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THE NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEPUTIES AS A RITUAL ELEMENT OF SOVIET OSTENSIBLE DEMOCRACY

The study deals with features of the procedure of the nomination of candidates for workers' deputies during the election campaigns to the Supreme Soviets of the USSR, the Ukrainian SSR, and local governments in the Ukrainian SSR of the post-war period. Legislative, organizational, and propaganda aspects of the process of running for power are analyzed. The procedure did not comply with constitutional norms, as, contrary to the Constitution, only one non-alternative candidate was nominated from each constituency, using non-legal buttons of their selection. Pre-election meetings were defined as one of the fundamental steps of the electoral process and as a ritual element of Soviet ostensible democracy. Pre-election events were controlled by party bodies, which neutralized the democratic principles of forming a representative branch of government and made it impossible to create a truly popular representation. The author defines the criteria that the authorities used for forming the deputy corps of different levels and describes the ideal version of the Soviet representative of the people.

Describing officials' difficulties in nominating candidates for deputies to local councils, the author gives statistics and reasons for the rejection of nominees at this level at the election meeting. Difficulties in the organization and conduct of the nomination procedure in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR due to the prevalence of anti-Soviet sentiment in the region and the activities of the nationalist underground were noted. It has been observed that every year citizens showed a more and more indifferent attitude to the elections due to the formality and politicization of the election procedure. Moreover, the parliamentary representation formed under party control did not correlate with society's political and social stratification.

Keywords: Ukrainian SSR, postwar period, Soviet election campaigns, election meetings, candidates for workers' deputies.

In the context of the reforms announced in Ukraine, changes in the electoral legislation play a crucial role since they directly affect changes in the management sector, which determines the essence of the state's political system.

So far, all the innovations introduced since independence have not been able to overcome the defects in the electoral process's organization and course. Therefore, the study of the evolution of electoral legislation and the system of organization of elections in the Ukrainian lands during different periods remains relevant. In particular, the optimization of the electoral process in contemporary Ukraine is impossible without analyzing Soviet democratic institutions' activities, which has a significant impact on the nature of election campaigns and the electoral choice of society up to this day.

Researchers paid little attention to the nomination of candidates for deputies in the Ukrainian SSR during Stalinism because of the artificiality and formality of the action accurately controlled by the Communists. This prevented the subject from being defined as a scientific problem. Some aspects related to the pre-election meeting organization and the principles of formation of the deputy corps can be found in the papers of Yu. Dreval¹, I. Kostenok², S. Yekelchyk³, A. Kymerlinh⁴, A. Fokin⁵, and others. They saw them primarily as a pretext for characterizing the Soviet political system.

The purpose of the article is to cover the legislative, organizational, and propaganda aspects of the nomination process to stand as a candidate for deputies as a ritual element of Soviet ostensible democracy.

Given the radicalization of sentiment in postwar society, the government used the «carrot and stick» method to stabilize the situation in the country. On the one hand, systemic and mass repressions continued; on the other hand, the authorities clearly expressed their intentions to gain people's trust and legitimize the existing system through it. The most effective mechanism that helped to establish trust between the government and society in the Soviet era was the institution of elections because «one of the hidden purposes of the electoral process in the USSR was to maintain or increase trust in the existing system»⁶. This is what the nomination of candidates for deputies of supreme and local governments was aimed at. Voters at the pre-

¹ Древалъ Ю. Д. Радянська модель політичного представництва. *Державне будівництво*. 2012. № 2. С. 1–9. URL: http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/DeBu_2012_2_3

² Костенок І. Радянська модель самоврядування як чинник впливу на сучасні самоврядні практики на пострадянському просторі. Публічне управління: теорія та практика: зб. наук. праць Асоціації докторів наук з державного управління. Харків: Вид-во «ДокНаукаДержУпр», 2012. Вип. 4 (12). Грудень. С. 168–171.

³ Єкельчик С. Перший кандидат і його вірні діти: Як висували в депутати в повоєнному Києві. *Histor!anS*. 2014. 20 жовтня. URL: <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/1302-serhii-yekelchuk-pershyi-kandydat-i-ioho-virni-dity-yak-v> (дата звернення: 6.05.2019).

⁴ Кимерлинг А. Выборы в Верховный Совет СССР 1946 года в Молотовской области как пример мобилизационной политической кампании. *Вестник Пермского университета. Серия: История*. Пермь, 2016. Вип. 4 (35). С. 109. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/v/vybory-v-verhovnuy-совет-sssr-1946-goda-v-molotovskoy-oblasti-kak-primer-mobilizatsionnoy-politicheskoy-kampanii> (дата звернення: 6.05.2020).

⁵ Фокин А. А. Депутат – слуга народа. Принципы выдвижения кандидатов как элемент советской демократии в 1960–1970-х гг. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/deputat-sluga-naroda-printsipy-vydvizheniya-kandidatov-kak-element-sovetskoj-demokratii-v-> (дата звернення: 12.06.2020).

⁶ Фокин А. «Товарищи! Разрешите поблагодарить вас за оказанное мне доверие». Культура доверия в советском избирательном процессе. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/tovarishi-razreshite-mne-poblagodarit-vas-za-okazannoe-mne-doverie-kultura-doveriya-v-sovets> (дата звернення: 22.07.2020).

election meeting showed confidence in a nominee who symbolized the government. In turn, he promised to justify this trust, which should contribute to the emergence of stable relations and trust between the government and the population. However, this relationship became formalized, and the nomination of candidates for the election, as one of the fundamental steps of the election process, turned into a compulsory politicized ritual without practical meaning.

According to the law, the principles for nominating deputies of the Soviet (workers' council) were the same at all levels. The candidacy was to be nominated and approved at the pre-election meeting of the institution, enterprise, or public organization that delegated its representative to the government. The only difference was in terms according to which candidates were registered by the district election commission (to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR – 30 days before the election, to land, county, region, and district Soviets – 35 days, to city, rural and settlement Soviets – 20 days). Long before the pre-election meeting, the candidates were approved by the bureaus of regional, city, and district committees of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – it depended on the representation level. Only after that, the discussion and approval mechanism at the workers' meeting was to be launched. The task of party organizations was to support the nominated candidates by the population, disguising the party's choice as a people's initiative.

In order to register a candidate, it was necessary to submit to the district election commission the minutes of the meeting on the nomination of the candidate and his/her application for consent to run from the organization nominating him/her. The nomination of candidates outside party control was considered unacceptable, as were the facts of self-nomination, which «the most democratic Stalinist constitution» did not provide for and which were immediately declared «hostile raids».

There was a system of quotas for candidates for ensuring nationwide power. So while forming the deputy corps, the Communists adhered to certain proportions regarding the nomination of men and women, partisan and nonpartisan, seniors and youth, etc. It was necessary to find the most suitable persons within these quotas based on certain criteria (work accomplishments, active public position, honorary titles, and awards, etc.). On the one hand, the authorities tried to mobilize the most worthy representatives into the parliamentary corps to increase the people's trust in the regime; on the other hand, there were numerous attempts to «pull» the right people into state institutions. The approval of both the government institutions and the people was considered a necessary condition for the nomination of a candidate, although a compromise was not always reached.

The role of candidates in election campaigns was also well-defined. Party committees and KGB officers tightly controlled their speeches and activities, unless, of course, the nominee belonged to the party nomenklatura or intelligence agency. It is known, instead of having their own program, the nominees identified it with the national political goals and economic five-year plans. This depersonalized the candidate, devalued his importance as a representative of the people, turning him into a symbolic figure. Therefore citizens did not vote for a specific person who had to solve their current problems but for state and political ideals. No wonder in the constituencies of all levels, except elections to the lowest-level Soviets, Stalin was called the «first candidate», «pushing to the second place the one whose name was on a ballot»⁷. Although the so-called «symbolic candidates» would withdraw their candidacies before

⁷ Скељчик С. Перший кандидат і його вірні діти ...

the election, referring to the Constitution article that provided for the possibility of running in only one constituency, the propaganda effect of this action was difficult to overestimate. However, the substitution of the electoral process subjects also had negative sides, reducing the interest of the population in the elections, and voting against the candidate was regarded as a vote against the ruling system.

Writing statements by candidates for the district commission agreeing to run was also ritualized since it usually showed political literacy and loyalty. In particular, P. H. Tychyna, nominated as a candidate for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the second convocation in December 1945, wrote that he promised to justify the voters' trust by honest and dedicated service to Motherland⁸. Another candidate, Dod Feodosii, declared likewise⁹. Candidates rarely confined themselves only to state the fact of nominating, such as the director of Kamin-Mostivsk MTS Danylo Tymofiiiovych Stepanok¹⁰.

Although the Constitution did not grant the proxies' institution, each candidate was given the proxy to represent their interests to the constituency voters. This was due to the lack of education most of the nominees, as a worker or kolkhoz farmer could not always appropriately explain to voters the decisions of the next Plenum of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U or Government resolutions. Such a candidate was assigned a «responsible comrade» who did it for him. The same was with ministers, generals, secretaries of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U and other high-ranking officials who, while running for power, did not always have time to meet with voters, so proxies represented their interests.

The nominating candidates for deputies were legislatively quite democratic but full control by the only state party, the Communist Party, turned it into fiction. On the eve of the election, regional committee workers would send detailed instructions to lower party centers on holding pre-election meetings, listing the names of candidates, the method of electing the presidium of the meeting, the number and order of speakers (6-8 people), and necessity to send a congratulatory telegram to Comrade Stalin on behalf of the district voters. Regarding the content of the speeches, the unspoken instructions stated: «To warn the secretaries of the district committees of the CP(b)U that all speeches should be carefully prepared and the text of the speeches should be edited»¹¹. As a result, workers' speeches at the pre-election meetings once again proved the strict control of the process since they had a clear political message and included numerous ideological clichés. And the meeting itself turned into a pompous act intended to demonstrate the loyalty of the population to power, that is, «to make a powerful showing of workers' love and devotion to the Bolshevik Party, the leader, and teacher Comrade Stalin» (which was the main purpose of such meetings in the time)¹².

Speakers traditionally began their speeches with words of gratitude to «father Stalin and the wise Communist Party», which lead the country to progress and prosperity. Then the nominee's biography was read, in which the proletarian origin of the future deputy and

⁸ Центральний державний архів вищих органів влади України (далі – ЦДАВО України). Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 233. Арк. 84.

⁹ Там само. Арк. 46.

¹⁰ Там само. Арк. 133.

¹¹ Порядок проведення зборів, присвячених зустрічі кандидата у депутати Верховної Ради СРСР з виборцями. Державний архів Тернопільської області (далі – Держархів Тернопільської обл.). Ф.П-1. Оп. 1. Спр. 1887. Арк. 13.

¹² Цит. за: Єсельчик С. Перший кандидат і його вірні діти...

his devotion to the communism ideals were emphasized. Speakers often promised to take on increased socialist commitments to meet the «historic date in the Ukrainian people's life – the day of the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR» with shock work. Thus, the senior mechanic of Mlynivtsi MTS of Zboriv district, Ternopil region Teliuk commit themselves to complete the tractor fleet's repair by February 15, 1950, and to repair all agricultural machinery and equipment by March 12¹³. And the farmer of the B. Khmelnytskyi kolkhoz in the same district called on neighbors to work to earn Comrade Stalin's gratitude¹⁴. Speakers ended their speeches with praise for Stalin and members of the government or shouts of «Long live Comrade Stalin!», «Hurray for Stalin!» and others. At that moment, the hall usually loudly applauded, which was also written in the unspoken instructions of the regional committee.

In the eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR, the pre-election meetings might be extremely pompous and large-scale (although workers and peasants were forced to attend it under pressure), but in the western regions, meetings were very modest. The party members had to make additional efforts to organize such performances because people did not want to participate in them. At least such mass meetings as in post-war Kyiv (during the nomination of workers' deputies to local Soviets in December 1950, about 20,000 Kyiv citizens gathered in the square near the university, and in January 1951, Stalin's candidacy for the deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR supported 150 thousand¹⁵), none was recorded. In particular, delegates from only 16 rural constituencies came to the pre-election meeting on nominating candidates for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on January 5, 1946, in Horodok, Lviv Region, and the rest did not show up. Therefore, only 120 people were present at the meeting¹⁶. The only exception was the Transcarpathia, which «joined» the USSR only at the end of 1945, and whose population did not have time to get rid of the bright expectations from the Bolsheviks. Speakers at pro-government meetings and rallies gathered thousands of listeners here¹⁷.

Representatives of the regime explained the unsatisfactory organization of pre-election events by obstacles from members of the national liberation movement who threatened the population. As a result, people were afraid of speaking, traveling, and going to pre-election meetings. However, Western Ukrainians' hostile attitude to the authorities, which was the real reason, was not mentioned. Meanwhile, the locals' unwillingness to cooperate with the authorities forced people to avoid such events, and those who took part in them were harassed by OUN underground members and gained contempt by their neighbors. A resi-

¹³ Інформація про перебіг висування кандидатів у депутати до Ради Союзу і Ради Національностей Верховної Ради Союзу РСР. Держархів Тернопільської обл. Ф.П-1. Оп. 1. Спр. 1887. Арк. 19.

¹⁴ Там само.

¹⁵ Там само.

¹⁶ Інформація представника Львівського обкому КП(б)У з підготовки виборів у ВР СРСР по Яворівському р-ну Фурсова. 8 січня 1946 р. Державний архів Львівської області (далі – Держархів Львівської обл.). Ф. 3. Оп. 1. Спр. 466. Арк. 18.зв.–19.

¹⁷ Міщанин В. Перші радянські вибори на Закарпатті в республіканський парламент (9 лютого 1947 р.): аналіз, хід та результати. Науковий вісник Миколаївського національного університету імені В. О. Сухомлинського. Історичні науки. зб. наук. праць / за ред. М. М. Шитюка. Миколаїв, 2015. № 2 (40). С. 54–62.

dent of Mateiky in Tsumanskyi district, Volyn region M. Demchuk, elected as a candidate for the district election meeting in November 1947, said: «We are not going of our own free will, but we are forcibly taken to this meeting, all the villagers are laughing at us»¹⁸.

In the regional centers, the authorities controlled such events much more carefully. In particular, the pre-election meeting of Ivan Franko Lviv University's staff on the nomination of candidates for deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which took place on January 3, 1946, was attended by 730 people. The secretary of the Lviv regional committee of the CP(b)U I. S. Hrushetskyi, the lecturer of the Lviv University S. V. Stefanyk, and the deputy chairman of the City Council V. H. Sadovyi were nominated. However, the first candidate was traditionally J. V. Stalin. Professor of Mathematics Myron Zarytskyi was given the word to nominate Comrade Stalin as a candidate for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. His speech sounded unnatural and insincere, as it is hard to believe that the father of Kateryna Zarytska, a convicted OUN activist, could have deliberately delivered praises to Stalin¹⁹. Obviously, the text of the speech was written for the professor in the regional committee, and he was forced to read it. To emphasize the forced nature of such speeches, most speakers who belonged to former nationally oriented circles read texts from a piece of paper. However, having understood the rules of the game, some were eager to curry favor with the authorities in exchange for promotion or material benefits.

Despite party control, the Soviet electoral system did not always work effectively. There were many cases of candidates being rejected at pre-election meetings, mostly at the local level. The Central Committee of the CP(b)U approved candidates for the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR, so rotations took place only in connection with the arrest or death of the candidate. These individuals' professional or moral qualities were undoubted for most voters because of the high state or social status, so the candidacy used to be supported unanimously. In general, there were many worthy workers among the workers' deputies who honestly tried to perform their duties and, despite the ineffectiveness of the representative branch of government in the USSR, found ways to solve the problems and orders of the electorate. But, in the system of party selection of candidates for deputies, the nominees' professional and moral qualities were often regarded non-essential as opposed to party discipline and loyalty to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism. Given this, careerists and people indifferent to the needs of workers quite often joined the parliamentary representation. Attempts of individual citizens to prevent the nomination of people who did not have professional skills or were morally depraved were often ignored. Authorities ignored voters' opinion when it was necessary to give a deputy mandate to the «right person», so many people got to the representative branch of government against voters' will. In particular, the first secretary of the Chernivtsi regional committee of the CP(b)U I. S. Zeleniuk was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the second convocation, although residents accused him of neglecting the municipal infrastructure, careless position to the needs of ordinary people, and a luxury lifestyle. So, the member of an editorial board of the newspaper «Radianska Bukovyna» Ye. Kaplan, having come

¹⁸ Галузевий державний архів Служби Безпеки України (далі – ГДА СБУ). Ф. 16. Оп. 1. Спр. 562. Арк. 35.

¹⁹ Інформація про загальні збори колективу Університету ім. І. Франка по висуненню кандидатів у депутати Верховної Ради СРСР. Держархів Львівської обл. . Ф. 3. Оп. 1. Спр. 481. Арк. 9.

to a polling station, declared to members of the election commission: «Zeleniuk does not worry about the workers, but only provides the top, he did not deserve to be a deputy»²⁰. Other citizens expressed similar views. The mechanic of the Chernivtsi regional hospital Umanskyi said that Zeleniuk had no merits to be nominated²¹. Voters had as many questions for regional leaders in other USSR regions, who had re-run for deputy. For instance, during the election meeting in Rekunovtsi, Poltava region, on January 3, 1946, voters expressed distrust in the chairman of the Poltava Region Executive Committee, I. Martynenko, who was running for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the second convocation. Major P. A. Safronov made critical remarks against the nominee, accusing him of binge-drinking, lewd behavior, and a war crime. According to P. A. Safronov, in 1942, as a member of the military council of the 57th Army, Martynenko did nothing to save the soldiers when the army was surrounded in the Barvinkove direction. As a result, the army lost 75,000 soldiers²². The accusations were really serious, so the meeting was postponed until the circumstances were clarified. At the same time, two candidates, Maryna Hnatenko and Hanna Tereshchenko, were sharply criticized by voters²³. However, all the criticized persons became members of the parliamentary corps of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the second convocation.

All participants in the process were aware of the fictitious nature of the nomination meeting but continued to play by the rules. Some candidates sincerely believed in the state importance of their mission; others behaved cynically and openly displayed their position. In particular, in the western regions, given the boycott of the electoral process, Stalin's nominees did not even hide that nothing depended on the people's will. In Borynychy, Lviv region, speaking in front of the people at the pre-election meeting, a candidate for deputy Kravchuk said that it did not matter whether people would vote or not – he would be elected indeed²⁴. Many candidates did not want to meet with voters at all because, under the current system, these meetings turned into an annoying formality. For example, during the elections to the local Soviets of the second convocation, only 23,841 candidates registered by the District Election Commissions out of the 45,753 (a little more than half) met with voters²⁵.

If the candidacies for the supreme bodies of power were not objected to by most voters, people were much more critical to the nomination of candidates to local Soviets, as they were personally acquainted with many nominees and could properly assess their potential in power. Therefore, many candidates for deputies to regional, district, city, village, and settlement Soviets had been criticized by voters. At a pre-election meeting in Hubychi,

²⁰ Специальное сообщение об отрицательных отзывах отдельных лиц в отношении некоторых кандидатур, выдвинутых кандидатами на голосование в депутаты Верховного Совета СССР. 1946 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Оп. 1. Спр. 562. Арк. 22.

²¹ Там само. Арк. 22.

²² Специальное сообщение об открытом выступлении члена ВКП(б) Сафронова против кандидата в депутаты Верховного Совета Союза ССР Мартыненко – председателя Полтавского облисполкома. 1946 г., 5 января. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Оп. 1. Спр. 562. Арк. 97–99.

²³ Копии спецсообщений докладных записок и представлений. 1946 г. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Оп. 7. Спр. 4. Т. 3. Арк. 253.

²⁴ Додатковий звіт з т. зв. «виборів» до Верховної Ради СССР, що відбулись 10 лютого 1946 р. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 13. Спр. 376. Т. 38. Арк. 286.

²⁵ Информация о ходе подготовки к выборам в местные Советы депутатов трудящихся Украинской РСР за 14 ноября 1947 г. ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 17. Спр. 16. Арк. 58.

Dobromyl district (Drohobych region), when the nominee was telling his autobiography, emphasizing his peasant origin, one of the attendants exclaimed: «Yeah, I know you. We used to go to the forest to steal firewood together»²⁶.

The reasons for rejecting the candidacy were most often unprofessionalism, careerism, and the nominee's low moral level. In particular, a group of communists from Yukhymivtsi, Chorno-Ostrivsk district, Kamyanets-Podilsk region, strongly opposed the candidacy of the village committee to their village Soviet Zamlynskyi. In a letter to the chairman of the RK CP(b)U Hlaziuk, local activists described the candidate as a slacker and drinker and stressed the inadmissibility of violating Soviet election law²⁷.

Many cases of rejection of candidates nominated by party members were recorded in other regions of the Ukrainian SSR. November 14, 1947, at a meeting of the kolkhoz, the peasants of the Verkhnohortytsia district, Zaporizhia region, rejected the candidacy of the district prosecutor Polskyi and instead suggested a local head of the kolkhoz²⁸. Moreover, the meeting of workers and employees of Dariivska MTS in the Kherson region nominated their candidacy from the best tractor drivers instead of the candidacy proposed by the district committee of the CP(b)U²⁹. Rejections of candidates due to religious beliefs were quite common. Mrs. Liakh, in the Brovarskyi district of the Kyiv region, was deregistered as a candidate for the district Soviet because she got married in church³⁰.

Candidates were often withdrawn from the run at the command of party bodies or the KGB (MGB) because of «imperfections» in the nominee's biography (non-proletarian origins, cooperation with the Nazis during World War II, the relatives living abroad, participation in the national liberation movement, etc.). For instance, in November 1947 in Bilky of the Irshava district in Transcarpathia were an attempt to nominate a representative of the wealthy peasantry as a candidate for the village Soviet, which the authorities stopped in advance, declaring the candidate a «kulak»³¹.

In the western region, candidates often withdrew their candidacies from elections under pressure from the OUN and UIA. Thus, on November 19, 1947, in the Stanislaviv region, in the Kolomyia rural constituency № 50, a kolkhoz farmer, Hanna Vasylyvna Sysok, refused to run for the district Soviet the last moment, thus delaying the registration of candidates for deputies³². Sometimes, for the same reasons, a nominee refused to run after registration (in the Nyzhnii-Ustryk district of the Drohobych region)³³.

A great number of candidates for local deputies did not gain the trust of citizens. In particular, during the elections to the local Soviets of Workers' Deputies of the second con-

²⁶ Додатковий звіт з т. зв. «виборів» до Верховної Ради СРСР, що відбулись 10 лютого 1946 р. ... Арк. 136.

²⁷ ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Оп. 1. Спр. 629. Арк. 87.

²⁸ Информация о ходе подготовки к выборам в местные Советы депутатов трудящихся Украинской РСР... Арк. 80.

²⁹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 17. Спр. 16. Арк. 122.

³⁰ Там само.

³¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 17. Спр. 16. Арк. 71

³² Информация о ходе подготовки к выборам в местные Советы депутатов трудящихся Украинской РСР за 19 ноября 1947г. ... Арк. 95.

³³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 17. Спр. 16. Арк. 113.

vocation as of November 27, 1947, in the Ternopil region, 8 candidates for village Soviets were rejected (in Bilobozhnyky, Kopychyntsi, Pidvolochysk, and Trusiv districts)³⁴, in the Drohobych region – 2 (in Staryi Sambir and Novo-Vasylkiv districts), in the Transcarpathia region – 1 (Lokhove, Mukachevo district), etc³⁵.

Also, during the elections, citizens could adjust the composition of the deputy corps. Many voters exercised their right to free choice and voted against candidates whom they did not like. However, when the system had been established, protest votes decreased. During the elections to local Soviets in the western regions of the USSR, in 1940, candidates from 68 constituencies to village Soviets and one by one constituency in the elections to the city Soviet of workers' deputies were not elected, but in the postwar period during elections to local Soviets of the second convocation (1947) in the Ukrainian SSR 11 deputies to village Soviets did not receive the required number of votes. Furthermore, during the similar elections of the third convocation (December 17, 1950), there were only 5 such precedents, and during elections to local Soviets of the third convocation in February 1953 – 6.

The rejection of the candidacy proposed and approved by the CP(b)U at the pre-election meeting or its failure in the elections the echelons of power interpreted not as a manifestation of democracy but as a lack of party organization and punished those responsible with reprimands and other penalties up to dismissal. The party members were accused of weak integration into labor collectives, people's ignorance, inability to gain authority among the masses, the like. Such a situation forced the responsible persons to select candidates for the deputies more carefully, coordinating their choice with the people's opinion, but this did not change the principle of regional and district committees' control over the process of nominating candidates. The rejected candidates were replaced by other government-controlled candidates, once again launching an artificial mechanism to support them with a workers' meeting, so there was no hint of democracy.

Thus, nominating candidates for deputies in the USSR legislatively was one of the fundamental stages of the election process to ensure nationwide representation in government. Like the Soviet electoral system in general, it was characterized by several contradictions. The Constitution of 1936 granted the possibility of nominating several alternative candidates in one constituency, but the authorities did everything possible to eliminate pre-election competition. The law provided for the free nomination of candidates at workers' meetings. Instead, the practice provided numerous social limitations, which made it impossible to reproduce real representation, which would connect with society's political and social stratification. Party bodies, interfering in the procedure of nominating candidates for deputies and using non-legal regulators of their selection, leveled the democratic nature of the formation of the representative branch of power, and the process itself turned into an agitation action without practical meaning.

³⁴ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 17. Спр. 16. Арк. 121.

³⁵ Там само. Арк. 109.

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ВИСУВАННЯ КАНДИДАТІВ У ДЕПУТАТИ ЯК РИТУАЛЬНИЙ ЕЛЕМЕНТ РАДЯНСЬКОЇ ПОКАЗОВОЇ ДЕМОКРАТІЇ

Висвітлено особливості процедури висування кандидатів у депутати трудящих під час виборчих кампаній до Верховних Рад СРСР, УРСР та місцевих органів влади в Українській РСР повоєнного періоду. Осмислено законодавчі, організаційно-технічні та пропагандистські аспекти процесу балотування у владу. Акцентовано невідповідність процедури висування кандидатів у депутати конституційним нормам, адже всупереч

Конституції з кожного округу висували лише одного безальтернативного кандидата, застосовуючи неправові регулятори їхнього відбору. Передвиборчі збори визначено як одну з основоположних стадій виборчого процесу, а водночас як ритуальний елемент радянської показової демократії. Наголошено на повній підконтрольності передвиборчих заходів партійним органам, що нівелювало демократичні принципи формування представницької гілки влади та унеможливило створення дійсно народного представництва. Окреслено критерії, якими керувалася влада у формуванні депутатського корпусу різних рівнів та охарактеризовано ідеальний варіант радянського представника народу. Описано складнощі, з якими стикалися представники влади під час висування кандидатів у депутати до місцевих Рад, наведено статистику та причини відхилення висуваних вказаного рівня на передвиборчих зборах. Наголошено на додаткових труднощах організації та проведення процедури висування кандидатів у депутати в західних областях УРСР, що було пов'язано з домінуванням у регіоні антирадянських настроїв та діяльністю націоналістичного підпілля. Простежено, що з кожним роком громадяни виявляли все більш індиферентне ставлення до виборів з огляду на формальність та заполітизованість виборчих процедур, а сформоване під партійним контролем депутатське представництво не відповідало політичному та соціальному розшаруванню суспільства.

Ключові слова: Українська РСР, повоєнний період, радянські виборчі кампанії, передвиборчі збори, кандидати у депутати трудящих.