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NAZI OCCUPATION AND DISMANTLING OF COMMUNIST MONUMENTS IN UKRAINE DURING WORLD WAR II

Abstract
*   **This paper** considers the measures undertaken by the Nazi occupation administration to dismantle Communist monuments in Ukraine during World War II. **The research methodology** integrates general scientific and special historical methods and the basic principles of historical research, namely: historicism, scientificity, objectivity, and systematicity. The principles of historicism and scientificity have contributed to complex representation of the processes of dismantling the Bolshevik monuments in interconnection and interrelation with the events of that period. The principle of objectivity has facilitated the analysis of the outlined issues taking into account the objective historical regularities, based on a critical analysis of the specialized literature and sources. The principle of systematicity has been used togain a holistic*

picture of Communist monuments dismantling in Ukraine during World War II. **This paper is the first research** *considering the measures to dismantle Communist monuments in Ukraine under the Nazi occupation on the basis of a comprehensive range of historical sources.* **The authors come to the conclusion** *that dismantling of Communist monuments in Ukraine was initiated at the beginning of the Nazi occupation. Bolshevik monuments were often demolished, whereas monuments without any ideological charge were preserved. The policy was supported by the local population, who associated ideological monuments with the Bolshevik anti-Ukrainian policy of the interwar period. To sustain anti-Soviet sentiments, the occupation administration promoted the local initiatives to erect monuments with anti-Bolshevik content (mostly monuments in memory of the Ukrainians executed by the NKVD). The evidence from this study indicates that Bolshevik ideological monuments were completely demolished on the territory of Ukraine during World War II.*

Key words: Communist (Bolshevik) monuments, dismantling, monumental propaganda, Soviet era, Nazi occupation, historical policy.

Introduction. The dismantling of Communist monuments was one of the priorities of the Nazi occupation policy in Ukraine during World War II. Numerous Bolshevik monuments erected in the interwar period symbolized Communist realities and were strongly ideologically charged. The dismantling of the objects of the Bolshevik monumental propaganda by the Nazis did not cause any objection on the part of the local Ukrainian population, who often assisted in the liquidation of the monuments. At the beginning of the Nazi occupation, the Ukrainian population associated the monuments to Soviet-party activists with the Bolshevik anti-Ukrainian policy of the interwar period. Alternatively, the dismantling of Communist monuments in Ukraine during World War II marked the new historical policy, aimed at destructing the historical memory of the Soviet past and spreading anti-Soviet sentiments.

To date, few studies have been conducted to investigate the dismantling processes of Communist monuments on the Nazi-occupied territory of Ukraine. The article by Serhii Stelnykovych addresses the problem of the «war of monuments» on the territories of Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia regions during World War II (Stelnykovych, 2014, pp. 31–33). The research carried out by Alla Zakoretskaya episodically focuses on the destruction of monuments, more specifically,the monuments to

Lenin in Luhansk during World War II (Zakoretskaya, 2013, p. 74). Several regional Ukrainian websites also provide some factual data (Kotys, 2013; Monuments in Chernivtsi a hundred years ago, 2015; The 12th monument to Lenin was unveiled after restoration in Donetsk region, 2013; Volochysk Railway Station. History and Development, 2019). Typically, these sites present the history of monuments in a certain city and occasionally pay attention to the destruction of Bolshevik monuments during World War II. Thus, the issue of dismantling Bolshevik monuments on the territory of Ukraine during the Nazi occupation remains largely under-researched.

The **purpose** of the study is to analyze the measures implemented by the Nazi occupation administration to dismantle Bolshevik monuments on the occupied Ukrainian territories during World War II.

Findings and discussion. In the first months of the Nazi occupation, Soviet monuments were almost completely dismantled in various regions of Ukraine. For instance, in Zhytomyr, the monuments to Vladimir Lenin, Felix Dzerzhinsky, Mykola Shchors, and the Bolshevik Revolution were destroyed (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-2636. Op. 1. D. 52. L. 269; State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-3948. Op. 1. D. 2. L. 10). The dismantling of Communist monuments was mainly initiated by the German military. They would announce the liquidation of Bolshevik monuments immediately after the occupation of a particular settlement.

The aggression of the Germans could also be directed at the representatives of certain ethnic groups (Jews) and Soviet party activists who were involved in the monument destructions. Two days after the occupation of the town of Ruzhyn, Zhytomyr region, on July 19, 1941, the Germans gathered 15 locals (probably Jews and/or communists) near the monument to Lenin, made them perform revolutionary songs and dance around the monument, and then smash the monument. The occupants filmed that event (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-2636. Op. 1. D. 17. L. 130).

Frequent were the cases when invading a certain settlement, German military beat off the heads on the monuments to Communist activists and then took pictures with the damaged monuments. At the beginning of the occupation, the monument to Lenin and Stalin in Lutsk was destroyed (it was a popular composition at that time, where Lenin

and Stalin sat next to each other and talked). The heads of both figures were beaten off by the Germans and placed in the hands of Lenin and Stalin. The German military photographed near the destroyed monuments (Kotys, 2013). Probably, for them such an entertainment symbolized the victory over Communism.

Sometimes the occupant military forces dismantled small monuments and kept them as a trophy or as an example of the Communist monumental propaganda. In late July 1942, after the occupation of Voroshilovgrad (Luhansk), the Italian military sent a bust of Lenin found in the premises of the city branch of the Communist Party to Italy. The bust was discovered in the funds of the National Gallery of Contemporary Art in Rome in the postwar period (Zakoretskaya, 2013, p. 74).

However, those were isolated cases. Despite any historical or aesthetic value of the Bolshevik monumental art, the occupation forces did not preserve the monuments symbolizing Soviet realities. The military order of the Commander of the 6th German Army, Field Marshall General Walter von Reichenau «On actions of military forces in the East», October 10, 1941, stated: «Any symbol of the former Bolshevik rule must be destroyed. Historical and aesthetic values in the East do not matter» (Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine. F. 4620. Op. 5. D. 15. L. 2).

In some cases, the dismantling of Communist monuments involved their relocation. For example, in mid-November 1941, the monument to Stalin was dismantled and then transported to one of the warehouses in Lviv (Remains of Bolshevik Propaganda, 1941, p. 4). Mykhailo Seleshko, the translator of the German Commission for the Exhumation of Victims of the Vinnytsia NKVD, mentioned the overthrown busts of Lenin and Stalin on the territory of the Vinnytsia City Park in the book of memoirs in mid-1943 (Seleshko, 1991, p. 40).

Thus, the dismantling of Communist monuments by the occupation forces often came down to their physical destruction. That approach was adopted by the Bolsheviks at the time. Soviet monuments were often erected on the sites of destroyed monuments of the previous era. The legal framework was developed to ensure those actions. On April 12, 1918, the government of Bolshevik Russia issued «The Decree on Monuments of the Republic». The document emphasized: «Monuments

erected in honor of kings and their servants and of no historic or aesthetic interest are to be removed from squares and streets and transported to warehouses or utilized» (Decrees by Soviet Power, 1959, p. 95). It was proposed to erect monuments associated with the new Bolshevik era. A similar document was issued by the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, May 7, 1919, that marked the beginning of the Bolshevik monumental propaganda. It also spread to the Western Ukrainian lands incorporated into the USSR in 1939–1940. In particular, after the accession of Bukovina to the USSR in 1940, the Soviet authorities dismantled the notable monument «Unirii» («Reunification») in the central square of Chernivtsi and installed a five-corner wooden star there, painted red. Several other Romanian monuments in Chernivtsi were destroyed by the Soviet authorities after 1940. In turn, in the second half of 1941 after the restoration of Romanian power, the Soviet red star in Chernivtsi was destroyed (Monuments in Chernivtsi a hundred years ago, 2015).

The policy of the occupant power aimed at the elimination of monuments to Bolshevism was supported by the Ukrainian auxiliary administration. In early August 1941, the Zhytomyr Regional Administration issued an order to remove and disrupt Soviet-era emblems in towns and villages, including monuments. The order also concerned other symbols of the Communist era, namely Bolshevik portraits, red stars, and red flags (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1156. Op. 1. D. 3. L. 484). Such orders of the auxiliary administration resulted from the general policy of the German military authorities. Moreover, this policy was supported by the independence movement activists, who partially controlled the auxiliary authorities at that time, and perceived Bolshevism as the main enemy of independent Ukraine. In the context of historical policy, such actions did not provoke objections from the Nazis, as it was supposed to sustain anti-Soviet sentiments among the population.

In this context, the Ukrainian auxiliary administration also pursued the policy of renaming settlements, districts, streets, and squares, related to Soviet realities. On August 8, 1941, the Zhytomyr Regional Administration enacted the resolution to rename the city of Chervonoarmiysk into Pulyny, and Chervonoarmiysk District was renamed into Pulyn district (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-

1153. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 2). Also, the resolution of the regional administration dated August 14, 1941, provided for the renaming of the city of Markhlevsk into the city of Dovbysh, Markhlevskyi district was renamed into Dovbyshanskyi district; the city of Volodarsk-Volynskyi was renamed as Goroshky, Volodarsk-Volynskyi district was renamed into Goroshkivskyi district (Resolutions of the Zhytomyr Regional Administration, 1941, p. 4). In Vinnytsia region, the historical name Makhnivka was returned to the village of Komsomolske, and Komsomolskyi district was renamed into Makhnivskyi district (Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine. F. 3206. Op. 1. D. 76. L. 2). By the resolution of the Kyiv City Administration on October 13, 1941, Zhovtnevyi district in Kyiv was renamed as Volodymyr district (Resolution 15 of the Kyiv City Council, 1941, p. 4).

The local population supported the dismantling of Communist monuments which they associated with the Bolshevik anti-Ukrainian policy of the interwar period. For instance, the population in Kolomyia «relocated the monuments of Kremlin criminals» from the city streets (To Normal Life, 1941, p. 2). In a German Ukrainian-language periodical the dismantling of the monument to Stalin in Lviv was described as follows: «The cord was thrown around its neck, a few blows of the hammer on its legs in sides, and the giant fell with tremendous noise under the joyful cries of the crowd. Gypsum scattered into minute pieces, and all sorts of rags, cod, gunpowder, and dirt poured out from the idol's empty insides» (And all that wind will scatter..., 1942, p. 3).

In some settlements on the threshold of the German attack, the Soviet Party activists put Bolshevik monuments safely away. In July 1941, the railway workers in Volochysk, Khmelnytsky region, dismantled and hid a monument to Lenin. After the restoration of the Soviet power in the spring of 1944, the monument was re-erected in the center of the city (Volochysk Railway Station. History and Development, 2019). A similar case was recorded in the village of Serhiivka, Donetsk region. On the threshold of the German army's attack, local Soviet activists removed Lenin's sculpture from its pedestal and put it safely away. During the years of occupation, those Soviet activists were executed, and the place where the sculpture was stored

could not be discovered. Notably, it was Serhiyivka where the first monument to Lenin in Ukraine was erected in 1924 (The 12th monument to Lenin was unveiled after restoration in Donetsk region, 2013).

In most cases, the occupation authorities did not destroy monuments devoid of ideological charge. In September 1941, Zhytomyr Mayor Dmytro Pavlovsky said in the interview to the newspaper «Ukrainske Slovo»: «There were monuments to Bolshevik leaders on many streets in the city. All of them are now removed, leaving only sculptures representing mythological or everyday life content» (Two months of creative work, 1941).

However, a significant number of plaster sculptures in the squares of Zhytomyr, especially statues depicting sports and physical strength, were destroyed by unknown people (Efremenko, 1941, p. 2). In early May 1942, the newspaper «Voice of Volyn» wrote about the sculptures of two bathers on the banks of the River Teteriv in the city park of Zhytomyr, the city's adornment: «Two girls walk down the granite stairs coming down from the park. On the shoulder of one of them is a white sheet, and the other has a towel. They are bathers. These are two sculptures that adorn the bank of the babbling river. These statutes are our town's attraction» (Mashchuk, 1942, p. 4). During the Nazi occupation, ideologically neutral monuments were preserved in Vinnytsia, some of them are presented on German photos (Vinnytsia. Historical Essay, 2007, pp. 208–209).

The «liberal» position of the Nazi occupation administration on ideologically neutral monuments did not save the monument to Alexander Pushkin in Zhytomyr, which was the oldest monument in the city. Pushkin's bronze bust was removed from the pedestal and sent to the scrapyard (The monument to the poet was restored, 1944, p. 2). (Pushkin's bronze bust survived, and after the war it was found in the wreckage of one of the destroyed houses on Mikhailivskaya Street.) The act of vandalism was likely committed by some individuals for personal gain. After all, from the beginning of 1942, the occupant power launched a campaign to collect non-ferrous metals. Therefore, most likely, the monument to Pushkin was destroyed not earlier than at that time. However, the source database contains information about the significant damage (and possibly destruction) of the monument to

Pushkin as early as the end of July 1941. In this regard, local intellectuals, members, and supporters of the independence movement raised the question of its restoration. The initiative of the locals was not supported by the nationalists of the western Ukrainian region who were in Zhytomyr, as they believed that Alexander Pushkin had misrepresented the image of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in Zhytomyr region. F. 6. D. 30391. L. 20).

During the Nazi occupation, some monuments were destroyed due to improper care, one of the examples is the monument to Polish politician Tadeusz Kostushko in Sambir, Lviv region. A Ukrainian-language newspaper wrote about the monument: «Since the collapse of Poland, this monument has not been repaired. As a result, Kostushko's monument has recently lost one arm and nose. Presently, the authorities of Sambor have ordered to dismantle the monument and another monument corresponding to the new situation will be erected instead» (Disassembly of the monument to Kostushko in Sambor, 1942, p. 4).

The Nazi policy of dismantling Bolshevik monumental art was promoted on the pages of the occupation propaganda newspapers and often gained a humorous form. The following text was published in the newspaper «Chernihiv Courier», February 10, 1943: «An elderly woman walks down the city street when she sees a monument to Lenin standing in front of her. She stops and begins to murmur something.

– Are you telling fortunes here, Granny? – asks the policeman.

– I am not telling fortunes; I am telling the truth: I am grateful to Ilyicht hat I do not bake bread. If only I could talk to Stalin not to cook soup as well…

The policeman got furious and dragged the elderly woman to the police…» (Near the Monument, 1943, p. 4).

The German policy of dismantling Bolshevik monuments did not presuppose the installation of monuments associated with Nazi realities. The occupants perceived the occupied lands as their own «living space», and the Ukrainian population was taken as a «labor resource». Consequently, the Germans did not have to influence the Ukrainians through monumental propaganda. Meanwhile, to maintain the anti-Soviet sentiment at the end of the war, the occupants supported the initiative of local activists to build symbolic monuments to the victims of Communist repression in the 1930s. The monument to the victims of

the NKVD was erected in June 1943 in the village of Lisnyky, Ternopil region (Monument in Memory of Victims of the NKVD, 1943, p. 6). In early September 1943, an oak cross was installed as a symbolic monument in Ovruch. It was located near the church destroyed in the Soviet era to honor the Ukrainians executed and deported by the NKVD in the pre-war period (Monument in Memory of the Soviet Executions in Ovruch, 1943, p. 4). As a rule, the local population actively participated in unveiling of such monuments. More than 2,000 people took part in the unveiling of the monument in Ovruch (Monument in Memory of the Soviet Executions in Ovruch, 1943, p. 4). For the Germans, such actions during the approaching military actions were a source of support for the anti-Soviet sentiment.

In the second half of 1943, the largest anti-Soviet propaganda action of the Nazis was the exhumation and reburial of victims of the Vinnytsia NKVD in the 1930s. As part of this propaganda campaign, it was decided to erect a monument to the victims of the Soviet NKVD in Vinnytsia. By the beginning of October 1943, about 600,000 rubles had been raised for the construction of the monument (Monument in Memory of the victims of the NKVD in Vinnytsia, 1943, p. 3). However, due to approaching military actions, the monument to the victims of the Vinnytsia NKVD was never built.

Conclusions. Dismantling of Communist monuments was initiated by the Nazis on the occupied Ukrainian territories at the beginning of World War II. Predominantly, those were the monuments to Lenin, Stalin, and other Bolshevik activists, as well as the monuments to collective images of the Communist era (for example, the Bolshevik Revolution). Very often dismantling turned into demolition of objects of the Bolshevik monumental propaganda. Nevertheless, monuments deprived of ideological charge were not liquidated. That occupation policy was supported by the local population, for whom the ideological monuments reminded of the Bolshevik anti-Ukrainian policy of the interwar period. As the Nazis sustained anti-Soviet sentiments among the local population, they did not object to erecting local anti-Bolshevik monuments, mainly monuments commemorating Ukrainians executed by the NKVD at the pre-war period. Thus, during World War II, Communist ideological monuments were almost completely dismantled on the territory of Ukraine. After the restoration of the Soviet power in

Ukraine, the priority measures were aimed at restoring Communist monuments.

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Стельникович Сергій, Жуковський Олександр,
Білобровець Ольга. **НАЦИСТСЬКА ОКУПАЦІЯ ТА ДЕМОНТАЖ**
КОМУНІСТИЧНИХ ПАМ'ЯТНИКІВ В УКРАЇНІ В РОКИ ДРУГОЇ
СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ

Анотація

Метою статті є розгляд заходів нацистської окупаційної адміністрації з демонтажу комуністичних пам'ятників в Україні в період Другої світової війни. *Методологія* наукового дослідження ґрунтується на основі загальнонаукових і спеціальних історичних методів з урахуванням базових принципів історичного пізнання: історизму, науковості, об'єктивності, системності. Принципи історизму та науковості дозволили відтворити процеси демонтажу більшовицьких монументів в усій складності та багатоманітності, у взаємозв'язку і взаємозумовленості з тогочасними подіями. Принцип об'єктивності допоміг підійти до розгляду окресленої проблематики з урахуванням об'єктивних історичних закономірностей, з критичним аналізом наявної літературно-джерельної бази. Принцип системності дозволив сформувати цілісну картину процесів демонтажу комуністичних пам'ятників в Україні в роки Другої світової війни. *Наукова новизна* роботи полягає у тому, що тут уперше на основі широкої джерельної бази розглянуто заходи з демонтажу комуністичних монументів в Україні в умовах нацистської окупації. *У результаті автори приходять до висновку*, що демонтаж комуністичних пам'ятників в Україні розпочався на початку нацистської окупації. Він нерідко зводився до звичайного руйнування більшовицьких монументів. При цьому демонтажу не підлягали пам'ятники, які були позбавлені ідеологічного змісту. Значною мірою така політика підтримувалася місцевим населенням, для якого відповідні ідеологічні монументи асоціювалися з більшовицькою антиукраїнською політикою міжвоєнної доби. Окупаційна адміністрація у рамках підтримання антирадянських настроїв не виступила проти ініціативи місцевих активістів щодо спорудження локальних монументів антибільшовицького змісту (переважно монументів у пам'ять про знищених українців органами НКВС). Автори також наголошують, що у роки Другої світової війни в Україні повністю були демонтовані більшовицькі ідеологічні монументи.

Ключові слова: комуністичні (більшовицькі) пам'ятники, демонтаж, монументальна пропаганда, радянська доба, нацистська окупація, історична політика.

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OKUPACJA NIEMIECKA I DEMONTAŻ ZABYTKÓW
KOMUNISTYCZNYCH NA UKRAINIE W CZASIE II WOJNY
ŚWIATOWEJ

Streszczenie

__Celem__ artykułu jest zbadanie kroków podjętych przez nazistowską administrację okupacyjną w celu demontażu komunistycznych pomników na Ukrainie w czasie II wojny światowej. __Metodologia__ badań naukowych opiera się na ogólnych metodach naukowych i specjalnych metodach historycznych, biorąc do uwagi podstawowe zasady poznania historycznego: historyzmu, naukowości, obiektywności, systematyczności. Zasady historyzmu i naukowości pozwoliły odtworzyć procesy demontażu zabytków bolszewików w całej ich złożoności i różnorodności, w powiązaniu i współzależności z wydarzeniami tamtych czasów. Zasada obiektywizmu pomogła podejść do analizy określonych zagadnień, z uwzględnieniem obiektywnych wzorców historycznych, z krytyczną analizą istniejącej literatury i bazy źródłowej. Zasada systematyczności pozwoliła utwożyć całościowy obraz procesów demontażu komunistycznych pomników na Ukrainie w czasie II wojny światowej. __Oryginalnością naukową__ pracy jest to, że po raz pierwszy na podstawie szerokiej bazy źródłowej rozważano działania dotyczące demontażu komunistycznych zabytków na Ukrainie podczas okupacji niemieckiej. W wyniku autorzy stwierdzają, że demontaż pomników komunistycznych na Ukrainie rozpoczął się na początku okupacji. Często ten proces sprowadzał się do zwykłego niszczenia pomników bolszewików. Pozbawione znaczenia ideologicznego pomniki nie podlegały rozbiórce. Przeważnie taką politykę popierała gromada miejscowa, dla której odpowiednie zabytki ideologiczne kojarzyły się z bolszewicką polityką antyukraińską okresu międzywojennego. Wspierając nastroje antyradzieckie, administracja okupacyjna nie sprzeciwiała się inicjatywie lokalnych działaczy wobec budowy lokalnych pomników o temacie antybolszewickim (głównie pomników ku pamięci Ukraińców poległych z rąk NKWD). Autorzy podkreślają też, że w czasie II wojny światowej na Ukrainie całkowicie rozebrano bolszewickie pomniki ideologiczne.

__Słowa kluczowe__: pomniki komunistyczne (bolszewickie), demontaż, propaganda monumentalna, era radziecka, okupacja niemiecka, polityka historyczna.