CONFLICTING INTERESTS: THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF *MAKULATURA* COLLECTION IN SOVIET UKRAINE

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WORLDWIDE WASTE
Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies

Volume 8, Number 1, 2025
Published online 1 July 2025

Submitted 11 December 2024
Accepted 2 April 2025

The White Horse Press
The Old Vicarage, Main Street,
Winwick, Cambridgeshire
PE28 5PN, UK

ABSTRACT

The article analyses the early stages of wastepaper collection in the Ukrainian SSR during the 1920s and early 1930s, with a focus on the key actors and their conflicting interests. The significance of makulatura is considered in the context of its economic, political and ideological importance in the early Soviet Union. Special attention is given to mass mobilisation campaigns and wastepaper collection in housing cooperatives. The desperate struggle of archival institutions to preserve their documentary heritage is highlighted. The article also reveals the role of administrative resources as a tool of directive planning, used to lobby the interests of specific companies. It demonstrates how the organisational flaws in the state wastepaper collection system contributed to the development of the black market, where wastepaper flows were redirected through unofficial channels. The article argues that speculators were the only ones to make substantial economic profits, while the state primarily derived political and ideological benefits

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KEYWORDS:

Wastepaper, waste recycling, makulatura, archives, housing cooperatives, administrative resource, directive planning, Ukrainian SSR, black market

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Perga, T. 2025. 'Conflicting Interests: The Early Development of *Makulatura* Collection In Soviet Ukraine'. *Worldwide Waste* **8**(1), 3: 1–15. DOI: 10.3197/whpww.63857928646677

INTRODUCTION

Wastepaper, or *makulatura*, is considered one of the symbols of Soviet waste recycling. Numerous recollections of participants in mass campaigns for its collection in the Soviet Union are presented in mass media and on the Internet. However, comprehensive studies on this topic remain highly fragmented. This article examines the origins of wastepaper recycling in the USSR, with a focus on the Ukrainian SSR. Given the republic's limited forest resources and the high costs associated with transporting cellulose from the RSFSR, the use of rags and wastepaper as substitutes for cellulose became crucial. The Ukrainian case highlights how republican authorities sought to develop an efficient system for collecting *makulatura* in the 1920s to early 1930s. This article aims to address the following research questions: Which agencies were involved in establishing early Soviet wastepaper collection in the Ukrainian SSR? How did these actors reconcile their conflicting interests? After a brief discussion of the significance of paper in the early Soviet Union and the plans to expand its production, this article explores the sources of wastepaper collection in the 1920s and early 1930s – including archives, housing cooperatives and wastepaper collection companies – within the broader context of a shortage economy and the paper crisis. It then examines the role of administrative resources as a tool of directive planning, the conflicts that emerged among various actors competing for access to wastepaper, and the strategies used to resolve these disputes.

LITERATURE METHODOLOGY

Although waste recycling in the Eastern bloc countries during the Cold War has attracted the attention of several scholars (Pal 2023, Gille 2007), the Soviet context remains underexplored. Recent studies have made significant progress in examining waste management in the post-Soviet space, demonstrating that the inefficiency of many practices and regulations originated and became deeply entrenched in the former Soviet republics – now independent states – while they were part of the USSR (Alexander 2008, Sim et al. 2013).

However, a significant gap remains in the study of early Soviet waste recycling. The literature only briefly mentions the activities of the All-Union Association for the Procurement and Processing of Secondary Raw Materials and Industrial Waste (excluding food waste) 'Soiuzutil', which was established in 1932 (Zabortseva 2016, Dolgušin 2022). Meanwhile, except for one study by Brigitte Pristed, which will be discussed below, a detailed analysis of the multifaceted activities of this organisation is lacking.

Waste collection before the establishment of Soiuzutil' – from the 1920s to the early 1930s – is represented by only a few studies on Ukrainian cases: the characteristics of the early Soviet waste management system in the republic (Perga 2024a), the recycling of rags (Perga 2023) and food waste during the Holodomor (1932–1933) in Ukraine (Skubii 2024).

This article contributes to the debate on paper recycling in the USSR, initiated by Brigitte Pristed. In her article, 'Point of No Return: Soviet Paper Reuse, 1932–1945', she examines the evolution of paper recycling in the Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s through the activities of Soiuzutil', linking this process to Soviet industrialisation and the resource management strategies that emerged during early Stalinism (Pristed 2022). In her subsequent article, 'Reading and Recycling: The Soviet Paper Debate and Makulatura Books, 1974–91', Pristed shifts her focus to the late Soviet period, contextualising wastepaper collection campaigns. She interprets these campaigns as a large-scale state initiative that allowed Soviet citizens to exchange collected wastepaper for vouchers to obtain books, which were otherwise difficult to purchase. The article highlights the impact of paper recycling in transforming Soviet citizens' roles from passive consumers of books to active participants in wastepaper supply chains. Furthermore, it discusses how this initiative expanded the scope of Soviet institutions such as the State Supply Committee and the State Committee for Publishing, whose interests in this initiative coincided. However, both articles ignore the regional specificities of the nationwide policy and fail to address the emergence of the wastepaper recycling policy in the 1920s.

This research is based on the analysis of primary sources – documents from Ukrainian archives and the Soviet Ukrainian press of the 1920s to the early 1930s which are being introduced into scholarly discourse for the first time. While the archival documents are extensive, they are highly fragmented, with some having been lost during the evacuation of Kyiv's archives during World War II. This is particularly true for the collection of one of the main actors in the wastepaper market in the Ukrainian SSR – the Directorate of State-Managed Paper Industry Enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Local Industry of the Ukrainian SSR 'Ukrpapirtrest' (TsDAVO Collection 2531). The documents in this archival collection cover only the periods 1919–1925 and 1939–1940 and contain data on the number of workers at its various factories, business correspondence regarding the delivery of different shipments of rags and wastepaper to the trust's factories, the cost of the shipments, logistics, contracts with counterparties, and numerous complaints about the failure of counterparties to fulfil their obligations.

More significant data is provided by the archival collection of the Ukrutilzbir company (DAKO Collection 2993), which was one of the main

wastepaper collectors in the Ukrainian SSR and operated from 1923 to 1930. However, since this company collected a wide range of waste in the republic – scrap metal, rags, paper waste, bones, glass shards, horns, hooves, hides and others – information on wastepaper is fragmented and scattered among documents related to the general process of waste disposal. This collection contains reports on the company's activities, financial documents and correspondence with the People's Commissariat of Trade of the Ukrainian SSR (NKTorg), to which it was accountable, as well as with other organisations, notably Ukrpapirtrest. Since systematic and comprehensive statistics on waste collection were not maintained in the USSR, the reconstruction of plans and their implementation can only be approximate. The most valuable sources are the discussions, transcripts and decisions of the Raw Materials Department of NKTorg, along with internal documents from the Kyiv Regional Office of Ukrutilzbir. These records provide insight into the plans set by the union authorities – represented by the People's Commissariat of Trade of the USSR – as well as the challenges and methods of their implementation. They also shed light on instances of competition and unfair business practices, as well as the relationships between Ukrutilzbir and various contractors and competitors.

The Ukrainian press of the 1920s and early 1930s provides insight into the progress and outcomes of *makulatura* collection campaigns. While many articles adopted a laudatory tone regarding the pace of these efforts, they also contained criticism, particularly concerning the process of distinguishing valuable documents from those deemed suitable for repurposing. These reports highlighted the challenges faced by archives in the process of 'cleansing' both their own collections and those of enterprises and institutions entrusted to them for safekeeping.

The diaries of eyewitnesses from the period under study complement certain facts and offer a deeper understanding of the context of the situation, including the severity of the paper crisis that occurred during the first Five-Year Plan in the USSR (1928–1932) and the efforts of collectors in accumulating *makulatura*.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PAPER IN THE USSR

The significance of paper in the development of various sectors of the USSR during the 1920s and 1930s is difficult to overestimate. Party and state authorities regarded it as a crucial element of cultural transformation (Zukin 2024) and an essential resource for the operation of the state apparatus, educational institutions, book publishing, mass media and propaganda. By the late 1920s, paper began to be used in the footwear industry as a substitute for certain leather components. During World War II, printing and writing paper played a crucial role in maintaining communication between the front and the home front, enabling the exchange of letters, news, telegrams and military intelligence. Furthermore, the state bureaucracy relied on paper for maintaining records on soldiers, prisoners of war, evacuees and workers, as well as for managing resource distribution and issuing food ration stamps (Pristed 2019: 125). Despite its various functions, paper was a highly politicised material in the Soviet Union, as it played a central role in the dissemination of communist propaganda.

Since the very first days of Soviet rule, enterprises under Bolshevik control faced a severe paper shortage, so one of the earliest decrees issued by the government of Soviet Russia Council of People's Commissars (CPC) in 1918 mandated the redistribution of paper exclusively for propaganda purposes (Dekret SNK o raspredelenii bumagi 1918). The shortage of raw materials for paper production led to the adoption of the Decree of CPC 'On the utilisation of wastepaper' on 10 March 1919, signed by the Chairman of the Council of Defense of the USSR Ulyanov (Lenin). This decree laid the foundation for wastepaper collection in Bolshevik-controlled territories, which became part of the Soviet Union in 1922. According to the decree, all government institutions of the RSFSR, as well as offices, institutions of the Military Department and military units, were required to collect rather than discard or burn any unnecessary or used paper under any circumstances. The paper had to be stored daily in designated rooms, and once a bulk batch of at least thirty poods [491.4 kilograms] was accumulated, it had to be reported to the Utilisation Departments established at local state bodies for territorial administration of the national economy – Councils of National Economy. These departments were responsible for dispatching workers to pack the paper and arrange for its removal according to the instructions of the Utilisation Department of the Supreme Council of National Economy (Dekret Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov 1919).

Control over paper production and redistribution was closely linked to publishing and involved the Bolshevik nationalisation of most publishing houses, which were tasked with printing various Soviet propaganda materials, including posters, leaflets, brochures and books. To organise paper production in Ukraine in 1921, the state trust for paper industry enterprises, Ukrpapirtrest, was established, uniting nine out of the eighteen surviving paper mills (Kizĭun 2009: 180). The trust was modeled on the similarly named institution established earlier in the RSFSR. Following the transformation of the Russian trust into an all-Union institution, Ukrpapirtrest de facto became one of its branches, however, it operated solely to meet the needs of the Ukrainian market (TsDAVO Collection 2531).

The significant potential of wastepaper resources in Ukraine prompted Bolshevik Eduard Simson to propose establishing a dedicated waste collection department within the Ukrainian Red Cross, with part of its funds allocated to supporting humanitarian organisations. In 1923, he wrote:

> In the production of various types of paper, the byproducts of papermaking include rags, paper scraps, damaged paper mills and glass factories have needed these additional resources in recent years and have acquired them through various means, mostly through private individuals. Meanwhile, right before our eyes, these unnoticed riches are being destroyed … By the end of the working day, each employee of every … [institution] collects an entire basket of various kinds of useless torn paper under their desk, which is then discarded by couriers into garbage pits or burned in stoves … Given the shortage of raw materials for domestic industry, the collection of paper and other waste, as well as broken glass, is undoubtedly a profitable, practical, and beneficial activity for the state.

Simson proposed the creation of a special department in Kharkiv within the Ukrainian Red Cross, which would focus on waste collection and expand this activity both within the city and its outskirts (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 16: 9). The establishment of one of the largest waste collection companies in Ukraine, Ukrutilzbir, by the Ukrainian government institutionalised this idea.

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, Ukrpapirtrest became the primary purchaser of rags used in paper production and wastepaper. Between 1926 and 1928–1929, its demand for wastepaper reached approximately 11,500 tons (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 48: 151; DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 71: 41), which accounted for nearly all the paper waste that could be collected in Ukraine. The trust had its own collection apparatus and hired contractors – companies engaged in waste collection. The private company Ukrutilzbir was granted a monopoly on paper collection in Ukraine for the needs of Ukrpapirtrest by the People's Commissariat of Trade of the Ukrainian SSR (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 71: 86). At different points in time, other collectors were involved in wastepaper collection, including the State Export-Import Office 'Statetorg', agricultural and industrial cooperatives operating under the All-Ukrainian Central Union of Consumer Societies 'Vukoopspilka' umbrella, humanitarian organisations (such as the Ukrainian Red Cross, the 'Dobrobut' society, and the Unemployment Relief Committee), voluntary organisations (e.g., the Society of Friends of Emergency Medical Care), credit societies and private entrepreneurs.

In rebuilding its economy, which had been severely disrupted by World War I and the subsequent revolutionary and civil wars, the Soviet Union faced a significant shortage of basic resources, including those required for paper production. As Kornai would describe it, the Soviet economy could be considered a 'shortage economy' (Kornai 1992). Problems with paper production were partly due to the loss of Finland, the Baltic States, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine after World War I and the Polish Soviet War. These territories housed 75 of 212 pulp and paper mills (excluding Finland), which produced more than forty per cent of the paper and cardboard in the Russian Empire (Zukin 2024: 45). The remaining mills were technologically underdeveloped and located in remote areas with complicated logistics. By 1930, the Soviet Union was only able to produce half of its domestic cellulose needs (Problemy bumazhnoĭ promyshlennosti 1930).

Extensive research was conducted in the Soviet Union to enhance cellulose production. In 1918, the first State Paper Testing Station for paper production was established in the RSFSR. Its objective was to optimise the cellulose production process and, to achieve this, it conducted comprehensive studies on the use of cottonseed hulls, cotton stalks, reeds and waste from tannin extract factories (Gosudarstvennai͡a bumazhnai͡a ispytatel'nai͡a stant͡sii͡a 1927). In 1932, a branch of the All-Union Research Institute for the Pulp and Paper Industry was established in Ukraine, conducting research valued at 10,000 rubles on using corn leaves and stalks for cellulose production (TsDAVO. Collection 572. Opis' 1. File 1483).

The importance of wastepaper collection was driven by the ambitious goal of the Soviet government to increase paper production by seventy per cent compared to the Russian Empire, aiming to reach 687,988 tons by 1930. Additionally, the paper industry was expected to eliminate the need for imports of both semifinished products and paper (Problemy bumazhnoĭ promyshlennosti 1930).

Under the command economy that began to take shape in the Soviet Union by the late 1920s, the central government set production targets, including those related to waste collection, often without fully considering the resources and capabilities of republics. Ukraine, the most economically developed Soviet republic after the RSFSR, was assigned high production targets for wastepaper collection to meet these needs. For instance, in 1931, Ukraine was tasked with fulfilling approximately sixteen per cent of the total union plan for wastepaper collection – 25,000 tons out of 155,000 tons for the entire Soviet Union. By comparison, the RSFSR was assigned 120,000 tons, Belarus 3,500 tons, Transcaucasia 4,500 tons, Turkmenistan 300 tons and Tajikistan 200 tons (Spravochnik po util'syr'ʲu 1931: 5–10).

The share of wastepaper in paper production gradually increased, but during the first and second Five-Year Plans of economic development of USSR (1928–1932, 1933–1937), it remained relatively low. In 1929, it accounted for just under twenty per cent

on average across the Soviet Union (Spravochnik po util'syr'iu 1931). This can be explained by the fact that industrial recycling relies on a certain level of consumption and surplus resources, which were virtually absent in the resource-deficient economy of the 1920s and 1930s (Pristed 2019: 135). By the end of the first Five-Year Plan, Ukraine was expected to produce about 30,000 tons of paper, but this target was not achieved even by the end of the 1930s. In 1940, Ukraine produced only 28,000 tons of paper (Narodnoe khoziaĭstvo SSSR 1922–1982, 1982). Many statistical collections from the USSR, which provided detailed descriptions of the industrial development of Soviet republics, did not even include the category of 'paper' in the reports from the Ukrainian SSR. Instead, these reports emphasised the growth of heavy industry, machine engineering, coal mining and agricultural expansion. This indirectly suggests that paper production was not a primary focus for Ukraine within the Soviet economic system. However, this did not affect the ever-increasing wastepaper collection quotas.

The decision-making system that emerged in the USSR in the late 1920s, within the framework of a command-administrative economy, involved centralised planning for the development of various industries, originating from Moscow. Despite the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the USSR from 1923 to 1928, which reintroduced certain elements of capitalist relations, the waste market in the Soviet Union was regulated by the state, due to the strategic importance of waste as raw material for Soviet enterprises. Upon receiving quotas from the central authorities, republican governments, through the Councils of National Economy and their subordinate ministries, developed production plans for industries and enterprises. In Ukraine, waste collection plans were developed by NKTorg. Archive documents from Ukrutilzbir indicate that these plans were ambitious and could be periodically increased according to directives from Moscow. For instance, on 30 December 1929, Ukrutilzbir's wastepaper collection target was increased from 9,000 tons to 12,000 tons (TsDAVO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 93: 634). All major participants in the waste market in Ukraine – such as Statetorg, Ukrutilzbir, Rudmetaltorg, Rusavstorg, Vukoopspilka, as well as large buyers of secondary raw materials, including Ukrpapirtruest, the Sugar Trust, the Leather Trust and others – were obligated to strictly fulfil these plans.

We found no evidence of conflicts between Ukrutilzbir or other companies and NKTorg regarding the implementation of these plans. This suggests a high level of centralised discipline and strict adherence to planned management, as well as the perception that fulfilling state directives was both inevitable and obligatory for all participants in the waste market, regardless of their ownership structure. Only in rare cases, such as the collection of rags, bones or scrap metal, when Ukrutilzbir could not fully meet these quotas, was the unmet portion redistributed among other market participants. As a private company, it did not have state support and was forced to obtain loans from banks to finance its operations. However, this seemingly 'lenient' attitude from NKTorg toward the company was likely not due to an understanding of its financial difficulties, but rather because it had been established by a decree of the Ukrainian government, with the starting capital provided by its co-founders – humanitarian organisations such as the Ukrainian Red Cross, the Central Commission for Aid to Children under the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (CCAC) and the Committee for Aid to Sick and Wounded Red Army Soldiers (AUCCASWRAS) (Perga 2024b).

The constant demand for paper throughout the 1920s, which exceeded production, led to an acute paper crisis in the USSR during the First Five-Year Plan. Industrialisation expanded bureaucracy and increased demands for paperwork and reporting. Moreover, it created significant demand for packaging paper and cardboard. Literacy efforts and the development of the education system fueled a surge in demand for printed materials such as notebooks and books. At the same time, wood resources for pulp production were primarily directed toward industries considered critical to the Soviet Union's industrial growth and the establishment of a powerful heavy industry sector. The paper crisis worsened not only due to raw material shortages but also because production costs rose by 19–25 per cent, driven by high electricity prices and the expensive logistics of transporting pulp from remote regions of the USSR, including the Northeast, the Urals and the Far East. As a result, paper production targets were consistently unmet. For instance, in the first half of 1932, Ukraine achieved only 59 per cent of its paper production goal (O rabote bumazhnoĭ promyshlennosti 1933).

The paper crisis affected all aspects of Soviet society. On 7 September 1929, Moscow historian Ivan Šitc recorded in his diary:

> At 10 a.m., the longest line is in front of the state publishing bookstore: schoolchildren are waiting, hoping for the store to open, aiming for notebooks. Newspapers recently reported that in the Moscow province, each student is allocated one notebook per month. This is in the center, but what about the outskirts? (Šitc 1991: 138).

The situation in the periphery was catastrophic. By the fourth quarter of that year, Ukraine required approximately 32 million notebooks. At a meeting of NKTorg on 28 September 1929, it was noted that the Soviet Print Committee had allocated writing paper from its reserves to produce only 1.6 million notebooks and permitted the repurposing of fifty tons of printing paper for this purpose. However, it refused to provide the 500 tons of paper specifically needed

for notebook production in the required quantity for the republic. As a result, it was decided that all writing paper received by Ukrpapirtrest would be used exclusively for notebook production (TsDAVO. Collection 423. Opis' 1. File 573: 23).

The paper crisis was so severe that a unique profession emerged in Moscow – individuals who cut clean pieces from paper waste.

> In … institutions, the unemployed are hired, paid 2 rubles 50 kopecks for an eight-hour workday, and tasked with sorting through files, cutting out clean fragments and corners from old business papers (Šitc 1991: 75).

Many of the documents we examined in Ukrainian archives were written on the reverse side of other documents. Even as late as 1941, according to Brigitte Pristed, much of the correspondence and documentation in Soiuzutil' was written on the back of obsolete blank sheets from the 1930s (Pristed 2019: 136), indicating that the paper crisis had not been resolved even by the early 1940s.

THE WAR ON ARCHIVES

The Soviet Union aimed to achieve paper recycling rates comparable to those of developed countries. However, economic calculations (such as population size, paper production, and consumption per capita) were not considered. According to Soviet experts, in 1929, paper recycling rates were 25% in France, 30% in Germany, 35% in the United Kingdom, 40% in the United States and 19.5% (84,000 tons) in the Soviet Union. One expert argued that if the Soviet Union's wastepaper collection process were as well-organised as in the United States, the annual collection could be doubled to 170,000 tons. He estimated the value of uncollected wastepaper at 5 million rubles (TsDAVO. Collection 4137. Opis' 1. File 24: 110).

Amid the severe shortage of paper production and supply, efforts to find new sources of wastepaper became significantly more active. The primary areas for wastepaper collection were urban centres, where it accumulated in government offices, printing houses, tobacco factories, households and other locations. Railways also generated large quantities of paper waste, including unused parcels and other materials, which were subsequently repurposed (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 35: 34). According to Brigitte Pristed,

> As early as the 1920s, archives, libraries, and other institutions were subjected to an aggressive, ideologically motivated mobilisation of resources during 'wastepaper campaigns,' which purged unwanted publications as 'excess' paper (Pristed 2019: 128).

One of the primary sources of wastepaper collection in the 1920s and early 1930s was the archives. Beyond purely utilitarian goals, such as supplying paper mills with wastepaper, the depletion of archives was also justified by ideological motives. It was framed as part of the 'new tasks' emerging from the broad expansion of socialist construction, which included the need to educate new workers, particularly the working youth and collective farm masses, through historical documents (Pro cherhovi zavdannia arkhivnoho budivnytstva USRR 1931: 4–5). Thus, in early Soviet society, wastepaper became not only a raw material for industrial development but also a tool for shaping a new historical memory, aligned with the interests of the proletariat and peasantry, and laying the groundwork for the ideological and economic practices of the coming decades. As David Brandenberger observes, 'The Soviet regime understood the importance of creating a useful past to legitimize its policies, emphasize its victories, and justify its existence' (Brandenberger 2011: 142).

The history of wastepaper collection in the 1920s and early 1930s is closely intertwined with the efforts of archival institutions to preserve documentary heritage. In the struggle for wastepaper, the interests of Ukrainian archival institutions, led by the Ukrainian Central Archive (Ukrtsentrarkh), founded in 1923, conflicted with those of Ukrpapirtrest, which represented the utilitarian priorities of the Soviet state amid its industrialisation efforts.

The utilisation of archival documents began in the early 1920s. The 'General Instructions for the Evaluation of Archival Materials' of 1921 established the methodology for assessing the value of documents in institutions and determining which ones should be utilised. It consisted of the following sections: '1) On the separation of materials for administrative purposes; 2) On the identification of materials of scientific significance; 3) On the separation of materials related to the history of the revolution; 4) On the removal of unnecessary archival materials' (TsDAVO. Collection 2531. Opis' 1. File 298: 18).

By the beginning of 1924, Ukrutilzbir had already negotiated with Ukrtsentrarkh regarding the acquisition of archival materials subject to purchase and sale and was purchasing them directly from the regional branches of the archive or at auctions (TsDAVO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 16: 31).

In accordance with established procedures, expert review committees were created at provincial (Gubarkhi) and district (Okrarkhi) archives to assess documents for these purposes. However, not all batches of documents classified as wastepaper and intended for sale to Ukrpapirtrest or auctioning reached their destination. Due to the large volume of wastepaper batches and the lack of strict control resulting from the decentralisation of the waste collection market in the Ukrainian SSR, some batches ended up on the black market, as archives also sought to generate funds for their own needs. For instance, this is evident in a 1924 letter from Ukrpapirtrest to the Kyiv Provincial Archives

Administration: 'Since November, we have not received any archive wastepaper from you. Meanwhile, the markets are full of it, and for some reason, when selling archives, preference is given to private individuals' (TsDAVO. Collection 2531. Opis' 1. File 298: 18).

In 1926–1927, a mass influx of documents from Soviet institutions began to arrive at state archives. According to the existing procedure, archival materials were transferred without prior sorting at the agencies. The evaluation of their importance was carried out in the state archives. On 20 December 1928, the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspections of the USSR changed the procedure and issued a decree for the urgent withdrawal of wastepaper from archival institutions to meet the needs of the paper industry, which triggered the *makulatura* collection campaign. All institutions and enterprises were instructed to prepare wastepaper and archival documents lacking scientific and practical value for transfer to Ukrpapirtrest within two months. According to the decree, revision committees were now required to be established in these institutions with the participation of archive staff.

The process of separating waste materials was divided into two stages. The first stage focused on documents of a mass stencil nature and auxiliary administrative forms of temporary significance, while the second stage involved materials that could only be discarded after a thorough review to assess their lack of necessity for the institutions and their absence of scientific or historical value (Pidsumky roboty 1929: 12). Grouping archival documents and distinguishing between those of minimal significance and those of scientific or historical value proved to be a significant challenge. This process faced numerous difficulties, both from the archival bodies responsible for conducting expert assessments and from the institutions themselves. Many valuable documents were destroyed due to negligence or incompetence on the part of responsible workers (Sel'čenkova 2004: 23–27) or in the rush to meet wastepaper collection quotas. Even the Soviet press noted that 'the revision commissions of many institutions, not understanding the importance of the tasks entrusted to them, approached their work either carelessly or in a formally bureaucratic manner' (Pidsumky roboty 1929: 12). It should be added that many employees of the institutions lacked the necessary education and knowledge to assess the importance of the documents.

According to S. Sel'čenkova, the destruction of valuable documentary sources during the *makulatura* collection campaigns, including operational and reference materials as well as documents of social significance, can be attributed to the fact that the campaign compelled archival institutions to focus not on selecting documents for preservation but on identifying those for destruction. As a result, the lists compiled in the 1920s and early 1930s primarily targeted documents considered unworthy of preservation. Meanwhile, the archivists, who were too few to manage such a large-scale task, attempted to save even documents of minimal value, as the urgency of resolving the paper crisis left little time for an objective assessment of their significance (Sel'čenkova 2004: 26–29).

An example of the selfless struggle of archival institutions to preserve archives is the conflict that arose between the South-Western Railway of the People's Commissariat of Railway Transport and Ukrtsentrarkh. During the operation of the railway, a significant amount of wastepaper accumulated, including old used railway tickets, individual bills of lading and duplicates whose retention periods had expired, as well as used telegraph tapes, current reports, damaged and blank forms, drafts, and other materials with no archival value. Although the Commissariat's orders did not explicitly direct that this paper waste be forwarded to local archives, the latter, referencing the instructions of Ukrtsentrarkh, insisted that all wastepaper be submitted to them and opposed any attempts to sell it independently.

For some time, the South-Western Railway administration sent wastepaper to local archives. However, due to challenging economic conditions, it decided to halt this practice and instead sell the wastepaper to collecting companies on a commercial basis. The administration appealed to Ukrtsentrarkh, requesting permission to independently sell the wastepaper, justifying its decision as follows:

The wastepaper, which holds no archival value, accumulates in tens of thousands of poods along the railway lines. Given the shortage of wrapping paper in the market and its high cost, such wastepaper, which has no archival significance, serves as a valuable material asset, either as pulp for processing paper mills or as material for packaging. The railway administration has long transferred this waste to the Ukrtsentrarkh authorities, thereby foregoing a profitable income of tens of thousands of rubles (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 71: 16).

At the same time, the administration of the South-Western Railway held an auction to sell 35 tons of wastepaper, which was won by Ukrutilzbir. However, upon learning of this transaction, the Kyiv Okrarkh intervened by sending a letter to prohibit the sale of paper and notifying the law enforcement authorities. The head of the Okrarkh insisted that *'the destruction or utilisation of the aforementioned archival materials be stopped, their integrity safeguarded, and that no archival materials from the railway be removed without the approval of Ukrtsentrarkh'.* The Okrarkh then began a search for the batches of wastepaper, enlisting the help of the police. Some of these materials had already been sold by Ukrutilzbir, which also attempted to trace their whereabouts. The archival documents do not clarify whether this transaction was legally halted.

At the time of the correspondence, the company received only half of the 35 tons of archival materials it had purchased. (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 74: 242-244, 15).

Meanwhile, across the USSR, numerous valuable archival documents were being destroyed. Several Russian historians have documented the loss of sources related to the history of the Russian army during the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, including World War I (Ŝerbina 1993: 24, Korotkov 1990). Some Ukrainian scholars contend that the mass destruction of archival materials also occurred in Ukraine (*Khrestomatiĭa z arkhivoznavstva* 2003). This is further evidenced by various articles from the Soviet press at the time reporting on the progress of the wastepaper campaign in the Ukrainian SSR. For instance, the Mogilyov-Podilskyi District Prosecutor's Office transferred its entire archive for utilisation without notification of Gubarkh. A significant part of Ukrainian archival collections from 1917–1921 was either destroyed or lost. In contrast, the newspaper collections from this period, which replaced these archives, were not forwarded to Ukrtsentrarkh from the periphery (Pro cherhovi zavdannia arkhivnoho budivnytstva USRR 1931: 5).

The dismantling of archival documents was carried out systematically, which hindered the ability to conduct thorough analysis and preserve valuable cultural and documentary heritage. For instance, in 1931, the Vinnytsia Local Archive committed to transferring forty tons of 'unnecessary' archival materials to paper mills for disposal (Damo 40 tons vidkhodiv'1931: 114). This practice was widespread throughout the country. Archives held significant 'wastepaper' potential, which facilitated the implementation of plans for their 'cleansing'. In 1927, the archives contained 10,744 linear meters of documents, a number that gradually declined during the campaign: to 8,433 meters in 1928 and to 6,032 meters in 1929 (Pidsumky diial'nosti Okrarkhiv u 1929 r. 1930: 74).

The scale of the wastepaper campaign can be illustrated by the following figures: in 1930, 800 tons of archival materials were utilised, and the target for 1931 was set at 1,300–1,500 tons. According to a decree from the Ukrainian Economic Council under the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR (UEC) for the first quarter of 1933, the utilisation plan for archives from active institutions, book-selling organisations and publishing houses was as follows: for the Ukrtsentrarkh – 1,100 tons; for the People's Commissariat for Railway Transport – 300 tons; and for book-selling organisations and publishing houses – 1,500 tons, totaling 2,900 tons (TsDAVO. Collection 572. Opis'1. File 42: 114).

This situation vividly illustrates the dilemma of the Soviet approach to modernisation, where ideological and economic considerations often took precedence over cultural needs, resulting in irreparable losses. Consequently, some archival collections vanished without a trace, creating significant gaps in historical scholarship – gaps that are still felt today.

UTILISING ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES: THE CASE OF HOUSING COOPERATIVES AND MAKULATURA COLLECTION COMPANIES

Existing academic studies often portray the Soviet economy as a highly centralised, command-driven system in which directives from central leadership were transmitted through multiple layers of administrative and state agencies, regulating production and resource allocation with limited flexibility or market incentives (Ericson 2013). Among the various tools employed in the command-administrative economy for waste collection, the role of the administrative resource has received little scholarly attention. In the USSR, the administrative resource referred to the use of government positions, official authority or state institutions to achieve specific objectives, often serving personal, political or institutional interests. This entailed leveraging authority and control associated with one's position within the highly centralised and hierarchical structure of the Soviet state. In the field of waste recycling during the late 1920s and early 1930s, the administrative resource manifested itself in mandatory directives issued by party and executive bodies. These directives required various actors to participate in mass campaigns, including one-day subbotniks, as well as weekly, ten-day or monthly collection drives. At the early stages of implementing this mechanism, it was often used to protect the interests of specific waste collection companies rather than individuals. While it is plausible that this practice was associated with corruption, no direct evidence of such activities has been identified in archival documents. Meanwhile these directives played a crucial role in ensuring the fulfillment of waste collection targets and provided a competitive advantage to collectors who secured these mandates. This article examines two cases that illustrate the application of administrative resources in this field.

One notable example is the involvement of housing cooperatives in waste collection. Amid the rapid urbanisation driven by industrialisation, residential buildings came to be regarded as 'waste factories' in the late 1920s. Between 1926 and 1939, the population of the Kyiv Region – approximately half of whom lived in cities – increased sixfold (Vsesoiuznyĭ perepys naselennia 1926 r.; Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naselennia 1939 g.). It was estimated that an average resident of a multi-store building discarded waste worth 50 rubles annually (TsDAVO. Collection 2347. Opis' 1. File 66: 24). A 1930 waste analysis conducted in Kharkiv detailed the composition of urban refuse:

ash accounted for 32.5%, other inorganic materials 8.5%, paper waste 6.7%, coal residues 2.4%, slag 2%, wood 1.6%, textiles 1.4%, food scraps 1.3%, bones and metals 0.5% each, and other waste 0.1% (Mamkov 1941: 16–25). Although these figures show that the share of wastepaper, rags, bones and metals in the garbage of housing cooperatives was small, the Soviet authorities relied not only on their systematic collection and recycling but also on the significant overall volume of waste expected due to the large number of multi-store buildings.

In 1928, the central housing cooperative organisation of the republic Ukrzhytlospilka issued directives to the boards of all affiliated housing cooperatives, mandating the participation of all residential buildings and complexes in waste collection. The order required residential cooperatives to sign compulsory agreements for waste disposal with one of Ukraine's two major procurement organisations: Ukrutilzbir or Statetorg. Additionally, cooperatives were instructed to designate specific areas for waste storage and finance the production of containers for separate collection (DAKO. Collection 2923. Opis' 1. File 90: 5).

The use of directive methods stemmed from the reluctance of most housing cooperatives to participate in waste collection. By the late 1920s, cooperatives were primarily focused on verifying the social status of residents to identify and evict so-called 'bourgeois elements', as the expanding urban population, particularly industrial workers, created an increasing demand for housing. Moreover, the financial burden of producing waste storage containers fell on the cooperatives, many of which lacked the necessary funds.

Directive decrees had to overcome these obstacles. They also mandated that the cultural-educational sectors of authorised organisations and housing cooperatives conduct propaganda campaigns aimed at the population. These efforts focused on engaging the 'hardened hearts of housewives' through personal discussions and the dissemination of various agitational posters. Housewives and domestic workers were encouraged to designate specific spaces for waste storage and provide containers for waste separation. The waste had to be maintained in good condition, with paper kept dry and clean (DAKO. Collection 2923. Opis' 1. File 90:15). However, according to our analysis of archival documents, although the housing cooperatives signed contracts with collection organisations for the supply of waste materials, the implementation of all the directives was hindered by the lack of financial motivation for their employees to effectively carry out the responsibilities assigned to them.

Makulatura collected from residential cooperatives was classified into two grades: 1) paper scraps, consisting of low-quality dry trimmings and miscellaneous office and shop papers, purchased at 20 rubles per ton; 2) archival waste, including office records, library books, brochures, periodicals, and archival files with covers, valued at 34–59 rubles per ton. Uncut books and newspapers were priced higher, reaching 77 rubles per ton (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 101: 11).

Following the establishment of Soiuzutil' in the 1930s, this initiative persisted. Brigitte Pristed provides evidence that waste collection quotas were assigned to each household, typically ranging from two to four kilograms per household, divided into various categories of scrap. Housing cooperatives that failed to meet their obligations were subject to fines (Pristed 2019: 137). Additionally, janitors played an active role in waste collection activities and received modest supplementary payment for their efforts.

Administrative resources were utilised by all market actors, each justifying their actions by emphasising the significance of their respective niches. Statetorg typically invoked the necessity of fulfilling export plans, while Ukrutilzbir cited its exclusive right to collect and purchase waste in Ukraine, granted by the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) and the Council of People's Commissars on 5 December 1923. Ukrutilzbir further leveraged additional regulations, including the decree of the Supreme Council of National Economy dated 28 December 1928; the resolution of the Collegium of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR from December 20, 1928, titled 'On the Procedure for the Withdrawal of Archival and Other Paper Waste from Enterprises and Institutions for the Needs of the Paper Industry'; a directive from the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (RKI) dated 14 January 1929; and a circular from NKTorg of the Ukrainian SSR dated 17 December 1929.

However, the ability to lobby for such directives issued by local executive bodies depended on a combination of objective and subjective factors, as mentioned earlier. Ukrutilzbir often successfully lobbied for its interests, securing directives from local authorities in its favor - mandating that participants in mass mobilisation campaigns deliver waste exclusively to the organisation. For instance, on 29 December 1929, the Mogilìv - Podìl's'kij District Executive Committee issued Mandatory Decree No. 23, titled 'On the Obligatory Delivery of Paper Waste and Scrap to Ukrutilzbir', aimed at enhancing companies' capacity to meet their paper waste collection targets. The decree included the following provisions:

- Mandatory Compliance: All state, cooperative, public, and private institutions, enterprises, and organisations were required to deliver paper waste, scraps, and defective paper exclusively to Ukrutilzbir at fixed prices.
- Prohibition of Destruction or Sale: Enterprises and institutions were strictly prohibited from

destroying, damaging, or selling paper waste to any organisation other than Ukrutilzbir.

- Penalties for Non-Compliance: Private individuals found violating these regulations faced administrative fines of up to 100 rubles.

For violations in cities and urban settlements, fines were imposed of up to 10 rubles, while rural violations could result in forced labour for up to one month. Officials who violated the decree were subject to criminal prosecution under Article 99 of the Criminal Code (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 84: 64).

According to established practice in the USSR, failure to meet state-mandated plans and obligations was punished, serving as one of the Soviet authorities' methods of coercion to maintain discipline and ensure the implementation of directives. This approach not only maintained strict centralised control but also incentivised managers and organisations to mobilise resources and meet established targets by any means necessary. During a session of the Council of Labor and Defense in Moscow in 1933, it was noted that

> certain trusts and enterprises, particularly those under the Ukrainian and Western Pulp and Paper Trusts, instead of focusing on securing raw materials and necessary resources (such as kaolin, alumina, etc.) to fulfill the production program for writing and notebook paper, resorted to systematically manufacturing 'non-quota varieties' and selling them at inflated prices.

As a result, severe measures were implemented: the head of the Ukrainian Pulp and Paper Trust, Comrade Shlifer, was dismissed and prosecuted for his 'anti-state approach to fulfilling the government-mandated plan and speculative price increases for paper'. Comrade Kotovič, the former director of the Troïc'ka factory, was also brought to trial. Comrade Safronov, the manager of the Western Pulp and Paper Trust, and Comrade Morozov, the head of the Middle Volga Pulp and Paper Trust, received official reprimands. Leaders of paper trusts and directors of enterprises were explicitly warned that deviations from the planned assortment would result in severe punitive measures (O rabote bumazhnoï promyshlennosti 1933).

During the 1930s, amid campaigns against economic sabotage, such 'crimes' could lead not only to imprisonment but also to capital punishment. However, by the late Soviet period, these actions were redefined as economic crimes or administrative violations, reflecting the evolving nature of state discipline and punishment.

Makulatura collection campaigns involved a broad cross-section of the population, including schoolchildren – pioneers. Various directives were also issued to organise them. Party and community activists, deeply concerned about the shortage of raw materials for paper factories, closely monitored the collection efforts, striving to highlight any shortcomings. The press published articles that both criticised and motivated these campaigns. The content of many publications from this period, as well as the organisation of paper collection campaigns, is exemplified in an article published on 15 February 1929, in the Cherkasy newspaper *Radâns'ka dumka*, titled 'Paper factories are waiting for raw materials'.

The article stated:

> *The Central Committee of Komsomol [youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (CPSU)] has decided to conduct a campaign to collect paper waste throughout February. This work has not yet begun in our district or city, and large amounts of paper waste are being discarded at a time when paper factories lack raw materials. Apart from Komsomol members, all schoolchildren, couriers, and janitors should be involved, as their efforts can gather various types of paper. Schoolchildren should collect paper at home, while janitors and couriers should do so at their workplaces. To motivate the collectors, a percentage of the collected paper should be set. Initial steps have been taken: the editorial office of Soviet Thought has already collected two poods [32.8 kg] of paper. Every institution should have a collection box, and schoolchildren must ensure there is one at home. The funds generated from the collected paper should be used for health-related activities for children. An organising committee should be established at the district level to oversee the campaign. Paper factories are waiting for the necessary raw materials. We must assist them. (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 76: 211).

Archival documents reveal that, in the early Soviet period, the money earned by schoolchildren from collecting wastepaper was channeled into social needs – hot meals, healthcare and support for needy students. In times of economic deficit, this served as additional motivation for their participation in collective actions. In the late Soviet period, the emphasis on moral incentives increased. Furthermore, the collection of wastepaper by pioneers became a tradition and an integral part of life, symbolising civic engagement and ideological devotion to socialist values.

COMPETITION, THE BLACK MARKET AND PROBLEMS WITH WASTEPAPER COLLECTION

In the 1920s and early 1930s, wastepaper collection was not only poorly organised but also economically unprofitable, much like the publishing industry itself. This is evidenced by certain accounts from the diary of the Ukrainian scholar, critic, and historian of literature, academician of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Sergìj Ŧefremov. He recounted a case that

revealed the paradoxical economic situation of the time: upon investigating why the circulation of the Kharkiv newspaper *Visti* unexpectedly increased, ŤEfremov discovered that in Mikolaïv, the newspaper would arrive at the train station, then be packed and sent directly to a store selling wastepaper and miscellaneous goods, bypassing its intended readers. The reason was simple, almost mathematical: a pound of the newspaper cost the subscriber 5 rubles 40 kopecks, while a pound of wastepaper was worth 7 rubles as scrap, which led to the bulk purchase of the newspaper by store workers, who would then immediately resell it to collection organisations as makulatura. The profit from such a simple operation amounted to 1.60 rubles per kilogram. It was only when the newspaper's circulation grew excessively large that concerns arose, and it became clear that this 'circulation' posed a threat to *Visti* itself. ŤEfremov wrote: 'However, since the funds for publication were effectively "free" – state-subsidised – nothing was done. Let them believe that the Soviet press is read everywhere' (ŤEfremov 1997: 358).

This case serves as an example of legal operations and illustrates how some collectors took advantage of price discrepancies to secure substantial profits. However, there was also a black market in Ukraine where waste was sold not only by illegal collectors but also by some employees of waste collection organisations. From the documents of Ukrutilzbir for 1926 and 1928, we can conclude that the local population regularly stole waste from the Luk'ânìvs'ka dump leased by the company and sold it to speculators. For instance, an entrepreneur named Blum established an underground warehouse near the landfill to purchase stolen recyclables, offering higher prices than Ukrutilzbir. To protect itself from competition and recover lost profits, the company appealed to the police, demanding that Blum be prosecuted (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 31: 80). Another document indicates that on 10 July 1930, Ukrutilzbir dismissed Samuïl Poltorak, the head of its Gastomel' branch in the Kyiv region, for various speculative activities: '1) collaboration with private traders; 2) reselling scarce nonferrous metals such as copper, zinc, and tin to private buyers; 3) using NKTorg documents for personal speculative schemes' (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 74: 200).

However, waste collection companies, including those dealing with wastepaper, did not only compete with private agents who were active in the market during the NEP period, which reintroduced certain market elements and allowed private entrepreneurs to operate. The companies also rivaled one another, and, surprisingly, Ukrpapirtrest competed with its own contractor, Ukrutilzbir. This can be explained by the trust's need to meet paper production quotas, which drove it to seek protection against its contractors' failure to meet wastepaper delivery targets. The constant threats of fines to Ukrutilzbir for not fulfilling wastepaper delivery contracts were insufficient to resolve the issue. In its attempt to collect as much wastepaper as possible for paper production, Ukrpapirtrest frequently overstepped the territorial boundaries allocated to companies by the NKTP (People's Commissariat of Trade) for their operations. For instance, in the summer of 1926, representatives from the Kharkiv office of Ukrpapirtrest began approaching local printing houses with contracts already in place with Ukrutilzbir, offering to exchange clean paper for wastepaper, despite the existing agreement to deliver waste to the trust (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 35: 122).

In the late Soviet period, the situation underwent a dramatic shift. With increased production and consumption, the surplus of materials in the form of waste expanded, leading to a decrease in competition for their acquisition. On the other hand, the existing recycling capacities in the USSR proved inadequate to manage the growing volume of waste (Pristed 2019: 139).

Ensuring the quality of makulatura was as crucial as meeting collection quotas. Ukrpapirtrest implemented exceptionally strict acceptance criteria for wastepaper. Acceptance reports frequently highlighted issues such as excessive moisture, gunpowder and other contaminants, resulting in the rejection of the wastepaper delivered. The trust even introduced a category called 'dirty paper', referring to paper contaminated with soil, which was not included in the official waste classification system approved by NKTorg (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 32: 18). Determining whether the paper was genuinely poorly sorted or if the customer was being excessively meticulous to obstruct Ukrutilzbir is often challenging. In some cases, such methods could be used to eliminate competitors or undesirable suppliers from the market or to shift the blame for failing to meet the plan onto a counterpart.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that workers at waste-collection companies frequently performed substandard sorting, as many lacked the necessary expertise for the job. Sorting paper was a labour-intensive process, requiring the categorisation of materials by colour and thickness. Additionally, paper scraps, particularly from various publishing houses, were often small-sized, further complicating the sorting process.

Jakiv, Beïlis the sorting instructor from the Kyiv office of Ukrutilzbir, regularly visited companies where conflicts arose during wastepaper deliveries. On 20 October 1925, he was dispatched to the Poninkivs'ka factory to resolve issues related to the sorting of paper scraps delivered to the facility (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 19: 6). In his letter to the Kyiv branch of Ukrutilzbir, Beïlis outlined the challenges faced by waste collectors:

Following your instructions, I traveled to Ponìnkìv to visit the Ponìnkìvs'ka paper mill to observe the sorting of the cut paper scraps. The sorting was

carried out in my presence, but it was done incorrectly, which I promptly pointed out to the factory administration. However, I was unable to alter the sorting methods, as the administration disagreed with my approach. The sorting and quality determination of the paper were conducted as follows...

Beĭlis further described the issues encountered during the transportation of paper scraps from the railway station to the factory. The cargo was not accompanied by a representative from the factory. Instead, local peasants, acting as cart drivers, were responsible for transporting the paper scraps. Consequently, the bundles of paper, which were tightly tied with the best quality ropes, arrived at the factory without the ropes, as the peasants had stolen them. When Beĭlis raised this concern, one of the workers remarked, 'Don't give us good ropes.' He concluded that the factory's reports about poor packaging, which supposedly led to a shortage of scraps, could not be attributed to the waste collection team.

In addition, when determining the loss due to 'soiling,' the factory claimed that the loss of ropes – used to bind the paper scraps and stolen by the peasants – accounted for six per cent of the value of the batch. Furthermore, the factory representatives incorrectly checked the sorting of the paper. Instead of selecting all the white scraps from the available bales for testing, they took samples from only two bales. They also claimed that the paper scraps arrived wet, but this was due to the factory's own negligence. The factory had failed to pay the contractors on time, delaying payments by two to three weeks. During this period, wastepaper was left in the railway cars, where rain soaked it, causing some to be lost (DAKO. Collection 2993. Opis' 1. File 35: 5-10).

However, careless handling of paper was also evident in the late Soviet period. Brigitte Pristed cites an article from the *Literturnaâ Gazeta* published in 1967, titled 'Comrade Roll', which discusses an investigative 'raid' by representatives from the newspaper and the Leningrad Writers' Association regarding the logistics of paper transportation from factories to printing houses. The article reveals that improper packaging and transportation in open trucks exposed to rain resulted in significant damage to the paper during transit – enough to print a small book with a circulation of 30,000 copies (Pristed 2019: 129). It is plausible that a similar situation occurred with wastepaper, which was transported under comparable conditions. Moreover, many waste collection containers installed in the courtyards of multi-storey buildings in the Soviet Union lacked lids or were poorly sealed, leading to the deterioration of the waste due to exposure to sunlight, wind, rain and snow.

Wastefulness and the concurrent shortage of Soviet printing paper only became topics of discussion in the late Soviet period, with writers emerging as the primary participants in these debates. In contrast, early Soviet discussions centered on entirely different issues, such as the standards for quality, packaging, sorting of paper waste, logistics, documentation and the procedures for receiving and transferring waste. For instance, Ukrutilzbir required its employees to carry out the acceptance and delivery processes in the presence of both the customer and the supplier, while also setting limits on the acceptable level of waste (garbage) – 0.25% for cutting and up to 2% for sorting (DAKO. Collection 2347. Opis' 1. File 60: 502). This focus on strict regulations was driven by the infancy of the waste collection industry and the need to establish various standards, adherence to which was expected to lead to genuine material savings.

Despite various attempts to improve wastepaper collection, the economic effectiveness of the initiative remains highly questionable. The cost of collecting wastepaper often exceeded the purchasing price set by collection enterprises, in accordance with the rates established by the People's Commissariat of Trade of the USSR through administrative methods. For instance, in the late 1920s, the price of one kilogram of wastepaper was approximately 4 kopecks. Compared to other types of waste, paper was significantly lighter for the same volume of materials such as rags, bones and metal scrap, making its transportation by horse-drawn carts both costly and inefficient. The alternative – motor transport – was scarce and prohibitively expensive at the time. For instance, acquiring the necessary motor vehicles for one collection campaign in Kharkiv in 1930 required 300,000 rubles (TsDAVO. Collection 2347. Opis' 1. File 66: 91). As a result, all such campaigns faced financial losses. However, although these issues were occasionally discussed by local organisers of *makulatura* collection campaigns, they were not properly addressed, as their resolution depended on nationwide authorities and required a complete overhaul of the directive planning system.

CONCLUSION

The early Soviet wastepaper collection system emerged within the framework of a shortage economy and paper crisis, where restricted paper production limited the amount of wastepaper generated. Directive methods of waste utilisation introduced during 1920s–early 1930s aimed to address this issue and ensure the fulfillment of wastepaper collection quotas established for the union republics by the central Soviet authorities.

To enhance the efficiency of wastepaper collection, the focus was placed on large waste suppliers, which led to the involvement of archives and housing cooperatives, along with the organisation of periodic ideologically-driven mobilisation campaigns that engaged broad segments of the population.

Prior to the centralisation of waste collection in 1932, a variety of actors with different ownership structures and conflicting interests were involved in the process. The primary purchaser of wastepaper was the state, represented by Ukrpapirtrest, while the main collector was the private company Ukrutilzbir, which procured waste from various sources, including archives and housing cooperatives.

The case of the Ukrainian SSR illustrates how the conflicting interests of these actors shaped their behaviour and approaches to resolving disputes. Ukrpapirtrest imposed fines for failure to fulfil contracts and practiced strict conditions for acceptance of paper waste, while also engaging in unethical business practices, such as appropriating contracts for acquiring wastepaper from printing houses that had agreements with his subcontractor Ukrutilzbir. Ukrutilzbir, like many other waste collectors, lobbied and used administrative leverage through local government decrees that forced local actors to supply wastepaper exclusively to them. Archives, confronted with the threat of losing valuable documentary heritage, sought to preserve even clearly irrelevant materials. However, despite these efforts, many important documents were irretrievably lost. Housing cooperatives, overwhelmed by other responsibilities and lacking economic incentives for wastepaper collection, handled their duties with neglect. Some waste collectors and employees of various institutions exploited organisational gaps in waste collection or motivated by personal profit, sold wastepaper on the black market. There, it was redistributed through unofficial channels, sold at inflated prices, or stockpiled in unrecorded reserves, ultimately undermining state control over the industry.

The wastepaper collection process often proved unprofitable due to the lack of organisation and high operational costs amid the low purchase price set centrally by Moscow. In this context, only black-market speculators were able to generate substantial profits. The benefit to the Soviet state was more political and ideological than economic. Wastepaper collection contributed to paper production and demonstrated the advantages of socialism, while also instilling a sense of collectivism and loyalty among Soviet citizens during mass mobilisation campaigns.

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