faces of war

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After One Disaster Comes Another? Extraordinary Events and Their Lessons in the *Croniche di Lucca*

Summary: In the *Croniche di Lucca*, which covers the period of Lucca's history from 1168 to 1424, we read about many natural disasters. We can read in detail about the lean years of 1181, 1284, 1330, 1348–1350, and 1400, and the plagues that followed, as well as the great windstorm of 1398. According to the descriptions, epidemics were almost always followed by wars or urban riots. The author of the historical work, Giovanni Sercambi (1348–1424), was not only a writer but also an active politician. He wrote down a significant part of the events he witnessed with the aim of teaching. He tried to formulate correlations both in the case of party fights and riots affecting the life of the city, as well as in the case of the aforementioned disasters. He stated that bad things are usually followed by more bad things.

He usually attached social or moral consequences to the individual events, which are outstanding sources of the history of the mentality of that period. He stated that the moral implications of the disunity experienced in urban politics are famine and epidemics, which in turn can lead to riots and uprisings. The question is, what were the additional consequences of the extraordinary events for the inhabitants of the city at the time? In my presentation, I will examine the relevant entries of the chronicle, analyse the social and moral lessons written down by Sercambi, compare the chapters of the Lucca source with the relevant notes of other contemporary Tuscan historical works, and draw conclusions about the unique features.

Keywords: *Croniche di Lucca*, Italy, Sercambi, epidemics, internal fights, riots, violent events, disasters

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Giovanni Sercambi (1348–1424), author of the *Croniche di Lucca*, recorded several extraordinary events or catastrophes, the examination of which leads to important historical lessons. He may have started writing the chronicle, which consists of two books, in the early 1390s. The work of more than a thousand pages has great historical value, as it is the only narrative source we have that presents the history of the contemporary city of Lucca.[1] Other works written by Sercambi are also known. He probably wrote the *Nota ai Guinigi* between 1390 and 1392, which is a short advisory lesson for the younger members of the Guinigi family on the smooth administration of the city.[2] We should also mention the collection of short stories, which is entitled *Novelle*, which contains more than one hundred and fifty short stories on various topics.[3]

To examine our primary source, it is also worth considering the Sercambi-era Lucca geopolitical situation. The city allied itself first with Florence at the beginning of the 14th century. Then, under the leadership of Castruccio Castracani, it became a regional power for a short time. Troops of Lucca were able to approach the city of lilies several times; however, after the fall of the ruler, a power vacuum was created. After a turbulent period, the city was acquired by John of Bohemia and then by the Rossi family of Parma (1331–1335), followed by Mastino della Scala.[4] In the next period, neighbouring Pisa moved in. Lucca in 1368 — with external help — was able to regain its independence, but from then on the city was in a difficult political situation. Due to its location, Lucca became a focal point for geographical competition between its expansive neighbours (Florence and Pisa). The area of Lucca was crucial, as the most significant coastal trade route ran through it in a north-south direction (following the Roman Via Aurelia and Francigena), while in the north-east direction it was possible to reach the fertile Romagna from Tuscany through the mountainous areas to ensure trade.[5]

Giovanni Sercambi was a witness to intrigues, and the chronicler himself was an active politician. Almost every year from his youth until his death, he served as an official in Lucca.[6] His influential supporters were members of the Guinigi family, who governed the city informally until 1400, when Paolo Guinigi was able to secure his election by the city councils as captain (*capitano*) and then as formal ruler (*Signore*).[7] The family influence thus took shape in the last decades of Sercambi into an actual monopoly. After Paolo came to power, the chronicler became a member of

1 Osheim D.J. 2007, 145–149.

2 Nota ai Guinigi, 397–407.

3 Meek C. 1991, 37–47.

4 Green L. 1995, 43–77.

5 Bratchel M.E. 2008, xviii; Goldthwaite R.A. 2009, 13.

6 Tori G. 1991, 109; Brogi M. 1991, 148.

7 Meek C. 1987, 333–343.

the small group who gave advice directly to the Signore.[8] In addition to political events, Sercambi also documented storms, earthquakes, and — last but not least — epidemics. Below, I will first briefly present the types of natural disasters that appear in the chronicle and then describe the political consequences of the plague epidemics between 1363 and 1399.

Famines, Starvations, and the Windstorm

The author of the *Croniche di Lucca* wrote that in 1181 the great famine (*grande fame*) was followed by death (*grande moria*), i.e., it was probably followed by some kind of epidemic.[9] Sercambi reports that in 1243 there was no rain for five months, which caused a huge crop shortage. In 1346, before the great plague, the grain yield was so poor that, according to the Lucca chronicler, the townspeople ate wild flowers.[10] In some cases, heavy rain caused the famine; it rained continuously in 1410, which the author attributed to God's punishment.[11] Nine years later, however, the chronicler noted that the people of Lucca could expect a bountiful harvest due to the rain, while the Florentines and Pisans could expect destruction due to the flooding of the Arno.[12] Interestingly, the warfare of the time was also able to utilise the latter phenomenon: in 1405, the people of Pisa launched an attack on San Miniato because the flood made it possible.[13] We can read about other natural calamities: in 1244, many buildings in Lucca collapsed when an earthquake struck the city three times in one night.[14]

It is well known that starvation was also used during sieges. Although it does not belong to the scope of natural disasters, it is worth mentioning briefly, since it points to the vulnerability of medieval cities. In 1302 the troops from Lucca took the fortress of Seravalle by employing this as a tactic,[15] and in 1306, together with the Florentines, they blockaded the city of Pistoia, which sympathised with the White Guelphs, and forced it to surrender after a month.[16] Dino Compagni, the Florentine author active around 1300, also reports on this. According to him, the besieged first ate the dogs and cats; then, in the last days, the possibility of cannibalism also arose.[17] Fortunately, according to the descriptions, this did not happen because the Florentines finally entered

8 Meek C. 1987, 281.
9 Sercambi G. 1892, I/16.
10 Sercambi G. 1892, I/129.
11 Sercambi G. 1892, II/205.
12 Sercambi G. 1892, II/286.
13 Sercambi G. 1892, II/104.
14 Sercambi G. 1892, I/61.
15 Sercambi G. 1892, I/106.
16 Sercambi G. 1892, I/110.
17 Compagni D. 1996, III/14; Francesconi G. 2007, 1–27.

the city. We can read in *Croniche di Lucca* that in 1381, during the siege of Arezzo, even children fell victim to this as a brutal tactical element.[18] In 1406, the chronicle reports that siege preparation could also be fraught with danger: Gambacorte, lord of Pisa, in fear of a possible Florentine blockade, collected the grain from the countryside and locked it in the city granaries. According to Sercambi, however, he miscalculated, because it was precisely this consideration that led to his downfall. The inhabitants of the *contado* began to starve and riot.[19]

A note from 1398 can represent a specific pattern of disasters. At that time, a severe windstorm hit Lucca. According to the chronicler, it blew from Rome and destroyed many buildings. Moreover, Giovanni Sercambi writes about how it cleared an entire forest. The author notes that the reason may have been the action of the anti-pope, for which God thus retaliated with his anger.[20] Although the bias of the author from Lucca in political matters is obvious, it can be established that the storm could have indeed raged at that time, because according to the Siena chronicler, in July 1398 the wind knocked down one of the city's bell towers.[21] Next, it is worth considering a topic that had a great impact on the internal politics of Lucca at the time: regularly recurring epidemics.

'Bad Things Are Usually Followed by Bad Things'

Looking at Sercambi's descriptions of the major epidemics, it can be generally concluded that their cause — as with other representatives of European chronicle literature — was thought to be the questionable moral conduct of its citizens.[22] The 'great deaths'[23], similar to the cited windstorm, appear as God's punishments in *Croniche di Lucca*.[24] The chronicler saw the antecedents not only in moral failings but also in wars and factional strife. According to Sercambi, instead of begging for forgiveness for their sins, people behaved even more sinfully.[25] The author of the *Croniche di Lucca* also mentions cause-and-effect relationships in terms of consequences. In the analysed chapters, the most common finding is the idea that bad things usually lead to

18 Sercambi G. 1892, I/167.

19 Sercambi G. 1892, II/109.

20 Sercambi G. 1892, I/591.

21 The tower of Santo Agustino church was collapsed. CTF 1939, 753.

22 Osheim D.J. 2012–2013, 91–93; Marshall L. 2016, 177–187.

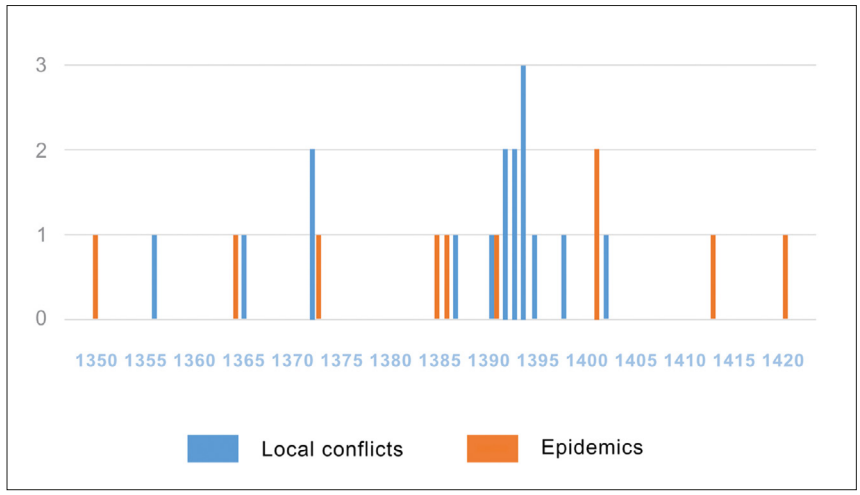
23 Sercambi used the expressions moria; grande moria instead of plaque in the caput titles, which was the rhetorical tool of distance. Althought in the main descriptions He used pestilenza too. Marafioti M. 2005, 326–327; Osheim D.J. 2012–2013, 91–93.

24 While Giovanni Villani often compared the causes of epidemics to astrological phenomena, Giovanni Sercambi, who was interested in politics, mentioned the immorality and hostility of people. About the characterictics of Villani: Palermo L. 1984, 343–375.

25 Sercambi G. 1892, I/320–321.

more bad things: *doppo l'uno male seguiti un' altro;*[26] *E perchè sempre le morìe inducono altri mali.*[27] What influences could Giovanni Sercambi have in mind?

If we look at the *Croniche di Lucca's* references to violent events and riots and compare them to the epidemics recorded by the chronicler, we can see that mass mortality was often followed by internal political conflicts in Lucca. Based on the lessons learnt from the diagram, we should take a closer look at the individual records of epidemics and the aftermath that they reveal.



Caption: The chronology of the violent urban conflicts and 'Moria' interpreted as epidemics in the *Croniche di Lucca*. The numbers indicate the number of chapters that report on a relevant case in a given year. On the one hand, this shows the quantity, and on the other hand, the protractedness, i.e. the importance, of a series of events. For technical reasons, the data in the diagram was narrowed down to the period of Sercambi's life.

Chart 1. Violent internal conflicts and epidemics in Lucca (1348–1424)
Source: Author based on Sercambi G. 1892

Sercambi's description of the plague epidemic of 1363 is preceded by a description of the contemporary wars fought by Lucca.[28] In the relevant chapter, we can read that the city had five thousand florins for the wages and supplies of the troops, which exhausted the coffers terribly.[29] The introductory passage of the following chapter, which presents the epidemic, makes it clear that Giovanni Sercambi may have

26 Sercambi G. 1892, I/293.
27 Sercambi G. 1892, I/152.
28 Sercambi G. 1892, I/151.
29 Sercambi G. 1892, I/151.

disapproved of the war. As the text states: 'God, who knows everything, saw the cruel one's warfare [...] therefore he sent death due to the cruelties of war.'[30] In the lines introducing the epidemic, we can read the following: 'throughout Tuscany, but especially in Lucca, death was raging in Pisa too';[31] 'Many people died, mainly fifteen-year-old children, and it lasted about a year.'[32] The reference to the fifteen-year-old age group can be considered unique. The latter may indicate that those who died in the 1363 epidemic were mainly born after the Great Plague of 1348. At the same time, it is not worth drawing far-reaching conclusions since this detail could also be the chronicler's personal experience. Sercambi was also fifteen years old at that time, from which we can also conclude that the chronicler may have been especially sensitive about deaths occurring in his age group.

Following the mention of Pisa, it is worth briefly examining the Pisan chronicles. Ranieri Sardo, who was a contemporary of Giovanni Sercambi, did not even mention the epidemic. At the same time, Jacopo Arroisti, who lived much later, devoted a large chapter to the subject. According to the latter, in 1363, half of the people died in Pisa — adults, women, and children alike. The feast of the Virgin Mary, which was crucial in the life of the city, could not be held. According to the Pisan historian, the epidemic lasted until November.[33] He also wrote that all this happened under the sign of Saturn, which was last seen in 1348.[34] Arroisti used this narrative device to draw a parallel between the Great Plague and the events of 1363. In contrast to it, in the second half of the 14th century, the Florentine chronicler Marchionne di Coppo Stefani wrote only that there was a 'huge mortality' that year — without giving any details.[35] Although the contemporary Sienese chronicler, Donato di Neri, mentions that there was a great loss of life in Pisa that year due to epidemics and wars, in which many prominent citizens died, he does not mention that Siena — which was further south — was affected by the epidemic.[36] Comparing the lines of Sercambi and the Pisan chronicler with the accounts from Florence and Siena, it can be concluded that the 1363 epidemic affected Pisa and neighbouring Lucca exceptionally severely, meaning that it must have had a primarily local effect. Sercambi's lines can therefore be

30 'Idio, il quale tutto cognoscie, vedendo la guerra cruda e aspra, e acta a crescere più tosto che mancare, dispuose la sua providensa mandare una morìa per la quale si rifrenasse la furia della guerra.' Sercambi G. 1892, I/152.

31 'la dicta morìa mandò in Luccha e im Pisa e per le parti di Toscana; ma principiò im Pisa e in Lucca,' Sercambi G. 1892, I/152.

32 'molti ne morlnno & maximamente i più fanciulli da .XV. anni in giù.' Sercambi G. 1892, I/152.

33 Arrosti I. 2016, 223.

34 Arrosti I. 2016, 223. Arrosti's astrological comment is very similar to the findings that we can read in Villani's chronicle about the earlier events. About Villani see the following: Palermo L. 1984, 351–352.

35 Stefani M. d. C. 1903, r. 691. It should be noted that the Florentine chronicler often recorded events factually, without moralizing. His entry on the 1363 epidemic is very brief, which perhaps indicates that Stefani did not attached much importance to it.

36 CDN 1939, 604–605.

considered unique. In *Croniche di Lucca,* not only is the description of the disaster detailed, but the immediate aftermath is as well. According to this, after the epidemic, two political groups were formed among the people of Lucca. One of these groups intended to deliver Lucca into the hands of the Florentines, while the other group consisted of local friends of Pisa. Among the former were Nicolao di Iohanni Diversi and Cholluccio Sornachi, who, according to Sercambi, were advocates of this school of thought. However, their conspiracy reached the ears of the people of Lucca, who were Pisan sympathisers. They immediately informed the neighbouring city's leaders, who promised that the rebels would not be punished if the others gave them up. However, the leaders of Pisa sent Bartolo di Arezzo, who (presumably with armed troops) beheaded eleven conspirators on the Vigil of St. Zita (i.e., 25 April)[37] in the main square of the city, in front of the church of Santo Regolo. Hearing this, the Florentine troops plundered the *contado* of Pisa, and some garrisons in Pisa territory were occupied.[38] This demonstrates that there was a possibility of a Florentine intervention. This is supported by Iacopo Arrosti, who notes that a Florentine group of 1,500 men was preparing to intervene after the successful uprising in Lucca.[39]

When the conspiracy was revealed, they ultimately did not approach the city. The Pisan historian does not describe the persons mentioned by Sercambi as its leader, but names the Obizi[40] clan. According to him, the *conservatore* of Lucca — who may be the same as Bartolo di Arezzo — sent more than a hundred people away. Many were punished, while others were executed.[41] This is, in essence, consistent with Sercambi's account, as well as the fact that it all happened on the vigil of Saint Zita. The above-quoted idea of *Croniche di Lucca* ('one evil is followed by another evil') suggests that the author saw a connection between the epidemic and the conspiracy. This was suggested by Duane J. Osheim; however, according to him, the chronicler saw primarily moral reasons rather than political.[42] It is important to note, however, that the larger context of the events of 1364 was the Pisa-Florence warfare, not the experience of the plague. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that the social crisis and insecurity associated with the disaster may have intensified the internal political conflicts fuelled by the war of the regional powers.

The experiences of the wave of deaths in 1363, even with the deduction of moral or even pro-peace lessons, were not a barrier to the continuation of the previously-started

37 This information is confirmed by the chronicle of Donato di Neri, in which we read that a hundred Luchese were captured and some were beheaded as rebels. CDN 1939, 605.

38 Sercambi G. 1892, I/153.

39 Arrosti I. 2016, 223. Donato di Neri also mentions 1,500 Florentine soldiers on standby. CDN 1939, 605.

40 The Obizi was one of the five grandi families which were banished from the officies of Lucca in 1372. Meek C. 1987, 184.

41 Arrosti I. 2016, 223.

42 Osheim D.J. 2012–2013, 103.

military actions: despite the plague, the political objectives and tools did not change. According to the *Croniche di Lucca*, the next epidemic broke out on 8 September 1371, the day of the feast of the Virgin Mary. According to the chronicler, it lasted more than two years (twenty-five months). He also mentions that it divided the city and the countryside population due to mortality on the one hand and regional migration on the other. According to the descriptions of Sercambi, people fled in fear from Lucca and its surroundings.[43] This phenomenon had a tangible effect on political life: the previously exiled groups wanted to take advantage of it; some of them considered acquiring the city.[44] The chronicler highlights the aforementioned Obizi clan, as in the earlier account concerning Pisa. Although the author did not state the connection explicitly, it can be assumed that acts of treason were attempted in some areas. Regarding this, we can read that the leaders of Lucca executed the captains of several rural fortresses.[45] Comparing the *Croniche di Lucca* with the works of other neighbouring cities, we can see that among the Pisan chronicles, this time, Sardo's work mentions the epidemic, while Arrosti is the one who is silent.

In the case of the former, however, the epidemic was not recorded in 1371, but in 1373, i.e., two years after the date indicated by Sercambi.[46] The dating is further complicated by the fact that Sercambi himself is also contradicted: in the introduction to the *Novelle*, he writes that there was a great death in 1374 in Lucca.[47] Martin Marafioti writes about the problem and presents several possible explanations. He cites the position of Di Francia, who argues that in this case the plague does not refer to an epidemic, but rather that it functions as a symbol of moral decay. Meanwhile, according to Löhmann, the date at the beginning of the short stories is the result of a transcription error and should instead be 1384.[48] Marafioti himself leans towards the latter.[49] It is worth considering an additional possibility. In the chronicle, it is emphasised that the epidemic appeared in September. This is also supported by the assumption of some researchers of historical epidemiology, according to which the plague may have had a seasonal nature and was most intense in autumn.[50] As to the flare-up

43 Sercambi G. 1892, I/240. Franca Leverotti examined the demographic data of the Lucca *contado* in several studies. He found that the population of the countryside surrounding the city had been continuously decreasing since the beginning of the 14th century. It can be shown that the repeated epidemics had a serious impact on the population of the area. From this point of view, Sercambi's descriptions of the vulnerability of the population are correct, but at the same time, the chronicler — obviously thanks to his own experiences — in some cases writes more about the migration of city dwellers to the countryside. Leverotti F. 1992, 71–86.; Leverotti F. 1999, Tabella 2–3.

44 Sercambi G. 1892, I/240.

45 Sercambi G. 1892, I/241.

46 Sardo R. 1845, 175.

47 Sercambi G. 1995, 53–54.

48 Marafioti M. 2005, 339.

49 Marafioti M. 2005, 339.

50 Ell S.R. 1984, 867.

in September, adding the twenty-five-month period mentioned by Sercambi, we can conclude that the mortality could have lasted until the end of 1373 and even until the beginning of 1374. Based on this, I believe that the dates given by Sercambi, and Sardo's dating, do not contradict each other. These details suggest that the events started earlier in Lucca than in Pisa, or that the epidemic of 1371 lasted longer than usual. Additionally, according to Sardo, 80% of twelve-year-old children fell victim.[51] The *Cronaca senese* is also a useful reference point. According to Donato di Neri, where the epidemic broke out, no one survived. Although this is obviously an exaggeration, it should be emphasised that the deaths, according to him, primarily affected children.[52] As he notes, 'anyone who did not see it with their own eyes would not believe it.'[53] We can again read about the involvement of the age group that was born during or shortly after the previous epidemic. Although in the case of Sercambi, it was due to personal involvement, and one may doubt the accuracy of what was written, it is worth briefly addressing the problem that different age groups may have been affected by the infection in different ways.

Stephen R. Ell, comparing the mortality data of several European regions and periods, found that, according to the data, the plague claimed the most victims among young men. The presentation of multiple points of view draws attention to three main factors. On the one hand, the ratio of children and young people was higher in medieval urban society; on the other hand, the community consisted mostly of mobile young men (so they were more likely to be infected); and thirdly, an iron-rich diet may have helped *Yersinia pestis* prevail in the body.[54] Ranieri Sardo also reports on an additional effect: according to him, grain became terribly expensive after the epidemic.[55]

The next epidemic recorded by Sercambi broke out in 1383.[56] According to the author from Lucca, 'a great number of great citizens, men, women and children, died, and the death lasted until the end of the year 1384'.[57] Although he mentions fewer specific details this time, one aspect is worth noting for its great impact on domestic politics: the head of the Guinigi family, Francesco, died in 1384 too. In addition to these horrors, Sercambi also mentions that after the 'death' was over there was division in Lucca. Many in the city councils spoke against the interests of the Guinigi

51 Sardo R. 1845, 175.

52 CDN 1939, 655.

53 'non si credarebe chi veduto non l'avesse,' CDN 1939, 655.

54 Ell S.R. 1984, 871–876.

55 Sardo R. 1845, 175.

56 It is worth mentioning that, based on the description of Donato di Neri, the epidemic may have appeared in Siena as early as 1382, claiming an exceptionally high number of victims in June 1384. CDN 1939, 696.

57 'molti venerabili ciptadini, homini, donne e fanciulli in grande moltitudine, e durò la dieta morìa infine all' anno di .mccclxxxiiii.' Sercambi G. 1892, I/292.

family, while many exiles and rebels took advantage of the situation to slip back into the city. The chronicler again highlighted that among them was Giovanni degli Obizi.[58]

The next similar event occurred in 1399. At that time, a serious epidemic — presumably plague — appeared in Lucca, which increased the dissatisfaction of the townspeople and those living in the *contado* with the city management; the epidemic also directly affected the Lucca elite.[59] Bartolomeo Guinigi, who would have been the head of the family, fell victim to the epidemic in May.[60] Sercambi describes him as a wise, big-hearted young man and a good man who lived in the love of God, whose death was a great loss for the supporters of the party.[61] The situation was further worsened when in June Francesco's cousin, the ecclesiastical dignitary Lazzaro di Niccolò Guinigi, died. In July, his son Giovanni was also killed by the epidemic.[62] The tragic events continued: Francesco's brother Michele Guinigi died in October. The seriousness of the situation is shown by the fact that, according to Sercambi, the Guinigi house was thus 'emptied',[63] and a few lines later, he states that the 'once huge family has significantly diminished'.[64] Also, at that time, one of their most influential supporters, Niccolò di Ser Pagani, who was fearless, bold and very wise, also left the ranks of the living.[65] The developments in domestic politics could not remain without consequences either, as the chronicler writes the following: 'numerous townspeople, who were minor friends of the house, spoke with disrespectful words and argued that the leadership of Lucca should be put in their hands'.[66] Paolo Guinigi and his followers responded to the critical political situation as best they could: they stabilised their position with the help of mercenaries and other armed people over Lucca. Paolo was elected as *Signore* by the city councils due to the presence of armed men; that is, they proclaimed him lord of the city.[67]

Conclusions

Based on the sources presented, the plague epidemics that returned every ten years had an impact on the domestic and foreign policy of Lucca at the end of the 14th century. In 1363, the social uncertainty caused by the epidemic intensified the tendencies

58 Sercambi G. 1892, I/293.

59 Meek C. 1987, 335–336.

60 Meek C. 1987, 336.

61 Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

62 Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

63 'Per le quali morti la casa de' Guinigi venne molto manchando, e così si sperava delli altri simile cazo'. Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

64 Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

65 Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

66 'Intanto che molti ciptadini poco amici di tal casa, con parole dizoneste parlando et tractando, la magioria di Lucha dovere in loro mani venire.' Sercambi G. 1892, 2/2.

67 Meek C. 1987, 341.

that led to the conspiracy against Pisa. The rulers of power gave a violent response and set an example with mass executions. In 1371 and 1384, revolts and military betrayals also occurred, in which the also aforementioned Obizi clan had an important role. From the repeated reprisals, we can conclude that the leadership in Lucca could only control the escalating conflicts by force. In 1400, the Guinigi clan was also in a threatening situation. As a solution, they resorted to violent intimidation and were able to create a monopoly by taking advantage of the chaos caused by the plague. It can, therefore, be concluded that the phrase used by Giovanni Sercambi, 'bad things are usually followed by bad things', was not just an empty phrase. The insight of the chronicler arose from the politics of his time. Epidemics could not directly lead to conspiracies — since the sources do not write about this — but during the social crises that followed, internal conflicts intensified. What could have been the additional factors that contributed to the development of violent incidents?

An examination of *Croniche di Lucca* and the Pisa sources reveals that the thin ruling layer in these cities was vulnerable, and, in some cases, their involvement may have led to a power vacuum. This tendency, and the 'emptying' of rural areas, could have also affected the fortresses and garrisons and been fatal for a medieval city-state. Sercambi also mentions regional migration, which also led to depopulation.

What Sercambi describes can be considered special from a historiographical point of view: he not only provides factual descriptions of the epidemics but also tries to discover the fundamental connections of the phenomena. However, these are not limited to the astrological observations that can be read in Villani or Arrosti; rather, he tries to find political and social connections. This obviously stems from Giovanni Sercambi's political learnings. In some cases, the connections may seem wrong; however, the recorded facts are supported in many cases by contemporary chroniclers.

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Weapons and Wealth: Economic Effects of the Lucca's War in Florentine Arms and Armour Production (1429–1433)

Summary: In traditional historiography, the wartime context is often judged to have had a uniformly negative impact on medieval economies. While this assessment holds in many respects, it has overlooked the specific sector of arms and armour production and trade, owing to a longstanding lack of focused study. This historiographical gap has thereby distorted our understanding of the period's economic reality. The present research, grounded in the payment mandates preserved by the *Dieci di Balìa*, the Florentine war office, during the War of Lucca (1429–1433), seeks to fill that void by offering a concrete appraisal of the arms and armour economy.

By examining every recorded expenditure on artillery and firearms with their accompanying gunpowder and bullets, on crossbows and the accessories required for their operation, on polearms, and on defensive armour, the study harnesses the richness and precision of archival evidence to reconstruct quantities purchased, total outlays, production locations and the identities of individual suppliers. Repeated spikes in spending correspond closely with the most intense phases of the campaign, demonstrating that demand for weaponry generated a marked, localised surge in economic activity. Notably, rural hamlets such as Montefioralle and La Trappola emerged as specialised centres for crossbow bolt manufacture, while a Florentine apothecary came to dominate the gunpowder supply.

Contrary to the prevailing view that war uniformly depressed Florentine economic life, the conflict with Lucca functioned as a powerful stimulus for sectoral growth, furnishing blacksmiths, carpenters, barrel makers and arms dealers with exceptional earning opportunities. By mapping the supply chains behind every cannon, bolt and spear and by correlating expenditure peaks with the military chronology, this study demonstrates that late-medieval warfare could serve

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as a positive-sum catalyst, anticipating the organised armaments industries of later centuries and calling for a substantial revision of traditional narratives about the economic impact of war.
Keywords: Military Labour, Renaissance Florence, Renaissance Warfare, Renaissance War, Siege of Lucca

Introduction: An Unsuccessful War (1429–1433)

For the Republic of Florence, the conquest of Lucca meant acquiring the last important part of the north of Tuscany, thus unifying almost the entire region, with the sole exclusion of the Sienese territories. In December 1429, Florence besieged the city.[1] After one year from the start of the war, Genoa sent the mercenary chief Niccolò Piccinino, who defeated the Florentine army.

Concerned that the Duke of Milan would take advantage of the situation to conquer the northern territories of Tuscany, Venice and Pope Eugene IV re-established the alliance with Florence. At the beginning of January 1431, hostilities also began in northern Italy. The first four months of 1431 were really difficult for the Florentines: Piccinino conquered many localities, and Lucca made further alliances with Milan and Siena. After Niccolò Piccinino's return to North Italy, the Florentine army managed to regain the lost territories. The clashes also continued at sea, and at the end of August of that year, the Venetians and Florentines defeated the Visconti-Genoese fleet in the battle of Rapallo.

At the beginning of June 1432, the Florentines defeated the army of Lucca, Siena and part of the Milanese in the battle of San Romano. From this moment, Florence maintained a defensive position, without incurring new important clashes. In northern Italy, the conflicts continued until November, when the Visconti army defeated the Venetians in the battle of Delebio. In December, the parties began to seek an acceptable agreement. After months of negotiations, they signed a peace treaty in Ferrara on April 1433.

Armaments

Purchasing ammunition was one of the most logistically demanding tasks for the Florentine office of war, the *Dieci di Balìa*.[2] Indeed, they had to purchase a considerable and disparate number of weapons and ammunition from multiple manufacturers

1 For a more accurate reconstruction of the conflict see: Picchianti S. 2024c chapter first.

2 Some of the late 15th century records produced by the *Dieci di balìa* have already been the subject of analysis. See: Ansani F. 2016; Ansani F. 2017a; Ansani F. 2017b; Ansani F. 2018; Ansani F. 2019; Ansani F. 2021a; Ansani F. 2021b; Ansani F. 2021c; Picchianti S. 2024a.

and then send these materials where needed.[3] These armaments can be divided into macro groups: artillery and handgonnes/bullets, gunpowder and barrels; crossbows, bows and spanning Devices spanning/crossbow bolts, arrows and crates, polearms, defensive armaments; finally, a miscellaneous group of useful tools for military camps.

Artillery and Handgonnes, Bullets, Gunpowder and Barrels

Artillery is generically defined by the documentation as bombards (*bombarde*), but in some cases, they have additional descriptions. By analysing the terminology used and comparing it with their relative weights in pounds (lb),[4] it was possible to divide them into three categories: great bombards (*bombarde grosse*); medium bombards (*bombarde mezane* or *bombardelle*); finally, small bombards (*bombarde piccole* or *bombardette*).[5] These bombards were made exclusively from cast iron (*ferro di getto*); no examples of bronze artillery are recorded.[6] The price of artillery was a function of its weight (*soldi* 6 a lb of cast iron).[7] During the first year of the war, purchases were not many, just 16 pieces. In all probability, the artillery needed for the siege of Lucca was already present at the *Camera dell'Arme*.[8] From the first half of 1431, all armament purchases will increase to arm each locality to defend against enemy attacks. Artillery, too, was not excluded. In fact, 182 were commissioned, with a total value of more than 6,000 *L*. In the following semesters, however, requests stabilised again at around 8–12 pieces.

Many of the masters who produced artillery were also active in making handgonnes (*scoppietti*).[9] These are not distinguished by model or designation but solely by the material of their barrels – iron, brass, or bronze. They weigh between roughly 8.3 lb and 18.7 lb, and their unit prices reflect this composition: brass barrels fetched 9 *s* 9 *d*, bronze 8 *s* 11 *d*, and iron 6 *s* 11 *d*. In a few instances, the records note special features – such as a trumpet-shaped muzzle, fitted wooden stocks, or painted decoration – that increased the standard price.

3 The data presented regarding armaments and manufacturers were taken from some records produced by the Florentine war office. ASFi DB M 1–4.

4 One Florentine pound in the Quattrocento corresponds today to 339.5 g.

5 As can be seen, there is an overlap in the weights of small bombards with medium bombards. It is possible that in addition to weight other aesthetic characteristics qualified them in one group over another.

6 Surviving artillery from the period is very scarce. On the subject we refer to: Smith R.D., Rhynas Brown R. 1989; Smith R.D., DeVries K. 2005; Mauro M. 2008; Mauro M. 2009; Leduc A. 2016; Davies J. 2019; de Crouy-Chanel E. 2020.

7 The unit of account used by the Republic of Florence during this period was a combination of the *florin* and the *lira*: 1 *florin* (*f*) equaled 4 *lire* (*L*); 1 L was divided into 20 *soldi* (*s*) or 240 *denari* (*d*); and 1 *s* corresponded to 12 *d*.

8 The *Camera dell'Arme*, located in Florence, was the main arsenal of the Republic.

9 On this topic see: McLachlan S. 2010.

Table 1. Purchases of Crossbows, Bows and Spanning devices (1429–1433)

Category	Type	Quantity	Total
Crossbows	Crossbows *da gamba*	17	**1.361**
	Crossbows *a girella*	212	
	Crossbows *a mulinello*	273	
	Crossbows *a manetta*	172	
	Crossbows (generic)	416	
	Great Crossbows *a mulinello*	13	
	Great Crossbows *ad arganello*	36	
	Crossbows *ad arganello*	151	
	Crossbows *a passerino*	18	
	Great Crossbows (generic)	30	
	Crossbows *da panca*	22	
	Great Crossbows *da panca*	1	
Bows	Bows	151	**151**
Spanning devices	Gaffle or Belts-and-claw system (*a manetta*)	280	**1.238**
	Cord-and-pulley system (*a girella*)	518	
	Windlass (*mulinello* or *arganello*)	440	

As in the case of artillery, purchases in the first part of the conflict were meagre. In the first half of the year, none were purchased; in the second half of 1430, 85 were bought and then jumped to 675 in the first part of 1431. In the next two years, only 90 were purchased for a total of 850 during the war.

For both bombards and handgonnes, the documentation defines their projectiles as bullets. Those for handgonnes were made from iron or lead, while those for artillery from large or small stone.

From the documentation, it is possible to derive the weights of these bullets with their price: in iron, they were found from 0.15 lb up to 0.82 lb; in lead, from 0.50 lb up to 0.87 lb. As for those in stone, these were produced, in most cases, locally. The bullets found in the documentation are those of proof, as those produced by the flag-stone

worker (*lastraiuolo*) Giovanni di Piero dei Tornaquinci.[10] The production of bullets at army camps or strongholds became an established practice from the second half of 1431 onwards, as demonstrated by the fact that they no longer appear among the purchases made, while, as we have seen, specialised workers were sent directly to produce this ammunition. For this reason, it was not possible to quantify the production of such ammunition.

Another key element for the operation of artillery and firearms was gunpowder. Especially, the artillery needed large quantities of material to operate. During the conflict, a large quantity of 476.96 tons was purchased by the Republic.

Purchases related to bombard powder then include barrels suitable for containing it. These were produced by coopers and directly sent to powder manufacturers. Barrels differed in capacity between small (*bariletti*) and big (*bariglioni*).

Crossbows, Bows, Spanning devices, Crossbow Bolts, Arrows and Crates

Crossbows, their accessories and crossbow bolts were among the highest expenses of ammunition. There were several types of crossbows, classified according to size or spanning mode (Table 1).[11]

The most common, called simply crossbows (in some cases referred to as *balestre da gamba* or *a manetta*), correspond to more than ⅓ of all those purchased, amounting to 541 pieces. Their spanning was done using a lever, gaffle (*crocco a piede di capra*) or a belt-and-claw (or spanning hook) system, attached to a belt that the crossbowman wore around his waist, defined in this case as belts with *manette* or *a manetta*. The term *a gamba* (leg) indicated how it was necessary to insert the foot into the front stirrup of the crossbow in order to anchor it to the ground before tensioning the string with the gaffle or the belt-and-claw system. The crossbows *a girella* were the most convenient to use because of their rope-pulling system. The cord-and-pulley system consisted of a pulley, which allowed, through its rotation, to tension the rope. Then there were the crossbows *a mulinello* (reel). Their size and strength were greater than the other two models of hand crossbows, reason why they needed a windlass to be able to place the rope in traction. Their use was defensive. Finally, some large models could only be used by resting them on a stand. These could be a *mulinello* or *da panca* (bench). A total of 1,371 pieces will be purchased during the conflict, with a peak in the first half of 1431 of 736.

As far as bows were concerned, the purchases of the *Dieci di Balìa* were directed at strengthening the depots of the fortified localities. During the conflict, 151 bows were purchased from the same artisans who also supplied crossbows. This relatively

10 ASFi DB M 1, c. 115v.

11 Regarding the bows and crossbows of this period see: Biscarini P. 2018; De Luca D., Farinelli R. 2018; Corbie L. 2018. Recently published on the history of the crossbow see: Ellis-Gorman S. 2022.

limited number suggests that bows held a significantly less prominent role in warfare compared to crossbows. At the time, crossbows had not yet become widely adopted for hunting, unlike bows, which were still commonly used across all social strata. However, effective use of the bow required extensive training over several months, in contrast to the crossbow, which could be mastered more quickly. As a result, bows were likely issued only to those who were already proficient in their use.

Spanning devices varied in price depending on complexity and size, and were always sold already attached to belts. The total number of items purchased is slightly less than the total number of crossbows.

Crossbow bolts were definitely the item most purchased by the Republic of Florence, corresponding to over 46,000 *L* in expenditures (Table 2).[12] Their use was indeed massive on the battlefield, but at the same time, every fortified place had to have large quantities of them in order to withstand a hypothetical siege. Crossbow bolts comprised three principal components – the head, the shaft, and the fletching – and during the War of Lucca, five distinct varieties were produced. The smallest, known as *verrettoni da gamba*, were intended for hand-loaded crossbows, while the medium-sized *verrettoni da cianfogna* were used with winch-operated weapons. *Passatoi* featured particularly sharp, round-sectioned heads designed for precision penetration, whereas *quadrelli* (or quarrels) were distinguished by their square-sectioned points and exceptional penetrating power. Finally, the largest type, the *cianfognoni da galea*, shared the form of the *verrettoni da cianfogna* but exceeded them in length and were employed specifically in naval engagements.[13] During the war years, more than 1,246,300 crossbow bolt heads and 1,610,800 shafts were purchased, among the many types.

The volume of arrows purchased, while significantly less than that of crossbow bolts, shows us that the use of these was not totally insignificant: in fact, the arrowheads alone number just under 70,000. The cost of arrows was, on the other hand, significantly higher than that of most crossbow bolt heads (the most common ones cost 30–50 *L* per 1,000 units). The high price of such ammunition was given mainly by the cost of assembly and feathering, amounting to 80 *L* per 1,000 units. The sources, in this case, allow us to understand why this price was so high: the fletches were not made of birds' feathers but of silk.[14] This was purchased directly from assemblers and consequently resulted in higher prices than crossbow bolts that had wooden or leather fletches.

As in the case of powder barrels, the darts needed crates so that they could be sent where they were needed. The crates were standard in size as they could hold 500 pieces each. Specific crates were produced by the same craftsmen for arrows used with bows. In this case, these could hold up to 600 units each.

12 The production and trade in Florence of crossbow darts during the period 1430–1433 has been the subject of analysis in Picchianti S. 2024a.

13 ASFi DB M, 2, cc. 34v, 37v and 38r.

14 ASFi DB M, 2, c. 86r.

Table 2. Purchases of Crossbow Bolts and Arrows (1429–1433)

Category	Type	Quantity	Total
Bolt Heads	*Gamba*	809.670	**1.246.379**
	Cianfogna	424.554	
	Passatoi	6.555	
	Quadrelli	300	
	Galley *Cianfognoni*	5.300	
Shafts	*Gamba*	572.172	**1.610.872**
	Cianfogna	394.200	
	Passatoi	25.200	
	Quadrelli	100	
	Galley *Cianfognoni*	2.700	
	Generic Shafts	616.500	
Arrows	Complete Arrows	19.575	**121.680**
	Arrowheads	69.555	
	Shafts	32.550	

Table 3. Purchases of Polearms (1429–1433)

Category	Type	Quantity	Total
Polearms	Lances for Horsemen	5.895	**19.765**
	Spears for Infantrymen	7.493	
	Small Spears (*chiaverine*)	139	
	Galleys Spears	1.126	
	Galley Darts	5.112	

Polearms

Another of the categories of armaments found among the ammunition is polearms (Table 3).[15] These were produced primarily by combining the labour of two categories of craftsmen, blacksmiths and spear makers. The former produced the weapon heads, the latter the shaft and did the assembly.

By the second year of the conflict, just under 20,000 polearms were purchased by the *Dieci di Balìa*. The main types were spears for foot soldiers and lances for mounted combat, but there were also specific ones for naval clashes. Added to these were two types of throwing weapons: the small spears similar to javelins, and the galley darts. The latter appears similar to a spear, but was equipped with a lance that allowed for better propulsion when thrown from the coffins of vessels. In some cases, it could also be fitted with hind fletches in order to stabilise its flight and thus improve its accuracy.[16]

The peak purchase of these occurred in the second half of 1431. In those months, the Florentine fleet was in fact being strengthened, and it was the only period in which galley spears (1,126) and darts (5,112) were purchased, all from the same seller, the peddler Berto di Giovanni from Pistoia.[17]

Defensive Armaments

Every mercenary or soldier of the Republic deputed to the defence of a locality had to have his own defensive armament so as not to incur the penalties commensurate with the lack of some element.[18] For this reason, defensive armaments were not normally part of the War Office's purchases. Instead, the situation of extraordinary insecurity faced by the *Dieci di Balìa* during the years of the War of Lucca led to a change in direction. If, in fact, in the first year of the war the purchases were minimal, during 1431, coinciding with the most difficult period of the conflict, they acquired a certain importance.

The defensive armaments present can be divided into three categories: shields, defensive armaments for the torso, and head protection (Table 4).[19]

15 Polearms have never generated much interest among researchers of arms and armour. The most relevant contributions are: Boccia L.G. 1967; Enlart C.P. 1976; Monelli N. 1977, Troso M. 1988 and a volume devoted to throwing darts, Troso M. 2014. As for the Florentine production Picchianti S. 2018b. Some references on the production of polearms in the 15th century in Pistoia can be found in Herlihy D. 1972, 199–200.

16 See: Troso M. 2014.

17 ASFi DB M, 2, cc. 251r and 317r.

18 Picchianti S. 2024b, 528–529.

19 Regarding Florentine production of defensive armaments: Boccia L.G. 1970; Boccia L.G. 1973a; Boccia L.G. 1973b; Frangioni L. 1985; Frangioni 1987; Frangioni L. 2005; Picchianti S. 2017; Picchianti S. 2018a; Picchianti S. 2020a; Picchianti S. 2020b; Picchianti S. 2023; Scalini M. 1982; Scalini M. 1990.

Table 4. Purchases of Shields, Armour Cuirasses and Head Protection (1429–1433)

Category	Type	Quantity	Total
Shields	Shields (*Targoni*)	374	**483**
	Galley Pavises	78	
	Great Pavises	9	
	Round Shields (*Rotelle*)	22	
Armour Cuirasses	Cuirasses	228	**283**
	Half Cuirasses (*mezze corazze)*	15	
	Breastplates	39	
	Plackart	1	
Head Protection	Small semicircular caps (*coppi*)	166	**225**
	Baucchi (a type of helmet)	216	
	Sallets (*celate*)	93	
	Ribalde (a type of Sallet)	6	
	Bacinets (*bacinetti*)	115	
	Helmets	11	

The shields mentioned fall into four distinct categories, each corresponding to a specific type and use: round shields (*rotelle*) were small, circular defensive arms typically used in hand-to-hand combat or ceremonial contexts; great shields (*targoni*) were larger and more elongated, offering greater protection and often employed by infantry; galley pavises (*palvesetti da galea*) were medium-sized, portable shields specifically designed for use aboard galleys, providing cover for rowers and soldiers during naval engagements; finally, great pavises (*pavesi*) were tall, rectangular shields used primarily in siege warfare to protect crossbowmen and archers while reloading. These, like other defensive armaments, were purchased massively on the Florentine market, even buying old models or those in less than excellent condition. The large shields were crafted from plain wood or faced with donkey or sheepskin and often bore the municipal insignia — either the lily or the Marzocco (Florence's lion emblem).[20]

20 ASFi DB M, 2, c. 315r. All shields were to be painted, as indicated by specific expenditures to wooden board makers (*tavolacciai*) or painters, such as Bonaiuto di Giovanni or Stefano di Lorenzo (ASFi DB M 2, cc. 315v-316r).

The peak time for the purchase of such armaments was the second half of 1431, during the arming of the Florentine fleet, which, as has already been seen for the arms in the auction, involved an increase for some types of ammunition.

Defensive armaments for the torso are divided into two categories. The first includes cuirasses (*corazze*) and half cuirasses (*mezze corazze*), which provided broad protection and were typically constructed from layered materials or reinforced fabric.[21] Among these armoured pieces — composed of steel plates fastened with leather straps — there are a total of 243 items, usually covered with fabric and occasionally with hides such as chamois.[22] The second category consists of individual plate armour. Notably, the only standalone pieces of armour present are 40 breastplates.

Head protection are of multiple types. There were: small semicircular caps (*coppi*); *baucchi* (a type of helmet); sallets (*celate*); *ribalde* (a type of sallet); bacinets (*bacinetti*); unspecified helmets.[23] The craftsmen devoted to this type of production were the same as those involved in the production of armour. Among the 607 pieces, purchased in the largest number, we find *baucchi*, followed by *coppi* and *ribalde*.

Goods Useful in Army Camps

Outside these macro-categories of goods are additional expenditures for special equipment purchased in small numbers. For example, a whole range of useful tools at the army camps, such as lanterns, iron picks, axes, two-handed axes and iron mallets, supplied by ironworkers, peddlers or blacksmiths; ladders, ropes, food bags for grain, the latter made by the linen products makers.[24] To be sent to some fortresses, bands, latches, drawbridge chains, keys, patches, created by blacksmiths and key makers.[25] More than 120 flags of different shapes and decorated with the lily, the *Marzocco* or the Commune coats of arms were requested from the flag makers.[26] Besides these, also some tents and flagpoles. Probably to carry out some undercover naval operations, flags with Genoese coats of arms were commissioned.[27]

21 Regarding cuirasses and their specific classification, see: Vignola M. 2008. On Italian armour in the 15th century, see: Boccia L.G., Coelho E.T. 1967; Scalini M. 1980; Boccia L.G. 1982a; Boccia L.G. 1982b; Williams A.R. 1987; Oakeshott E. 2000; Williams A.R. 2004. See: Moffat R. 2024.

22 ASFi DB M 2, c. 236.

23 On the specific differences between the various head protectors (perhaps simply 'helmets'). See: Picchianti S. 2023, 254–258.

24 ASFi DB M 1, cc. 41r–41v, 58r.

25 ASFi DB M 1, c. 51r.

26 ASFi DB M 2, cc. 288r–289r.

27 ASFi DB M 2, c. 288r.

Producers and Economic Intermediaries

The wide variety of armaments and ammunition that were purchased by the *Dieci di Balìa* were produced by artisans and marketed by them or by economic intermediaries (Table 5).

Table 5. Craftsman/Seller and Related Goods Produced

Profession	Artilleries	Firearms	Gunpowder	Bullets	Barrels	Crossbows	Spanning devices	Bolts	Crates	Polearms	Shields	Armour	Flags, tents	Ladders, ropes, bags	Latches, chains, keys	Lanterns, axes, etc.
Blacksmith (*fabbro*)	x	x						x							x	x
Ironworker (*ferraiuolo*)	x	x										x				
Bombard maker (*bombardiere*)	x															
Firearms maker (*scoppiettiere*)		x		x												
Flag-stone worker (*lastraiuolo*)				x												
Seller of spices (*speziale*)			x													
Barrels maker (*bottaio*)					x	x	x									
Crossbow maker (*balestriere*)						x	x									
Peddler (*merciaio*)						x	x				x					x
Secondhand dealer (*rigattiere*)						x	x									
Dealer in old iron (*ferravecchio*)						x	x				x					x
Carpenter (*legnaiolo*)								x	x	x						
Bowl-maker (*scodellaio*)										x						

Table 5. cont.

Profession	Artilleries	Firearms	Gunpowder	Bullets	Barrels	Crossbows	Spanning devices	Bolts	Crates	Polearms	Shields	Armour	Flags, tents	Ladders, ropes, bags	Latches, chains, keys	Lanterns, axes, etc.
Spear maker (*lanciaio*)										x						
Wooden board maker (*tavolacciaio*)											x	x				
Armour maker (*corazzaio*)												x				
Arms dealer (*armaiolo*)										x	x	x				
Linen products maker (*linaiuolo*)														x		
Keymaker (*chiavaiuolo*)															x	
Flags maker (*bandieraio*)													x			

The artillery purchased by the office of war was produced by various artisans: blacksmiths, ironworkers, or bombard makers. The number of manufacturers is small, but one must consider the size of their workshops, which was undoubtedly not limited to just a few workers. Indeed, if one considers the six months of highest demand for armaments, it becomes clear how two of them managed to fulfil a substantial number of orders. Out of a total of 182 pieces, the blacksmith Tinaccio di Piero, along with the craftsmen working in his workshop, produced as many as 40 bombards, while Simone di Michele di Jacopo delle Volte was responsible for as many as 78 of various types. These included large, medium, and small bombards, indicating a diversified output. Given approximately six months, or about 180 days, this suggests that one bombard was completed roughly every five days in Tinaccio's workshop. Such a remarkable rate of production can only be explained by a highly organised system of labour and the involvement of a substantial number of workers specialised in cast-iron founding.

The geographical origin of such masters is varied. In addition to locations in the domains, one is found from the famous Brescian firearms production area (northern Italy), the Garza Valley, another from Germany, one from Perugia (central Italy),

and yet another from the Venetian locality of Cologna.[28] Workshop locations are not always recorded; where they are specified, however, they invariably lie adjacent to waterways, allowing smiths to harness hydraulic power for hammers or bellows. For instance, Tinuccio's forge stood near Porta San Niccolò on the banks of the Arno, Antonio di Domenico operated in Ponte a Grassina by the Sieve tributary, and Bindo di Nanni's workshop in Castelfiorentino was similarly sited on the Elsa River.[29]

Blacksmiths and ironworkers constituted the principal producers of handgonnes, their broad metallurgical expertise encompassing not only ironworking but also — and by implication — bronze casting operations, even though founders are not explicitly named in the sources. It is reasonable to infer that casting of bronze and other copper alloys was carried out under the aegis of these workshops. Alongside them operated a handful of highly specialised firearm makers (*maestri di scoppietti*), whose very title attests to their distinctive skill in fabricating portable gunpowder weapons. Among the named artisans, Simone di Michele di Jacopo delle Volte's workshop accounted for 219 handgonnes, Tinuccio di Piero's for 115, and the ironworker Lapo di Stefano da Greve for 102, reflecting the concentrated yet varied nature of gun barrel production in the Florentine domains.

The bullets were made by the same craftsmen dedicated to the production of firearms as Lapo di Stefano and Tinuccio di Piero.[30] They are also joined by the flagstone workers (*lastraioli*), the true specialists in the field, among whom Giovanni di Pierone stands out in terms of sales volume.[31]

Powder production was virtually monopolised by a single apothecary (*speziale*), Lorenzo di Stagio Barducci, whose workshop supplied over 82% of all recorded bombard powder — an amount exceeding 8,300 *ƒ* (approximately 33,200 *L*). Notably, Barducci and his peers were exclusively engaged in the procurement and refinement of gunpowder; they neither manufactured firearms nor cast artillery pieces. This clear division of labour highlights the early emergence of a specialised gunpowder economy, in which distinct artisan categories collaborated to sustain Florentine military logistics.[32]

28 Santi di Domenico (Garza Valley); Giovanni di Giovanni (Germany); Maso di Matteo (Perugia). ASFi DB M 1, cc. 50r, 118r, 102v; Matteo di Gherardo (Cologna). ASFi CC P SEU 42, c. 345v.

29 All in the domains of the Florentine republic. ASFi DB M 1, c. 41v; ASFi CC P SEU, 42, c. 344v; ASFi DB M 2, c. 237r.

30 ASFi DB M 1, cc. 88r, 116r.

31 ASFi DB M 1, c. 113v.

32 The only other producers mentioned were: Francesco di ser Antonio and Domenico di Lorenzo. ASFi DB M 1, c. 56r; the seller of spices Cambio di Giovanni. ASFi CC P SEU 42, c. 44v; Vannuccio d'Andrea Martignoni and Giano Bauzi. ASFi DB M 1, c. 144v; Bartolomeo di Masino del Tignoso from Pisa. ASFi DB M 1, c. 148r.

There were only three artisans who made barrels, and they were all Florentines: Giovanni di Corsellino, Giovanni di Filippo, and Neri di Francesco.[33] Regarding this type of goods, it is worth noting how they could be repurposed. For this reason, used barrels sent back to the powder manufacturers for reuse are shown, as was also the case with crates of crossbow bolts.[34]

Crossbows were chiefly produced by specialised crossbow makers, with barrel makers playing a smaller role; vendors included itinerant peddlers, secondhand dealers and merchants in scrap iron. Although many artisans in the records do not specify their place of origin, documentary evidence reveals that the majority were Florentine citizens. The most prolific workshop belonged to Nanni di Tingo, who supplied the Republic with over 250 crossbows in addition to ancillary components.

The staggering volume of bolt production further illustrates a proto-industrial organisation: between 1430 and 1433, more than 700,800 bolt heads from Montefioralle alone were delivered. Thanks to the rolls of the *Arte dei Fabbri* (the Florentine guild of blacksmiths) for the city and its contado, we can identify thirty-three master smiths active in Montefioralle during the Lucca War. Virtually all inherited their craft through family — only five were new entrants — underscoring the locality's entrenched tradition of blacksmithing. When compared with guild membership across the wider Florentine countryside, Montefioralle emerges as a remarkable centre of metalwork throughout the 15th century.[35]

Tax records from 1427 show that Montefioralle counted just seventy working-age men, of whom thirty-three were master smiths.[36] It is therefore reasonable to infer that the remaining adults were employed in workshops and that younger boys served as apprentices. Together, they maintained a semiannual average output of over 100,000 crossbow bolt heads — peaking at nearly 196,000 in a single six-month period — and supplied Florence with more than 700,800 heads between 1430 and 1433. The Republic's procurement of these vast quantities amounted to expenditures in excess of 18,600 lire throughout the war.

Meanwhile, the tiny hamlet of La Trappola, situated on the southwestern slopes of Pratomagno and home to roughly fifty inhabitants, became the principal source of wooden shafts. Local carpenters — members of Florence's gild of carpenters (*Arte dei Legnaiuoli*) — produced an estimated 983,000 shafts during the conflict, with a six-month high of 454,000 in early 1431.[37] Although guild rolls do not preserve the names

33 ASFi DB M 1, c. 39r; ASFi DB M 2, c. 29v; ASFi DB M 4, c. 34v.

34 Of crates for crossbow bolts were bought in fact a little less than 1.500, which could contain less than the half of the total of the darts purchased.

35 The main localities of the Florentine countryside for the presence of blacksmiths registered in the guild were: Castel Fiorentino; Figline Valdarno; Empoli; Poggibonsi, San Giovanni Valdarno; Montevarchi. Picchianti S. 2018a, 142.

36 Conti E. 1965, 294.

37 ASFi Arte dei Legnaiuoli 4, c. 6r.

of individual masters in La Trappola, the hamlet's small population makes it likely that almost every able-bodied male participated in shaft production during periods of peak demand. Together, these figures attest to a remarkably concentrated, proto-industrial organisation of armaments manufacture in Florence's rural domains.

Producing the polearms was the spear maker. Although logically, they would have belonged to the Arte dei Legnaiuoli, in 1384 the guild expelled all weapon makers, re-instating them later, except the spear makers.[38]

Artisans who professed this trade then had to register with the guild by indicating another trade: some that of carpenters, but most that of bowl maker (*scodellaio*).[39]

It is also noteworthy that the Florentine vendors from whom the *Dieci di Balìa* purchased polearms were, in most cases, economic intermediaries rather than direct manufacturers. Matteo di Benedetto, for instance, sold the Republic no fewer than 9,129 polearms — an amount that would have far exceeded the productive capacity of a single workshop, particularly one located in the centre of Florence. The intermediary nature of these figures is further confirmed by the case of Piero di Naldo, who died in September 1430. According to the post-mortem inventory of his workshop, compiled by the *Ufficiali dei Pupilli*, a Florentine magistracy responsible for overseeing testamentary estates in cases where the heirs were still minors at the time of the deceased's death, he held in storage 462 complete weapons and 856 weapon shafts, quantities far too large for a typical urban workshop to produce independently. Moreover, the lists of his debtors and creditors include, in addition to the *Dieci di Balìa*, numerous individuals from the city, the surrounding countryside, and even the mountainous areas of Pistoia — regions from which he evidently sourced arms for resale.[40]

Producing and marketing defensive armaments were different artisans/entrepreneurs from multiple guilds: the main ones were the armour maker (*corazzai*), part of the eponymous art (*Arte dei corazzai e spadai*); then there were the arms dealers (*armaioli*), registered in *Arte di Por Santa Maria*;[41] Finally, some members of the guild of key makers, ironworkers and coppersmiths (*Arte dei chiavaiuoli, ferraiuoli e calderai*) (but who could only market used or cold-processed products.[42] The largest number of purchases was made from the Florentine arms dealer Giovanni di ser Piero Centellini, from whom more than ⅗ of all armour was bought. Even in the case of helmets, about a hundred of them were bought from Centellini, while the remainder were sought in markets outside the city of Florence.

38 Picchianti S. 2018b, 44.

39 As well as Matteo di Benedetto, Marco di Giovanni, Piero d'Antonio. ASFi DB M 1, cc. 44r-44v, 96r.

40 Picchianti S. 2018b, 49.

41 The Arte di Por Santa Maria gathered among its members multiple artisans/sellers of luxury goods such as: silk merchants (*setaioli*); hat makers (*cappellai*); doublet makers (*farsettai*); shoemakers (*calzaioli*); mattress makers (*materassai*); goldsmiths (*orefici*).

42 As regards the specific activities carried out by these craftsmen, see: Picchianti S. 2023, 250–354. In this guild were present: key maker, dealer in old iron, and coppersmith.

Shields were made by wooden board makers, experts in woodworking, mainly from planks. Also, trading in such products are peddlers and dealers in old iron, all Florentine citizens. Here again, there is a favoured seller in purchases, the wooden board maker Bartolomeo di Domenico: out of the 483 shields purchased, he would provide 215.[43]

Conclusions

By analysing the trends in military expenditure, it becomes evident that, following the initial surge in spending during the early stages of the war, aimed at supplying the encampment stationed beneath the walls of Lucca — outlays on armaments and ammunition dropped sharply in the subsequent six months (Chart 1). The year 1431 marked the peak of military expenditure: in the first half, funds were directed toward equipping auxiliary troops and securing the republic's fortresses; in the second half, resources were allocated to outfitting the Florentine fleet. After these intense phases of procurement, military spending gradually declined until the conclusion of the conflict.

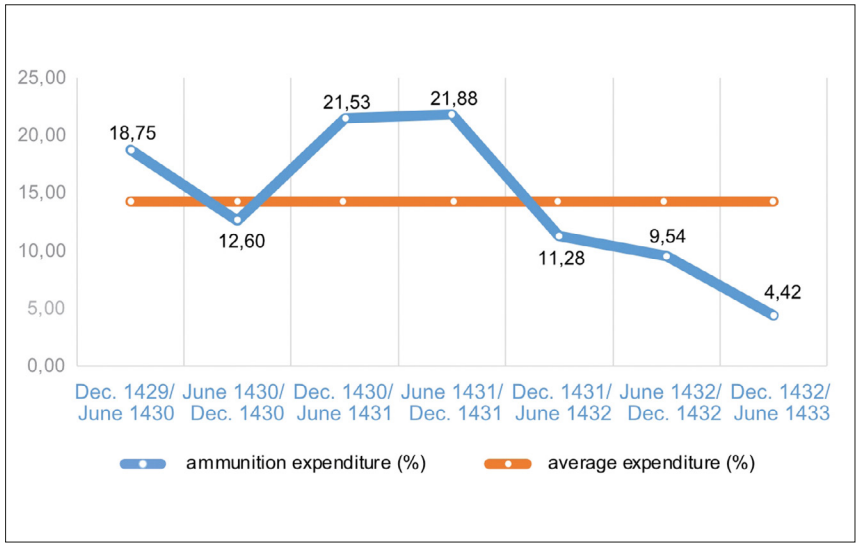

Chart 1. Percentage Breakdown by Semester of Total Expenditure on Ammunition during the War of Lucca (1429–1433)

43 The size of his workshop was large and it is not excluded that he could also play the role of dealer for other craftsmen.

Ammunition costs alone accounted for a significant portion of overall state expenditure and involved numerous craftsmen with highly specialised skills. A clear trend emerged to concentrate the largest contracts in the hands of a few economic intermediaries, effectively creating monopolistic or oligopolistic structures (Table 6). This pattern is exemplified by Lorenzo di Stagio Barducci's dominance in the gunpowder market; Giovanni di Berto's exclusive supply of galley darts and spears; Matteo di Benedetto's control over polearms; Nanni di Tiengo's provision of crossbows and related accessories; and the production of crossbow bolt heads and shafts from the artisanal centres of Montefioralle and La Trappola. In other instances, similar dynamics persisted, although the supplier in question was unable to fully dominate the market, managing instead to supply approximately half of the Dieci di Balìa's demand — as was the case with Bartolomeo di Domenico and the supply of shields.

Table 6. Artisans/Vendors & Produced Goods

Principal Producers	Profession	% on tot.	Goods
Tinaccio di Piero	Blacksmith	21,98	Artilleries
Simone di Michele di Jacopo delle Volte	Blacksmith	42,86	Artilleries
Simone di Michele di Jacopo delle Volte	Blacksmith	25,76	Firearms
Tinaccio di Piero	Blacksmith	13,53	Firearms
Lapo di Stefano from Greve	Blacksmith	12,00	Firearms
Lorenzo di Stagio Barducci	Seller of spices	82,00	Gunpowder
Artisans of Montefioralle (village)	Blacksmiths	56,23	Bolts (heads)
Artisans of La Trappola (village)	Carpenters	61,03	Bolts (shafts)
Nanni di Tingo	Crossbow maker	18,23	Crossbows
Berto di Giovanni	Peddler	100,00	Galley Spears and Darts
Matteo di Benedetto	Bowl-maker	67,49	Spears/Lances
Bartolomeo di Domenico	Wooden boards maker	44,51	Shields
Giovanni di ser Piero Centellini	Armour dealer	38,60	Cuirasses
Giovanni di ser Piero Centellini	Armour dealer	41,78	Helmets

In the field of firearms, although some artisans reached high production volumes, none focused exclusively on a single type of weapon. Instead, they typically specialised in multiple product lines: Tinuccio di Piero manufactured artillery, handgonnes, and bullets; Simone di Michele di Jacopo produced both artillery and bullets; and Lapo di Stefano specialised in handgonnes and bullets.

The economic benefits of wartime demand were not limited to arms manufacturers and merchants. The overall value of military contracts amounted to the remarkable sum of 181,785 *L*. In some cases, wartime needs spurred entire communities to specialise in the production of a single item, as occurred in two villages that became proto-industrial centres for the manufacture of crossbow bolts.

In peacetime, military expenditures in Florence were minimal, often approaching negligible levels. Following the conclusion of hostilities, the Republic systematically ensured that each fortress was adequately stocked with weapons and ammunition, while also replenishing the reserves maintained by the *Camera dell'Arme*. However, during wartime, the demand for armaments extended beyond the fortifications to include the continuous provisioning of the field army, resulting in a substantial and sustained increase in military expenditures. This surge in demand necessitated efficient organisational strategies in procurement. The observed monopolisation or oligopolization of supply contracts by a limited number of vendors can be understood as a pragmatic response aimed at fulfilling large-scale and urgent orders within compressed timeframes. Such concentration of military suppliers likely facilitated the rapid mobilisation and equipping of forces essential to wartime efforts. While similar supply dynamics may have occurred during peacetime, these would have depended on well-established and trusted relationships between vendors and Florentine authorities, underscoring the importance of long-term economic partnerships in the maintenance of the Republic's armaments infrastructure.

While it is undeniable that the war negatively impacted certain sectors of the economy, such as the wool trade, other categories of economic actors benefited significantly. The military sector, therefore, remained a powerful driver of economic growth during the medieval period for a wide range of artisans, not only those directly involved in weapons production but also those whose goods and services supported the broader logistics of war.

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The Rise of Northern Unionism's Influence on the Political Scene of Great Britain Against the Backdrop of Belfast's Social and Economic Transformations During the Great War

Summary: This article examines the situation in Belfast during the First World War, considering its role as the political and economic centre of the north of Ireland. It explores whether the global conflict contributed to the city's development or led to its stagnation, focusing on three key aspects: economic, social, and political. The economic analysis particularly highlights the state of the shipbuilding industry. The study of social conditions reveals the economic, religious, and cultural sources of divisions among Belfast's residents and shipyard workers. Meanwhile, the discussion of the political aspect traces key transformations within the Irish unionist movement, mainly its faction closely linked to Ulster and Belfast. The article aims to outline the situation in north of Ireland during the Great War to explain the causes of the growing social divisions in the interwar period, which ultimately led to the establishment of an administratively separate Northern Ireland.
Keywords: Ireland, Northern Ireland, Belfast, unionism, First World War, shipbuilding industry, Home Rule

Analyses of the transformations that Ireland underwent during the Great War usually focus on national issues and the actions taken by nationalist organisations. When discussing events on the island, the Easter Rising and the rise of the Sinn Féin party are therefore typically mentioned. However, the impact of the conflict on the northern region of Ireland and the distinct identity that developed in this area at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries — socially, economically, and politically — is rarely examined.

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the percentage share of the author in the preparation of the work is: [AP 100%]

Yet the changes that took place at that time had far-reaching consequences not only for this region but for the island as a whole, and it is precisely in the global conflict that the origins of Ireland's later partition can be found.

For this reason, this study aims to present the condition of Belfast as the political and economic centre of the north of Ireland during the First World War and to attempt to answer the question of whether this was a period of decline, stagnation, or development. To achieve this, it is necessary to distinguish three areas of analysis: economic, social, and political. The article will adopt a tripartite structure, allowing each of these aspects to be examined separately while also highlighting their interconnected themes.

This topic has never been addressed in Polish academic research. The issue of social conflicts in the north of Ireland and the actions of politicians associated with the Northern Unionist movement appear only as a marginal theme in monographs on Ireland's struggle for independence. Meanwhile, the economic development of the north of Ireland and its shipbuilding industry has never been thoroughly discussed in Polish studies on Irish history.

Economic Aspect

Beginning the analysis with an examination of the economic aspect is justified for several reasons. Above all, these issues and the strategic significance of northern industry formed the foundation of the political influence of Northern Unionists. They also affected social relations by deepening existing religious divisions and adding a new economic dimension to them. Discussing the history of Northern Ireland's industrial development also allows for the introduction of key themes and for explaining the privileged position of the Protestant segment of Irish society.

The presence of this group in Ireland dates back to the early 17th century.[1] The division within Irish society, initiated at that time, was further reinforced by English and, later, British legislation that introduced social, economic, and political discrimination against Catholics, collectively known as the *Penal Laws*.[2] This led to the establishment of a social system in which Protestant landowners achieved a particularly privileged position, known as the Protestant Ascendancy. However, a distinctive feature of this system was a persistent fear of losing this privileged status. This fear motivated the desire to maintain political influence by ensuring a lasting connection between Ireland and Great Britain, as expressed through the unionist movement.

The economic development of Ireland, particularly its northern counties, was closely linked to this system. The legal privileges enjoyed by Protestants enabled

1 Anderson J., O'Dowd L. 2007, 941.

2 McGrath C. 2021, 13–48.

them to participate in the economic boom of 19th-century Britain. In the north of Ireland, a complete economic transformation took place where machine-based industry, driven by textile exports and shipbuilding, replaced the previously dominant agricultural production.[3]

Analysing Ireland's economic condition during its union with Great Britain is challenging due to a lack of sources providing data for a comprehensive assessment and comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom. The only such source is the economic census conducted by the British *Board of Trade* in 1907.[4] The data collected in this survey indicate that agricultural and textile production played a more significant role in the Irish economy than the island's entire industrial sector. Ireland's textile industry was concentrated specifically in the six northern counties.[5] Lacking access to rich coal deposits, Ireland was unable to follow in the footsteps of England or even Scotland in developing heavy industry.[6] However, access to raw materials became one of the key factors behind the economic success of the six counties of what became known as Ulster.[7]

For Belfast's industry, the lack of domestic raw materials did not pose a significant problem due to the city's geographical location and its ability to import essential materials by sea through Belfast Lough.[8] Higher production costs could be offset by access to a supply of cheap, unskilled labour.[9] The north of Ireland also gained an advantage over other shipbuilding centres by successfully attracting skilled experts.[10] By the early 20th century, Belfast's shipyards had become the largest source of employment in Ireland, providing jobs for over nine thousand people.[11] Additionally, the focus of the shipbuilding industry on exports made northern heavy industry less dependent on the low domestic demand for industrial production.[12] Similarly, Belfast's textile industry was oriented towards exporting its products to markets such as the United States and the Russian Empire.[13]

Nevertheless, during the 19th century, Great Britain was the undisputed leader in shipbuilding. How did the largest industrialists of the North compare to other British

3 Buckland P. 1975, 212.

4 *Report 1907*.

5 Bielenberg A. 2008, 829–830.

6 Bielenberg A. 2008, 832.

7 Ulster is the name of one of Ireland's historic provinces, which during the period in question did not function as the administrative designation of a county-divided island. However, the term refers not so much to a geographical area as to a political community of Protestants living in the north of Ireland, who generally held unionist views.

8 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 49.

9 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 49.

10 Lynch J. 1997, 36.

11 PRONI HWP D2805; PRONI MIN/A 1–3 – without pagination.

12 Bielenberg A. 2008, 832.

13 Good J.W. 1922, 270.

manufacturers? At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, practically all of Britain's merchant and naval ship production was concentrated in four major centres: Clydeside, Newcastle, Sunderland, and Belfast.[14] By the 1880s, Belfast had already emerged as the most powerful of these.[15] The dramatic growth of its local industry is well illustrated by statistical data. In the 1860s, the city played virtually no role in Britain's shipbuilding sector. However, by 1914, Belfast's docks, particularly those of Harland & Wolff and Workman Clark, were responsible for 10% of the entire British shipbuilding output.[16]

The strategic importance of northern industrial production became even more apparent in the context of Britain's economic position at the turn of the century and its economic rivalry with powers such as the German Empire and the United States. Belfast's shipyards were one of the key components of Britain's economic supremacy in the years leading up to the global conflict. Consequently, politicians from the north of Ireland, who were usually aligned with the unionist movement, possessed a particularly strong bargaining position.

An analysis of the activities of Harland & Wolff during the Great War provides crucial context for understanding the social and political issues of the north of Ireland during the conflict. These matters were inextricably linked. Before the war, the company focused on producing ocean liners in partnership with the White Star Line. Despite this specialisation in passenger vessels, Harland & Wolff played an active role in Britain's economic competition with Imperial Germany. For example, its investment in the Olympic-class liners[17] was an attempt to outclass German competitors, particularly the Norddeutscher Lloyd company.[18]

The construction of the Olympic-class liners secured Harland & Wolff's reputation and a place in history, although perhaps not in the way that its director, William Pirrie, had hoped. The sinking of RMS *Titanic* brought financial difficulties to the company. Although it remained one of the largest shipbuilding firms in the world in 1914, the outbreak of war had a profoundly negative impact on its condition. The conflict disrupted the supply chains upon which Belfast's shipyards depended, affecting global markets and trade, as the company relied heavily on exports. This led to mass layoffs and created an atmosphere of uncertainty. However, by mid-September 1914, this uncertainty had dissipated, marking the beginning of a new era in the industrial history of the North.[19]

As previously mentioned, Harland & Wolff specialised in the construction of merchant and passenger ships. At first glance, this type of production might appear less

14 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 42–43.

15 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 46.

16 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 49.

17 RMS *Olympic* produced in 1911, RMS *Titanic* – 1912, RMS *Britannic* – 1914.

18 Chirnside M. 2004, 11–14.

19 Mercer E. 2003, 30.

significant during a military conflict. However, given that the British Empire sought to maintain its economic dominance, preserving a strong merchant fleet was just as crucial. The offensive launched by German submarines forced Britain to adapt its production system and highlighted the need to maintain a secure number of merchant vessels essential for logistics and supply chains. In this context, Belfast's strategic importance grew even further.

For the first time in its history, Harland & Wolff also began fulfilling orders for the Admiralty during the Great War, constructing Abercrombie-class monitors. These contracts became a source of record-breaking revenue for the company.[20] The increasing economic and political influence of Harland & Wolff was reflected in the 1917 appointment of its director, William Pirrie, as Controller General of Merchant Shipbuilding.[21]

In 1915, the company reported gross profits exceeding 298,000 pounds. By 1916–1917, profits had risen to over 520,000 pounds. The year 1918 was an absolute record in the company's history, generating more than 930,000 pounds in gross profits.[22] The firm also significantly invested in its expansion, allocating one million pounds to infrastructure development.[23]

The data presented demonstrate that, from an economic perspective, the Great War led to the rapid development of Belfast, particularly its shipbuilding industry. However, did the growth of the company and the city translate into prosperity for its inhabitants?

Social Aspect

An analysis of Belfast's economic situation reveals a fascinating social phenomenon. Among the four major shipbuilding centres in the United Kingdom mentioned earlier, the average wages in Belfast remained the lowest until the year 1914.[24] This fact may have contributed to the competitiveness of this centre, which, unlike its domestic competitors, had to import all raw materials by sea.[25] Thus, low wages could have offset the increased production costs. Another puzzling fact is that despite such low earnings, Belfast remained free from strikes and demonstrations during the Great War.

At the root of this phenomenon lay a profound social, national, and, most importantly, religious division within the city. The issue of Protestant settlement on the island was outlined in an earlier part of this article, but it must be emphasised that the social structure of Belfast was a consequence of changes that accompanied

20 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 52.

21 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 52.

22 Moss M.S., Hume J.R. 1986, 183.

23 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 53.

24 Pollard S., Robertson P. 1979, 246–247.

25 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 49.

the city's economic development. In the year 1800, Belfast had a population of only 19,000, whereas by the beginning of the new century, in 1911, this number had risen to 378,000. Of these, approximately 100,000 were Catholics. However, the percentage of the Catholic population in this area was in decline (in 1861, they constituted 41% of the population, whereas by 1911, this had fallen to only 34%).[26] Meanwhile, the city continued to experience an influx of Protestant workers for economic reasons — educated and skilled craftsmen employed in the shipbuilding industry, originating from centres known for such production in Scotland and England.[27]

Why, then, would educated workers migrate to Belfast if, as mentioned earlier, shipbuilding wages there were the lowest in the entire United Kingdom? This phenomenon can be explained by the division among workers into skilled and unskilled labourers.[28] Experienced and well-trained specialists formed the foundation of shipbuilding enterprises.[29] Securing as many of them as possible was the objective of employers. Unskilled workers, on the other hand, were easily replaceable and readily available, particularly in light of the massive migration of rural populations to the city.[30] Although wages in Belfast were generally lower than in other shipbuilding centres, this was due to the vast disparity between the salaries of skilled workers and those of the cheap labour force.[31] In reality, a specialist in Belfast earned more than in other regions of the United Kingdom.[32]

The economic divide in the class conflict was further compounded by national and religious divisions. The cheap labour force primarily consisted of Irish Catholics who had migrated to cities in search of work due to economic difficulties in agricultural regions. The skilled specialists, on the other hand, migrated to Belfast from Scotland or England and were predominantly Protestant. Tensions between these groups extended beyond wage disparities. Skilled workers formed an elite within the workforce and were fully aware of their crucial role in the production process. Unskilled workers, by contrast, were easily replaceable. Their mass dismissals represented the most convenient cost-cutting measure for companies, which became particularly significant at the outbreak of the Great War. In light of the temporary economic crisis of 1914, mass redundancies took place. Faced with a lack of means to support themselves, many labourers chose to enlist in the military, where the proportion of volunteers from more

26 Jenkins G. 2010, 166.

27 Lynch J. 1999, 37.

28 Buckland P. 1975, 214.

29 Lynch J. 1997, 48.

30 Jenkins G. 2010, 166.

31 An unskilled labourer in Belfast earned 15–18 shillings per week, whereas in other shipbuilding centres, a similar position paid between 18 and 23 shillings per week. By comparison, a shipwright — a skilled worker — earned approximately 44 shillings per week. Lynch J. 1997, 48, 52.

32 Lynch J. 1999, 39.

privileged groups was considerably lower.[33] While the economic situation of unskilled workers became increasingly precarious during the war, the specialists' wages rose by as much as 70%, further deepening the economic antagonism between the groups.[34]

This conflict was also evident in the structure (and weakness) of Belfast's labour movement. These groups did not join the same trade unions,[35] and all attempts to introduce more radical demands to the so-called 'labour aristocracy' — as the skilled shipyard workers were referred to — proved unsuccessful. The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union was unable to extend its influence beyond the environment of unskilled Catholic workers.[36]

The division was not limited to the workplace but was also reflected in urban development. The groups resided in separate districts of the city, avoiding social interaction outside the shipyards.[37] This sense of distinctiveness stemmed from a combination of overlapping factors such as place of origin, social and economic status, and religious and cultural affiliation. The religious aspect was particularly significant: membership in the Catholic Church was a key element of identity for a section of the city's population and served as a vital bond for those of lower social and economic status. The strong anti-Catholic sentiment present in this Anglosphere society also greatly influenced the antagonism between the two groups. Political views were another crucial factor in reinforcing social divisions among Belfast's inhabitants.[38]

These political views notably distinguished the 'labour aristocracy' from the rest of the workforce. Better educated, with experience gained through apprenticeships in other companies, and more worldly, they linked their prosperity to the British capitalist system. In their view, their privileged social and economic position depended on the development of enterprises and their success in the market. Thus, skilled workers closely aligned their interests with the prosperity of business owners. Consequently, the political beliefs of the wealthy Protestant bourgeoisie became shared by their significantly less affluent yet self-perceived elite Protestant labourers.[39]

With each new attempt to introduce Home Rule in Ireland,[40] the prospect of Belfast's industry — and the entire north of Ireland — coming under the administration of Catholic Dublin caused significant concern among entrepreneurs and their skilled

33 Mercer E. 2003, 31.

34 The increase varied in percentage depending on the type of work performed. Lynch J. 1997, 48.

35 Lynch J. 1997, 58.

36 Grey J. 2013, 23.

37 Jenkins G. 2010, 167.

38 Buckland P. 1975, 214

39 Buckland P. 1975, 213.

40 'Home Rule' was a demand made by Irish politicians seeking autonomy from the British Empire. A key element of this independence was to be a separate Irish parliament in Dublin, which would decide on the island's internal affairs. Attempts to pass a law introducing autonomy were unsuccessfully made in 1886 and 1893.

workers. There was a prevailing belief among Protestants in Belfast that the northern industry could not operate under Catholic governance. In the Harland & Wolff company, the idea of relocating production from Belfast to other parts of the United Kingdom was even considered.[41] The outbreaks of religious and national violence further fuelled this discussion.[42] Both Edward Harland and Gustav Wolff were staunch opponents of autonomy and committed unionists. The economic and social components formed the foundation for the emergence of a 'siege mentality' among the northern Protestants, for whom the concept of autonomy was synonymous with the collapse of northern industry.

Political Issues

Economic and social factors had a significant impact on the political decisions made by voters in Belfast. However, to accurately describe the political situation in the North during the years of the Great War, a brief introduction outlining the roots of the region's most influential political force, the Ulster Unionist Party, is essential.

Although the concept of Home Rule envisaged maintaining the union while restoring a separate Irish parliament, for unionists, this demand was synonymous with the end of their dominance on the island and the conclusion of the so-called Protestant Ascendancy. There was also widespread fear of increasing Catholic Church influence on Irish internal politics.[43] Additionally, it is worth noting that the unionist movement had strong connections with the Orange Order — an organisation founded in the 18th century, whose goal was to uphold Protestant dominance in Ireland and counteract Catholic political emancipation. Traditionally, the unionist movement was also closely aligned with the British Conservative Party due to shared interests and a common electorate.

The period preceding the outbreak of the Great War saw the transformation of the unionist movement in Ireland, with activists from the north of the island, particularly from Ulster, taking centre stage. Belfast was indisputably the political hub of this transformation. Southern Unionists were pushed to the background, and the dominant role was assumed by the charismatic Sir Edward Carson, who sought above all to protect the interests of the North.[44]

The dynamic actions and influence of Carson's movement became particularly evident between 1911 and 1914, during the constitutional crisis triggered by the limitation of the House of Lords' veto power. Up until then, every attempt to introduce Home Rule

41 Simpson G. 2012, 32.

42 Simpson G. 2012, 31.

43 Boyce D.G. 1970, 90.

44 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 879.

for Ireland had been blocked in the upper house of Parliament, which was dominated by the Conservative Party. However, with the constitutional reforms of 1911, it became apparent that the next attempt to implement Home Rule would likely succeed. This perceived threat led to an unprecedented mobilisation of unionists under Carson's leadership. The response of the North to this situation is known in historiography as the Ulster Crisis, characterised by the threat of an armed Protestant uprising against the imposed idea of loosening ties between Ireland and Great Britain. The argument of force relied on the potential military actions of the Ulster Volunteer Force. To arm and equip this Protestant paramilitary group, enormous quantities of weapons and ammunition were smuggled into the North illegally.[45] This posed a real threat to the internal security of Great Britain and the stability of the British Empire, especially in a period of heightened international tensions. Relations between unionists and the government continued to deteriorate, while the rivalry between Sir Edward Carson and John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, grew increasingly intense. Unionist politicians demanded the complete exclusion of the northern counties from the jurisdiction of the Home Rule Act.[46] By early 1914, it seemed entirely possible that armed conflict could erupt in the north of the island.

However, the outbreak of the Great War fundamentally altered the political landscape. In the face of such a global threat, neither Irish nationalists nor unionists could afford to openly oppose the imperial government, as they risked being accused of a lack of patriotism. Given the growing public anxiety about the war, both movements could have lost the support they had previously gained from British public opinion. For unionists, one of the key elements of their argument was the narrative portraying Irish Protestants as loyal subjects of the Crown — patriots abandoned to the mercy of Catholics by a treacherous imperial government. Maintaining the threat of an uprising during a global conflict would have completely undermined Belfast's image as a bastion of British patriotism.[47]

This situation initiated a form of political competition between John Redmond and Sir Edward Carson. Each leader sought to present their movement as the more patriotic one and proposed the use of their respective paramilitary organisations to protect the island during the war.[48] Efforts were also made to promote the idea of voluntary military service among the Irish to emphasise their commitment to the defence of the Empire.[49] However, the significant response was not necessarily due to exceptionally patriotic sentiments among the Irish but rather the brief economic crisis

45 Jenkins G. 2010, 175.

46 *Hansard*, c. 337.

47 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 870.

48 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 870–872.

49 Boyce D.G. 1970, 49.

caused by the outbreak of war, as discussed in the previous section.[50] Three Irish divisions were formed. Two were composed almost entirely of Catholics, while the third became a stronghold of Irish Protestants. Engagement in military operations soon became a political argument, particularly well utilised by the unionist side.[51]

Although Home Rule was passed in 1914, its implementation was suspended for the duration of the war.[52] Both sides agreed to set aside agitation related to the issue for the time being to focus on the immediate threat to the Empire. The Prime Minister assured that unionists would not be forced, under wartime conditions, to accept the terms they had so fiercely opposed. The outbreak of the war thus became not only a test of the professed loyalty of Irish unionists but also a turning point in the gradual increase of their political influence.[53]

In 1915, the outbreak of a crisis related to the lack of supplies on the Western Front created a unique opportunity for an agreement between the government and the Conservative Party. A coalition government was formed under the leadership of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, intended as an expression of national unity.[54] Although the Prime Minister strongly opposed entrusting the most important ministries to the Conservatives, the position of the unionists themselves increased, and key northern politicians, such as Sir Edward Carson, were granted governmental positions and the opportunity to influence policy at the imperial level.

At the beginning of 1916, the unionists possessed several extremely strong advantages: the industry of Belfast was gradually cementing its position as a strategic and indispensable element of the British war machine, and the engagement of Protestant volunteers in frontline activities clearly demonstrated the patriotic spirit of Ulster. In January 1916, the government decided to exclude the territory of Ireland from the operation of the Military Service Act,[55] which greatly angered Irish Unionists who demanded the introduction of conscription on the island as well. Once again, however, the unionists manifested their patriotism by refraining from opposing the introduction of the act in a form that did not meet their expectations.[56]

In April 1916, with the outbreak of the Easter Rising, the position of the unionists was further strengthened by contrasting their stance with the actions of Irish Republicans, who cooperated with the German Empire to destabilise the situation in the United Kingdom. Although the insurrection was quickly suppressed, its effects were felt for a long time afterwards. The coalition government saw the need to ease the

50 Boyce D.G. 1970, 49–50.

51 Boyce D.G. 1970, 51.

52 *Government of Ireland Act 1914.*

53 Boyce D.G. 1970, 93.

54 Adams R.J.Q. 1999, 188.

55 *Military Service Act 1916.*

56 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 876.

situation by addressing the Irish question. Once again, the high standing of Sir Edward Carson's movement became evident. David Lloyd George, who was tasked with securing support for a new proposal, first sought the approval of the Unionists from the north of Ireland for the proposed solutions, thereby emphasising their growing significance not only within the unionist movement itself but also in Conservative circles. However, once again, an agreement could not be reached — this time due to the strong opposition of Irish Unionists from the South, who feared their complete exclusion from discussions regarding the future shape of autonomy.[57]

An even greater rise in the position of the unionists came with the final months of the year 1916 and the resignation of Asquith from the position of Prime Minister. In the new government formed by David Lloyd George, the unionists gained greater influence and more key ministries (the Exchequer for Andrew Bonar Law, Sir Edward Carson as First Lord of the Admiralty, and the position of Attorney General for Frederick Edwin Smith, Carson's closest associate). The position of the new Prime Minister was largely dependent on strong support from the Conservatives and unionists.[58]

This created a rather problematic situation for Lloyd George, who could not leave the Irish question unresolved. The issue of the United States entering the war forced the government to demonstrate a willingness to resolve the matter of Irish autonomy.[59] Other British dominions also expected the Prime Minister to take action on this issue, and in light of the increasing engagement of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada in the war effort, their voices could not be ignored.[60] Due to the coalition nature of Lloyd George's government, there were as many opponents as supporters of Home Rule in his cabinet.[61] However, the Prime Minister benefitted from the trap that the unionists had set for themselves. As an opposition force criticising the actions of the Liberal government in 1913, they could afford an open and aggressive stance against the idea of autonomy. As members of a government that had to find a solution to the Irish problem, they could no longer permit such a sharp opposition. They were expected to take actions that would stabilise the situation in the United Kingdom. Any public support, particularly from the British Conservative public opinion, would have been withdrawn in response to such unpatriotic actions.[62] The Irish Convention, convened in the year 1917 to develop a consensus on the matter, removed the burden of responsibility from the shoulders of the Prime Minister but did not bring the government any closer to solving the Irish problem.[63] However, what was certain was that

57 Boyce D.G. 1970, 94.
58 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 886.
59 Boyce D.G. 1970, 95.
60 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 885.
61 Savage D.W. 1972, 101.
62 Boyce D.G. 1970, 95.
63 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 886.

the autonomy established by the act of the year 1914 was already a dead idea. Nationalists from the south of the island had become drastically radicalised following the suppression of the Easter Rising, and the Irish Parliamentary Party, which had previously been key in the Irish political scene, was losing support in favour of a new movement — the radical Sinn Féin party.[64] The Irish Unionists were divided, and the Northern Unionism of Belfast seemed to dominate over the weakening influence of the unionists from the south of the island, ensuring continued tensions.[65]

At the beginning of 1918, in the face of the German offensive, the most pressing issue for the government became that of conscription — this time, it was planned to be introduced in Ireland as well. However, there were fears that public opposition to such a measure would be too great and that the situation could spiral out of control, given the increasing radicalisation of Irish society. It became evident that conscription could not be introduced without first resolving the issue of autonomy. However, this matter was in no way expedited by the Irish Convention. The new proposal for autonomy suggested by the government was not accepted by Sir Edward Carson. The lack of a unified stance among moderate Nationalists under Redmond, as well as between Southern and Northern Unionists, resulted in another failure. The proposal for autonomy was rejected, conscription in Ireland was not implemented, and Sir Edward Carson, expressing his disapproval of the government's actions, resigned from his ministerial position in January 1918.

This situation, although highly disadvantageous for the British Empire, ultimately served to further cement the position of the Northern Unionists. Blocking a concrete, new form of autonomy proposed by Redmond's faction and the Southern Unionists temporarily safeguarded the interests of Ulster. Additionally, it weakened the position of the Northern Unionists' political opponents, exposing their inability to devise any binding solution without the consent of Carson and his faction. The prolonged deadlock on the Irish issue and the threat of conscription further radicalised society, leading to a steady decline in support for the Irish Parliamentary Party.[66]

Conclusion

From an economic perspective, the period of the Great War can undoubtedly be described as the golden age of Belfast. The strategic importance of the shipbuilding industry guaranteed not only continued orders for the production of commercial vessels but also, for the first time in the company's history, orders from the Admiralty for the construction of warships. The company's wartime profits were a multiple of

64 Coleman M. 2013, 40.

65 Smith J. 2000, 61.

66 Stubbs J.O. 1990, 891–892.

the revenues generated in the years preceding the conflict. 1917 was one of the most successful in the history of Harland & Wolff,[67] and by the end of the war, the company had produced more standardised ships than any other British manufacturer. The rapid growth witnessed during the war years became particularly evident in contrast to the post-war period, when the cessation of government orders and the decisions of the Washington Conference led to significant reductions in shipbuilding production.[68] According to later analyses conducted by the newly established Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Finance of Northern Ireland, this situation was expected to lead to financial difficulties and become one of the greatest challenges facing the autonomous region.[69]

The prosperity of the Great War period also translated significantly into the well-being of the city's inhabitants, particularly skilled shipyard workers. Their wages increased by several dozen per cent during the war.[70] The priority status and strategic importance of Belfast's production ensured stable employment for educated workers, whose expertise was essential to fulfilling government orders. However, unskilled labourers did not enjoy the same job security, and for many of them, military service became the only alternative.[71] This situation deepened the divisions between the Catholic and Protestant populations of the city, which had already experienced outbreaks of religiously motivated violence.[72] More such incidents were to follow in the future.[73]

The most striking transformation was in the position of the Northern Unionists. A movement that had threatened an uprising against British rule as recently as 1913 gained enormous influence and political significance during the Great War. From being a vocal and critical opposition, the Northern Unionists secured positions within the coalition government, initially receiving minor ministries and roles alongside members of the Conservative Party. However, this firmly established their presence in British politics. Over time, Carson's faction came to dominate the unionist movement, sidelining activists from the south of the island. The strategic importance of Belfast's industry also played a key role. Moreover, in the wartime context, the argument that Home Rule would destabilise shipbuilding production became a leading narrative. The rise of Northern Unionism progressed alongside the fall of Asquith's government and the formation of a new cabinet under Lloyd George in 1916. This time, key figures in the movement secured even more influential ministerial posts, further solidifying their power.

67 Geary F., Johnson W. 1989, 53.

68 Good J.W. 1922, 269–270.

69 PRONI FIN 3/C/6.

70 Lynch J. 1997, 48.

71 Mercer E. 2003, 31.

72 Simpson G. 2012, 32.

73 PRONI HA 32/1, 28.

Carson's ability to accurately determine when the interests of the North should be set aside to maintain government unity, and when they should be prioritised, ensured his continued influence over political affairs. The Northern Unionists' greatest success was their decisive takeover of leadership within the unionist movement, the marginalisation of their southern counterparts, and — through skilfully paralysing the Irish Convention — engineering a situation in which the broader Irish public withdrew its support for the Irish Parliamentary Party in favour of the radical Sinn Féin. Consequently, by the end of the war in 1919, these two political factions came to dominate the Irish political landscape.

The Government of Ireland Act became the legal safeguard for Ulster's interests,[74] with work on the legislation beginning in the latter half of 1919. Under its provisions, Great Britain was to grant autonomy not to the entire island but to its two parts: Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland. This secured key issues for Northern Unionism, such as maintaining control over the northern economy and its shipbuilding industry, preserving Protestant Ascendancy, and minimising Dublin's influence over Belfast's political affairs. As a result, the events of the Great War laid the groundwork for the legal division of the island.

For Belfast, the Great War meant economic growth and increased political influence. However, the global conflict also cemented divisions that, although present in earlier decades, had never before been so pronounced. The Great War significantly accelerated the partitioning of the island and laid the foundations for a prolonged conflict that would persist for several more decades within Ireland itself.

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The Fate of the Brazilian Collection of the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw Before and During the Second World War (1939–1945)[1]

Summary: Before the Second World War, the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw was a dynamically functioning research institution, characterised by its rapidly growing collections of contemporary animals for scientific, educational and exhibition purposes. The specimens were mainly collected during expeditions organised by the museum's staff. One of the explorers was Tadeusz Chrostowski (1878–1923), an ornithologist and head of the Neotropical Birds Department of the Museum. The naturalist organised three expeditions to Brazil in 1910–1911, 1913–1915 and 1921–1923. He explored areas of the state of Paraná that were considered the least explored. Chrostowski's last journey, known as the Polish Zoological Expedition, received the most attention in scientific and social circles. It was the leading overseas scientific expedition organised by the newly revived Polish

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state. In addition to Chrostowski, the research team included the entomologist Tadeusz Jaczewski (1899–1974) and the taxidermist Stanisław Borecki (1888–1968). The team aimed to study the fauna of southern and central Paraná, specifically in areas with araucaria humid forests inhabited by Polish colonies, subtropical forests, and along the rivers Ivaí, Paraná and Iguaçu. A collection of over 22,000 zoological specimens was one of the outcomes of the fieldwork. The material included many species of birds first found in the Paraná. The collection was taken to Warsaw in 1924 and was available to researchers in the museum until 1939. The Second World War was a tragic event in the history of the institution. Not only did it interrupt scientific and research activities, but it also contributed to the loss of part of the collection. Among the museum's war losses were more than 2 million animal specimens, including more than 20,000 of Chrostowski's specimens. The collections were destroyed, confiscated and exported and many were dispersed. Research into the history of Chrostowski's collection aims to reconstruct and describe it, as well as to spread knowledge of the wartime losses suffered by the State Zoological Museum during the Second World War.

Keywords: State Zoological Museum, scientific expeditions, fauna of Brazil, natural history collections, World War II, wartime losses

Introduction

The National Museum of Natural History was established in Warsaw in 1919. It incorporated the animal collections of the Gabinet Zoologiczny w Warszawie (Zoological Cabinet of the University of Warsaw), established in 1818 and the Muzeum Zoologiczne Branickich (Branicki Zoological Museum), established in 1887. From 1921, the institution operated under the name of the Polish State Museum of Natural History and from 1928 as the State Zoological Museum.[2] The ornithologist Jan Sztolcman (1854–1928) was appointed the museum's first deputy director in 1919. He was succeeded in 1921 by the malacologist Antoni Wagner (1860–1928), who assumed the position of director. During these times, the Museum had three curators, who were responsible for the following departments: invertebrates (except insects) — malacologist Władysław Poliński (1885–1930), insects — entomologist Jan Prüffer (1890–1959) and neotropical birds — ornithologist Tadeusz Chrostowski (1878–1923), who had been employed since 1919 (Fig. 1). Between 1919 and 1939, in addition to the abovementioned specialists, about 15 other zoologists worked at the Museum on a larger or smaller time dimension.

2 See: Kazubski L. 1996, 7–19; Iwan D., Mierzwa-Szymkowiak D., Wawer W. 2021, 241–254; Daszkiewicz P., Iwan D. 2020, 77–87.

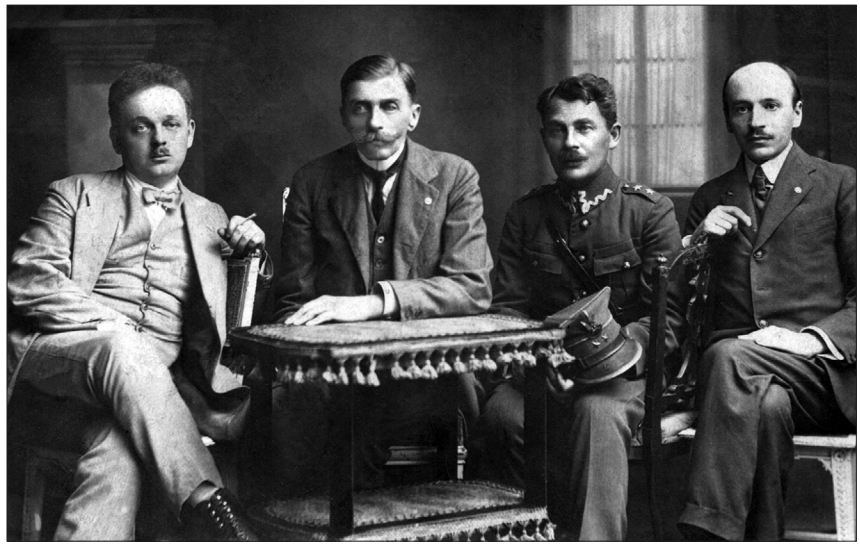

Fig. 1. Naturalists associated with the State Zoological Museum: ornithologists Janusz Domaniewski (1891–1954), Jan Sztolcman, Tadeusz Chrostowski, initiator of the Polish Zoological Expedition and malacologist Władysław Poliński (Source: AMIZPAN, sign. KEF160)

The main tasks of the institution were: researching and compiling scientific information on local and global fauna; collecting, storing, cataloguing, describing and providing access to the collection; organising expeditions both domestically and abroad to expand the collection; and disseminating natural knowledge to the public. The scientific results were documented in publications, primarily focusing on the animals of Europe, South America and Africa.[3] Thanks to numerous gifts, purchases and exchanges, the museum's zoological collection developed rapidly. It became one of the largest collections in Poland and is scientifically significant in Europe. The number of specimens totalled about 4 million by the late 1930s. The collection was famous for its material (especially birds) collected in South America, which included many species new to science. South American birds collected before 1919 (before the establishment of the National Museum of Natural History) came from the explorers Konstanty Jelski (1837–1896) and Jan Sztolcman. These two naturalists worked largely on behalf of the patrons of the Zoological Cabinet — Counts Aleksander Branicki (1821–1877) and Konstanty Branicki (1824–1884). Jelski collected material in French Guiana between 1866 and 1869, and in Peru from 1869 to 1873, while Sztolcman conducted fieldwork in Peru from 1875 to 1881, and in Ecuador between 1882 and 1884.[4]

3 AMIZPAN, sign. 1/99 (2256), 1.

4 Piechnik Ł., Kurek P. 2016, 63.

In 1919, Jelski's and Sztolcman's collections became part of the National Museum of Natural History's holdings, where they were curated by Chrostowski. By that time, this ambitious ornithologist, with considerable collecting experience and extensive knowledge of ornithology, had undertaken two trips to Brazil (1910–1911, 1913–1915) and was preparing for a third (1921–1924). It is worth noting that the earlier expeditions of Chrostowski and his predecessors, Jelski and Sztolcman, were undertaken during the period of partitions and the absence of Polish statehood. Chrostowski's third overseas expedition, conducted after the re-establishment of the Polish state, was therefore a significant event that was highly regarded within scientific and social circles. The initiative aimed to reaffirm the importance and contributions of Polish scientists and explorers to the advancement of biological sciences worldwide. The material collected during the expedition documented natural discoveries and verified the presence of Polish naturalists in a specific region at a particular time. This was especially important given the pioneering nature of the research undertaken. Undoubtedly, Chrostowski inspired other naturalists at the Museum to embark on scientific and exploratory expeditions. Before the Second World War, expeditions were organised by Tadeusz Jaczewski (1899–1974) and Tadeusz Wolski (1890–1959) to Mexico (1929); Wacław Roszkowski (1886–1944) and Stanisław Felisiak (1906–1992) to Brazil and Martinique (1931–1932); Roszkowski and Janusz Nast (1908–1991) to Brazil (1933–1934); and Jaczewski and Felisiak to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the French islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon (1938).[5]

Written sources on the wartime fate of the State Zoological Museum and its losses during the war are scarce. Many archives were lost at that time. This makes it difficult to conduct research to trace the history of natural materials from the collected to the present. Documents from the post-war period are often general and refer approximately to what the museum had and lost during the war. This article presents data from literature and archives, as well as the results of a museum search, in order to approximately estimate the extent of losses in one of Poland's most important zoological collections. A collection of Brazilian animals collected by Chrostowski, which is scientifically unique, was analysed.

Chrostowski's expeditions to Brazil

Chrostowski made three trips to the State of Paraná (Southern Brazil), each in a different political context, both in Brazil and in Poland. The first expedition happened in the years 1910–1911. Chrostowski left as a settler, like thousands of other Poles who

5 See: Wąsowska M., Winiszewska-Ślipińska G. 1996, 29–34. AMIZPAN, sign. 1/360 (5591), 5.

emigrated for economic reasons to Brazil. At that time, Poles formed the majority of farmers in Paraná. Their agricultural products were of high quality and commanded high prices. European settlers (mainly of Polish, Ukrainian, German and Italian origin) contributed to the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in Paraná today.[6]

Initially, Chrostowski intended a permanent residence in Paraná. However, the enormous living and financial difficulties he encountered forced him to abandon his plan. As a settler, he was required to dedicate almost all of his time to agricultural practices. In the background were his scientific research and collecting birds, which he cared about the most. On this first expedition, Chrostowski lived mainly in a small settlement called Vera Guarani, close to the Iguaçu River. Sometimes he visited some Polish immigrant colonies (e.g. Rio Claro, Mallet, Irati), and also the sources of the Ivaí River.[7] The geographical area covered included large extensions of the Araucaria Forest and campos (fields) in the central and southern portions of Paraná. Chrostowski planned research in even more distant places. He had hope that one day, under better conditions, he would return to Paraná to complete his work.

Upon returning to Poland, he continued his studies on South American avifauna, maintaining close contact with Brazilian ornithological centres (São Paulo, Belém, Rio de Janeiro), European centres (England, Germany, France, Russia) and especially with Carl Eduard Hellmayr (1878–1944) (Germany). At that time, Hellmayr was not only an expert on neotropical birds but also the director of the Zoological Museum in Munich. He provided a subsidy that enabled Chrostowski to go on another trip to Brazil. In return for the assistance he received, Chrostowski undertook to send duplicates of the collected birds to the museum in Munich.[8] The second trip (1913–1915) took place in a wartime setting. It coincided with the First World War and also with a civil war that was happening in Paraná, called Revolta do Contestado (1912–1916). For this expedition, Chrostowski repeated the procedure of the previous trip. This time he settled in Antonio Olinto (where he worked as a Polish language teacher) and visited several nearby places (e.g. Afonso Pena, Curitiba, Rio Negro, São Mateus do Sul), to enrich the representation of his collections. Chrostowski wanted to collect as many species as possible.[9] He would also realise his intention during a third expedition.

In 1921, Chrostowski initiated a new trip to Brazil. The Polish Zoological Expedition was one of the first nature expeditions in the newly reborn Polish state. The entomologist Tadeusz Jaczewski (1922–1924), also came on this trip[10] and the taxidermist

6 See: Straube F.C., Urben-Filho A., Kopij G. 2007, 87–116; Ziomek K. 2018, 145–186.

7 Straube F.C. 2016, 20–58.

8 Jaczewski T. 1923, 4.

9 Straube F.C. 2016, 58–140.

10 See: Straube F.C. 2016, 152–154.

Fig. 2. Tadeusz Jaczewski, member of the Polish Zoological Expedition (Source: AMIZPAN, sign. KEF648)

Stanisław Borecki (1888–1968)[11] (Fig. 2–3). The team's goal was to explore and describe the fauna of an unexplored area of Paraná, which had never been visited by any naturalist. Their route was a very long one, starting in Mallet (central Paraná) and, from there, covering the entire territorial extension of the state. For their objectives, they visited small villages (e.g. Guarapuava, Cândido de Abreu, Guaíra), farms and settlements (e.g. Rio Claro) of Polish immigrants and then sailed the Ivaí River (using rustic solid wood canoes) and, later, the river Paraná, until arrival in Foz do Iguaçu.[12]

It was during this last trip that, on April 4, 1923, Chrostowski died at the age of 44, due to a health complication (pneumonia) resulting from malaria acquired in Porto Mendes.[13] He was buried in a cemetery that today belongs to the Iguaçu National Park. There since 2023, is a monument celebrating his impressive contribution to Natural History in Southern Brazil. With the death of his chief, Jaczewski completed the work after heading east to Curitiba and, finally, arriving at the port of Paranaguá, from where he returned alone to Poland.

During the entire time dedicated to the expedition, the group covered around 2,000 km, visiting Araucaria forests, campos (open fields) and the luxuriant semideciduous forests of the western region of Paraná. This was the largest ornithological expedition ever conducted in Paraná.

11 Stanisław Borecki (1888–1968) was born in Sudova Vyshnia (now Ukraine). He was the son of Andrzej Borecki and Malwina Borecka, née Hukiewicz. He graduated from a teacher's seminary in his hometown in 1911. He was a commander of rifle teams. In 1912, Borecki went to Brazil, where he worked as a teacher. He became one of the first members of the Polish Rifle Association in South America. He returned to the country with the Polish Army in France, formed during the First World War. In 1921–1922, he was a member of the Polish Zoological Expedition initiated by Chrostowski. The invitation to Borecki to join the expedition was based on his previous stay in Brazil and his skills. Borecki was a hunter and preparator who specialised in ornithology. He was renowned for his knowledge of the birds of Paraná. He left the expedition in mid-1922 and decided to stay in Brazil permanently. He lived for many years in Cândido de Abreu. Borecki was active in education, teaching children of four nationalities: Polish, Russian, German and Brazilian. He was also involved in horticulture, cultivating European and South American fruit trees. He developed the cultivation of mulberry trees for the breeding of silkworms. He collaborated with the Butantan Institute in São Paulo in the acquisition of venomous reptile species for serum research. Stanisław Borecki died in Linha Ivaí in southern Brazil. PAHB. Birth Certificate of Stanisław Borecki; Zieliński S. 1932, 37; Jaczewski T. 1972, 93. Isaakowa M. 2011, 121–125.

12 Straube F.C. 2016, 140–245.

13 Gajl K. 1923, 631–632; Jaczewski T. 1925, 349–350.

Fig. 3. Stanisław Borecki, member of the Polish Zoological Expedition with his pupils (Source: PAHB)

Chrostowski's contribution to the state of knowledge of Brazil's nature

During his first trip to Brazil, Chrostowski collected more than 150 bird specimens belonging to about 100 species.[14] Almost half of the species were discovered for the first time in Paraná. Chrostowski donated all the collection to the Polish Tourist Society, and a smaller part was subsequently transferred to the Branicki Zoological Museum.[15] The material from the second voyage, comprising about 500 specimens, including rare and new species, was incorporated into the collection of the State Zoological Museum.[16] The most varied and numerous material was collected by Chrostowski together with Jaczewski and Borecki during their third trip to Brazil. Although they concentrated on collecting birds, they also amassed a large number of specimens from other animal groups. During the expedition, they stored their collections in the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Curitiba. By 1923, the material assembled there, packed into twelve boxes, included: 6,011 beetles, 2,550 other insects (including beetles and dragonflies), 20 test tubes of dragonflies, approximately 500 molluscs, 40 test tubes of myriapods, 62 test tubes of internal and external parasites (including bird parasites), 10 amphibians, 900 birds, 21 bird skulls and 14 mammals.[17] The museum's activity report for 1924

14 See: Chrostowski T. 1912, 452–490.

15 Chrostowski T. 1912, 458.

16 Chrostowski T. 1921, 31–40; Wagner A. 1926, 280.

17 Poliński W. 1923, 119; Sztolcman J. 1923, 227; Jaczewski T. 1972, 94.

mentions an acquisition of animals collected in Brazil by Chrostowski's team. The material included approximately 20,000 insects, more than 300 molluscs, about 100 myriapods, more than 1,200 birds (about 260 species), as well as specimens of arachnids, worms, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.[18] Despite the discrepancies in the number and type of specimens, the two descriptions (the consulate's boxes and the Museum's acquisition report) confirm the size of the collection amassed in Brazil and brought to Warsaw for scientific purposes. The material found by Chrostowski and his collaborators was one of the first collections to come from the Paraná region, which was characterised by a high species diversity and number of specimens (Fig. 4). Its importance was, and still is (despite war losses), all the greater when one considers that many species can no longer be observed in southern Brazil. This is due to the massive environmental destruction that has taken place since the 1950s. At present, these materials are used in documenting biodiversity as well as the geographical distribution of animals. They provide materials for different research in systematics as well as anatomy, ecology and genetics.

Chrostowski's zoological research in Paraná was pioneering. His main aim was to study and describe the avifauna of Paraná, which had only been visited by a few naturalists, such as the Austrian ornithologist Johann Natterer (1787–1843) between 1820 and 1821, or collectors like Ernst Garbe (1853–1925), who gathered material for the Museu Paulista in São Paulo between 1901 and 1902.[19] Chrostowski mainly acquired specimens representing rare species (with a narrow or wide distribution range in Brazil), unavailable in European museums, e.g. in Berlin, Paris and London, not previously found in Paraná, or known from single specimens collected 100 years earlier by Natterer.[20] Therefore, the collection work of Chrostowski was not intended to reach large numbers of specimens, but rather representatives of species that could in themselves illustrate the avifauna of Paraná. Chrostowski was an accomplished collector and a keen observer. He connected systematic and field ornithology. Therefore, he can be considered one of the precursors of the so-called New Ornithology (Stresemann revolution). This meant that the variations of museum specimens were less important for him, and he was more focused on the natural history of the birds in their environmental context. As one of the first ornithologists, he observed in detail the habits of birds exclusive to the southern part of the Atlantic Forest which were previously unknown. The examples of such species are the Canebrake Groundcreeper (*Clibanornis dendrocolaptoides*), Araucaria Tit-Spinetail (*Leptasthenura setaria*), Mottled Piculet (*Picumnus nebulosus*), the Three-toed Jamacar (*Jacamaralcyon tridactyla*), Brazilian Merganser (*Mergus octosetaceus*) and even a species extinct in the wild at present, the Purple-winged Ground Dove (*Paraclaravis geoffroyi*). The great importance

18 Wagner A. 1926a, 270.

19 Chrostowski T. 1912, 456.

20 Sztolcman J. 1925, 107–196; Straube F.C., Urben-Filho A., Kopij G. 2003, 226; Mlíkovský J. 2009, 17–180.

of Chrostowski's work was also its geographic originality. Although other naturalists had already travelled to some regions of Paraná, he was the first to dedicate himself entirely to that State and, in addition, he was also the first to venture into the interior. Furthermore, he was a pioneer in publishing a study exclusively on the birds of Paraná, which earned him the title of Patron of Ornithology of Paraná.[21]

Fig. 4. The specimens of Brazilian birds from Chrostowski's collection (Photo: D. Mierzwa-Szymkowiak)

21 See: Chrostowski T. 1912, 452–500.

The fate of the State Zoological Museum and its collections during the war

The Second World War was a tragic chapter in the history of the State Zoological Museum. During the German attack on Warsaw in 1939, the museum building sustained artillery damage. The destruction was compounded by looting conducted by an SS unit, the Sonderkommando Paulsen. The unit arrived at the Museum in November 1939 and transported four lorry-loads of animal specimens, books and optical equipment to Salzburg, Austria.[22] At the turn of 1939 and 1940, the German administration, known as the Liquidation Commission of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, began to oversee the museum. The Commission initially banned staff from entering the museum and from undertaking scholarly work. It later relaxed the restrictions by agreeing to allow a small group of staff to conserve the collection.[23]

The outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 was another test for the Museum and its staff. The Museum's material losses during the uprising included bullet-shattered display cases and specimens of animals kept in preservatives.[24] The drama began after the collapse of the Uprising, when the Germans launched a campaign to destroy Warsaw. During this time, the Museum was left unattended, its collections at risk of arson and looting. The mission to save the Museum and the collection was undertaken by a small group of staff who, with the support of the Committee for the Evacuation of Cultural Property[25] from Warsaw, participated in illegal trips to the city. In early November 1944, the staff managed to reach the museum. They found smoking ruins on the first, second and third floors, which housed archives and library materials, and on the fourth and fifth floors, where insect collections were kept. Staff launched an operation to secure the materials and remove them from the museum. As part of the campaign to evacuate cultural artefacts from Warsaw, many museum and library materials were transported by train to Piotrków Trybunalski. These included more than 1200 boxes of skins of domestic and foreign birds (including Brazilian birds from Chrostowski's collection), 21 boxes of about 50,000 shells and 40 bags of books, manuscripts and catalogues.[26]

In December 1944, staff dug three pits in the frozen ground in the museum's courtyard (Fig. 5). They hid some 6000 glass jars containing specimens of invertebrates

22 Zabłocki W. 2020, 83.

23 Daszkiewicz P. et al. 2016, 40; Daszkiewicz P., Iwan D. 2016, 435–436.

24 Zabłocki W. 2020, 84.

25 The Committee for the Evacuation of Cultural Property was established in Pruszków in 1944. Its chairman was Eugeniusz Łopuszański, and its member was Stanisław Feliksiak, who was appointed to organize the rescue of the State Zoological Museum's assets. See: Daszkiewicz P. et al. 2016, 41.

26 Daszkiewicz P., Iwan D. 2016, 436; Daszkiewicz P. et al. 2016, 41–43.

(including molluscs and echinoderms) and vertebrates (including fish, amphibians and reptiles) in fluid preservatives. Workers were aware that so-called wet specimens could be damaged in transit. In turn, leaving the glases unprotected in the museum exposed them to destruction. Ten crates of stuffed animals and bird skins, four crates of mammals and skulls, over a million mollusc shells and 221 sacks of books were also placed in the pits. In January 1945, the museum staff prepared a fourth pit. More than 800 wet specimens, 53 boxes of bird and mammal specimens and 195 sacks of books were buried there.[27] The sudden offensive of Soviet and Polish troops in early 1945 saved the collection from deportation or destruction. However, the museum building was already badly damaged, and the rooms were destroyed (Fig. 6).

Fig. 5. A holes dug in the ground in the courtyard of the State Zoological Museum during the war (Source: AMIZPAN. Photo, no sign.)

27 Daszkiewicz P. et al. 2016, 42.

Fig. 6. Interiors of the State Zoological Museum. Photo from the period 1945–1949 (Source: AMIZPAN. Photo, no sign.)

Losses in Chrostowski's collection

Despite sacrificial rescue efforts, the losses suffered by the State Zoological Museum during the Second World War were very high. The destruction of property was estimated at 50%, and of the scientific collections at 43%. Equipment in all the studios and archives was burned. A collection of insects from around the world, estimated at around 2 million specimens, was lost. This collection included more than 20,000 insects (including bugs, beetles and dragonflies) collected in Brazil by the Polish Zoological Expedition.[28] It can be assumed that the war also contributed to the destruction, confiscation and/or loss of other collections of invertebrates collected by the

28 Daszkiewicz P., Iwan D. 2020, 437–438.

expedition at the same time as the insects. These included losses of some 450 molluscs, about 100 myriapods, more than 60 specimens with internal and external parasites, and unquantified arachnids. Presumably, a similar fate befell the vertebrate collections, including amphibians, reptiles and mammals.[29] In the case of the vertebrates, it appears that some of the material, e.g. reptiles (as well as arachnids among the invertebrates), was not estimated in terms of the number of specimens before the war.[30] It is therefore difficult at present to assess the extent of the losses. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that during the war, the Museum lost documentation of the provenance of the specimens, including the labels attached to the specimens. Among the vertebrates, it is estimated that about 10 amphibians, all reptiles, about 10 mammals and 15 mammal skulls were destroyed. The "Kurier Codzienny", a newspaper, published an account by Stanisław Felisiak (1906–1992), a museum employee, of one of the reasons for the loss of the collection during the looting of the building in 1944:

> After the [Warsaw] Uprising, I managed to get to Warsaw many times [...]. With a pained heart, I watched as drunken soldiers threw jars of valuable specimens out of windows and smashed cabinets [...]. Invaluable specimens of Brazilian snakes, turtles, vipers, fish, etc., were destroyed in a barbaric manner.[31]

Of all Chrostowski's collections, the birds survived the war in the greatest numbers. Nearly 100 specimens survived from the first expedition (about 50 specimens lost), approximately 400 from the second (losses included about 100 specimens) and more than 950 from the third (about 250 specimens lost).[32] The scientific materials looted from the museum in 1939 by Paulsen Sonderkommando included Chrostowski's specimens. Among them were four mammal skulls from Rio Ivahy obtained during the third expedition to Brazil and the *Aramides saracura* bird from Vera Guarani from the first expedition. The looted materials went to the Haus der Natur Museum in Salzburg. After the war, the specimens were identified and returned to the museum in Warsaw. In 1946, skulls from Brazil, bird and mammal specimens of other Polish collectors were returned, together with books.[33] In 2022, an *A. saracura* bird from Brazil was returned with bone materials, reptile and bird specimens collected by other naturalists and books.[34]

29 It can be assumed that in 1935, during a fire in the museum, some part of Chrostowski's collection was destroyed. Daszkiewicz P. et al. 2016, 35–38.

30 Wagner A. 1926a, 270.

31 AMIZPAN, sign. 1/75 (111/I), 29.

32 Chrostowski T. 1912, 452–490; Poliński W. 1923, 119; Sztolcman J. 1923, 227; Wagner A. 1926a, 270; Wagner A. 1926b, 280.

33 Daszkiewicz P., et al. 2016, 91–98.

34 See: *The catalogue*...

Wartime Losses

The war was a period of stagnation in the functioning of the State Zoological Museum in Warsaw. Academic research, teaching, exhibition and publishing activities were curtailed.[35] Scientific work on the collection and its popularisation became impossible. International cooperation and the circulation of materials in Poland and abroad were suspended. Access to the specimens was difficult, while loans and possible exchanges were halted. The museum's staff was severely depleted. Many workers and collaborators (27% of the workforce) lost their lives during the war.[36] The museum lacked specialists in ornithology and entomology, among others, who could potentially take over the description of the collection. The staff who managed to work at the museum at various times did not have the opportunity for professional development, experience, networking and knowledge sharing. They had to concentrate on securing and evacuating the specimens. Rescuing and protecting the collection was done at the risk of life. Tasks such as organising, cataloguing, labelling and scientifically processing the materials were abandoned.

During the war, the collection was subject to destruction, robbery and loss. The illegal transportation of specimens, books and research tools by the Paulsen Sonderkommando was risky as the cargo could be lost in transit before reaching its destination. The fate of the material left in the museum was also uncertain. The collections in the damaged building, which was unheated or poorly heated in winter, did not have adequate humidity and thermal conditions. Dry specimens were damaged, destroyed or soiled by mould, pests, moisture, dust and dirt. Wet specimens were susceptible to decomposition and desiccation due to a lack of preservative fluids. Liquids evaporated rapidly from the damaged containers in the high indoor summer temperatures.

During the war period, the museum lost its archives, making it difficult to conduct provenance research on the collection. This type of research aims to trace the history of specimens from their acquisition to the present day. This research proved extremely important in the post-war period. It made it possible to reconstruct the history and preserve the memory of collections that were temporarily or irretrievably lost during the war. This type of research is based on archives such as museum activity reports, on the organisation of the collection, the division of specimens and the systems in place for labelling them. Books of acquisitions (books of gifts), inventories of collections and exhibition catalogues containing descriptions, engravings and/or photographs of specimens are important. Much of the data on collections is provided by reports on the national and international movement of specimens, indicating their

35 See: Iwan D., Daszkiewicz P. 2021, 51–59.

36 Daszkiewicz P., Iwan D. 2016, 433; Brzęk G. 1997, 173–197.

temporary storage locations and confirming their return to the museum. Collections data is also contained in staff records, including notes, correspondence, reports and summaries. Many of these archives in the museum were burned during the war. The problem of researching the provenance of the collection in the post-war period was compounded by the fact that many exhibits lost their information carriers, such as plinths. The carriers contained data of the following types: taxonomic name, place and year of collection, name of the collector, acquisition number (gift number), catalogue number with institution acronym, identifiers and ownership marks. The loss of the storage carriers not only deprived the specimens of basic data but also diminished their scientific value.

The lack of pre-war documentation for the collection makes it challenging to compile a complete list of museum materials before 1939. It is also hard to establish how many specimens were lost during the war. Consequently, the history of the collection requires investigative work to locate and merge information from various sources.

Conclusion

Tadeusz Chrostowski and his collaborators enriched the collection of the State Zoological Museum with numerous animal specimens gathered during three expeditions to Brazil in the first half of the 20th century. More than 20,000 of Chrostowski's specimens were destroyed during the Second World War and the loss of the collection was one of the greatest material losses suffered by the museum in its section of neotropical animals. The museum also experienced intangible losses including the interruption of the continuity of conservation and scientific work on the collection, the hindrance of its development with new materials and the decline of its scientific standing internationally.

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Incorporation of Andriy Melnyk's OUN into the Kharkiv Environment (1941–1943)

Summary: Today, studying the spread of OUN activities, particularly those of the OUN(m), in Eastern Ukraine during the German-Soviet War is particularly relevant. This paper aims to highlight the work of the OUN(m) in Kharkiv during the Nazi occupation. Analysing the available sources and publications, it can be stated that during the German-Soviet war, the OUN(m) took the opportunity to spread their ideology in the Eastern Ukrainian lands, creating their cells among the local population. The primary tasks of the OUN(m), who arrived in Kharkiv with the Germans as part of a Sonderkommando or propaganda groups, were to infiltrate the local administration, police, and cultural and educational institutions; propagate nationalist ideas about creating an independent Ukrainian state; and organise local cells. To do this, they used both legal and illegal methods. Bohdan Konyk, Yakiv Kravchuk, and Petro Sahaidachnyi were particularly prominent in Kharkiv. The peak of OUN(m) activity in the city was October–December 1941. This was due to their proximity to the Germans and the ability to conduct their work legally. During the Nazi Occupation, the ideological views of the OUN(m) in Kharkiv were transformed to adapt to a more moderate Eastern Ukrainian version of nationalism. Nevertheless, their ideas became known to the wider Kharkiv community, influencing the vision of Ukraine's future among local nationalists.

Keywords: World War II, Ukrainian nationalism, Kharkiv, OUN(m), ideology

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Studying the political history of Ukraine and the struggle for the creation of an independent state is impossible without taking into account the spread of ideologies by various political organisations. Today, it is especially relevant to analyse the spread of the worldview conducted by members of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), in particular supporters of Andriy Melnyk (OUN(m)) in Eastern Ukraine, specifically in Kharkiv during the Nazi occupation in 1941–1943.

The process of introducing nationalist ideology and politics in the east of the country is interesting because it begins with the massive rejection of the OUN state-building theory by the population. Today, this concept has many supporters who are even ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of nationalist beliefs about Ukraine's future.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the activities of the OUN(m) in Kharkiv during the Nazi Occupation. The publication's scientific novelty lies in its comprehensive study of the main directions of the OUN(m)'s propaganda work in Kharkiv, based on the identified range of documentary sources and scholarly publications.

The publication combines textual analysis with general scientific, special historical, and sociological research methods. This approach enables one to determine how Melnyk's group tried to use the opportunities of their stay in Kharkiv to establish and spread their ideology.

The current state of research on the topic shows that both domestic and international scholars have only briefly examined this subject. It should be emphasised that a neutral study of the history of the OUN became feasible only after the formation of an independent Ukrainian state. One of the earliest Ukrainian historians to explore this issue was Mykhailo Koval. Among Kharkiv historians who investigated the city's life during the Nazi Occupation, the most notable are the works of Olena Diakova, Vladyslav Pronenko, Yurii Radchenko, and Anatolii Skorobohatov. These scholars explore various aspects of the OUN's activities in Kharkiv. Of the works addressing the city's history during World War II, Anatolii Skorobohatov's book *Kharkiv during the German Occupation (1941–1943)* is particularly comprehensive. The author, for the first time, examined issues such as the functioning of German and civilian administrations, the activities of political organisations from 1941 to 1943, and the daily life of Kharkiv residents under occupation.

Of great importance for understanding the new concept of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists in Ukrainian historiography is the professional opinion of the working group of historians at the Government Commission for the Study of the OUN and UPA, and the universal two-volume publication *Ukraine in the Second World War: A View from the 21st Century*[1] was written under the auspices of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine by leading national historians in the field of World War II.

1 Smolii V.A. et al. (ed.), 2011, 1–2; S.V. Kul'chyts'kyy (ed.), 2005, 53.

Ivan Patryliak's publications provide general information about the OUN's activities in Ukraine. Although his work is devoted to the OUN Bandera wing, the scholar also addresses the OUN(m)'s actions, comparing their policies and ideology. Pavlo Hai-Nyzhnyk, Heorhiy Kasianov, Oleksandr Pahiri, and others' studies are also crucial for assessing the activities of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists.[2]

The works of diaspora scholars Vasyl Veriga and Lev Shankovskyi are essential for understanding the activities of the Melnyk faction. Written by historians who were also direct participants in those events, their publications are, on the one hand, memoirs, and on the other hand, have all the hallmarks of scientific treatises.

German scholars' interpretations of the OUN's activities, particularly those of the Melnyk faction (e.g., Hans Friedrich Gunther, Kai Struve), are also interesting, as they present a German perspective on developing Ukrainian-German relations during World War II.[3]

The source material on the topic is extensive. This article includes criminal cases of collaborators, denunciations left in the occupied territory by Soviet agents, etc.[4]

Kharkiv is located in north-east Ukraine. It is a relatively young city, just over 370 years old. The opening of a university and a technological institute in 1805 and 1885 attracted entrepreneurs and businesspeople to the city. In Soviet times, it was one of the major industrial, scientific, and cultural centres and transportation hubs of the Soviet Union. From 1919 to 1934, it was the capital of Soviet Ukraine. During industrialisation, the status of the capital city led to the construction of many new enterprises and the reconstruction of old ones. Industry giants such as tractors, aircraft, turbines, machine tools, and many other plants emerged here. The reorganisation of higher education separated certain institutes from the university: law and medicine. The Institute of Technology was divided into five independent institutes: Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Aviation. In 1940, there were 1200 industrial enterprises in the city. Many writers came to Kharkiv as the capital. Many of them created new Ukrainian literature. On the eve of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, there were 46 research institutes and 36 higher education institutions in Kharkiv, 41 colleges, and 138 schools. There were also 14 theatres, 60 clubs, 304 libraries, and 9 museums. The rapid growth of industrial enterprises, a transport hub, and scientific and educational institutes led to significant demographic growth in the city and, thus, the construction of a large number of residential areas. Among them are the socialist

2 Hay-Nyzhnyk P. 2015, 71–79; Kasianov H. 2003, 63; Kasianov H. 1999, 351; Pahiria O. 2013, 4–9; Pahiria O., Ivanchenko V. (eds) 2011, 1161.

3 Gunter F. 2008, 301; Struve K. 2015, 739.

4 CSAPUO. Fond 1, opis 23, sprava 90, 58 ark. SSASSU. U 32 t., sprava 99615, t. 4, 217 ark.; U 4 t., fond 5, sprava 67452, vol. 1–4; sprava 036316; Fond 6, sprava 75962; Sprava 035617. SAKR. Fond R-6452, opis 1, sprava 5346, 190 ark.

'cities' of 'Novyi Pobut' (now called KhTZ district), Krasnyi Zhovten, Krasnyi Promin, and others. The housing stock of Kharkiv amounted to about 4 million square metres.[5] However, such significant achievements occurred in parallel with repressions against all population segments. Collectivisation in the countryside led to the famine of 1932–1933. Thousands of peasants moved to cities, primarily to Kharkiv, to escape from starvation.

The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, led to dramatic changes in the lives of the citizens of this state. All social and personal life was subordinated to new realities. Thousands of Kharkiv residents were mobilised to the front. Their places in the factories were taken by pensioners, women, and teenagers.

Realising Kharkiv's importance as an industrial centre, the German command tried to capture it as soon as possible, while the Soviet government tried to prevent this.

The front line was advancing quickly enough into the Kharkiv region. Within three months, it reached the border of the region. At the end of September 1941, the situation on the southern flank of the German-Soviet front became more complicated. Nazi troops, with superior strength and equipment, captured the left bank of the Dnipro River. The Nazis determined two directions of attack on the Kharkiv region — from the west and the south-west. The defence of Kharkiv from the west was carried out by the troops of the 40th, 21st, and 38th Armies of the Southwestern Front, which had been exhausted by the fighting in the Kyiv direction in August.

The German command created a powerful strike group (9 divisions) to capture the city, which was four times larger than the Soviet troops in manpower and equipment. The Nazis hoped to crush the defenders and capture the city with a single blow. In the second half of October, fighting broke out on the outskirts of Kharkiv. The city was defended by units of the 38th Army, troops of the Kharkiv garrison, an NKVD brigade, and Kharkiv militia. However, the forces were unequal — on 25 October 1941, the Germans completely captured the city.

The Soviet government attached great importance to the liberation of the Kharkiv region. Moreover, the liberation of Kharkiv, the first capital of Soviet Ukraine, was of strategic, economic, and political significance. No wonder 10 military operations were carried out to liberate the region: Hraki (18–22 November 1941); Bulatselivka (26 November – 13 December 1941); Barvenkovo–Lozivska (18–31 January 1942); Battle of Kharkiv (12–29 May 1942); Voronezh–Kharkiv Strategic Offensive (13 January – 3 March 1943); Operation Skachok (29 January – 6 February 1943); Kharkiv Defensive Offensive (4–25 March 1943); Izium–Barvinkove Offensive (17–27 July 1943); Belgorod–Kharkiv Strategic Offensive Operation (3–23 August 1943); and Donbas Offensive (13–22 August 1943). The intense battles are evidenced by the fact that seven

5 Siroshtan M.A. et al. (eds), 1967, 115–123.

settlements of the region were liberated from the invaders four times, 30 settlements three times, and 115 settlements — including Kharkiv — twice.[6]

Today, it is possible to state that the German occupation regime was ambiguous. The Germans pursued a 'carrot and stick' policy in the occupied lands. Public executions, raids, and searches on the streets became commonplace. There was no water, no electricity, and no heating. Often on the streets, one could see not only those executed, but also local residents who died of hunger or cold.

At the same time, the Nazis pursued a pro-Ukrainian policy in Ukraine, proclaiming Ukrainian as the state language alongside German. They allowed the resumption of the activities of public organisations and supported the Ukrainisation of all spheres of life, including the publication of the Ukrainian-language press, teaching Ukrainian in educational institutions, etc.

Along with the Germans, teams of OUN(m) and Banderites — natives of Western Ukraine — came to the city legally and illegally. Officially organised by the Germans, the Sonderkommando consisted of Western Ukrainian nationalists, including OUN(m).

There were three groups of nationalists in German-occupied Kharkiv: local, OUN(b), and OUN(m). In the early days, the local nationalists — who are more appropriately called nationally conscious because they were not as radical as the Banderites and even the more moderate OUN(m) — formed the Public Committee headed by Volodymyr Dolenko.[7]

It should be noted that shortly before the attack on the Soviet Union, the German command on the territory under its control mobilised pro-Ukrainian people into paramilitary units, the Abwehr Sonderkommando, to liberate the people of the USSR from Bolshevism.[8] These were auxiliary units of the Wehrmacht, which included Ukrainians who had important ideological professions: priests, translators, librarians, and representatives of other service professions. Their task was to help the Germans establish power in the captured settlements. Sonderkommando-202, under the command of German Major Hans Ferbeck, was sent to Kharkiv.[9]

Even before the war, some representatives of the OUN(m) made unofficial contact with the German command, reaching certain agreements under which the OUN(m) was subordinate to the Germans in their propaganda and ideological activities. At the same time, in the summer of 1941, before the outbreak of hostilities between Germany

6 Dyakova O. 2013, 99.

7 Volodymyr Dolenko was a Ukrainian politician and public figure who expressed his pro-Ukrainian views from the beginning of the twentieth century. He fought for the supremacy of the Ukrainian language and culture in Kharkiv during the National Democratic Revolution of 1917–1921, and was arrested twice in Soviet times for his national views. For this, he earned respect among Kharkiv nationalists, and therefore, during the Nazi occupation, he was essentially a "gray cardinal" in resolving many personnel and political issues with the German authorities.

8 Struve K. 2015, 65; SSASSU. U 4 t. Fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 4.

9 SSASSU. U 4 t. Fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 42.

and the Soviet Union, the OUN(m) began forming its marching groups to establish centres throughout Ukraine. It is known that the OUN(m) sent three groups to Soviet Ukraine: southern, middle, and northern. The middle group was formed west of the San River and was led by Oleh Kandyba-Olzhych. It first reached Kyiv, then, after being captured by the Germans, moved to Poltava and Kharkiv. Kharkiv was the main goal and final destination of the movement. Among its members, the most notable are Dr. Oliynyk, Kindrat Poluvedko (who, incidentally, was an NKVD agent), as well as journalists Petro Sahaidachnyi and Bohdan Konyk (Onufrienko), and Archpriest Yakov Kravchuk — the latter two being agents of the Abwehr.

A little later, the OUN(b) also started its activities. However, it was unable to achieve significant success in the city due to its illegal status, small size, insignificant support from the local population, and high competition with the previously mentioned organisations. The Centre group, organised in Przemysl, was headed here and was supposed to go through Lviv–Ternopil–Proskuriv–Vinnytsia–Fastiv–Kyiv–Poltava to Kharkiv.

It should also be noted that although the Germans considered the OUN members to be their allies, they were still wary of them, seeing them as future opponents and fighters for Ukrainian independence. After the proclamation of the restoration of Ukraine on 30 June 1941, the Germans began to persecute the Bandera followers, and after a demonstration in the town of Bazar, Zhytomyr region, on 21 November, in memory of the participants in the Second Winter Campaign of the UPR army killed by the Bolsheviks, the persecution of Melnyk's followers began.

Despite the repressions, the Germans treated the OUN(m) leniently for some time in Kharkiv. The latter used this to spread their ideas legally and illegally. First, they tried to create their own powerful leadership in Kharkiv by recruiting local nationally conscious Ukrainians. B. Konyk and Y. Kravchuk were most concerned with this issue. At first, they simply put people on lists. But later B. Konyk, with the help of local activists, founded an initiative group to recruit new members to the OUN(m). In December 1941, it was decided to hold a solemn oath of allegiance to the OUN. Thus, one was held every Sunday at the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Drama Theatre. The event was held according to a certain ritual. Candidates were lined up in two rows in the theatre lobby. The speakers were Kindrat Poluvedko and Bohdan Konyk, and Archpriest Yakiv Kravchuk, dressed in a cassock with a cross and a prayer book in his hands, gave a nationalistic sermon. Afterwards, in a separate room, he read out the oath and let the recruits kiss the cross. Many nationally conscious Kharkiv residents joined the OUN(m) at that time. Among them were Deputy Mayor Mykola Slipchenko, Secretary of the Public Committee Serhii Cherniaiev, Head of the Propaganda Department Volodymyr Kryvenko, Head of the Regional Land Office Mykhailo Vetukhiv, and others.[10]

10 Skorobohatov A. 1996, 83.

However, it is known that Kharkiv residents refused to join the OUN(m). One of these people was an influential nationalist and historian, Dmytro Solovey.[11]

At first, joining the OUN(m) was a condition for being appointed to a position in the city government or district mayors' offices or to obtain a military rank in the police. However, this process was short-lived: in early 1942, membership in the OUN(m) ceased, as it no longer made sense due to the strengthening of the positions of Dolenko's group and the departure of Melnyk's people to the West due to the loss of positions in the face of Nazi repression.

The relations between the Dolenko group and the OUN Melnyk faction at the beginning of the occupation were ambiguous, but they can be defined as more positive than negative. At that time, they tried to mutually solve urgent administrative issues and promote the rise of the Ukrainian language and culture.

The next day after the occupation, a two-stage administration was formed in the city: the military commandant's office (German) and the city council (made up of local civilians and nationalists from the Sonderkommando). As is known, the first chairman was Oleksiy Kramarenko, a professor at the Institute of Technology. His deputy was Mykola Slipchenko (a person close to Volodymyr Dolenko), and his secretary was the already mentioned Kindrat Poluvedko (a member of the Melnyk group).[12]

The nationalists who arrived from the West had a stereotype that Kharkiv was a pro-Russian city and were afraid of people with such views coming to power. B. Konyk was even indignant: "...due to the unpreparedness of Ukrainians, the city administration was seized by 'Moscovites' — Kramarenko and company, who should be expelled from the city administration."[13] Dolenko's group shared the same opinion. Indeed, the employees of the city and district administrations had different views. And at first they had to put up with it, but gradually Kharkiv nationalists began to strengthen their positions, to eliminate unwanted people, often slandering them to the punitive German authorities.

Nevertheless, in the city government, especially at first, the OUN(m) not only worked but also zealously implemented their policies. They were in charge of the departments of religion (Yakiv Kravchuk), labour (Mykola Kononenko), and propaganda (Volodymyr Kryvenko, whose deputy before his arrest was Maria Neduzha). Even after the Melnyk activists left Kharkiv, some Kharkiv residents supported their ideas.

In the early days, the propaganda department of KhMU was supervised not only by a representative of the German commandant's office but also by Bohdan Konyk. Therefore, the employees of this department pursued not only a pro-German and anti-Soviet policy, but also a pro-Ukrainian one. Over time, the department turned into

11 Dyakova O. 2012, 166–169; SSASSU. Sprava 035617, 140 ark. 20–21.

12 Gunter F. 2008, 137.

13 SSASSU. Sprava 035617, 140 ark. 17.

a legal centre of the OUN(m), which did not suit the German command, and therefore, the department was liquidated.[14]

In December 1941, Bohdan Konyk began forming the Ukrainian police. Soon, its first units were located in premises on Eparchialna Street (now Alchevskikh Street) and Korolenko Lane. The police were organised by district, and by the summer of 1942, there were 21 police officers in Kharkiv. They were not subordinated to the district mayors but directly to the city police headquarters, which was initially located at 4 Korolenko Street (now Mykolaivska Street), and from January 1942 at 100 Sumska Street (in the Gestapo building). Among the police commanders were many immigrants from Western Ukraine, and the rank and file were recruited from prisoners of war and local youth. In 1941 and early 1942, Melnyk residents even organised several marches of the Ukrainian police with an orchestra and the performance of nationalist songs, including the anthem "Ukraine Has Not Yet Died", through the streets of Kharkiv.[15]

From the end of October 1941, the process of forming public organisations began in Kharkiv. They became a place of consolidation, primarily for nationally conscious Ukrainians, a 'mediator' between ordinary Kharkiv residents and the Nazi occupation authorities, and defenders of the interests of some city residents (primarily the like-minded and repressed). As noted above, in November 1941, the Kharkiv Public Committee (KHPC) was established and headed by Volodymyr Dolenko. It was the most influential public semi-legal unification of the city.

In his report of 8 March 1943, to the NKVD, agent Sorbonin (priest Vasyl Potienko[16]) noted the process of creating the KHK, as heard in a conversation with Volodymyr Dolenko. Volodymyr Andriyovych said that the idea of creating a semi-legal or even legal committee belonged to OUN members Bohdan Konyk and Yakiv Kravchuk. In their view, the committee "would lead the Ukrainian public and seek to implement measures aimed at a complete and early national revival and the transition of the leading role in the life of the city and the country to Ukrainians."[17] Melnyk residents even tried to influence the selection of members of the KHK. However, local nationalists opposed the imposition of someone else's, i.e., Melnyk's, vision of the organisation's structure and goals. Nevertheless, in October–December 1941, Bohdan Konyk and Yakiv Kravchuk attended meetings of the KHPC and explained the ideology of the OUN(m). To a certain extent, they convinced Kharkiv residents of the need to work together for the good of Ukraine, and in December Serhiy Cherniayev was appointed liaison with the OUN(m) Kyiv centre.[18] When relations between the Dolenko group and Melnyk

14 Skorobohatov A. 2004, 145.

15 Skorobohatov A. 2004, 61; Skorobohatov A. 1996, 87.

16 Interestingly, in 1943, V. Potienko emigrated to the West with the Germans and died in Berlin on April 12, 1945.

17 SSASSU. U 32 t. Sprava 99615, t. 4, ark. 113zv.

18 Dyakova O. 2020, 214.

residents deteriorated, the latter held their own meetings at the apartments of the aforementioned Serhiy Cherniayev or the Neduzhykh family.[19]

Over time, the KHPC became the most influential organisation, because without its members' patronage and the head's consent, it was impossible to take a more or less prestigious position in Kharkiv.

In December 1941, Prosvita resumed its work (in 1922, the Soviet government closed this organisation as a 'bourgeois' one). History professor Vasyl Dubrovskyi headed it. The organisation existed legally for some time and conducted cultural, educational, commercial, and charitable activities, which made it possible to openly promote Ukrainian ideology, manage the spread of the Ukrainian language and culture, and provide financial assistance to like-minded people and locals who were offended by the Soviet government. The organisation consisted of 90 members.[20]

The Union of Ukrainian Women, the Union of Ukrainian Youth, the Society of Ukrainian Merchants, and the House of National Culture were also officially established. All these organisations were subordinated to Prosvita.

The society's main goal was to unite Kharkiv residents based on Ukrainian culture and awaken their national Ukrainian consciousness. For this purpose, lectures on historical topics were held, preparatory courses for young people to enter universities were offered, religious holidays were celebrated, concerts were organised, and solemn meetings were held in honour of national writers and heroes (Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Symon Petliura, Yevhen Konovalets, Andriy Melnyk, and others). OUN members were also invited to these meetings.[21]

Speaking to Kharkiv residents, the OUN(m) explained the OUN programme and its political concepts. It should be noted that their plans were devoid of radical Russophobia, because at that time, Russophobia was not a prevalent sentiment among the majority of the population of Eastern Ukraine. Therefore, the emissaries blamed the tsarist and Soviet governments for all the misfortunes of Ukraine, while at the same time praising the Ukrainian people.

In the first half of the twentieth century, religion played an essential role in the lives of Kharkiv residents, as it did for most Ukrainians. OUN(m) emissary Father Yakiv (Kravchuk) was the first to initiate the restoration of church life in Kharkiv to promote the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (hereinafter referred to as the UAOC, autocephalists). First, it was his duty as part of the work of Sonderkommando-202: "I, as a priest who shared the views of Ukrainian nationalists, agreed to this work and was appointed head of the church department of the German Sonderkommando,"

19 Skorobohatov A. 1996, 83.

20 SAKR. Fond R-2982, opis 2, sprava 5, 78 ark. 22–23.

21 Skorobohatov A. 2004, 195–196.

he said during an interrogation by the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR on 1 October 1948.[22] Secondly, Yakiv Kravchuk simultaneously fulfilled the blessing of the UAOC bishop, Father Hilarion (Ivan Ohienko). During a personal meeting, "Hilarion explained to me that German troops were occupying the territory of Ukraine and that this created the possibility of creating an 'independent' Ukrainian state," Yakiv Kravchuk testified during this interrogation.[23] Thirdly, he, like other autocephalists, was not satisfied with the significant influence of the local Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. He believed that he had to "create a Ukrainian independent Orthodox Church, independent of the Russian Patriarchate, on the territory of Soviet Ukraine occupied by the Germans."[24]

On the orders of the Sonderkommando commander Hans Ferbeck, Father Yakiv (Kravchuk) identified the presence of believers, appointed priests and other church ministers, and finally organised church parishes and initially managed their work through the religious department of the Kharkiv City Council (KhCC).[25] However, in parallel, religious departments with similar functions were also established at the KHPC and Prosvita Society. And in November–December 1941, Metropolitan Theophilus (Buldovskyi) and representatives of KhCC and Prosvita formed the Kharkiv Diocesan Administration of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (hereinafter referred to as the UAOC), headed by Metropolitan Theophilus (Buldovskyi). The KhCC began operating in January 1942. By the way, Theophilus Buldovskyi was registered with the religious department of KhCC not only as a clergyman, but also as 'Metropolitan of All Ukraine'.[26]

Thus, in Kharkiv, Yakiv Kravchuk, as a member of the church department of Sonderkommando-202, gradually lost sole supervision over the city's religious life between November 1941 and January 1942. But, left unemployed, he nevertheless openly continued to conduct pro-Ukrainian and pro-German propaganda among the UAOC faithful.

The first church to be opened in the city was the Three Saints Church (known in the city as Holberg's). Before the service in this church, Kravchuk ordered Metropolitan Theophilus to commemorate Vasyl Lypkivskyi and the German authorities as 'Metropolitan of All Ukraine'. Theophilus did not like this, but he complied with this demand to avoid conflict during the service. But then he declared that he refused to continue to hold services under such conditions.[27] The requirement to conduct ser-

22 SSASSU. U 4 t., fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 41.

23 SSASSU. U 4 t., fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 40.

24 SSASSU. U 4 t., fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 41.

25 SSASSU. U 4 t., fond 5, sprava 67452, t. 1, ark. 40, 95, 115.

26 CSAPUO. Fond 1, opis 23, sprava 90, ark. 58.

27 CSAPUO. Fond 1, opis 23, sprava 90, ark. 12.

vices exclusively in Ukrainian caused dissatisfaction among many believers and clergy who were used to listening to and saying prayers in Old Slavonic, not Ukrainian.[28]

Another area of OUN propaganda was to instil in Kharkiv residents respect for holidays and figures whom nationalists considered national heroes. These events included the memory of those who died at Kruty.[29] On 1 February 1942, the Church of the Intercession Monastery commemorated "the memory of 300 young knights-officers and Cossacks of the Ukrainian army who heroically fell in an unforgettable battle near Kruty, blocking the Moscow hordes' path to Ukraine."[30] On this occasion, Metropolitan Theophilus held a memorial service. After the memorial service, Yakiv Kravchuk held another prayer service for the victims of Kruty in the premises of Prosvita.[31] In addition to these commemorations, there were celebrations of the births or deaths of Taras Shevchenko, Mykola Lysenko, Ivan Franko, Symon Petliura, Yevhen Konovalets, and other prominent Ukrainian personalities.

Initially, the Gestapo conducted its line of propaganda independently or through Yakov Kravchuk, but later it began to use the services of Metropolitan Theophilus (Buldovskyi). This change in vector was due to several reasons. First, the Gestapo, the local commandant's office, and a part of the local intelligentsia were irritated by the persistent Ukrainisation of the church life of the city by nationalists. Second, they, like Theophilus Buldovskyi, were not satisfied with the use of the church by the OUN(m) for political propaganda.

Establishing the daily newspaper "Nova Ukraina" was important for ideological work among the population. Initially, Petro Sahaidachnyi, who arrived from the West, was appointed editor-in-chief. In April 1942, he was replaced by Vsevolod Tsarynnyk from Kharkiv.

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28 SSASSU. Fond 6, sprava 75962, 53, ark. 19zv.

29 The Battle of Kruty took place on 16 or 17 January (according to the new style, 29 or 30 January), 1918, near the Kruty railway station, which is now located in the Kruty village community of the Nizhyn district of Chernihiv region. There was a clash between the army of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR), consisting of the 1st Ukrainian Junior School named after Bohdan Khmelnytsky, student kurens, and "Smertia" from the local Free Cossacks, and the Bolshevik troops of the Red Cossacks, created from residents of Eastern Ukraine, as well as Red Guards from Moscow, Petrograd, and sailors of the Baltic Fleet. The Bolsheviks won this battle. According to the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, 520 Ukrainian soldiers, young men, and students took part in the battle, armed with up to 16 machine guns and one cannon on a railroad platform. In comparison, the Bolshevik troops consisted of 4,800 soldiers who were well armed and had artillery. In the evening, Ukrainian troops retreated. 27 students and gymnasium students who were in the reserve were captured and shot during the retreat. In March 1918, when the UPR was restored after the signing of the Treaty of Brest and with the help of the German armed forces, the young men were solemnly buried at Askold's Grave in Kyiv. For Ukrainian nationalists, the deaths of the young men near Kruty in January 1918 became a symbol of patriotism and selflessness in the struggle for Ukrainian independence. Every year, commemorative events are held in memory of their sacrifice. This was the case during the years of Nazi occupation. This day has been celebrated at the state level since 2003.

30 *Ob'yava...*. 1942.

31 SSASSU. U 32 t. sprava 99615, t. 4, ark. 144zv.

The newspaper was particularly critical of the Soviet government, aggressively xenophobic (primarily against Jews, and less so towards Russians), and published articles of a nationalist (pro-Ukrainian), pro-German (Nazi) nature.

During 1942, a wave of arrests of local and visiting people swept through Kharkiv, leading to the departure of Ukrainian nationalists from the city, including the OUN(m). By March of this year, the prominent emissaries of the OUN(m) who had arrived from the West had left the city. A small group of local OUN(m) remained in Kharkiv, led by Mykola Kononenko, head of the Labour Department of the KhCC. Its size is difficult to determine because it is known that five of them were shot by the Germans (including Mykola Kononenko), and 16 people emigrated with the Germans in 1943.[32]

In parallel with the repressions, they began to 'cleanse' the KhCC and district burgomasters of Kramarenkiv and Melnyk residents.[33] The reasons for this were the active outflow of OUN(m) members and the growing influence of local nationalists. The German occupation authorities gradually began to give preference to Dolenko's group in the city's administration because they understood the mentality of Kharkiv residents and were better aware of their needs and capabilities. Thanks to the Nazis, Volodymyr Dolenko managed to 'place' his trusted people in key positions in the Kharkiv City Council, district mayors' offices, and enterprises to control and operate more effectively by attracting new members to his cell, promoting his own ideology, controlling religious and educational institutions, etc. And since then, the effective functioning of the OUN has depended on the attitude of the KHPC members towards a particular person. One of the most crucial moments in this development was the appointment of Oleksandr Semenenko from Dolenko's group to the post of mayor of Kharkiv in April 1942.

Despite their departure, the ties between Kharkiv nationalists and the OUN did not break. This is evidenced by the visits of some of them to Kharkiv. For example, in the summer of 1942, Ukrainian writer and OUN(m) supporter Ulas Samchuk visited the city, and Oleksa Babiy brought nationalist literature here.[34]

Kharkiv residents also travelled to the West. For example, in June 1942, Petro Syrotenko toured Kyiv–Poltava–Rivne, which lasted almost a month. There, he established contacts with representatives of the OUN and studied their experience.[35]

Bohdan Konyk and Yakiv Kravchuk left a special imprint on the historical memory of Kharkiv residents. B. Konyk was known for his propaganda talents. The historian Vasyl Veriga considered him a "good propagandist" who could "influence and

32 Skorobohatov A. 2004, 187; Radchenko Yu. 2023. Part 2.

33 SSASSU. U 32 t. Sprava 99615, t. 4, ark. 76.

34 Radchenko Yu. 2023. Part. 4.

35 SAKR. Fond R-6452, opis 1, sprava 5346, ark. 23–24.

convince his environment" and "had a remarkable gift for appealing to people in general, and to the younger generation in particular."[36] Kharkiv nationalists saw him as a prominent nationalist, also because "he had the support of the Germans and the opportunity to work legally and openly for the benefit of Ukraine."[37] Y. Kravchuk, however, was not respected in the city because he was considered "an adventurer, a dark, suspicious person."[38]

Thus, it can be stated that during the German-Soviet war, the OUN(m) took advantage of the opportunity to spread their ideology in the eastern Ukrainian lands. The main goals of the OUN(m), who came to Kharkiv with the Germans in Sonderkommando or marching groups, were to infiltrate their people into the local administration, police, cultural and educational institutions; spread nationalist ideas about creating an independent Ukrainian state; and organise local cells. To do this, they used both legal and illegal methods. In Kharkiv, Bohdan Konyk, Yakiv Kravchuk, and Petro Sahaidachnyi were the most prominent. The peak OUN(m) activities in Kharkiv occurred in October–December 1941. This was due to their proximity to the Germans and the ability to conduct their work legally. However, their overall contribution to the ideological palette of the city was quite insignificant. This was due to three interrelated reasons: the lack of mass support for the OUN(m) ideology among the local population, the Nazi repression of the OUN in January–July 1942, and competition for key administrative positions with the Dolenko people.

The ideological views of the OUN(m) in Kharkiv were transformed during the occupation period, adapting to a more moderate version of Eastern Ukrainian nationalism. However, they became known to a wider audience of Kharkiv residents, and this influenced the local nationalists' future vision of Ukraine. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the views of the OUN(m) were disseminated in Kharkiv at that time. This is because in 1942–1943 most Ukrainian nationalists emigrated with the Germans to the West, and the Soviet punitive authorities repressed those who remained for collaborating with the occupiers. After returning from prison camps, these individuals led a closed lifestyle, being especially careful not to disclose what they did in Nazi Kharkiv and where they spent several years after its liberation from the Nazis.

36 Veryha V. 1991, 149, 150.

37 Skorobohatov A. 2004, 182.

38 SSASSU. Sprava 036316, ark. 80.

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faces of war (2025) — 01

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Representation of the Nazi Crimes in Donbass in Soviet Documentary and Fictional Cinema (1943–1950)[1]

Summary: Soviet documentary and fiction cinema of World War II and the first postwar years created several images related to Donbas. This region had played a significant role in Soviet socio-political discourse since prewar times. The article focuses on the peculiarities of the representation of Nazi crimes in Donbas. The author analyses the main fiction and documentary films that feature episodes of crimes committed during the German occupation, describes their historical context, and characterises the degree of influence these scenes had on the population. It is noted that the subject of Nazi crimes in Donbas first appears in the visual images of the destruction of industrial and social infrastructure caused by the Nazis. The issue of the murder of the population of the occupied territories is explored in documentaries related to the central site of mass crimes — the 4–4 bis mine in Stalino (today Donetsk).

Fiction cinema dedicated to the topic of the wartime Donbas is represented by the films *The Unconquered* (*Nepokorennyye*), *It Happened in Donbas* (*Eto bylo v Donbasse*), *The Young Guard* (*Molodaya gvardiya*), and *A Great Life* (*Bol'shaya zhizn'*). The key focus is on the issues of the struggle against Nazism and post-war reconstruction. The films show the torture and murder of members of the anti-Nazi Resistance movement, including juveniles, the executions of Soviet prisoners of war, the deportation of civilians to Germany, and, for the first time in Soviet cinema,

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a scene of a mass execution of the Jewish population. Despite several historical inconsistencies, as the films were usually based on literary works, these films were very popular among the population that survived the occupation. Both abstract and concrete images of victims of the Nazi regime evoked allusions to their suffering caused by the war and occupation. The images of the wartime Donbas are still an important source for the perspective of reflecting the historical processes of the past and for studying the system of influence on the outlook and value coordinates of the population in different historical epochs.

Keywords: Donbas, Nazi crimes, Soviet cinema, propaganda discourse, public consciousness

The experience of military conflicts shows that military propaganda has a significant influence on the moral and psychological state of the army and the population. As a rule, it is devoted to the exploits of one's army, as well as the war crimes of the opposing side. Such stories have a key impact on the formation of the enemy's image, increase the motivation of the army and the population to fight the enemy, and generally perform a mobilising function. This influence is multiplied and becomes more enduring if it is reflected in mass culture, primarily in fiction and cinema.

During the Second World War and in the first postwar years, films about Donbas, a region that played a special role in terms of realising the objectives of the Soviet government and in shaping the propaganda discourse of the fight against Nazism and postwar reconstruction, played a prominent role in this regard. In historical studies about Soviet cinema, these features of the cinematic image of Donbas are reflected.[2] However, historians and film scholars have not focused on the specifics of documentary and fiction cinema's coverage of Nazi crimes committed in Donbas. The only exception are the publications devoted to the film *The Unconquered* (*Nepokorionnye*).[3] It depicts the events of the German occupation, including the genocide of the Jewish population, in an abstract city. The film was based on Boris Gorbatov's story, *The Unconquered*, about life in German-occupied Donbass, which makes it reasonable to allude to events in this region.

Given this, the objectives of the article will be to identify the main films, both fiction and documentary, which contain episodes related to Nazi crimes in Donbas, to determine the historical background of these episodes, and to characterise the degree of influence of these stories on the population.

The first attempts to recreate the image of the wartime Donbas were made in documentary cinema during the war, primarily in the work of the famous Ukrainian

2 Bol'shakov I. 1950; Kornienko I.S. 1975; Levchuk T.V. et al. (eds), 1987; Engel C. 1999; Hutchings S., Vernitski A. (eds), 2005.

3 Hicks J. 2012; Berkhoff K. 2023, 327–350.

director Oleksandr Dovzhenko, *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* (*Bitva za nashu Sovetskuyu Ukrainu*). However, the subject of Nazi crimes is depicted there in the form of visual images of the destruction caused by the Nazis. A little-studied aspect of wartime documentary filmmaking, which included the image of Donbas, was filming in the region's settlements immediately after the liberation from occupation. Frontline cinematographers played a key role in these recordings. According to the recollections of the head of the film group of the Southwestern Front, V. Yeshurin, to the head of the Film Directorate, F. Vasilchenko, at the end of February 1943, they were tasked with filming material for the film *Liberation of Donbas* (*Osvobozhdenie Donbasa*). Still, no information about the release of this film on cinema screens could be found.[4] This was due to the failures of Soviet troops in February–March 1943 during the Wehrmacht's counteroffensive on the southern part of the Soviet-German front and the loss of part of the previously liberated territory. Documentary filmmakers did much more in the summer of 1943. They managed to capture images of cities, industrial and social infrastructure during wartime hostilities, and the behavioural reactions of people who survived the occupation. In particular, the following was recorded in the editing sheet describing filming in Stalino on 7 September 1943:

> Soviet troops are entering the town of Stalino. The townspeople are meeting the soldiers. Pensioner Natalia Kazantseva hangs the coat of arms of the Soviet Union, which she hid from the Germans. Residents read the latest issue of the Soviet Ukraine newspaper. This is the issue of September 7. Workers, employees, and housewives are heading to the building where the city's military commandant and the Party Regional Committee are located. [...] Girls with flowers met the fighter scouts who were the first to enter the city...[5]

Particular attention was paid to filming the sites of the occupiers' crimes against the local population. It was a kind of shock for both the cinematographers and the residents who witnessed it. The description of the exhumation at the place of execution of civilians in Donbas, recounted by the frontline cinematographers V. Tomberg, is quite eloquent:

> In Donbasugol (*Donbass Coal Trust – O.T.*), I learned that in abandoned old mines on the outskirts of Stalino, many corpses, entire cemeteries, and brutally tortured people were found. I was given a car and went to film. The remains of tortured and shot local residents were being lifted from the drift along a vertical shaft in a large

4 Mikhaylov V.P., Fomin V.I. 2010, 566–567.

5 Mikhaylov V.P., Fomin V.I. 2010, 572.

> tub... The mutilated bodies were carefully laid on the snow. Townspeople and villagers gathered around, mostly exhausted old women. They moved gloomily, silently, or stood, intensely peering at what was left of the people...[6]

V. Tomberg was describing the process of lifting corpses from the pit of the 4–4 bis mine in Stalino where, according to the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, more than 75,000 people were killed.[7]

Much of the footage filmed by the cameramen did not survive the war and was used without backup copies to edit certain films. This is how O. Dovzhenko characterised this state of affairs in his report at a meeting on documentary filmmaking in 1946:

> When I came to the studio, I really found disrespect for the material. The footage of documentary material that I used was taken somewhere, and then it was impossible to find out who took it and where. It was a whole trauma in my mind, and from the first day, I raised the issue of stopping these unworthy methods of work.[8]

Although not all of these materials have been preserved and made available to the viewer, the objects that were filmed, the very fact of filming on the streets of the liberated settlements of the Donetsk region (there is evidence of the work of cameramen in Stalino, Makiivka, and Kramatorsk[9]), and the participation of the population in them have become additional arguments in favour of the local population's high level of interest and trust in feature films and wartime newsreels.

With the liberation of the region from occupation and the end of the war, Soviet documentary cinema faced new challenges, including the reconstruction of Donbas. However, in the 1946 documentary film *Donbas*, which, along with several others, 'focuses on the triumph of reconstruction',[10] there is a fragment dedicated to the largest site of Nazi crimes in Donbas — the aforementioned 4–4 bis mine in Stalino. In addition to the visuals — shots of the destroyed mine — the voiceover text states the number of dead — 75,000 people, and also mentions the only person who survived being thrown into the mine — engineer O. Polozhentsev.[11] The film also contains motion pictures from the mass grave of members of *The Young Guard* (*Molodaya gvardiya*) underground organisation that operated in the Voroshylovhrad (now Luhansk) region and recounts the story of one of the dead members of the Donetsk underground — S. Skoblov.

6 Tomberg V.E. 2003, 572.

7 USHMMA, RG-22.002; SARF, F. P-7021. Op. 71. D. 33. L. 208.

8 CSAMLAU, F. 690. Op. 4. Spr. 86. Ark. 28.

9 Mikhaylov V.P., Fomin V.I. 2010, 572–575.

10 Roberts G. 1999, 138.

11 Donabas 1946.

An important factor influencing the consciousness of the population and fostering their patriotic feelings was the ability of cinema to respond to viewers' needs for empathy and engagement with specific types of social behaviour. From 1945 to 1948, a series of films was produced that became long-standing symbols of wartime Donbas. These films addressed the political and ideological demands of the state. Although Nazi crimes were not overlooked in these films, it would be incorrect, given the political and ideological context of the time, to see these films as fully reflecting the phenomenon of occupation.

A significant event in Soviet wartime and postwar cinema was the release of the film *The Unconquered*, based on the novel by Boris Gorbatov. The story was first published in the newspaper "Pravda" in 1943 (the newspaper version, however, was titled slightly differently — *The Family of Taras* — O.T.) and soon it was published in a large print run for wartime — 200,000 copies.[12] The work is based on the author's impressions, who entered the cities of Donbas together with the advanced units of the Red Army. The recognition of both the high artistic merits of the novel and its significant mobilisation potential (this, in the context of the time, was more important for the authorities) was evidenced by the awarding of the USSR State Prize in 1946. It made a huge impression not only on the public but also on the filmmakers who took the opportunity to film the work.[13] Based on the novel, film director Mark Donskoy made a feature film of the same name in 1945 at the Kyiv Film Studio, which won the main prize at the VII International Film Festival in Venice in 1946.[14]

The main idea of the work is to depict the resistance to the occupiers by ordinary people, residents of Donbas. Thus, the film fits perfectly into the framework of the approach already established in Soviet cinema: the Germans must be resisted because they leave no alternative.[15] This film encompasses several aspects of the occupation, including partisan warfare and the dilemmas facing the local population under Nazi rule. A new element of the film was that it presented not only the theme of heroism, which was typical for Soviet propaganda discourse, but also suffering in a rather detailed way. Its most remarkable dimension emerges in a secondary plotline, the Jewish doctor Aron Fishman. The directors of the film, Donskoi and Gorbatov, gave much greater importance to Dr Fishman than the character enjoys in the novel.[16] Thus, the tragedy of the Jews in the occupied territory acquires a distinctly personalised character. The film directed by M. Donskoy includes an episode of the mass shooting of Jews, which, according to the historical context, took place in Voroshilovgrad (now Luhansk) in November 1942. The victims were about 1,800 Jews

12 Berkhoff K. 2012, 204.

13 Galanov B., Karaganova S. (eds), 1982, 303.

14 Kornienko I.S. 1975, 136.

15 Kenez P. 1992, 199.

16 Hicks J. 2012, 136.

living in Voroshylivhrad and surrounding towns.[17] The shooting was carried out in Kyiv, which was liberated at the time, at the actual site of Nazi crimes, Babyn Yar (although the story takes place in Donbas). It was the first depiction of the Holocaust tragedy in a fictional film. Film critics noted the exceptional documentary value of these shots, not to mention their emotional component.[18]

In the summer of 1945, the fiction film *It Happened in the Donbas* (*Eto bylo v Donbasse)* was filmed in Stalino. One of the authors of the script was B. Horbatov, and the film was directed by one of the cult Soviet filmmakers, L. Lukov, the creator of one of the most important pre-war Soviet films, *A Great Life*, who, 'like Horbatov, knows Donbas and its wonderful people well.'[19] It should be noted that the scripts of the films *It Happened in Donbas* and later *The Miners of Donetsk* were written in Donbas, in Stalino, where B. Horbatov worked every summer from 1946 to 1954.[20]

The film, in the spirit of the political demands of the time, tells the story of the heroic struggle of young people who resisted the invaders in the occupied Donbas during the war. The hyperbolisation of the scale of resistance to the Nazis and a certain sacralisation of the victims, especially members of the anti-Nazi resistance movement, became inherent features of war and postwar cinema, justified by the context of the time and political goals. For example, one of the film's storylines shows the selfless refusal of miners to restore a blown-up mine and work for the occupiers, even though their comrade, Komsomol member Fedir, dies.[21] One of the most vivid and dynamic episodes was the execution of captured Soviet sailors at the gates of the prison camp. The execution takes place to the sailors' song, performed in front of hundreds of townspeople. Most likely, the scene of the execution of sailors, a canonical example of Nazi crimes against prisoners of war, had a historical basis. Several residents of Stalino (Donetsk) witnessed the convoy of captured sailors, who were rumoured to have been shot, through the streets of the city.[22] This episode is connected with a moment that characterises the moral and psychological state of the population that survived the occupation: the inhabitants of the city, remembering its terrible realities, did not immediately realise that a film was being shot and almost attacked the actors in German uniforms.[23] The film also touched upon the topic of deportation to Germany for forced labour, a Nazi crime that destroyed the lives of 2.5 million Ukrainians and began to be studied by historians and artists only in the late 1980s.

17 USHMMA, RG- 22.002; SARF, F. P-7021. Op. 56. D. 681. L. 2; Kruglov A.I. 2004, 138.

18 Zorkaya N. 2005, 752.

19 Bol'shakov I. 1950, 68.

20 Bol'shakov I. 1950, 69.

21 "Sotsialisticheskiy Donbass" August 4, 1945.

22 Titarenko D.N., Penter T. (eds), 2013, 95, 98.

23 Forum.

A special place in postwar cinema related to Donbas belongs to L. Lukov. A native of Mariupol, he graduated from a labour school and knew the life of miners well. It was his films about miners' labour, *A Great Life* and *The Miners of Donetsk* (*Donetskie shakhtyory*), that earned Lukov two Stalin Prizes in 1941 and 1952.[24] However, not all of Leonid Lukov's films were so successful in terms of their reception by the political leadership. Among them was the second episode of *The Great Life*, which was filmed in 1946 and was subjected to extremely harsh criticism. The film was released only 12 years later.

The director tried not only to depict the romantic part of the restoration of Donbas but also to show the harsh realities of the postwar Donbas and to touch upon some taboo topics, such as collaboration during the occupation and the lack of competence of a number of responsible workers in the mines.[25] However, Lukov desired to make a film as close to everyday life as possible, which led to the critical assessment of the film by the party leadership.[26] The resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) of 4 September 1946, emphasised the film's viciousness in ideological and political terms and its weakness in artistic terms. Regarding the issue of collaboration raised by the director, the resolution contained a separate paragraph: 'The main characters of the film are people who served in the German police. The film depicts a type of alien to the Soviet system — Usynin, who remained with the Germans in Donbas, whose provocative activities remain unpunished.'[27] This approach reflects, on the one hand, both a simplistic approach to the phenomenon of collaboration and an irreconcilable attitude towards people who, from the perspective of the government's discourse, were accomplices of the occupiers and, therefore, complicit in Nazi crimes.

For many years, the film *The Young Guard*, released in October 1948, became a symbol of wartime Donbas. It was widely publicised in the media as a film 'dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Lenin-Stalin Komsomol.'[28] 1,500 copies of the film were shown in all major cities of the Soviet Union. On October 11, the first day of the screening, 175,000 viewers watched the film in Moscow, 130,000 in Leningrad, and 8,500 at the central Taras Shevchenko cinema in Stalino.[29] The next day, key Soviet newspapers published reviews and feedback from viewers, which were enthusiastic. Some publications devoted entire issues to the film, including not only reviews but also shots from the film with relevant comments. The memories of respondents, who watched the film as children, are very revealing in this regard:

24 Gromov E.S. 1998, 381.

25 Tytarenko O. 2017, 174.

26 *Kulturne budivnytstvo* 1961, 138.

27 Anderson K.M., Maksimenkov L.V. (eds), 2005, 764.

28 "Sotsialisticheskiy Donbass" October 1948, 8.

29 "Sotsialisticheskiy Donbass" October 1948, 13.

> In the 9th grade, there was already a movie about *The Young Guard*, and I remember that we all wanted to watch this movie, but we were told that we were not old enough for the evening screening.... But we watched the movie anyway. It was an extraordinary experience. This Oleg, this Lyubka. In general, everyone was ready to... as if to repeat this movie, the feat and all. That's how they felt about it.[30]

Another respondent recalls the following:

> Oh... *The Young Guard* — we read it! And when the movie *The Young Guard* came out, listen, it was a bomb! Oh, I'll tell you that directly... We went 5, 10 times, I swear to you! After *The Young Guard*, we played in Oleg Koshovoy, Tyulenin, and *The Young Guard*. We made dugouts, so we were running and hiding there. They were looking for us, and we played war games. Oh, it was something like that...[31]

The activities of *The Young Guard* became one of the most important examples of social mythmaking in the wartime and postwar periods, being imposed from above and apparently meeting with an enthusiastic response among the population of the region due to the geographical proximity of the scene.[32] In 1948, the film took first place at the box office, and a year later, the creators of *The Young Guard* received the honorary Stalin Prize. In March 1949, a meeting of Soviet cinematographers assessed the film, along with several other films, as one that '...has a deep ideological content, life truthfulness, and high artistic merit.'[33] The sacrifice and tragic fate of the members of the youth underground evoked particularly strong emotions. The key scene in the film was the execution of *The Young Guard*, which gives an idea of the peculiarities of the public's perception of cinematic images created from local material.

According to eyewitnesses, this scene was filmed in the evening, but in the middle of the day, residents of the town gathered around the destroyed mine headframe. People stood silent, holding back their tears, and the young actors had to do several takes to fix the inevitable technical problems. However, the best fragment that correctly conveyed the artistic meaning of this scene was the first take, filmed immediately, without rehearsals, in the state of emotional turmoil that prevailed at that moment. It was included in the film. In this context, an interview with the actress Inna Makarova, who played the role of Lyuba, is particularly interesting, as she stated:

30 Interview with P. L.O.

31 Interview with Sh. V.V.

32 Aralovets N.A. et al. (eds), 2010, 221.

33 Anderson K.M., Maksimenkov L.V. (eds), 2005, 815.

> After all, we treated the material itself, the story of these guys, with incredible enthusiasm and purity. [...] It did happen. I remember how people from neighbouring villages came and watched the execution scene being filmed. The pit was concreted, and it was about two meters down. A mat was laid down below. But many guys felt the rock was sticking out. Someone broke his head, and someone dislocated his arm. We spent four nights filming. We all walked around the stage in torn dresses, barefoot. And it was already autumn, and it was cold.[34]

It should be noted that the book was written in a hurry (according to Fadeev himself, without claiming to be historically accurate[35]), so the film *The Young Guard* has many factual flaws. After the novel was published, Fadeyev was criticised for not showing the 'leading and guiding' role of the Communist Party sufficiently. The author had to change the book, and some changes were made in the film. It was O. Fadeev's book and the film that for a long time preserved the one-sided, distorted, and unrealistic perception of *The Young Guard*, and made both the underground *The Young Guard* members themselves and residents hostages to the legend created by him and S. Gerasimov. For example, several of them were labelled traitors for no reason at all, and their families were persecuted. This, in particular, concerned the first commissar of *The Young Guard*, Viktor Tretyakevich. Only later was it revealed that the accusations of treason were groundless. The name of Viktor Tretyakevych, a victim of Nazism and, at the same time, a mistaken target of the Soviet investigation, was rehabilitated, and the ending of the film was re-voiced, with Viktor Tretyakevych named among other underground members who died at the hands of the Nazis.[36]

Despite the retreat from historical truth and the tension of some episodes, and a high level of ideologisation (an immanent feature of Soviet cinema of the war and post-war period) the film became a notable phenomenon in Soviet postwar cinema. The film was actively shown abroad, especially in the countries of the socialist camp. The heroism and sacrifices of young people in the fight against Nazism fostered sympathy for the Soviet Union.[37] S. Gerasimov's *The Young Guard* portrayed heroic images of ordinary citizens who were ready to die for their country. After this film, the tendencies of further development of the heroic theme in Soviet postwar cinema evolved. The theme of the deaths of members of the anti-fascist resistance movement is central to the film. At the same time, the film's content presents several other categories of victims of Nazi crimes: Soviet prisoners of war, civilian hostages, and people deported to Germany for forced labour.

34 *Molodaya gvardiya.*

35 Aralovets N.A. et al. (eds), 2010, 221.

36 Musskiy I.A. 2007, 170.

37 Borovikova V.N., et al. (eds), 1970, 255–256.

The image of the Donbas as one of the key regions of the Soviet Union's industrial power, formed and mythologised to a certain extent in the pre-war period, was actively developed by propaganda during the war and in the first postwar years. In documentary cinema, the topic of Nazi crimes in Donbas first appears in the form of visual images of the destruction of industrial and social infrastructure caused by the Germans. For the first time, the number of victims at the largest mass crime site in Donbas, the 4–4 bis mine in Stalino, was announced based on NDC materials. Feature films dedicated to the topic of the war-torn Donbas are represented by the films *The Unconquered*, *It Happened in Donbas*, *The Young Guard*, and *A Great Life*. The key emphasis is placed on the issues of the national struggle against Nazism and postwar reconstruction. This was consistent with the political and ideological agenda of the state authorities, but it excluded the depiction of the survival strategies of millions of inhabitants in wartime. The films feature the following categories of victims of Nazi crimes: representatives of the anti-Nazi Resistance movement, including minors, Soviet prisoners of war, civilians, and residents of the region deported to Germany for forced labour. For the first time in Soviet cinema, a scene of a mass execution of the Jewish population was depicted.

Despite several historical inaccuracies, these films evoked allusions to the population's own suffering among those who had survived the occupation. This resulted in high audience demand. In general, the cinematic images of the war-torn Donbas remain an important source for understanding the historical processes of the past and for studying the system of political and ideological influence on the worldview and the values of the population in different historical epochs.

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Ukrainian Classical Music in the Public Sphere Amid the Russo-Ukrainian War: 2022–2023

Summary: This article discusses the state of Ukrainian classical music during the first years of the full-scale Russian invasion, the understanding of which requires familiarity with the historical context and the rhetoric of post-colonial studies. The cultural confrontation between Ukraine and Russia reached its peak during this period, leading to a significant decline in the promotion and performance of Russian classical music both within Ukraine and internationally. Since 2022, a shift in the Ukrainian musical landscape —marked by the revitalisation of repertoire politics and an active process of derussification has been observed. This positive development is demonstrated in Ukraine's opera houses and their ongoing repertory renewal: this includes *Kateryna* by Oleksandr Rodin (Odesa), *Fearful Revenge* by Ievhen Stankovych (Lviv), and *Vyshyvanyi. The King of Ukraine* by Alla Zahaikevych (Kharkiv). The Ukrainian opera *Chornobyldorf* by Roman Hryhoriv and Illia Razumetskyi is regarded as one of the best modern repertory operas. The staging of *Genesis. Opera of Memory* by the same authors in the Khanenko Museum (Kyiv, 2022) has become a new phenomenon in Ukrainian musical life. The Nova Opera group presented the *Art of War* opera by the young composer Serhii Vilka, based on a libretto by Myroslav Laiuk. Classical works by Ukrainian composers are also being reconceptualised: Lviv Opera presented an action version of *Cossacks Beyond the Danube* by Semen Hulak-Artemovskyi.

Global interest in the works of Ukrainian classical music has increased; therefore, the online repository of works by local composers (the number of records on the Ukrainian Live Classic app platform rose from 500 to 1700, representing the creativity of more than 70 authors) has been developed. The renowned promoter of Ukrainian classical music is the Days of Ukrainian Music in Warsaw' festival, which has been held since 1999 (founded by Roman Rewakowicz). The world tours of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra (initiated by the Metropolitan Opera and Polish National Opera) and the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, whose programmes are based on Ukrainian music,

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occur within the framework of cultural diplomacy. In November 2022, during the United Kingdom–Ukraine Season of Culture, a festival of new and experimental music took place in Huddersfield with the participation of Ukrainian performers. The 'Solidarity Project' is an invitation from Ukrainian composers to collaborate with the Metropolitan Opera. However, there remains a lack of professional discussion regarding national classical music in the Ukrainian media landscape. Departments specialising in the post-colonial studies of Russian culture, in which Ukrainian culture has existed on the sidelines for a long time, are currently being established.
Keywords: musical classics, opera, derussification, decolonisation, cultural diplomacy

In the rhetoric of modern researchers, Ukrainian classical music is often used as a weapon of information in the Russian-Ukrainian war.[1] An international scientific conference with the participation of specialists from Ukraine, Poland, and the United States was held in the M. Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy on 9–10 December 2022 under this theme. The scientists defined the strategic tasks of Ukrainian musical art amid the Russian-Ukrainian war (Liubov Kyianovska) and noted the influence of martial law on changes in the musical infrastructure (Zoriana Lastovetska-Solanska). Famous Ukrainian composers have repeatedly been discussing the role of music during wartime.[2]

History as a discipline has gained particular significance and popularity in Ukraine after 24 February 2022. This is reflected above all in the monographs of Ukrainian historians such as Serhii Plokhy[3] and Yaroslav Hrytsak.[4] Meanwhile, American historian Timothy Snyder, in his lecture series *The Making of Modern Ukraine* delivered at Yale University, also noted that Ukrainian classical music, inspired by Mykola Leontovych's *Shchedryk*, was performed on 5 December 2022, at Carnegie Hall. Snyder drew attention to the confrontation between the Ukrainian and Russian cultures, which has an ideological connotation, although both these cultures are bound organically.[5] The deep tension, which has existed between them for several centuries, reached its peak during the Russian-Ukrainian War: we are witnesses to the process of separation, as attempts to perform and promote Russian classical music both within and outside Ukraine continue. An outstanding example is the efforts of the Grand Kyiv Ballet, in particular, of Kateryna Kukhar, aimed at substituting *The Swan Lake* by Pyotr Chaikovsky for *The Forest Song* by Mykhailo Skorulskyi on the stages of Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Therefore, according to Tetiana Pylypchuk, Director

1 About musical life in Ukraine after 2014 see: Samczenko W. 2022; Olijnik S. 2022.

2 Safian D. 2023.

3 Plokhy S. 2015; Plokhy S. 2021.

4 Hrytsak Y. 2024.

5 Snayder T. 2023.

of Kharkiv Literature Museum, in an interview with Radio Liberty, the so-called 'war of cultures' is one of the peculiarities of the large-scale Russian-Ukrainian war.[6]

The resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine prohibiting Russian music in the media space and public venues has elicited a strong response. In the opinion of the famous historian S. Plokhy, it is expected that, in the future, "the dominant Russian culture will be transformed into the minority" in Ukraine.[7] The slogan 'Return of History', which became fundamental in his book, *Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*,[8] is important for understanding Ukraine's musical heritage.

The large-scale Russian-Ukrainian war triggered tectonic shifts in the consciousness of the Ukrainian people, who felt a need to pull Ukrainian culture out from under the shadow of Russia, and this inevitably influenced the musical community. The year 2022 passed in an atmosphere of intense discussion regarding the renewal of repertoire policy, decolonisation, and derussification of both the Ukrainian and European musical spaces. However, in an interview with music expert Adelina Yefimenko, renowned opera singer Olha Kulchynska noted:

> As regards cancelling everything Russian in Ukraine, I totally agree. We always underestimated what we had, did not study and showed little interest in it as compared to the Russian music [...]. But all of us, the Ukrainians, shall understand that such a boycott and cancellation of the Russian culture, which we demand from the Western world, will never take place [...] That is why we shall shift the focus to the propagation of something of our own, but not to the cancellation of someone else's things.[9]

Let's recall the metaphorical expression popular in Ukraine, attributed to the former President Leonid Kuchma: even now, some figures in Ukrainian culture are looking at it through Moscow's glasses. The war has led to another process — now we are trying to examine our musical heritage through the prism of national culture, which contributes to the establishment and development of Ukrainian identity. It is symbolically depicted on the posters of students at the Institute of Graphical Design of Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts (exhibition 'Ukrainians by Origin, Spirit and Actions', 1 August – 30 September 2022).

One of them shows the composer, pianist, and conductor, Ihor Stravinskyi, one of the most famous representatives of new music, who was born in the Russian Empire,

6 Bondar Y. 2023.

7 Drozdovs'kyy D. 2018.

8 Plokhy S. 2023.

9 "Щодо кенселінгу всього російського в Україні я повністю згідна. Ми завжди недооцінювали своє, мало його вивчали, мало цікавились, порівняно з російською музикою [...]. Але ми всі, українці, маємо розуміти, що такого бойкоту і кенселінгу російської культури, як ми вимагаємо від західного світу, ніколи не буде [...]. Тому ми мусимо змістити акцент на пропагування свого, а не на кенселінг чужого". Yefimenko A. 2023.

died in the USA, but was portrayed as an artist belonging to Ukrainian culture (Fig. 1). A comparative analysis of the pre-war repertoire of the Ukrainian opera houses with the repertoire during the large-scale war shows certain positive changes: they include *Kateryna* by Oleksandr Rodin (Odesa), *The Terrible Revenge* by Yevhen Stankovych (Lviv), and *Vyshyvanyi. The King of Ukraine* by Alla Zahaikevych (Kharkiv),[10] *Genesis* (Modern Opera Laboratory, Kyiv). The Ukrainian opera *Chornobyldorf* by Roman Hryhoriv and Illia Razumeiko, which presents the vision of what life after the Apocalypse might be like in the event of the loss of historical memory, was ranked in the top six of the world's best operas. It was written in 2020, and in 2022–2023, according to its authors and performers, it became a story about the war. This opera was broadcast on the BBC British radio and performed at the Ukrainian festival in Liverpool in April 2023. The staging of the *Opera of Memory* in Khanenko Museum (Kyiv) has become a new phenomenon in Ukrainian musical life. This is a five-hour story about the creation of the world – *Genesis: Opera of Memory in 13 mise-en-scène*. The opera was written specifically for the museum as a place of memory. Its libretto is based on the Book of Genesis and the everlasting myth about Orpheus. Thirteen rooms of the empty museum serve as a space for thirteen mise-en-scène. In this space, the Opera Aperta artists tell the history of the Russian-Ukrainian war (on the night of the seventh day of the creation of the world, Ophelia recalled the dreams: the destroyed theatre, an old piano, and an empty museum). In Lviv, the Nova Opera formation presented the opera *The Art of War* by the composer Serhii Vilka (libretto written by the poet Myroslav Laiuk). The opera was based on the motifs of the classical military treatise by Sun Tzu about the difficult way to victory. The strong impression in this opera is produced by the vocal improvisation and the extension of the singing techniques, from academic, folk, and jazz vocal to overtone singing.

In May 2023, Lviv Opera presented the action-version of the *Cossacks Beyond the Danube* by Semen Hulak-Artemovskyi. On the stage, the audience saw bundles of silver threads, which, envisioned by the art director Tadei Ryndzak, symbolically connect the authors of the new opera with those who are no longer with us. It is a kind of dialogue of modern composers, particularly the author of the new version, Dmytro Saratskyi, with S. Hulak-Artemovskyi. It is worth noting that not only did musical experts participate in the discussion concerning the performance of this opera on the Lviv stage. The historian Olesia Isaiuk from the Liberation Movement Centre of the National Museum-Memorial 'Loncky Street Prison' finds this opera to be an unsuccessful transformation of the classical version by considering it through the prism of colonial optics. The author is surprised by an attempt to "make an epic story dedicated to the national theme out of the plot forcedly quasi-loyal to the empire."[11]

10 See: Vyetrov O.V. 2023.

11 "Зробити з вимушено квазілояльного імперії сюжету епічний твір на національну тему". Isayuk O. 2023.

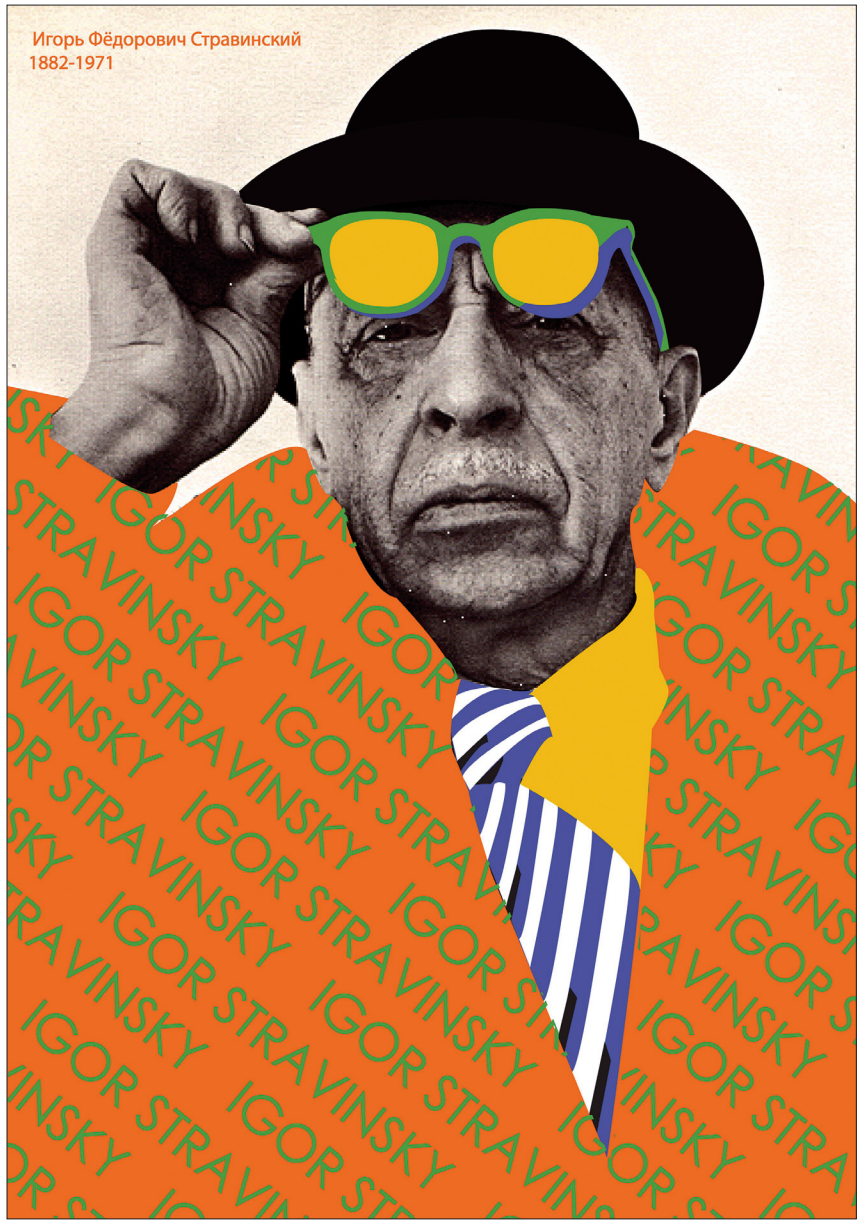

Fig. 1. Igor Stravinsky (Poster by O. Poliakova, 2022)

Fig. 2. Poster of the 8th Days of Ukrainian Music in Warsaw, 4–9 September 2022 (Source: www.pmw.org.pl)

Since 2022–2023, the world has become much more interested in Ukrainian classical music. As a result, an online database of works by domestic composers, initiated by the Lyatoshynskyi Club, was created. Thereafter, the number of records on the app, Ukrainian Live Classic, increased from 500 to 1700, representing the creative works of more than 70 composers, which was of particular interest to musicians from the USA, Germany, and Austria. The world tours of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, initiated by the Metropolitan Opera and the National Opera of Poland, and Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, whose programmes were based on Ukrainian music, took place within the framework of international diplomacy. We should also note the trend for the performance of works by modern Ukrainian composers (Valentyn Sylvestrov, Viktoriia Poliova, Hanna Havrylets, and Bohdana Froliak). The 'Days of Ukrainian Music in Warsaw' festival, which has been held since 1999 (founded by conductor Roman Rewakowicz), is significant in terms of promoting Ukrainian classical music. According to specialists, a comparative analysis of concerts within the framework of this event with the Ukrainian Freedom concerts in Poland primarily points to a contextual reaction of the musical community to Russian aggression, but not to profound changes in the comprehension of Ukrainian musical culture abroad. For example, while the Warsaw festival exclusively featured Ukrainian music, the orchestra's repertoire, with the exception of the works by Valentyn Sylvestrov, also included music by Beethoven, Brahms, and Dvořák.[12] It proves again the fact that music during war can serve as an instrument of political weight and that the recognition of its artistic value must be primarily realised in Ukraine itself.

From 18 to 27 November 2022, a festival of new and experimental music featuring Ukrainian performers took place within the framework of the Great Britain/Ukraine Season of Culture in Huddersfield. The 'Solidarity Project' is an invitation for the Ukrainian composers to cooperate with the Metropolitan Opera. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of professional discussion about Ukrainian classical music in the Ukrainian media environment. Higher educational music institutions are in desperate need of establishing departments specialising in the post-colonial studies of Russian culture, in the shadows of which Ukrainian culture has long existed. Moreover, according to the pointed remark of Timothy Snyder, this culture has always been overshadowed by prohibitions resulting from the Valuev Circular of 1863 and the Ems Ukaz Decree of 1876. Since Ukrainian musical culture is important for the recognition of identity, the processes of its 'refixturing' in the East and South of Ukraine (primarily including Kharkiv and Odesa) can be considered a positive development.

One of the determining factors of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, which has also expanded into the cultural sphere, is the 'semantic war' (according to writer Oksana Zabuzhko).[13]

12 Kaufman-Portnikov M. 2023.

13 Tereshchuk H. 2023.

This conflict exists not only between Russia and Ukraine but also within Ukraine itself, as it conceptualises and overcomes its colonial past. It affects the nature of discussions associated with the interpretation of the biographies of famous composers (for example, the dispute regarding the name of Petro Tchaikovsky in the title of the National Academy of Music)[14] and the ongoing reinterpretation of Ukrainian classical music, which the world has started to truly explore on its own merits, rather than through the prism of Russian culture. An important factor for the popularisation of Ukrainian classical music is the creation of the first UNESCO Musical Department, 'Music, Education, Science — For the Sake of Peace', in the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music in March 2023.

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The Evolution of the Role of Mass Media in Wars – Media as a Tool, a Threat and a Side of the War

Summary: Released information can lead to the outbreak of war, such as 'The Ems Telegram'. It can also cause changes in the actions of the 'great and the small' of this world, influence the perception of reality and lead to a reversal of events. The examples of the media's involvement in the history of wars described in this article demonstrate its use by conflicting parties as an instrument of warfare. Furthermore, they also make it clear that the media can be a threat and even a war party. During war, it is necessary to control the media space, understand the role of the media, pay attention to their presence in war, their technological capabilities, and their power to influence audiences and developments. Skilful and planned use of the media for political and military purposes can influence the success of operations.

Keywords: war, media, disinformation, propaganda, information warfare

Introduction

War has led to the creation and spread of many technological inventions, including communication technologies, e.g. radio in WWI, radar in WWII, and the Internet in the latter half of the 20th century. Modern IT has become widely accessible, not only to journalists, intelligence and the military, but also to citizens. Due to the possibility of continuous event transmission, media have become an integral part of military operations, making their role crucial to analyse both during preparations and throughout the conduct of war.

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Technologies that revolutionised how conflicts are communicated enable planning and coordinating image-related actions of all parties involved, as well as interfering with the perception of non-participants by, e.g. replicating and modifying the message within the information network. Media are used to present positions of different conflict parties, conduct information warfare and also gather and disseminate intelligence. Furthermore, war reporting attracts audiences, driving market demand and profits for media companies. It should be understood that the power of communication and information is as destructive as weapons. Published information can trigger war (e.g. the Ems Dispatch), cause changes in the actions of the 'small and great' of the world, influence the perception of reality but also lead to positive changes in events.[1] Researchers studying media influence on recipients emphasise their freedom in shaping information.[2]

This article concerns war characterised today by hybrid warfare, in which a combination of political, diplomatic, military, informational, economic and cultural means aims to achieve intended effects.[3] Such a war involves cooperation or a combination of conventional and unconventional forces and means, synchronised to exploit the opponent's weaknesses. Therefore, the purpose here is to raise awareness that the role of media evolves with each war and to pay special attention to their presence in conflicts, the technological capabilities they possess, their influence on recipients and their impact on event development. This article highlights three issues:

1. Use of mass media by conflict parties as tools for defensive and offensive actions.
2. Attention to threats to the success of military operations stemming both from treating media as tools and from their participation by reporting events. Does media presence during war threaten only directly involved parties, or a broader group of states and audiences?
3. Presentation of media as a potential conflict party.

Due to the nature of this study, a detailed analysis cannot be provided; thus, the article focuses on key issues.

Media as a Tool in War

The armed forces and state administrations are aware of the importance of the media and the role they play in the global flow of information. For this reason, numerous tools of strategic communication exist to disseminate desired content through the

1 Derlatka K.E. 2016, 28.

2 See: Aronson E. 2000; Aronson E., Wilson T.D., Akert R.M. 2012; Goban-Klas T. 2006; Goban-Klas T. 2009; Netwig W. 1995; Mrozowski M. 1991; Pisarek W. 1995; McQuail D. 2007; Graber D.A. 1990; Condry J., Popper K., Król M. 1996; Reeves B., Nass C. 2000; Reeves B., Rivers W.L., Mathews C. 1995.

3 The concept of 'hybrid warfare', which includes information operations as one of its elements, was presented in Russian military journals in 2013. Analysts' and media interest in this topic increased following the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine in 2014. See: Derlatka K.E. 2021, 59; Bilal A. 2021.

media. If the media space is not brought under control during wartime, it can disrupt established operational strategies. On the other hand, the skilful and planned use of media for political and military purposes can contribute to the success of operations.

Among the historical examples of mass media participation in warfare, one must mention the American Civil War (1861–1865), during which the military, aware of the need to control media activity, implemented censorship of the press, telegraph lines, mail, logistical data and information shared with journalists. Nevertheless, information leaks still occurred.[4]

Another example is the Spanish-American War in Cuba in 1898. William R. Hearst,[5] in the "Morning Journal," openly called on the U.S. government to engage in the ongoing Spanish-Cuban conflict on the island. A correspondent and illustrator were sent to Cuba, and the illustrations were accompanied by editorial commentary matching the desired narrative, aiming to convince the American public that the Spanish were the enemy and the Cubans the victims. When, on February 15, an explosion occurred on the American armoured cruiser USS *Maine* in the port of Havana, Hearst's newspapers strongly suggested that the ship had been destroyed by Spanish actions.[6]

British efforts to control the media space during the First and Second World Wars provide further examples. Through the Ministry of Information, British politicians coordinated communication regarding military progress, maintained public morale and conducted propaganda abroad.[7] Similarly, in 1942, the United States established the Office of War Information (OWI) to promote patriotism and warn against enemy subversion using press releases, radio programs, photographs, posters and even films.[8] During the Cold War, in 1953, the United States created the United States Information Agency (USIA) to conduct public diplomacy, promote the country's image and influence societies in the Eastern Bloc. The USIA coordinated and supervised institutions such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

Another example is the Vietnam War (1965–1975), during which television reports from the front lines led to a decrease in American public support for the war. It is often said that this was the first 'media war.'[9]

4 Idzik J., Klepka R. 2020, 30.

5 William Randolph Hearst, an American media tycoon of the late 19th century, contributed to the rise of so-called yellow journalism – based on false, sensationalist reporting, moral scandals and crime stories.

6 The causes of the war included expansionist tendencies in American foreign policy, as well as economic and strategic interests. The anti-Spanish uprising that began in Cuba in 1895 and the atrocities committed by the Spanish during its suppression — widely publicised by the press empires of William Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer — led the American public to demand the removal of the island from Spanish control. The sinking of an American warship and the blaming of Spain for the incident (despite the likely cause being spontaneous coal combustion) resulted in the United States declaring on April 25, that it had been at war since April 21.

7 Wolska-Zogata I. 2012, 39.

8 Ward B.M., Jones F. 2003, 3–6.

9 Mortensen M. 2013, 328.

During the American invasion of Grenada in 1983, the media were controlled by barring journalists from entering the conflict zone. American television networks aired only footage provided by the military. Following protests from journalists and the emergence of foreign media coverage from the battlefield, a trusted media team of selected reporters was allowed access to the war zones.

The U.S. government also managed war communication during the First Gulf War in 1991. A strategy was developed to justify the war as a fight for freedom. The Pentagon eliminated critical press commentary by accrediting press team members, verifying, and censoring transmitted information.[10] During the bombing of former Yugoslavia in 1999 (NATO's Operation 'Allied Force'), a U.S. F-117 stealth attack aircraft was shot down and its pilot rescued after several hours.[11] The Pentagon quickly summoned accredited journalists to inform them of the event before the news could reach them through other sources. Similarly, during the war in Afghanistan in 2002, journalists' access to information was strictly dependent on the armed forces.[12]

Faster access to information is crucial for either accelerating or halting journalists' reactions to military actions — to respond accordingly, to prevent the dissemination of incorrect information, or to intentionally release disinformation. This method of 'disinformation' is also a form of communication. Reporting from areas occupied by the military is strictly linked to the activities of journalists who are not allowed to move independently. If a journalist were to report something not approved by the military, they would lose access to information. A journalist accredited to a military contingent is directly subject to military authorities. Only selected journalists are allowed into areas of conflict and military operations — those who understand the principles of information disclosure managed by military command. A permanent 'press corps' exists at the Pentagon and the State Department.[13]

NATO also uses the full range of available communication channels in its strategic communication — traditional media, internet media, and direct public engagement. These actions are conducted using NATO's communication capabilities, such as information operations, public diplomacy, press and information activities, military

10 Esser F. 2009, 710.

11 See: Mijajlović M.S., Aničić D.S. 2022, 318–456.

12 Media correspondents operating in NATO areas were required to obtain accreditation, which provided them with means of transportation, accommodation, access to information and communication tools. Journalists working within the Alliance's area of operations were not allowed to approach secured zones without an escort. The information they reported could not contain classified material. In situations involving threats or within threatened areas, specific topics were subject to prior approval before publication—known as the 'Stop List/Ground Rules.' These included intelligence information and its sources, assessments of that information, the composition and exact locations of ships, units, and aircraft, methods and means of camouflage, details concerning troop movements, defensive positions, armaments and their deployment, operational orders, plans or intentions, casualty data (both NATO and enemy), applicable tactics, personal data of soldiers and operational mistakes made by allied or enemy forces. NATO Standard AJP-01. Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-1(A). 1999.

13 Cabaj K.E. 2006, 125.

public affairs and psychological operations.[14] NATO's communications are intended to directly and positively contribute to the success of operations. This requires message consistency at all levels of command, active engagement in the information environment (including social media), speed and responsiveness. Communication through media enables planned narrative and action management within the Alliance.

After the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine in February 2022, this kind of orchestrated, planned and media-driven messaging by NATO has become particularly important for purposes such as deterrence, strategic communication, debunking of false information, as well as inspiration and disinformation. The goal is to achieve a specific psychological effect: a change in attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour of individuals and social groups. Therefore, all communications published by NATO — even those perceived as 'uncontrolled media leaks' — should be regarded as intentional. The likelihood of an 'uncontrolled information leak' is minimal. However, it can be an element of information warfare. Such actions are ongoing in the conflict in Ukraine, despite the fact that Ukraine is not a NATO member. The nature of the conflict and the active use of various forms of warfare — not only kinetic — create a situation in which the war is being fought, to some extent, between the Russian Federation and the countries supporting Ukraine, most of which are NATO members. It is important to emphasise the dominance of information operations that mask military actions.

Narrative control is also clearly visible in the work of Russian propaganda centres, which continuously disseminate the same ideological and manipulative messages. While these may appear primitive or naive to audiences outside the Russian Federation, they are not aimed at convincing Western or Ukrainian audiences. Instead, these narratives are intended for domestic Russian and Belarusian audiences, as well as populations in the occupied territories of Ukraine.[15] In response, the West adopts symmetrical strategies toward the aggressor. The Russian Federation has been employing hybrid warfare in its aggression against Ukraine since 2014. Propaganda is a fundamental instrument in its information operations. The state exerts control over the majority of traditional media (television, radio, newspapers), with messages curated by specialists in political technology. Social media presents a challenge for Russian propaganda due to the presence of independent information with global reach. In response, the authorities attempt to limit citizens' access by implementing blocks in order to sustain indoctrination and restrict the flow of information regarding Russia's military operations in Ukraine. Information-psychological

14 NATO Strategic Communication Policy, 2009.

15 Examples of the most frequently repeated narratives include: the armed forces are surrendering without a fight; chaos and widespread panic prevail in Kyiv and Kharkiv; the Ukrainian population in the occupied territories is welcoming the Russian liberators with open arms. See: Piekut B. 2022, 77; Sijer M. 2023.

and network warfare are ways of conducting conflict and exerting influence without engaging in open combat.[16]

The use of media as a tool in the conflict in Ukraine since 2014 became widely recognised due to footage showing the so-called 'little green men' (Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms), recorded by smartphones and shared online. In 2022, Russia again utilised such content to reinforce propaganda narratives.[17] War footage shared on social media by direct participants has been and continues to be amplified by global media. Russia's strategic goals — such as attaining global power status, expanding its territorial sphere of influence, weakening NATO and increasing its network of allies — are pursued through all available communication channels, on a large scale, and with high levels of information aggression.[18] Russia's messaging seeks to intimidate and discourage Ukrainian citizens from joining the military, undermine trust in their leadership, and frighten Western nations with claims that supporting Ukraine will result in energy crises. This narrative is promoted in print, radio, television and on the internet. Russian media and political figures portray Ukraine as ruled by 'Nazis,' 'Banderites,' and 'nationalists' in order to dehumanise the enemy. This tactic is intended to motivate Russian soldiers and society and maintain support for the war — or, as the Kremlin frames it, the 'special operation.' At the same time, they promote the image of Russia as a victim, attacked by the West, NATO and the European Union.[19]

The Ukrainian response to the Russian media offensive has been unprecedented in its use of media, primarily social media, as a defensive tool and additional communication channel offering an informational advantage. Digital technologies allow soldiers to produce and distribute information worldwide through blogs and social media.[20] This form of communication provides an alternative to traditional media, making it possible to show the war from a desired perspective, in real time, and serves as a counterweight to enemy propaganda and disinformation. Ukraine demonstrates how its military and defence institutions are prepared to repel aggression. The videos published in this context are used as tools in information operations. The impactful imagery presented enhances public opinion engagement worldwide, and observers of military operations — at least to some extent — become participants in the war.[21]

Ukrainians also use chatbots based on encrypted messaging applications, which have proven highly resistant to cyberattacks. Through them, the military and intelligence services can receive real-time information about enemy troop movements and activities. The transmission of information, as well as Ukraine's own war narrative,

16 Wojnowski M. 2017, 31; Darczewska J. 2014, 26.

17 Mazzoleni G., Schulz W. 1999, 249.

18 Darczewska J. 2015.

19 Wojnowski M. 2015, 34–35.

20 Wall M. 2005, 162.

21 Derlatka K. 2019, 213; Derlatka K. 2023, 225–240.

relies primarily on the internet and social media. These channels are vital because the internet is less vulnerable to being disconnected by the enemy and underscores the role of non-state actors and information technology in warfare.

Live reports from the front, published by global media outlets, the documentation of events and war crimes and the search for their perpetrators support both physical defence (by providing additional information beyond intelligence sources) and the shaping of the country's image. These reports have significantly influenced the solidarity of Western states in providing aid and exerting pressure on their governments. The information technologies used by the Ukrainian side have also become a platform for organising fundraising campaigns for military equipment, food and other resources. Media coverage exposes war crimes, publishes disturbing recordings of Russian soldiers' conversations and reveals how manipulated the Russian public is — many refuse to acknowledge that Russia is the aggressor, causing destruction and killing Ukrainian civilians.

The media highlight the power of propaganda but also serve as a tool for informing the public about the war, especially in the context of Ukraine. Satellite imagery of crime scenes and images of war published globally could, in the future, provide a basis for holding perpetrators accountable for crimes and destruction.

Media as a Threat in War

The main role of the media is to inform, but taking into account issues of their ownership, the question arises not about the reliability, but about the objectivity of the information presented. There are no free media, because regardless of the political system, they always belong to someone; the owner has their own interests, represents someone's interests, and is a participant in political life, economic processes, financial matters, etc. Therefore, when considering the role of the media in war, one must bear in mind the factors that determine the non-objective nature of the conveyed information. Such actions can be defined as disinformation, inspiration, propaganda, or manipulation. How harmful these will be depends on the client commissioning such modified messages. If it is the military, this constitutes a factor in warfare. If it is politicians, they may conduct their own game in international relations. If it is the financial establishment, it realises its business objectives in this way. Anyone who influences the media through ownership systems, lobbying, or political arrangements can use them to their own advantage.

A threat from the media side in war can also be the lack of responsibility and balance in reporting war-related information. Every statement made by an expert, an officer, or a politician is analysed and divided into individual theses, so that from each sentence new information, insinuations and inspirations are created, which can escalate the situation and complicate existing actions by governments, international

organisations and parties involved in the conflict. Mainly for mercantile reasons, editorial offices compete to invent sensational headlines, maintain audience interest and publish various statements and information that are sometimes denied later. Viewership, financial profits, high rankings on the most popular media lists and owners' satisfaction are what matter most.

Media cannot be seen solely in the context of information transmitters. Mass media can be a tool of disinformation by duplicating information that contradicts national interests, including by users of social media (such as trolls), and even popular editorial offices and widely-reaching radio and television stations. They can disseminate and replicate propaganda content and fail to provide complete information, which may lead to informational deficits. A threat can also arise from the interference of individuals or entities in the content of internet portals, distorting the message and introducing logically false content into information systems. Media can be used by hostile information-propaganda structures, intelligence services and information entities of other states. This can affect the loss of the ability to distribute information as well as trigger and deepen social and political divisions.[22]

The problem also lies in the media space dominated by global media corporations, which own the most popular titles, radio and television stations and internet portals. Another threat is the uncontrolled development of the information market, for example, the emergence of various types of internet portals of an informational nature that are not owned by large media corporations. These portals publish information that is interesting from the perspective of the audience and the international situation, but is not always covered by mainstream media, making it more difficult to verify the credibility of the content and the author.

Another threat posed by the media is the premature publication of military-related information, for example, concerning the intention to transfer weapons to a fighting party (such as the topic of the possibility of Poland transferring fighter and multirole aircraft to Ukraine). For the media, this is great 'news' but prematurely releasing it may ruin potential defence plans and even lead to an escalation of the conflict. Publishing conspiracy theories is also a problem. Social media, in particular, are especially susceptible environments for this purpose. The instigators of such information can also be editorial offices, which, in search of sensation and aiming to increase their audience reach, try to engage public opinion by creating controversial theses, headlines and event analyses. Social media do not guarantee verification of the information conveyed. Creating and spreading so-called 'fake news' on social media is an effective tool for exerting influence, manipulating public opinion and can impact political processes.[23]

22 Derlatka K.E. 2021, 119–121.

23 Lewandowsky S., Cook J. 2020.

Media as a Side of the War

Can the media be perceived as a party in war? The media as an entity cannot be a part of war, but due to the personal ambitions of journalists, ownership structures that, for example, favour the aggressor or have an interest in interfering in internal and international processes, they can be perceived as such. Contemporary media organisations are primarily engaged in generating profits. From this point of view, war presented in the media is a commodity.[24] Media corporations during an armed conflict may pursue their financial goals because the subject matter results in high audience ratings and a large number of internet views, which then generate advertising revenue. This causes self-interest (which also includes the interests of third parties financially connected with a given media outlet — these may be individuals linked to political or business groups) to become more important than objectivity and reliability of information, which can influence the international situation and the development of the armed conflict. For their own interest, the media become a part of the war.

Attention should also be drawn to the 'freedom of speech' in the media, which can disrupt the planned military strategy. This mainly concerns the constant disclosure of confidential data in the name of access to information and freedom of expression. Therefore, the reporting of wars by the media should be taken seriously due to its broad range of influence on knowledge, social behaviours and the reputation of states and individuals presented in the media.[25] During war, a conflict arises between the media and the narrative conveyed by armed forces. When the media obtain interesting information, they publish it immediately, which can complicate the planned actions of allied military forces. Such information may be inspired by the armed forces as part of information operations or deliberately disclosed by politicians acting in favour of the aggressor, or they may do so out of their own ignorance, stirring international confusion and attempting to destroy mutual trust among coalition partners, or they may simply be unprofessional.

The personal interests of war reporters, editors-in-chief, or publishers, as well as other factors, may also cause the media to be perceived as a party to the conflict. The long-known statement: 'When war is declared, Truth is the first casualty'[26] remains a central problem of modern informational media, which, competing with others and trying to fill airtime with attractive news, seek sensation, tragedy and death, often creating a false image of the world. It should be remembered that the shaping of media war coverage is influenced by the political interests of one's own country, the political environment and the media system as a whole. The responsibility for how the

24 Carruthers S.L. 2011, 5.

25 Bryant J., Oliver M.B. 2009; Kepplinger H.M. 2015, 349–351.

26 Ponsonby A. 1928, 10.

media present war lies with both military and civilian decision-makers. Often, the media censor information about the war, select certain aspects of the reality being presented and increase emphasis in the communicated material to promote a specific definition of a given issue.[27]

An example of media influence on transforming and shaping public opinion and policy is the phenomenon called the 'CNN effect.' Through their impact on events, the media position themselves as a party, becoming yet another actor.[28] This phenomenon assumes that televised broadcasts of human suffering may cause public opinion to demand the launch or cessation of military intervention. An example is Somalia in 1992, when the administration of the American president George H.W. Bush sent troops to initiate a humanitarian intervention following media reports regarding starving and dying Somalis, and in 1993 the cabinet of his successor, President Bill Clinton, withdrew American forces after the deaths of eighteen soldiers and the desecration of their bodies in the streets of Mogadishu, which the media presented to the public.[29] The 'CNN effect' can also be observed in the war in Ukraine. Here, media pressure combined with the purposeful communication by the Ukrainian government seeks to exert pressure on the international community to join in defending Ukraine against Russian aggression and increase military and civilian aid. However, due to the ongoing conflict, it is not possible to clearly and comprehensively assess the effects of these actions.

Conclusion

Each side engaged in an information war compensates for negative informational actions by conducting counterattacks using information. Therefore, it should be remembered that during war, the media become a tool of waging combat that must be controlled. Due to their impact and global reach, they can pose a threat not only to ongoing military operations but also to the stability of the international environment — political, economic and social. It should be kept in mind that the ownership, political and personal interests of entities connected with the media, who exert indirect and direct influence on their functioning and the narrative they present, cause the media to potentially become a party in the war.

In the three identified areas of media use in war (as a tool, a threat and a party), similar actions are observed. Each action can be used for different purposes and affects the perception of the image of war. A recurring element is the presence of influence agents — deliberately placed, selected individuals who control the media such as

27 Entman R.M. 1993, 51–55.

28 The broadcasting of images of human suffering in the media led to post-Cold War military interventions carried out by the United States, including in Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia (1994–1995), and Kosovo (1999). Pratkanis A., Aronson E. 2003, 31.

29 Wheeler N.J., Bellamy A.J. 2005, 564–565.

owners, journalists and sponsors. Such individuals can serve as tools or threats and may even turn the media into an active party in the conflict. They will conduct deliberate disinformation, manipulation and shape the narrative for their own benefits or to prolong the conflict. In all scenarios — media as a tool, a threat, or a party — disinformation, manipulation and propaganda are employed. In these variants, the media influence the surrounding reality and the future. This is facilitated by the media-enhanced sense of realism among recipients — the impression of witnessing events firsthand. Hence, it becomes easier to present a manipulated message to the audience, as contradictions are more difficult to detect. This is aided by the simultaneity of events, which happen simultaneously in reality and are transmitted in the media. The intention of those commissioning such actions is crucial. These actions are perceived differently depending on whether they are controlled by an anti-war coalition, NATO or the European Union or if they represent a harmful narrative leading to threats or death and destruction, such as those perpetrated by the aggressor, in this case, Russia.

The power of information causes events to happen simultaneously in the real and virtual worlds, being transmitted through television and the Internet. An attack on the opponent's information systems primarily aims to weaken their will or physical capacity to fight. It is worth noting that real events like a war within one or several states now have a global scope precisely due to the participation of states and societies through media that utilise full technological potential and rely mainly on live broadcasts. To maintain viewer interest, the same reports — for example, on television — are also published on social media. For the media, war is a prolonged event that fills programming schedules.[30] Therefore, they strive for participation in the event as long as possible, carefully monitoring transmissions, controlling the narrative and the information reaching and emanating from journalists, which are essential means of conducting war as well as repelling aggression.

It must be strongly emphasised that there is no such thing as 'free media.' The media have their owners, and those owners have their own interests. This freedom is merely an illusion. The art lies in using this 'freedom' in the name of world security.

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debates

faces of war (2025) — 01

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Overestimated Balance Sheet — the Astray of Research Without Archival Sources In Response to Kazimierz Przeszowski

Summary: The polemic reviews the research of Kazimierz Przeszowski, which was intended as a balance sheet of previous estimates by Stanisław Płoski and Ewa Śliwińska, Adam Borkiewicz, Hanns von Krannhals, Maria Turlejska, Antoni Przygoński, Joanna Hanson, Maja Motyl and Stanisław Rutkowski, Piotr Gursztyn, Norbert Bączyk and Grzegorz Jasiński, as well as Hubert Kuberski. These estimates indicate that the number of victims of the Wola massacre ranged from 10,000 to 57,600 (even 65,000). This part can be considered a precise summary of previous studies. However, the subsequent section of the article is based on statistical research derived from post-war historians' studies (lacking statistical data from 1938–1944), which does not allow for detailed research. The comparative analysis of mass executions in Rumbula near Riga, Babi Yar near Kyiv, and executions carried out during Operation 'Ertnefest' [sic! actually — Aktion 'Erntefest'] in Distrikt Lublin is even more problematic, as the author proves that German forces in Wola were sufficient to exterminate even 65,000 people. Przeszowski demonstrated that the Wola district was estimated to have been inhabited by around 100,000 people in the summer of 1944, potential victims of mass executions. These finding, indicate the need for a new methodological approach and further archival research into the number of human losses in Wola in 1944, particularly concerning the analysis of documents preserved in the Bundesarchiv. This place provides an orientation to the number of German, Austrian and Eastern European exterminators during the two-day *danse macabre* in Northern County — commonly known as the Wola district.

Keywords: Warsaw Uprising 1944, Wola massacre, German & Austrian, WW II, war crimes, mass executions of the civilian population, correction of Attempt at Balance

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Finding one's name in footnotes among cited materials is a pleasant feeling for any historian. However, it is difficult to agree with the opinions and estimates presented in Kazimierz Przeszowski's article *Population Losses in the Wola Area During the Warsaw Uprising 1944. A Review of Research and an Attempt at Balance.*[1] The author did not align with the position of German historian Hanns von Krannhals, whose work he did not examine thoroughly enough.[2]

Yet, with virtually no analysis and comparison of the German scholar's argument, Przeszowski rejected Krannhals's theses.[3] Krannhals's findings only reached a wider Polish audience in 2017, although they were still presented in a poor translation and an unfinished edition.

The author of this polemic disagrees with Przeszowski on many points, particularly regarding his acknowledgement of 'possible ethical objections to placing the aforementioned figure in the role of a kind of arbiter in matters of mass murders committed against the Polish population by German pacification forces during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.'[4]

However, even Przeszowski is bound by the triad proposed by von Krannhals, which highlights three key aspects in assessing the number of victims:

1. The methodology of calculations.
2. The technical feasibility of executing the assumed number of victims.
3. The correlation between the estimated number of victims and the population of Wola at that time.

To this triad, a fourth important point should be added — the actual number of exterminators serving in Kampfgruppe Reinefarth. Not all units were commanded by SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS und Polizei Heinrich (Heinz) Friedrich Reinefarth carried out mass shootings and other crimes against civilians.

These issues and myths have been a visible part of academic discourse since 1946. This was also the case with Przeszowski's previous article, *Zaludnienie obszaru warszawskiej dzielnicy wola, objętego masowymi egzekucjami w Parku Sowińskiego wykonanymi 5 sierpnia 1944 roku* (Population of the area of Wola District in Warsaw, covered by mass executions in the Sowinski Park on August 5, 1944).[5] Similarly, it applied to the use of an averaging methodology derived from the real estate management

1 Przeszowski K. 2024, 109–128.

2 Krannhals H. von, 1962. See: Krannhals H. von, 2017 — a sloppy Polish edition by Bellona Publishung Hosue, with historical edited only 70% of its translation.

3 After a very fruitful search in the Polish People's Republic and initial support, the Poles detained Krannhals at the Warsaw airport and forced him to hand over virtually all the materials collected in the Polish archives. However, Krannhals was from then on persona non grata in Poland, a fact that was clearly felt by subsequent German delegations. See: Marti P. 2016, 230 (German edition: Marti P. 2014).

4 Przeszowski K. 2024, 111.

5 Przeszowski K. 2022, 29–76.

industry practices, in which statistical averaging was used to estimate the number of victims. For example, 'in the case of the Hankiewicz house, records document approximately 150 residential units and about 600 residents. This translates to an average of about four people per apartment.'[6] To me, this represents research conducted without archival sources, which instead relies on developing novel methodologies for calculating civilian losses during mass executions of residents of Warsaw's Northern County (such was the official nomenclature of that part of the city to which Wola belonged) — commonly known as the Wola district.

Here is the area of the aforementioned county:

> The boundary line of the North Warsaw district follows the city boundary and the Vistula River, as well as the following route: from the city boundary along the left bank of the Vistula to Steinkeller Street, along Steinkeller Street to Bugaj Street, along Bugaj Street to Celna Street, along Celna Street through the Old Town to Piekarska Street, along Piekarska Street to Kapitulna Street, along Kapitulna Street to Miodowa Street, along Miodowa Street to Krasiński Square, across Krasiński Square to Nowiniarska Street, along Nowiniarska Street to Świętojerska Street, along Świętojerska Street to Nalewki Street, along Nalewki Street to Nowolipki Street, along Nowolipki Street to Przejazd Street, along Przejazd Street to Leszno Street, along Leszno Street to Solna Street, along Solna Street to Elektoralna Street, along Elektoralna Street to Zimna Street, along Zimna Street through Żelazna Brama Square to Rynkowa Street, along Rynkowa Street to Grzybowska Street, along Grzybowska Street to Karolkowa Street, along Karolkowa Street to Dworska Street, along Dworska Street to Brylowska Street, along Brylowska Street to Prądzyński Street, along Prądzyński Street to Kolejowa Street, along Kolejowa Street to the railway tracks and along the railway tracks to the city boundary.[7]

Instead of charts and hypothetical numbers of those murdered on August 5–6 in the area of Wola, thorough analytical work on the German documentation, consisting of several dozen volumes, would suffice. This documentation could, of course, be expanded to 30,000 pages of German-origin records.

However, before addressing Przeszowski's continuation of research that notably avoids examining German ZStL[8] documents related to the Warsaw Uprising and fails

6 Przeszowski K. 2022, 43.

7 Dziennik Ustaw 1931, no. 26, pos. 155, 294.

8 Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen (ZStL) — The Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes is Germany's — main agency responsible for investigating war crimes during National Socialist rule. The commission possesses the largest collection of files, documentation and materials concerning criminal activities during National Socialist dictatorship. The Central Office is located in Ludwigsburg.

to compare them with Polish records from postwar prosecutorial investigations into Wola,[9] let us first turn to the factual lapses and oversimplifications in reconstructing historical realities that appear in his article *Population Losses in the Wola Area During the Warsaw Uprising 1944*.[10] The author is, of course, aware of the importance of citing archival references, evidenced by his shifting of citation priority in footnotes, changing the hierarchy from a Swiss historian Philipp Marti, to archival.[11]

The first publication presenting data on the number of victims of mass executions of Wola residents was a compilation of execution sites and victim counts for mass executions in Warsaw between 1939 and 1944. This source-based study was authored by Edward Serwański and Irena Trawińska. In their study, we read:

> It is impossible to determine the number of victims today. The testimonies of witnesses provide too general a basis for calculations. What is certain is that the victims [of the Wola Massacre — as the mass executions are referred to in the book] number in the tens of thousands. Many crimes will remain forever shrouded in mystery, as no one survived the numerous executions. Only a thorough registration of Wola's residents and the creation of a victim database would allow for a numerical assessment of the losses.[12]

This was achieved over more than 30 years of research by Marek Strok,[13] whose extensive inquiries as part of his scientific project *Wola IX 1939 – I 1945*, which I will mention later. Already in my article from four years ago, I should have explicitly

9 In the internal review, together with the second reviewer, we recommended to the author to make broader use of German documents from the archives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland in his research on this subject.

10 Przeszowski K. 2024.

11 Now 'Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein (LASH), quote from: Marti P. 2016, 165', and should be 'Marti P. 2016, 165, quote from: LASH', whereby the document was unequivocally discovered by a Swiss historian, and it is necessary to quote the meticulous monograph by Philipp Marti. See: Przeszowski K. 2024, 110.

12 Serwański E., Trawińska I. 1946, 23.

13 Marek Strok, although a self-taught history enthusiast, possesses a vast academic and historical legacy, and his historical skills are in no way inferior to those of professionals. For decades, working closely with insurgent veterans, he has documented the history of the Polish Underground State and the Warsaw Uprising. Conducting countless research studies in Polish and foreign archives, he has accumulated the most comprehensive source of knowledge about the participants of the Uprising and its various military aspects. However, this is not merely a duplication of scattered archival materials, but rather a creative compilation into databases. Over several decades of meticulous work, which, it should be emphasised, is of a social nature, he has collected over 50,000 names, nicknames and other personal data of Uprising participants. Based on this list, the Warsaw Uprising Museum has created an online database of insurgents. Thanks to his research, the names of approximately 12,000 participants are inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance at the Warsaw Uprising Museum. Underground soldiers were killed in Warsaw in 1944. Furthermore, Marek Strok compiled a database of the victims of the Wola massacre. He painstakingly, tenement by tenement, reconstructed the names of the Wola residents murdered in August 1944. He is the author of a monograph: Strok M. 2006. In addition, he published and edited AK documents in cooperation with M. Olczak and R. Bielecki: Olczak M., Strok M. 2008; Olczak M., Strok M. 2018; Bielecki R., Strok M. 1997.

referred to the estimates of 'Marek Strok and Hubert Kuberski',[14] which were based on an extensive database of residents of the so-called Wola's tenement buildings and properties, alongside *Powstańcze biogramy* compiled by Strok.[15] The upper estimate proposed by him was his own; I merely introduced it into academic discourse after several multi-hour discussions.

I did not succumb to the argument equating Marek Strok's estimate of 'at most 15,000' with the reduction of the Wola Massacre death toll to 'over 15,000' by a German historian who failed to reference specific sources for his calculations.[16] The war crimes committed by German-Austrian pacification forces in Wola accounted for 10% of the total number of civilians murdered in August and September 1944 — a figure generally accepted as 150,000, based on data provided by Polish researchers.[17]

The most thoroughly sourced estimates come from Maja Motyl and Stanisław Rutkowski, prepared for the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. Their work presents an alphabetical list of addresses, sites of mass executions and individual killings of civilians during the 1944 Uprising. Although the authors did not summarise the total number of victims in Wola, Przeszowski compiled a balance of 176 war crime sites in Wola (identified by M. Motyl and S. Rutkowski) and, after 'recalculating the approximate data', arrived at an estimate of around 40,000 victims, as well as 9 other locations. It is difficult to agree with such estimates by M. Motyl and S. Rutkowski. However, the scale of these atrocities can be further verified through a comparative analysis of the Polish and German documentation.[18]

Also, it is difficult to agree with Piotr Gursztyn, who rejects the '15,000 victims' figure by arguing that its author, Hanns von Krannhals, is not particularly credible. This could be seen as part of a broader competition over which massacre of civilians was the bloodiest, compared, for example, to 'Aktion Erntefest', during which 42,000 Jews were murdered in Lublin District on November 3–4, 1943 by German, Austrian, Volksdeutsche, and Trawnikimänner units of the SS and Orpo. According to Piotr Gursztyn, the death toll of 59,000 Polish victims in the Wola Massacre, popularised by Antoni Przygoński, should be considered. However, this estimate acks support when compared to the actual number of German and Austrian (and probably Azeri) extermination units involved, who, in this case, would have had to eliminate four times fewer innocent civilians in Wola.[19]

14 Kuberski H. 2021, 173–174.

15 *Spis powstańczych biogramów*.

16 Krannhals H. von, 1962, 307–308 and Kuberski H. 2021, 173–174.

17 Currently, 97–99% of the content consists of information cross-referenced and gathered by M. Strok, while the remaining portion consists of supplements from the Warsaw Uprising Museum archival unit. See: Spis powstańczych biogramów.

18 Motyl M., Rutkowski S. 1994, 11–13.

19 Gursztyn P. 2015, 305–306.

In 2020, Norbert Bączyk and Grzegorz Jasiński published a book in which they deemed previous estimates of the number of victims of the 'Wola Massacre' to be 'significantly overestimated.' Their reading of testimony from former SS- Gruf. Reinefarth led them to accept a figure of 'over 10,000 people.' They supported their estimate with the claim that 'Wola had a wartime population of 30,000,' and that a significant portion (20,000 people) fled either to Śródmieście or the countryside upon hearing about the massacres. The authors did specify the source basis, based on reports on the situation during the Warsaw Uprising prepared by the Einsatzkommando Spilker (they forgot that this unit was not engaged in extermination and started its actual activity since 13 August). They firmly advocated for the lowest estimate in their analysis.[20]

An excerpt from an article by Kazimierz Przeszowski deserves particular attention:

> In 2021, Hubert Kuberski published an article presenting the participation of Dirlewanger's unit in the mass executions of Wola's population in August 1944, in which the number of victims of the Wola Massacre was estimated to be about 15 thousand people. Kuberski relied on calculations compiled by Marek Strok based on an extensive source search but did not explain the methodology adopted by the author he quoted.[21]

I have already referred previously to the scanty forces involved in the 5–6 August extermination of the civilian population. Strok's estimates are the result of many years of painstaking research, which I referred to in one of the footnotes. It should have been mentioned in the main text, as follows:

> Marek Strok used the following sources to determine his calculations of the number of victims of the Wola Genocide: parish registers of births, marriages, deaths from the churches of: St. Joseph – Deotymy Street, St. Stanislaus – Bema Street, St. Lawrence – Wolska Street, St. Adalbert – Wolska Street; registration books for specific houses on Wola preserved in the State Archive of the City of Warsaw; Red Cross card files and exhumation protocols related to Wola; archives of The Main Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza – RGO) containing lists of Wola residents displaced after the Uprising from Warsaw; collections of Arolsen Archives; and the Main Commission for the Investigation of German/Hitlerite Crimes (Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich/Hitlerowskich), or photographing all graves at the Wola cemetery and symbolic graves of Wola mass extermination victims in other Warsaw's cemeteries.[22]

20 Bączyk N., Jasiński G. 2020, 52 (footnote 37).

21 Kuberski H. 2021, 173–174.

22 AIPN, BU 0688/311, 228; Krannhals H. von, 1962, 308; Strok M. 2019, 7 (article not admitted to the conference 'Osądzić rzeź Woli' ['To judge the Wola massacre'], Warsaw, September 28, 2019, organised by Instytut Pamięci Narodowej — received thanks to correspondence with the Author).

The author attempted to confront the adequacy (in his view) of the German forces to carry out mass executions and murder 35,000 victims within 2 days, a claim which Hanns von Krannhals refuted, while this was also the conclusion of three decades of research into the two-day massacre of the Wola district.[23] Meanwhile, Przeszowski based his thesis on a comparative analysis with three mass executions of Jewish populations carried out by German policemen, Austrian policemen and Volksdeutscher and East European volunteers, in occupied Central and Eastern Europe during World War II — on 29–30 September 1941, in Babi Yar near Kyiv, with a victim count of 33,771; on 30 November and 8 December 1941, the extermination of Jews from the Riga ghetto: 25,000 victims in the forests near the village of Rumbula; and 'within the framework of the Operation 'Ertnefest' [actually Aktion 'Erntefest'] on 3–4 November 1943: 42–43,000 victims. Technically, it was possible to murder between 25,000 and 42,000 people within 2 days. However, German documents do not confirm such large extermination forces, and there was no organisational preparation for carrying out mass shootings (there was no call to gather at designated assembly points) in Wola district.[24]

It should be noted that Przeszowski determined that the number of German pacification units operating in Wola in the first days of August 1944 was 1,000 on 4 August and 2,297 on 5 August. On 6 August, these forces were further reinforced by several hundred policemen and soldiers, and by 8 August, they totalled 2,640.[25] Hubert Kuberski, based on German documents, assesses that the Orpo units directly involved in the mass executions on 5 August numbered 497 policemen of Polizei-Bataillon Petersburs. However, to definitively settle this issue, detailed research of the extensive archival resources will be necessary. Indications suggest the participation of other German units in the war crimes in Wola. In conclusion, it should be stated that from 5 to 8 August 1944, between 2,297 and 2,640 German soldiers operated in the Wola area,

23 Kąkolewski K. 1975, 98.

24 A minor typographical error in the extermination Aktion in the Lublin District — it should also not be confused with the counter-partisan Unternehmen 'Erntefest' from 18 January to 7 February 1943. The assumptions assumed the pacification of three former regions east of the Minsk–Slutsk highway, partly part of Kreis Minsk-Land. The aforementioned counter-partisan operation took place simultaneously with Unternehmen 'Peter', which was carried out by the 203. Sicherungs-Division, see: [Wolfgang Vopersal] SS- u. Polizei-Kampfgruppe Griep [undated]; BA-MA, N 756/206b, s.p.; SS-Sonderbat Dirlewanger, Batl. Befehl für dem 19.1.43. BA-MA, RS 3–36/3, 231; 18.01.1943; Verstärktes SS-Sonderbataillon [Dirlewanger], Abschlussbericht für das Unternehmen 'Erntefest', 00.01.1943 (before January 19). BA-MA, RS 3–36/9, 5–6; SS-Sonderbatl. Dirlewanger, Batl. Befehl für den 18.1.43; 17.01.1943. BA-MA, RS 3–36/9, 96; SS-Sonderbatl. Dirlewanger, Batl. Befehl für den 17.1.43; 16.01.1943, BA-MA, RS 3–36/9, 97; Kampfgruppe Coretti, Unternehmen 'Peter' der 203. Sich.Div. 11.01.1943, BA-MA, RS 3–36/9, 102; Bender R.J., Taylor H.P. 1986, 51; Żukov D., Kovtun I. 2009, 99–100.

25 Przeszowski K. 2024, 110. It has been a while since then — I will propose changes to the quoted passage: 'On 6 [7] August 1944, the German troops [Kampfgruppe Reinefarth] were joined by the second battalion of the Brigade [sic! actually the 2nd battalion of the regiment — II/SS-Sonderregiment Dirlewanger — without the SS-Standartenführer des Reserve Oskar Paul Dirlewanger, who was absent in Warsaw until 8 August]. Dirlewanger. This unit was commanded by SS-Sturmbannführer und Major der Schutzpolizei Josef Steinhauer]': Krannhals H. von, 1962, 362–363. Document no. 24.

of which at least 750–850 were policemen (Ordnungspolizei and Sicherheitspolizei), directly involved in the extermination of the civilian population.[26]

The author's comparative considerations focus solely on comparing the number of executioners and victims. By adopting this methodological approach (which is, of course, entirely dependent on acting in accordance with the available knowledge, regardless of whether it aligns with objective reality), Przeszowski significantly simplified the described events, albeit in line with the knowledge he possessed, but before becoming familiar with and confronting German documents with Polish sources. The author was, of course, aware of the differences in conditions under which mass executions were carried out in various locations. Nevertheless, he formulated a thesis rejecting the claim that it was 'technically unfeasible' to execute 35,000 or even 65,000 people.[27]

Apart from the known number of executioners from German documents (unfortunately, not available for every day of August and September 1944), the most crucial factor in estimating the number of victims is the amount of ash remaining after the burning of those murdered in mass executions. The most frequently cited version mentions 12 tons of human ashes collected from execution sites in Wola and piled into a mound, on top of which a field altar was to be placed, serving simultaneously as a chapel-mausoleum. It was not until 1973 that Gustaw Zemła's monument 'The Fallen, Unconquered' was erected there, unveiled on 20 September 1973.[28] The figure of 12 tons of victims' ashes became so widely accepted that it was used by director Michał Rogalski in the title of his 2008 documentary film *12 Tons. They Are All There.* In one of my discussions with Kazimierz Krajewski, I accepted his proposed estimate of 18 tons of human ashes.

I went even further — in addition to estimating the amount of ashes, I also considered atmospheric conditions (wind, rain, snow), the presence of children among the victims, whose burned remains weighed less than those of adults, and unrecorded

26 Polizei-Bataillon Peterburs consisting on 5 August of 497 officers (on August 6, there were already five companies, i.e. 750–850 policemen) and a battalion from the 608th Security Regiment [Sicherungsregiment 608, Col. Schmidt] with personnel of 618 soldiers (as of 20 August, see: Kranhals H. von, 1962. Document no. 40). See: Gursztyn P. 2015, 354–355; Mierecki P., Christoforow W. (eds), 2007, 685. H. Kuberski did not present a hypothesis but rather quoted two key documents indicating that 2.5 Schutzpolizei companies with 341 men and 1 Gendarmerie company with 155 men were numerically equivalent to the staff of an Ordnungspolizei battalion (Polizei-Bataillon) on 5 August 1944, such a unit, created on an emergency basis from subunits of Orpo was Polizei-Bataillon Peterburs. On the second and final day of command, Major Peterburs resigned from this position, and his unit was renamed from 7 August to Polizei-Bataillon Sarnow (from the name of the new commander). See: Kuberski H. 2021, 144, footnote 15.

27 Przeszowski K. 2024, 120.

28 At the back of the monument, there is a plaque with the following inscription: 'In this place rest the ashes of over 50,000 Poles, civilian residents of Warsaw and soldiers of the Home Army, who died for the freedom of the Fatherland, murdered by the Germans during the Warsaw Uprising in August and September 1944. On 6 August 1946, 117 coffins with the ashes of people murdered and burned, transported from among others: the Gestapo headquarters in Szuch Avenue, Wolska Street, Górczewska Street, Sowiński Park, St. Stanislaus Hospital (Franaszek's factory), Moczydło Street and Młynarska Street.' This means that the ashes of victims of the massacre in Southern Śródmieście were also buried there.

massacre sites from which the ashes did not reach the Warsaw Insurgents Cemetery. Due to these factors, the estimated amount of ashes could be increased by 2.5 times and rounded up to 30 tons (30,000 kg). This figure could then be divided by the amount of ash corresponding to one statistically murdered person, allowing for an estimate of the number of victims of mass killings in the western part of the former Warsaw-North County, i.e., today's Wola district. The Polish side stipulated that '[this] was not intended to determine the number of victims,' but this method allowed for an estimate of 12,000–15,000 victims. Meanwhile, a German judge arrived at different calculations based on the opinion of his expert, ranging from 8,500 to 10,000 dead. However, considering the consistency of von Krannhals's estimates with the thirty years of research conducted by Strok, we assume the number of victims at approximately 15,000 murdered civilian residents of Wola.[29]

The literature providing data on the weight of cremated human remains is surprisingly scarce, and most of it consists only of approximate estimates. Let us first refer to the arguments of Wojciech Szukiewicz, the author of one of the studies on this subject:

> The weight of ash obtained after the cremation of a human body depends on the size, development and robustness of the skeletal structure, as well as the abundance of water and fats. A man's corpse yields 3–5 kilograms of ash, which fits in an urn with a capacity of 2–4 litres. For women and children, an urn with a capacity of 1–2 litres is usually sufficient.[30]

For example, Iserson (1) reports a range of 3–9 pounds (1.36–4.08 kg), Quigley a range of 6–12 pounds (2.72–5.44 kg), Carlson a range of 3–7 pounds (1.36–3.17 kg), and Maples and Browning a range of 2.2–8.8 pounds (0.99–3.99 kg). In summary, one can assume that the weight of ashes remaining from human cremation falls within the range of 0.99 kg (for children) to 5.44 kg.[31]

29 The most shocking information found in the Polish document was the mention of treasure hunters searching for gold and valuables, which highlights that such practices were not only related to Poles scavenging through the 'corpse slime' at the sites of former German death camps, but also applied to other places of mass extermination. These were inevitable effects of the barbarisation and dehumanisation of some members of Polish society under the German occupation.

30 Szukiewicz W. 1909, 58.

31 Cremation mass can be used to estimate the age and sex of individuals, to determine the minimum number of people in a sample, or to assess the pre-mortem size of the deceased. However, the cremation mass is also influenced by various other factors, including the cremation process itself, the selection of remains for burial, the soil, and the burial conditions to which the bones are exposed. The information on body mass after cremation in this study is used for a preliminary assessment of the preservation state of the remains and is not the basis for drawing conclusions about the age and sex of individuals. Data from articles and books by the aforementioned scientists (Iserson K. 1994; Quigley C. 1996; Carlson L. 1998; Warren M.W., Maples W.R. 1997) are taken from the article Bass W.M., Jantz R.L. 2004, 5; Schultz J.J., Warren M.W., Krigbaum J.S. 2015; Szukiewicz W. 1909, 58.

The estimate provided by the German forensic expert in an expert opinion for the investigating judge at the Hamburg Regional Court in the preliminary proceedings against insurance salesman (ex SS-Standartenführer, Regierungs- und Kriminaldirektor, Oberst der Polizei) Ludwig Hermann Karl Hahn and reserve criminal counsellor (ex SS-Sturmbannführer und Regierungs-und Kriminalrat) Walter Willy Otto Stamm:

> From the expert opinion prepared based on these findings by construction senior counsellor [Oberbaurat, Claus] Ballenthin from the Hamburg Building Authority, Department of Gardens and Cemeteries [Bauamt Hamburg, Garten- und Friedhofsamt], which was based on a series of experiments, it follows that in the case of impure cremation remains, one should assume that 3.53 kg corresponds to one corpse, while in the case of pure cremation remains, the weight is 2.25 kg per corpse. The expert believes that in the case of the ashes found in the cadet barracks,[32] the calculation should be based on the average weight of impure cremation remains. However, he incorrectly assumes that the bodies were burned in clothing. On the other hand, it should be considered that wood was burned along with the bodies (the weight of 2.25 kg was determined for cremation without coal). If an average weight of 3 kg is assumed, the conclusion is that the ashes found originate from the cremation of approximately 1,860 corpses [in the cadet barracks — *HK*].[33]

It is also important to consider the previously mentioned weather conditions, the presence of children among the victims — whose cremated remains weighed less than those of adults — as well as the unregistered massacre sites, from which the ashes did not reach the Warsaw Insurgents Cemetery. Due to these factors, the estimated amount of ashes can be increased 2.5 times and rounded to 30,000 kg. This number can then be divided by the amount of ash corresponding to one murdered person to estimate the number of victims of mass executions in the western part of the former Warsaw-North County, i.e., today's Wola district. However, considering the consistency between Hanns von Krannhals' estimates and Marek Strok's thirty years of research, we accept the number of victims at approximately 15,000 murdered civilian residents of Wola (assuming an average of 2 kg of ashes per victim, remembering the murdered children who weighed less than adults).

Returning to the issue of the number of perpetrators of genocide, a document from 6 August slightly increased the recorded personnel of the exterminators. Instead of the 3.5 Orpo companies that were present in Wola on 5 August, the German 9. Armee

32 Currently, the building of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland, Aleje Ujazdowskie 1–3, Warsaw.

33 Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Landgericht Hamburg, Abteilung 14 B, Geschäfts-Nr.: 147 Js 22/69, Voruntersuchung gegen Dr. Hahn u.a. wegen NSG-Verbrechen in Warschau 1944, 10.02.1971. BL, B 162/18307, Bd. 1, k. 52.

Order of Battle (OdB) mentions that in 'Einsatzgruppe Reinefarth' in section (Teil) B, five companies of Schupo and Gendarmerie were subordinated. The number of soldiers or policemen in one company is, on average, from 90 to 200 men. However, on that day, the mass killings of Polish civilians ceased to have a systematic, exterminatory character after the evening order issued on 5 August by SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach. A noteworthy fact is the absence, in the above summary of extermination forces, of the personnel from Sonderkommando 7a (mentioned later in this monograph). These SS men may have been involved in mass executions in Moczydło, behind the viaduct and the embankment of the regional railway.[34]

This raises the question of the intentions and emotions of the perpetrators of the mass extermination of the civilian population in the western part of the Warsaw-North County (Wola) during the two-day Wola massacre. Assistance in this matter comes from the late writer Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz,[35] in his historiosophical reflections included in the volume *Kinderszenen*, expressed in a paradoxical yet balanced form:

> The massacre that really took place — the one carried out in Warsaw by the soldiers [and policemen — *HK*] of von dem Bach — had (one could say and not only could but should say) a human character, a human face, a human dimension. It was a massacre that was deeply and fundamentally humanistic. It consisted of a thousand events, of many thousands of events, and each of these events had its own character (each slightly different), each had its own duration, its own course, its own tension, its own particularity — its own distinct flavour. [...] The massacre that truly took place had a human character also because those who carried it out were human — they could be seen, their faces (each face different), their smiles (each smile different), their rage (each rage different). One could see the sweat running down their foreheads, see them gulping water after completing their work. One could see the sleeves of their uniform shirts rolled up below the elbows, their hands sweaty, hairy. Later, they sat on the sidewalk, took off their heavy helmets, and leaned against a bullet-riddled wall — resting. Like weary workers, for it was all very human. [...] Thousands of soldiers took part in these massacres that took place in Wola, Ochota, and the Old Town — from the Wehrmacht [Heer], the SS, the Sicherheitspolizei, the Luftwaffe, the RONA, and the ROA [sic!]. These thousands were commanded by dozens or hundreds of officers who gave orders to execute and burn or who personally carried out the executions. These hundreds or dozens were commanded by a few generals or a dozen or so colonels, who did not personally take part in the massacre; perhaps they watched, or perhaps they did not.[36]

34 Krannhals H. von, 1962, 361. Dokument 23: Einsatzgruppe [SS-] Gruppenführer Reinefarth; 5.08.1944, 363 — doc. 24: AOK 9, Ia N 3788/44, Gliederung AOK 9, 6.08.1944.

35 J.M. Rymkiewicz, (1935–2022). Polish poet, playwright and literary critic, professor of the humanities.

36 Rymkiewicz J.M. 2008, 210.

Conclusion

Based on the analysed research results, it should be stated that despite nearly 80 years having passed, there is still no consensus on the number of casualties in Wola during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Moreover, the existing discrepancies in this area have even widened, ranging from 10,000 to 59,000 victims. A comparative analysis with other mass executions, based on specific examples, demonstrated that the 'technical feasibility' of executing 35,000 or 38,000 people should be considered unfounded 'due to the insufficiency of German forces.' At the same time, considering only the issue of 'technical feasibility,' the number of victims of the Wola Massacre could have been even higher, even accounting for the possible statistical absence of Orpo officers. It is challenging to accept the findings of Przeszowski, which were made 80 years after the tragic events discussed in this paper, as they were found to be merely averaged statistical studies. The author still faces the task of confronting German documents — cross-referencing his statistics with available information on the forces of Ordnungspolizei (Schutzpolizei and Gendarmerie) and SS (Sonderkommando 7a) based on the Order of Battle of the pacifying forces, which will allow for obtaining reliable information regarding the number of exterminators and Germans and Austrians and Azeris who primarily fought, but were also capable of pulling the trigger of their 7,92 mm MG 34s or 7,92 mm MG 08/15 or machine pistols 9 mm MP35 or Erma EMP or 7,62 mm MP 717(r) or ordinary bolt-action rifle 7,92 mm Karabiner 98k.

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Response to the Polemic Regarding the Review of Research on Population Losses in the Wola District During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944

Summary: This response draws attention to the purpose of the original 2024 article, presents general remarks on the polemic text, and discusses the allegations concerning the review of research and the comparative study regarding: The number of victims of mass executions, the size of the German pacification forces, and the area and population of the Wola district. Finally, it addresses the relevance of the findings of the original article in light of the criticisms raised in the polemic.
Keywords: Warsaw, Wola district, civilian population, World War II, Warsaw Uprising 1944, mass executions, polemic

This text is a response to Hubert Kuberski's polemic[1] directed at my previously published article in this journal.[2] My article was a review of research relating to the extent of population losses in the Wola district during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. A polemic should contain constructive comments and substantive arguments supporting a different position in the debate. Unfortunately, reading its content evokes a deep sense of disappointment. I present the justification for my perspective in the following points of this response.

1 Kuberski H. 2025, 129–141.
2 Przeszowski K. 2024b, 109–128.

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First, the polemic text is not organised according to a logical structure of the issues discussed. It does not contain a main thesis or its development, nor does it refer to the sequence of content in the original article.

Second, Kuberski, already in the very title of his polemic, formulates three extremely strong accusations: erroneous research, overestimation of numerical estimates, and lack of basis in archival sources. Given the nature of my publication — a review of research — the accusation of erroneous research is, in itself, absurd. It seems obvious that when compiling research conducted by other scholars, the author of such a review can at worst make errors in reporting them. The fact that this did not occur is even acknowledged by the author of the polemic, who states that the review was conducted correctly.

The accusation of allegedly overestimating the balance of numerical estimates must be considered absurd, since the balance I presented was based on a comparative analysis with the results of research conducted by other scholars. Thus, any potential error in this regard could only concern an unjustified comparison or incorrect reporting of research, not the overestimation of numerical data itself. However, there is no evidence of such errors in the content of the polemic.

The accusation of lacking a basis in archival sources is as strong as it is obviously unfounded. First and foremost, it is necessary to point out the aforementioned issues regarding the nature of a research review and comparative analysis, which do not require conducting one's own archival research for their validity. Therefore, this accusation must be considered unjustified. In the summary, the author of the polemic further alleges that the comparative part of the research review was based on statistical data derived from post-war historians' studies, claiming that statistical data on the population of the Wola district for the period 1938–1944 supposedly does not exist. However, for the period in question, information on the population of Warsaw has been preserved, for example from 1 September 1939 and 1 May 1940. I used this data in preparing my article.[3]

Third, in many paragraphs of the polemic, instead of addressing the position presented in the original article and possibly discussing it, we find the polemicist's own thoughts on topics not directly related to the subject under discussion.

Regarding the review of research, it should be emphasised that the author of the polemic confirms that it was conducted correctly. Nevertheless, Kuberski once again summarises the findings of publications that I had already presented in my review

3 See. Przeszowski K. 2024b, 124–125: Chart 3, Chart 4, footnotes 55–58; 127. Statistical data from the Population Registration Department of the Municipal Board of the City of Warsaw from the pre-war period and the occupation period were included in the clandestine study by Witold Kula from July 1940. See: AAN, ref. no. 76/III-61; Kula W. 1984, 216–217 and others; *Warszawa w liczbach*, 16, table: 'Population by districts.'

of the state of research. This repeated review covers seven publications,[4] while omitting four items from the original literature review.[5]

A prominent place in Kuberski's remarks on the state of research is given to the book by Hanns von Krannhals, published in 1962. The author of the polemic is particularly disturbed by the fact that I did not accept its findings — published, incidentally, 63 years ago — as the only authoritative ones. He accuses me of not having sufficiently familiarised myself with the content of Krannhals's book and of failing to analyse the arguments contained therein. The supposed evidence of this alleged neglect on my part is that I do not uncritically accept the position expressed by the German historian.

In discussing the book by Norbert Bączyk and Grzegorz Jasiński, the author of the polemic devotes a separate paragraph to repeating information I had already indicated in my original review of research. In paraphrasing my text, Kuberski makes a small but significant change: In my original article, I stated that Bączyk and Jasiński did not indicate the source on which they based their data regarding the population of the Wola district at the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, nor the proportion of the population that managed to escape the district. Kuberski removes the word 'not' from this sentence and then claims that the source was the reporting of Einsatzkommando Alfred Spilker, which was in fact cited by the authors of the 2020 publication. However, in none of the 94 pages of these reports, held in the Central Military Archive in Warsaw, is there a scrap of information on this subject.[6]

The author of the polemic devoted the most space to discussing his own work, which addresses the issue of population losses in the Wola district in 1944.[7] A prominent place in my opponent's arguments about the scale of losses in Wola in 1944 is given to research conducted by Marek Strok. A kind of research report was supposed to be an article by Strok, which was submitted but not accepted for a scientific conference on the Wola Massacre in 2019. As far as could be verified in publicly available sources, this article has not been published in any other form to date, and the author of the polemic became acquainted with its content through direct contact with the author.

The intended outcome of the research project was to develop an extensive database of residents and properties in the Wola district. However, we do not learn how many records about Wola residents murdered in August 1944 were collected by the creators

4 Hubert Kuberski once again discusses the content of publications by the following authors: Stanisław Płoski and Ewa Śliwińska, Hanns von Krannhals, Antoni Przygoński, Maja Motyl and Stanisław Rutkowski, Piotr Gursztyn, Norbert Bączyk and Grzegorz Jasiński, as well as his own work.

5 In his review of the state of research, Hubert Kuberski omits the publications of Adam Borkiewicz, Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, Maria Turlejska, and Joanna K.M. Hanson.

6 CAW IX.3.40.60. The aforementioned reports from the period 12 August – 6 October 1944 for the entire area of operations of the Reinefarth combat group record a total of 2,873 people shot and over 11,000 burned individual bodies, as well as an unspecified number of burned piles of bodies, as I wrote in another article of mine from 2024. See: Przeszowski K. 2024a, 46–50.

7 Kuberski H. 2021.

of the database. As a result, there is doubt as to whether the cited figure of 15,000 represents the total number of fatalities or only the number of victims whose identities could be established. The latter would be analogous to the database of civilian victims of the Warsaw Uprising, published by the Warsaw Uprising Museum, which contains the names of nearly 50,000 people.[8]

Kuberski claims that the author of the numerical estimates for the victims of the Wola Massacre in 1944 is Strok, while he himself "introduced them into academic discourse." The author of the polemic refers to the postulate of registering Wola residents and creating a database of victims, formulated by Edward Serwański and Irena Trawińska in 1946. Kuberski assures that it is precisely Marek Strok's research that fulfils this postulate. However, this does not seem possible for several reasons. First, a complete registration of Wola residents who survived World War II would have required a mandatory census, including the Recovered Territories, and reaching all former residents who remained abroad after the war. Second, creating a complete list of victims by name would have required collecting testimonies from tens of thousands of people, which would have meant enormous expenditure of effort and resources. Thus, research conducted 50 years after the war and on a limited scale[9] does not meet these conditions and therefore cannot be considered a final resolution of the discussion on the number of victims.

The author of the polemic did not provide any additional information about the research methodology on which his numerical estimates are based, compared to his original article. In addition to the obvious impoverishment of the scientific debate conducted in this journal, this also constitutes a fundamental obstacle to their current use in academic discourse.[10]

In my comparative review of research on mass executions of civilians during World War II in Central and Eastern Europe, the author of the polemic did not point out any substantive errors. Nevertheless, he described it as 'even more problematic.' The main — and only — argument supporting this opinion is the fact that my analysis led to conclusions different from those of the author of the polemic.

An important, though essentially overlooked, element of the polemicist's position seems to be the issue of the duration of the mass executions in the Wola district in August 1944. Kuberski asserts with complete certainty that already on the first day (5 August) the executions took on a truly mass character, and that all the tragic events ended on the second day (6 August). Following the polemicist's line of reasoning,

8 Civilian Victims [database].

9 The author of the polemic presented a description of the queries conducted, which is a literal repetition of content from his own article from 2021. See: Kuberski H. 2021, 174, footnote 76.

10 A necessary condition for including Marek Strok's research in further debate is its scientific, peer-reviewed publication, which would provide other researchers with access not only to the final results, but also present the methodology of the research conducted.

one must conclude that if the mass executions lasted essentially only one day, and the total number of victims was 15,000, then the German pacification forces in Wola were sufficient to carry out mass executions of 15,000 people in a single day.[11] In light of this conclusion, Kuberski's determination to maintain that the mass executions in Wola could not have lasted longer than just one day becomes understandable.[12]

Regarding the issue of the area and population of Wola, it should be noted at the outset that Kuberski essentially does not clarify his own position on the territorial scope of the Wola district and its population, which is one of the key points of my review and analysis of previous research.

However, the polemicist even questions the very term "Wola district," pointing out that, from a formal perspective, this area was part of one of the four urban counties into which Warsaw was divided since 1931. Apart from this formal consideration, the author of the polemic does not present any other argument against my use of the term "Wola district" in its historical sense for the pre-war and occupation periods. Instead of the disputed term, Kuberski proposes the designation "the western part of the former Warsaw-North County, i.e., today's Wola district,"[13] or alternatively "Northern County, commonly known as the Wola district."[14] However, the polemic does not explain what research benefits would result from using these terms.

It should be noted that the urban county (starostwo powiatowe) Warsaw-North did not coincide with the historical area of the Wola district.[15] The southeastern boundary ran along the streets Grzybowska, Karolkowa, Dworska, Brylowska, Prądzyńskiego, and Kolejowa. Outside the area of the Warsaw-North urban county were, among others, the tram power station on Przyokopowa Street and the former Jewish hospital in Czyste (now Wolski Hospital), as well as a significant part of the Wola parish of St. Stanislaus. This area included two statistical districts: 24 and 24a — Przyokopowa Street, inhabited in 1938 by about 9,000 residents. The absurdity of such a situation leads to the rejection of the terminological proposal presented by the author of the polemic.

In summary, it should be stated that, despite making extremely strong claims in the title of his polemic, the author has not demonstrated any substantive errors

11 The figure of 15,000 victims in a single day, as suggested by Hubert Kuberski's position, is essentially consistent with the numerical data for mass executions in Babi Yar, Rumbula, and the vicinity of Lublin, which claimed between 25,000 and 42,000 victims over the course of two days.

12 However, the author of the polemic does not indicate what sources or literature his position is based on. Meanwhile, there is a consensus in the scholarly literature that the mass executions in Wola in August 1944 lasted several days. For example, Piotr Gursztyn states that they continued on August 5, 6, 7, and the following days of August 1944. See: Gursztyn P. 2015, 81–250.

13 The polemicist uses the term "the western part of the Warsaw-North County, i.e., today's Wola district" three times, on pages 7, 8 and 9.

14 The author of the polemic uses the term 'Warsaw-North County' two times, on pages 1 and 2.

15 The boundaries of the urban counties are shown on the map attached to the publication: *Warszawa w liczbach*, VII.

in my review and comparative analysis of the research. I regard the polemic against my article as an expression of the author's determination to present his own position. However, in my opinion, this position contains several significant shortcomings. First, the author of the polemic relies on the results of Strok's research, which remain unpublished and thus inaccessible to the wider academic community. Second, Kuberski attempts to draw conclusions about the total number of victims in Wola based on uncertain and substantially incomplete estimates of the weight of human ashes collected in the mass grave at the Wola Cemetery of the Warsaw Uprising. Third, the author of the polemic makes categorical judgments on issues in which he clearly lacks knowledge of the basic literature and sources, including archival sources. In light of these observations, I fully maintain the position presented in my original article published in this journal: The scholarly discussion regarding the scale of population losses in the Wola district during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is not concluded, and this requires further research.

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