

Alla Ziakun¹ 

FROM SAVINGS TO DESTRUCTION: MONUMENT PROTECTION ACTIVITIES IN UKRAINE IN THE FIRST TWENTIES OF SOVIET UNIOUN

ABSTRACT:

Today, there is a growing interest in national traditions, historical and cultural monuments in Ukraine. Preserving the historical heritage is not only a professional but also a political task. Therefore, the development of effective legal norms in the field of the preservation of cultural values based on historical experience, both positive and negative, is an urgent task. The practice of destroying cultural monuments, defined by totalitarian administration, neglected of historical and national traditions, uncultured behavior, which undermined the spirituality of the Ukrainian people, deprived it of national masterpieces of historical heritage is considered. The author analyzes the monumental actions of the Soviet leadership on the cultural and historical values of Ukraine in the 20's - 30's.

INTRODUCTION.

Existing analyses on this topic can be divided into two groups: the work of historians, public figures of the Soviet period and the study of contemporary domestic authors. The works of Soviet historians were ideologized, so the coverage of the problem seemed incomplete, one-sided. These writings did not refer to the losses caused by the Soviet power, and if something was mentioned then it was submitted because of the "necessity" for the further development of the state. The "New Look" raised the problem of lost historical and cultural values in contemporary Ukrainian historiography. With increasing interest in this topic, some aspects of the attitude of the Bolshevik regime to Ukrainian culture and the destruction of its national monuments began to be explored [1-5]. However, the analysis of the literature suggests that the topic under study has not yet been sufficiently developed, and some aspects of it have not yet attracted the attention of historians.

¹ Ph.D. (Historical sciences), Associate professor
Sumy State University, UKRAINE



POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS.

After October 1917, establishing the state protection of cultural monuments, the Bolshevik authorities proclaimed the preservation of cultural and historical values of all peoples that were part of the Russian Empire. Therefore, on November 24, 1917, the RNA and the Central Executive Committee made a decision "On the transfer of trophies to the Ukrainian people" [6], which were selected in Ukraine since Catherine II. The basis for the establishment of a state control system for antique monuments was the decree of the RNA of the RSFSR "On Registration, Registration and Protection of Monuments of Art and Antiquities" of October 5, 1918 [7].

The first conservation measures were implemented in Ukraine in January 1919, when two sections were created at the Kharkiv Provincial Department of Public Education - the museum and the monument protection. All district and district councils were issued an appeal proposing immediate measures to protect the historical and cultural values left by their owners. These measures covered the territory of Poltava, Kyiv, Chernihiv and Katerynoslav provinces. In times of war, there was a need to create a government body that would lead and coordinate the preservation of cultural heritage on a nationwide scale. Therefore, in February 1919, the All-Ukrainian Committee for the Protection of Monuments of Art and Antiquities (VUKOPMIS) was established in Kharkiv [8].

The creation of a legal framework was important for the protection of cultural monuments of Ukraine. By the decree of the Soviet Government of Ukraine of April 1, 1919, all historical and artistic values on the territory of the republic were passed to the People's Commissariat of Education. Nationalization of historical and artistic values began to take place throughout Ukraine. The museums, estates, historical and local lore and art institutions of the largest cities of Ukraine were subject to it.

Thus, in June 1919, a special decree on the basis of nationalized meetings of Bohdan and Barbara Khanenko created the Museum of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (since 1934, the Kiev State Museum of Western and Oriental Art). The same decree nationalized the collections of Oscar Hansen's works of art, on the basis of which the Third State Museum was created, as well as the Kiev Art and Industrial and Scientific Museum, named after the First State Museum (since 1924, the T. Shevchenko All-Ukrainian History Museum, and since 1965, the State History Museum of the USSR).

In the same year, it was declared the property of the republic and the protected area of the Holosiivskyi Forest, formerly owned by the Kiev-Pechersk

Lavra (formerly Holosiivskyi Desert). Its management was entrusted to the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and the Museum of Religious Cult was established on the territory of Lavra [9].

The decrees of the Soviet government and the activities of the UNICEF created certain preconditions for the deployment of museum construction. If in 1910 there were 24 museums in Ukraine and 36 in 1917, then in 1918-1922, 63 new museums were organized on the basis of requisitioned collections [10].

The mid-twenties were promising. In June 1926, the UTSVK and the RNA of the USSR approved the "Regulations on Cultural and Environmental Monuments" [11].

According to this document, the state registration and classification of immovable monuments, their scientific research, creation of a network of historical and cultural and natural reserves, museums and other cultural institutions began. A prospective plan for historical and archaeological research was developed and scientific expeditions to 30 (out of 40) districts of Ukraine were already working in 1928. In particular, studies were carried out in Olvia, and archaeological excavations were restored on Berezan island. Scientific expeditions headed by O. Fedorovsky, M. Makarenko, F. Kozubovsky, S. Gamchenko worked in different regions of Ukraine. In the spring of 1927, in connection with the construction of the Dniproges, began historical and archeological studies of Zaporozhye, headed by D. Yavornitsky. His expedition discovered and saved numerous monuments of material culture of different eras in the territory from the Dnipro to Kichkass. Hundreds of boxes with archeological findings were sent to Kiev, Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk. During the years, the Dnepropetrovsk Museum registered 36,936 objects of historical and archeological significance that awaited further scientific study [6].

POLICY FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS.

In the late 1920s, the cultural progress of the Ukrainian people was interrupted by the authoritarian actions of the party leadership. The business of protecting monuments began to decline sharply. The dissemination of negative and meticulous treatment of ancient monuments has gained theoretical justification. According to M. Pokrovsky's periodization, all the monuments of the past were regarded as architectural and artistic works that recreate two epochs - feudalism and capitalism. According to the same scheme all issues of protection, research, use and promotion of monuments were considered. It was considered optional to preserve historical monuments



ideologically linked to the interests of the ruling classes. In practice, this led to the destruction and without economic use of antiquity, especially of a cult character: monasteries, churches, as well as estates of historical and cultural purpose.

In 1929, the reorganization of historical and historical museums began. The main essence of the changes at that time was that the monuments of archeology, history, works of art were over-complemented by diagrams and exhibitions on political topics. The view and assessment of the main role of the monument itself in the exposition changed. The principle of objectivity was replaced by a visual illustration of the various schemes. All of this exacerbated the negative attitude towards the monuments of material culture.

It should be noted that most of the monuments of historical and architectural importance were existing religious buildings (monasteries, cathedrals, churches, synagogues). Exactly against it in the 1920s the policy in the field of protection of cultural monuments pursued by the NKVD of the USSR was directed. The Second Congress of the Union of Warring Believers in June 1929 declared the fight against religion one of the most important areas of class struggle and one of the most important conditions for a socialist offensive.

Following the ideological aggression, a campaign to destroy the ancient cathedrals and monasteries began in a directive manner. According to the NKVD, in 1917 there were 106,356 operating prayer houses of all denominations in the country, and in 1928 - 38,194, including Orthodox ones, decreased from 77,767 to 32,995, respectively [6]. Monasteries, churches, synagogues were closed and dismantled by the citizens' decree for "building material". Often people uses explosives to destroy them. On the place of the demolished historical and architectural objects, the waste lands remained for a long time and were built much later. Not only religious buildings were demolished, but also civil architecture buildings on the pretext that they were an obstacle to new construction or street traffic.

Thus, due to local authorities, under the pretext of an acute shortage of bricks and stones, the remains of B. Khmelnytsky's castle in Chyhyryn disappeared. In general, the attitude to the Cossacks was "special": the burials of all hetmans of Ukraine and the Cossack leaders, including P. Saghaydachny in the Bratsk Monastery in Kiev, S. Kishka, Y. Shakha, I. Pidkovi near the Assumption Cathedral in Kanev were destroyed. Only the ruined tombs of the cat chieftains I. Sirko and K. Gordienko survived. Demolition or restructuring of architectural monuments in these years was sanctioned by administrative and



economic circles, in particular, by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and the opinion of scientists and experts was ignored. On the Left part of Ukraine in 1927 - 1932 almost all wooden churches, which were the pinnacle of the achievements of Ukrainian architecture, were destroyed, except for the churches in Novgorod-Siversk, Lebedyn, Novomoskovsk and several others [6].

The Vozdvizhensky monastery in Poltava was destroyed, the Church of the Intercession of 1690 in Sumy was destroyed; St. George's Church of XVIII century in Okhtyrka was destroyed; architectural monuments of the XVI - XVIII centuries also. Novgorod-Siverskyi and Mezhygirsky monasteries; trading rows of the XIX century in Chernihiv; fortifications in Kherson and Kamenets-Podilsky; the town hall with towers in Mogilev-Podilsky; royal Scythian mounds near Mariupol; the church in the village of Petrikivtsi in the Dnipropetrovsk region, built by P. Kalnyshevskyi, the church in the village of Malynivtsi in Kharkiv, painted by I. Repin were destroyed too.

In Ukraine at that time were destroyed not only models, drawings and photos of ancient churches, crosses and bell towers, but also embroidery with crosses. According to the Union of Military Disbelievers of Ukraine, during the year 1930 around 533 religious buildings were closed. From the 12380 church buildings that existed in Ukraine in 1917, 7341 of them were closed by 1936 [6].

The bodies of protection of monuments, which were not able to prevent the demolition of religious buildings, many of which were of historical and architectural importance, were limited to measures to partially preserve the property that remained from them. Special commissions were formed to evaluate the cultural property, consisting of representatives of the local council and a representative of the department of public education. The last one were given the right to withdraw things of historical, artistic or archeological value.

It was difficult for authorities to confront officially sanctioned prejudice over the legacy of past eras. In October 1931, the People's Commissar of the USSR adopted a decree "On the Status and Tasks of Protecting Cultural and Nature Monuments", in which he noted the unsatisfactory state of the preservation and use of cultural property. The decree stated that, contrary to the current security legislation, many cultural and nature monuments were illegally destroyed in recent years by state and public organizations and individuals [6].

It was proposed to increase the overall concern for the preservation of all cultural monuments from destruction, to approve the registers of newly discovered monuments, and to expand the network of historical, cultural and natural reserves. In addition, the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and other

scientific and educational institutions were invited to combine their research work with the protection, study and promotion of cultural and nature monuments. Unfortunately, despite all these proposals, the developed measures remained at the level of declarative floodlights.

In the fall of 1931, the editorial board of the journal "Proletarian Revolution" received a letter from Stalin "On some issues of the history of Bolshevism", which became a kind of program for the further development of historical science. He provided methodological guidance on how to write the history of the party and the revolutionary movement.

Now the leaders of the state were least interested in scientific truth, documentary authenticity, and in monuments of material culture, which did not serve to assert totalitarian ideas. Officially sanctioned negative attitudes to antiquities have become increasingly threatening. In fact, all the monuments of archeology, history, architecture and nature were out of state protection. They were sprayed on various departments and economic organizations.

As a rule, their fate was solved by officials who had nothing to do with the problems of preservation and study of cultural values. For example, barbaric destructive work was carried out by Metal Scrap - the State Trust for the Procurement, Processing and Delivery of Scrap Metal, which until 1930 was called Rudmetaltorg. These organizations, collecting non-ferrous metal for the needs of industry, destroyed the shrines. A striking example of this activity is the destruction of Askold's tomb. According to the first Master Plan for the reconstruction of Kiev in 1934 - 1936, Askold's tomb was cleared from the monuments of the past and turned into a city park of culture and recreation. They planned to destroy the richest aristocratic cemetery that existed here since the 19th century, smashed tombstones, tombstones that were used as material for the construction and decoration of parks. Valuable items from the buried graves were confiscated by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

The indifference and inhuman attitude to the historical heritage was so striking that the Main Directorate of the Police Headquarters issued a special decree "On the Protection of Cultural and Natural Monuments" of February 10, 1932 and develop and issue mandatory regulations for the protection of monuments. However, if such documents were accepted, there was almost no possibility of compliance.

Across the country, the business of protecting and using monuments was going through a difficult time, and it was imperative to take legislative action to state control of arbitrary administrative and economic orders in this area.

Therefore, in August 1932, the Central Executive Committee approved the Regulations on the Interagency Committee for the Protection of Monuments of Revolution, Art and Culture under the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR [12].

The Interagency Committee was entrusted with the overall oversight of the Government's regulations on the protection of monuments, the obligation to draw up lists of monuments subject to state protection, to resolve all questions about their use, demolition, reconstruction and restoration. But in Ukraine, the state of preservation of ancient monuments was nullified by the distortion of national politics.

The practice of destroying historical and architectural monuments in Ukraine gained even more during industrialization, which was accompanied by the rapid growth of old and the creation of new cities. In June 1933 the resolution "On drawing up and approval of projects of planning and socialist reconstruction of cities and other settlements of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic" was adopted, and the corresponding decree of the UTSVK and RNA of the Ukrainian SSR was approved on May 20, 1934 [6].

After transferring the capital from Kharkiv to Kyiv in January 1934, the restructuring of the city began. While master plans for the reconstruction of Moscow, Leningrad, and Kharkiv were developed over several years, this task was accomplished in Kyiv at an accelerated pace for the six months of 1935. General reconstruction of Kyiv lost and destroyed the St. Michael's Golden-domed cathedral of XII-XVIII centuries, Epiphany Church of the Fraternal Monastery of the XVII century, Baroque Buildings of the Cyril Monastery of the XII - XIX centuries, Alexander Nevsky cathedral of XIX century, Trisvetilitskaya church of XII - XVII centuries., Peter and Paul church of XVII century and many other attractions [6].

The negative practice of arbitrary destruction of ancient monuments of architecture during reconstruction and redevelopment did not pass other historical cities of Ukraine: Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnitsa, Odessa, Chernihiv, Poltava, Sumy, Kamenets-Podilsky. During the implementation of these projects, the monuments of history and architecture were demolished and reconstructed, ususally used for economic or atheistic purposes. Due to numerous devastations in the early 1940s, there were no churches in Vinnytsia, Donetsk, Kirovograd, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Khmelnytskyi regions, one in Lugansk, Poltava and Kharkiv. The destruction of the unique values of

centuries and old spiritual culture was combined with mass repression of the clergy and believers.

Along with the destruction and restructuring of architectural monuments, huge losses were suffered from their historical and artistic values. In the late 20ies began, and in the 30ies acquired a threatening scale of sales at auctions of works of art and monuments of antiquity, organized in the west by the All-Union Association "Antiques". The Soviet leadership treated cultural values as a commodity, a source of foreign currency. Almost for nothing, ancient treasures came true. The civilized world did not know such a sale of national cultural values. Ukraine received only 18 million rubles from this "cultural export" (more than 6000 tons), which accounted for a negligible share of total imports into the USSR (about 3.5 billion rubles) [6].

In addition, monuments of history and works of art from museums, libraries and archives were generously encouraged by the Soviet leadership, for political reasons, by foreign diplomats and businessmen.

This was especially noticeable when Western countries began to close trade relations with the USSR. The seized values that fell into the repositories of the State Museum Fund were also not insured for destruction: they died due to the lack of proper storage conditions and uncontrolled stretching by the employees of the Narcotics Service, Antiquities Association, ODPU - NKVD, Westerners and their own.

CONCLUSIONS.

By the end of the 1930s, the policy of eradicating Ukraine's national historical and cultural heritage monuments began to decline somewhat. It is not easy to say what caused these reasons. In our opinion, the administrative-command system, which has been so intensively implanted in society, has sought some stability.

In the case of the protection of historical and cultural monuments, the Union and Republican administrations came to the conclusion, on their own negative experience, that the total destruction of historical and cultural heritage does not add authority to the state. Uncontrolled mass sales abroad of works of art and antiques were stopped, attention was paid to the preservation of monuments of military prowess and their use in patriotic education. The leadership has once again succeeded in a radical reorganization of public administration in this field.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Horbyk, V. & Denysenko, H. (2004). Okhorona ta zberezhennia pamiatok istorii ta kultury v Ukraini: istorychnyi aspekt. *Istorychnyi zhurnal*, (10-11). [In Ukrainian].
- [2] Nestulia, O. (2000). Osoblyvosti pamiatkookhoronnoho rukhu v Ukraini 1917-1991 rr. ta aktualni zavdannia zberezhennia istorychno-kulturnoi spadshchyny na suchasnomu etapi. *Stratehii ukraïnskoho derzhavotvorennia: filosofsko-politohichnyi ta ekonomichnyi analiz*. Kyiv, Poltava. [In Ukrainian].
- [3] Midko, A. S. (2015). Deiaki aspekty stanovlennia ta rozvytku derzhavnogo upravlinnia okhoronoï kulturnoi spadshchyny na pochatku KhKh st.. (na osnovi zvitv Sektzii okhorony pamiatok starovyny i mystetstva za 1919-1920 rr.). *Sivierianskyi litopys*, (1), 104-108. [In Ukrainian].
- [4] Rudyi, H. (2001). Stanovlennia derzhavnoi systemy okhorony istoriko-kulturnoi spadshchyny v Ukraini (1918-1920 rr.). *Kraieznavstvo*, (1-4), 95-102. [In Ukrainian].
- [5] Alieksieiev, O. O. (2009). Formuvannia pamiatkookhoronnoho zakonodavstva v pershi roky radianskoi vlady (1917-1920 rr.). *Pratsi istorychnoho fakultetu Zaporizkoho natsionalnoho universytetu*, (XVII), 117-120. [In Ukrainian].
- [6] Akulenko, V. (1991). *Zlochyn proty pamiaty. Pro nyschchennia kulturnykh tsinnosteï na Ukraini (1927-1941 rr.)*. Kyiv. [In Ukrainian].
- [7] Cmoliï, V. A. (red.), Boriak, H. V. & Danylenko, V. M. (2015). *Kulturna spadshchyny v konteksti «Zvodu pamiatok istorii ta kultury Ukrainy»*. Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy. [In Ukrainian].
- [8] Denysenko, O. A. (2014). Istorychna retrospektyva stanovlennia pamiatkookhoronnoho zakonodavstva v Ukraini. *Naukovi zapysky Instytutu zakonodavstva Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy*, (3), 5-10. [In Ukrainian].
- [9] *Ocherky ystoriï Kyievo-Pecherskoi lavry y zapovednyka*. (1992). Kyev. [In Ukrainian].
- [10] Kushnir, V. I. (2013). Pytannia orhanizatsii muzeinoi merezhi USRR u 1920-ti rr.: naukovyi ta suspilno-politychnyi vymiry. *Narodoznavchi zoshyty*, (6 (114)), 977-987. [In Ukrainian].
- [11] *Zakonodavstvo pro pamiatnyky istorii ta kultury*. (1970). Kyiv. [In Ukrainian].
- [12] *Okhrana pamiatnykov ystoriï y kultury*. (1973). Sbornyk dokumentov. Moskva. [In Russian].

