

## COVERAGE OF BORYS HRINCHENKO'S CREATIVE WORK IN THE OCCUPATION PERIODICALS IN 1941–1943

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the activities of Borys Hrinchenko, the famous Ukrainian writer, poet, publicist and public figure, in periodicals in the territory occupied by the Nazi army during World War II. It is shown that the figure of Borys Hrinchenko and his multifaceted work found a response in hearts of the Ukrainian people in conditions of the hardships of World War II; editors of newspapers and periodicals often appealed to the works of famous writers, poets and publicists in all parts of Ukraine. It is found that the main content of the writer's works was the struggle for the Ukrainian national cause and an independent state. The high interest in the figure of Borys Hrinchenko and his work during World War II is demonstrated by the number of publications in the occupation periodicals.

**Keywords:** Borys Hrinchenko, creativity, Nazi occupation period, occupation periodicals, World War II, patriotism, national consciousness.

For the Ukrainian people, World War II was a period of difficult awareness of their destiny. Investigating all aspects of life of the population of the occupied territories, it is important to understand what ordinary Ukrainians felt, what they thought, how they were able to withstand the conditions of fascist subjection.

Having the opportunity to communicate in their native language and to publish periodicals in the territory occupied by the Nazis, the Ukrainian intelligentsia did everything to make Ukrainians remember their own artistic and literary heritage. They cherished the hope of liberation, referring to the images of writers, poets and artists significant for Ukrainians in the pages of their publications.

Biographies and works of such famous poets and writers as Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, and Borys Hrinchenko were published on pages of periodicals. We propose to analyze the content of the articles which covered the figure of Borys Hrinchenko, his creative work and its interpretation by the occupation periodicals in 1941–1943.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of Borys Dmytrovych Hrinchenko's work for the spiritual development of the Ukrainian people. He managed to reveal and comprehend the past, present and future of Ukraine. His work became the spiritual basis for the formation of the modern Ukrainian nation, and became a powerful source of inexhaustible energy of the word for Ukrainians of all subsequent generations.

His undisputed authority became important to many writers, artists and educators both in the early twentieth century and during World War II, as evidenced by the frequency of publications of his works and articles about personal life in the occupation press. Borys Hrinchenko's works are life lessons and therefore the appeal of the Ukrainian people and writers to his work in the terrible hour of World War II is extremely important for the historical and philological sciences.

Neither Soviet nor contemporary scholars have studied the topic of Borys Hrinchenko's coverage of the occupation periodicals. Soviet historians also disregarded the attitude of the Ukrainian people to the writer, poet, and scientist in those difficult times.

The purpose of this study is to represent Borys Hrinchenko's creative work in periodicals in occupied Ukraine during World War II.

Functioning of periodicals was vital to the occupation administration. The press became a tool for spreading the necessary sentiments among the population. The new government sought to exploit the dissatisfaction of Ukrainians with the policies of the Soviet government in the pre-war period<sup>1</sup>. To strengthen these sentiments and gain the support of the local population, the leadership of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine decided to increase the informational influence on the population of the occupied territories through the media, including periodicals, more than 400 of which were published in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine and the military administration zone<sup>2</sup>. In addition to reports from the "Führer's headquarters", the occupation authorities allowed the publication of works by writers and poets who were not indifferent to Ukrainians, whose works contributed to the awareness of their belonging to a great nation. Thus, the second and third pages of most newspapers were devoted to the works of local and national Ukrainian poets and writers, whose works were extremely important for Ukrainians in difficult times.

Despite the fact that periodicals were subject to mandatory censorship, editors of newspapers and magazines found opportunities to create literary

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<sup>1</sup> *Німецько-фашистський окупаційний режим на Україні: Збірник документів і матеріалів*, ed. А. Батюк, Київ 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Б. Черняков, *Окупаційна преса Рейхскомісаріату Україна: розбудова і функціонування (1941–1943 рр.)*, "Наукові записки Інституту політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України" 2006, р. 51–68.

columns dedicated to the anniversaries of certain Ukrainian artists and figures so that to preserve the historical truth about them and their love for the people. For example, in all periodicals without exception, in early March, the third page, or even all four pages were dedicated to the work of Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko; in early December – to the works of Borys Hrinchenko and other famous Ukrainian literary and cultural figures.

Accordingly, having analyzed the occupation periodicals, we can see in which part of Ukraine was more interest in a given writer, poet or artist. While the works of Lesya Ukrainka and Ivan Franko could be seen in occupation newspapers mainly in the western part of Ukraine, the works and poetry of Taras Shevchenko and Borys Hrinchenko were published both in the western region and in periodicals in the eastern region, including in the military administration zone. Borys Hrinchenko's literary works and poems usually filled 2–3 pages in December editions, and sometimes they could be seen in other issues as well<sup>3</sup>.

Why was Borys Hrinchenko's work so disturbing to Ukrainians under Nazi occupation, and why was the occupation administration loyal to such respect?

Firstly, Borys Hrinchenko's poetry and literary works inspired the emotional experiences of the inhabitants of Ukrainian cities and villages who were in the occupied territories, gave hope, aspirations and expectancies. Therefore, this manifestation of the daily life of the population of the territories enslaved by the Nazi army is extremely important for the study of a number of problems of World War II. The creativity of famous Ukrainian artists, which was heard from the columns of occupation newspapers and periodicals, testified that the people who were under Nazi occupation did not lose hope and nurtured the idea of their own statehood and self-identification, preservation of the native language.

Among the large number of periodicals where Borys Hrinchenko's works were published, such publications as the "Volyn" periodical, the "Golos Volyny" newspaper, the "Kremenetsky Visti", "Kostopilsky Visti", "Vinnytsky Visti", "Kozyatynsky Visti", "Donetsky Vistnyk", "Mariupolska Gazeta", "Nove Zaporizhzhia" and others can be distinguished. The pages of these publications presented not only his works, but also interesting biographical messages.

Thus, the Lokhvytsia Educational Community wrote about Borys Hrinchenko's activity in the field of public education, his vision of the work of teachers and students, the methodological training of public school teach-

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<sup>3</sup> "Вільне слово" 1941, 9 грудня, р. 2; "Вінницькі вісті" 1941, 15 травня, р. 2; "Часопис «Волинь»" 1941, 10 грудня, р. 4; "Маріупольська газета" 1941, 9 грудня, р. 3–4; "Донецький вісник" 1942 р, 10 грудня, р. 3–4.

ers, in the “Literaturna Gazeta”. It was noted that Hrinchenko wrote books for teachers, on the pages of contemporary newspapers he gave advice on teaching in primary school. This was important because in occupied Ukraine, the intelligentsia tried to preserve the ability to teach their children, and teachers – to retain teaching skills to some extent<sup>4</sup>.

In the article *Dnieper Wave* (Дніпрова хвиля) in the Kremenchuk district periodical, the author writes about what Borys Hrinchenko saw as the meaning of life. He saw the awakening of the people’s consciousness through the development of education and cultural development. The article compared Borys Hrinchenko’s attitude to the Bolsheviks with the attitude of the Ukrainian people to the Bolsheviks. It was noted that with the rise of the Bolshevik government it was forbidden to write and speak about Hrinchenko, and now when the German government had come, we could safely write and talk about our people’s favorites. This article is censored, but it is informative and introduces the reader to the educational and social activities of Borys Hrychenko<sup>5</sup>.

The article *Writer-Worker* (Письменник-трудівник) of the “Ukrainske Slovo” periodical reports that Borys Hrinchenko earned great respect of the Ukrainian people, even at a time when Bolshevik literary critics were trying to abase him. The author emphasized that in his works and poems, Hrinchenko constantly appealed to the Ukrainian people and called on them to work actively for the restoration and development of the great Motherland<sup>6</sup>.

On pages of the “Ukrainsky Holos” newspaper, the author notes Borys Hrinchenko’s love to his native land, that it had always been a driving force in all his public affairs and personal life. The reader is introduced to the plays that Hrinchenko wrote for producing in the drama theater, evaluating and comparing these works with the work of other famous writers and cultural figures<sup>7</sup>.

Borys Hrinchenko’s public activity and his organization of the “Prosvita” in Kyiv are revealed in an article in the “Holos Okhtyrshchyny” newspaper. The author notes that Hrinchenko’s poetry is dedicated to the national struggle of the Ukrainian people to work for the future of their nation. Hrinchenko believed in the strength of the people, he understood that they would build a better future for themselves through stubborn struggle. Analyzing Hrinchenko’s works, the author emphasizes that in his prose works he shows those public figures who gave all their energies to cultural and educational work in the countryside, in particular Marko Kravchenko and Demid Haydenko<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> “Літературна газета” 1942, 10 травня, р. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Кременчуцький округовий часопис «Дніпрова хвиля» від 5 листопада 1941 р, р. 2.

<sup>6</sup> “Українське слово”, 13 вересня 1942 р., р. 3.

<sup>7</sup> “Український голос”, 14 грудня 1942 р., р. 2.

<sup>8</sup> “Голос Охтирщини”, 2 квітня 1942 р., р. 3.

Through his work, Borys Hrinchenko contributed to the development of the national consciousness of the Ukrainian people. His achievements in literature are the evidence of this: the novel *Sunbeam* (*Сонячний промінь*), *At the Crossroads* (*На розпутьті*), *In the middle of the dark night* (*Серед темної ночі*), *Under the quiet willows* (*Під тихими вербами*); dramatic works: *Clear Stars* (*Ясні зорі*), *Among the Storm* (*Серед бурі*), *Arsen Yavorenko* (*Арсен Яворенко*) and others. Borys Hrinchenko wrote many journalistic, critical, historical-literary and popular-scientific works, the content of which revealed the true character of the Ukrainian people. In his works, the writer and publicist urges Ukrainians to fight for their future, no matter what conditions we live in<sup>9</sup>.

The same content line about the activities of Borys Hrinchenko was in the columns of the “Vidrodzhennya” newspaper and the “Volyn” periodical published in Rivne, which published literary works and poems, the main content of which was the struggle for the Ukrainian national cause. Here the poem *To work* (*До праці*) by Borys Hrinchenko is offered to the reader. As in most of his works, he emphasizes that only through creative work the Ukrainian people will be able to achieve a happy future:

*Праця єдина з недолі нас вирве:  
Нумо до праці, брати!  
Годі лякатись! За діло святес  
Сміло ми будемо йти.  
Праця єдина нам шлях уторує,  
Довгий той шлях і важкий,  
Що аж до щастя і волі прямує:  
Нумо до праці мерщій!..  
Праця не згине між людьми даремне:  
Сонце засвітить колись, –  
Дякою нас тоді люде згадають:  
Ну же, до праці берись!...<sup>10</sup>*

Periodicals also cover his publication activities<sup>11</sup>. It is shown that the publishing house under the care of Borys Hrinchenko existed for six years and printed 46 books with a total circulation of about 170,000 copies<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> “Рідна нива”, 7 травня 1942 р., р. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Часопис «Волинь» 1943. 12.03, р. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Г. Ібсен, *Примари: семейна драма на три дії*, trans. М. Загірня, Київ 1907; *Ідея федералізму у декабристів*, Київ 1907; *Про одруження на Україні в давніші часи*, За людьми написала Марія Загірня, Київ 1912 (Книжки пам'яті Насті Грінченко).

<sup>12</sup> Н. Зубкова, *Початки книговидавничої діяльності Бориса Грінченка*, [in:] “Md-eksperiment.org”, [web-site:] <https://md-eksperiment.org/post/20181223-pochatki-knigovidavnichoyi-diyalnosti>, access: 17.05.2021.

On the pages of periodicals, the authors of the articles show how deeply and completely Borys Hrinchenko considers the reasons for the decay of national competitions and expresses views and wishes on the intensification of the revival process, guided by the criterion of historical approach, considers the content and essence of such concepts as patriotism, national consciousness, Ukrainian intelligentsia, national literature. His political reflections on the ways of development of language, culture, traditions are covered. He forms the legacy of individual Ukrainian writers and historians (including M. Kostomarov, P. Kulish, etc.) through the prism of the formation of national consciousness, summing up with pain their helplessness or amorphousness in this context<sup>13</sup>.

In the newspapers “Donetsky Visnyk”, “Mariupolska Gazeta”, a whole column dedicated to Borys Hrinchenko’s birthday was presented. In each of these newspapers, on page 4, biographical features of writer’s life and creative rises were revealed. In one of the articles on page 3, we can read: “The Ukrainian people appreciate Borys Hrinchenko not only as a writer and a prominent public figure, but also as an example of steadfastness, public initiative, and struggle against difficult circumstances”<sup>14</sup>. Borys Hrinchenko devoted his entire life and work to the struggle against social and national slavery, “he became the leader of stubborn systematic work... he considered work to be salvation for the Ukrainian people”.

*«Праця єдина з недолі нас вирве.  
Нумо до праці, брати!»*

In the Volyn land, the poet and writer was treated with no less respect. Borys Hrinchenko’s poem *To the Ukrainian People* (*До народу українського*) was published in the “Kostopilsky Visti” newspaper on December 9, 1942:

*Народе мій! Зблукавишсь у темноті,  
Не бачачи, на знаючи шляхів,  
Вбиваючи всю силу на роботі,  
Що не дає їй хвилини на спочив, —  
Знемігшися, не хочеш ти спитати,  
Куди іти, в своїх поводитирів,  
Йдеш навмання, бо звук уже блукати,  
Бо всі уже стежки ти погубив.*

<sup>13</sup> Ю. Беззуб, *Постать Тараса Шевченка в концепції українського національного відродження Бориса Грінченка*, “Українознавчий альманах” 2014, vol. 17, p. 273–277.

<sup>14</sup> “Маріупольська газета” 1942 р., 10 грудня, р. 4.

*Народе мій! Тяжка твоя темнота!  
 Болить душа дивитись, як ти сам  
 Не хочеш геть іти з того болота,  
 Що у йому ти вгруз на глум людям!  
 Болить душа! Але ж твою провину  
 Простить тобі, хто зрозумів її:  
 Бо завели себе у ту багнину  
 Вони ж таки, проводирі твої!<sup>15</sup>.*

Where the author notes that the Ukrainian people got lost in the dark once again and no one but themselves would be able to take them out of that mud. The problem raised by the author is relevant today and requires an urgent solution.

In the poem *Don't be sad (Не сумуй)*, published in the "Volyn" periodical on December 11, 1941, Borys Hrinchenko seemed to describe life in contemporary Ukraine. He spoke with pain in his soul about the negligence and indifference of contemporaries and hopefully noted that there were people in his native country who were not indifferent to the fate of the state and the people, that thanks to them Ukraine would be reborn and would become a powerful state:

*Низько, низько похилилась  
 Наша рідна хата  
 Не єдна любов до краю  
 Більше з братом брата;  
 Там, де кров лилась річками  
 За свою країну,  
 Там недбалість і байдужість  
 Бачимо єдину.  
 Але ж не сумуйте! Не скрізь ще руїна:  
 Високі душею єсть люди,  
 І в серці в людей тих живе Україна,  
 І жити повік вона буде!<sup>16</sup>.*

Among the works about Borys Hrinchenko's creativity published in the occupation periodicals, the most significant is the poem by Ivan Manil *To B. D. Hrinchenko (Б. Д. Грінченкові)*:

*Ти мріяв: «Народяться дні  
 Веселі, без горя і мук.*

<sup>15</sup> "Костопільські вісті" 1942, 9 грудня, р. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Часопис «Волинь», 1941, 11 грудня, р. 4.

*Розквітнуть бажання ясні, –  
 Ми скинем кайдани із рук, –  
 Народові поміч подасть  
 Народ – його сонячний друг, –  
 І землю дорідну зоре  
 Нагострений правдою плуг.  
 Працюючи, скажем тоді,  
 Що діло народне святе  
 Зроста, мов сади молоді,  
 Мов жито в степах золоте»...<sup>17</sup>.*

Thus, the figure of Borys Hrinchenko and his multifaceted creativity found a response in the hearts of the Ukrainian people in conditions of the hardships of World War II. Analysis of periodicals shows that editors of newspapers and periodicals often appealed to the work of the famous writer, poet, publicist and public figure. His works reflected the desire of the people to fight for the future of their nation. Summarizing the obtained results, it should be noted that during World War II, the interest in the figure of Borys Hrinchenko and his creative work increased significantly compared to the pre-war period, when the Bolshevik government banned the publication of materials about this figure.

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<sup>17</sup> “Нове Запоріжжя” 1942, 9 грудня 1941, р. 4.



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#### DZIEJE PRACY TWÓRCZEJ BORYSA HRINCZENKI W CZASIE OKUPACJI HITLEROWSKIEJ W LATACH 1941–1943

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł poświęcony jest działalności i twórczości literackiej Borysa Hrinčenki, wybitnego ukraińskiego pisarza, poety, publicysty i osoby publicznej, w periodykach na terenach okupowanych przez wojska hitlerowskie w czasie II wojny światowej. Okazuje się, że postać Borysa Hrinčenki i jego wielopłaszczyznowa działalność znalazły odpowiedź w sercach Ukraińców w warunkach trudów II wojny światowej; redaktorzy gazet i periodyków często odwoływali się do dzieł znanych pisarzy, poetów i publicystów z całej Ukrainy. Stwierdza się, że główną treścią twórczości pisarza była walka o ukraińską sprawę narodową i niepodległe państwo. O dużym zainteresowaniu postacią Borysa Hrinčenki i jego twórczością w czasie II wojny światowej świadczy liczba publikacji w czasopiśmie okupacyjnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Borys Hrinčenko, spuścizna, okres okupacji, czasopisma okupacyjne, II Wojna Światowa, patriotyzm, świadomość narodowa

ІСТОРІЯ ТВОРЧОСТІ БОРИСА ГРІНЧЕНКА ЧАСІВ НАЦИСТСЬКОЇ ОКУПАЦІЇ  
У 1941–1943 РОКАХ

**Резюме:** Стаття присвячена висвітленню окупаційними періодичними виданнями діяльності Бориса Грінченка, відомого українського письменника, поета, публіциста та громадського діяча. Показано твори Б. Грінченка у часописах, що видавалися на окупованій нацистською армією території України у 1941–1943 рр. Висвітлено, що постать Бориса Грінченка та його багатогранна праця знайшли відгук у серцях українців у складних умовах війни. Редактори газет та періодичних видань, щоб підтримати український народ у часи лихоліття часто зверталися до творів відомих письменників, поетів та публіцистів. Встановлено, що основним змістом творів Б. Грінченка була боротьба за українську національну справу та незалежну державу. Про високий інтерес до постаті Бориса Грінченка та його творчості під час Другої світової війни свідчить кількість публікацій в окупаційній періодиці.

**Ключові слова:** Борис Грінченко, творчість, період нацистської окупації, окупаційна періодика, Друга світова війна, патріотизм, національна свідомість