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Culture and Education in Lviv during the German Occupation

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(Gniezno)

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN LVIV
DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION**

Abstract

This paper analyses the basic principles of German occupation policy in the Ukrainian lands, attitude of the occupying power to local people, investigates governing methods in occupied territories, the government policy on culture and education.

Keywords

Galicia, World War II, German occupation, education, literature, culture, fine art

At the beginning of the Soviet-German armed confrontation in World War II during the summer–autumn 1941, much of the territory of Ukraine was occupied by German troops. The Bolshevik totalitarian regime was replaced with no less brutal Nazi one. Significant part of the population happily welcomed German troops with flowers and acclamation of “Heil Hitler” and “Glory to Ukraine”, considering them as the liberators from the Bolshevik regime. The behavior of the Ukrainian population of Galicia in the early days of German-Soviet war is equivalent to the mass plebiscite against the Soviet state as a form of government¹. Evaluating the events of the first days of war and reaction of the Ukrainian people to them, this phenomenon cannot be treated as an act of treason. Such accusations should be regarded as unfounded, because most of people in the early stages of military operations did not treat the new invader as an enemy, with whom the Bolshevik regime was at war. Within a short period of time, the attitude of Ukrainians to German occupation authorities changed abruptly and was reduced to the famous saying “the same suit on the other side sewed”. Kost Pankivsky, head of Lviv branch of the Ukrainian Central Committee stated that “German occupation of Galicia lasted three years and one month. Without special illusions, but still with hopes for better Ukrainians met the Germans in June and July. But fate mocked us. The years of Nazi occupation are not reflected in Ukrainian life much better than years of Bolshevik occupation”².

As soon as Bolsheviks left Lviv, and the city was occupied by German armed forces and the battalion “Nachtigall”, on June 30th, local OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) summoned the Constituent Assembly of the West Ukrainian lands that adopted the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence. But their hopes did not come true. The German government, higher state and party leadership of the Third Reich did not recognize the Declaration, and the OUN leaders were arrested and soon sent away to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp for refusal to withdraw the document³. Hitler made no secret that “East has to be put at the service of Europe”. Galicia, with its geographical and histori-

¹V. Oficinsky, *Galychyna (1941–1944)*, Uzhgorod 2001, p. 24.

²K. Pankivsky, *Roky nimeckoi okupacii*, New York–Toronto 1965, p. 11.

³V. Kosyk, *Ukraina i Nimechyna v Drugiy svitoviy viyni*, Paris–New York–Lviv, NTSh 1993, p. 127–129.

cal position, was not regarded by Germans as occupied territory, but as an area directly subordinated to the Reich, and as its part in the future⁴.

Depending on the distance from the territory as well as racial and geographic factors, German occupation regime had certain peculiarities during the Second World War. Four types of German occupation authority can be distinguished. 1. The Military council — when the whole civil and military power was concentrated in the hands of military commanders; 2. Protectorate, an autonomous unit within Germany; 3. Reichskommissariat (literally “Reich Commissariat of Ukraine”) led by Reichskommissar. In Ukraine, it was E. Koch, who was clothed with full authority and was accountable directly to the Fuehrer; 4. The General Government, established on the territories of the former Polish state now occupied by Germany.

In mid-July 1941, with the assistance of Metropolitan A. Sheptytsky and under direct supervision of K. Levytsky, the Ukrainian National Council was established in Lviv; its task was to become a “subsidiary leadership” of Galician population in solving political and cultural problems of the land⁵. This institution existed till the beginning of March 1942, and then, at the order of Adolf Hitler, it was liquidated.

After Galicia acceded to the General Government, Germans demanded establishment of a body similar to the already existing in Cracow. At the request of the Nazis, such body was established in Lviv — the Ukrainian regional committee⁶. As the analysis of the occupation regime in Galicia shows, this institution contributed to the fact that situation of the region, in comparison with eastern Ukraine or Poland, was slightly better. This is primarily because a large extent of the German administration in the district of Galicia was executed through Ukrainian administration. In February 1942, leaders of the General Government, in view of the ideas of independence and too centralized socio-political and cultural life, dissolved the Committee. Ukrainian Central Committee (UCC) took over its functions. The headquarters of the UCC were established in Lviv. It was chaired by K. Pankivsky, who became also vice-head of V. Kubyovych, deputy head of the UCC. Formally the central institution of the UCC remained in Krakow, but Lviv became the actual center of its activities.

⁴V. Kucher, T. Stefanyuk, *Okupacyyny regym v dystrykti “Galychyna”, Ukraina v Drugiy svitoviy viyni: poglyad z XXI st., Istorychni narysy, Knyga persha, Kyiv 2010, p. 393.*

⁵*Ibidem*, p. 397.

⁶V. Kosyk, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

German leadership was hardly interested in the development of Ukrainian culture and education on the occupied territory, and did not hide it. Therefore, any achievements in this area should be linked to self-organization of the intelligentsia and the activity of local associates. Under the fascist regime, Lviv remained a leading center not only in Galicia, but also in the entire Ukraine. Despite the continual attempts of occupation government officials to limit the opportunities for the development of culture, to reduce it to the simplest form, Ukrainian intelligentsia did everything possible to raise the spiritual level of people, strengthening the Ukrainian identity of the city.

During the German occupation, virtually every area of public life manifested interwoven interests of three political forces: the Nazi regime, Soviet underground fighters as the representatives of the communist regime and Ukrainian nationalists as supporters of Ukrainian independence⁷. Each of those forces had its own plans regarding the organization of cultural and educational life. A. Rosenberg, Reich Minister of the Eastern territories, realized that by eliminating Ukrainian national culture, the occupation regime will in some way lead to passive resistance of the population. His position on this issue is expressed in the decree of April 10th, 1942, which emphasized: “The purpose of our policy is to involve Ukrainian population in voluntary cooperation, and this requires tolerant treatment of their inherent culture. Excessive restriction of cultural manifestations of Ukrainians can cause aversion to work instead of joyful attitude to it, and passive resistance instead of enticing people on our side”⁸.

The cultural process in the General Government, even though limited by the Nazis, was much broader and stronger than in other regions of Ukraine. Ukrainian history in the General Government — as W. Kubyovych wrote — differs from the history of other Ukrainian lands for two reasons: in this part of our land German occupation regime was less strict, our losses there were the smallest, and there was the lowest wartime destruction. Secondly, among the general greyness we can see here some rays of hope: first of all it was national revival of our outlying western districts⁹. However, while building national life,

⁷V. Tinda, *Kultura, osvita i sport pid chas okupacii, Ukraina v Drugiy svitiviy viyni*, [in:] *Ukraina v Drugiy svitiviy viyni: poglyad z XXI st.*, Istorychni narysy, Knyga persha, Kyiv 2010, p. 697–698.

⁸O. Potylchak, *Nacysts'ka polityka u sferi specialnoi i serednyoi ta vyshchoi osvity v Ukraini. 1941–1944*, Arhiv okupacii, Kyiv 2006, p. 783.

⁹V. Kubyovych, *Ukrainci v Generalniy Gubernii 1939–1941*, *Istoria Ukrainskogo Centralnogo komitetu*, Chicago 1979, p. 10–11.

it was necessary to consider a number of historical circumstances of the recent past. Therefore, as the Ukrainian periodical agency “Ukrainian Daily News” points out in the front-page article — “Our sentiment regarding to what has been remains as sentiment to our past, but it should not reduce our scope in creating new forms of our national life”.

German government actively monitored all areas of cultural life. In the field of education it established its own structure, where the main elements included popular (initial) and professional schools, which were to provide training of the younger generation so it could fulfill elementary functions in industry, handicrafts, trade, agriculture, and thus create the necessary contingent of cheap labor force for the purposes of the Reich. As the population of Lviv was multi-ethnic, Nazi authorities organizing education followed the principles of creation of separate mononational schools, respectively for Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, with the Jews excluded.

In late 1944, according to official data, there were 15 Ukrainian Lviv public schools, where 150 Ukrainian teachers trained 5,000 Ukrainian children; in turn, there were 37 Polish schools, 411 Polish teachers and 13,000 of Polish students. In the year when Lviv city district significantly increased by subsuming 14 suburban villages, the number of Ukrainian schools increased to 33 (6,800 students), and Polish to 51 (14,500 students). In 1942, there were 5 German public schools in Lviv, enrolling about 1,360 children of German officials and the *Volksdeutsche*¹⁰.

There was some progress in the development of various professional, mainly highly specialized schools. In 1942, their number in the city reached 37, including one German school (170 students in total), 16 Polish schools (4,940 students) and 20 Ukrainian schools (4,915 students). Students of Ukrainian folk and professional schools made more than 15.1% of total Ukrainian population, and among Poles this figure did not exceed 11.4%¹¹.

Social origin of students in secondary and specialized (professional) schools was fairly homogeneous. Mostly children of middle and smallholder peasants and workers studied there. Almost all of them had to interrupt their studies, but the community succored by providing facilities for bursas and monthly scholarships.

¹⁰Nova forma — novyy zmist, Ukrainski shchodenni visti, 11.07.1941.

¹¹Gazeta Lwowska, 8.12.1941.

After Galicia's accession to the General Government, German authorities promised to open high schools and a university in Lviv, but it was just one of many promotional promises.

Due to war events, German authorities had critical need in medical and veterinary personnel. That is why, in spring 1942, highest state professional courses were opened, they were affiliated with former Lviv higher schools, such as medical, pharmaceutical, veterinary, agronomic and technical. In September 1942, highest courses of forestry were launched. Tuition at the courses was conducted in German, but at the end of the lecture teacher could give the contents in Ukrainian or Polish. Exercises in laboratories were performed in Ukrainian¹². Total number of students in all institutes was distributed as follows: Medical institute — 722, Pharmacy — 125, Veterinarian — 260, Technical — 400, Agricultural — 170¹³.

Since September 1941, Theological Academy was restored in Lviv, it was headed by J. Slipyy. The duration of training at the academy, established following the model of Catholic faculties of Western European schools, was 5 years.

In 1943 “State high school of trade” was established in Lviv, with two divisions — general trade division and pedagogical division training teachers of trade schools.

Following a higher school curriculum, classes were conducted in two schools of art, which were created by Ukrainians on voluntary basis at the department of cultural work of the Ukrainian Central Committee. There was higher theatrical studio and higher fine arts studio. Three-year theatrical studio prepared actors for Ukrainian theatres, while the higher fine arts studio, also called the Ukrainian Academy of Arts, was to bring up young talented artists¹⁴.

The occupation regime gave the theatre a loose rein in comparison with other areas of cultural life. Evidently, the authorities were guided by the fact that theatre, as stated in the leading article of “Lviv News”, “is just the magician that can reduce the varied human mass to one sensual common denominator and leads their souls in the chosen direction”¹⁵. Theatre is of great moral and social importance as a significant factor in cultural development of the population, because the strongly influences a human being with such means as beauty or

¹²Gazeta Lwowska, 13.04.1941, p. 363–365.

¹³K. Pankivskyy, op. cit.

¹⁴Vyshchi shkoly u Lvovi, Lvivski visti 131, 1942.

¹⁵Ryatunok u vichno gyvuchiy krynci mudrosti, Lvivski visti, 16.01.1943.

art. So theatre was regarded as a powerful and effective tool of psychological influence on the masses, as the best “folk school”¹⁶.

In July 1941, Ukrainian theatre elite founded the Union of Ukrainian theatre artists, one of the largest in Western Ukraine. Dramatic actors, singers and ballet dancers at the Theatre of Opera and Ballet founded Ukrainian Theatre of Lviv City with departments: drama, ballet and opera and symphony. Town council approved the elected Administration of the Theatre which included A. Petrenko, director; V. Blavatsky, artistic director; leading directors Y. Stadnyk and Y. Girnyak; L. Turkevych became music director of Ukrainian plays, P. Luzhnytsky — literary reviewer, Ya. Barnych, A. Voloshchak — conductors, N. Hornytsky and Ya. Voshchak — choirmasters, E. Vihilov, M. Tregubov, V. Shtengel — ballet masters¹⁷.

On July 19th, 1941, the first performance — the opera “Zaporozhets za Dunayem” of P. Hulak-Artemovskiy was performed, directed by Y. Stadnyk¹⁸. By early 1942, almost 350 people were employed at the Ukrainian Theatre of Lviv City (over 50 actors and soloists and 50 musicians, 40 choristers, 35 ballet members)¹⁹. Within 2 years, 43 premieres were staged, including 20 dramas (domestic, historical, psychological, comedy), 9 operas, two of which were Ukrainian operas — “Zaporozhets za Dunayem”, “Natalka Poltavka”, 5 operettas and 6 ballets. 620 performances were attended by about 500,000 audience²⁰. The number of visitors of the theatre was determined by the number of the sold tickets, but there were many so-called closed performances — free — for the wounded and schoolchildren. The theatre also organized traveling shows in the province. Thus the total number of visitors was much higher.

As authority presumed that the prior mission of the Ukrainian theatre lay in the cultural service for the German audience, so premiere performances took place first for the Germans, and than — for the Ukrainian people. Days of the week were distributed on national basis also, but the real purpose of the

¹⁶Teatralna studia, Lvivski visti, 12–15.06.1943.

¹⁷V. Revucky, V orbiti svitovogo teatru, Kyiv–Kharkiv–New York 1972, p. 42–43.

¹⁸Z teatru, Nashi dni 1, 1942, p. 15.

¹⁹M. Semchyshyn, Na slugi v melpomeny, Nashi dni 8, 1943, p. 14.

²⁰V. Gaydabura, Teatr, zakhovanyy v arkhivah (scenichne mystectvo v Ukraini periodu nimecko-fashystskoi okupacii (1941–1944), Istoria. Polityka. Dokumenty. Idei. Khudogni realii ludskoi doli, Kyiv 1998, p. 15.

work of Ukrainian actors and directors was in the dialogue with fellow citizens. Therefore, Ukrainians substantially prevailed among the spectators.

Repertoire of the opera included “Carmen” by G. Bizet, “Aida”, “Troubadour” of G. Verdi, while among the operettas there were “Gypsy Baron” and “Lylyk” by J. Strauss.

The most popular section was dramatic — more than half of all premieres of the theatre were drama and comedy. These performances were addressed to Ukrainian audience, and when the resonance of performance spread beyond the city, German soldiers would often attend. Exactly the same happened to the premiere of Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”, which was held on September 21st, 1943 and became a significant artistic event not only in the life of the city, but in Ukrainian theatre art. For the first time in national history, the Hamlet on stage began to speak in Ukrainian (translation: M. Rudnytskyy), directed by Y. Girnyak, Hamlet — V. Blavatskyy²¹.

The play “Hamlet” had a great success on Lviv stage, as 12 performances were sold out less than in a month after the premiere²². Stage-director Y. Girnyak set the play realistically, with some notable haze of romanticism in it. With great artistic talent, V. Blavatskyy showed the tragic figure of the broken, desperate but not fainthearted man²³. V. Blavatskyy characterized his work in this epochal role thus: “[...] The role of Hamlet — is an epoch in the life of an actor. It was not easy to create this hero. My first steps in working this role out were: to get (to learn) the text of the play by heart and make a vision of the figure of Hamlet, to imagine myself on stage in that role [...] but difficulties accrued during rehearsals, while becoming acquainting with the material that usually makes fierce resistance”²⁴.

In just two and a half years of activity of Ukrainian theatre in Lviv, 750 performances were attended by over 600,000 spectators, including nearly half of the 250,000 German soldiers.

For the Ukrainian audience performances were held four times a week, Monday being a day off²⁵. In addition to “Hamlet”, the most popular among the audience was the play of K. Hupalo “Triumph Procurora Dalskoho”. The staging

²¹I. Nimchuk, Vystava “Gamlet” u Lvovi, Nashi dni 10, 1943, p. 32.

²²Ibidem, p. 8.

²³Z tayemnych glybyn aktorskoï tvorchosti, Lvivski visti, 31.10–1.11.1943, p. 9.

²⁴750 vystav. Ukrainsky Teatr u Lvovi, Lvivski visti, 1.01.1944.

²⁵V. Gaydabura, op. cit.

of V. Blavatsky had a premiere year and a half before Shakespeare's premiere, and for a long time actor played these roles simultaneously. For V. Blavatsky, the hero in the drama "Triumph Procurora Dalskoho" of K. Hupalo in some way could have been a paradoxical psychological background for the role of Hamlet.

Despite the diversity of art pieces and heroes, there is a reason to believe that both materials contained similar internal counterpoint. Servant of the Stalinist regime A. Dalsky and sophisticated humanist Hamlet both breathe poisonous air of the bloody feud of people. In extreme circumstances they have hidden dual existence²⁶.

In the context of variety of genres there emerged the so-called literary court as a form of discussion and criticism, which had been known in the West, but in Lviv it made its appearance for the first time. Literary court is the so-called "readers tribune" or "audience tribune". First of all, only audience has a voice here. The audience, like "witnesses" at the trial, state what was ignored or not described by professional critics or what reviewers have written inaccurately. The purpose of the court — everyone who saw the play that is "criticized", read the review — now has the right to disagree with the opinion of the reviewer or author. Such a creative meeting is an impetus for the writer, and often an indication for critics. It should not be thought that work which was tried was bad. On the contrary — it was valuable, touched the public, was topical and useful.

This court took place in April 20th, 1942 at the Literary and Art Club in Lviv. Tickets were sold out immediately. Prosecutor — G. Lyzhnytsky, defenders — Yu. Stefanyk and O. Bodnarovych. Chairman of the court — M. Brylynsky. Registrar of the court, deputy head, jurors. Court jury had to answer a number of important cross-questions. Hearing of witnesses regarding estimation of the play. Verdict — to release the accused V. Blavatsky from guilt and punishment for "dull, unpatriotic, false" staging of the play "Triumph Prokurora Dalskoho"²⁷.

Such form of literary event took place once again more than seven months later, when a soiree of R. Yendyk was held as literary court in the Hall of Literary

²⁶Literaturnyy sud (pyesa K. Gupala "Triumf proroka Dols'kogo"), Lvivski visti, 17.04.1942, p. 145.

²⁷Triumf proroka Lugnyc'kogo na pershomu literaturnomu sudi u Lvovi, Lvivski visti, 21.04.1942.

and Art Club, with such prominent theatre figures as T. Luzhnytskyy, V. Blavatskyy, B. Pazdriy, Yu. Stefanyk, M. Senchyshyn, D. Shtykalo and others²⁸.

The problem of establishing theatre that would give the viewer the most joyful experience using national art became more urgent since 1941. In June 1942, creative team was set up, consisting of Y. Hirnyak, director, Ya. Barnych, composer, E. Kozak, artist and others²⁹. At this time the name of the theatre was conceived — the “Cheerful Lviv” (emblem — a laughing lion). Variety shows were organized by Z. Tarnavskyy, E. Kozak, V. Lyaskovskyy, I. Kernytskyy, A. Kos-Anatolskyi, O. Kurochka, T. Myhal³⁰. On 7 Francyskanska street the Ukrainian theatre of small art forms presented the “light genre” — the only such theatre in Lviv and in Galicia. Practically, it became the successor of the traditions of “light genre” theatres such as “Tsvirkun”, “La Boheme”, which initiated art of light genre 30 years previously. Lviv spectator, who previously heard songs and jokes in other languages, now had an opportunity to hear Ukrainian humor at a high artistic level.

A kind of musical comedy of Z. Tarnavskyy “Kupuyemo — Prodayemo” enjoyed a considerable success at the premiere. And then — a number of new and original shows such as “Bo Viyna Viynoyu”, “Vid Vukha do Vukha”, “Oh Serce, Ty Serce”, “Padayut snizhynky” staged by Z. Tarnavskyy, V. Blavatskyy, P. Soroka³¹. Very popular among the audience were three figures in Lviv types gallery: Misko Makolondra (Ya. Stadnyk), advisor Shchypka (A. Murativ), Pelagia Dub (I. Lavrivska). The later productions of the theatre — “Odne Malenke Ale”, “Ce Tobi i Meni” instilled the hope of spectators for better times and new performances with new repertoire³².

The peculiarity of artistic life of this period in Lviv was a combination of art and sport in the form of spectacle. Such events were held in Lviv in 1943 and brought about great revival in the cultural life of the city. The essence of the spectacle was to conduct sensational football matches between writers and artists. Members of both teams were recognised figures in the literary and artistic

²⁸Pysmennyk pered literaturnym sudom. Avtorskyy vechir Rostuslava Yendyka, Lvivski visti, 29.11.1942.

²⁹Veselyy Lviv, Lvivski visti, 280, 1942.

³⁰Teatr “Veselyy Lviv”, Nashi dni 4, 13, 7, 1943, p. 15.

³¹Skromnyy yuviley. Rik praci teatru malyh form “Veselyy Lviv”, Krakivski visti, 30.12.1943.

³²Zi sceny i estrady, Krakivski visti, 19.02.1944; Premyera u “Veselomu Lvovi”, Krakivski visti, 10.03.1944.

life of the city — I. Nimchuk, R. Yendyk, B. Nyzhankivskyy, V. Karhut, M. Semchyshyn, O. Tarnavskyy, Z. Tarnavskyy, Yu. Kosach, T. Myhal. Another team was represented by artists — M. Azovskyy, R. Smolskyy, E. Kozak, M. Muhyn, S. Lytvynenko³³. Writers won the decisive match — 7:4 — on May 2nd, 1943, at the stadium in Stryiska Street. Revenues of this event were intended for the “Pysanka Ukrainskiy Ditvori”³⁴.

Theatre of small forms “Cheerful Lviv” continued the sports theme by creating the original program under a popular slogan “Sport in masses”. The 16 episodes of the program presented such sports as football, horse racing, discus throwing, running under the names “Sportswoman of Strong Emotions”, “Goldfish”, “Green Tribune”³⁵.

September 1943 was eventful. Besides the regional track-and-field competitions and great radio concert for volunteers of the “Galicia” Division, the event “Live chess” was organized³⁶. There were two teams — princely warriors, led by Prince and Polovtsi, led by Khan. Performers were actors of the Lviv Opera, director — V. Pazdriy, artistic director — V. Blavatskyy, who also was the executive director of Opera theatre. The victory of the prince’s armed forces delighted a huge audience³⁷.

Ukrainian musical life in the General Government expanded under the direction of the Union of Ukrainian musicians, whose elected chairman was the famous composer S. Ludkevych. The whole musical culture of Galicia developed on the basis of choir. So, during the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mykola Lysenko, a grand regional choirs concert took place in Lviv, with the participation of about 400 choirs³⁸.

Appreciable contribution to the development of Ukrainian culture was made by artists — painters and sculptors who were united in the Union of Ukrainian fine artists in Lviv. The union organized a series of exhibitions of Ukrainian artists, which were attended by such prominent artists as O. Kulchytska, A. Manastyrskyy, S. Hordynskyy, O. Kurylas etc.

³³Sensacyini zmagannya, Lvivski visti, 21.04.1943.

³⁴Sensacyini zmagannya. Mytci ta pysmennyky trenuyut, Lvivski visti, 30.04.1943.

³⁵T. Kulchytskyy, Nova programa u “Veselomu Lvovi”, Lvivski visti, 19.05.1943.

³⁶Nebudenna impreza. Zmagannya gyvyh shakhovyh figur, Lvivski visti, 9.09.1943.

³⁷Knyaz’ Monomah peremagaye polovciv, Ridna zemlya, 19.09.1943.

³⁸Za muzychnu kulturu, Krakivski visti 160, 1942.

Thus, despite some political and material restrictions Lviv artistic life did not stop. The activity of cultural representatives became a manifestation of the strengthening national spirit, and dissension to occupation regime.

Orest Krasowski

**KULTURA I OŚWIATA WE LWOWIE W CZASIE OKUPACJI
NIEMIECKIEJ**

Streszczenie

Pomimo politycznych i materialnych ograniczeń spowodowanych II wojną światową artystyczne życie Lwowa toczyło się nadal. Działalność przedstawicieli kultury stała się wyrazem rosnącego w siłę ducha narodowego i niezgody na okupacyjny reżim. Szkolnictwo, literatura, teatr, muzyka i działalność sportowa w Galicji i we Lwowie nieprzerwanie się rozwijały.