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**THE NEWSPAPER «OVRUCHSKI VISTI»
IN THE NAZI INFORMATION SPACE
(AUGUST – OCTOBER 1943)**

Abstract

This article aims to examine the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», published in Ovruch between August and October 1943, as part of the Nazi information space during World War II. The research methodology is based on general scientific and special historical methods, integrating the fundamental principles of historical knowledge: historicism, scientificity, objectivity, and systematicity. The principles of historicism and scientificity have been used to recreate the history of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» in all its complexity and diversity in connection to the events of the time. The principle of objectivity has assisted in considering the outlined issues, taking into account objective historical regularities with a critical analysis of the available literature and source base. The principle of systematicity has enabled the reconstruction of a holistic picture of the history of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» as part of the Nazi information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine. The scientific novelty of the research consists in its comprehensive account of the history of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» in the context of the Nazi information space from August to October 1943, which was first carried out on a broad source base. The authors have come to the following conclusions. The occupation authorities initiated the publication of

the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» to strengthen anti-Soviet propaganda and influence the communist resistance movement and its supporters. The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» mostly included German materials, with minimal publications on issues of all-Ukrainian and local life. The approach used to the thematic content of the newspaper met the general requirements for Ukrainian-language newspapers set forth by the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine». This also applied to the main propaganda topics in Ukrainian-language periodicals. The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» disseminated anti-Soviet propaganda; anti-Jewish propaganda; and propaganda aimed at supporting the occupation policy and directives from the occupation administration.

Keywords: *Nazi occupation, newspaper, «Ovruchski Visti», propaganda, General District «Zhytomyr».*

Introduction. One of the major aims for the Nazi occupation authority in Ukraine was the creation of a massive media network. After all, newspapers played a crucial role as a propaganda and informational instrument to influence the local population and occupied an important place in the information space of the occupiers. One of these publications was the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», which was printed in Ovruch (north of the General District «Zhytomyr», Reichskommissariat «Ukraine») from August to October 1943. The newspaper was started in the second half of 1943 for a number of reasons. First of all, the newspaper's materials were intended to promote anti-Soviet beliefs in the context of the retreat of the German troops. The communist resistance movement, which grew over the northern portion of the General District «Zhytomyr», was also addressed in the newspaper along with its members and sympathizers. Additionally, the region's occupation administration decided to intensify anti-Soviet propaganda since the spring of 1943, with newspapers acting as the primary medium (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1151. Op. 1. D. 45. L. 7–8).

There are currently no studies in historiography that comprehensively examine the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» as part of the Nazi information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine during World War II. At the same time, it is necessary to note the recent publishing of a number of references and encyclopedic publications about periodicals on Ukrainian territory during the Nazi occupation. As a result, the publishing of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» and its content are being called attention to in this context. Relevant information is presented in the works of Borys Cherniakov (Cherniakov, 2005, p. 140–155), Serhii

Stelnykovych (Stelnykovych, 2015, p. 422), Maria Kravchuk and Zinovi Partyko (Kravchuk, Partyko, 2022, p. 13). It is especially necessary to highlight the research of Kostiantyn Kurylyshyn, in which the researcher pays some attention to the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» (Kurylyshyn, 2007, p. 129–131; Kurylyshyn, 2022). The author provides a brief explanation of the events that led to the newspaper's establishment and its contents. It should also be noted that the formation of the information space in the Nazi-occupied territory of Ukraine (Reichskommissariat «Ukraine» and the zone of military administration) is comprehensively covered in the study of Oksana Salata (Salata, 2010). According to the historian, the Nazis assigned Ukrainian-language newspapers a significant role in the development of the information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine.

The **main objective** of the article is to consider the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» as an integral part of the Nazi information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine in the second half of 1943.

Findings and discussion. The publication of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» in Ovruch was supported by the occupation administration of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine» and the General District «Zhytomyr». On May 5, 1943, two printing machines were delivered from Rivne to Ovruch, with one of them intended for newspaper production (the other – for printing various official messages). Later, a printing specialist arrived from Zhytomyr to Ovruch to set up the printing equipment (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1156. Op. 1. D. 54. L. 6). In this context, it is possible to argue with the words of the Ovruch Hebbitskommissar Wenzel that the publication of the newspaper was started mainly due to his efforts. The German administrator already made this claim in the first issue of the newspaper, which was published on August 7, 1943: «Through great efforts, I finally managed to rebuild the printing house in Ovruch. Today the first issue of “Ovruch News” is published, which will be distributed in the city and village. The newspaper will be released once a week and contain important current event news» (Residents of the village and the city, 1943, p. 1). The end of the newspaper's publishing is obviously related to the proximity of the battlefield to the area and the escalation of communist resistance actions, whose troops on November 17, 1943, forced the Germans out of Ovruch (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine. F. 1. Op. 18. D. 23. L. 172).

In total, between August 7 and October 23, 1943, 11 issues of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» were published (at least 11 issues are known). It was printed weekly, on Saturdays (with two weeks between the publication of issues 10 and 11), on four pages in Ukrainian. The header of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» contained the title, initial information (number, place, year, and date of publishing), and price of the newspaper. This information was presented in Ukrainian and German. The chief editor of the newspaper was P. Kuz'kovoy. The newspaper was published for the population of the Ovruch Hebbitskommissariat (Ovruch, Bazar, and Narodychi districts) with a circulation of 5 thousand copies (Hornauer, 1944, p. 31). It should be mentioned that the original of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» is kept in the funds of the State Scientific Archival Library in Kyiv.

The content of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», as well as other Ukrainian-language media of the Reich Commissariat «Ukraine», compiled with the demands of the occupation administration. At least 75% of the newspaper space had to be devoted to German propaganda (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1156. Op. 1. D. 10. L. 34, 57). Thus, the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» mainly disseminated official information from German news agencies, reprints of German and Ukrainian-language newspapers, and documents from the occupation administration. Particularly numerous publications chronicled the course of hostilities on the Eastern Front and reported on the alleged constant success of the Wehrmacht. In fact, after the defeat in early February 1943 at Stalingrad and the surrender in August 1943 at the Orel-Kursk Bulge, the German army did not have any strategic victories on the Eastern Front. A significant number of articles dealt with current issues of Nazi policy, including the involvement of the Ukrainian population in compulsory work on the ground and in the Reich. The orders and announcements of the occupation authorities were particularly informative.

The newspaper also included the coverage of world news. One of the central themes was the situation in Italy, an ally of Nazi Germany that signed an unconditional surrender agreement on September 3, 1943. Despite this, Germany was nevertheless able to install a Benito Mussolini-led fascist puppet government in Italy. The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» describes these events as follows: «Rome. September 15. Today, Benito Mussolini reclaims the highest leadership position in

fascist Italy. The Duce issued on September 15 the following five daily orders of the government, which were published through the Roman radio <...>» (5 daily orders of the Duce. Mussolini takes over the leadership of fascist Italy again, 1943, p. 2). Nazi propaganda certainly made an effort to convince readers that the Reich had reliable military successes at the front and strong support from its allies.

According to German requirements, only up to 25% of the space of the Ukrainian-language newspapers of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine» could contain materials related to issues of national and local life (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1156. Op. 1. D. 10. L. 34, 57). However, in reality, the percentage of such publications in the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» was minimal. In some issues, they were absent altogether. As an example of publications on all-Ukrainian issues, we can mention an article about the events that took place in Kyiv in August – September 1943 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Lesya Ukrainka's death (Lesya Ukrainka's Events in Kyiv, 1943, p. 4); and an article on the St. Volodymyr's Cathedral opening in Kyiv (Opening of St. Volodymyr's Cathedral in Kyiv, 1943, p. 4). Among the publications on local life, the article about the opening on May 1, 1943, and work of the drama theater in Ovruch attracts attention (Ukrainian Drama Theater in Ovruch, 1943, p. 4; Nikonchuk, 1943, p. 4; A New Production in the Ovruch Theater, 1943, p. 4). An important article describes the installation of an oak cross in Ovruch, next to the church destroyed by the Bolsheviks. It served as a symbolic monument to local Ukrainians who were killed and deported by the NKVD (Monument in Memory of Soviet Murders in Ovruch, 1943, p. 4). Such publications offer a wealth of information for researching life in the area under Nazi rule.

The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» features a disproportionately large quantity of illustrations compared to most official Ukrainian-language publications of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine»: images of Hitler, German soldiers, images from the exhumation sites of Vinnytsia NKVD victims, etc. It is important to pay attention to the caption underneath the photograph of German soldiers walking by against the backdrop of a burning Ukrainian village from September 4, 1943: «The smoke and the hot sun pose difficult obstacles for the German soldiers» ([Photo illustration], 1943, p. 1).

Thus, the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» served as an information and propaganda tool for the Nazi information space in the occupied territory

of Ukraine. In this regard, in terms of content and formal features (except for a small number of publications on local life), it actually did not differ from other official Ukrainian-language newspapers of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine». The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» published articles with a pronounced propagandist focus. As in other publications of the Reich Commissariat «Ukraine», three types of Nazi propaganda – anti-Soviet, anti-Jewish, and propaganda supporting the occupation policy and occupation orders – can be differentiated in it.

In the context of the Red Army attack, anti-Soviet propaganda had to actualize in the population's memory of pre-war communist crimes, particularly the years of famine and terror. Already in the first issue of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», it was emphasized: «Famine and repression, repression and famine and repression again – this is the destiny of a Soviet citizen. <...> People still remember the hundreds of thousands of exiles sent to Siberia and the method of “voluntary collectivization of the village”. They also remember the millions of people who died of starvation despite the fact there was enough bread in the state warehouses. People still remember the bloody years of 1937–38 and 1939» (Looks into the Future, 1943, p. 1). In order to strengthen anti-Soviet propaganda in the second half of 1943, all newspapers of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine», including the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», published a significant number of materials that reflected the processes of exhumation and reburial of the victims of the Vinnytsia NKVD (Bolshevik mass murders of Ukrainian rural workers, 1943, p. 3–4; Vinnytsia is a City of Crying, 1943, p. 3; Monument at the mass graves in Vinnytsia, 1943, p. 4; Soviet Emergency Report on Vinnytsia Mass Graves, 1943, p. 2). These were mainly articles reprinted from the newspaper «Vinnytski Visti» that were written by Apollinariï Trembovetskyi, an employee of the editorial office of the newspaper «Vinnytski Visti». Given this, it can be assumed that the broad propaganda campaign of the Nazis related to the «Vinnytsia tragedy» was one of the reasons for the appearance of the newspaper in Ovruch in the second half of 1943. The communist resistance movement was also severely criticized in Nazi anti-Soviet propaganda.

To some extent, anti-Jewish propaganda was also present on the pages of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», which was also linked with anti-Soviet propaganda. In propaganda articles, the Bolshevik government was associated with Jewishness, and the ideological tenet of

«Jew-Bolshevism» was proclaimed. Because of this, the pre-war communist terror was also associated with Jewishness. It is significant that in the already mentioned article of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», on the oak cross, installed on the southern outskirts of Ovruch in front of the church destroyed by the Bolsheviks, there was an inscription: «To the victims of the Jewish-Bolshevik terror» (Monument in Memory of Soviet Murders in Ovruch, 1943, p. 4). According to other newspapers in the region, in particular, the central publication «Voice of Volyn» of September 14, 1943, another inscription was placed on the oak cross as a symbolic monument to Ukrainians who were deported and tortured by the NKVD: «Remember the Ukrainian brothers deported and tortured by the NKVD» (On the liberated Ukraine, 1943, p. 4). It should be noted that in one of the articles of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» Nazi propaganda referred to World War II as «a robber war for the domination of the Jews over the world» (Soviet workers under the Jewish whip, 1943, p. 3).

A significant number of publications of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» were aimed at propaganda of the German occupation policy and occupation orders. These are the above-mentioned materials from the fronts of hostilities; publications about allegedly planned reforms in the field of agriculture; appeals of the civil administration (including the General Commissioner of the General District «Zhytomyr» Ernst Leiser); calls for their implementation, in particular, to collect and protect the harvest, etc. One of the central places here is occupied by the propaganda about sending labor resources to Germany. Thus, in the article of August 7, 1943, it was stated: «One thing is clear: every worker transported to Germany is a contribution to the cause of peace, every worker transported to Germany is a knife in the heart of the Soviets» (Looks into the Future, 1943, p. 1). The newspaper describes the allegedly proper working and living conditions in Germany («Great!» That's what they say about work in Germany, 1943, p. 3); liberalization of German official policy towards workers from the East (Increased maintenance of families of workers working in Germany, 1943, p. 3), etc. Letters were also printed on behalf of workers from Germany who represented different parts of the General District «Zhytomyr». One example is a letter from the Reich to her mother in Rechytsia (the northern Belarusian part of the General District Zhytomyr) from Ukrainian worker Tetyana Rudkivska. In it, the Ukrainian worker speaks very positively about the working and living conditions in Germany, emphasizing: «I told you before leaving that only

happiness awaits me in the Reich. <...> You can believe me that I have never seen such a life as in the Reich, and probably never will. I am begging fate now for the war to end soon, I am begging for the Reich to take us into its [jurisdiction], and then our people will understand, see, and know what life means, not living» (Letter of Ukrainian worker Tetyana Rudkivska from the Reich to her mother in Rechytsia, Mykhailivska street 17, 1943, p. 4). As the Germans themselves noted: «The press and explanatory work in the occupied regions should constantly emphasize that the slogan for the population liberated from Bolshevism should be only one slogan: “Work and work again!”» (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine. F. KMF-8. Op. 1. D. 38. L. 118).

In several issues of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», an article entitled «What we owe to the Germans» was published (Stryzhevsky, 1943, What we owe to the Germans, p. 3; Stryzhevsky, 1943, What we owe to the Germans (continuation), p. 3; Stryzhevsky, 1943, What we owe to the Germans (ending), p. 3). Its appearance is connected with a press competition announced in March 1943 by Generalkommissar Ernst Leiser. As a reward for the best thematic publications, actively published in the journals of the General District «Zhytomyr», the German official promised an excursion to the Reich (State Archives of Zhytomyr Region. F. R-1151, Op. 1, D. 137, L. 17). Such publications were intended to involve the inhabitants in the propaganda for national socialism, showing by their own example how «well» they lived in the new reality. The author of this publication is Y. Stryzhevsky. Obviously, he did not represent the Ovruch region, and the article was reprinted in other newspapers. In particular, the same article, «For what we thank the Germans», by Y. Stryzhevsky appeared the day before in the Berdychiv newspaper «Nova Doba» (Stryzhevsky, 1943, For what we thank the Germans, p. 3).

Conclusions. The newspaper «Ovruchski Visti», which was published in Ovruch between August and October 1943, was an integral part of the Nazi information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine during World War II. Its publication was initiated by the top leadership of the occupation administration to strengthen anti-Soviet propaganda in the face of German defeats on the Eastern Front and in an attempt to influence the communist resistance movement and its supporters. The content of this newspaper, as well as other Ukrainian-language

publications of the Reichskommissariat «Ukraine», mainly consisted of German materials, and to a lesser extent, materials on the problems of all-Ukrainian and local life. The publications of the newspaper «Ovruchski Visti» had a pronounced propaganda orientation. In general, three areas of Nazi propaganda can be identified in the newspaper: anti-Soviet propaganda; anti-Jewish propaganda; propaganda aimed at supporting the occupation policy and occupation orders. Such propaganda directions were present in almost all Ukrainian-language newspapers of the Nazi information space in the occupied territory of Ukraine during World War II.

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5 daily orders of the Duce. Mussolini takes over the leadership of fascist Italy again. (1943). Ovruchski Visti (Ovruch), September 25. P. 2. [In Ukrainian].

Стельникович Сергій, Жуковський Олександр. ГАЗЕТА «ОВРУЧСЬКІ ВІСТІ» В НАЦИСТСЬКОМУ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ (СЕРПЕНЬ – ЖОВТЕНЬ 1943 Р.)

Анотація

*Метою роботи є розгляд газети «Овручські вісті», яка виходила у м. Овруч у серпні – жовтні 1943 р., як складової частини нацистського інформаційного простору в роки 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 історію газети «Овручські вісті» в усій складності та багатоманітності, у взаємозв'язку 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 відтворити цілісну картину історії газети «Овручські вісті» як складової частини нацистського інформаційного простору на окупованій території України. **Наукова новизна** роботи полягає у тому, що тут уперше на основі широкої джерельної бази розглянуто історію газети «Овручські вісті» у контексті нацистського інформаційного простору у серпні – жовтні 1943 р. У результаті автори приходять до **висновків**. Вихід газети «Овручські вісті» ініціювала окупаційна влада для посилення антирадянської пропаганди та з метою впливу на комуністичний рух опору і його прихильників. Змістове наповнення газети «Овручські вісті» здебільшого складало німецькі матеріали, мінімально були присутні*

публікації з проблематики загальноукраїнського та місцевого життя. Такий підхід до тематичного наповнення газети відповідав загальним вимогам до україномовних газет в Райхскомісаріаті «Україна». Це також стосувалося і основних напрямків пропаганди україномовної періодики. В газеті «Овручські вісті» була представлена антирадянська пропаганда; антиєврейська пропаганда; пропаганда, яка спрямовувалася на підтримку окупаційної політики та розпоряджень окупаційної адміністрації.

Ключові слова: нацистська окупація, газета, «Овручські вісті», пропаганда, Генеральний округ «Житомир».

**Stelnykowycz Serhij, Żukowski Oleksandr. GAZETA «WIADOMOŚCI
OWRUCKIE» («OWRUCZSKI WISTI») W NAZISTOWSKIEJ
PRZESTRZENI INFORMACYJNEJ (SIERPIEŃ – PAŹDZIERNIK
1943 ROKU)**

Streszczenie

*Celem pracy jest badanie gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie», która ukazywała się w Owruczu w sierpniu – październiku 1943 r., w kontekście nazistowskiej przestrzeni informacyjnej w czasie Drugiej wojny światowej. Metodologia badań naukowych opiera się na ogólnych metodach naukowych i metodach historycznych, biorąc pod uwagę podstawowe zasady wiedzy historycznej: historyzm, obiektywizm, spójność. Zasady historyzmu i badań naukowych pozwoliły odtworzyć historię gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie» w całej złożoności i różnorodności, w związku z wydarzeniami owych czasów. Zasada obiektywizmu pomogła podejść do rozważań nad zagadnieniami z uwzględnieniem obiektywnych praw historycznych, z krytyczną analizą istniejącej bazy literackiej i źródłowej. Zasada spójności umożliwiła odtworzenie pełnego obrazu historii gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie» jako integralnej części nazistowskiej przestrzeni informacyjnej na okupowanym terytorium Ukrainy. Aktualność pracy polega na tym, że po raz pierwszy na podstawie szerokiej bazy źródłowej historia gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie» została rozpatrzona w kontekście nazistowskiej przestrzeni informacyjnej w sierpniu – październiku 1943 r. W wyniku czego autorzy dochodzą do następnyc **wniosków**. Wydanie gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie» zostało zainicjowane przez władze okupacyjne w celu wzmocnienia propagandy antyradzieckiej i wpływu na komunistyczny ruch oporu i jego zwolenników. Treścią gazety «Wiadomości Owruckie» były generalnie materiały niemieckie, minimalnie obecne publikacje dotyczące problematyki życia ogólnoukraińskiego i lokalnego. Takie podejście do treści tematycznych gazety spełniało ogólne wymagania dla gazet ukraińskojęzycznych w Komisariacie Rzeszy Ukraina. Dotyczyło to również głównyc kierunków propagandy czasopism ukraińskojęzycznych. Gazeta «Wiadomości Owruckie» przedstawiała*

propagandę antyradziecką, antyżydowską; propagandę mającą na celu wspieranie polityki okupacyjnej i rozkazów administracji okupacyjnej.

Wyrazy kluczowe: *okupacja nazistowska, gazeta, «Wiadomości Owruckie» («Owruński Wisti»), propaganda, Okręg generalny Żytomierz.*

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