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PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES OF GERMAN TROOPS IN UKRAINE (FEBRUARY – APRIL 1918)

Abstract. *The purpose* of the study is to find out, based on the testimony of contemporaries, what methods of procuring food and other resources were used by the German troops in the Ukrainian People's Republic (February – April of 1918). **The research methodology** is based on the principles of historicism, systematicity, objectivity and integrity, on general scientific and special scientific methods (functional, problem-chronological historical systemic methods, as well as methods of criticism of historical sources). **The scientific novelty** of the research consists in the fact that for the first time, within the framework of a special study, the issue of procurement activities of the German armed units in the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) has been considered. **Conclusions.** Since February of 1918, the German military group had been stationed on the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic – military assistance forces invited by the Ukrainian government to protect against aggression of Soviet Russia. In Ukraine the German troops had to take care of their own supplies, as well as carry out orders from the command to purchase raw materials and other goods (primarily food) for export to their homeland, and therefore, in addition to performing actual combat missions, they also carried out procurement activities. The main way to obtain what was needed was to buy at market prices (under free trade conditions), but at the same time, the army widely used requisitioning – forced paid withdrawal. When carrying out requisitions, the German military sometimes committed abuses – they paid an incomplete price or did not pay at all, resorted to fraud with receipts, and took away property that was vital to the owners. Disputes between the German military and the Ukrainian population regarding the seizure of property in a number of cases led to armed clashes. Cases of abuse, having become widely publicized, had an extremely negative impact on the attitude of the Ukrainian society towards the German troops. At the same time, the scale of abuse should not be exaggerated. Judging by the testimonies of the then contemporaries, this was not a general practice, but individual incidents.

Key words: *Ukrainian People's Republic, German Empire, Austro-Hungarian and German troops in Ukraine (1918), export, requisition, procurement system.*

ЗАГОТІВЕЛЬНІ ЗАХОДИ НІМЕЦЬКИХ ВІЙСЬК В УКРАЇНІ (ЛЮТИЙ – КВІТЕНЬ 1918 РОКУ)

Анотація. *Мета дослідження* – ґрунтуючись на свідченнях сучасників, з'ясувати, які способи заготівлі продовольства та інших ресурсів застосовували німецькі війська в Українській Народній Республіці (лютий-квітень 1918 р.). **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах історизму, системності, об'єктивності й цілісності, на загальнонаукових і спеціально-наукових методах (функціональний, проблемно-хронологічний історико-системний методи, а також методи критики історичних джерел). **Наукова новизна** результатів роботи полягає у тому, що вперше в рамках спеціального дослідження розглянуто питання про заготівельні заходи німецьких збройних підрозділів в Українській Народній Республіці (УНР). **Висновок.** З лютого 1918 року на території Української Народної Республіки перебували німецькі військові підрозділи – сили збройної допомоги, покликані українським урядом для боротьби з більшовиками. Дбаючи про власне забезпечення та виконуючи розпорядження армійського керівництва про придбання сировини й інших товарів (насамперед продовольства) для вивозу до Німеччини, німецькі війська в УНР, крім виконання власне бойових завдань, провадили заготівельну кампанію. Основним способом заготівлі було придбання на умовах вільної торгівлі, але водночас арміїці широко застосовували реквізицію – примусове оплатне вилучення. Вилучаючи продукти й речі, німецькі військові подекуди допускали зловживання, зокрема, платили неповну ціну або взагалі брали безплатно, вдавалися до махінацій з розписками. Утиски спричинили низку збройних сутичок між військами й населенням. Зловживання, судячи зі свідчень сучасників, не становили загальну практику – йшлося про окремі інциденти. Проте, набувши широкого розголосу, ці випадки вкрай негативно позначились на ставленні українського суспільства до німецьких військ, сприяли формуванню образу німця-загарбника.

Ключові слова: Українська Народна Республіка, Німецька імперія, австро-угорські й німецькі війська в Україні (1918), експорт, реквізиція, закупівля, система заготівель.

Problem Statement. In February of 1918, Austria-Hungary and Germany, in response to the Ukrainian government's request for military assistance to oust the Bolsheviks, sent their troops to Ukraine. The Central Powers' army units, deployed to the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), needed supplies – they needed food, transport, and housing. In addition to the food products and things that the units needed, goods intended for export to the homeland were needed as well. According to the Peace Treaty between Ukraine and the countries of the Quadruple Alliance (February 9, 1918), the parties were to begin trade relations immediately after the conclusion of the Treaty. The German and Austro-Hungarian troops sent to Ukraine were ordered, without waiting for interstate trade to develop, to procure and send raw materials and industrial products to their countries.

Review of Recent Research and Publications. The events of 1918 in Ukraine are of considerable interest to scholars (among the recent studies there are the following ones: Kornovenko, & Pasichna, 2021, pp. 107–121; Kornovenko, Telvak, & Ilnytskyi, 2018, pp. 133–141; Lozovyi, 2021, pp. 78–86; Malynovsky, 2024, pp. 52–64; Malynovsky, & Tryhub, 2023, pp. 263–276). However, this interest is “uneven”: some contemporary phenomena and processes have been studied thoroughly, some – superficially. The latter includes the participation of the Central Powers troops in the procurement activities in

the Ukrainian People's Republic. Modern historians touch on this topic superficially – in the studies on the nature and peculiarities of the German and Austro-Hungarian military presence, on food policy, and in general on the situation in the Ukrainian state at the time (Dornik, 2015, pp. 266–276; Kuraiev, 2009, pp. 277, 278; Malynovska, & Malynovsky, 2018, pp. 102–108; Pyrih, 2018, p. 32; Shpektorenko, 1998, pp. 125–132).

At the same time, the coverage of the actions taken by the army is often selective and one-sided. Researchers usually focus on the cases of forced expropriation, without mentioning procurement under free trade conditions; abuses committed by military procurers are often considered not as exceptions but as the norm, repeatedly reproducing the thesis formulated in the Soviet times about brutal extortion as the supposedly main content of the Central Powers troops activities in Ukraine (“requisitions and plunder” – “the system of bloody management of the German invaders” (Derenkovskij, 1942, p. 24)). Since the issue of the Central Powers troops' role in the procurement campaign in Ukraine in the spring of 1918 has not been sufficiently studied, its study is a topical scientific objective.

Thus, the questions arise: were “requisitions and plunder” really the main method of supplying the German troops in Ukraine? How did the military forces acquire the food and other goods they needed for themselves and for export?

The purpose of the study is to find out, based on the testimony of contemporaries, what methods of procuring food and other resources were used by the German troops in the UNR (February – April of 1918).

Research Results. To purchase goods in the UNR, the German units received cash from the German state treasury. It is known, for example, that by the end of 1918, the military treasury of the 27th Reserve Corps contained at least 12 million rubles and 3 million marks (Bussmann, 1982, p. 439). Two options for settling purchases with sellers were provided: army procurers, when purchasing goods, either gave cash on the spot, or issued a receipt, with which sellers had to go to the military cash desk and receive the amount of money indicated in the receipt.

Taking care of their own supplies and fulfilling orders to prepare for sending them home, in the UNR the German military purchased everything valuable massively. On March 31, 1918, in her diary Countess Olha Sivers wrote a story heard from her friend about the food situation in Romny (Poltava province): “all products are very expensive because the Germans buy them in huge quantities, paying 3 rubles for 10 eggs, 15 rubles – for chickens, and sending them to Germany” (Sivers, 2015, p. 63).

The same thing happened in other regions of Ukraine. During March and April of 1918, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic received reports from all over the world about the organized mass purchase of raw materials and industrial products by the German soldiers. For example, Iziaslav County Land Committee telegraphed the following information: the German troops, with the help of their and our agents, are buying up from the population (,) regardless of the price (,) grain (,) fodder (,) and other goods” (Central State Archive of the Highest Authorities and Administration of Ukraine, f. 2552, d. 1, c. 39, p. 62).

This campaign did not bypass the capital either. “When (...) they entered Kyiv (March 2, 1918 – *Author*) (...), the Germans began to buy up everything in Kyiv – iron, leather, manufactures and send them to Germany”, – we read in the diary of Academician Volodymyr Vernadsky (Vernadsky, 1994, p. 74).

It was primarily about purchasing on free trade terms: the German soldiers, generously spending the cash given to them, bought everything offered for sale. At the same time, in

addition to purchasing by consent, they also used forced, paid withdrawal – requisition. This procurement procedure was convenient for the soldiers: it saved their time (because it excluded a lengthy bargaining) and protected against excessive price increases.

By resorting to requisition, the army made things easier for itself, but created problems for the society. Forced purchase implied payment of the full value of the confiscated goods. However, even while complying with this norm, the requisition burdened the population – because the owners were not asked whether they agreed to sell their goods. The example of a situation where the military, seeing what they needed, simply took it, ignoring the opinion of the owners, is given in the statement by Pozniaky village executive committee (Pozniaky village, Ostersky district, Chernihiv province), addressed to the chairman of the Council of People's Ministers of the UNR. The statement ran: “On March 6, 1918, the German soldiers arrived in our village and began taking away horses from our villagers, without having any official documents, and some of them were taken away on the way back from work. They do not care and pay no attention to all the pleas and requests, because they don't speak Russian or Ukrainian, and they don't have any interpreter” (CSAHAAU, f. 2552, d. 1, c. 39, p. 134).

In the village of Pozniaky, the soldiers noticed horses suitable for requisition. Usually, the property and goods not intended for sale were not seen, because the owners, without any desire to sell it, hid it. If the products and goods were not visible, how could the military know about their very existence? The solution to this problem entailed another restriction of civilians' rights – being in search of what they needed, the military broke into the houses of civilians.

As an example, let us cite the incident that occurred in the village of Karmanovo (Tyraspol district, Kherson province) on August 28, 1918. Chronologically, this incident goes beyond the scope of the article and its participants were not German, but Austro-Hungarian servicemen. However, it can be assumed that something similar happened before and also involved the German servicemen were involved into it.

Karmanovo (until 1915 – Neudorf) was the German settlement (German colony, the village of German colonists). As we learn from the protocol drawn up by the village headman, the requisition affected the farms of Theobald Veil, Johann Zindler, Friedrich Lippert, Jakob Job and Johann Hofer. The Austro-Hungarian soldiers, without asking permission, entered the manor, went down into the cellar or climbed up into the attic, took some of the food stored there (lard, flour, and bran), and, after paying, left.

In particular, Friedrich Lippert testified: “Austrian soldiers entered the yard and, without asking, went up to the attic when he (Lippert – *Author*) saw them and followed them; having gone up to the attic (,) the eldest of them (,) a non-commissioned officer (but he called himself an officer), seeing a pile of wheat and pointing at 1 ½ sacks of flour (,) said: “You don't have any extra wheat, but we'll take the flour away” and (,) turning to the soldiers (,) ordered them to take half a sack (he had to repeat the order three times)”. Thus, having taken away 3 poods of flour, the soldiers paid Lippert 30 rubles (i.e. 10 rubles per pood) (CSAHAAU, f. 2311, d. 1, c. 146, p. 392).

And what if the owner not only did not put the property up for sale, not only did not show it, but, on the contrary, carefully hid it? In that troubled time many owners kept their grain stocks not in barns, but in hiding places. General Wilhelm Groener, one of the top commanders of the German group of troops in Ukraine, wrote in his memoirs: “those who had at least something hid it, as it is customary in Ukraine, in deep pits in the ground” (Groener, 1957, pp. 390, 391).

The first cases of requisitioning reinforced the following practice – such cases encouraged farmers to hide what had not been hidden before. Thus, in early March of 1918, after the German troops had “requisitioned and looted peasants’ property” (the words from a witness statement), the residents of the village of Mykilska Borshchahivka near Kyiv moved their livestock to the neighbouring village of Shuliavka to “hide it from the Germans” (Rybalko, 1967, pp. 34, 35).

Trying to find hidden property, the military conducted searches, i.e. they did not simply “visit” the farms without the owners’ consent, but turned everything upside down there. In his diary Volodymyr Vernadsky wrote the following: “The Germans in Kyiv Governorate (...) and in Poltava made a stunning impression on the peasants: with the help of dogs they discovered buried grain and pork, and with a magnetic arrow – hidden weapons!” (Vernadsky, 1994, p. 75).

While being housed in public institutions (for example, in schools) or in private houses, army soldiers often disposed of their owners’ property as if it had been their own – i.e. requisitioning turned from a one-time event into a process. For example, Pavlo Mykhalevych, a priest of one of the parishes near Bilopillia (Sumy district, Kharkiv province), which the German offensive reached at the end of March 1918, complained to the general of the UNR armed forces, Volodymyr Sikevych, that the German soldiers, living in the house, “smashed (...) the cellars, exterminated the goods” (Beshulia, 2019, p. 312).

In addition to searches, there was another way to make the seizure possible – not to search the owners for the necessary items, but to force them to deliver goods to the military. Pavlo Mzkhalevych told how the procurement was organized in his parish: “Every week, our parishioners carried everything the Germans ordered them to the yard, it was all packed and sent to Germany without any payment (in cash – *Author*) to the peasants, they were just given some receipts, no one could make out what was written there. (...) If someone did not follow the order, then the second week peasants had to bring twice as much as punishment, and the third time such people were sent to work in Germany, and there their trace disappeared” (Beshulia, 2019, p. 312).

Often, the compensation provided during the requisition was, as it should be, full, but the seizure concerned property that could not be seized under any circumstances. Imagine the situation of a person from whom all his supplies and essential items were taken away – they paid a good price, but did not take into account that the owner could not do without this property. In his diary Volodymyr Vernadsky wrote on April 1, 1918: “In the villages, the Germans take everything away, they pay – but do not take into account the needs of the population” (Vernadsky, 1994, p. 67).

Disregard for the owner's opinion and pressure on him were components of the coercive measure. For the population, these were hardships, but they were more or less within the limits of the norm – they could be eliminated only by prohibiting requisition. However, they were often accompanied by outright violations.

One of them was a non-equivalent payment. As noted, a person or institution that was subject to requisition should have been compensated for the full value of the seized property. In reality, the military did not always adhere to this rule. In his diary the Ukrainian poet and public figure Ostap Lutsnyi, a serviceman of the Austro-Hungarian Army Group of Archduke Wilhelm, recalled how on April 7, 1918, together with another officer, he requisitioned a car from Kherson zemstvo (Lutsnyi, 1985, p. 91). Apparently, it was the “Mercedes” car that belonged to Kherson County Food Board. (Malynovska & Malynovsky, 2018, p. 104). O. Lutsnyi did not mention how the car's owners reacted to the requisition. However,

we know about it from the official correspondence of the Ukrainian authorities. Kherson zemstvo agreed to give up the “Mercedes” car, but demanded to pay not a partial, but the full cost, because at one time (in the summer of 1917) it had purchased this car for 16 thousand rubles, and from the Austro-Hungarian military, according to their statement, it was supposed to receive only 8 thousand (Malynovska, & Malynovsky, 2018, p. 104). The above case concerned the Austro-Hungarian army, but, of course, there were cases when the German soldiers did not pay the full price either.

It happened that the owners of confiscated property did not receive any compensation at all. We learn about such forced “gifts” in favour of the military, in particular, from the complaints of the victims. Thus, the statement of the residents of the village of Mykhailivka (Kyiv district) ran: “On March 8 (...) a German officer and five soldiers of the 2nd Dragoon Squadron, under the threat of violence and punishment, took away 73 poods 16 pounds of seed oats from Mykhailivka farm of V. I. Pakentryr, and in the village of Mykhailivka, under the threat of death, the same soldiers and the officer robbed lard and eggs, while the aforementioned ranks of the German army broke the locks of the peasants’ barns and took the lard and eggs without paying money, and without even leaving any notes or receipts” (Rybalko, 1967, p. 39).

It also happened that a person was beset by two misfortunes at once – a person was deprived of the necessities, literally being taken away the last, and at the same time a person was paid a pittance or not paid at all. The German officer Hans Tintrup described a disgusting episode in his memoirs. While his army unit was located in Lutsk, in the first days of the offensive, he ordered the seizure of a local resident's cartload (“a good one”, “new”), which the unit needed to transport food supplies (oats and veal, apparently also obtained through requisition). Hans Tintrup believed that he had done the right thing, “according to the indisputable law of war”. However, the cartload owner and his family had a completely different opinion. “The peasant family was inconsolable because of this loss; they followed the cartload with lamentations as we pulled it out, and stood around it crying as it was loaded and harnessed”, Hans Tintrup recalled. Then, according to him, it was even worse: “the peasant (...) walked all day next to it (a cartload – *Author*) (...), and in the evening he appeared before me, spoke the most pleading words, and kissed the hem of my uniform with a humble bow”. In the end, one of the officers forced the peasant to leave by handing him a ten-mark bill and at the same time threatening him with a pistol” (Tintrup, 1938, p. 17, 18). Hans Tintrup, speaking about what he called a “really difficult case”, admitted that it was not the only one case (Tintrup, 1938, p. 17).

A similar incident was also mentioned by the head of the UNR military department, Colonel Oleksandr Zhukovskiy. It happened on the way to Manevychi railway station, where O. Zhukovskiy and another member of the UNR government, Hryhoriy Sydorenko, were travelling to hold a meeting with the German command (on March 20, 1918). “A peasant stops us with tears in his eyes and a piece of paper in his hands and asks us to come to help him. He says – the Germans came – they took away the last hay and the cow, and they gave us this piece of paper (,) on which something is written in German, will you help me. Protect me so that they don’t rob me. I will die of hunger and my family will die as well. My God, my God, we were robbed by our people, the Ukrainians, and now a German has come (,) and is robbing us”, O. Zhukovskiy wrote in his memoirs. The ministers were unable to provide help and protect ordinary people. They only said that the state would pay the bills, “but this was more said just to get away with it” (Zhukovskiy, 2018, p. 129).

In some places, forced gratuitous requisition was not a one-time occurrence, but systematic. Thus, on March 13, 1918, the head of Khotiv Volost People's Council (the village

of Khotiv, Kyiv County) reported to the county commissar: “It has been six days since the German troops are quartered in Khotivska volost area, especially in the village of Hatne, and have begun the arbitrary robbery of peasant property, namely: bread, oats, hay, and food supplies; they are taking everything for free. A German or two of them, they go around all the villages, making incomprehensible demands in German, they don't know Russian and do not speak Russian at all, and only by pointing at the objects they demand hay, oats, straw, which, in fact, the peasants desperately need; they take all this arbitrarily and without any payment, they kill and take away the pigs” (Rybalko, 1967, pp. 41, 42).

Sometimes citizens who were subject to requisition were not only unpaid compensation, but they themselves were forced to give money, in addition to food and things. This was the so-called contribution – a fine for failure to comply with the requisition order. Accusing people of ignoring the requisition order, the military confiscated their property and imposed a fine. For example, on March 23, 1918, the Mykilsko-Borshchahivska volost administration reported to the commandant of Kyiv, General Konstantyn Prysovsky: “Contributions are being imposed on villagers, with a deadline of several hours for their fulfillment; those who have not complied with the requirement (to pay a fine – *Author*) are being subjected to a general search” (Minc & Gorodeckij, 1942, p. 22).

A purely conditional line separated gratuitous seizures from robberies. In Lutsk such crime occurred immediately after the start of the German offensive in Ukraine. The city was occupied by the German troops on the first day of this offensive (February 18, 1918), and four days later the German servicemen committed a theft from one of the local residents – a Russian officer, commander of the 18th Automobile Squadron. While the lieutenant colonel was demonstrating the squadron's economy to the German officers, their subordinates broke into his apartment and took everything away. The victim complained to the Ukrainian government commissioner, Semen Komirny: “On February 22 (...) about 12 and 4 p.m., the German soldiers broke into and robbed my apartment in the brewery building (...), where the 18th Automobile Squadron is housed. The robbery took place while the squadron's vehicles were being inspected by the German officers and I was with them. Everything was robbed from the apartment, so I was left with only what I was wearing only” (CSAHAAU, f. 3766, d. 1, c. 162, p. 59). The list of stolen items attached to the complaint included clothing, weapons, food, as well as “dishes, knives, forks, spoons, 3 pince-nez, 2 spectacles, razors, galoshes, shoes, and other items, orders, equipment” – a total of 4,991 rubles worth of property (CSAHAAU, f. 3766, d. 1, c. 162, p. 59).

Receipt fraud became widespread. This was also a robbery, but not an obvious one – the victim realized that he/she had been robbed, not immediately, but after some time. The essence of the fraud was as follows. Taking advantage of the fact that the sellers did not understand German and did not know what a document drawn up in compliance with all the rules looked like, the military, when making requisitions, instead of receipts, issued simple pieces of paper to the owners of the confiscated property. In his memoirs Hans Tintrup wrote the following: “As long as the owner received legally correct requisition receipts, with a precise description of the property taken away, if possible also with an agreed price and, above all, with the stamp of the military unit and the signature of the officer, every was correct and there was nothing to be said; such receipts were unconditionally paid by the German military services later. (...) But was it worth delivering them (receipts by the German military services – *Author*)? The peasant could read Russian in some cases, rarely, but German – never; therefore, he was unable to make sure that everything he provided was

correctly indicated on the paper given to him; and the signature was a complete mystery to him. The stamp was the most important. But even in this case, (...) for the most naive the German servicemen would stamp a coin, and for the more intelligent – a military or other stamp, (...) stamped illegibly or even intentionally altered” (Tintrup, 1938, p. 15).

It should also be noted that during the requisition, not only property interests but also the personal dignity of citizens were often harmed – the military insulted them. For example, in the complaint cited above by the head of Khotiv People's Council, it was emphasized that the German army soldiers, while confiscating food, behaved “very rudely and with threatened the population” (Rybalko, 1967, p. 42). On March 19, 1918, reporting to Berlin about the abuses committed by the German military, the head of the German diplomatic mission in Ukraine, Alfons Mumm Freiherr von Schwarzenstein, recalled the case when a receipt issued to a peasant contained the inscription “A pig was obtained from a pig” (Baumgart, 1966, p. 124). A priest Pavlo Mykhalevych told General Volodymyr Sikevych about receipts that were written in German: “Slap the bearer of this receipt twice in the face” (Beshulia, 2019, p. 312).

If the owner did not accept the fact that his property was taken away, not only denied and protested, but also actively resisted, conflicts and even armed clashes occurred. One of such clashes occurred at Zhuliany railway station (Kyiv district) shortly after the German troops entered Kyiv. We know about the circumstances of this incident from the materials of the investigation conducted by the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies.

According to the eyewitness, on the morning of March 8, 1918, the news reached the station that the German soldiers were looting the house of a local railway worker. Since, according to this eyewitness, “cases of looting, or violent requisition, had occurred previously in nearby villages”, “the slightest rumor was enough to create tension and bring numerous residents to their feet”. A group of people led by the station chief went to the house of a local railway worker, found a requisition group of three German soldiers there, and demanded an explanation from them about their actions.

The argument continued for some time, then the German soldiers got on a cartload and drove away, and the Zhulians rushed to the ticket office, where several rifles were stored, grabbed them and ran after the German soldiers. They were already far away, they could not catch up with them, until another requisitioning group appeared on the way – two German soldiers, also on a cartload. “Taking the latter for the former”, according to the witness, the Zhulians tried to detain these two. They resisted, and shooting broke out. In the end, the German soldiers ran away.

However, the incident did not end. Clashes, i.e. situations in which the use of force by the military was met with resistance, led to a new round of repression. This happened in Zhuliany. An hour after the incident, the German unit arrived at the station, with the aim of finding and detaining the participants in the attack on the German soldiers.

The commander of this unit ordered the arrest of station employees and several local residents, and then carried out a savage massacre. According to witnesses, he “selected from the total mass 8 people, in his opinion the most suspicious, (...) and began to interrogate them with the help of an interpreter. In order to identify the guilty, (...) a striking form of intimidation was used. All 8 men were given a rifle (...) in their hands and were lined up; then the formal and detailed preparations for the shooting began; (...) it came to the point that the officer raised his revolver to give the signal. (...) The experiences of the people designated for shooting are beyond any description”.

The end of the event was as follows: “At the last moment (...) the telegraph operator stepped forward and declared: “I am a free Cossack (i.e. a member of the Free Cossacks –

a paramilitary organization in the UNR – *Author*) and I shot at the Germans because they were looting”. At the word “looting” the Germans burst into rage. Based on the telegraph operator’s testimony, two more of those who shot were identified, as well as the station chief (...). After that, the rest were released, and four (...) men, with rifles, were taken in the direction of Post-Volynsky” (Ptashynskiy, 1933, pp. 133–135). Within a few days, these people – the UNR citizens Bublîi, Serbyn, M. Nahazhevskiy and Jo. Nahazhevskiy – were sentenced to prison by the German military court (Verstiuk, 1997, pp. 197, 344).

The incident in Zhuliany was not the only one. At the same time, a similar incident occurred in another settlement near Kyiv – in the village of Markhalivka. The circumstances of the case were set out in a statement submitted to Kyiv district commissioner by commissioners T. Kovalenko and A. Synelnyk. On March 7, 1918, three German soldiers arrived in Markhalivka and “arbitrarily began to take away everything they saw: oats, chickens, eggs, boots”. The villagers demanded that the soldiers show their service IDs. They refused and “began to threaten the villagers with revolvers”. The German soldiers’ audacity cost them their lives – “a few guys (...) made an armed resistance against the soldiers and the German soldiers were killed”.

The murder led to revenge. On March 8, 1918, at about three o’clock in the morning, the German punitive detachment entered the village. The soldiers set fire to two barns, and when the villagers ran to put out the fire, they opened fire on them. “People began to hide in panic, and the Germans caught and beat them. By morning, almost all villagers fled. The German soldiers began to take over, breaking windows and doors, and looting everything. They loaded everything on carts and took it away. They broke into the consumer society store, killed the salesman, and robbed the store. They stabbed an 80-year-old grandfather to death”.

On March 11, 1918, the punishers appeared in Markhalivka again. They surrounded the village and began shelling it. “Innocent women and children fled in fear, and the German soldiers fired from machine guns and rifles. They drove almost the entire population out of the village. They took away the property that had not been taken. In addition, the women who did not have time to escape were raped. There was much more they did that we are not describing...” – those facts were included into the statement of T. Kovalenko and A. Synelnyk. Eleven residents of Markhalivka, arrested that day by the punishers, were sent to prison (Panch, 1942, p. 10, 11).

Of course, not all German soldiers behaved as exploiters and oppressors in Ukraine. While some soldiers shamelessly resorted to abuse, others avoided it. While in some places commanders turned a blind eye to crimes committed by their subordinates, in other places they severely punished soldiers for committing crimes. Cases of violations of the norm became public in the Ukrainian society. Public opinion usually ignored its observance, taking it for granted, because that is how it was. Therefore, in contemporary narrative and documentary sources, positive reviews of the German soldiers’ behaviour are rare. The then contemporaries made such confessions when, for the sake of justice, they wanted to refute the idea that looting by foreign soldiers was a widespread and everyday occurrence.

For example, in his memoirs an ethnographer and official of the Ukrainian State Mykola Mohyliansky wrote the following: “How did the Germans behave in the Ukrainian village? Everything depended, of course, on the personal command staff. I had the opportunity to personally observe the Germans who were at posts in the village of Kaniv district, Kyiv province, who did not cause any hatred and irritation among the population and did not leave behind bad feelings. For all the products and goods they took away from the local population,

the German soldiers paid properly and did not offend the population in any way. In other places, I read a number of detailed reports and investigative protocols about this, there was a direct, shameless and cynical looting” (Mogilyanskij, 1930, p. 127).

Judging by the complaints of the victims and the Ukrainian officials' reports, such places were usually located nearby. That is, they were the areas of deployment of individual units, whose commanders tolerated the soldiers' atrocities for a certain period of time. The above mentioned examples of abuses concerned mainly two regions – the frontline territory in Volyn (Lutsk, Manevychi) and the outskirts of Kyiv (Khotiv, Zhuliany, Markhalivka, Pozniaky, Mykilska Borshchahivka) from the beginning of the German military campaign against the Bolsheviks (February 18) to the end of March 1918.

Thus, in the report to the provincial commissar describing the state of affairs in the villages around the capital, Kyiv district commissar on March 25, 1918, emphasized that the violations did not cover a certain village, but a group of them, extending to a certain area: “in the regions closest to Kyiv, the German units made requisition of horse stocks, livestock, and food without any contact with the requisitioning and food authorities (of Ukraine – *Author*) and (...) take away all the seed material and even baked bread, so that nothing remains on the farm. (...) During requisitions, the German soldiers do not give any receipts, not to mention unfair prices in the case of payment (in cash – *Author*). At the same time, both during the day (.) and often at night, there are raids by the German soldiers, sometimes without command personnel, who commit uniformed robberies: they break chests, steal money, gold items, all kinds of clothing, including women's, and all other household goods and treasures. They attack women who, along with the population, flee from villages and hide in the forests” (Minc & Gorodeckij, 1942, pp. 22, 23).

However, outside the “anomalous zones,” in the rest of the territory of the Ukrainian state, there were no or almost no violations. One of the leaders of the Ukrainian army, Colonel Oleksandr Shapoval, testified: “Moving with the German armed forces to the East of Ukraine, I monitored the behaviour of the Germans and Austrians during this campaign very closely. And I firmly state (and let our future historians note this) that in that (...) direction (...) (Kyiv – Poltava – Kharkiv) no looting or any violence against our population was committed by the Allied armies. There were minor misunderstandings between the local population and Allied soldiers, but these misunderstandings arose from a lack of understanding of each other. The Ukrainian people did not speak the German language, and the Germans did not speak Ukrainian either. The German command immediately informed me about this misunderstanding by field telephone (...), I sent a sergeant who knew both languages well (.) and the misunderstanding was resolved” (Shapoval, 2003, p. 54).

Even in cases where it was about involuntary provision of services and goods – requisition, the German military knew how to behave in a way that aroused not condemnation but, on the contrary, respect among the citizens of the UNR who were subjected to coercion. Or even admiration – especially when compared to the soldiers of the Russian army. On March 30, 1918, in his diary, Doctor Oleksandr Nesvitsky, a resident of Poltava, wrote his impressions about the housed Russian and German soldiers: “The Germans occupied one room in our apartment by requisition, our dining room with entrance to the apartment. Several people settled there. They kept quiet, modest, and were very polite. When meeting us: “Guten Morgen, Guten Tag, Guten Abend”. They cleaned the rooms thoroughly every day, swept and mopped the floors, and when they left, they cleaned the entire room thoroughly and handed it over to us in a perfect cleanliness and order, without damaging or dirtying anything. As they

left, they thanked us for the apartment and apologized for the trouble they had caused. What a huge parallel (abyss – *Author*) between cultured people and our “conscious” soldiers!... savages!” (Nesvitskyi, 1995, p. 48).

Where there was no oppression and abuse, where the German military tried not to use requisition at all, good relations developed between them and the local population. While a number of outrageous incidents occurred in the villages near Kyiv, the situation in the city itself did not cause complaints among the majority of its residents. Thus, in his memoirs Professor of the University of St. Volodymyr Mykola Bubnov emphasized the following: “It must be admitted that the German troops, and not only the officers, behaved with dignity, courtesy and calmness in Kyiv. I have not heard any complaints about them” (Bubnov, 2017, p. 259).

Thus, forced property seizure and abuses associated with it were not a common practice. However, they created a general negative impression. Rumors exaggerated them, contributing to the formation of a German-invader image in Ukraine. On March 24, 1918, in a report to the leadership, Admiral Albert Hopman, the head of the Navigational and Technical Commission in Odesa, reported: “Immediately after the Austrians, after the occupation of Odesa (on March 13, 1918 – *Author*), loaded several wagons with food, there was great excitement among the population, incredible rumors about requisitions, about the export of huge amounts of grain spread and, of course, the rumours are considered to be true” (Hopman, 2004, pp. 1096, 1097).

The image of the German oppressor was made convincing by outrageous stories. Among them, undoubtedly, along with real ones, there were also figured out ones. In his memoirs the Ukrainian writer Hryhoriy Hryhoriev described a terrible event that supposedly happened in the village of Tarasivka near Kyiv. During the requisition, the German soldiers took away all the food from the house of an elderly man. The owner asked to leave at least one sack of flour, otherwise he and his grandson would die of hunger. He was refused (“the officer (...) calm and attentive (...) replied: “We are carrying out the command’s order...””), and the old man shouted angrily: “Then kill me on the spot, I will die of hunger anyway!” The officer did not answer, but after the requisition was completed, he ordered the man to be shot, telling the community: “Grandfather received a bullet because he asked for it”. At the same time, two more villagers, invalids of the World War, were executed: one hid half a pound of lard, the other – a rifle (“he explained to the officer that he had brought it from the front, it would be used for hunting”) (Hryhoriev, 1961, pp. 315, 316). Hryhoriy Hryhoriev stated that he learned about this event in the summer of 1918 from the residents of Tarasivka (Hryhoriev, 1961, p. 314). Perhaps this story is true, or perhaps it, like many similar ones that frightened the Ukrainian society at the time, was not a fact, but figured out.

Conclusions. Since February of 1918, the German military group had been stationed on the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic – military assistance forces invited by the Ukrainian government to protect against aggression of Soviet Russia. In Ukraine the German troops had to take care of their own supplies, as well as carry out orders from the command to purchase raw materials and other goods (primarily food) for export to their homeland, and therefore, in addition to performing actual combat missions, they also carried out procurement activities. The main way to obtain what was needed was to buy at market prices (under free trade conditions), but at the same time, the army widely used requisitioning – forced paid withdrawal. When carrying out requisitions, the German military sometimes committed abuses – they paid an incomplete price or did not pay at all, resorted to fraud with receipts, and took away property that was vital to the owners. Disputes between the German military

and the Ukrainian population regarding the seizure of property in a number of cases led to armed clashes. Cases of abuse, having become widely publicized, had an extremely negative impact on the attitude of the Ukrainian society towards the German troops. At the same time, the scale of abuse should not be exaggerated. Judging by the testimonies of the then contemporaries, this was not a general practice, but individual incidents.

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