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## **WHERE DID THE SOVIET TANKS DISAPPEAR IN THE SUMMER OF 1941? (THE TANK BATTLE ON THE MARKET SQUARE IN THE CITY OF MYKOLAIV NEAR THE DNIESTER RIVER ON JULY 1, 1941)**

Historical science is still looking for a detailed explanation of the phenomenon of the complete defeat of the Soviet tank troops in the summer of 1941, which had an absolute numerical and technical advantage over the tank troops of the Wehrmacht. The article shows the specific reasons for this terrible defeat of the Soviet army at the beginning of the Soviet-German war, using the example of the tank battle on Rynok Square in the city of Mykolaiv, Lviv region, which took place on July 1, 1941. The battle is well documented thanks in part to surviving German frontline photographs. An attempt was made to explain under what conditions the German 101st light infantry division, which did not have a single tank, and mobility was ensured by movement on pods and bicycles, could successfully advance against the Soviet units, which included the most powerful KV tanks at the time 1 and KV-2. The picture of repressions inflicted on the local population by the Soviet punitive bodies at the beginning of the war is also presented. The reasons for the mistakes and actual inaction of the Soviet command, which turned out to be unable to determine the direction of the enemy's main strikes and resist these strikes, having a complete advantage in both manpower and equipment, are analyzed. Against this background, the heroism of ordinary soldiers who remained faithful to their duty until the end, in particular the tankers who died during this battle, paid for the miscalculations of the command with terrible losses.

Particular attention is paid to the peculiarities of tank combat in the conditions of urban development, when the Germans managed to disable a combat vehicle with the help of a 28-mm anti-tank gun, which was difficult to knock out even with an 88-mm anti-aircraft gun placed at direct fire.

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*Formulation of the problem.* The complete defeat of the Soviet tank troops in the summer of 1941, which had an absolute numerical and technical advantage over the tank troops of the Wehrmacht, especially on the South-Western Front, is still a matter of debate. Large campaigns, battles and consist of separate battles, which sometimes in their details reflect all their problems, causes and consequences. Such battles include the tank battle on July 1, 1941 on Rynok Square in the city of Mykolaiv, Lviv region, the details of which allow us to follow the sources, while revealing almost all sides and causes of the tank defeat in the summer of 1941. This already determines the relevance of this intelligence, dedicated to this battle, in the process of investigating the problem of where the Soviet tanks disappeared in the summer of 1941.

*Analysis of recent research and publications.* For the first time, information about the tank battle on July 1, 1941 appeared in the Russian-language version of "History of Cities and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR. Lviv region", where it was reported that four tanks of the 23rd and 24th tank regiments of the 12th tank division heroically held back the German attack on Mykolaiv for two days. Tank crews died. The names have not been established (*Markevich, Orel, Stasyv: 1978, p. 433*). The authors of the article have heard something about a tank battle. It was established that before the war, the 12th tank division, which included the 23rd and 24th tank regiments. But already on June 23, 1941, the 12th Tank Division was first transferred to the 6th Army, and later to the 4th Army, and from June 25 it was involved in heavy battles in the Brodivsko-Dubnensky direction, where the largest tank battle of the Second world war. On July 1, 1941, most of the machines of this division burned near Brody and Dubno (where the commander of the 24th Tank Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel P. I. Volkov, who is still considered missing, was killed), and the rest went to Proskuriv (*Khmelnyskyi*). The commander of the division, Major General Tymofiy Myshanin, died on June 28, leading the soldiers to attack in foot formation near Brody. Most of the machines were lost at that time. Therefore, they could not be in Mykolaiv.

When the chronicle of the local parish priest Fr. Volodymyr Fedusevych, where this battle is described by an eyewitness, was

published in 1989 and 1998 with comments by L. Voytovych (*Voytovych, 1989; Fedusevych, 1998: 183–184*). L. Voitovych published several reports on this battle (*Voitovych, 2009; Voitovych, Oschypok, 2020: 451–468; Voitovych, 2021: 225–242*). L. Kryvyzyuk and O. Yurchuk also mentioned this battle in their monograph (*Kryvyzyuk, Yurchuk, 2014: 215*). Writer Yaroslav Hnativ and Mykolaiv local historian Ivan Tabachar expressed their own guesses and clarifications about this battle in the local press and in their speeches at conferences, who based their conclusions on the memories of eyewitnesses (Yaroslav Hnativ had the opportunity to see knocked-down cars for several years). Later it turned out that the episodes of this battle were filmed by photographers from the squadron of cyclists of the reconnaissance battalion of the 101st light infantry division of the Wehrmacht. These photographs were published in various German, Italian and Russian collections, including that of the famous Russian military historian Oleksiy Isaev (*Isaev, 2004*), but never once in the captions under these photographs was it indicated that they were taken in Mykolaiv.

Thanks to the perseverance of enthusiasts who, while researching the places of former battles, successively bypassed them from the border to the Kyiv fortified district, in particular Yuri Morgun, Konstantin Kovalyshin, Yehor Okunev, Andriy Karpov, Serhiy Lotarev and Denys Kolokolchikov, these photos were reliably identified as Mykolaiv and entered into the scientific circulation.

*The purpose of the article.* Using all available sources, analyze in detail the tank battle on Rynok Square in Mykolaiv on July 1, 1941, and use its example to show all sides and reasons for the tank defeat in the summer of 1941.

*Presenting main material.* The Second World War began on September 1, 1939, with Germany's attack on Poland. Relations between the Polish authorities and the population of Galicia were difficult. The authorities did not take any steps to meet the Ukrainians, which stimulated the growth of activity of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, which could only be opposed by repression. This led to the fact that with the beginning of the war, a large part of the population did not sympathize with the Polish authorities, although the majority of men were in the Polish army, which was retreating to the east with battles. Therefore, at the call of the OUN Regional Executive, on

September 10–11, 1939, an anti-Polish uprising broke out in the Mykolaiv region. Hitler was unhappy that his ally Stalin had not yet taken action against Poland. J. Stalin avoided responsibility for resolving the world conflict on a level with A. Hitler and delayed the introduction of troops into the territory of Poland (*Kryvyzyuk, 2022: 64*). In order to push his partner, he blackmailed him with the possible declaration of a Ukrainian state like Ukrainian Transcarpathia. In Galicia, it would be dangerous and Stalin did not delay further. The lack of documents does not allow us to state to what extent the actions of the County Executive were related to these moments.

Armed demonstrations also took place in Shchyrechchyna, Stryichyna, Drohobychchyna, and Skolivchyna, so everything happened at the behest of Provod, who sincerely believed in the good intentions and help of the Germans. In the Mykolaiv Oblast, the population was ready for an anti-Polish speech, so there was no need for a big agitation. Another thing is that the speech was not prepared, did not have a leadership core with a clear plan, and most importantly - did not have any support. The epicenter of the uprising became Nadytichi, the movement covered Mykolaiv, Rozdil, PISOCHNA, Berezina, Velyn, Krupsko, Rozvadiv and Ustya. The insurgents disarmed police stations, took over the government in Mykolaiv, where Yaroslav Pryshlyak became the official, formed self-defense units and began disarming scattered Polish units. On September 14, the Polish gendarmerie, reinforced by the military, began an offensive against the rebels. The rebels had nothing to defend against. During the massacre, Krupsko, Nadytichi and Velyn, part of Rozdol and Mykolaiv were burned, many people died (*Pryshlyak, 1991; Pryshlyak, 1998: 27; Skolozdra, 1994; Skolozdra, 1996; Skolozdra, 2002: 29 – 38; Drak, Lyalka, 1999*). Following the secret protocol of the German-Soviet agreement of August 23–24, 1939, Soviet troops entered the territory of Poland on September 17. On September 19, units of the German Wehrmacht passed through Mykolaiv in the direction of Stry, taking under guard the bridges over the Dniester and the station in Rozvadov. Already on September 22, they began to withdraw, surrendering these territories to the Soviet troops. On September 24, tank and cavalry units of the 12th Army under the command of 2nd rank Ivan Tyulyenev entered Mykolaiv. Near by the Krasov, they met with units of the 6th army of Komkor Pylyp Golikov, who accepted the surrender of Lviv on September 22.

A temporary worker-peasant committee was created in Mykolaiv, which included A. Zakharko, S. Voloshchak and Ya. Nevolianskyi. During November-December, the estate of Count Skarbko's refuge (which was dispersed, and a cavalry regiment was stationed in the castle), a brickyard, a mill, a pharmacy, 5 bakeries, 29 shops and 26 largest houses were nationalized. A city workers' guard was organized, headed by S. Levytskyi, a resident of Mykolaiv, who returned after emigrating to Soviet Ukraine. The main task of this formation was the detection of "reactionary" officers and OUN citizens and the protection of nationalized property (*Markevich, Orel, 1968: 446*). Mykolaiv became the center of the Mykolaiv district of the Drohobysk region with all relevant institutions. Private workshops were combined into a household factory. In the premises of the Polish defensive (political police), they began to equip a city hospital. The school became Ukrainian and local Ukrainian teachers got jobs there. 8 more teachers arrived from the eastern regions. Evening training and courses for the illiterate were organized. The club opened. A park was built on the market square in the center of the city, which still exists today. In 1940, the construction of a cement plant began (*Markevich, Orel, 1968: 447*).

But already on December 25, 1939, the first deportations of families of the Polish intelligentsia and massacres of Ukrainian activists began. One of the first victims was Bohdan Kindiy (1919–1940), a student of Lviv University, the son of a Rozvadiv parish priest, and Roman Sas (1913–1940), convicted by the Poles in 1936 for belonging to the OUN for 7 years. Both were tortured in the torture chambers of the NKVD. Antin Odnorig and his wife, land surveyor and city councilor, one of the organizers and board members of the "Prosvita" reading room, did not return from Siberia; Stepan Palidovych, an activist of "Prosvita" and a member of the drama group; Andrii Melnychyn, foreman of the UGA, an employee of the cooperative warehouse in Mykolaiv (*Pryshlyak, 1998: 28–29*).

In Mykolaiv, the NKVD branch was located in the premises of the later district archive on Lesya Ukrainka Street, which had brick basements. The frenzy of bloody repression by the NKVD began immediately with the beginning of the German-Soviet war on June 22–29, 1941. At that time, the main battles were fought in the Brodovo-Dubnen area, where the Germans, in general, were completely inferior to the Soviet troops of the South-Western Front in terms of manpower

and tanks. deployed their main strike forces. No one prevented the punitive authorities from arresting anyone who, in their opinion, looked suspicious. It is clear that this number included primarily intellectuals and priests. On June 27, those arrested in Mykolaiv were taken to Zakladsky forest and shot.

The NKVD car got stuck in the swamp and was abandoned as a kind of evidence of whose crime it was. The hands of the prisoners were twisted with wire. They were put on the ground and shot in the back of the head. One of them, Lev Kuts, an accountant at the agricultural lyceum in Chernytsia, was lucky and the bullet pierced his cheek, hitting only his upper jaw. He survived and reached Demni. After the departure of the Bolsheviks, he showed the scene of the crime. Lawyer Dr. Volodymyr Zdebsky, a well-known activist of Ukrainian institutions in the city, was killed in Zakladsky Forest; Ivan Kharchyshyn, an employee of the cooperative branch of the regional union in Mykolaiv; Antin Gerasimov, teacher of the national school; Stepan Zanevich (1891–1941), former sub-chief of the UGA, activist of "Prosvita", "Native School" and "Silsky gospodar"; Volodyslav Spodar (1892–1941), former deputy of the UGA, director of the school in Rozvadov; Hryhoriy Gontarskyi, notary in Mykolaiv; brothers Ivan and Stepan Goldenbany from Drohovyzh, former deputy chiefs of the UGA; Danylo Fik from PISOCHNA, an employee of the cooperative; Stepan Savaryn from Rozvadov (1897–1941), a telephone technician, and forester Negrush, an Armenian, who was arrested at home in Priyma. Most of them were lured to the building of the NKVD branch under various pretexts and captured. Thus, radio amateur Anton Gerasimiv was asked to help repair a radio receiver, and Ivan Kharchyshyn and Danylo Fik were invited to the opening of a cooperative warehouse. Relatives who came to find out what happened were told that they would all be released soon. The bodies of the dead were brought to the city, placed in separate homes, displayed in the "Prosvit" reading room, and after the service in the church of St. Mykolaiv was buried in a mass grave in Mykolaiv (except for Danylo Fika, whose family took him to PISOCHNAYA). Father gave patriotic speeches at the funeral. Volodymyr Fedusevych and Dr. Dmytro Stasiv (*Tragedy under Demney*, 1989; *Pankiv*, 1990; *Litopis*, 1993: 34–35; *Skolozdra*, 2000; *Skolozdra*, 2002: 43–46).

Of course, compared to Lviv, where the number of victims in Bryhydki, in the prisons on Lontskoi and Zamastyrnov, was counted

in the thousands (on Lontskoi, in particular, Yuriy Fedusevych, the son of pastor Volodymyr Fedusevych, died), Drohobych, where more than 2,000 people perished (incl. Mykolaiv residents Mykhailo Balakym (1920–1941), Yevhen Kichak (1922–1940), Andriy Kobrin (1917–1940), Kornel Koretskyi (1923–1941), Mykola Netyzhak (1921–1940), Andriy Palidovych (1914–1941), Volodymyr Petrivskyi (1917–1941), Mykola Ustianovych (1921–1941) and others (Pryshlyak, 1998: 28–29); Dobromylem, where up to 1,000 people died in the salt mines, Strya, or even in Shchyrka or Komarna, a number Mykolaiv victims are relatively small. But only the list of these people and the circumstances of their death clearly demonstrate the infernal Bolshevik policy, which was carried out methodically and mercilessly, regardless of the circumstances. These executions and torture (cutting off the tongues, ears, breasts of girls, etc.) mostly completely random victims did not make any sense from the German point of view offensive and Soviet defense. It was a systematic destruction of the Ukrainian elite and the Ukrainian spirit in the western regions (in the eastern regions it was done during the Holodomor and repressions of 1937–1939).

And it was these repressions that pushed young Galician intellectuals and students to join the Galicia division in 1943-1944, and their older comrades to evacuate with the German army and wander in camps for displaced persons. We are convinced that the population's activism when joining the division was a result of the Bolshevik repressions in June 1941. True, the division was also joined by Ukrainians from the diaspora, children of emigrants - participants in the liberation struggle, who were never Soviet subjects and were ready to fight for the revival of the Ukrainian state. as Leonid Mukha (1927–2022) (Mukha, 2010), a divisional officer from Mykolaiv, described in his memoirs, but there were relatively few of them. There are also few objective studies devoted to the 14th Grenadier Division of the Waffen-SS "Galichyna" (Hunchak, 1993: 6–150; Kosyk, 1993; Kolisnyk, Mukha, Matseva, 2009; Rudling, 2012: 329–368). However, not only among Russian authors, but also among Ukrainian researchers who flaunt their devotion to the search for truth, there are accusations of collaborationism.

Russian authors should be advised not to shyly silence the total number of Russian formations of the Wehrmacht: from the Cossack Corps of Helmut von Pannwitz, the Separate Cossack Corps of T.

Domanov, the brigade of B. Kaminsky, the 1st Russian National Army of B. Holmston-Smyslovsky, ROA of A. Vlasov to separate battalions and *kampfverbände* (combat units) of voluntary assistants of the "hivi" and personnel from among them in the German units of the Wehrmacht. In July 1943, their number in Wehrmacht formations reached 600,000. According to the statistics from October 2, 1943, there were 2,005 freelancers for 10,708 Germans in the infantry division. At the same time, the Wehrmacht had up to 900,000 "Hivi", while the killed and wounded were replenished from the number of new volunteers. That is, a total of at least 1.2 million people can be included in this category (Chuev, 2004; Drobyazko, 2004; Zhukov, Kovtun, 2009; Zhukov, Kovtun, 2010; Bolyanovskyi, 2013). Such activity of Russian collaborators is due to the policy of Stalin, who refused to recognize his prisoners of war (although most were captured precisely because of him) and to keep them through the Red Cross in accordance with international conventions, as was done by Poland, England or the USA. People were dying of hunger and saw no other way out. In the end, those who endured the horrors of German captivity and even fought as part of the formations of the European resistance movement, then suffered the wanderings of Soviet camps. Ukrainian authors should also compare the number of Ukrainians, who at that time did not have a state and a large part of whom were not Soviet subjects, that is, had the right to choose their fate and place in the struggle (Bolyanovskyi, 2003), with the number of representatives of other nations in German formations, and also pay attention to June 1941 and the Soviet repressive machine throughout the war (Vronska, Lysenko, 2006: 39–50; Lysenko, 2011:541–551; Lysenko, 2017: 134–137).

But let's return to the events of July 1, 1941. The local parish priest Fr. Volodymyr Fedusevych, who was an eyewitness of the events, recorded: "... in the middle of the Market there was an ancient monumental iron cross on top of a stone pedestal, on which there was an ancient inscription in the Church Slavonic language... It stood until 1941, until July 1 that year, when the Germans were pressing on Mykolaiv, and the Bolsheviks were retreating, one of the Bolshevik big tanks drove through the Market Square directly at that figure, and in a few minutes the beautiful, fenced-in raft, eternal monument became a pile of cargo. The iron cross was gutted, the obelisk on which the cross stood was toppled and half-destroyed along its length,



so that it was completely destroyed. The monument ceased to exist, but about three hours later, a German grenade hit that tank and it, split in two, is still lying in the south side of the Market Square, opposite the house b. Vinicha-Shora, a Jew, in whose house was housed the Bolshevik government recording acts of public status... That house was burning from cannon shots, when I found out about it, I involuntarily jumped into that house. He told me to pour water on myself, scalded my hands, but still saved the metrical books of all the churches, churches and synagogues of the Mykolaiv district. Our parish has not lost a single book. With the help of Mr. Ivan Kryska and two other townspeople, I transported those books in a handcart to the church of St. Mykolaiv, and every parish priest took his books from there... metrical books, as I mentioned above, were saved by me on July 1, 1941, when in Mykolaiv at "On the 3rd, German troops entered" (Fedusevich, 1998: 183–184).

Mykolaiv local historian Ivan Tabachar heard from eyewitnesses that the Germans came to Mykolaiv on bicycles. This information is reliable. At 3:00 p.m. on July 1, 1941, units of the 101st Light Infantry Division entered Mykolaiv. Obviously, the first were fighters of the reconnaissance battalion. According to the staff roster, the reconnaissance battalion of the light infantry division had two bicycle squadrons and an anti-tank company armed with 37-mm horse-drawn guns. At that time, a Soviet tank was driving around the Market Square, cyclists went around its side streets, took up positions in the Vynych-Shor building (where the district registry office was located at the time) and from there threw a grenade that killed the caterpillar. The tank fired its cannon at the house and set it on fire. In the photo, where the KV-2 tank is burning from the right side, you can clearly see the traces of a cannon shot into the house, in which the windows and doors are broken. Here, the information from all sources is consistent. I. Tabachar's informants told about two killed Germans who were buried on the square. And about two dead tankers, one of whom shot himself after sitting in a tank for quite a long time. Both tankers were buried at the cemetery by order of Fr. Volodymyr Fedusevych.

The photos also clearly show that the tank exploded and its parts were scattered in different directions (these parts of the tank were lying around until the end of the war and were seen by all Mykolaiv residents who lived in the city at the time). Here, the photos show an

abandoned motorcycle and a staff car. Another photo shows a KV-1 tank with two tankers lying next to it. It is obvious that eyewitnesses told I. Tabachar about these two tankers, one of whom shot himself. Scouts from the 101st German light infantry division could not hit the Soviet KV-2 tank from afar. They just didn't have anything. KV-2 was the most powerful tank in the world at that time. Its 75-mm front armor and 60-mm rear armor could not be penetrated not only by standard 37-mm anti-tank guns, which were in service with the division, but also by 88-mm anti-aircraft guns, which the Germans used against T-34 tanks. But the 101st light infantry division did not have such anti-aircraft guns. Their 37 mm guns could leave only barely noticeable dents in the armor of the powerful KV, which, after all, can be seen in the photographs. It was possible to detonate the caterpillar with a grenade at close range, but this would not have caused the tank to explode.

Yaroslav Hnativ, who saw the tank torn to pieces with his own eyes, believed that German sappers, using a smoke screen, planted a mine on which the tank exploded. But the German scouts were not armed with anti-tank mines. In addition, the Wehrmacht did not have mines capable of destroying a KV tank (the bottom of the tank also had 40 mm armor, which was larger than the frontal armor of German tanks of that time). Photos of the tank after the explosion leave no doubt that the ammunition was detonated (the KV-2 tank had a powerful 152.4-mm ML-20S howitzer with ammunition). Only the explosion of such ammunition could tear such a heavy machine to pieces. But why did the ammunition explode?

The Soviet Union prepared well for the war, having created the most powerful tank troops. True, the creator and organizer of this process was shot by the 2nd rank commander Ivan Halepkyi (1893–1938) and his associates as spies. Most of the designers and directors of tank plants were imprisoned.

As of June 22, 1941, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (RSCHA) had 25,886 tanks in service, including 1,225 T-34 tanks and 636 KV-1 and KV-2 tanks, that is, 1,861 tanks whose armor could not be penetrated by German tanks and German anti-tank artillery. All other countries of the world combined did not have so many tanks. As of June 22, 1941, the German Wehrmacht had 6,852 tanks, including tanks of the Pz I series (actually tanks: weight - 5.4 tons, 14-18 mm armor, armament - 2 7.92 mm MG13 machine guns), French and

Czech trophy tanks (Kryviziuk, Yurchuk, 2014: 202–203). Why the Soviet army retreated all the way to Moscow with such forces remains a mystery. "... taking into account such factors as the enormous difficulties of supply that faced the Germans, the underdevelopment of the road network in Russia, the unexpected strength of the resistance, the miscalculations regarding the Russian reserves and the fact that the Germans did not put more than 25 panzer divisions into action, it is worth noting that that the German offensive between June 22 and December 6, 1941 is the most amazing achievement of the armed forces" - wrote after the war, one of the creators of tank forces, the outstanding English tank theorist and historian Major General John Frederick Charles Fuller (1878–1966) (Fuller, 1956: 259).

Against the South-Western Front of Colonel-General Mykola Kyrponos (1892 – 1941), the Germans concentrated the shock 1st Panzer Group of Colonel-General Ewald von Kleist (1881-1954). Kirponos had eight mechanized corps (4, 8, 9, 15, 16, 19, 22, 24), numbered 5,894 tanks as of June 1, 1941 (Kryvyzyuk, 2013: 43-50), including 1,558 tanks T-34 and KV, and more than 400 gun armored cars) and 4 anti-tank brigades with mechanically propelled guns (192 76-mm guns, 192 85-mm guns and 86 107-mm guns). The Germans had three tank corps: a total of 728 tanks, of which only 80 were of the Pz IV series (30–50 mm armor, armament: a 75 mm gun and two 7.92 mm machine guns); 195 – Pz III series (16–40 mm armor, armament: 50 mm gun and two 7.92 mm machine guns); the rest are Pz II series (10-30 mm armor, armament: 20 mm cannon and 7.92 mm machine gun) and Pz I tankettes. None of the German tanks could defeat the T-34 tank, let alone the KV.

The Germans concentrated their tanks on the axis of the main highway Lutsk-Kyiv. There were no tanks at all in other parts of the Wehrmacht in other directions. The Germans did not have any total superiority in the air, which Russian authors still like to write about. The entire 5th Luftwaffe Corps, which supported Army Group South, had seven bomber and five fighter groups, including temporarily disabled machines, as of the morning of June 22, 1941, 266 horizontal bombers (163 Ju-88 and 103 He -111) and 174 fighters (Me-109). On the Soviet side, they were opposed by 944 bombers (not including the outdated TB-3) and 1,166 fighters (including 253 of the latest MiG-3 and YaK-1). Soviet aviation was stationed at 216 airfields, which the

enemy could not suppress with the available forces with a sudden strike.

That is, according to all canons of military art, under any circumstances, the Wehrmacht had no chance. Therefore, it is not easy for military historians to explain the reasons for the terrible defeat, the episode of which was the battle in Mykolaiv on July 1, 1941. At the end of the 20th century, when it was no longer possible to talk about a sudden attack on an unprepared peaceful Soviet Union and the technical superiority of the Germans, in research and well-edited memoirs (including the memoirs of the commander of the 8th mechanized corps, which was stationed in Drohobych and Stryi, Lieutenant General Dmytro Ryabyshev (1894–1985) and his commissar, brigade commissar Mykola Popely (1901–1980), and therefore in the artistic literature and films, a new "canonical" version began to prevail: the General Staff and J. Stalin, not having the correct information, with their directive forced the mechanized corps to attack the enemy, while it was necessary to take up the defense, wait for the concentration of all forces and then calmly start a counterattack. This is wonderful the commander of the district, Colonel-General Mykola Kirponos, and his chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Maksym Purkaev (1894–1953) and their subordinate commanders. But what could they do if the directive of the Headquarters was controlled by Stalin's commissar - a member of the military council, corps commissar Mykola Vashugin (1900–1941), who later realized his mistake and shot himself? It seemed that everything was quite logical. But this is just another propaganda fantasy. To the headquarters of the front in Ternopil, where the Chief of the General Staff, Army General Georgy Zhukov and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(b) of Ukraine Nikita Khrushchev arrived on the orders of Stalin, indeed, on the night of June 22-23, directive No. 3 of the General Staff arrived, demanding to repel the enemy and lead an offensive on Lublin. In Moscow, it was not without reason that they believed that with a 3:1 advantage (in reality, much more), covered flanks from the Carpathian side (Hungary had not yet entered the war) and the Pripyat swamps, the mechanized corps should break through the 1st tank group at any -what circumstances. The offensive in the direction of Lublin made any German breakthrough dangerous and pointless.

Moreover, the success of such an attack would force the Germans to withdraw troops from the direction of Minsk. But knowing well the Stalinist system, where repression threatened not only ordinary Ukrainians, but also the highest-ranking generals, lulled by the leader's statements, not having reliable information about the enemy, not only the former ensigns of the tsarist army M. Kirponos and M. Purkaev, who took high positions on the eve of the war positions, not having the proper experience, only due to the fact that Stalin shot more experienced and worthy generals, but also those closer to the leader G. Zhukov and M. Khrushchev, simply lost their minds. They did not fulfill Stalin's directive, limiting themselves to order No. 03 dated 06/23/1941 on its implementation, but simply gave the initiative to the enemy, forcing tank and mechanized units to use up motor resources with aimless marches. Corps commissar M. Vashugin had the appropriate military education and experience. Most likely, the reasons for his suicide were the result of the organizational disorder that he saw during his trips to the army, and only then was he blamed for the faults of others. And the main culprit, the creator of the system, Y. Stalin, still remains an icon (*Kryvyzyuk, Yurchuk, 2014: 206–220*). The decision of the headquarters of the front was half-hearted: to defeat the Volodymyr-Volyn group of the enemy and restore the situation on the border. The task was quite possible, based on the real balance of forces. All the more so because G. Zhukov ordered the commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General Ivan Muzychenko, to immediately move to the right flank of the army the best-equipped 4th Mechanized Corps of Major General Andriy Vlasov (892 tanks, including 414 KV and T-34). But, as it turned out, Lieutenant-General I. Muzychenko did not carry out this order, leaving the corps to cover Lviv, which at that time was not threatened by anyone, who tried to snatch the 8th mechanized corps for himself, scaring M. Kirponos with hundreds of tanks, which allegedly threatened Lviv.

Mykolaiv was located in the zone of the 26th army of Lieutenant General Fedor Kostenko (1896–1942), whose headquarters was in Dobromyla. The main striking force of the 26th Army was the 8th Mechanized Corps of Lieutenant General Dmytro Ryabyshev (12th and 34th Tank Divisions, 7th Mechanized Division), which had 932 tanks (according to the memoirs of the former commander) or from

858 to 899 tanks (according to various studies), including 100 T-34 tanks, 2 KV-2 tanks and 6 KV-1 tanks and 211 gun armored vehicles. On June 22, 1941, the corps left the places of deployment and advanced to the border. At the same time, the 7th mechanized division moved through Mykolaiv on the evening of June 22. In the morning of June 23, part of the forces of the 12th tank division passed through Mykolaiv. German aerial reconnaissance recorded this movement of a mass of military equipment towards Przemyśl, and the commander of the 17th German Army, which was covering this direction with the forces of the 101st Light Infantry Division, stopped its advance. The forces of the division that had crossed Xiang were turned back. Soviet authors wrote that the border guards defeated the Germans for Xiang on June 23. In fact, the Germans withdrew according to the order of their command. The light infantry division was a unit intended for operations in rugged terrain inaccessible to tanks. Because of this, it had only two infantry regiments and an artillery regiment of a reduced composition (two batteries of 4 guns in each division). The division was formed only on December 10, 1940 and managed to take part in the final stage of the campaign for the occupation of Yugoslavia. All equipment was horse-drawn, and for the mobility of the infantry, peasant carts and bicycles were used.

In this direction, the 101st Light Infantry Division stood near Przemyśl until the morning of June 27, 1941. It was opposed by the 99th Soviet Rifle Division (in 1940, when it was commanded by A. Vlasov, it was the best rifle division of the RSChA). There were no battles in this direction, and the punitive bodies were engaged in their bloody affairs with sadistic pleasure. Meanwhile, the headquarters of M. Kirponos, yielding to the panic calls of the commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General I. Muzychenko, overthrew the 8th Corps north of Lviv, which was not threatened by the enemy so far. After aimless marches (the troops did not have topographic maps), having used most of the motor resource (T-34 tanks had a range of up to 400 km on the highway, 350 on rough terrain; KV - 140 and 80, respectively, after which it was necessary to carry out engine maintenance, for which the troops did not have suitable mobile means), and having lost as much as 50% of vehicles without direct contact with the enemy (the corps command reported that the vehicles

had traveled 495 km and the losses of materiel amounted to 50%)., D. Ryabyshev's corps was involved in Brodivsk-Dubensk tank battle. By July 1, 1941, the remnants of the corps retreated to Proskuriv (Khmelnyskyi).

Tanks of the 8th Corps were not supposed to be in Mykolaiv on July 1. All the more KV tanks, invulnerable to the enemy. In addition to them, there were three more abandoned tanks of various modifications of the BT series on the outskirts of the city and two BT tanks on the Market Square in the city. In the 26th army, heavy KV tanks were only part of the 8th mechanized corps. In this way, only the following could happen: the tanks, which for various reasons remained standing on the road and in the reports of the 8th mechanized corps were classified as irreversible losses, actually remained in service. In these machines, the crews were devoted to their duty. At that time, the Soviet army, unlike the Germans, did not have mobile repair and evacuation units. Having repaired the machine on their own or obtained fuel, the crews were ready to perform combat missions. Without radio communication, they could not know that their regiment or division was fighting in the zone of another army (radios were only on command cars), so tank commanders turned to any senior commanders in the zone of the 26th Army and were the last to join their units. Which of the infantry commanders would refuse such tanks? Unfortunately, the lack of archives of the 26th Army, which were lost during the encirclement of the army near Umanya, will not allow us to verify this version.

On June 27, 1941, the Soviet 26th Army began to retreat from the border to the Dniester in the direction of Mykolaiv, where the army headquarters arrived on June 28. The retreat was covered by the 99th Rifle Division. In the vanguard of the German 52nd Army Corps, the same 101st Light Infantry Division was moving on bicycles and tanks. On June 27, it occupied the deserted Przemyśl and entered Dobromyl by the end of the day. The reconnaissance battalion and the 229th infantry regiment moved in the vanguard of the division. On June 28, they reached the town of Rudka, and on June 29 they spent the night in Komarno. The headquarters of the Soviet 26th Army crossed the Dniester and on June 30 left the 206th Rifle Regiment of the 99th Rifle Division to cover the crossing, which as of the morning of July 1

(according to the army headquarters) was occupying the defense on the Drogovyzh–Rozvadiv–Vernyn line. So Mykolaiv was abandoned. Tanks from among those tanks from the 8th Mechanized Corps that joined the 8th Rifle Corps were left for cover. The tanks were clearly running out of fuel, because three of them from the BT series were abandoned at the entrance to the city from the Drogovizh side.

Two heavy KV machines and two BT tanks drove into the market square of the city, where the future park had just been broken up. A staff passenger car and a motorcycle were also left there (the 206th regiment did not have its own unit providing fuel and lubricants). Tanks took up defensive positions on both sides of the square. They probably received an order to tie up the enemy for a certain time in order to give the 206th regiment an opportunity to move on. We will never know this either. They must have run out of fuel quickly, because not being able to lower the gun to get at the German 37 mm anti-tank gun that was firing at them from the end of what is now Češek Street, the tankers from KV-2 did not take the opportunity to simply crush it with their hull. Seeing that the tanks were not maneuvering, the Germans turned their 37-mm guns at close range and probably easily knocked out both BTs. In my opinion, the KV-2 tank, after shooting the house of Vynych-Shor, where German soldiers died, was detonated by its own crew and exploded after detonating the ammunition (Voitovych, 2009). But after my publication, Yaroslav Mucha published the report of the chief of intelligence of the 101st light infantry division, which was unknown to me. A German officer, reporting on the destruction of four vehicles, called the KV-1 tank "a tank of an unknown type", and the KV-2 - an "assault 15-cm gun" (the KV-2 had a 152-mm M-10T tank howitzer), which "was pierced by an anti-tank gun 41. The crew showed that it surrendered, then threw grenades and was destroyed in close combat. A car fire led to an explosion" (Mukha, 2010). The same report noted the capture of 21 trucks and 3 tanks (abandoned by the crews when entering the city from the Drohovyzh side) and the absence of prisoners (this means that all tankers, including the crews of two BTs, died).





***Pic. 1. The enemy equipment on the Drogovizh road***

The 41 gun mentioned in the report is a 28-mm sPzB-41 anti-tank gun of the Mauser company (actually a small gun weighing 229 kg, which was serviced by three soldiers), adopted in July 1940. At the time of the start of hostilities against the Soviet troops in the Wehrmacht had only 183 of them (here, the light infantry division, which was formed at the end of 1940, was simply lucky to receive a few units of the latest anti-tank weapons). This rifle-cannon pierced armor up to 52 mm with a cumulative projectile at a distance of 100 m. The location of the KV-2 made it possible to approach the tank even 20 m or closer. Therefore, under such conditions, the scouts from the 101st light infantry division could indeed shoot down the KV-2, but only from a distance of no more than 20 m (Главное артерлийское управление, 1944; Kolomiets, 2006; Lüdeke, 2010: 44–48). This case is unique, such things happened extremely rarely in battle. The tank, which could not always be penetrated by an 88-mm anti-aircraft gun from a normal distance, was hit by an anti-tank gun!

The KV-2 crew consists of six people, one of whom is an officer. The battle on the Market Square lasted three hours, during which time other advanced German units approached. The market was surrounded from all sides and the tankers could not escape. It is unclear what happened to the KV-1 tank. In the photos, it appears intact with only a hole in the side of the gun barrel, which could have been made by a shell from the same 28 mm gun at close range (accidentally, of course, because no one aimed at the 76 mm gun). This tank had no fuel and could not move or fire its guns, but its three 7.62 mm DT machine guns were a serious weapon against German infantry. Why did only two of the six crew members remain there? Perhaps the rest managed to slip away and hide somewhere earlier, and those two shot themselves, defending themselves to the end. Ironically, the tank stopped near the sign "Attention! Walking on the grass, spoiling trees and flowers is strictly prohibited." At the end of the battle, Germans from the 229th regiment entered the city and rushed to photograph the tanks, especially the intact KV-1. Most of them have never seen such tanks. People from Mykolaiv were photographed together with them.



*Pic. 2. Market square after a tank battle*

The fate of the fighters of the 206th Rifle Regiment of the 99th Rifle Division, whose battle in the center of Mykolaiv allowed them to break away from the enemy, was no better than those who died covering their retreat. The 99th Rifle Division, part of the 8th Rifle Corps, reached Uman, where those who remained alive together with the commander, Major General Mykhailo Snegov (1896–1960), were captured. After the horrors of the fascist camps, Soviet camps awaited them for alleged treason. General M. Snegov was lucky. Among the few generals who returned from captivity (most were shot in 1947-1950), he served in the army even after the filtration camps in 1947-1959. Unfortunately, despite the loud statements that "no one is forgotten...", still not the names of the dead tankers have been established. They could abandon the cars that ran out of fuel, but they stayed and held the enemy, allowing the infantry to break away from him. Already somewhere around 2020, when the anti-Ukrainian forces again began to fabricate the "bloody crimes of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists", the previously disappeared version of the supposedly "damned" nationalists killed "poor" tankers who were repairing cars in the city center (the best place for repairs just can't find it), and then set fire to the tank itself. This version is from the same series of modern "researchers" who, justifying Y. Stalin, are trying to prove that 85% of the tanks of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army were faulty and with an exhausted motor resource, especially the KV and T-34, which were just brought from the factories and managed to pass to 5 hours of test run.

*Conclusions.* An unbiased analysis of one of the many tank battles, which took place on July 1, 1941 on Rynok Square in the city of Mykolaiv on the Dniester, 36 km south of Lviv, made it possible to identify the main reasons for the tank defeat of the Soviet troops in the summer of 1941. Despite the complete numerical and technical superiority the tank defeat was the result, first of all, of improper operational-tactical and organizational use. In the mechanized corps, there were no mobile units for maintenance and provision of fuel and lubricants, and the tanks themselves, except for the commander's, did not have radio communication, due to which the vehicles left on the march, even for minor technical reasons, practically did not have the opportunity to return to their units, and using the motor resource - had even fewer opportunities to restore it. The command, not having the

general situation, actually sabotaged the implementation of the directive of the General Staff on the offensive in the direction of Lublin, and in return forced, for example, the 8th mechanized corps to spend the motor resource of its vehicles on unnecessary movements during June 22–27, 1941, under the attack of enemy aircraft along the front from Peremyshl to Lviv and Brody, where the enemy at that time had no tank forces at all. At that time, the NKVD apparatus carried out its bloody repressions against the local population. The enemy, even without having appropriate anti-tank means against KV and T-34 tanks, managed to take advantage of the mistakes of the Soviet command and destroy combat vehicles. Loyalty to the oath and steadfastness of the tankers could not compensate for the mistakes of the command. This ordinary battle allows us to assert that Soviet tanks in the summer of 1941 disappeared in the chaos of the complete unsuitability of the Soviet system at the beginning of the Soviet-German war.

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**Войтович Л.В., Кривизюк Л.П.**  
**КУДИ ЗНИКЛИ РАДЯНСЬКІ ТАНКИ ВЛІТКУ 1941 РОКУ?**  
**(танковий бій на площі Ринок у місті Миколаїв над Дністром 01.07.1941 р.)**

Історична наука досі шукає докладного пояснення феномену повного розгрому влітку 1941 р. радянських танкових військ, які мали абсолютну чисельну і технічну перевагу над танковими військами Вермахту. У статті на прикладі танкового бою на площі Ринок у м. Миколаєві Львівської області, який відбувся 1 липня 1941 р., показано окремі причини цієї страшної поразки радянської армії на початку радянсько-німецької війни. Бій добре розібраний частково завдяки німецьким фронтовим фотографіям, які збереглися. Здійснена спроба пояснити, за яких умов німецька 101-ша легко-піхотна дивізія, у складі якої не було жодного танка, а мобільність забезпечувалася пересуванням на підводах та велосипедах, могла успішно наступати проти радянських частин, у складі яких були найпотужніші на той час танки КВ-1 та КВ-2. Подана також картина репресій, які завдали на початку війни місцевому населенню радянські каральні органи. Проаналізовані причини помилок і фактичної бездіяльності радянського командування, яке виявилось нездатним визначити напрямки головних ударів противника і протистояти цим ударам, маючи повну перевагу як у живій силі, так і техніці. На фоні цього героїзм рядових солдатів, які до кінця залишалися вірними своєму обов'язку, зокрема танкістів, які загинули під час цього бою, страшними втратами заплатили за прорахунки командування. Окрема увага приділена особливостям танкового бою в умовах міської забудови, коли німцям вдалося вивести зі строю з допомогою 28-мм протитанкової рушниць бойову машину, яку важко було підбити навіть з 88-мм зенітної гармати, поставленої на пряму наводку.

*Ключові слова:* початок радянсько-німецької війни, Миколаїв, злочини НКВС, танковий бій, бій в умовах міської забудови.