

UDC 94:[323.3:66-051](477)"16/17"

Mulyar Anatoly

Candidate of Historical Sciences,

Associate Professor of the Department of Social and Humanities

University of Economics and Entrepreneurship

ORCID: 0000-0002-7629-301X

**BEYOND DOGMA: STRATEGIES OF ADAPTATION AND
SCHOLARLY AUTONOMY IN SOVIET AGRARIAN
HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE, 19TH – EARLY
20TH CENTURIES**

**ПОЗА ДОГМОЮ: СТРАТЕГІЇ АДАПТАЦІЇ ТА НАУКОВА
АВТОНОМІЯ В РАДЯНСЬКІЙ АГРАРНІЙ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЇ
ПРАВОБЕРЕЖНОЇ УКРАЇНИ XIX - ПОЧАТКУ XX СТ.**

***Summary.** This article explores the complex intellectual strategies of adaptation and the pursuit of scholarly autonomy employed by Soviet historians who researched land relations in Right-Bank Ukraine during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Contrary to the widespread perception that Soviet historiography was entirely subservient to the ideological imperatives of Marxism-Leninism, this work demonstrates how researchers navigated strict censorship and a repressive apparatus. It analyzes the approaches of prominent scholars such as I. Hurzhii, M. Leshchenko, and L. Melnyk, who, by combining class analysis with extensive use of archival sources, sought to avoid excessive ideologization and made significant contributions to the study of socio-economic processes in the region. The article also examines the works of other historians who operated within more rigid ideological frameworks, illustrating the multifaceted nature of Soviet scholarly discourse. Overall, the research highlights the challenges of balancing*

scholarly objectivity with ideological conformity that influenced the structure and content of Soviet historical works, proving that even under totalitarian conditions, the production of significant scholarly knowledge was possible.

Key words: *Soviet historiography, agrarian history, Right-Bank Ukraine, 19th century, early 20th century, land relations, adaptation, scholarly autonomy, ideological control, historians.*

Problem Statement. Traditionally, Soviet historiography is often interpreted as a discipline entirely subservient to the ideological imperatives of Marxism-Leninism, with its representatives viewed as passive executors of state will. This simplistic approach significantly diminishes the complexity of the intellectual strategies that Soviet historians employed to adapt to censorship, maneuver within ideological frameworks, and develop innovative approaches to studying the past. They not only survived under a repressive apparatus but also actively produced scholarly knowledge, balancing official demands with the pursuit of academic autonomy.

Soviet historical science developed under unprecedented ideological control, particularly evident during the Stalinist era. History as a discipline was expected to legitimize the Communist Party's power, emphasizing the historical inevitability of socialist construction and justifying the regime's political decisions. Censorship was pervasive, demanding that historians strictly align their work with the official line, and any deviations were severely punished—ranging from professional isolation to political repression.

Despite these rigid constraints, historians were not always passive recipients of directives. An examination of land relations in Right-Bank Ukraine during the 19th and early 20th centuries reveals how some historians developed their research strategies, avoiding excessive ideologization and deepening archival research. This allowed them to make significant contributions to the

study of the region's socio-economic processes, agricultural transformations, and peasant movements.

Therefore, the relevance of this study stems from the need to re-evaluate the role of Soviet historians not merely as purveyors of ideology but also as scholars capable of critical analysis and the production of valuable knowledge. Currently, there is a need for a deeper examination of the mechanisms they used to achieve this, as well as the impact of their work on contemporary historiography. Consequently, this article aims to fill this gap by analyzing the specifics of Soviet agrarian historiography's functioning through the regional example of Right-Bank Ukraine and to uncover strategies of adaptation and the pursuit of academic autonomy under ideological pressure.

Research Methodology. This study employs an integrated approach that combines the principles of historiographical analysis, contextual analysis, and elements of critical discourse analysis. The purpose of applying this methodological framework is to conduct an in-depth study of Soviet agrarian historiography of Right-Bank Ukraine from the 19th to the early 20th century. The research specifically focuses on identifying the strategies historians used to adapt and their pursuit of academic autonomy under conditions of ideological control.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Recent research and publications on the agrarian history of Ukraine indicate a significant renewal in the scientific approach to this subject. This renewal is driven by combining classical historical methods with modern economic, sociological, and geographical analyses. In 2019, a new three-part textbook titled "Agrarian History of Ukraine" (2019) [52] was prepared by a team of authors including S.S. Padalka, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Leading Researcher at the Institute of History of Ukraine, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; I.H. Kyrylenko, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine; and V.A. Verhunov, Doctor

of Agricultural Sciences, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Academician of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine. Based on their analysis of numerous documentary sources and studies by Ukrainian and foreign historians, the authors reveal the history of the Ukrainian peasantry and agrarian relations in Ukrainian lands from ancient times to the beginning of the current century.

The textbook thoroughly examines peasant reforms in Western Ukrainian lands and in Russian-ruled Ukraine, as well as the post-reform period (1860s-1890s, Chapter 11). Special attention is given to changes in agriculture, the socio-economic life of the village, the peasant environment, and the everyday life of the Ukrainian village [24]. Research increasingly views agrarian history in connection with broader processes such as capitalism, industrialization, social movements, and state policy, including the colonial aspects of economic exploitation of Ukrainian lands within the USSR [19].

Particular emphasis is placed on the role of private peasant farms in Ukraine's modern agrarian economy, their resilience, efficiency, and potential for developing small entrepreneurship in agribusiness. For instance, recent dissertation research explores the organizational and economic principles of such farms operating under market conditions [18].

Presentation of the Main Research Material

The widespread belief that Soviet historiography was entirely subservient to Marxist-Leninist ideology, and its practitioners merely passive executors of the party's will, is overly simplistic. In reality, Soviet historians employed complex intellectual strategies to navigate within rigid ideological and censorship constraints, all while producing significant scholarly knowledge. Their activities demonstrate a unique balance between official demands and the desire to maintain academic integrity.

The development of Soviet historical science occurred under unprecedented ideological pressure, particularly palpable during the Stalinist era.

History was viewed as a tool for legitimizing the Communist Party, intended to emphasize the inevitability of socialist construction and justify the regime's decisions. All-encompassing censorship demanded strict adherence to the official line, and any deviation could lead to severe consequences, from professional marginalization to political repression.

Despite these strictures, historians were not always passive recipients of directives. They developed distinctive "survival strategies" and "tactics of resistance" that allowed them to preserve the academic value of their research. This manifested through the use of cautious phrasing, focusing on "safe" topics (e.g., archaeological research, ancient or medieval history) that could be studied without direct conflict with ideology, and sometimes through "Aesopian language" (hidden hints and allegories) that allowed them to convey nuances and critical remarks between the lines.

At the same time, Soviet historians also demonstrated significant innovation in certain methodological approaches, particularly in developing quantitative research methods. The ideological emphasis on materialism and economic determinism fostered a deeper focus on statistical and mass sources—such as agricultural productivity data, demographic indicators, census materials, and budget studies. This stimulated the creation of large archival databases and the development of analytical tools that, to some extent, foreshadowed the rise of cliometrics and social history in the West. Thus, even under harsh conditions, Soviet historiography made its specific contribution to the development of historical methodology.

One striking example of applying intellectual strategies in Soviet historiography is the figure of Oleksiy Ivanovych Baranovich (1892–1961), a prominent researcher of agrarian history in Right-Bank Ukraine and socio-demographic processes. His scholarly legacy, comprising approximately 50 works, was shaped during a complex transition from the relative academic freedom of the 1920s to the rigid ideologization of the 1930s–1950s.

Among his most fundamental works, which illustrate this evolution, are "Essays on Magnate Economy in Southern Volhynia in the 18th Century" (Vol. 1, 1926; Vol. 3, 1930) [1] and "Population of Volhynian Voivodeship in the First Half of the 17th Century" (1930) [2]. These early works reflect his research potential and the broader scope of issues from the de-ideologized period. In contrast, the later work "Magnate Economy in Southern Volhynia" (1955) [3] is significant, demonstrating the scholar's ability to continue in-depth scientific investigations while adapting to the demands of the post-war Soviet academic environment.

One of O.I. Baranovich's key works, which vividly demonstrates the academic freedom of his early creative period, is the monograph "Essays on Magnate Economy in Southern Volhynia in the 18th Century" (1926, 1930). This study is distinguished by the depth of its archival analysis and the absence of ideological simplifications characteristic of later Soviet scholarship. As a graduate of Petrograd University and a staff member of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (VUAN), Baranovich belonged to the Kyiv school of agrarian history, known for its emphasis on thorough source studies and economic analysis, which allowed him to form an original methodological approach. Instead of the "crisis of feudalism" scheme prevalent in the 1930s-1950s, he focused on a systematic reconstruction of the economic mechanisms of the Lubomirski and Sanguszko estates, utilizing documents from the Slavuta archive, inventories, and tax registers [9, p.49].

Baranovich's key scientific contributions lie in several aspects:

First, he proved the effectiveness of magnate estates as closed economic systems.

Second, using the example of the South Volhynian estates, he identified a shift from subsistence farming to lease-money relations. He also traced the diversification of income sources (grain, fishing, distilling) and the combination of serf labor with free peasant labor.

Third, the researcher argued that the prevailing forms of social and state structure at the time led to the decline of urban settlements in Volhynia and contributed to the transformation of a significant portion of townspeople into serfs. This, consequently, resulted in a decrease in trade between town and country and ultimately, the economic decline of the region [10, p. 13].

Baranovich's methodological innovation lay in combining a macro- and micro-approach: detailed analysis of individual estates (e.g., Yampil) was accompanied by broad regional generalizations. However, this advantage also had limitations: his works from the 1920s did not account for the impact of peasant uprisings on the system's economic stability, nor did they consider the deeper transformation of economies occurring beyond the studied chronological framework.

Against the backdrop of these methodological peculiarities, the influence of the ideological context became particularly significant, proving to be two-pronged for Baranovich's work. In the 1920s, the researcher enjoyed a rare degree of freedom for Soviet scholarship, allowing him to publish objective data without imposed ideological labels like "exploiting class." However, after the dissolution of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (VUAN) in 1934, which marked the intensification of repression against the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the centralization of science, Baranovich was forced to shift to "all-Russian" themes. His 1955 work ("Magnate Economy in Southern Volhynia") included the obligatory theses of the time regarding the "decline of the feudal system"—a narrative intended to legitimize Soviet power as a progressive force, but one that significantly weakened the scientific value of his later works.

Modern reception evaluates Baranovich's work as groundbreaking for its time, though not without flaws. His archeographical findings (particularly the publication of chimney tax extracts from the Lutsk district) remain an indispensable source for historians. At the same time, his thesis on the "stability of the magnate economy" is being re-evaluated today, taking into account the

prolonged impact of military destruction and social upheavals of the 17th century on the region's subsequent development.

Another significant figure whose activity illustrates the peculiarities of historical science functioning during the early Soviet period is Ivan Ivanovych Kravchenko (1899–1953). This Ukrainian historian and archivist, Doctor of Historical Sciences (1952), and Professor played an active role in establishing Soviet power in Ukraine. Notably, he headed the commission for liquidating institutions of the tsarist and Provisional Governments in Kyiv in 1919–1920 and was a member of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsVK) of the Ukrainian SSR in 1920–1921. As a representative of Ukrainian agrarian historiography of the 1920s and a researcher at the scientific research department of Ukrainian history in Kyiv, Kravchenko produced his works during a period of relative academic freedom that preceded the intensification of Stalinist censorship [5]. His legacy is valuable for understanding how scholarly approaches and opportunities changed amidst the evolution of the Soviet regime.

Ivan Kravchenko authored several works on Ukrainian history, including: "The Struggle for Soviet Power in Radomyshl" (1927) [30], "The Yampil Estate in the Late 18th and First Quarter of the 19th Century" (1929) [31], "Fascist Concepts of Hrushevsky and His School in Ukrainian Historiography" (1934) [32], and "Folk Art of the Don Cossacks" (1938) [33]. Notably, publications such as "The Yampil Estate..." (1929) appeared during a period of relative academic freedom, while later works, such as the ideologically charged article against Hrushevsky (1934) and the thematically distant work on the Don Cossacks (1938), indicate a shift in Kravchenko's scholarly priorities under pressure from new ideological demands.

A key publication that reveals his early scholarly approach was the monograph "The Yampil Estate in the Late 18th Century" (1929). In it, Kravchenko explored the organization of the Potocki counts' estate in Podillia, thoroughly analyzing the structure of land ownership, the lease system, and

agricultural production technologies. In this work, the author combined descriptive historicism (i.e., a focus on detailed factual presentation) with elements of economic analysis. Unlike later Soviet works, he avoided straightforward Marxism and emphasis on "class struggle." Kravchenko was the first to introduce the Potocki archives into academic circulation: inventory descriptions, estate account books, and lease agreements. Based on these documents, he reconstructed the estate's profitability [31, pp. 71-72]. This work, developing themes initiated by O.I. Baranovich, focused on the local history of Podillia, indicating the formation of certain directions and schools within Ukrainian agrarian historiography of the 1920s.

At the same time, Kravchenko was a talented archeographer but a limited analyst. His strength lay in his ability to find and publish unique documents. However, his weakness was an unwillingness (or inability) to move beyond descriptive historicism. His studies lack comparative analysis: he did not compare the Yampil estate with other estates in Podillia. Kravchenko focused exclusively on the 18th century, even though the archives he worked with contained materials from the 17th to 19th centuries. He also avoided issues of peasant uprisings, strikes, and sabotage. As a result, his work is a valuable source but not a comprehensive theory explaining the economy of Right-Bank Ukraine as a whole.

The third key figure illustrating the development of the socio-economic direction in Ukrainian historiography under the changing ideological climate of the first half of the 20th century is Mykhailo Yelyseiovych Slabchenko (1882–1952). This prominent Ukrainian historian, jurist, and sociologist, a representative of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's school, is considered one of the pioneers of the socio-economic approach. His significant scholarly output includes works such as: "Essays on the History of Economic Life in Poltava and Sloboda Ukraine in the 17th-18th Centuries" (1927) [56], "Collective Landownership and Community Structure in Ukraine in the 14th-18th Centuries"

(1928) [57], "The Land Community in Ukraine in the 18th Century" (1925) [55], and "Essays on the History of the Ukrainian Peasant Community" (1924) [54].

Mykhailo Slabchenko's works are crucial for understanding the transformation of Ukrainian society, and his methodology stands out for its complex approach, combining historical, legal, and economic analysis. The researcher developed the ideas of M. Hrushevsky's school but focused on analyzing economic structures as the driving force of historical change. In his monumental series of works, "History of the National Economy of Ukraine" (1923–1928), he thoroughly investigated: the evolution of landownership forms (from princely times to capitalism), the interaction of legal institutions and economics, and the role of the state in shaping economic models.

Significantly, Mykhailo Slabchenko proposed his alternative periodization of historical development to the Marxist one, which demonstrated his independent methodological approach. He identified four stages:

Period	Characteristics
Subsistence Economy (until 16th century)	Predominance of patrimonial estates, absence of commodity-money relations
Corvée-Serfdom (17th–18th centuries)	Exploitation of the peasantry, focus on grain export
Capitalist (19th century)	Disintegration of serfdom, the emergence of free wage laborers
Industrial (early 20th century)	Mechanization of agriculture, integration into European markets

In his works from the 1920s, Slabchenko also argued that Ukraine's economy within the Russian Empire was peripheral. He contended that raw materials (grain, sugar) were exported without adequate development of the processing industry, and serfdom was artificially maintained to reduce export

costs. In contrast to studies that focused on landlord latifundia (such as those by Prykhodko), Slabchenko emphasized the role of middle-peasant and prosperous farms as the basis of commodity production, particularly in Left-Bank and Sloboda Ukraine.

These unorthodox conclusions and methodological approaches, from the perspective of official ideology, led to the researcher's tragic fate. In the 1930s, he was accused of "nationalist propaganda," and his works were banned until 1941. Subsequently, in 1952, Mykhailo Slabchenko was convicted of "anti-Soviet activity" and executed. He was posthumously rehabilitated in 1958 [63].

His pioneering achievement, atypical for his time, was the integration of history, law, and economics, which allowed him to create a comprehensive model for societal analysis. Slabchenko also argued that Ukraine had its distinct paths of economic development, different from Russia's, specifically emphasizing the role of Cossack self-governance in shaping market institutions. His original periodization (natural → corvée → capitalist → industrial economy) offered an alternative to Soviet dogmatism and, in essence, anticipated Fernand Braudel's ideas about "time-spaces" in history. In contrast to official historiography, he examined not only the elites but also broad segments of the population—the peasantry, townspeople, and Cossacks—demonstrating their significant contribution to economic development [54, p. 76].

Despite these significant achievements, Mykhailo Slabchenko's work also had certain shortcomings and limitations that should be considered in its evaluation. His works were often based on fragmentary data, which sometimes led to hypothetical conclusions requiring further verification. Slabchenko occasionally overestimated the role of Cossack law and community self-governance, neglecting facts of corruption and social conflicts within these systems. Furthermore, in the 1920s, he lacked access to the archives of the Russian Empire, meaning that the regional peculiarities of Southern Ukraine

(Odesa region, Kherson region), whose archives were mostly located outside the Ukrainian SSR, were described in less detail than those of Left-Bank Ukraine.

Another prominent example illustrating the ability of Soviet scholars to conduct in-depth economic research, even as ideological control tightened, is Kostiantyn Hryhorovych Voblyi (1876–1947). This distinguished Ukrainian economist, economic geographer, economic historian, academician of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (VUAN)/Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, Doctor of Political Economy and Statistics, Professor at Kyiv University, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, Director of the Institute of Economics, and Honored Scientist of the Ukrainian SSR [53], authored approximately 450 scientific works. His main work, "Essays on the History of the Russian-Ukrainian Sugar Beet Industry," published in 1931, is a crucial source for studying the development of this sector in Ukraine [6, 7, 8].

Voblyi became one of the pioneers in the systematic study of the history of the sugar beet industry in Ukrainian scholarship. He introduced new data into academic discourse concerning the geographical location of sugar refineries, production technologies, and economic indicators of the industry in Ukrainian gubernias of the Russian Empire.

The researcher distinguished between two types of sugar refineries: agricultural (for the estates' own needs) and commercial (industrial enterprises oriented toward profit). Based on technical characteristics, he classified them into fire-heated and steam-powered sugar refineries, with the latter being large enterprises employing hundreds of workers. Voblyi also identified two main belts of sugar industry development: the northeastern and the southwestern, which included Dnieper Ukraine, particularly the Kyiv region—the center of sugar beet production in the Russian Empire. His approach stood out for its use of comparative statistics to analyze the number of enterprises, workers, production volumes, and labor productivity, which allowed for the creation of valuable comparative tables [59].

Beyond his fundamental work on the sugar industry, Kostiantyn Voblyi actively researched Ukraine's natural resources, engaged in local history, and authored numerous popular science works about various regions of the country.

Undoubtedly, the positive aspects of his research activities include their systematic nature and fundamental depth. He was among the first in Ukrainian scholarship to systematically study the history of the sugar beet industry, introducing a vast array of new archival and statistical data on the geographical location of sugar refineries, production technologies, and the economic performance of the industry. Voblyi developed his system and techniques for scientific research, dedicating significant attention to research methodology, issues of organizing scientific work, and a comprehensive and historical approach to economic analysis [61, p. 6]. His work laid strong foundations for the development of modern economic-geographical research, forming the basis for his scientific school, whose followers continue to work successfully to this day.

However, K.H. Voblyi's research is not without certain flaws, as it was conducted under a totalitarian regime. This context significantly influenced the subject matter, writing style, and most importantly, the possibility of openly expressing one's views. Under pressure from circumstances, he was forced to adapt to the demands of Soviet power, which manifested, in particular, in avoiding openly declaring national identity [61, p. 7]. Some works noted shortcomings in comparing Ukraine's national economy with other countries, and the actual territorial division was not always considered [61, p. 25].

Finally, Ivan Oleksandrovykh Hurzhii (1915–1971) represents the next stage in the development of Ukrainian historical science within the Soviet system, demonstrating the possibilities and limitations of research activity during the post-Stalin "Thaw" and stagnation periods. This prominent Ukrainian historian made a significant contribution to the study of the socio-economic history of Ukraine in the 18th and 19th centuries, historiography, and source studies, working in leading scientific institutions and leaving a substantial scholarly

legacy. His work comprises approximately 300 scientific papers, among the most famous of which are:

Studies on peasant uprisings and the struggle against serfdom: "The Turbair Peasant Uprising (1789–1793)" (1950) [11]; "The Struggle of Peasants and Workers in Ukraine Against Feudal-Serfdom Oppression (from the 1780s to 1861)" (1958) [14].

Works on socio-economic history: "The Disintegration of the Feudal-Serfdom System in Ukrainian Agriculture in the First Half of the 19th Century" (1954) [12]; "The Genesis of the Working Class in Ukraine (Late 18th – First Half of 19th Century)" (1958) [13]; "The Development of Commodity Production and Trade in Ukraine (from the Late 18th Century to 1861)" (1962) [15]; "Ukraine within the All-Russian Market System in the 1860s-1890s" (1968) [17].

Historiographical research: "T.H. Shevchenko's Historical Views" (1964) [16].

The scholar's main works focused on the post-reform period in Right-Bank Ukraine.

Ivan Hurzhii's primary research areas included the disintegration of the feudal serfdom system, agrarian relations, the establishment of market structures, and the formation of the working class. In his studies, he analyzed the specialization of agriculture (particularly industrial crops in Right-Bank Ukraine and commercial grain production in the south), examining the impact of monetary rent on the commercialization of peasant households and the role of state peasants in market processes. Hurzhii also systematically covered the struggle of Ukrainian peasants and workers against feudal serfdom oppression and analyzed the historical views of Taras Shevchenko [16]. Although his works adhered to the Marxist paradigm, they demonstrate a commitment to thorough source analysis and the systematization of factual material, which made them valuable despite ideological constraints.

He made significant contributions to the development of historiography and source studies, leading the relevant departments at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR. His scholarly work encompassed an in-depth study of key socio-economic processes: from feudal-serfdom relations to the genesis of the working class, peasant uprisings, and the development of commodity production and trade. Hurzhii actively participated in the creation and editing of fundamental encyclopedic publications on Ukrainian history. His works became the foundation for further research into Ukraine's socio-economic history, as well as for teaching history in higher education institutions, confirming his lasting impact on domestic historiography.

In his work "The Disintegration of the Feudal-Serfdom System in Ukrainian Agriculture in the First Half of the 19th Century" (1954), I.O. Hurzhii meticulously analyzes the internal economic processes that led to the decline of serfdom. He convincingly emphasizes that the growth of commodity-money relations was a key factor, in transforming the traditional feudal economy. With this, he substantiated the thesis that the disintegration of serfdom in Ukraine was a consequence of internal economic processes, rather than solely political reforms or exclusively class struggle, which was an important scientific clarification for its time [12, pp. 4, 283-285].

His second significant work, "The Development of Commodity Production and Trade in Ukraine (from the Late 18th Century to 1861)" (1962), laid the methodological foundations for understanding the economic preconditions of post-reform changes. In it, Hurzhii analyzed the evolution of commodity-money relations, the disintegration of the feudal serfdom system, and the emergence of capitalist elements, all of which directly influenced the nature of subsequent transformations. The author also demonstrated the growth of industry and its role in shaping commodity production. He paid particular attention to the penetration of commodity-money relations into agriculture, which fostered production specialization and strengthened economic ties between Ukrainian regions.

The monograph "Ukraine within the All-Russian Market System in the 1860s-1890s" (1968) is one of Ivan Hurzhii's key works on the economic history of Ukraine in the second half of the 19th century. In it, the author comprehensively examines the processes of integrating Ukrainian lands into the structure of the all-Russian market after the abolition of serfdom. He analyzes the economic, social, and infrastructural changes of this period, emphasizing that the integration process was driven not only by political decisions from the center but also by natural economic evolution, the development of industry, transport, infrastructure, and regional specialization [58, p. 223].

An analysis of I.O. Hurzhii's work, like that of the previously discussed historians, reveals both his unique scientific achievements and the unavoidable compromises made under the Soviet system. The positive aspects of his research include his high scientific productivity (around 300 scholarly works), the depth and breadth of his studies, his significant contributions to the development of historiography and source studies, and his pursuit of objectivity and criticality. He endeavored to avoid ideological stereotypes as much as possible, presenting an objective picture of Ukraine's socio-economic development within the Russian Empire.

However, like most Soviet scholars, he worked in challenging political conditions. This imposed certain limitations on his chosen topics, interpretations, and the freedom of scientific thought. While Hurzhii strived for objectivity, the ideological pressure of the Soviet era compelled him to avoid open criticism of the political and social aspects of the contemporary system, which undoubtedly could have influenced the completeness and depth of his analysis of certain historical processes.

A vivid, yet tragic, example of the totalitarian regime's impact on scholars' lives, as well as their ability to return to their profession after rehabilitation, is the figure of Sergei Mitrofanovich Dubrovsky (1900–1970). He was a distinguished Soviet historian and economist specializing in the agrarian history of the Russian

Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dubrovsky served as the second dean of the History Faculty at Leningrad State University (1935–1936) and held a Doctor of Historical Sciences degree. However, his academic career was interrupted: he was convicted in 1936, and after his release, he was re-arrested in 1949. On June 25, 1949, by decision of the Special Council of the MGB (Ministry of State Security) of the USSR, he was sentenced to exile to Yeniseisk, where he worked as a water carrier and later (until 1955) as a consultant for museum exhibit construction and the development of technical and economic plans. He was only rehabilitated in 1956, and after his release, he resumed his scholarly work.

His scholarly output included the following studies: "Essays on the Russian Revolution" (1920) [20]; a significant work of that time, "On the Question of the Essence of the 'Asiatic Mode of Production,' Feudalism, Serfdom, and Commercial Capital" (1929) [21], which reflected sharp ideological discussions; (after a significant break due to repression) "Stolypin Land Reform" (1963) [22]; and "Agriculture and Peasantry of Russia during the Period of Imperialism" (1975) [23].

Sergei Dubrovsky's seminal work is the posthumously published monograph "Agriculture and Peasantry of Russia during the Period of Imperialism" (1975) [23]. In this work, the author systematically examines the socio-economic processes in Russian agriculture on the eve of the revolution. He analyzes the transformations of agrarian relations, the plight of the peasantry, the development of capitalist forms of farming, and the issues of land ownership and agrarian policy. The work is based on extensive use of archival sources and statistical data, allowing the author to provide a comprehensive analysis of the agrarian sector within the context of the empire-wide economic and social changes.

Dubrovsky emphasizes the contradictory nature of agrarian transformations in the Russian Empire, highlighting the persistence of serfdom's remnants, the uneven development of capitalism in agriculture, and the severe

social problems faced by the peasantry. He aptly points out that these problems became one of the causes of social tension in the empire [60, p. 194]. The scholar believed that agrarian reforms should be evaluated by their contribution to the transition from feudal to capitalist relations. He particularly stressed that underestimating the remnants of serfdom leads to a misunderstanding of the agrarian system and peasant movements. This position, while within the Marxist paradigm, allowed him to conduct a deep and systematic analysis.

Among the undisputed positive aspects of Dubrovsky's research is his profound and systematic analysis of the agrarian sector. His comprehensive study of agriculture and the situation of the peasantry in the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries became a significant contribution to Soviet historiography of the agrarian question. Dubrovsky's work is based on extensive archival and statistical material, which enabled a comprehensive and objective analysis of socio-economic processes [39, p. 86].

However, like most Soviet historians, Sergei Dubrovsky worked under ideological constraints. His research was conducted within the framework of official ideology, which undoubtedly could limit the freedom of scientific interpretation and exclude critical perspectives on certain aspects of socioeconomic development that did not align with the dominant doctrine. This compromise was characteristic of many scholars who sought to preserve the possibility of scientific activity under a totalitarian regime.

One of the key figures in the development of Soviet agrarian economic thought was Euphrasia Stepanivna Karnaukhova (1912–1989). This prominent Soviet economist, Doctor of Economic Sciences, and Professor specialized in researching agrarian economics and agricultural placement within the USSR. Working at the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Karnaukhova made significant contributions to the development of the theory of agrarian relations and the economic valuation of land resources. Her works reflect attempts to find answers to fundamental economic challenges of the planned

economy, particularly the effective use of land in the absence of market ownership. Her main works include: "Socialist Agriculture, Its Sectoral Structure and Placement" (1950) [25]; "Land Relations in Socialist Society" (1967) [26]; "Differential Rent under Socialism and Economic Valuation of Land" (1976) [27]; and "Report on the Results of Research into the Problem 'Differential Rent and Economic Valuation of Land'" (1977) [28].

These monographs demonstrate her deep immersion in the specifics of the Soviet agrarian system, where she sought to apply economic analysis to optimize production and rationalize resource allocation, despite ideological constraints.

Euphrasia Stepanivna actively participated in developing the theoretical foundations of agrarian economics. She deeply analyzed production efficiency and proposed ways to improve the performance of agricultural enterprises directly within the socialist economic context.

At the same time, her scholarly interest also encompassed the pre-revolutionary period, as reflected in her work "Placement of Russian Agriculture during the Period of Capitalism (1860–1914)" [29]. In this monograph, Karnaukhova systematically explored the territorial distribution of agriculture in Russia, based on a broad analysis of economic, social, and geographical factors. This work is a significant contribution to the study of the agrarian sector of the Russian Empire at the turn of the century, enabling a comparative analysis of the evolution of agrarian relations from capitalism to socialism in her subsequent research.

Undoubtedly, the positive aspects of Euphrasia Karnaukhova's research activities include her systematic approach to agrarian economics. She viewed agriculture not merely as a production system but as a complex spatial-economic structure shaped by historical, natural, and political factors. As one of the first to combine historical analysis and regional economics, Karnaukhova actively worked on issues of land rent and the methodology of land valuation, which was critically important for the scientific substantiation of planned agrarian policy.

Her idea that the implementation of the 1861 Peasant Reform was influenced by "the spatial or geographical distribution of areas where agrarian evolution of the Prussian and American types prevailed" [29, p.36] vividly demonstrates her comprehensive approach.

However, like the vast majority of Soviet scholars, Karnaukhova worked under ideological limitations. This meant strict adherence to the Marxist-Leninist paradigm, which inevitably affected the objectivity of her assessments, especially concerning reforms of the tsarist period or the functioning of market mechanisms. Her analysis was also limited to the Soviet and Russian contexts, rarely referencing Western experiences in agrarian development or comparative analyses of land use systems. Moreover, some of her research was based on statistical methods from the 1940s-1950s, which, without the involvement of modern mathematical or econometric tools, may limit the contemporary scientific value of some of her works. Her texts often contain stereotypical formulations such as "crisis of capitalist agriculture" or "triumph of socialist forms," which could diminish analytical depth in favor of ideological loyalty. Despite these limitations, her ability to conduct systematic analysis and develop methodological approaches points to her adaptation and pursuit of scientific inquiry under challenging conditions.

The next important figure illustrating the development of historical thought in the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods is Avenir Pavlovich Korelin (1933–2017). This Soviet/Russian historian, Doctor of Historical Sciences, and Professor specializing in "National History," deeply analyzed the activities of credit institutions. He particularly focused on small-scale credit as a key marker of agrarian capitalism's development, a rather subtle yet crucial research direction within the Marxist paradigm.

According to Korelin, agrarian credit was not only an indicator of capitalism in the countryside but also a "connecting element between all branches of the economy, forming a holistic system" [35]. He emphasized that the

development of credit relations is an important indicator of the formation of capitalist relations in agriculture, as credit ensures not only the financing of agricultural production but also the integration of the countryside into the broader economic space [35, p. 304]. Through his research on the nobility and credit organizations, Korelin skillfully outlined the complex socio-economic transformations of the regions.

His significant scholarly contributions, which demonstrate the evolution of his interests, include the following definitive monographs: "The Nobility in Post-Reform Russia: Composition, Numbers, Corporate Organization (1861–1904)" (1979) [34]; "Agricultural Credit in Russia in the Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries" (1988) [36]; and "S. Yu. Witte – Financier, Politician, Diplomat" (1998) [37].

In his numerous works, Avenir Korelin profoundly analyzed the activities of credit institutions, with a particular focus on small-scale credit as a marker of agrarian capitalism's development. His most renowned study in this field is the monograph "Agricultural Credit in Russia in the Late 19th – Early 20th Century" (1988).

The purpose of this fundamental work was to comprehensively characterize the formation and development of the agricultural credit system in the Russian Empire from the 1880s to 1917. Korelin aimed to investigate how the state, banking institutions, and cooperatives attempted to satisfy the peasantry's need for financial resources amidst the growing role of capitalism in the agrarian sector. This work is crucial for understanding the economic transformations of pre-revolutionary Russia through the prism of financial relations.

In his work "The Agrarian Question and Agrarian Policy in Russia (Late 19th – Early 20th Century)" (1985), Avenir Korelin expressed a number of profound ideas. He argued that the state used credit as a mechanism for a controlled transition to capitalism in the countryside, aiming simultaneously to preserve social stability. The researcher showed that this credit policy was

directed more towards supporting the wealthy peasantry and affluent tenants than the broad masses of poor peasants. In his view, credit institutions during the period under study could not keep pace with the growing financial needs of the agrarian sector, which weakened the overall effectiveness of agrarian policy. At the same time, Korelin emphasized that cooperatives served as an important democratic instrument for organizing credit, though their potential was limited due to insufficient state support [35, p. 225].

It's important to note that Korelin was the first to provide a comprehensive description of the agrarian credit system, as before him, this topic had only been covered fragmentarily. He undertook a deep reconstruction of credit institutions, meticulously studying their functioning, lending volumes, and borrower categories, which provided an unprecedented depth of understanding of this complex area.

Among the positive aspects of Avenir Korelin's research, his first large-scale overview of small and mortgage credit organizations in rural areas stands out. He viewed credit not merely as a financial instrument but as a mechanism for shaping national economic strategy, which speaks to the depth of his analysis. A significant advantage of his works was also the use of a wide range of documentary and dissertation sources, ensuring the thoroughness of his conclusions.

However, like a significant portion of his colleagues during the Soviet period, Korelin adopted a Soviet-centric approach. This led to limited criticism of the state-planned system and insufficient comparability with Western experiences or objects in other countries, thereby narrowing the scope of his analysis. Furthermore, his research made limited use of quantitative methods, which, from a modern perspective, could constrain the depth of some economic interpretations. These aspects reflect both the specifics of the Soviet historical school and the challenges faced by scholars of that era.

Among the prominent Ukrainian historians of the Soviet era is Mykola Nyzhyrovych Leshchenko (1911–1991). His life and academic path vividly demonstrate perseverance and adaptation within the context of post-war recovery and a rigid ideological system. During the German-Soviet War, Leshchenko sustained a severe injury that left him disabled, yet it did not deter him from pursuing a scholarship.

From 1945 to 1949, he taught the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism at Kyiv University. In 1949, he transferred to the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, where he worked as a research fellow, and from 1951 to 1986, as a senior research fellow [4].

Leshchenko specialized in the history of Ukraine in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on social movements, agrarian relations, and interethnic ties. His impressive output includes over 300 works, among the most well-known of which are: "The Peasant Movement in Right-Bank Ukraine during the Revolution of 1905–1907" (1955) [41]; "The Peasant Movement in Ukraine in Connection with the 1861 Reform" (1959) [42]; "Class Struggle in the Ukrainian Village in the Era of Capitalism" (1970) [43]; and "The Ukrainian Village in the Revolution of 1905–1907" (1977) [44]. These works reflect his consistent interest in class struggle and the transformation of the Ukrainian village, which was a central theme for Soviet historiography of that period.

Mykola Leshchenko's 1959 study, "The Peasant Movement in Ukraine in Connection with the 1861 Reform," is a foundational work dedicated to the post-reform period. In it, the author thoroughly analyzes the socio-economic conditions and legal framework of the 1861 reform—the abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire—as well as the peasantry's reaction to its implementation in the 1860s.

Leshchenko emphasized that despite the official abolition of serfdom, the reform preserved numerous feudal remnants. This particularly concerned the retention of landlord landownership, the burdensome conditions for peasants to

redeem their land, and the prolonged dependence of peasants on landlords through various forms of bondage (corvée, latifundia, and restrictions on rights). Through a detailed examination of the Manifesto of February 19, 1861, and accompanying normative acts, he demonstrated that these documents, while formally granting peasants the rights of free citizens, were aimed at preserving the dominant position of the landlords and transforming them into a bourgeois class [40].

The historian convincingly argued that the harsh conditions of land tenure and economic exploitation led to numerous peasant uprisings and protest movements in the 1860s, interpreting them as a form of class struggle by the peasantry against landlord oppression. Leshchenko paid particular attention to the specifics of Right-Bank Ukraine, where agrarian relations had their peculiarities due to national and political factors, especially the struggle between the Polish gentry and the Ukrainian peasantry.

In his research, Mykola Leshchenko utilized a wide range of sources: official documents, legislative acts, statistical data, and materials from peasant uprisings. This allowed him to create a thorough and multifaceted analysis. He consistently applied a Marxist methodology, viewing the peasant movement as a key manifestation of class struggle during the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Leshchenko was distinguished by his academic thoroughness, which was combined with his practical life experience. His military service and participation in the war shaped his deep conviction in the importance of "friendship of peoples," a topic to which he dedicated the final years of his career. He introduced hundreds of previously unknown documents about peasant movements into scholarly circulation, filling a significant gap in the study of Ukraine's social history. His works were characterized by the systematization of a vast array of historical facts, attention to regional peculiarities, and clear argumentation. He

was the first in Soviet historiography to systematically study the impact of the 1861 reform on the social dynamics of the Ukrainian village.

At the same time, as a typical Soviet historian, Leshchenko analyzed the past almost exclusively through the prism of Marxism-Leninism. This meant that all peasant movements were presented as an undeniable "manifestation of class struggle," which could oversimplify their multifaceted nature. Some aspects of the national question and cultural peculiarities might have been insufficiently covered or interpreted due to the dominance of the class approach, which is a characteristic limitation of the historiography of that era.

Andriy Ivanovych Mamalyha is a Ukrainian historian, Candidate of Historical Sciences, who in 1978 defended his dissertation, "Capitalist Evolution of Landlord and Peasant Farms in Podillia Governorate in the Post-Reform Period (1861–1900)," at Kamianets-Podilskyi Pedagogical Institute [46]. This work stands out for its attention to regional specifics, as the Podillia Governorate had previously been significantly less studied compared to other regions of Ukraine.

Andriy Mamalyha was the first to conduct a systematic analysis of a wide range of sources, including statistical data, zemstvo reports, and revision materials. His research convincingly demonstrated the gradual loss of feudal characteristics in landlord farming, accompanied by an increase in hired labor and a shift towards commodity agriculture [45, pp. 81-92]. This work not only revealed the peculiarities of agrarian evolution in Right-Bank Ukraine but also became a valuable contribution to understanding the general transformational processes in post-reform Ukraine.

Researcher Andriy Mamalyha convincingly showed that after the 1861 reform, peasants were quickly divided into smallholders, prosperous farmers, and landless poor. Although his research was created within the framework of Soviet methodology, Mamalyha managed to maintain significant analytical rigor and reliance on sources. He didn't reduce the complex process of agrarian changes exclusively to "class struggle," but rather viewed them as a complex of

interconnected economic and social factors [45, pp. 132–135, 145–148]. This nuanced approach allowed the scholar to make a significant contribution to the study of the transformation of the Ukrainian Right-Bank village after the 1861 reform.

His dissertation, "Capitalist Evolution of Landlord and Peasant Farms in Podillia Governorate in the Post-Reform Period (1861–1900)" [46], covers a period of significant socio-economic changes related to the reforms. Mamalyha meticulously analyzes how landlord and peasant farms adapted to the new economic conditions as a result of the transition to capitalist relations. He investigates the impact of changes in agrarian policy on the structure of land ownership and production, arguing that the acceleration of industrialization in the agrarian sector led to an increase in the number of free-hired laborers, an intensification of peasant stratification, and contributed to the growth of capitalist forms of landlord farming [46, pp. 45–60].

Andriy Mamalyha's scholarly achievements undoubtedly include his profound analysis of the agrarian dynamics in Podillia Governorate, which allowed for a detailed clarification of the regional peculiarities in the evolution of both landlord and peasant farms. His research stands out for its high documentary reliability, as he extensively utilized diverse sources, including revision lists, zemstvo reports, and agricultural statistics. This systematic approach to analyzing agrarian relations is a testament to his academic rigor.

However, Mamalyha's research activities also had their drawbacks, typical for that period. His work was written within the framework of Marxist-Leninist methodology, which inevitably limited interpretations. The study primarily emphasized "class struggle" and "exploitation," which could oversimplify complex socio-economic processes. For instance, landlord estates were often viewed predominantly as a reactionary form of economy, even though in some cases they were centers of innovation and modernization. Furthermore, the work

lacks comparisons with other regions of the empire or Western Europe, which restricts the breadth of its conclusions and prevents a full international context.

Rounding out our series of distinguished historians is Leonid Herasymovych Melnyk (1929–2017)—a prominent Ukrainian historian, Doctor of Historical Sciences (1972), and Professor (1976). He was a multifaceted specialist whose academic interests encompassed the socio-economic history of Ukraine in the 17th-19th centuries, the history of the Cossack era and the Hetmanate, industrial history, as well as historical methodology and Ukrainian historiography [38 pp. 156–159]. His career is a prime example of adaptation and the expansion of scholarly horizons during the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

From 1960, Leonid Melnyk actively worked at Kyiv University, progressing from lecturer to Deputy Dean of the Faculty of History (1972–1974), Head of Department (from 1976), and finally, Professor of the Department of Ancient and Modern History of Ukraine (from 1996).

His research primarily focused on agrarian history, the development of landlord estates, market relations, and the evolution of land ownership. This deep interest in economic transformations is reflected in significant works such as: "On the Development of Capitalism in Large Landlord Estates of Right-Bank Ukraine (1860s–1890s)" (1974) [47, pp. 73–79], "Technical Revolution in Ukraine in the 19th Century" [48], "The Struggle for Ukrainian Statehood (17th Century)" (1995) [49], "Left-Bank Hetmanate During the Period of Stabilization (1669–1709)" (1995) [50], and "History of Ukraine: A Course of Lectures" (1991) [51].

Among Leonid Melnyk's key works concerning the post-reform period, the monograph "On the Development of Capitalism in Large Landlord Estates of Right-Bank Ukraine (1860s–1890s)" stands out. In this study, the author deeply examined the peculiarities of the development of large landlord estates in Right-Bank Ukraine during the second half of the 19th century, drawing upon new archival sources and the scholarly contributions of his predecessors.

Melnyk identified the progress of these estates towards developing market relations, emphasizing the acceleration of these processes by the late 19th century [62, p. 125]. He paid particular attention to issues of landownership, land use, the employment of hired labor, agrotechnical innovations, and the impact of market conditions on production structure.

Melnyk's works, especially this study, laid solid foundations for further research into Ukraine's agrarian history, particularly in the context of market evolution and the modernization of agriculture in Right-Bank Ukraine. His works are distinguished by a broad source base, comprehensive analysis, and, importantly, objectivity within the permissible bounds of Soviet historiography. His consistent attention to the social and economic aspects of rural transformations is also noteworthy.

The positive aspects of Leonid Melnyk's research include his analytical approach, evidenced by his consistent use of quantitative indicators and thorough documentary analysis. His works focused on the local development of rural capitalism, particularly the activities of large landowners, which significantly complemented the picture of agrarian transformations within the empire.

However, as was the case for many Soviet scholars of his generation, Leonid Melnyk's research and conclusions were, to some extent, limited by the ideological framework of the Soviet system, which affected the freedom of scientific thought and the interpretation of historical processes. In the early period of his career, similar to many colleagues, he worked within the confines of official Marxist-Leninist methodology, which at times led to ideological one-sidedness in his assessments and interpretations of historical events [48]. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, his commitment to quantitative analysis and reliance on sources allowed him to achieve significant depth in studying specific economic processes.

Most of the researchers examined primarily focused their attention on studying magnate and landlord estates and analyzing the development of capitalist (market) relations within them during the second half of the 19th and

early 20th centuries. This direction became crucial for understanding the agrarian transformations of that period.

Table 1

Scholarly Depth, Source Base, and Methodology

Scholar	Scholarly Depth and Source Base	Methodological Foundation
M. Slabchenko	High, though limited by repressions; thorough archival analysis	Marxism with a sociological approach
I. Hurzhii	Thorough; extensive sources	Marxism with moderate ideologization
M. Leshchenko	Broad; detailed analysis	Class analysis within an economic context
S. Dubrovsky	Systematic; statistics	Strict Marxism
E. Karnaukhova	Good; geographical data	Economic-geographical; Marxism
A. Mamalyha	Limited; local sources	Local history with Marxism
L. Melnyk	High; archives	Marxism with economic analysis
A. Baraboi	Narrow; specialized	Class-based; ideologically rigid

Table 2

Objectivity, Criticality, and Impact of Scholarly Works

Scholar	Objectivity and Criticality	Impact and Significance of Scholarly Work
M. Slabchenko	Limited due to censorship	Founder of the field
K. Voblyi	Limited by ideology	Influence on the economy of the Ukrainian SSR
I. Hurzhii	Relatively objective	Classic in agrarian history
M. Leshchenko	Critical within ideological bounds	Fundamental for peasant movement research
S. Dubrovsky	Ideologically limited	Recognized in Soviet historiography
E. Karnaukhova	Less ideology; technical approach	Influence on agrarian policy
A. Mamalyha	Limited due to lack of data	Minimal
L. Melnyk	Attempted to avoid ideology	Influential educator and researcher

Table 3

Ideological Constraints and Personal Contribution

Scholar	Ideological Constraints	Personal Contribution and Creative Output
M. Slabchenko	Pronounced, especially later	Authored monographs, repressed
K. Voblyi	Tangible, but with a practical bent	Influenced economic geography
I. Hurzhii	Present, but not dominant	Headed departments, mentored scholars
M. Leshchenko	High, class-based approach	Author of textbooks, editor
S. Dubrovsky	Strict	No known pedagogical activity
E. Karnaukhova	Moderate	Academician, award laureate
A. Mamalyha	Strong	Co-authored collective works
L. Melnyk	Diminished over time	Initiated courses, educator

Source: systematized by the author

This comparison effectively evaluates each scholar based on key parameters, while maintaining the completeness and depth of the analysis.

Conclusion. The analysis of the scholarly contributions of Ukrainian Soviet historians who researched the agrarian sector of Ukraine and the Russian Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries convincingly demonstrates the complexity and internal dynamism of Soviet historiography. Despite the rigid ideological framework of Marxist-Leninist methodology, these scholars not only adapted to the system's demands but also managed to make significant contributions to the study of socio-economic processes, agricultural transformations, agrarian relations, and peasant movements.

Among the figures examined, distinct groups of researchers stand out based on their approaches and achievements. Scholars such as I. Hurzhii, M. Leshchenko, and L. Melnyk were distinguished by the depth of their analysis and the comprehensiveness of their research. They skillfully combined the obligatory class-based approach with a thorough engagement with a wide range of archival sources, striving to reflect complex economic and social processes as objectively as possible. Their works not only laid the foundation for subsequent generations

of historians but also remain a valuable source of information for contemporary Ukrainian historiography, though they require critical re-evaluation outside their original ideological context.

At the same time, the works of other researchers, specifically S. Dubrovsky and A. Baraboi, were written within stricter ideological confines, which undoubtedly affected the criticality of their conclusions and interpretations. Nevertheless, even under these conditions, their works played a vital role in accumulating factual material and shaping the dominant scholarly discourse of that era. A particular focus on magnate and landlord estates, as well as the development of capitalist relations within them, was a common thread for most scholars, allowing for a detailed study of agrarian transformation mechanisms.

Soviet historians of the agrarian sphere constantly faced the challenge of balancing between scientific objectivity and ideological compliance. This influenced the structure, choice of topics, and content of their research. However, their scholarly output, characterized by meticulous work with sources and aspiration for systematic analysis, laid a solid foundation for the further development of Ukrainian agrarian history. Contemporary study of this period is impossible without considering and critically analyzing their legacy.

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