate dropped significantly, and a disproportion between women and men arose. In total, millions of civilians were deliberately killed during the occupation. Large civilian casualties occurred because of a significant increase in the mortality rate as a result of the catastrophic drop in living standards, lack of adequate medical care, epidemics, and mass starvation. Of course, the Ukrainian factor in the war was significant: in terms of total human losses among the warring parties, Ukraine was second only to Russia.

Associates of the demography department of the USSR Central Statistical Directorate calculated the current population for all republics and oblasts of the Soviet Union as of January 1, 1941, and January 1,

²⁶Russian State Archive of Economics (hereinafter, RGAE), Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2219, Fol. 121.

²⁷"Zakarpattia [Transcarpathia] 1919–2009: History, politics, culture," in Ukrainian-Language Version of the Ukrainian–Hungarian Edition (Uzhgorod, 2010), p. 207; V. P. Kopchak and S. I. Kopchak, *Population of Transcarpathia over 100 years: 1870–1970: Statistical and Demographic Study* (L'viv, 1977).

²⁸A. L. Perkovskii, "Sources on the national composition of the population of Ukraine in 1939–1944," *Human Losses of the USSR in the Second World War: Collection of Articles* (St. Petersburg, 1995), p. 55.

Table 1. Population calculation for the Ukrainian SSR in 1941–1946 (at the beginning of the year, thousand people)

Decrease	Thousand people	Increase	Thousand people
1. The civilian population abducted by the Germans	2960	1. The demobilized and disabled who returned by January 1, 1946	1506
2. Civilians who died during hostilities and extermination under the occupation	2109	2. Those who repatriated from German hard labor	733
3. Civilian deaths from other causes	4483	3. Those who returned from evacuation	1643
4. People evacuated outside the Ukrainian SSR	1943	4. People who arrived from outside the Ukrainian SSR and other republics (except those indicated in paragraphs 1–3)	556
5. Those who dropped out of the civilian population, and the civilians who left the Ukrainian SSR	5144	5. People born between 1941–1945	2570
Total loss of the civilian population of the Ukrainian SSR	16639	Total increase in the civilian population by January 1, 1946	7008

Source: RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2218, Fol. 7.; File 2217, Fol. 7.

1945. The calculations show that all oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR saw a sharp decline in population. The origin of the document is described by V.B. Zhiromskaya, V.A. Isupov, and G.E. Kornilov.²⁹ The diagram (Fig. 1) compiled from these data clearly shows that in the Ukrainian SSR as a whole, the population decrease by 37.83% was recorded by the beginning of 1945, and according to the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR, by 19.89% by July 1946. The population of eastern oblasts of the republic decreased by 31.8% by 1945, and by 37.8% in the western oblasts; July 1, 1946, by 19.1 and 29.2%, respectively.³⁰ In the eastern oblasts, the largest population decline occurred in Stalino oblast (now the Donetsk People's Republic), by 39.9% by 1945 and by 25% by the summer of 1946; Voroshilovgrad oblast (now the Lugansk People's Republic), by 38.4 and 22.9%; and Odessa oblast (by 37.4 and 23.5%). Among western oblasts, the largest population losses were recorded in Tarnopol' (40.8 and 39.0%) and Rovno (39.8 and 36.3%) oblasts. Ukrainian demographers Perkovskii and Pirozhkov explain the large losses of population in the western oblasts by the fact that here the terrorist regime of Hitler's occupation lasted longer than in the eastern oblasts; it was impossible to carry out large-scale evacuation from the western oblasts.³¹ In addition,

a large Polish and Jewish population lived on the territory of L'vov, Drohobych (in 1959 included in L'vov oblast), Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankovsk), Volyn', Rovno, and Tarnopol' oblasts. The genocide of Jews and the mass resettlement of Poles significantly affected the change in population in these territories. The terror against the Polish population unleashed by armed gangs of Ukrainian nationalists (Volhynian slaughter of 1943) made a significant part of it flee to the territory of Poland even before the liberation of the western oblasts by the Soviet Army.

Data given in the article by Perkovskii and Pirozhkov³² disagree with archival data: in 1941, the entire population of the Ukrainian SSR according to the article amounted to 40.996 million people, while according to the archival document, it was 40.993 million; in 1945, 27.693 million and 27.382 million; and in 1946, 32.100 million and 32.099 million, respectively.

The calculations made by the statisticians of the Ukrainian SSR were based on information provided by all oblast statistical bodies, which relied on data from various government bodies. Thus, a memo on the population of Poltava oblast, sent to the head of the Central Directorate of the USSR State Planning Committee V.N. Starovskii by Deputy Commissioner of the State Planning Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Poltava oblast Yaremko, reported that information on the oblast had been collected in the oblast military commissariat, oblast social security

²⁹V. B. Zhiromskaya, V. A. Isupov, and G. E. Kornilov, "Russia's population, 1939–1945," *Herald Russ. Acad. Sci.* **90** (5), 525–536 (2020).

³⁰Calculated according to RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2219, Fol. 119–122.

³¹A. L. Perkovskii and S. I. Pirozhkov, "From the history of demographic development of the 30–40s (the case study of the Ukrainian SSR)," in *Economy. Demography. Statistics. Research and Problems (to the 75th Anniversary of the Birth of Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences T.V. Ryabushkin)* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 171–197.

³²A. L. Perkovskii and S. I. Pirozhkov, "From the history of demographic development of the 30–40s (the case study of the Ukrainian SSR)," in *Economy. Demography. Statistics. Research and Problems (to the 75th Anniversary of the Birth of Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences T.V. Ryabushkin)* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 41, 192.

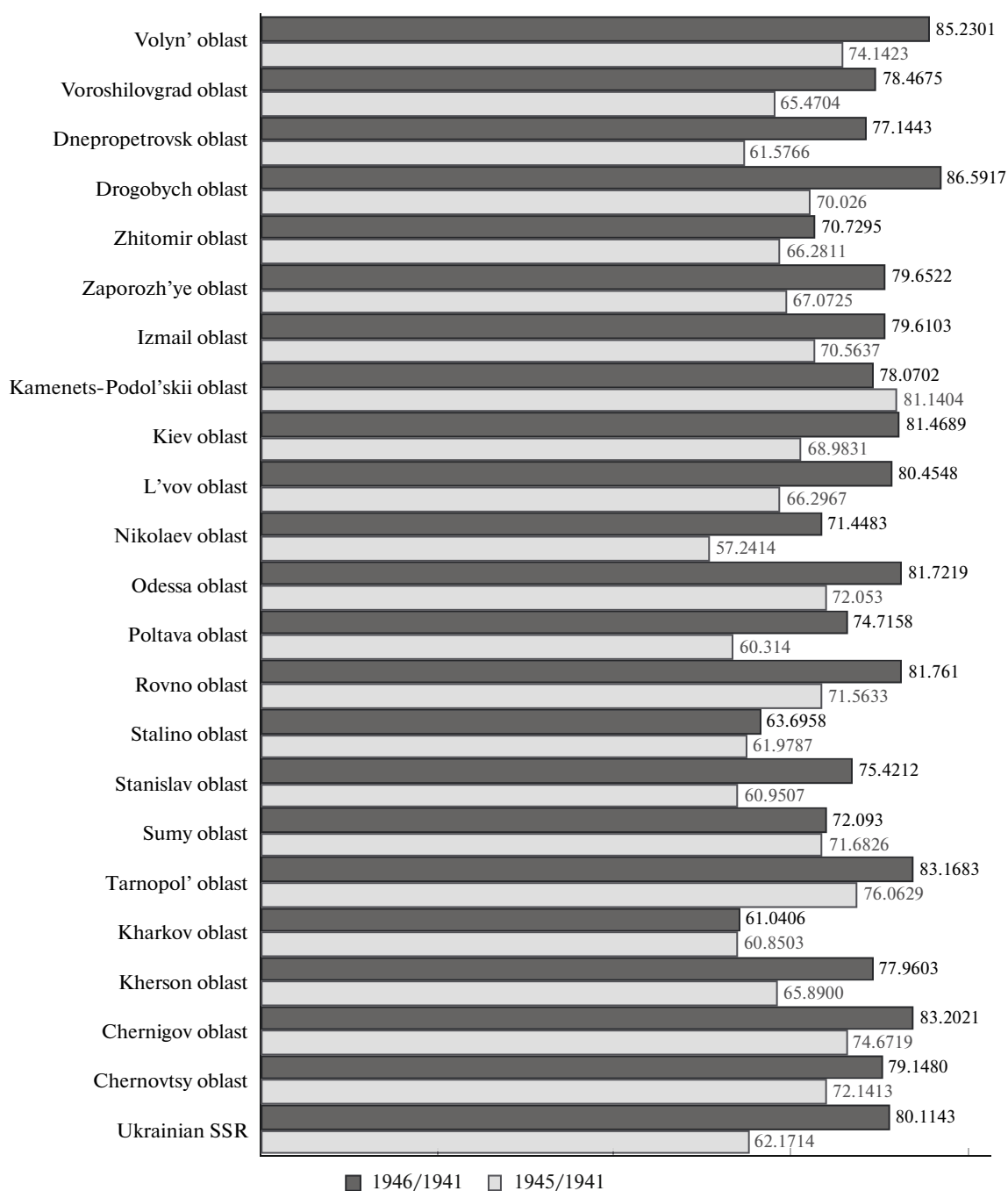


Fig. 1. Population of the Ukrainian SSR, 1946 to 1941 (at the beginning of the year, in %). Compiled according to RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2219, Fols. 119–122.

department, repatriation department, oblast bureau of labor distribution, in registry offices (ZAGSs), passport offices, oblast department of labor resource mobilization, and oblast department of state support.³³ The Commissioner of the USSR State Planning Committee for Kherson oblast, S. Kunin, reported that data on the number of people deported by the Germans to Germany and of those who had

died as a result of extermination by the Nazi invaders were taken from the materials of the Extraordinary State Commission. Vital statistics for 1944–1945 were taken from the information of ZAGS offices; for 1941–1942 and the beginning of 1944, they were calculated using the coefficients of 1944–1945 adjusted for the conditions of the German occupation. The number of the evacuated who arrived and left the oblast was calculated approximately with account for the turnover of the population brought by the Ger-

³³RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2217, Fol. 27.

mans from districts of Donbass and Crimea to eastern districts of Kherson oblast and the return of this population to their places of permanent residence in 1944–1945, as well as the arrival of immigrants from Poland and their subsequent partial departure from the oblast according to party, Soviet, and economic organizations.³⁴ The memos noted that the process of returning the population to their homes was still ongoing.

Wartime and postwar statisticians did much to generate information about the population and the demographic processes during the war. The materials to determine human losses were collected according to a single plan. The total population of the Ukrainian SSR decreased from 40.993 million people as of January 1, 1941, to 31.362 million people of actual population as of January 1, 1946. Statisticians found that the decrease in the actual population in Ukraine was due to the following.

- (1) People were driven away by the Germans to Germany.
- (2) Mass systematic extermination of the population by the Germans during the occupation of oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR (murders, mass executions, various repressions, etc.).
- (3) Increased mortality of the population during the occupation due to the famine, artificially created by the Germans in cities and industrial centers, and epidemic diseases
- (4) Evacuation of the population.
- (5) Mobilization into the Red Army.
- (6) Departure of civilians outside the Ukrainian SSR (except for those indicated in paragraphs 4–5).

After the liberation of the oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR (Left Bank in 1943 and Right Bank in 1944) and in the postwar period (May–December 1945), population replenishment processes began to work.

- (1) The demobilized from the Red Army and disabled veterans of the Patriotic War arrived.
- (2) The population driven away by the Germans was repatriating.
- (3) The bulk of the evacuated population returned.
- (4) The arrival of civilians from outside the Ukrainian SSR.
- (5) Fertility of the population.

Of course, statistical bodies had no comprehensive data on the extent of the population decrease from 1941 to 1945, as well as on the number of arrivals. Where applicable, all kinds of sources for approximate calculations of the population and the balance method were used, as, for example, when calculating the population deported by the Germans to Germany. The head of the population and health department of the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR, I. Kova-

lenko, prepared two documents for A.M. Vostrikova, the head of the demography department of the Central Directorate of the USSR State Planning Committee: one of them was about the number of those demobilized from the Red Army, disabled people, and those arriving from repatriation; and the other, about the number of evacuated Poles and Ukrainians who arrived from Poland on January 1, 1946. The first reported that the total number of the demobilized from the army who arrived amounted to 10 473 000 people; in urban areas, 2 396 000; and in rural areas, 8 077 000. Of the 2 278 800 people registered as deported to Germany, 732 700 people arrived according to the department of repatriated people. There were 458 900 people disabled during the Great Patriotic War.³⁵ By the beginning of 1946, 285 566 Ukrainians from Poland arrived in Ukraine, and 612 530 Poles left.³⁶

The memo “On the labor reserve for cities and urban settlements” of Dnepropetrovsk oblast is very informative. It was prepared by the Commissioner of the USSR State Planning Committee I. Mazdrin and sent to the heads of the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR Ryabichko and the Central Directorate of the USSR State Planning Committee V.N. Starovskii. It is a statistical development of voter lists (with the exception of lists for military units and military formations) for the elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet, which took place on February 10, 1946. The adult population in the oblast was 1 219 024 people, of whom 630 815 were city residents (51.7%), and 588 209 people (48.3%) were rural residents. Both in the urban and rural populations, women predominated, 62.9 and 70%, respectively. Next, the age and sex composition of the adult population was analyzed, showing huge losses of men, which led to a sharp deterioration in the sex ratio. Among the population group from 18 to 34 years old, the sex ratio was 1 to 2.1 in favor of women for the urban population and 1 to 3.3 for the rural population. An analysis of the labor reserve showed that the greatest need for labor was observed in industry and construction since in 1946 and in subsequent years work was carried out not only on the restoration of industrial enterprises but also on the construction of new industrial facilities.³⁷

Memos on the natural movement of the population of the republic for 1945 and the first half of 1946, prepared by the Statistical Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR (signed by its chief Ryabichko), were sent to the deputy head of the Central Directorate of the State Planning Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers, I.Yu. Pisarev, on August 12, 1946.³⁸ The memo for 1945 presents a thorough analysis of the process of population reproduction. The total number of births

³⁴RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2217, Fol. 48.

³⁵RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2217, Fols. 3, 4.

³⁶RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2217, Fol. 5.

³⁷RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2217, Fols. 57–65.

³⁸RGAE, Fund 1562, Inventory 329, File 2218, Fols. 37–49, 50–56.

in 1945 compared to the prewar year 1939 was 32.3% less, and the birthrate in cities fell from 33.2 to 19.0‰. This happened, as the authors of the document believed, because of insufficient work to combat abortion, and obstetric care was not fully provided, especially in western oblasts. There was an increase in registered children without information about their fathers (23.3%). During the first half of 1946, throughout the republic, the number of births increased noticeably (by 32% compared to the previous year), but in some western oblasts it decreased. In L'vov, Drogobych, Chernovitsy, Izmail, Stanislav, Chernigov, Volyn', and Rovno oblasts, high mortality rates remained, there were more deaths than births. The average mortality rate for the Ukrainian SSR in 1945 was 12.9‰. Despite the fairly low mortality rate, there was an increase in deaths of men over 30 years of age from tuberculosis, diseases of the digestive system, inflammation of the kidneys, as well as from violent death (murders and various nonoccupational injuries). The mortality rate of the entire population from parasitic diseases (typhus, relapsing fever in western oblasts) remained high. The mortality rate in the first half of 1946 was 5.5‰, having decreased to its minimum compared to 1945 (7.8‰) and 1939 (6.7‰).

Natural growth, as a result of population reproduction after the end of the war, was positive in the first half of 1946 compared to 1945. In western oblasts in 1945, it was negative, but in eastern oblasts and throughout the republic, it was positive; in the first half of 1946, on average for all territories, it turned out to be positive. However, the rate of natural population growth in 1946 remained two times lower than before the war. A positive aspect for reproduction, noted in the memo, was a significant increase in the marriage rate.

Information on the population of the republic collected by statisticians at the end of 1945 and the first half of 1946 was an indicative census, the purpose of which was to determine the number of the existing population and its composition and the extent of human losses. The methodology was first tested on September 1–24, 1943, when conducting a census of the actual population of Kharkov after liberation. During registration, it was prohibited to conduct a survey of the population. In the liberated rural areas, they

began to keep household books—the basis of the village council registration of the rural population.³⁹

Ukrainian historians and demographers ignore historical documents that are stored in the Russian federal archives (either because of lack of funds for business trips or, as strange as it may seem, on the instructions of the UINM, which prohibited the use of documents from the Russian archives, falsified by the NKVD).

Nevertheless, the basic principle of successfully studying the problem of human losses has always been the need to use the most complete set of historical sources possible. It is necessary to identify documents in the oblast archives of Ukraine, especially preparatory materials on population registration in the post-war years. The identified archive documents will, of course, require careful source analysis to prove their reliability and representativeness. The inclusion of new historical sources in scientific circulation will make it possible to reasonably reconstruct the dynamics and composition of the population and contribute to the study of the problem of human losses in the Ukrainian SSR in 1941–1945 in the context of the demographic development of the Soviet Union.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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³⁹A. L. Perkovskii, "Sources on the national composition of the population of Ukraine in 1939–1944," *Human Losses of the USSR in the Second World War: Collection of Articles* (St. Petersburg, 1995), pp. 57, 58.