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## CONTENTS

<b>VIKTOR PETROV'S "EPOCH THEORY": THE PHENOMENON IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE TWENTIETH CENTURY</b> Andreyev V. M. ....	5
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF HYGIENE OF FARM ANIMALS IN UKRAINE (THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th – EARLY 21st CENTURIES)</b> Bey R. V. ....	31
<b>FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENCE OF ANIMAL FARM FEEDING (THE SECOND HALF OF 19th – EARLY OF THE 21st CENTURIES)</b> Borodai I. S. ....	49
<b>THE BELARUSIAN-UKRAINIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE SECOND HALF OF XIX<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY XX<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY</b> Hrytsenko H. Z. ....	68
<b>PECULIARITIES OF SCIENTIFIC SCHOOLS' ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS TO IMPROVE AGROECOSYSTEMS IN FOREST- STEPPE OF UKRAINE (SECOND HALF OF THE XIXth – BEGINNING OF THE XXIst CENTURIES)</b> Kovalenko N. P. ....	87
<b>STAGES OF POULTRY FARMING DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE OF THE SECOND HALF OF 20th – AT THE BEGINING OF THE 21st CENTURIES</b> Melnyk V. V. ....	106
<b>AGRARIAN SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY IN UKRAINE (1990–2015)</b> Orehivskyi V. D. ....	126
<b>CENTRALIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CASE IN UKRAINE IN THE FIELD OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (20–30th OF XX CENTURY)</b> Shchebetyuk N. B. ....	144

<b>MONASTERIES OF WESTERN DIOCESES OF KYIV UNION METROPOLIYA (90th YEARS OF XVII – 90th YEARS OF XVIII CENTURES): JURISDICTIONAL CONVERSIONS</b> Stetsyk Y. O.....	164
<b>RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR 2014–2019 YEARS AS THE DECISIVE STAGE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENT STATE</b> Sytnyk O. M. ....	183
<b>PERCEPTION OF MYKHAILO HRUSHEVSKY’S WORKS DURING INTERWAR PERIOD</b> Telvak V. P.....	201
<b>HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE IN UKRAINE DURING THE INTEGRATION OF STATE REGULATION SYSTEMS</b> Vergunov V. A. ....	220
<b>THE INTRODUCTION OF STATISTICAL RESEARCH BY PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ZEMSTVOS FOR AGRARIAN BRANCHES</b> Vergunova I. M.....	240
<b>STATE ARCHIVE OF LVIV OBLAST: SOURCE POTENTIAL FOR THE HISTORY OF UKRAINIAN CULTURE</b> Yanyshyn B. M. ....	260
<b>POLITICIZATION OF HISTORY: TERMS, METHODS, SIGNIFICANCE</b> Yaremchuk V. P. ....	280

## **VIKTOR PETROV'S "EPOCH THEORY": THE PHENOMENON IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Andreyev V. M.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Viktor Platonovych Petrov (pseudonyms – V. Ber, Borys Verigo, V. Domontovych, V. Plyat and other; 1894–1969) was one of the brightest Ukrainian intellectuals of his time – an outstanding scientist of encyclopedic erudition (historian, anthropologist, archaeologist, literary scholar, linguist, folklorist, and philosopher), organizer of science, public figure and writer of the circle of neoclassicists and Soviet intelligence agent.

V. Petrov was considered to be an outstanding, original and even brilliant philosopher and scientist at the Ukrainian literary and academic circles of «golden age» of Ukrainian humanities of 1920-s and «immigrant renaissance» of the second half of the 1940-s. However, due to various circumstances and life collisions, his multifaceted scientific potential was «deleted» from the intellectual space of the USSR and Ukrainian diaspora, underestimated and forgotten for a long time. So today V. Petrov remains little-known not only in the world, but also at home.

Almost all his life, since 1919, excluding a forced interruption in 1942-1956 s., V. Petrov devoted himself to the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He was one of the first scientists of All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, actively and productive working in various academic institutions. In 1919-1920s V. Petrov was a Secretary of the Commission for Ukrainian historical dictionary making. Since January 1920 he started working as a researcher and later as a secretary (1923–1927) and a head (1927–1933) of Ethnographic Commission attached to All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, edited various publications of the institution. In 1927 the Russian Geographical Society, recognizing the merits of V. Petrov in organization of ethnographic science in Ukraine, vigorous activity in studying of folk culture and everyday life, awarded him a silver medal. In 1928 the scientist was elected as an existing member of this society. In 1930 the scientist

took a degree of Doctor of Philology for the monograph about P. Kulish. Since 1933 V. Petrov held the position of the researcher, and since 1939 he was a head of the sector of pre-feudal and feudal archeology of the Union of Institutions of Material Culture (the Institute of History of Material Culture since 1934, which was later reorganized into the Institute of Archaeology attached to the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (IA AS USSR). Since February 1941 the scientist became a director of the newly established Institute of Ukrainian Folklore attached to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. This period of his research activity is presented by a fairly significant scientific achievements (especially in the field of ethnography) – more than 100 works.

During the Soviet-German War Viktor Platonovych served in the Red Army – he was a reconnaissance man. In 1945–1949s., performing the tasks of the Soviet reconnaissance, he worked among Ukrainian emigration in Bavaria. He was one of the founders of Ukrainian Art Movement (UAM), Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, editor of periodical literature, teacher at institutions of higher education of Ukrainian emigration (Ukrainian Free University, Theological Academy of Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Ukrainian Technical and Economic Institution, etc.), worked a lot in the field of science. Officially V. Petrov was employed by the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the USSR as a researcher till 1950. In 1950–1956s., after mysterious return from Germany, the scientist worked as a researcher at the Institute of History of Material Culture of the USSR in Moscow, and since December 1956 until his death he worked at the Institute of Archaeology attached to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

V. Petrov's top achievement as an intellectual and versatile scholar is his "epoch theory". The thinker suggested an original conception of ancient history of Ukraine, which became an important theoretical and practical contribution to Ukrainian historiography. His concept was based on the discrete, cyclical vision of the historical process and was in the line with the main trends of European historiosophical thought of 1920–1940, it was directly in the context of intellectual ideas of M. Berdyaev, V. Velflin, N. Danilevsky, A. J. Toynbee, S. Freud, M. Foucault, M. Khvylovy, D. Chyzhevsky, F. Schmitt, O. Spengler and the existentialists.

On the basis of the «epoch theory» the scientist developed a scheme of ancient history of Ukraine («prehistory of Ukrainian people») and a

scheme of ethnogenesis of Ukrainian people as a part of European history. This opened a new way for the development of national historical science and could cause a «revolution» in Ukrainian historical writing. However, intellectual initiative of the scientist was not accepted by his contemporaries and to this day it remains outside the main directions of theoretical and practical search of historians.

This article deals with the phenomenon of Victor Petrov in the national historiography of the twentieth century. Although the polymath was working for decades within the framework of the Soviet historical science and its academic institutions and Marxist discourse played a certain role in its formation, in my opinion, we should talk about alternativeness of views of V. Petrov concerning Marxism, which was prevailing in the Soviet science. The Marxist conception as an explanatory model of the historical process and methodological tool of scientific research did not satisfy the scientist.

There are several stages in the formation of historical conception of V. Petrov. However, it was not enunciated in a distinct and final way due to different reasons.

### **1. Familiarity and Creative Mastering of European, Russian and Ukrainian Philosophical and Historiosophical Thought**

The first stage – 1910-th – early 1930-th. – familiarity and creative mastering of European, Russian and Ukrainian philosophical and historiosophical thought (G. Lotze, G. Hegel, V. Velflin, N. Danilevsky, O. Spengler, F. Schmitt, M. Khvylovy, early existentialists, classical scholars of Marxism and others).

In the 1920s the ideas of German philosopher O. Spengler were known in Ukraine, they became popular in the forefront of cataclysms of World War I and post-war poverty. He was sympathized, admired and even for some time there was an intellectual fashion for O. Spengler. «The Decline of the West» was repeatedly discussed on the pages of Soviet publications<sup>1</sup>. Therefore naturally, his concept was embraced and transformed in the works of a number of Ukrainian intellectuals.

Ukrainian national communists M. Khvylovy created his own historical and philosophical conception of culture (Asian Renaissance

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<sup>1</sup> Базаров В. О. Шпенглер и его критики. *Красная Новь*. 1922. № 2. Ст. 212–225; Пятаков Г. Философия современного империализма (Этюд о Шпенглере). *Красная новь*. 1922. № 3. Ст. 182–197.

theory) based on the theories of local civilizations of N. Danilevsky, O. Spengler and Marxism. It was formulated in the context of the social and literary discussions in the Soviet Ukraine of mid-1920-th, in the center of which stood the prospects of development of Ukrainian culture. The last, seventh chapter of the pamphlet «Ukraine or Little Russia?» (1926) is devoted to the presentation of the conceptual foundations of the theory of the Asian Renaissance<sup>2</sup>. M. Khvylovy took the original thesis that every nation is going through childhood, cultural and civilizational stages; the latter is the final chord of every culture and the beginning of its end. But historical types of cultures are not locked in a «spontaneous frames ... that come under the sign of their fate» (as presented in the concepts of «idealistic intuitionism» of N. Danilevsky and O. Spengler), but framed in the patriarchal, feudal, bourgeois and proletarian time. Every single one of these types is original, but the element of «natural inheritance» is still compulsive.

According to the ideas expressed by M. Khvylovy, almost all cultures of patriarchal period (Mycenaean, Indian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Arabic) were formed by peoples who inhabited the territory of Asia, or were geographically adjacent to it. The «Human material» of Asia exhausted its «creative energy», solving problems of patriarchal period, and feudal type manifested itself on the European territory. The energy of the population of Europe, which they were accumulating for centuries, was enough to create a culture of the third type – the bourgeois type. At the present stage the bourgeois type dies, Western society is in decline and therefore new proletarian cultural-historical type is being created on the territory of Asia.

This cultural-historical type that M. Khvylovy calls «Asian Renaissance» will be determined by high classical erudition and will be based on the achievements of Asian as well as European cultures. One of the conditions of Asian Renaissance is the presence of Bolshevik state model. Since Ukraine is situated on the border of Europe and Asia and has the ability to use energy potential of one as well as the other, it should be at the forefront of the fourth cultural-historical type.

The views of M. Khvylovy had considerable attention in the Soviet Ukraine; he entered the national history not only as a writer, literary figure, but as a representative of the original philosophical thought as well<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Хвильовий М. Україна чи Малоросія? *Хвильовий М. Санаторійна зона: оповідання, новели, повісті, памфлети*. Харків: Фоліо, 2008. Ст. 334–381.

<sup>3</sup> Горський В. С. *Історія української філософії*. 3-є вид.. К.: Наукова думка, 1997. Ст. 255–258.



It should be noted that the concept of M. Khvylovy was presented in a popular form, did not have justified terminology, it called for discussion to a greater extent than it was giving answers. The Asian Renaissance theory concerned the problems associated with philosophical comprehension of Ukrainian national idea directly, for the author it acted as means of addressing spiritual progress of Ukrainian people through the dilemma «Russia – Europe», but it did not play an independent role. V. Petrov thought highly of the pamphlets of M. Khvylovy and considered him to be «a true European», who meant not «Europe in general», not «the machinery», not «the proletariat», but a «western intellectual», a high type of spiritual culture<sup>4</sup>.

V. Petrov as a direct participant of literary and cultural debates during 1925–1928 was certainly familiar with the research of O. Spengler and its reception in the works of M. Khvylovy. However, it should be noted that the scientist could independently come to an understanding of discontinuity of the historical process through the studies in the field of German philosophy, in particular – the works of R.G. Lotze, who developed the ideas that were close to the doctrine of monads of G.W. Leibniz. It is known that the theory of local civilizations emerged in the context of the philosophical tradition of Leibniz in Germany (civilization – a kind of historical process monads)<sup>5</sup>.

However, in 1919, a famous Russian art historian and archaeologist F. Schmitt, whose life for quite a long time was associated with Ukraine (Kharkiv, Kyiv), set out his ideas of cyclical development of art («Laws of history» (1916), «Art – its psychology, its stylistics, its evolution» (1919))<sup>6</sup>. There upon in due course time he was often compared to A. J. Toynbee and called a «Russian Spengler»<sup>7</sup>. In his memoirs V. Petrov noted that a lecture of Fyodor Ivanovych delivered in Kiev in 1919 imposed a strong impression on him.

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<sup>4</sup> Петров В. Діячі української культури (1920–1940 рр.) – жертви більшовицького терору. К.: Воскресіння, 1992. Ст. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Зашкільняк Л. Методологія історії від давнини до сучасності. Львів: Львів. держ. ун-т ім. І. Франка, 1999. Ст. 172–175; Ионов И. Н. Теория цивилизаций. Этапы становления. *Новая и новейшая история*. 1994. № 4/5. Ст. 33–50; Ионов И. Н. Рождение теории локальных цивилизаций и смена научных парадигм. *Образы историографии*. М., 2001. Ст. 59–84; Космина В. Г. Проблемы методологии цивилизационного анализа исторического процесса. Запоріжжя: Запорізь. нац. ун-т, 2011. 310 ст.; Репина Л. П., Зверева В. В., Парамонова М. Ю. История исторического знания. М.: Дрофа, 2004. Ст. 217–220; Яковенко Н. Вступ до історії. К.: Критика, 2007. Ст. 253 тощо.

<sup>6</sup> Шмит Ф. И. Законы истории. Введение к всеобщей истории искусств. Харьков, 1916. 198 с.; Шмит Ф. И. Искусство – его психология, его стилистика, его эволюция. Харьков, 1919. 328 ст.

<sup>7</sup> Михайловский И. Б. Архитектурные ордера. М, 1925. Ст. 25.

Similar thoughts on the discreteness of art history were also expressed by a Swiss Scientist G. Wolfflin<sup>8</sup> (his book «Renaissance and Baroque») was translated into Russian in 1913 and also had a considerable impact on V. Petrov – a student of Kiev University)<sup>9</sup>.

To the factors forming historiosophical views of V. Petrov a modern researcher of his life and work V. Bryukhovetsky also joins the influence of his father's works – the works of Platon Petrov on the history of the church and prominent representatives of the so-called «Kiev philosophical circles» of the first decades of the twentieth century (M. Berdyaev, A. Gilyarov, V. Zenkovsky, Lev Shestov, D. Chyzhevsky)<sup>10</sup>.

Since the 1920s V. Petrov fruit fully worked in the field of history of philosophy, methodology of different humanities, history and theory of culture, he became acquainted with classical and modern philosophical systems, approbated them in different subject areas of historical research. Professional skills of V. Petrov allowed him to realize himself in specific historical, as well as theoretical studies.

During the 1930s the scientist was working within the limits of Marxist methodology and Marrism in the field of history of material culture and formed his own perception of objective laws of historical development of Eastern Europe<sup>11</sup>.

## **2. Formation of V. Petrov's Historiosophical Views and His Historical Concept's Basis**

The second stage – the first half of 1940-s – attempts to present ideas in popular scientific and artistic works (during the administration of exploratory mission on the territory of the occupied Ukraine). The first fragmentary attempts to express their views on the history as the process of changing of epochs was carried out by the scientist in 1942 on the pages of literary magazine «Ukrainian sowing» in the article «The Goths in Ukraine and the culture of fields graves» (characteristics of ancient period on Ukrainian territory) and in the novel «Without soil»<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Вёльфлин Г. Ренессанс и барокко. [пер. с нем. Е. Г. Лундберга]. СПб.: Азбука-классика, 2004. 288 ст.

<sup>9</sup> Домонтович В. Болотьяна Лукроза. *Київські неокласики*. К.: Факт, 2003. Ст. 295.

<sup>10</sup> Брюховецький В. Віктор Петров: верхи долі – верхи і долі. К.: Темпора, 2013. Ст. 33–35.

<sup>11</sup> Андреев В. М. Віктор Петров: Нариси інтелектуальної біографії вченого : монографія. Дніпропетровськ: Герда, 2012. Ст. 91–106.

<sup>12</sup> Домонтович В. Без ґрунту. *Український засів*. Х., 1942. Чис. 2. Ст. 30–57; Домонтович В. Без ґрунту. Продовження. *Український засів*. Х., 1943. Чис. 4. Ст. 49–71; Петров В. Готи на Україні та культура полів поховань. *Український засів*. Х., 1942. Чис. 1. Ст. 61–65.

The third stage – the second half of 1940-s – historiosophical execution of principles of “epoch theory”, its application to the understanding of European history, and an attempt to put the theory into historical specificity of ancient history of Ukraine. Formation of conception of V. Petrov took place during his presence in the Western zones of occupation in Germany in a closed environment of Ukrainian intellectual elite in emigration.

The main socio-cultural factors that influenced V. Petrov’s historiosophical understanding of the basic laws of historical process were the conditions of post-war ruins, ideological crisis of West European society, inability of the existing concepts to explain the historical reality of the totalitarian era, the appeal of European public opinion to cyclic theories and concepts in search of a way out of the cognitive crisis. Sharp society’s reaction to the atomic bombings of 1945, his own intellectual experience, rueful feelings about the fate of Ukrainian and European culture, about the future of the world and humanity resulted in humanistic character of philosophical views of V. Petrov; moral values have precedence over the technical progress, the scientist appeals to Christianity.

In the second half of 1940-san outstanding Ukrainian philosopher and scientist D. Chyzhevsky works on the theory of cultural-historical epochs in the history of art. As far back as 1920-s he was schooled by European philosophic thought, the scientist listened to the lectures of K. Jaspers, E. Husserl, M. Heidegger and others, but he did not become a supporter of a certain school. In post-war Germany, he, like other members of the second wave of Ukrainian immigration appeared in the close socio-cultural, organizational and scientific contact with the intellectual elite of the Third Wave<sup>13</sup>. The fruitful scientific collaboration of D. Chyzhevsky and V. Petrov inter alia, manifested on the background of literature, they became co-authors of a textbook on the history of Ukrainian literature, they were like-minded on the issue of historical periodization of Ukrainian literature<sup>14</sup>.

D. Chyzhevsky stated his theory in the research «Culture-historical epochs» (1948)<sup>15</sup> [53]. In this research the scientist contradicted the

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<sup>13</sup> Горський В. С. Історія української філософії... Ст. 272–277.

<sup>14</sup> Петров В., Чижевський Д., Глобенко М. Українська література. *Історія української культури*. Мюнхен; Львів: Укр. вільний ун-т, 1994. 380 ст.

<sup>15</sup> Чижевський Д. *Культурно-історичні епохи*. 2-ге вид.. Авгсбург–Монреаль: Накладом Тов-ва прихильників УВАН, 1978. 16 ст. (Slavistica; № 78).

«theory of progress», which described the historical development «as a way of gradual improvement, accumulation of cultural acquisitions»<sup>16</sup>. He divided the cultural history of Europe into «epochs» – Romance, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, «Enlightenment» (Classicism), Romanticism, Realism («New Enlightenment»), neoromanticism. Every epoch, in the opinion of the researcher, is «the wholeness, a system of movements and changes, all of which have a certain direction», every epoch has its own character, «style». D. Chyzhevsky emphasized that the basic unit of historical study is the epoch, and the primary task of the historian is studying of the «style of the epoch». Moreover, the historian, «... achieving this goal or approaching to it, does not invent, does not form a certain picture, but discovers the wholeness of epoch's image, which is really the foundation of this epoch, which belongs to objective historical reality»<sup>17</sup>.

D. Chyzhevsky put an increased focus on «regularity» of periods' change, which are embodied in the change of styles. He called his concept the «theory of cultural waves» and associated its forthcoming with the works of V. Velflin<sup>18</sup>. The main idea of the «theory waves» of D. Chyzhevsky lies in the fact that every succeeding epoch denies, repudiates the main ideas, features of the previous one, at the same time forming its own style, it revives to some extent the ideals of the epoch, which preceded its antecessor. Thus, according to the scientist, «in any case earlier Middle Ages are more consistent with aesthetic ideals of the Renaissance than the later Middle Ages, which resemble Baroque by composing and dynamics of its works» and so on. Consequently, D. Chyzhevsky graphically depicts the scheme of historical development of European culture by a wavy line<sup>19</sup>.

D. Chyzhevsky considered the correlation between the concept of «epoch» and historical time the most vulnerable part of his conception; moreover he left the question of historicity/ahistoricity of epochs open.

It should be noted that D. Chyzhevsky presented the «theory of cultural waves» as a hypothesis, which, according to the author, required verification by the actual material. The concept of D. Chyzhevsky arose in the context of debate about the fate of Ukrainian culture in literary circles of emigration in Germany (V. Derzhavyn and others).

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<sup>16</sup> Там само. Ст. 5–6.

<sup>17</sup> Там само. С. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Вельфлин Г. Ренессанс и барокко.

<sup>19</sup> Чижевський Д. Культурно-історичні епохи. С. 12–13.

D. Chyzhevsky believed that the use of cultural-historical method and pan-European scheme of development of culture of the Ukrainian material allows one to look at the history of Ukrainian culture as a part of “Pan-European integrity”<sup>20</sup>.

The views of V. Petrov on the historical process were described in various publications of Ukrainian emigration in Germany: historiosophical sketches “Historiosophical Essays”, “Our Time, as it is», “Fundamentals of History”, “Problems of the Epoch», “Modern Image of the World: the Crisis of Classical Physics», “Principles of Poetics», “Christianity and Modernity”, “Spiritual Currents of Europe of the New Age», “Modern Spiritual Currents in Europe», “The Masses, Machinery and Liberalism», etc., and theoretical excursions to historical and journalistic writings (“The Origin of the Ukrainian People», “Ukrainian Activists – Victims of Bolshevik Terror» and others), literary works («Francois Villon», “Lone Traveler Walks along a Lonely Road», “Tamed Gaydamak», “Professor Expresses his Views», “Pre-Easter», “Without the Ground», etc.)<sup>21</sup>.

The main core of the concept of V. Petrov was “the discreteness of time», “the isolation of individual of epochs» and the relationship between them on the basis of denial and rejection of the idea of development. V. Petrov denied the principle of continuity of history: “The historical process is not a continuous flow of being. This flow is divided into specific gradations of time»<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the epoch is a self-contained and enclosed in itself by the frames of dominant ideology “period of time”. Therefore, the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. С. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Бер В. Наш час, як він є (з приводу статті Нормана Казнса «Несучасність сучасної людини» «The Saturday Review of Literature. New York. 1946). *Рідне слово: вісн. літератури, мистецтва і науки*. Мюнхен; Бер В. Засади поетики. Від «Ars poetica» Є. Маланюка до «Ars poetica» доби розкладеного атома. *МУР: зб. літературно-мистецької проблематики*. Мюнхен; Карлсфельд, 1946. Зб. 1. Ст. 7–23; Бер В. Сучасні духові течії в Європі (1. Новіші вчення про всесвіт). *Час*. Фюрт, 1946. Чис. 42. Ст. 2–3; Бер В. Сучасні духові течії в Європі (2. Новіші вчення про походження людини). *Час*. Фюрт, 1946. Чис. 43. Ст. 2–3; Бер В. Сучасний образ світу: Криза класичної фізики. *Арка*. Мюнхен, 1947. Чис. 1. Ст. 2–6; Веріго Борис. [Віктор Петров] Маси, техніка й лібералізм (з приводу книги Хозе Ортеги і Гассет «Повстання мас»). *Орлик: місячник культури і суспільного життя*. Берхтесгаден, 1948. Чис. 3 (Березень). Ст. 33–35; Домонтович В. Самотній мандрівник простує по самотній дорозі. Вінсент Ван Гог (1833–1890): Біографічна новеля. *Арка*. Мюнхен, 1948. Чис. 5 (11). Ст. 25–34; Домонтович В. Самотній мандрівник простує по самотній дорозі. Вінсент Ван Гог (1833–1890): Біографічна новеля. *Арка*. Мюнхен, 1948. Чис. 5 (11). Ст. 25–34; Домонтович В. Приборканий гайдамака. Оповідання про Саву Чалого (розділи 1-2). *Похід*. Гайденав, 1947. Чис. 1. С. 7–11; Петров В. Історіософічні етюди. *МУР: зб. літературно-мистецької проблематики*. Мюнхен; Карлсфельд, 1946. Зб. 2. Ст. 7–19; Петров В. Християнство і сучасність. *Орлик: місячник культури і суспільного життя*. Берхтесгаден, 1947. Чис. 2 (Лютий). Ст. 15–18; Петров В. Діячі української культури (1920-1940 рр.) – жертви більшовицького терору. *Українська літературна газета*. Мюнхен. 1955. Чис. 1 (Липень); Петров В. Походження українського народу. К.: МП «Фенікс», 1992. 192 ст.

<sup>22</sup> Петров В. Історіософічні етюди. Ст. 7.

historical process, the history of mankind, according to V. Petrov, is a successive change of epochs within the limits of which there are unique, peculiar only to them processes.

From the context of the works of V. Petrov it becomes clear that the epoch is a certain component of the historical process, which is recognized as the structural integrity, which is characterized by: the presence of the dominant ideology, sustainable correlation of the certain interdependent forms of economy, social institutions and cultural phenomena. V. Petrov understood the history as a process of being and changing of different self-sufficient epochs, each of which is characterized by its own affinity, different from affinity of other epoch. History is discrete, discontinuous; it includes inter epoch “fractures”. The transition from one epoch to another through the fractures means that next to the processes of destruction, displacement, resettlement and migration, there also occurred a process of diffusion, deformation, inheritance, and learning. Furthermore, important factors of transformations are also external influences such as expansion, wars, disasters, destructions, cultural and economic relations and influences, natural factor and so on. Accordingly, the main subject of historical study of V. Petrov is the epoch, and the objective of the research is determination of methodology of epoch change.

The researcher tried to give an explanation of how one epoch became a different one. He believed that the change of epochs was due to the function of «overcoming», “contrasting”, re-embodiment of the epoch into its contrast, not in terms of time. He was even speaking about “laws of epoch change”<sup>23</sup>. However, according to V. Petrov, there are other forms of relations, presumably inherent to non-European civilizations. Whence, he mentions the connection of “Chinese type”, which is an unchanging, sustainable existence. Unfortunately, the scientist did not develop this idea. But, everything seems to suggest that V. Petrov had an idea and his own vision of non-European, Oriental cultures, which is evidenced by some “remarks” in his works.

To some extent “the epoch” of V. Petrov corresponds to the “cultural-historical type” in the theory of local civilizations, which is supra-ethnic socio-cultural communities, idiosyncratic “blocks” of world history, whose interaction determines the course of historical process.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Ст. 20, 26.

Thus wise, the ideas of denial of world progress, discreteness of history (rejection of traditional notions of historical time), isolation and self-sufficiency of an epoch / culture syncretize researches of V. Petrov and O. Spengler. The epoch of V. Petrov as well as the “cultural-historical type” of O. Spengler, is bound to disappearance, which is peculiar to its nature. However, unlike O. Spengler, Ukrainian thinker saw a certain connection between the epochs/cultures, which reconciled his vision of history with the one of A. J. Toynbee. Thus, Toynbee captures «parent-child» relationship between particular civilizations. In other words, civilizations, changing each other, may form a sequence. For example, the Minoan civilization is followed by the Hellenic civilization and it is followed by Medieval Western civilization and so on. For Toynbee it is essential that some societies, joining the others, thereby provide a continuity of the historical process. We see similar thoughts about contacts of cultures in the works of V. Petrov. According to V. Petrov, there is a relationship between the epochs (Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modern Age – Present). For Toynbee, the link between different civilizations was a man – a permanent and regular element in history. In V. Petrov’s theory, it is observed that the man is the mediator and the custodian of epoch’s acquisitions.

The ideas of destruction of civilizations/the end of epochs which occur as a result of internal crisis and external factors (military defeats, destroyed, natural disasters, etc.) are somewhat similar in viewpoints of V. Petrov and A. J. Toynbee. Looking for the causes of decline and end of civilizations, A. J. Toynbee concluded that the growth of civilization is accompanied by its self-determination, and the main criterion and fundamental cause of the fracture is an internal explosion, through which the society loses the feature the self-determination. A. J. Toynbee tried to see certain patterns in the history of local civilizations, while the only law for V. Petrov was the change one era into another, the individuum and the unique were in the center of his attention. It is unlikely that V. Petrov was familiar with the works of A. J. Toynbee, but both thinkers were in the common scientific paradigm and could reach similar views on the historical process.

According to V. Petrov, the content of individual epochs is primarily determined by the dominant ideology. Accordingly, the change epochs is accompanied by the crisis of ideology. Middle Ages, Modern age and

Modernity (“Our Time”) are three eras of European history, which were in the thinker’s center of attention. He considered theologism to be the ideological content of the Middle Ages, humanism – of the Renaissance, and rationalism, subjectivism, relativism, pluralism, and skepticism – of the Modern age<sup>24</sup>.

He has represented Ukrainian culture as a rightful and self-contained part of European civilization, which is «enduring» all those epochs that Europe has gone through.

Comprehension of different historical epochs, according to V. Petrov, occurs through the ideology, inner world, life and activities of specific individuals, typical representatives of their time. According to V. Petrov, each era has a certain type of personality (ideal figure of his time). Specific characters of literature and fictionalized images of his scientific works that combine norms of life, morality, stereotypes of two epochs or reject the certain ones in favor of others, correspond to the catastrophic fractures of time<sup>25</sup>.

“Epoch theory” represents one of the possible variants of civilizational analysis of world history, but, unlike the majority of other civilizational theories it goes beyond purely historical and philosophical exposition and offers methodology of concrete historical material analysis. V. Petrov put the idea of epoch change on historical specificity of ancient history of Ukraine, the essence of historiosophical concepts of “the epoch”, “the fracture”, “the epoch change”, “objection” was demonstrated in the published university lecture of V. Petrov “Origin of Ukrainian people” (Regensburg 1947).

Considerations of V. Petrov regarding the differences of the epochs, the principle of their objection, fracture, change and self-organization of the society also correspond to the latest methodological approaches in understanding of the historical process. A look at the history in terms of the idea of self-organization brings the concept of V. Petrov closer to synergistic approach, which considers the society be a complex system, all elements of which are interrelated. Changing of one of the backbone elements or implementation of new or even alien elements into the system

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<sup>24</sup> Петров В. Исторіософічні етюди. *МУР: зб. літературно-мистецької проблематики*. Мюнхен; Карлсфельд, 1946. Зб. 2. Ст. 7–19; Петров В. Исторіософічні етюди. *МУР: зб. літературно-мистецької проблематики*. Мюнхен; Карлсфельд, 1947. Зб. 3. Ст. 7–10.

<sup>25</sup> Мішеніна Н. Исторіософський мотив зміни епох як модель внутрішнього інтертексту (проза Віктора Петрова-Домонтовича). *Слово і час*. 2002. № 11. Ст. 32.



may lead to a qualitative degeneration of the entire system, especially if it is in unbalanced, unstable condition<sup>26</sup>.

### 3. «Epoch Theory» in the Realities of the Soviet Science

The fourth stage—extension and specification of the concept of ancient history of Ukraine (ethnogenesis of the Slavs) after returning to the Soviet Union, when the scientist was forced to adapt his «epoch theory» to the realities of the Soviet science.

In the 1960s the scientist continued his theoretical and practical researches in the field archeology, history, linguistics, ethnography, that allowed him to detail his conception of ancient history of Ukraine, to expand the source base and to include the latest scientific discoveries into it. At the same time V. Petrov implemented the theoretical and methodological principles of his conception in a veiled form on specific problems and periods in the works: «Ancient Slavs and their origin: the issue Slavic ethnogenesis» (1963), «Historical topography of Kyiv. The archeof of the city. The city of Vladimir, structure and origin» (1964), «The Slavs and Byzantium. On the change of archaeological cultures on the territory of Ukraine in V-VII centuries A.D.» (1965), «The Scythians. Language and ethnicity» (1968) and others<sup>27</sup>. He adapted his conception to the realities of the Soviet science, paid more attention to the socio-economic component “the epoch”.

V. Petrov's erstwhile achievements illustrate the breadth of the subject field and methodological approaches of national historical science which was made possible under the conditions of the Khrushchev Thaw. Decrease of ideological pressure on science was the result of the Thaw and “quiet” revision of the theory of historical materialism, a development of the ideas of “late” K. Marx on differentiation of mainstream of historical development in ancient times. For example, the so-called “second” discussion about the “Asiatic mode of production” unfolded in the Soviet and world science (the “first” took place in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1920s – early 1930s.); this discussion eventually led to many discussions of urgent problems of the theory of historical process.

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<sup>26</sup> Пригожин И., Стенгерс И. Порядок из хаоса. Новый диалог человека с природой. М.: Вектра, 2001. 420 ст.

<sup>27</sup> Петров В. Давні слов'яни та їх походження: До проблеми слов'янського етногенезу. *Український історичний журнал*. 1963. № 4. С. 36–44; Петров В. Слов'яни і Візантія. Про зміну археологічних культур на території України в V–VII ст. н. е. *Археологія*. 1965. Т. 18. Ст. 3–13; Петров В. Скіфи. Мова і етнос. К.: Наук. думка, 1968. 149 ст.

Scientists expressed interesting ideas, including those concerning non-linearity and polyvariety of the historical process<sup>28</sup>.

Today it becomes clear that the Soviet historiography was not a methodological monolith. But certain interpretations of Marxism, national romanticism, structuralism, the school «Annals» concealed under the veil with quotations of “classics”, and even something so original and individual, that it is hard to define<sup>29</sup>.

V. Petrov’s concept was presented in a relatively complete form in his work “Ethnogenesis of the Slavs” (Kyiv, 1972). Qualitative stages of Slavic ethnogenesis were matched with the scheme of division into the “epochs” of ancient history of Ukraine (from Tripillya to historical times of Slavdom). According to references in the work to the editions of 1966–1967 it is possible to determine the final phase of author’s work at the text of the research «Ethnogenesis of the Slavs». From its abstract of 1966 it is clear that the structure of the proposed monograph «The Problem of Slavic Ethnogenesis. Ancient Slavs and their Origin» involved chapters on Byzantium and the Slavs, cultural and ethnic unity of Slavs in the V – VII centuries; which were not included in the publication. V. Petrov also planned monographic works on the ancient history of Kyiv and Slavic writing system at least up to XI century<sup>30</sup>.

V. Petrov died finishing the main text of the work «Ethnogenesis of the Slavs». This research was published in 1972, thus it did not take into account relevant achievements of various branches of archeology and other sciences, materials of global new-building expeditions. This monograph was published (although it was incomplete and unedited by the author) during the ideological reaction that increased in the early 1970 s. Changes in the senior headquarters of the republic blocked the development of ethnogenetical studies, which did not meet a concept of the common Old Russian nation. M. Braichevsky, O. Kompan and O. Apanovych were fired

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<sup>28</sup> Семенов Ю. И. Теория общественно-экономических формаций и всемирный исторический процесс. *Народы Азии и Африки*. 1970. № 5. Ст. 82–95; Семенов Ю. И. Марксистско-ленинская теория общественно-экономических формаций и всемирная история. *Актуальные проблемы марксистско-ленинского учения об общественно-экономических формациях*. М., 1975. Ст. 53–87; Семенов Ю. И. Разработка проблем истории первобытного общества в Институте этнографии АН СССР в «эпоху» Бромлея (воспоминания и размышления). *Этнографическое обозрение*. 2001. № 6. Ст. 3–20; Хазанов А. М. О связи линейности и локальности с образом жизни. *Советская этнография*. 1974. № 6. Ст. 58–61.

<sup>29</sup> Бойцов М. А. Вперед, к Геродоту! *Казус: индивидуальное и уникальное в истории*. М.: Российск. гос. гуманит. ун-т, 1999. Вып. 2. С. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Петров В. П. Язык. Этнос. Фольклор : автореф. по совокупности работ на соискание ученой степени кандидата филол. наук. К., 1966. Ст. 60.

from the Institute of History of the Academy of Science of the USSR. The research of K. Guslysty “Historical Development of Ukrainian Nation” and multi-authored monograph «Ukrainians» were forbidden for publishing in 1972. But the censorship did not notice the sedition, especially since author’s presentation ended in V – VI centuries, videlicet in “pre-Kyiv” period.

The monograph «Ethnogenesis of the Slavs» was the result of scientist’s years-long researches, but at the same time it was expanded and revised version of his research “Origin of the Ukrainian people” (1947). The concept of epoch in “Ethnogenesis of the Slavs” was not presented as vividly as it was in 1947. It can be observed even from the contents of the book<sup>31</sup>. However, based on the structure of the text and logic of presentation, it is clear that the author followed his concept. Clearly highlighted by V. Petrov in «The Origin of the Ukrainian people» epochs do not correspond to formational periodization of history: Trypolian, After-trypolian (Pre-scythian), Scythian, ancient (the first period), ancient (the second period). This scheme generally corresponds to structural sections of the research «Ethnogenesis of the Slavs»: «Trypolian culture» corresponds to Trypolian epoch, “the era of Urban-Usatove culture” and “the Middle Dnieper culture” correspond to After-trypolian epoch; “Scythians” corresponds to Scythian epoch; «Zarubintsy era» and «Chernyakhov culture» correspond to periods of ancient epoch.

V. Petrov’s conception of ancient history of Ukraine captures the period starting from Eneolithic Period up to the times of Historic Slavdom (IV century B. C. – VI century C. E.). According to V. Petrov, the history of Ukraine is discrete, discontinuous, «fractures» between the epochs are peculiar to it (between Trypolian and After-trypolian, Zarubintsy and Chernyakhov (Ancient), and Slavic). The transition from one epoch to another through the fractures means that «next to the processes of destruction, displacement, resettlement and migration, there also occurred a process of diffusion, deformation, inheritance, and learning. There appeared not only exclusion, but inclusion as well. There was a fracture as well as percussion»<sup>32</sup>. The scientist illustrates his statement about the ambiguity of time through the analysis of archaeological sources according to which After-trypolian epoch was more primitive than the previous one –

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<sup>31</sup> Петров В. Етногенез слов’ян. Джерела, стан розвитку і проблематика. К., 1972. Ст. 214.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Ст. 38.

Trypolian, and Chernyakhov epoch was higher than the historical Slavdom culture before the creation of Kievan Rus<sup>33</sup>.

V. Petrov studies the overall pattern of change of epochs on the territory of Ukraine in the general European context. In ancient European history as well as in the history of Middle Ages and Modern Times, the historian distinguishes the main “gradations of time”: the old non-Indo-European world and the new one – the era of Indo-European peoples domination that continues to the present. There was a fracture between these epochs, a catastrophe which falls at II millennium B.C. It’s not just about the linguistic aspect, but also about the structure of historical existence. For V. Petrov, a man, a leading figure, is an indication of the epoch: “A farmer is replaced by a rider. A peaceful settler is replaced by a warrior”. He believed, that during After-trypolian (Pre-scythian) and Scythian epoch «a rider becomes a leading figure of the time, at this very time he extrudes a farmer and pushes him on the back burner». Moreover, he highlighted that he means “economy as well as the social structure of the country”, that it «equally concerns economic, social, political and public life»<sup>34</sup>. According to V. Petrov, ancient history of Ukraine is a successive change of farmer and rider epochs<sup>35</sup>.

For V. Petrov, «Epoch theory» became a methodological basis for solving the problems of ethnogenesis, understanding the concept of «ethnos» and correlation between the epochs change with the stages of ethnogenesis. The scientist outlined his concept of the origin of Slavs and the origins of the Ukrainian people in the monographs “The Origin of the Ukrainian people”<sup>36</sup> and «Ethnogenesis of the Slavs. Sources, stages of development and problematic» (1972)<sup>37</sup>, and in the articles “Anthropological features of the Ukrainian people”<sup>38</sup> and others.

V. Petrov considered the concept of ethnos to be historical, and therefore the process of ethnogenesis is historical as well and takes place within the limits of an all-sufficient epoch, and therefore is discrete. Ethnos of one epoch is not the ethnos of some other epoch; every epoch has “its

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Ст. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Ст. 36–40.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Ст. 46.

<sup>36</sup> Петров В. Походження українського народу. К.: МП «Фенікс», 1992. 192 ст.

<sup>37</sup> Петров В. Етногенез слов’ян...

<sup>38</sup> Петров В. Антропологічні особливості українського народу (Початок). *Орлик: місячник культури і суспільного життя*. Берхтесгаден, 1947. Чис. 5 (Травень). Ст. 15–18; Петров В. Антропологічні особливості українського народу (Закінчення). *Орлик: місячник культури і суспільного життя*. Берхтесгаден, 1947. Чис. 6 (Червень). Ст. 16–19.

direction of ethnos-creating” according to its properties, so ethnos of different epochs are not identical. Within the limits of each epoch ethnogenesis of a separate nation has its own peculiarities and differences. Therefore, the researcher believes that characteristic feature of an ethnic history is continuity of its progressive development.

Later, in 1970 s, the ethnogenetical provisions about the discreteness of processes were elaborated in the works of Soviet ethnographers. Ethnic processes associated with the “fracture” in the development, were called «ethno-discrete». Their special role is that they lead humanity to move into a new ethnic state. In contrast to the ethno-evolutionary processes that are associated only with changes in individual components of ethnic system, J. Bromley noted that it is the discrete processes that caused the emergence of the first ethnic communities<sup>39</sup>.

Ethnogenesis of the Ukrainians, according V. Petrov, occurred within the limits of several epochs that changed one another. The relationship between these epochs was not a correlation of “Chinese type” and was carried out in the shifts, through changes, disasters and crises. “This relationship is subject to laws of epoch change. History of Ukraine passed through several epochs. That is why the concept of epoch as structural integrity is one of the key, guiding principles in our modern historiosophical concepts and studies”, – wrote V. Petrov<sup>40</sup>.

Of course, the scientist was not released from compulsory quotations of classics of Marxism-Leninism and made the necessary references, but mainly to F. Engels and only when it was appropriate, and coincided with the logic of his scientific conclusions.

Developments of V. Petrov remained neglected by the experts, because there was no author’s presentation of theoretical principles and terminological apparatus for methodologically unilaterally trained Soviet scientists. They were practically the accumulation of factual material (outdated to some extent).

On the other hand, Marxism – “camouflaged” concept of V. Petrov is mechanically perceived as Marxism even to this day, and sometimes it distorts the meaning of scientific achievements of the researcher. Thus, in the «Comments» to republication of the work “The Origin of the Ukrainian people” in 1992 the authors (N. Kravchenko and Y. Pavlenko) proposed

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<sup>39</sup> Абашина Н. С. Вивчення етногенезу слов’ян в працях В. П. Петрова. *Археологія*. 1986. Вип. 9. Ст. 10–11; Бромлей Ю. В. Этнос и этнография. М., 1973. Ст. 153–154.

<sup>40</sup> Петров В. Етногенез слов’ян. Ст. 21.

not completely correct attempt of construction of the concept “epoch”: “From the context of work it is implied that the epoch is not a formation in its Marxist sense, although according to a number of features these categories come near. In understanding of the researcher the “epoch” is a certain stage of human development, which is recognized as a structural integrity, which is characterized by a constant relationship (correlation) of certain, interrelated forms of economy, social institutions, cultural phenomena, etc<sup>41</sup>. I believe that terminological addressing to stability does not correlate with the principle of epoch changing and understanding of historical progress in the concept of V. Petrov.

Y. Pavlenko was one of the first national historians, who started to use the civilizational approach starting in the late 1980s, combining it with the theory of formations. In the views of V. Petrov he saw Marxist basis, and in the works published after returning of the scientist to Ukraine he saw the use of exclusively formational theory that prevailed in the Soviet social sciences<sup>42</sup>. Here is how Y. Pavlenko briefly stated the essence of the approach, that was affirmed by V. Petrov, and that was acceptable for him as a moderate version of formational theory application in new methodological paradigms: a systematic understanding of the historical process involves selection of qualitative stages of Slavic ethnogenesis relevant to special forms of social and economic organization (pre-class, early class and so on) and reflected in the specifics of archaeological materials<sup>43</sup>.

However, the fundamental work of Y. Pavlenko «Prehistory of old Russians in the global context» (1994)<sup>44</sup> demonstrates not only the influence of Y. Braychevsky, whom the author expresses thanks in the preface, but also the influences of V. Petrov. The fact of the matter is not only in numerous references to specific historical conclusions and results of field studies of V. Petrov, but also in general perception of his understanding of schematic-dynamic changes of ancient stages of Slavogenesis. The research of Y. Pavlenko is performed on the modern scientific level, on the relevant terminological and theoretical basis, on the grounds

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<sup>41</sup> Кравченко Н., Павленко Ю. Коментар до праці «Походження українського народу». *Походження українського народу*. К.: МП «Фенікс», 1992. Ст. 115.

<sup>42</sup> Там само.

<sup>43</sup> Павленко Ю. В. Раннеклассовые общества (генезис и пути развития). К.: Наук. думка, 1989. Ст. 206–207.

<sup>44</sup> Павленко Ю. В. Передісторія давніх русів у світовому контексті. К.: Фенікс, 1994. 400 ст.

of new source complexes. It covered the “prehistory of Russes» (the period from the third millennium B. C. to late first millennium C. E.).

## CONCLUSIONS

Incompatibility of theoretical views of V. Petrov with stadially linear, deterministic, incrementally progressive vision of the historical process, which was dominant in Soviet science, is evident. Epoch theory of V. Petrov is an individual phenomenon of national historiography, but not an example of “soft revision of Marxism”. However, this does not exclude recognition of socio-economic component in the concept of «epoch» as structural integrity by the academic.

The main tool for cognition of the past for the philosopher is his “epoch theory”, which is quite flexible and provides identification of unique internal laws for each of the epochs, it does not recognize the constant laws in their changing, and therefore allows enough flexibility to generalize specific historical material. V. Petrov’s conception of the ancient history of Ukraine is a holistic, thorough and functional explanatory model. V. Petrov’s scientific heritage of 1940–1950’s, the essence of his ideas can be understood only through his “epoch theory”, because the internal logic of presentation, scientific argumentation and conclusions of the researcher are based on such concepts as “era”, “epoch”, “fracture”, “discreteness” and others.

Conception of V. Petrov was not accepted by his contemporaries and to this day it remains obscure to most researchers. Why? The most common causes are ambiguity of terminology and the lack of a holistic presentation of the conception. Its basic theoretical principles were formulated during DP and published in Ukrainian short-run camp publications in post-war Germany, and fundamental works based on specific historical material were published after two decades in Soviet Ukraine without a systematic presentation of their theoretical principles.

Moreover, V. Petrov’s views could not be perceived in the USSR due to their nonconformity with formational scheme of historical process. In the West –due to language barriers and poor awareness with his work, in the environment Ukrainian emigration –due to odiousness of the author (Soviet spy) and nonconformity of their conceptual and methodological principles with the scheme of continuous national history by M. Hrushevsky.

The lack of attention in modern science can be explained by a complex of reasons. First of all, it is the lack of a general analysis of scientific achievements of Viktor Petrov, debates around personality of the scientist and the writer, sometimes exclusively in the plane of the ideological, political and moral evaluations. Secondly, it is the sustainability of historiographic «templates» and «cliché» (through the formal indicator V. Petrov is automatically reckoned among a cohort of Marxist Historians). Thirdly, what can be considered as an advantage of “epoch theory” in comparison with other historiosophical concepts, namely application to of specific historical material, became its weakness. From the perspective of the modern science the range of archaeological sources of V. Petrov seems too narrow, the findings on specific problems of ancient history of Ukraine are outdated, there is an underestimation of migration processes in ethnogenetical processes, the actual exception from the general scheme of the Bronze Age seems unclear and, therefore, interest in the concept itself is lost. By contrast a historiosofic concept, such as A. J. Toynbee’s, this is not burdened with such particularities and it is “not threatened” by new scientific discoveries and it remains popular for decades.

However, complex reconstruction of conceptual positions, terminology, instrumentarium and methodological foundations of “epoch theory”, practical realization of creative potential of world and national history study in the works of V. Petrov may be important for the creation of modern theoretical models of national history.

Also, no less important today for the Ukrainian historical science is the answer to the question of the meaning of V. Petrov’s concept in the light of M. Hrushevsky’s canonical scheme of the history of Ukraine. The principle of continuity of national history, justified by M. Hrushevsky, has always had an ideological significance; modern society and scientific environment are not ready to opt for a new-fangled versions of discontinuous national history. At the same time, there are more and more calls to pay particular attention to the moments of breaks, which contain much more powerful heuristic potential and are important for understanding of the hypothetical “historical inheritance” and social genealogy than insistence on ideologically motivated continuity<sup>45</sup>. Among

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<sup>45</sup> Касьянов Г. В., Толочко О.П. Національні історії та сучасна історіографія : виклики й небезпеки при написанні нової історії України. *Український історичний журнал*. 2012. № 6. Ст. 21.



other things the structural-synergistic model of Ukrainian history is proposed<sup>46</sup>.

It should be noted, that since the principles of “epoch theory” were applied by V. Petrov for organizing specific historical material of ancient history of Ukraine, this meant differentiation from the “History of Ukraine-Rus” by M. Hrushevsky in chronological terms: when M. Hrushevsky started Ukrainian history with the Antes, V. Petrov’s presentation of early stages of Ukrainian ethnogenesis ended with the Antes. The picture of Slavo-genesis at the turn of Millennium – the first half of the first millennium C. E., as it is depicted in the works of V. Petrov and M. Braychevsky, provides compelling evidence in support of early versions Ukraino-genesis, the supporter of which was M. Hrushevsky<sup>47</sup>.

Therefore, V. Petrov’s concept of the ancient history of Ukraine was based on his “epoch theory”, which rejected the idea of continuous progress and emphasized the discreteness of historical process. Independently developed, based on personal experience, observations and emotions, it discovers the greatest resemblance to the theory of local civilizations of O. Spengler and A.J. Toynbee. The expression of national identity as a philosopher and a scientist, an appeal to the spiritual culture of the Ukrainian people is observed in the views of V. Petrov, as well as in the views of other prominent thinkers – his contemporaries (M. Khvylovy, D. Chyzhevsky and others). At the same time it can be argued that approaches of V. Petrov exhibit a certain correspondence to synergistic paradigm of understanding of the historical process, they were in unison with the latest scientific theories and far ahead of their time.

However, the historical scheme of V. Petrov is detached from the history of Ukrainian historical thought, as it has not been assessed in historiography; it remained out of sight of scientists and has no direct followers.

## SUMMARY

Viktor Petrov (1894–1969) was one of the brightest Ukrainian intellectuals of his time – an outstanding scientist of encyclopedic erudition (historian, ethnographer, archaeologist, literary scholar, linguist, folklorist

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<sup>46</sup> Колесник І. Український гранд-нарратив. Ретроспективи та перспективи. *Ейдос: альманах теорії та історії історичної науки*. К.: Ін-т історії НАН України, 2008. Вип. 3. Ст. 175–177.

<sup>47</sup> Залізняк Л. Українці: витоки та історичні долі. К.: Темпора, 2011. Ст. 218; Павленко Ю. В. Раннеклассовые общества... Ст. 115.

and philosopher), science manager, public figure and writer of the circle of neoclassicists and Soviet intelligence agent. V. Petrov's top achievement as an intellectual and versatile scholar is his "epoch theory". The thinker suggested an original conception of ancient history of Ukraine, which became an important theoretical and practical contribution to Ukrainian historiography. His concept was based on the discrete, cyclical vision of the historical process and was in the line with the main trends of European historiosophical thought of 1920–1940, it was directly in the context of intellectual ideas of N. Berdyaev, V. Velflin, N. Danilevsky, A.J. Toynbee, S. Freud, M. Foucault, M. Khvylovy, D. Chyzhevsky, F. Schmitt, O. Spengler and the existentialists. On the basis of the «epoch theory» the scientist developed a scheme of ancient history of Ukraine ("prehistory of Ukrainian people") and a scheme of ethnogenesis of Ukrainian people as a part of European history. This opened a new way for the development of national historical science and could cause a «revolution» in Ukrainian historical writing. However, intellectual initiative of the scientist was not accepted by his contemporaries and to this day it remains outside the main directions of theoretical and practical search of historians.

This article deals with the content and the genesis of Petrov's «epoch theory».

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