

The Cult of Will and Power: Did Brzozowski Inspire Ukrainian Nationalism?¹

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Reference to the works or the mere name of Stanisław Brzozowski can be regarded as a basso continuo in twentieth-century Polish intellectual debates. Ever since his premature death from tuberculosis in 1911, his writings as well as his critical posture have served as a vantage point, as a source of inspiration or of symbolic authority for several generations of Polish intellectuals up to recent times. Although it is not always easy to assess how precisely Brzozowski may have inspired religious thinkers of the 1920s, literary critics of the 1930s, Marxist-revisionist philosophers of the 1960s, or left-wing activists of the 2000s (to name only a few settings in which references to Brzozowski have been particularly frequent)—the sheer fact of his presence is something that can hardly be called into question. If this holds true for Poland, the opposite must be said for the rest of the world. Brzozowski's relevance as a writer and thinker somehow vanishes completely as soon as we cross the borders of Polish culture. Several attempts were made to mark at least Brzozowski's potential to exert an influence on the history of twentieth-century literature, criticism, and social philosophy. The most prominent example is Andrzej Walicki's book on *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*.² However, there is something inevitably melancholic in these endeavors. It simply has to be admitted that Brzozowski was practically ignored by intellectuals outside Poland. Exceptions were few—one could point to his encounters with Anatolii Lu-

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues and friends who helped me with finding materials or gave me their advice during the writing of this essay: Lyudmyla Berbenets, Andrej Lushnycky, Dorota Kozicka, Olesya Omelchuk, and Dariusz Pachocki.

2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

nacharskii and Maksim Gor'kii in Florence in 1907;³ to his programmatic article on “Historical Materialism as Cultural Philosophy” in the German socialist journal *Die Neue Zeit*,⁴ and maybe as well to his plan to collaborate with the Florence-based journal *La Voce*,⁵ which unfortunately remained aspirational.⁶ However, these few examples confirm rather than disprove the assertion that one cannot speak of any impact whatsoever exerted by Brzozowski’s writings on non-Polish debates in the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, there was one exception. Brzozowski *was* in fact read and appreciated by a small number of Ukrainian intellectuals in the interwar period. There even is some (admittedly scarce) evidence that his ideas were picked up and developed in the context of Ukrainian nationalist thought in the 1920s and 1930s. The goal of the present chapter is to shed some light on this episode in the history of the reception of Brzozowski’s works, to collect hints that point to a possible affiliation between the Polish philosopher and his Ukrainian readers, and to assess if we can indeed speak of an ‘influence’ wielded by the former’s writings in this specific context.

Did it Happen? Brzozowski’s Encounter with Dmytro Dontsov

In Mykhailo Sosnovs’kyi’s *Dmytro Dontsov: A Political Portrait* we read that Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973), possibly the most influential representative of Ukrainian nationalist thought during the interwar years and one of the intellectual leaders (though not a formal member) of the “Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists” (OUN),⁷ had spent some months during 1908 and 1909 in Za-

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- 3 Daniela Steila, “A philosophy of labour: comparing A. V. Lunačarskij and S. Brzozowski,” *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 315–327.
 - 4 Stanislaus Brzozowski, “Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie: ein philosophisches Programm,” *Die neue Zeit: Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 31 (1907), 153–160. http://library.fes.de/cgi-bin/neuzeit.pl?id=07.06297&dok=1906-07b&f=190607b_0153&l=190607b_0160&c=190607b_0153. The article was reviewed by M. S. H. in *American Journal of Sociology* 13, 3 (1907): 429. For more on this see Gábor Gángó’s essay in this volume, 57ff.
 - 5 As mentioned in a letter to Ostap Ortwin on May 3, 1910. Cf.: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 419.
 - 6 Cf. annotation in: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 412, and also in: Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 121. All these plans were balked by the “Brzozowski affair.”
 - 7 Cf.: Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego* [The Ukrainian national idea in the interwar period] (Toruń: Wyd. Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013), 116.

kopane for treatment. Sosnovs'kyi further states that, in Zakopane, Dontsov had “made the acquaintance of the outstanding Polish philosopher and journalist of the so-called ‘Young Poland’ generation, whose works, as some people suppose, bore a considerable influence on Dontsov.”⁸ Unfortunately, this is the only occurrence of Brzozowski’s name in this extensive study of Dontsov’s intellectual biography.

Sosnovs'kyi’s laconic remark could not fit better with a general conclusion I reached during my research on the forms and representations of Brzozowski’s intellectual heritage. Many key figures in Polish twentieth-century intellectual history claim to have been influenced or inspired by Brzozowski. Nevertheless, only very rarely does one get to know more about the specific ideas, terms or concepts of the author of *The Legend of Modern Poland*, which were actually picked up by his readers. This observation raises the problem of ‘intellectual influence’ as such. We have no clear definition of what it means to be ‘influenced’ by an author—his person or his writings. Does it suffice that his name is mentioned as a source of inspiration or would we expect references to his works, direct quotations or other explicit or implicit marks of intertextuality? In Brzozowski’s case, we frequently get the impression that reference to his writings—or, unfortunately more often, solely to his name—is not so much meant to call up specific ideas as to declare a personal affiliation to a certain group, camp or intellectual and generational cluster. Thus, ‘Brzozowski’ becomes a label, a common denominator that is employed to declare one’s kinship with a group of likeminded peers. Recently, Małgorzata Szpakowska has shown that the engagement with Brzozowski’s heritage in the interwar journal *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News) was actually rather superficial, despite the fact that Brzozowski was generally considered the journal’s intellectual “patron.”⁹

For a clarification of what can be understood as ‘intellectual influence’ we can turn directly to Brzozowski’s ideas on the matter. In his *Diary*, he stated, “what is not biography does not exist at all.”¹⁰ Presumably Brzozowski’s most often quoted statement, this phrase considerably disturbs scholars who are used to rely on structures and networks more than on the subject as an agent in a historical process. It certainly needs further explanation to be of use for a discus-

8 Mykhailo Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov: politychnyi portret. Z istorii rozvytku ideologii ukraïns'koho natsionalizmu* [Dmytro Dontsov: a political portrait. From the history of the development of the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism] (New York – Toronto: Trident International, Inc., 1974), 76.

9 Małgorzata Szpakowska, “*Wiadomości Literackie*” *prawie dla wszystkich* [“Literary news”: almost for everyone] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2012), 373f.

10 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 164.

sion of Brzozowski's own sphere of influence. In an annotation to his translation of John Henry Newman's writings he developed this idea somewhat more fully: every "thing" and every "principle" or "idea" is of historical relevance only insofar as it enters the concrete life of an individual. It is this individual who introduces the idea to a greater community: "Everything must be a moment of someone's biography."¹¹ The concept of "entering one's biography" oscillates between the claim to historical and biographical factuality, or at least verifiability, and a rather blurred symbolic or charismatic meaning. And it is precisely thanks to this semantic ambivalence that it can be useful as a tool for intellectual historians who are interested not so much in a free flow of ideas in some sublime, depersonalized *empyrean*, but in the institutional, social and concrete historical context which produces and shapes these ideas—as well as their impact. The *person* is situated at the very intersection of these factors. Moreover, she is an acting part in the process. However, we must not forget that the mere mention of an author's name as a source of authority or symbolic capital can also be completely misleading. It is often more fruitful to ask for which specific interest or motivation does someone choose to claim 'Brzozowski' as an authoritative point of reference for her own intellectual biography or public image, rather than to try to detect traces of Brzozowski's ideas in her writings. But this assessment can only be made after a thorough examination of the philosophical or critical concepts that are at stake in the respective context.

In this regard, Dmytro Dontsov's case is exceptional. Whereas in certain contexts of Polish culture, Brzozowski's name clearly served as a source of symbolic capital, nothing similar can be stated for cultures outside Poland. Why should the Canada-based author of a 1974 biography about the mastermind of Ukrainian interwar nationalism resort to this device? One would normally not expect that a reference to Brzozowski in the context of Ukrainian émigré scholarship could produce the same charismatic effect as in the Polish context. Should we not conclude therefore that there must be more behind this reference than a simple attempt to confer significance on Dontsov's person and writings? Nevertheless, it would be risky to conclude from the pure fact of this somewhat isolated reference that Brzozowski actually *did* inspire Dontsov's political ideas or world-view. Unfortunately, Sosnovs'kyi's version of an encounter in Zakopane is at best circumstantial evidence—or rather no evidence at all. However, this did not hinder later Dontsov scholars from reiterating it: Thus, Oleh Bahan stressed the importance of Dontsov's encounter with Brzozowski in Zakopane in

11 Cf.: John Henry Newman, *Przyświadczenia wiary* [Testimonies of faith], trans. Stanisław Brzozowski (Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Ska., 1915), 221.

1909. He even assumed that the pen-name “Zakopanets’,” adopted by Dontsov in some of his publications should be read as an acknowledgment of the pivotal role of this encounter for the development of his political thought.¹² Unfortunately, Bahan, too, spares us any references that could tell us more about the sources from which he builds his assessment. In all likelihood, he simply follows Sosnovs’kyi here. As did the Polish writer and critic Józef Łobodowski in a 1981 essay on Dmytro Dontsov; speaking of Sosnovs’kyi’s account of Dontsov’s meeting with Brzozowski, he asserted that “this is an interesting fact for Polish cultural history” (Tu interesujący polonik).¹³

It is hard not to agree with this assessment: Dontsov’s meeting with Brzozowski would indeed be an interesting fact—if it were a fact at all. The problem is that, for all we know, Brzozowski did *not* stay in Zakopane in 1908 or 1909.¹⁴ If Dontsov met him there, this must have been in 1905. In July and August 1905, Brzozowski held lectures at the “Holiday University” (Uniwersytet Wakacyjny) in the Tatra resort.¹⁵ But this date seems improbable for a meeting of the two, given that we have no evidence that Dontsov could have come to Zakopane during the years of his studies at St. Petersburg University.¹⁶ Zakopane was in the Austro-Hungarian part of Poland; reliable biographical accounts state that Dontsov left the Russian Empire for the first time (and for good) in 1908.¹⁷

12 He also mentions Dontsov’s meetings with the leader of Ukrainian conservatism V’iachoslav Lypyns’kyi (1882–1931) in Zakopane in 1909: “Особистостями, які посприяли цьому, можна припустити, були польський критик і мислитель волюнтаристського спрямування Станіслав Бжозовський (1878–1911) і український історик та теоретик консерватизму В’ячеслав Липинський (1882–1931), з якими він познайомився у 1909 р., вже на еміграції, у польському курортному містечку Закопане. (Можливо, не випадково один час його псевдонімом був «Закопанець», що ніби вказував на значущість зустрічей у мальовничих Татрах).” Oleh Bahan, “Ideoloh natsional’noï velychi” [An ideologue of national greatness]. http://dontsov.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121:oleg-bagan-qideolog-nacionalnoji-velychiq-&catid=36:poslidovniki&Itemid=41

13 Józef Łobodowski, “Dmytro Doncow: życie i działalność” [Dmytro Doncow: life and deeds], *Zeszyty Historyczne* 55 (1981): 146.

14 Cf.: Mieczysław Sroka, “Ważniejsze daty z życia i działalności Stanisława Brzozowskiego” [The most important dates in the life and the deeds of Stanisław Brzozowski], in Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 871–876.

15 Cf.: *ibid.*, 861.

16 Cf. Sosnovs’kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 68.

17 Oleh Bahan, “Dzherela svitohliadnoho natsionalizmu Dmytra Dontsova” [The sources of Dmytro Dontsov’s ideological nationalism], in Dmytro Dontsov, *Vybrani tvory u*

The references quoted above are not the only sources which claim a link between Brzozowski and Dontsov. In Mieczysław Sroka's introduction to his edition of Brzozowski's letters, we find the following sentence: "The Ukrainian nationalist Dymitr Doncow will be enthusiastic about Brzozowski."¹⁸ This remark, too, is obviously highly intriguing, given that Sroka's thoroughly commented and annotated edition remains until this day one of the authoritative cornerstones in Brzozowski studies. But, unfortunately and quite uncharacteristically for such a scrupulous philologist, Sroka, just like Sosnovs'kyi, does not supply any reference that could document Dontsov's alleged "enthusiasm" for Brzozowski.¹⁹

Recently, Trevor Erlacher, in a highly interesting essay on Dontsov's intellectual development prior to World War I, took up Sosnovs'kyi's assumptions, specifying that Dontsov met Brzozowski in L'viv and in Vienna in 1908.²⁰ It seems that this is an unfounded conjecture, given that Brzozowski did not stay in either of these cities in 1908.²¹ Moreover, it is not very likely that Dontsov who just had "escaped abroad to L'viv [...] on 12 April 1908"²² should have sought the company of a man who was suspected of being an informant of the Okhrana. The infamous list with Brzozowski's name at the top was published on April 25,

desiaty tomakh, vol. 1: *Politychna analityka (1912–1918 rr.)*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych – L'viv: Vidrodzhennia, 2011), 8.

- 18 "Brzozowskim entuzjazmował się będzie nacjonalista ukraiński Dymitr Doncow." Mieczysław Sroka, "Przedmowa," in Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, xxxix.
- 19 In contemporary Ukrainian scholarship Sosnovs'kyi's version of a personal acquaintance between Brzozowski and Dontsov continues to persist. In a recent book on Dontsov and the ideological background of his journal *Vistnyk*, Olesia Omel'chuk names Brzozowski among the thinkers who influenced Dontsov, adding that Dontsov "knew him personally." Olesia Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukrains'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)* [The literary ideals of the Ukrainian "Vistnyk" circle] (Kyiv: "Smolohyry", 2011), 20. Cf. also: Hanna V. Davlietova, "D. I. Dontsov: pochatok formuvannia svitohliadu" [D. I. Dontsov: the beginning of the forming of his world-view], *Naukovi pratsi istorychnoho fak-tu ZNU* 21 (2007): 141.
- 20 Trevor Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism': Dmytro Dontsov and Heterodox Marxism before World War I, 1883–1914," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, 3 (2014): 531f.
- 21 Sroka, "Ważniejsze daty z życia i działalności Brzozowskiego," 871–873. All of Brzozowski's 1908 letters were sent from Florence, Italy (cf.: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 430–767).
- 22 Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism'," 531.

1908.²³ This latter point is of marginal importance though, since Brzozowski simply did not leave Italy in 1908. Nonetheless, relying exclusively on Sosnovs'kyi (for Dontsov's biography) and on Walicki and Kołakowski (for references from Brzozowski's works), Erlacher cannot resist stating that "in Brzozowski we find the most immediate inspirations for Dontsov's later attitudes on ethics, nationality, and the primacy of will, ideas, and power in human history."²⁴ Even if based on second-hand sources (in Brzozowski's case), Erlacher's observations regarding parallels between Dontsov's ideology of "active nationalism" and Brzozowski's ideas on the modernization of Polish culture are not without valuable insight. As it turns out, a comparative analysis of Brzozowski's and Dontsov's writings is arguably the only viable way to assess, if not the 'impact' or 'influence', then at least the common ideological standpoints and approaches that link the two authors. Still we have to acknowledge that the attempt to establish a factual biographical link between them has not led to convincing results. Possibly, we are dealing with just another legend here, comparable to Wilhelm Feldman's conjecture concerning a meeting between Brzozowski and Lenin in Switzerland.²⁵ Maybe some day, archival research will provide us with reliable information about a meeting between Dontsov and Brzozowski. For the time being we have to note that, according to the published sources of which we dispose, such a meeting could not have taken place either in 1908/1909 in Zakopane or in 1908 in L'viv or Vienna. This means that the ground for a discussion of Brzozowski's impact on the emergence of Ukrainian nationalist thought in the first third of the twentieth century is at best very shaky.

"The cult of will and power": Did Brzozowski "give birth" to Dontsov?

As it turns out, all speculation about Brzozowski's weighty influence on Dontsov can be traced back to Michał Rudnicki, or rather Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi (1889–1975), a former collaborator of Ostap Ortwin in the Bernard Połoniecki publishing house in Lwów. According to Mieczysław Sroka, Rudnyts'kyi, to-

23 Cf. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, between pp. 512 and 513.

24 Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism'," 532.

25 Wilhelm Feldman, *Współczesna literatura polska, 1864–1917* [Contemporary Polish literature, 1864–1917], part III, 6th ed. (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze w Warszawie, 1919), 81. Cf. also: Sroka, "Przedmowa," xxxf.

gether with Ostap Ortwin, transcribed manuscripts for the editions of Brzozowski's works that were issued by "Księgarnia B. Połonieckiego."²⁶

During the interwar years, Rudnyts'kyi was a well-known literary critic, writer, and literary scholar, as well as an important figure on the Ukrainian cultural scene in Galicia. He worked as a journalist and published books of prose and essays in Ukrainian. In Soviet times, he became a professor for literature at L'viv University.²⁷ It is essential here to take into account the status of Ukrainian culture in Poland as a 'subordinate culture' that was, moreover, divided between two hostile states—Poland and the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian intellectuals in L'viv and the region of Galicia could function perfectly well in a Polish language environment, but because Polish culture was dominant Poles did not need Ukrainian. The Ukrainians had their own public sphere with a number of newspapers and journals. But a closer look, for example at the issues of the daily newspaper *Dilo* (to which Rudnyts'kyi contributed as a literary critic from 1923 on), tells us more about the severe and sometimes hostile environment in which Ukrainian culture developed in Poland. For reasons of censorship, many pages of this newspaper were partly left blank, a fact that the German writer Alfred Döblin noted with astonishment in his account of a visit to Lwów in 1924.²⁸

Talking about the status of Ukrainian literature for the contemporary Polish reader at a meeting of the "Zawodowy Związek Literatów" (Professional Writers' Union), Rudnyts'kyi stated that "Ukrainian literature is more exotic and unknown for the Polish community than for instance Spanish literature."²⁹ In Poland, Ukrainian culture was dominated and subordinated much like Polish culture was on the European level. In an article, published in the Warsaw-based Ukrainian language journal *My* (We), Rudnyts'kyi declared in 1934 that Brzozowski could well have been acknowledged as one of the leading European intellectuals of his time, if only he had chosen a different language for his publications—or if someone would have prepared a selection of his works translated

26 Cf. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 228. Cf. also: Karol Kuryluk, "Krytyk ukraiński o Stanisławie Brzozowskim" [A Ukrainian critic on St. Brzozowski], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 34 (1935): 676.

27 Cf.: Ivan Koshelivets, "Rudnytsky, Mykhailo." <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\R\U\RudnytskyMykhailo.htm>

28 Alfred Döblin, *Reise in Polen* [1925] (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 191.

29 "[...] literatura ukraińska jest dla polskiego społeczeństwa czemś bardziej egzotycznym i nieznanym niż n. p. literatura hiszpańska." bwl. [=author], "Współczesna literatura ukraińska," *Słowo Polskie*, April 24, 1931, 6. <http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=200345>

into a language more accessible than Polish.³⁰ It is not astonishing that Rudnyts'kyi had high esteem for Brzozowski. It was he who accomplished the translation of the missing fragments of Brzozowski's edition of articles by John Henry Newman, published as *Przyświadczenia wiary* (Testimonies of Faith) in 1915.³¹ In his preface to a volume of Georges Sorel's essays Rudnyts'kyi translated for the same series,³² he repeatedly quoted Brzozowski who, for his part, was a great admirer of Sorel.³³ For Rudnyts'kyi, Brzozowski was one of the first to discover the significance of Sorel's thought and he considered Brzozowski's essay on Sorel to be "the only fruit of real reflection about Sorel."³⁴ Moreover, the authors Rudnyts'kyi referred to were very much the same that Brzozowski dealt with in his late writings: Vico, Hegel, Renan, Blondel, Newman—to name only a few. Rudnyts'kyi's article in *My* testifies to a deep and sympathetic understanding of Brzozowski's ideas. It was not devoid of criticism, but generally paid tribute to Brzozowski's mission as that of an intellectual who belonged to a stateless nation and wanted to show this nation the path to Europe.

It is more the *context* than the *content* of Rudnyts'kyi's article that allows me to highlight a connection between Brzozowski and Ukrainian nationalist thought: In a commentary signed by the "editorial team"³⁵ of *My*,³⁶ Brzozowski's writings are credited with an "acute actuality." Brzozowski is seen as the progenitor of a "new epoch of nationalism" that emerged "in the coulisses" (на лаштунках) of the old and decaying prewar-world. The authors of the commentary draw a direct connection to the contemporary state of Ukrainian culture in Poland:

30 Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, "Muchenyk neprymyrennykh idealiv. Stanislav Bzhozov-s'kyi" [A martyr of irreconcilable ideals: Stanisław Brzozowski], *My. Literaturnyi ne-periodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (1934): 174.

31 According to Leopold Staff's "Editor's Remark," this was about one third of the text. Cf.: Newman, *Przyświadczenia wiary*, s.p.

32 "Symposion," ed. Leopold Staff.

33 Cf.: Michał Rudnicki, "O konkretności myśli Jerzego Sorela" [On the concreteness of Georges Sorel's thought], in Georges Sorel, *O sztuce, religii i filozofii*, trans. Michał Rudnicki (Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Spółka, 1913), xxvi, xxxiii, xlviif., lii.

34 *Ibid.*, lxv. Brzozowski's essay on Sorel was published in the Kiev journal *Świt* (Dawn) in 1907 (reprinted in his *Kultura i życie*, 515–522).

35 The journal was edited (in 1934) by Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhaniv's'kyi.

36 For *My* cf.: Serhii Kvit, *Dmytro Dontsov: ideolohichnyi portret*, 2nd ed. [Dmytro Dontsov: an ideological portrait] (L'viv: Galyts'ka vydavnycha spilka, 2013), 56.

Now, when Ukrainian life is undergoing a renaissance under the sign of a “cult of will and power” [культу волі та сили], when a new Ukrainian individuality is crystallizing and solidifying, the works of this famous Pole, this tragic, impulsive and romantic man, gain a new, peculiar, sharp relevance for us.³⁷

In these few words, one recognizes, of course, the late Brzozowski’s metaphors: In *Voices in the Night* he had dealt with the link between literature and thought on the one hand and forms of political (national) community on the other, applying the notion of “crystallization.”³⁸ Also the word “гартуватися” is quite characteristic of Brzozowski’s rhetoric. However, there is something more going on here: The authors speak of a renaissance of Ukrainian life and even quote the formula of a “cult of will and power.” It is here, according to them, that the link between Brzozowski and the contemporary Ukrainian intellectual scene in Poland can be observed. The formula “культ волі та сили” had been propagated by none other than Dmytro Dontsov, the author of a book on *Nationalism*, published in 1926 by the L’viv publishing house “Nove Zhyttia” (New Life).³⁹ The authors of the commentary were even more specific about the connection between Dontsov’s ideas and Brzozowski’s writings, claiming that “in our life, Brzozowski’s influence is only in one case wholly unquestionable. No one else but Brzozowski gave birth to [породив] the well-known critic and publicist Dmytro Dontsov.”⁴⁰ They point to parallels between Brzozowski’s and Dontsov’s ideological development from “passionate Marxism” to a “no less passionate nationalism and traditionalism,” and they stress the fact that Dontsov, “being trapped by the reading of Brzozowski,” incessantly borrowed “names, complete quotes, metaphors, and thoughts” from the works of the Polish philosopher.⁴¹

37 Ivan Dubyts’kyi and Andrei Kryzhaniv’s’kyi, “Prim. Redaktsii” [...], *My. Literaturnyi neperiodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (1934): 174.

38 Cf.: Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 192.

39 Dmytro Dontsov, *Natsionalizm* (L’viv: Vydavnistvo “Nove Zhyttia”, 1926), 211. Cf. also: Myroslaw Yurkevich, “Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists,” in *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\O\O\OrganizationofUkrainianNationalists.htm> (“Their [the OUN’s] outlook was influenced strongly by Dmytro Dontsov, who propounded a cult of will and power and indiscriminately praised fascist and Nazi leaders.”).

40 Dubyts’kyi and Kryzhaniv’s’kyi, “Prim. Redaktsii,” 175.

41 Ibid. It is important to note that these passages are in fact to be found in the “Editorial Remark” and not in the actual text of Rudnyts’kyi’s essay (Erlacher quotes them as Rudnyts’kyi’s text; apparently, he did not have access to the issue of *My*).

Apparently, they wanted to denigrate Dontsov's rank as a thinker and literary critic by presenting him as a kind of 'second-hand-Brzozowski' who had nothing original to offer to his Ukrainian readers. Accordingly, they concluded their introductory commentary by asserting that "Brzozowski is such an independent and characteristic figure that the educated Ukrainian reader should take a direct interest in him."⁴²

It is important to add that the editorial team of *My* polemicized on numerous occasions against Dontsov and his Lwów-based journal *Vistnyk* (Herald; formerly *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk*—Literary-Scientific Herald). Both journals propagated nationalist ideas, *My* representing a more liberal and moderate approach to questions of literature and aesthetics than the politically more radical and aesthetically more utilitarian *Vistnyk*. Oleh Bahan, in an introduction to a recently published collection of Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi's writings, indicates that *My* was financed by "Soviet special services" and that Kryzhaniv'skyi was a hired agent of the U.S.S.R. However, he does not provide us with any evidence for these assertions.⁴³ It is difficult for me to assess whether Bahan is right. As a Dontsov scholar and, to judge by the ideological tendency of his articles, as an ardent follower and devotee of Dontsov's ideology, Bahan apparently has some interest in saving the honor of his hero. All we can note is that Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhaniv'skyi, the editors of *My*, did their best to defame Dontsov as a second-rate thinker, if not a plagiarist. However, it remains unclear if we are dealing with a struggle between different ideological positions or also with a struggle for the supremacy in the—extremely narrow—field of Ukrainian language press and criticism in interwar Poland⁴⁴ in this instance, or if there was

42 Ibid., 175.

43 Oleh Bahan, "Koryfei liberal'noi literaturnoi krytyky" [An eminent authority of liberal criticism], in Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, *Vid Myrnoho do Khvil'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych: Vidrozhennia, 2009), 14. According to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, *My* had been "founded by supporters of the Government-in-exile of the Ukrainian National Republic." <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\MY\MyIT.htm>

44 The editors of *My* launched polemical attacks against Dontsov on other occasions, too. Cf.: Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhaniv'skyi, "Patetychna peredmovna, napsyana hlybokim znavtsem chytal'nyts'koï psykhyky na zamovlennia redaktsii ta v її imeni" [An impassionate foreword, written by a deep connoisseur of the readers' psyche, ordered by the editorial team and in its name], *My* 3 (1934): 9–14. This was a reaction to a polemical review of *My* in Dontsov's *Vistnyk*. Cf. also: "Z presovoho fil'mu" [From the press] *Vistnyk* II, 3 (1934): 228–231 (no author indicated). The polemics was about ideological but also personal issues; Dubyts'kyi, Kryzhaniv'skyi as well as

some sort of political conspiracy behind it, secretly orchestrated by Soviet authorities who wanted to undermine Dontsov's authority among Ukrainian nationalists. The allegation of collaboration with Soviet secret services is of course not without irony in the context of Brzozowski studies. It should also be noted that Dontsov himself was suspected of a secret collaboration with Russian agencies at the time of his break with the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party in 1913.⁴⁵

One point is clear, though: it is Brzozowski's name and works that serve as a central point of reference in these polemics. The question remains to what extent his writings could possibly have contributed to the renaissance of "Ukrainian life" in the 1930s.⁴⁶ Polemics and conspiracies apart, from the words of the editors of *My* we can conclude that the Ukrainian intellectual community in Poland was not yet very familiar with Brzozowski's works. Nevertheless, they postulated that his writings had an impact on the latest developments in the field of nationalist discourse ascribing the role of a mediator to Dmytro Dontsov.⁴⁷ Once more, was there any connection between Dontsov and Brzozowski? Mykhailo Sosnovs'kyi, in his *Dmytro Dontsov: A Political Portrait*, commented on the above-quoted commentary to Rudnyts'kyi's article: According to him, to state that Dontsov was "trapped by the reading of Brzozowski" would be an exaggeration. He did not fail to note that, "Rudnyts'kyi" (he does not pay attention to the fact that the commentary was signed by the "editorial team") did not give any reference for "his" hypothesis. However, as for the general assumption of Brzo-

Rudnyts'kyi were sharply criticized on both levels. Cf. also Dontsov's article "Da capo," (first published in 1929) in Dmytro Dontsov, *Literaturna eseistyka*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych: Vidrodzhennia, 2009), 284–291, esp. 288–291 (attacks against Rudnyts'kyi).

45 Oleksandr Zaitsev, *Ukrains'kyi integral'nyi natsionalizm (1920–1930-ti roky). Narysy intelektual'noi istorii* [Ukrainian integral nationalism, 1920–1930. Sketches of intellectual history] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013), 160.

46 "[...] українське життя відроджується." Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhaniv's'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsii," 174.

47 Interestingly enough, we find a similar (non-)link to Brzozowski in an essay on the Ukrainian poet Mykola Ievshan, published in *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* in 1929. The author puts much emphasis on the claim that the common idea of Brzozowski's influence on the works of Ievshan, widely present, as he writes, in the literary circles in Galicia of the time, was completely unfounded. Oles' Babii, "Mykola Ievshan (Fediushka)," *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* 28,11 (1929): 976. It is however somewhat suspicious that Babii devotes two whole pages of his short piece (six pages on the whole) to the refutation of this idea.

zowski's influence on Dontsov, he agreed: "We do not call into question the influence of Brzozowski's (and other authors') writings on Dontsov."⁴⁸

In Dontsov's publications references to Brzozowski are scarce: In an essay on the main representatives of Russian culture, dating from 1919, Dontsov approvingly quotes Brzozowski's depiction of the Russian writer Mikhail Artsybashev's works as based on a "philosophy of spermatoidism."⁴⁹ However, the remainder of the essay, even though in its polemical stance it reminds one of Brzozowski's "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej" (The Crisis in Russian Literature) from his posthumously published *Głosy wśród nocy* (Voices in the Night, 1912), does not contain any further hint of Brzozowski. In a 1936 article from *Vistnyk*, Dontsov takes a quote from Brzozowski which he found "in one Polish newspaper"⁵⁰ as a point of departure, yet there is no mention of Brzozowski in the further course of the text. Both quotations are rather superficial and not quite exact. Surely, they do not allow us to conclude that Dontsov was heavily influenced by Brzozowski's writings. But they do prove that he was at least familiar with Brzozowski's name and some of his texts in a general way.

For lack of direct quotations from Brzozowski in Dontsov's writings, I suggest casting a comparative glance at both thinkers' personal background and intellectual formation. In his student years, Dontsov joined and co-founded parties and groups of a socialist orientation.⁵¹ He remained a member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party which he had co-founded in 1905, at least until 1913 or, according to other sources, until the outbreak of World War I.⁵² Not only does the development of Dontsov's ideological stance remind us of Brzozowski's own evolution from Marxism to nationalism.⁵³ When we read Dontsov's book on *Nationalism*, which upon its publication in 1926 gained him the position of a leader in the Ukrainian nationalist camp in Galicia (and beyond), we can in fact note parallels with Brzozowski's merciless analysis of the shortcomings of Polish national culture. Dontsov claimed a categorical priority

48 Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 77.

49 Dmytro Dontsov, "Kul'tura prymityvizmu," in *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh*, vol. 2: *Kul'turolohichna ta istoriosofs'ka eseistyka (1911–1939) rr.*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych / L'viv: "Vidrodzhennia", 2012), 96. See Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 194 ("panspermatoidyzm Arcybaszewa").

50 Dmytro Dontsov, "Zgoda v simeistvi," in *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh*, vol. 2: *Kul'turolohichna ta istoriosofs'ka eseistyka (1911–1939) rr.*, 311.

51 Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 118.

52 Zaitsev, *Ukrains'kyi integral'nyi natsionalizm*, 160. Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 119.

53 Cf.: DUBYTS'KYI AND Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsiï," 175.

of the nation above all other political and axiological principles. For him, the nation was a self-sufficient ideal that did not need to be justified by supranational, common human values.⁵⁴ Brzozowski himself had declared that the main item on the political agenda of his time was to “create Poland as a power that will prevail in the world.”⁵⁵ He had tackled Poland’s “infantilism” whereas Dontsov denounced the provinciality of Ukrainian thought and society. Very much in the style of Brzozowski, Dontsov ridiculed the Ukrainian aversion towards all kinds of heroism and historical greatness:

The construction of pyramids, medieval cathedrals, great empires, crusades—all these are products of a “barbaric” epoch, talk of which today, in this “age of reason,” is ridiculous. Their ideal is to sit quietly in their rural “peaceful country,” awash in milk and honey, and God forbid that Moses should come and lead them out of there.⁵⁶

Dontsov denounced this stance as “provansal’stvo” (‘provençalism’). Referring to the region in southern France, he understood “provansal’stvo” as a worldview and a way of life that was based on provincial self-sufficiency and idyllic mediocrity.⁵⁷ His own idea of the nation referred to biological and racial features. It involved a struggle for survival and even a rivalry between currently living and future members of a national community (with preference given to the latter).⁵⁸ All this reminds us of Brzozowski’s understanding of the role of the nation in the modern world as presented notably in his *Legend of Modern Poland*.

As the editor-in-chief of *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* from 1922 on,⁵⁹ Dontsov had made clear that the journal’s main goal was to give shape and form to the Ukrainian “national idea.”⁶⁰ His decision to pursue this aim by means of literature and literary criticism can be seen as consistent with Brzozowski’s conviction that by means of literature and literary criticism a society could gain

54 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 27. Cf.: Omel’chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukrains’koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 17.

55 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 197.

56 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 34. For a discussion of Dontsov’s “psychological portrait” of Ukraine and “the Ukrainians” cf.: Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 164–181.

57 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 6–148 (chapter: “Ukrains’ke provansal’stvo”).

58 *Ibid.*, 37.

59 The journal existed until 1932 and was later continued by Dontsov under the title *Vistnyk* (1933–1939).

60 Cf.: Dmytro Dontsov, “Nashi tsily,” *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* 1 (May 1922): 1.

self-consciousness and develop a political platform. Dontsov's idea of the nation was based on merging features he took from contemporary 'Lebensphilosophie' (Bergson's "élan vital") and its philosophical precursors (Nietzsche's "will to power"),⁶¹ combining them with a concrete political agenda: independent Ukrainian statehood, defense of Ukrainian national interests, and even expansion for the sake of self-preservation.⁶²

Brzozowski's proximity to proto-fascist ideas and terminology was noticed as early as the 1920s. Maciej Urbanowski has given a sober and sophisticated account of these possible affinities, concluding that, for simple reasons of chronology, the question "did Brzozowski uphold fascist ideas?" is ill-posed: Brzozowski died in 1911, roughly a decade before fascism came into being as a political movement in Italy.⁶³ Nevertheless, Brzozowski's ideas concerning the nation, the mythical bond that forges a society, the emphasis he puts on the soldier and the worker, his fascination with "strength," "hardness," "heroism," and "energy" reveal obvious affinities with the later context of fascist and/or radical right movements in Europe.⁶⁴

It should be noted that Dontsov did not overtly adhere to or declare himself a proponent of fascist ideology⁶⁵ even though he *did* express some sympathy for "fascism."⁶⁶ His essay *Nationalism* must of course be read against the background of the emergence of fascist movements in Europe during the 1920s.⁶⁷ His refusal of universalist categories, the accent on biological categories in his conception of the nation⁶⁸ and on the "will" (*vola*) as the nation's irrational "élan vital"⁶⁹ are quite near to the late Brzozowski's conceptualizations of nation and society. For both of them Georges Sorel was an important point of reference. However, Dontsov's ideal of a "peasant and petty bourgeois republic"⁷⁰ hardly

61 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 159.

62 Ibid., 171.

63 Maciej Urbanowski, "Stanisław Brzozowski and Fascism," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 306.

64 Cf.: *ibid.*, 309–312.

65 Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 149.

66 Ibid., 149–156. Cf. also: Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 212.

67 For an excellent discussion of fascist elements in the ideology of Dontsov's journal *Vistnyk* cf.: Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistrykivstva (1922–1939)*, 219–248.

68 Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 138.

69 Ibid., 142.

70 "Отже, селянська дрібно-буржуазна республіка. Такий наш ідеал." Dmytro Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoi polityky* (Viden': Vydavnytstvo Dontsovykh, 1921), 119.

fits with Brzozowski's enthusiastic praise for the worker. Similar to Brzozowski, yet on a certainly less sophisticated level, Dontsov referred to writers and poets in order to support his views on the essence of the Ukrainian nation. Mostly, these were Ukrainian writers, such as Lesia Ukraïnka or, of course, Taras Shevchenko, but we encounter also Jack London and his "joy to kill."⁷¹ In his programmatic brochure *The Foundations of Our Politics*, Dontsov gave an over-all analysis of Russian culture and society, referring above all to literature as an empirical basis for his observations,⁷² just as Brzozowski had done 12 years earlier in his essay on the "Crisis in Russian Literature" from *Voices in the Night*⁷³—an essay Dontsov was familiar with, as we can conclude from the abovementioned quotation concerning Mikhail Artsybashev.

Alexander J. Motyl has rightly pointed out that we should not overemphasize the role of "ideas themselves as the source of his [Dontsov's] inspiration."⁷⁴ It is hardly possible to track down exactly whose books and articles Dontsov read, or whom he met and when. Even if we could approximately reconstruct his readings and encounters, this still would not allow us to assess how he rethought and evaluated these manifold inspirations, not to mention the political events of the time which also played an important part here.⁷⁵

What we can do is point out some typological parallels between Dontsov and Brzozowski. When Dontsov declares his credo of "creative violence" and of "will and power,"⁷⁶ then this reads in fact as a somewhat simplified or radicalized version of Brzozowski's deliberations on the "search for and the creation of power"⁷⁷ from *The Legend of Modern Poland*. It reminds us also of Brzozowski's understanding of the "nation" as a "great source of creation" with the accent falling on the "family" and the "military and state organizations" from *Ideas*.⁷⁸ For the late Brzozowski, the "nation" was the unique source of self-consciousness, "since there are no non-national, international organs of spiritual life."⁷⁹ This would be a quite fitting definition of what is discussed as "integral

71 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 171.

72 Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoi polityky*.

73 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej" [1909], in *Głosy wśród nocy*, 173–199.

74 Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (New York: Columbia UP, 1980), 67.

75 *Ibid.*, 67f.

76 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 211.

77 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 398.

78 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 268, 264.

79 *Ibid.*, 269.

nationalism” in research on Dontsov. In the same context, Brzozowski stressed the role of “power,” a “power” that is inseparably linked to the nation and that alone allows a person to achieve real existential depth.⁸⁰ In *The Foundations of Our Politics*, Dontsov wrote that only a “clearly defined national ideal” could transform a “national idea” into the “crystalized core for individual or collective wills inside the nation”; without this core, they would find “other centers of gravity.”⁸¹ The nation is seen as the catalyst for individual and collective aspirations, it forges a community, vests it with a core and a direction. In this respect Brzozowski’s and Dontsov’s views coincide with only slight differences: Dontsov, who wrote his *Foundations* in the aftermath of World War I, was more concrete, more aggressive, and less philosophical than Brzozowski, since his political aims were more clearly defined.

However, all common inspirations, references, key words notwithstanding—this is hardly sufficient to speak of a “strong influence” exerted by Brzozowski’s writings on Dontsov. I pointed out above that Sosnovs’kyi’s story of their actual meeting is untenable. This still leaves us with the question why the editors of *My* put so much emphasis on the link between Brzozowski and Dontsov—when Brzozowski was hardly ever mentioned in the latter’s writings. Stepan Lenkavs’kyi, the author of an early account of the philosophical foundations of Dontsov’s concept of “nationalism,” did not mention Brzozowski at all,⁸² which perhaps does not mean much, since for adherents of the radically anti-Russian and anti-Polish Ukrainian nationalist movement, the intellectual affinity with a Polish thinker, whose possible collaboration with the Tsarist Okhrana was not entirely clarified, could well have been something better left unmentioned.

Brzozowski in the Polemical Context of Ukrainian (Galician) Interwar Criticism

For now, we have to assume that the story of Dontsov’s “enthusiasm” for Brzozowski, as told by Sroka and Sosnovs’kyi, and, more recently, Bahan and Erbacher, had its origin exclusively in the introductory remarks to Rudnytskyi’s piece on Brzozowski in *My* 1934.⁸³ But for what reason should Ivan Dubyts’kyi

80 Ibid., 270.

81 Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoi polityky*, 125.

82 Stepan Lenkavs’kyi, “Fil’osofichni pidstavy ‘Natsionalizmu’ Dontsova,” *Rozbudova natsii* 7–8 (1928).

83 In the preface to his book Sosnovs’kyi indicates that he met Dontsov personally in 1968 and that he also had conversations with Dontsov’s wife and other persons of his

and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi have chosen the reference to Brzozowski in order to discredit Dontsov, and why did they do so in a commentary that was meant to introduce the readers to a partly critical, but overall sympathetic, and at times even *enthusiastic* article on Brzozowski? In my view, the only explanation that makes sense (given the current state of knowledge) would be contextual: Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, who signed the essay but not the commentary (although we cannot know if he wrote it together with Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhanivs'kyi), was one of Dontsov's ideological adversaries within the Ukrainian intellectual community in interwar Poland—and one of the latter's principal rivals in the field of Ukrainian-language journalism and literary criticism.⁸⁴ In his articles Dontsov launched vivid attacks against proponents of nearly all ideological or political camps, most often denouncing them as “provençalist.” Among others, this concerned Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi.⁸⁵ The polemics between Dontsov and Rudnyts'kyi revolved around the role of the “worldview” for literature, Dontsov demanding of the writer a clear—if not political, at least philosophical—stance and a commitment to activity and struggle, whereas Rudnyts'kyi put the accent on aesthetic values.⁸⁶ Dontsov attacked not only the critic but also the prose-writer Rudnyts'kyi.⁸⁷ The charges directed against him and his journal *Nazustrich* (*Rendez-vous*) were: lack of principle, careerism, cynicism, decadence.⁸⁸ Rudnyts'kyi, for his part, in an interview published in the leftist Polish journal *Sygnaly* (Signals), overtly labelled the contributors of Dontsov's *Vistnyk* as “nationalists of fascist orientation.” He accused Dontsov of publishing works of a “certain specific tendency,” regardless of their artistic value.⁸⁹ It must have been

entourage (Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 7f.). I assume that he relied on non-verified, most likely oral sources when he claimed that Dontsov and Brzozowski met in Zakopane in 1908/1909 (but this is of course just another conjecture).

84 Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukrains'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 85.

85 Stryjek, *Ukrainska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 170.

86 Cf.: Bahan, “Koryfei...,” 15. Cf. also: Dmytro Dontsov, “Estetika dekadansu,” [1930] in *Dvi literatury nashoi doby* (Toronto: Nakladom vydavnytstva „Homin Ukraïny”, 1958), 197.

87 Dmytro Dontsov, “Nashe literaturne getto,” [1932] in *Dvi literatury nashoi doby*, 219.

88 Dmytro Dontsov, “‘L’Art pour l’art’ chy iak stimul zhyttia?” [1935], in *Dvi literatury nashoi doby*, 225–258; 225f., 243–246.

89 “‘Wistnyk’ Doncowa skupił wokół siebie nacjonalistów faszystowskiego pokroju [...]” “Droga na Zachód (Rozmowa z Michałem Rudnickim)” [The way to the West (a conversation with Michał Rudnicki)], *Sygnaly* 4–5 (1934 = “Numer ukraiński”): 2. In 1934 *Vistnyk* published an essay by the German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukrains'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 197.

especially provocative to Dontsov that this assessment was pronounced in a Polish journal and addressed to the Polish intellectual community.

Why should Ukrainian intellectuals of the interwar period have an interest in Brzozowski? Reading Brzozowski's novels *Plomienie* (Flames, 1908) or *Sam wśród ludzi* (Alone among People, 1911), and his critical essays we hardly ever encounter any Ukrainians. Although Michał Kaniowski's (from *Flames*) and Roman Ołucki's (from *Alone among People*) families live in Podolia, where the peasant population was ethnically Ukrainian, the Ukrainian element is practically absent in both novels. Andrzej Mencwel rightly noted that no works by Ukrainian authors are ever mentioned in Brzozowski's essays.⁹⁰ What then could attract Ukrainian intellectuals of the interwar period to this author? It is somewhat ironic that it is not Dontsov who can give us an answer to this question. His ideological and aesthetic adversary Rudnyts'kyi, who rejected any ideological, idea-centered approach to literature,⁹¹ *did* formulate some thoughts on the possible relevance of Brzozowski's writings for Ukrainian readers of the 1930s. For Rudnyts'kyi, Brzozowski, in his messianic aspirations, was, above all, the "characteristic type of Slav who wants to catch up with Europe" and, attempting to achieve this goal, "opted for the most inappropriate means: prophecy" (проповідництво).⁹² Brzozowski had wanted to liberate his nation "through literature," to "give her a national philosophy or religion." It was, according to Rudnyts'kyi, this romanticist idea that inspired the Polish philosopher.⁹³ It is quite characteristic that he concentrates notably on the late Brzozowski's ideas on identity and nationality. This allows him to draw a parallel between the fate of the Ukrainian nation in the 1930s and that of the Poles at the beginning of the century, but we also notice some reserve on his part when it comes to the applicability of Brzozowski's world-view: "As members of a stateless nation which is inspired by steely outcries about national strength we have the tendency to take the famous slogans of great demagogues for a worldview."⁹⁴ Unlike many Polish intellectuals of the interwar period, Rudnyts'kyi was clear about the lack of clarity in

90 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), 185. In a personal conversation with the author, Mencwel argued that it was Brzozowski's *szlachta* background that made him ignore this part of the social reality in nineteenth-century Podolia (August 30, 2014).

91 Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, "Meta i metoda," in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, 34.

92 Rudnyts'kyi, "Muchenyk neprymyrennykh idealiv," 192.

93 *Ibid.*, 194.

94 *Ibid.*

Brzozowski's writings. For him, there could be no straightforward reading of Brzozowski; there was no direct link even between the last chapters of *The Legend of Modern Poland* and a concrete political platform that could lead to national liberation. Brzozowski's thoughts were too complex, too manifold, and too vague and foggy to be used for political propaganda. These statements seemed to be directed against Dmytro Dontsov, although, let us stress this once again, Brzozowski's allegedly crucial role for Dontsov was nothing but an assumption issued implicitly by Rudnyts'kyi himself and explicitly by his editors. As a matter of fact, Rudnyts'kyi was quite skeptical about a possible impact of Brzozowski's ideas and concepts on future readers. He asked, "how could one transfer the electric energy of Brzozowski's works to the accumulator of a well-constructed factory?"⁹⁵ Brzozowski's library reminded him of a chemistry laboratory with extracts and essences on every shelf. The question only was, "How to make use of this experiment?"⁹⁶ Apparently, Rudnyts'kyi did not have an answer to this question.

In all his meditations on criticism and literature, Rudnyts'kyi paid a great deal of attention to the role of minor literatures, namely Ukrainian literature, as confronted with the literature of urban elites, European, or even "Weltliteratur."⁹⁷ He was very much concerned about the theoretical level of Ukrainian literary criticism—in Polish Galicia as well as in Soviet-ruled Ukraine—and deplored the divide between European discussions and the intellectual sphere in Galicia.⁹⁸ The common thread of his 1932 book *Mizh ideieiu i formoiu* (Between Idea and Form) was the role of ideology in literature and the struggle against the attempts of the representatives of "national criticism" to claim national ideology as the superior criterion in discussions about literature.⁹⁹ Rudnyts'kyi's understanding of the critic's role was very similar to Brzozowski's. In *Between Idea and Form*, he wrote:

95 Ibid., 195.

96 Ibid., 199.

97 Cf.: Rudnyts'kyi, *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 84.

98 Rudnyts'kyi, "Nash riven' dyskusiï" [Our standard of discussion], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 343f.

99 Cf.: Rudnyts'kyi, "Rizni dukhovi potreby" [Various spiritual needs], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 356–364.

[...] literature is a battlefield of different currents and ships; the role of the critic is to recognize the direction of the wind and to distinguish armored cruisers from boats, but also to discover the new shores to which these are heading, unconscious of their aim.¹⁰⁰

This of course reminds us of Brzozowski's depiction of the critic as "the poet of this new *Odyssey* across the sea of the human spirit and life" and as "a cartographer of strange journeys" in his essay "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej I" (Some Remarks on the General State of European Literature I) from *Voices in the Night*.¹⁰¹

Although Rudnyts'kyi only rarely mentioned Dontsov by name, it is nevertheless rather obvious that the views he expressed in the essays published in *Mizh ideieiu i formoiu* and *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho* (1936) were at least in part meant to counter Dontsov's program of a nationalist literature. Given the wide range of key works of modern European literature and criticism quoted and discussed by Rudnyts'kyi, we can in fact conclude that for him Dontsov's ideology of literature was not "provençal," but *provincial* in the plain sense of the word. For Rudnyts'kyi the way out of the ghetto of minority literature meant having to broaden perspectives, to spread European ideas and to develop an ethos of 'world literature'. Young Ukrainian writers should not be content with compliments issued by domestic (i.e., Ukrainian-language) criticism. After all, criticism that did not refer to examples from world literature was nothing but "ordinary provincial propaganda."¹⁰² For Rudnyts'kyi and, arguably less, for Dontsov, Brzozowski served as a model here: an intellectual of European stature who did not limit himself to his own, parochial world, who included in his meditations on culture and the nation nearly every new idea or philosophical current to appear on the European stage. At the same time, Rudnyts'kyi made use of Brzozowski's name to discredit his adversary. Insinuating that Dontsov borrowed his ideas and a good deal of his bibliographical references from Brzozowski, Rudnyts'kyi tried to convince his Ukrainian readers of Dontsov's profound provinciality: There was nothing original about the ideas of the author of *Nationalism*, which would be obvious for readers once they gained access to Brzozowski's texts. On the other hand, he implicitly used references to Dontsov to distinguish Brzozowski, the sophisticated critic and connoisseur of European

100 Rudnyts'kyi, "Pragmatychni kryterii" [Pragmatic criteria], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 413.

101 "Krytyk dziś musi być poetą tej nowej Odysei po morzach ducha i życia ludzkiego, która jest jedynym możliwym eposem naszego czasu. [...] on [krytyk] jest kartografem dziwnych podróży." Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 97.

102 Rudnicki, "Droga na Zachód," 3.

literature, from Brzozowski, the predecessor of nationalist (and by this: simplified) cultural criticism.

Conclusion

The answer to the question I have posed in the title of this paper is negative. However, even if we have no evidence that Brzozowski inspired Ukrainian nationalist thought, we can state that at a certain moment Brzozowski served as a point of reference in a discussion about the interconnections between aesthetic and political concepts in Ukrainian criticism of the 1930s. Brzozowski *did* indeed inspire Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi's critical writings and his aesthetics. Rudnyts'kyi overtly acknowledged this indebtedness. Curiously enough, in doing so, he (or his editors) simultaneously ascribed an indebtedness to Brzozowski to his principal ideological adversary in the field of Ukrainian (Galician) literary criticism of the time. The aim of this insinuation is clear: What can a nationalist program be worth that is entirely based on borrowings from a philosopher and critic who, in the Galician context, belongs to the hegemonic culture—the culture whose dominance a Ukrainian nationalist program has to tackle in the first place?

We were able to see that the parallels between Brzozowski and Dontsov are merely typological; shared concepts, rhetoric devices, and biographical references notwithstanding. However, the most astonishing outcome of this short overview is that the hypothesis of Brzozowski's "strong impact" on Dontsov, which we could trace back to inner-Ukrainian (Galician) critical polemics of the 1930s, has lived on and been reiterated in various sources right to the present. Furthermore, it is astonishing that those who postulated an impact of Brzozowski's writings on Dontsov also postulated a meeting between both authors—in absence of any viable historical source and as if this were a prerequisite for 'influence'. Apparently, in intellectual history there still is a strong need for real persons and their actual "accelerated pulse," as Brzozowski put it in his *Diary*.¹⁰³

103 "[...] wszystkie kosmologie i metafizyki, to epizody biografii, to czyjś puls przyspieszony, czyjś błysk oczu – wszystko w człowieku" ("[...] all cosmologies and metaphysics are nothing else than episodes of a biography, one's accelerated pulse, the shine in one's eyes—all is in the person). Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 164.

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