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THE WORK OF THE NAZI SPECIAL SERVICES AMONG THE PROTESTANTS OF THE REICHSKOMMISSARIAT UKRAINE

(According to the Top-secret Materials of the NKVD-NKGB)

By Oleksandr Korotaiev

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Abstract

Studying the work of Nazi special services among the Protestant denominations of the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine during World War II is an under-explored aspect of modern historical science. The article attempts to fill this gap by covering the work of the Nazi secret services, Gestapo¹ and *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD),² among Evangelical Christians (EC), Baptists (B), and Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals, CEF) of the RKU. The basis of this study is the recently declassified documents and archival materials of the KGB of the USSR. The article first provides a brief analysis of the activities of the Soviet intelligence services (NKVD³) in this area in the pre-war period, as well as consideration for the work of the Nazi special services in the religious spheres of the Reich and the General Government for the occupied Polish lands (GG).⁴ The main purpose of the Nazi special services in the religious sphere of the RKU was to intensify religious life, revive Protestant councils liquidated by the Bolsheviks and unite them into a single Council for the purpose of directing its activities to combat Bolshevism.

The results of the study will help in the research practices of historians and other humanities. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the fact that it contains concrete historical processes examined through the prism of the work of the Nazi special services; their place and role in these processes are determined. Type of article: theoretically analytical.

¹ Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) – was the official secret police of Nazi Germany and in German-occupied Europe.

² SD (*Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers-SS*) – was the Nazi Germany's internal (Inland-SD) and foreign (Ausland-SD) intelligence service (III and VI departments of the RSHA, respectively), which was responsible for gathering intelligence and passing it on to the Gestapo.

³ NKVD (НКВД) – Народный комиссариат внутренних дел (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) – the name of the Soviet state security bodies in 1934 – April 1943.

⁴ Consideration of the work of the Nazi special services in GG was due to the fact that until 1939 Poland included Western Ukrainian lands, such as Galicia, Kholmshchyna, Podlaschie, Volyn, Polesie, Posiannya, Lemkivshchyna. As a result, the Western Ukrainian religious councils of EC, B and Pentecostals were forced to become members of similar Polish religious councils, whose leading centers were located, until 1939, in Warsaw, Lodz, and Gdansk, respectively. After the occupation of Poland by the Wehrmacht, this circumstance allowed the Nazi special services to quickly take control of the Western Ukrainian Protestant councils and create, with the help of their leaders (Gestapo agents), in the /RKU/ the Union of Free Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (Germ. *Bund Evangelisch Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in der Ukraine*, hereinafter BEFGU), which was controlled by Gestapo.

Keywords: Protestants, Evangelical Christians and Baptists, Pentecostals, Second World War, Gestapo, SD, NKVD-NKGB.

Introduction

To better understand the main directions of the activities of the Nazi special services in the Protestant environment of the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine (hereafter, RKU), it is necessary to first characterize the religious situation that developed in the Ukrainian SSR as a result of the work of the Soviet special services in the pre-war period. Before the outbreak of the war (close to February 1941), the NKVD bodies of the USSR (*Народный комиссариат внутренних дел* [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs]) aimed at destroying the institution of the church by administrative and operational means. Unlike party bodies that were forced to interact with religious organizations within the Soviet legal framework, NKVD's anti-religious departments always viewed them "as bodies of bourgeois reaction that serve to protect the exploitation and fooling of the working class."⁵ As a result of such an ideological perspective, all religious organizations of the USSR, without exception, as "bodies of bourgeois reaction," were considered a potential object of the surveillance and control of the Soviet special services. Their destructive work among the Protestant denominations of Ukraine in the 1930s resulted in the All-Ukrainian Council of Christians of Evangelical Faith (hereafter, AUCCEF) and the All-Ukrainian Council of Baptists (hereafter AUCB), respectively, stopping their activities. The leaders and preachers of the said unions were sent to the GULAG or shot by the NKVD officials. According to the calculations of O. Bazhan, in a year's duration, starting in August 1937, 8,832 people were repressed in Ukraine "along the church-sectarian line."⁶ By their repressive actions, the authorities drove the church underground, but the level of religiosity of the population in the entire country remained very high. This is evidenced by the results of the country-wide census of 1937 where 55,277,000 citizens (56.16% of the population) declared themselves as believers, of which 457,885 people (0.47% of the population) regarded themselves as Protestant believers.⁷ After joining the territory of Western

⁵ В. Ленін *Повне зібрання творів*. Т.17. Берез. 1908 – черв. 1909. XXIV (Політвидав України, 1971), с. 416. [V. Lenin. Complete Collection of Works. Volume 17. 1908 – June 1909. XXIV (Political Publishing House of Ukraine, 1971), p. 416].

⁶ О. Бажан Репресії серед духовенства та віруючих в УРСР в часи «великого терору»: статистичний аспект. *З архівів ВУЧК–ГПУ–НКВД–КГБ*, 2007 р. Вип. 2 (29). с. 15, 17. [O. Bazhan. Repression among clergy and believers in the Ukrainian SSR during the "great terror": statistical aspect. From the archives of the VUCHK-GPU-NKVD-KGB, 2007. Vol. 2 (29). p. 15, 17].

⁷ F. Corley Believer's Responses to the 1937 and 1939 Soviet Censuses. *Religion, State and Society*. Vol. 22, No. 4, 1994. p. 407.

Ukraine in 1939, and Bessarabia and Northern Bukovyna in 1940 to the Ukrainian SSR, repression of “the religious” was conducted in these lands. According to archival documents by the NKVD, from January 1940 to February 1941, 988 people were arrested among the “churchgoers and sectarians.”⁸ The result of such actions was the liquidation of the Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Western Ukraine and Belarus (hereafter CCEF), which was part of the Council of Pentecostal Christians in Poland (Pol. *Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijań Zielonoświątkowych w Polsce*) and the Bessarabian Pentecostal Church (hereafter BPC).⁹ Communities of ECB of Western Ukraine, which were part of the Council of Slavic communities of EC in Poland (Pol. *Związek Słowiańskich Zborów Ewangelicznych w Polsce*) and the Union of Slavic Baptist Communities in Poland (Pol. *Związek Zborów Słowiańskich Baptystów w Polsce*) were “cleaned” of the “unreliable” element and re-registered with the Soviet authorities. Only a few of their leaders (V. Husaruk, S. Nischik, etc.) were lucky to avoid repression, as they were outside the USSR at that time (in Warsaw and Lodz, respectively).¹⁰

The general result of the work of Soviet special services in the religious sphere of Ukraine was that at the beginning of 1941 in the USSR remained legally only the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians, led by A. Andreyev and M. Orlov, with its administrative center located in Moscow.¹¹ In Ukraine, there were 426 prayer houses that were a part of it, as well as communities of Baptist churches, which the Bolsheviks did not have time to close.¹² The number of places of worship decreased by 11.4 times the amount compared to their total number (4,875) in Ukraine in 1929.¹³

Since the beginning of Nazi-Soviet war in June 1941, NKVD authorities had lost control over the denominational situation in occupied Ukraine, as they were evacuated to Engels in the Saratov oblast of the RSFSR.¹⁴ Therefore, control over the denominational situation in the Ukrainian SSR was completely taken over by Hitler’s occupational authorities and German special services.

⁸ SSU BSA. Found 13. File 608. Page 297 (“Found” hereinafter – “F”; “Page” hereinafter – “P”).

⁹ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inventory (hereinafter – Inv.) 1. File 572. P. 168b.

¹⁰ State Archives SSU (hereinafter SA SSU) in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. П-24066. Vol.1. P. 94, 96, 113; С. Нищик. *Шлях віри* (Вінніпег-Детройт, 1975 р.), с. 64. [S. Nischik. *The Way of Faith* (Winnipeg-Detroit, 1975), p. 64]; R. Tomaszewski. *Baptyści w Polsce w latach 1918–1958* (Warszawa: Kompas II, 2008), s. 242-244).

¹¹ SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File. 1103. P. 88.

¹² Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAGO/ЦДАГО), hereinafter CSA POU. F. 1. Inv. 23. File 5377. P. 21.

¹³ Central State Archives of Supreme Authorities and Governments of Ukraine (ЦДАВО/TsDAVO), hereinafter CSA SAG. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 27. P. 80.

¹⁴ SSU BSA. Found. 13. File 375. Page 8.

Historiography

Given the little-researched topic, its historiographical base is small. It is represented mainly by works of Russian (M. Shkarovskii,¹⁵ M. Odintsov, A. Kochetova¹⁶) and Ukrainian (D. Viedienieiev¹⁷ and O. Lysenko¹⁸) historians. M. Shkarovskii, M. Odintsov and A. Kochetova, were engaged in the study of Nazi religious policy (primarily in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church (hereafter ROC)), which was introduced in the occupied territories of the former USSR but also indirectly affected the work of Nazi special services in this domain. These historians argued that the Nazi religious policy (and therefore the activities of the Nazi special services) in the occupied territories of the USSR was focused on “crushing” all religious denominations (especially the ROC) with the aim of further nationalization and destruction of religion in general. However, the mechanisms of its implementation and the role and place of the Nazi special services in this process had not been investigated by these historians. The secrecy of the source base in the work of the secret services of totalitarian states (the Reich and the USSR) and the political situation in Russia, which did not contribute to the study of their activities, probably affected their work.

The declassification of the archives of the Soviet special services in Ukraine gave Ukrainian historians an opportunity to advance further than their Russian counterparts in studying this issue. As a result, the works of D. Viedienieiev and A. Lysenko revealed some aspects of the work of Nazi special services in the religious sphere of the RKU, primarily among the ROC, as the largest religious organization in the USSR. Despite this, the activities of Nazi special services among the Protestant organizations of the RKU likewise did not receive proper coverage in these works. This article is an attempt to fill the existing gaps in this area.

¹⁵ М. Шкаровский. *Русская церковь и Третий рейх*. (Москва: Вече, 2010). [M. Shkarovskii. *Russian Churches and the Third Reich*. Moscow: Vechie, 2010].

¹⁶ М. Одинцов, А. Кочетова. *Конфессиональная политика в Советском Союзе в годы Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.* (Москва: Научно-политическая книга; Политическая энциклопедия, 2014). [M. Odintsov and A. Kochetova. *Confessional policy in the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945*. Moscow: Scientific and political book; Political encyclopedia, 2014].

¹⁷ Д. Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах: Советские спецслужбы и религиозная сфера Украины*. (Москва: Алгоритм, 2016). [D. Viedienieiev. *Atheists in Uniforms: Soviet Special Services and the Religious Sphere of Ukraine*. Moscow: Algorithm, 2016].

¹⁸ Д. Веденеев, О. Лисенко. Релігійні конфесії України як об'єкт оперативної розробки німецьких і радянських спецслужб (1943-1945 рр.). *Український історичний журнал*. 2012 р. Вип. № 4. С. 104-126. [D. Viedienieiev and O. Lysenko. Religious denominations of Ukraine as an object of operational development of German and Soviet special services (1943-1945 biennium). *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2012. Vol. 4. P.104-126].

To solve the tasks, I used a whole range of recently declassified, completely secret documents stored in the funds of the GDA SSU /ГДА СБУ (Service Security of Ukraine Branch-Wise State Archive, hereafter SSU BSA) and archival holdings of the Service Security of Ukraine regional offices. The first group of sources consists of completely secret reports and directives of the NKVD-NKGB of the Ukrainian SSR,¹⁹ which highlight the work of the Nazi special services “on the church-sectarian line” in the *Reichskommissariat* “Ukraine”/RKU (stored in SSU BSA). The second group of sources comprises the archival and criminal charges, formed in the RKU with the assistance of Gestapo (which are kept in archival holdings of the Service Security of Ukraine regional offices). They were opened by the NKVD-NKGB bodies against the leaders of Protestant unions.

When using these documents, I took into account their specifics, which follows from the “punitive” appointment of NKVD-NKGB bodies, which could lead to the possible appearance of fictional criminal cases and reports on the exposure of so-called “anti-Soviet sectarian centers” and “spies of foreign information.” Therefore, in the process of working with these documents, the data given by me was carefully checked and critically evaluated. However, it should be noted that these archival documents contain unique factual material that has a fairly high degree of reliability. This is because the information-analytical and reporting materials by responsible employees of the state security bodies were prepared for the highest Soviet and Communist leadership of the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, which was to be fully aware of the key issues of socio-political status and ideological and moral moods of society. Often, the information received from the secret services, as noted in the memoirs of Lieutenant General of the Soviet special services, P. Sudoplatov, inspired all party and government decisions “on cardinal issues of domestic and foreign policy.”²⁰

Statistics on the number of Protestant communities in the Ukrainian SSR in the pre-war and war periods were taken by me from the funds of the TsDAVO and TsDAGO. They got there in the form of reports from Soviet intelligence officers and other Soviet officials.

The Main Material and Results

To better understand the religious policy of the Nazi invaders, and their influence on the denominational palette of Ukraine, it is advisable to first consider the principles of solving

¹⁹ НКГБ (НКГБ) – Народный комиссариат государственной безопасности (People's Commissariat for State Security) – the name of the Soviet special services in April 1943 – March 1946.

²⁰ П. Судоплатов. Разные дни тайной войны и дипломатии: 1941 год. (Москва: Олма-Пресс, 2001), с. 17. [P. Sudoplatov. Different days of secret war and diplomacy: 1941. (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2001), p. 17].

the religious issue by the Nazis. The religious policy in the territories occupied by the Nazis was a natural continuation of their national religious policy.

Since Hitler came to authority in Germany, a totalitarian state had been built consolidating and subordinating all spheres of the Reich's life to the values of National Socialist ideology. In Nazi terminology, this process was called "*Gleichschaltung*" (Germ. "*Gleich*" – equal, same + "*Schaltung*" – scheme, connection, inclusion). According to the German researcher, M. Grüttner, "*Gleichschaltung*" meant the elimination of democratic structures of authority in favor of the "Principle of the Führers," the implementation of anti-Semitic principles, and the complete or partial replacement of the "old" leadership of all state and non-governmental organizations as the "new" regime.²¹ The process of "*Gleichschaltung*" did not avoid the institution of the church. As noted by the Russian researcher, V. Zakharov, "Catholic and Protestant churches of Germany, as well as believers of both denominations, faced a difficult moral and political choice: either to join the policy of the Nazi '*Gleichschaltung*' and become part of the state machine of the Third Reich, or try to defend their religious beliefs and organizational autonomy even under the conditions of the Nazi dictatorship."²² According to the German researcher, S. Zimmermann, Protestant churches in the Reich, for the most part (except for the so-called "Confessing Church"), chose the first option.²³ As a result, the Nazis began work aimed at their subordination to the regime. This task was entrusted to the Gestapo, whose competencies also belonged to the "struggle against political Protestantism and sectarianism."²⁴ Thus, unlike the bodies of NKVD, Gestapo's task was not to physically liquidate the institutions of the church through repression, as it was in the USSR, but only to establish political control over it to subordinate its activities to the Nazi state.

As V. Zakharov noted, Gestapo succeeded in the confessional environment of the Reich to impose practical activities: "unspoken observation of religious associations and denominations, study of the sentiments of clergy and believers, planting of agents in church administrative and management structures, promotion of "necessary people" to various

²¹ M. Grüttner. *Brandstifter und Biedermänner: Deutschland 1933-1939* (Stuttgart, 2015), p. 40.

²² В. Захаров, "Между властью и верой: религиозные конфессии Восточной Германии в годы советского оккупационного режима, 1945-1949." <http://statearchive.ru/398>. [V. Zakharov, Between Power and Faith: Religious Confessions of East Germany during the Soviet Occupation Regime, 1945-1949].

²³ S. Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung. Die Haltung der Baptisten-und Brüdergemeinden im Nationalsozialismus*. (Wölmersen, 2004), pp. 89-91.

²⁴ *Органы государственной безопасности СССР в Великой Отечественной войне. Сборник документов. Т. 1. Накануне. Кн. 2 (1 января – 21 июня 1941 г.)*, с. 320. [Bodies of state security of the USSR in the Great Patriotic war. Collection of documents. Vol. 1. The day before. Book 2 (January 1 - 21 June 1941), p. 320].

hierarchical positions,” and so on. V. Zakharov concluded that as a result of these actions “an extensive agent network was created among the main church confessions and religious associations of Germany.”²⁵

After establishing oversight over the activities of the main church denominations of the Reich, the Gestapo began to work on the affiliation of smaller religious organizations to them. For example, on June 27, 1936, on the initiative of the Gestapo, the Reich church ministry banned the activities of Pentecostals, which “confuse compatriots” (due to “prayer in the spirit” practiced by Pentecostals).²⁶ As a result, the Pentecostals were forced to join the legally operating Baptist Council of Germany, which, according to the Soviet special services, was headed by Gestapo resident P. Schmidt.²⁷ On April 13, 1937, *Reichsführer* SS H. Himmler issued a package of decrees under the general title “On the prohibition of the activities of dangerous ‘sects,’” resulting in the impossibility of activities of free Evangelical Christians, which were close to the Pentecostal Christians of the Schopdacher creed (Germ. *Schopdacher Freundeskreis*) and Adventists. According to the Gestapo, these denominations were not active enough in supporting the political activities of the NSDAP and the Nazi government. This led to political police accusing members of “dangerous sects” of supporting Marxism and providing Jews with asylum.²⁸ With the help of the Gestapo, these denominations were “cleansed” of the “unreliable” element and united into a single Council of Free Churches (Germ. *Bund Freikirchlicher Christen*, hereafter BFC). This religious organization had a “transparent” governing body headed by Gestapo protégé, H. Becker.²⁹

Since the beginning of World War II, there had been another large-scale adjustment of the religious palette of the Reich. With the assistance of the leadership of the Gestapo, BFC was joined to the Baptist Council, which in turn was reorganized into a large pro-Nazi organization “Council of Free Evangelical Churches of Germany: A Public Corporation” (Germ. *Bund Evangelisch Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland: Körperschaft des öffentlichen*, hereafter BEFG).³⁰ The clarifying addition of “Public Corporation” was to mean that this Union was a semi-secular organization in which participation was “public”—that is, unrelated to the rite of baptism.³¹ Such a requirement did not meet the dogmatic principles of

²⁵ Захаров, “Между властью и верой.” <http://statearchive.ru/398>.

²⁶ S. Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung*, p. 72.

²⁷ SA of Cherkasy region. F. II-5625. Vol. 1. File. 9742. Pp. 2, 66.

²⁸ Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung*, pp. 52, 53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

all Protestant denominations (especially Baptists) who joined the BEFG. However, the forced agreement with such a violation of the canons may indicate that the Protestants supported the Nazi religious policy, the meaning of which was to secularize and nazify the institution of the church. The result of this policy, according to the ideologists of the Soviet special services, should have been “fascist modernization of religion in general” and its replacement by Nazi ideology.³²

Consequently, the formation of the BEFG can be seen as the emergence of a transitional link between the “old” Christian church and the “new” Aryan. The formed organization numbered 150,000 people, and its administrative center was in Berlin. P. Schmidt became the Federal Director, and H. Becker became the second head.³³ The position of the presbyter of the Berlin community of the BEFG was held by R. Vogel, who, like P. Schmidt, according to Soviet intelligence, was a member of the Gestapo.³⁴

BEFG’s leaders, represented by P. Schmidt and Co., followed pro-Nazi views. The slogan of the Union was a verse from the New Testament (I Peter 2:17), revised by P. Schmidt in a pro-Nazi spirit: “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the Führer!” (Germ. “*Fürchtet Gott, habt die Brüder lieb, ehret den Führer!*”).³⁵ The chosen motto reflected the work of the whole Union. On the pages of periodicals, printed by Baptists and free Evangelical Christians, A. Hitler was portrayed as a ruler according to the “plan of God,” his rise to power was interpreted as “an act of the will of God,” and the dictatorship he introduced was elevated to the level of “divine” principles of government, which were contrasted to “vague” pluralism and democracy.³⁶ In such accents, the aggressive external activities of Nazi Germany, such as the Anschluss of Austria, the occupation of the Czech Republic, and the invasion of Poland, in most denominations that were part of the BEFG, were interpreted as the restoration of God's justice through A. Hitler, “the anointed by God,” to rule over the German people.³⁷ In the Baptist magazine “Herald of Truth”, on September 3, 1939, an article was published by P. Schmidt, in which he, on behalf of all free EC of the Reich, expressed support for A. Hitler and endorsed the Second World War. “These days, – wrote P. Schmidt, – there can be no Christian who would not passionately support the Führer and the people he trusts,

³² SSU BSA. F. 9. Ukr/SSR. File 74. P. 103.

³³ Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung*, pp. 76, 78.

³⁴ SA of Cherkasy region. F. II-5625. Vol. 1. File. 9742. P. 2, 66.

³⁵ Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung*, p. 80.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20, 25.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74, 81.

who try in every way to correct the injustice of Versailles <...>. As Christians, we are absolutely committed in our natural submission to our Nation and its Fuhrer!”³⁸

After the Wehrmacht occupied Western Poland, Gestapo began work there aiming at subordinating the activities of religious denominations to its influence. Since the beginning of 1940, in the General Government (German: *Generalgouvernement* (GG) for the occupied Polish lands and Polish territories annexed directly to the Reich, the decrees of the *Reichsführer* SS, H. Himmler, “On the prohibition of the activities of dangerous ‘sects’”³⁹ attained legal force. At the same time, a decree was issued by Governor-General, H. Frank, on the liquidation of all religious organizations and unions in the GG lands as not recognized by the Nazi authorities.⁴⁰ Since the only recognized Protestant religious organization in the Reich was BEFG, the leaders of the Protestant denominations of the GG had to choose whether to join it or cease the activities of their parishes. Through the Aryan clause, the Council of German Baptist Communities in Poland (Pol.: *Unia Zborów Baptystów Języka Niemieckiego w Polsce*) which consisted of *Volksdeutsche*, was affiliated directly to the BEFG. Other Protestant councils of former Poland (the Council of Slavic Communities of EC /Pol. *Związek Słowiańskich Zborów Ewangelicznych*/ and the Council of Churches of Christ /Pol. *Zjednoczenie Kościołów Chrystusowych Wyznania Ewangelicznego*/) united as the Council of Slavic Baptist Communities in Poland (Pol.: *Związek Zborów Słowiańskich Baptystów w Polsce*) into a non-Aryan branch of the BEFG, called the Council of Non-German Free Evangelical Communities (Germ. *Bund Nichtdeutscher Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden*, hereafter BNEFG).⁴¹ As a result of this adjustment of the denominational situation, the largest Protestant councils of the former Poland came under the control of Gestapo.

In my opinion, the content of those events was aptly described by their eyewitness, confessional diaspora historian (Baptist), G. Domashovetz. Comparing Stalin’s creation in 1944 of the religious council (All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, i.e., ACECB), controlled by the Soviet authorities, G. Domashovetz noted that A. Hitler was ahead of Stalin with the creation of a similar pro-Nazi union BEFG by four years:

During his reign in the USSR, Stalin drove everyone together in almost one fell swoop. All willy-nilly merged into one stream. Then (1944-1945 – Auth.) Baptists under the new regime were forced to organize from all denominations a new council, called "All-

³⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁰ R. Tomaszewski. *Baptyści w Polsce w latach 1918-1958*. (Warszawa: Kompas II, 2008), pp. 217-218.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 225.

Russian Council of Evangelical Christians Baptists" (in abbreviation ARCECB). The same thing happened when, in 1941, Hitler occupied almost all of Europe in a lightning war. In 1941, on the territory of former Poland, he liquidated all evangelical councils, all Fetler⁴² associations, all "free and not free,"⁴³ without bypassing the Baptists. Then all the councils and associations had to, submissively and fraternally, unite with the Baptists.⁴⁴

Taking into account the fact that the governing centers of communities of Protestants of Western Ukraine, occupied in 1939 by the USSR, were part of the Nazi-controlled BEFG, and those communities began to be seen as the sphere of influence of BEFG, and therefore Gestapo. In the event of the occupation of the territory of Ukraine by the Wehrmacht, the presence of the leaders of the Evangelical-Baptist movement in Western Ukraine (V. Husaruk and S. Nischik) in the GG (in Warsaw and Lodz, respectively) created the possibility of using them in uniting the Protestant confessions of the Ukrainian SSR into one council, controlled by Gestapo, subordinate to the BEFG. "In Lodz (Poland), for the work in the Ukrainian lands, the invaders formed a "center" of Baptists to unite different denominations into one under the auspices of Berlin."⁴⁵ With the same purpose, with the assistance of Baptist leadership, special missionary courses for Ukrainian youth began to operate at the Hamburg Baptist Seminary in January 1940, in which future missionaries and preachers were raised for the "eastern lands."⁴⁶ Since theology was mastered as a compulsory discipline in these courses, it can be assumed that the training of missionaries and preachers was carried out in them in a pro-Nazi spirit. It was on the basis of the Hamburg Baptist Seminary that the pro-Nazi doctrine "Theology of the orders of creation" (Germ.: *Theologie der Schöpfungsordnungen*) was developed and taught, which became the spiritual foundation of Hitler's dictatorship and the totalitarian National Socialist model of the state.⁴⁷

Such increased attention of the aggressor to the religious issue in Ukraine, which D. Viedienieiev explained by the desire of the Nazis to use religious associations in the process of occupation of the Ukrainian SSR to strengthen the Nazi power and undermine the loyalty of

⁴² Pentecostal communities in Poland.

⁴³ "Free" denominations in Poland are those denominations that existed independently (freely) from state funding. "Not free" denominations in Poland are those denominations whose activities were supported by the state.

⁴⁴ Г. Домашовець. *Нарис історії української євангельсько-баптистської церкви*. (Ірвінгтон-Торонто, 1967 р.), с. 237-238. [G. Domashovetz. *Historical sketch of the Ukrainian Evangelical-Baptist church*. (Irvington-Toronto, 1967), pp. 237-238].

⁴⁵ Д. Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах: Советские спецслужбы и религиозная сфера Украины*. (Москва: Алгоритм, 2016), с. 122. [D. Viedienieiev. *Atheists in Uniforms: Soviet Special Services and the Religious Sphere of Ukraine*. Moscow: Algorithm, 2016], p. 122.

⁴⁶ SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 1. File. 476. P. 194; CSA SAG. F. 4648. Op. 4. Spr. 40. Arc. 7-9.

⁴⁷ С. Нищик. *Шлях віри* (Вінніпег-Детройт, 1975 р.), с. 63. [S. Nischik. *The Way of Faith* (Winnipeg-Detroit, 1975), p. 63]; Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung*, p. 25.

the population to the Soviet regime.⁴⁸ These attempts, according to D. Viedienieiev, were part of the strategy of “reconnaissance-subversive ‘total’ war” developed in the Third Reich in 1935-1938.⁴⁹ An important role in this strategy was cited by the “non-combat” methods of struggle, which were to complement the Wehrmacht's military actions.⁵⁰ In other words, in the fight against Bolshevism, the Nazis wanted to use not only their own armed forces, but also the local population and the institution of the church, dissatisfied with the Bolshevik religious policy.

To carry out this work, the powers of the Gestapo as political police had been greatly expanded. Since the beginning of the Nazi-Soviet war, the reorganization of the Nazi special services took place in accordance with the requirements of wartime and the Nazi security service, RSHA⁵¹ order dated August 4, 1941, “On the reorganization of the intelligence and counterintelligence service,” according to which counterintelligence (with the exception of the military) was transferred to the competence of the IV RSHA Directorate (that is, to the political police – Gestapo). And the information “about ideological opponents (Masons, Jews, church)” acquired not a political, but a counterintelligence character, since it belonged to the “competence of counterintelligence,” which was already led by Gestapo.⁵² To effectively carry out counterintelligence work in the religious environment of the Ukrainian SSR, and thus strengthen the Nazi authorities in the occupied territories of Ukraine, the chief of RSHA, R. Heydrich, decided to take advantage of the discontent of the clergy and the general population with the atheistic policy of the Bolsheviks. To this end, R. Heydrich prepared a special operational order No. 10 of August 16, 1941, “On the Understanding of Church Issues in the Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union,” which were later clarified (until 1942), taking into account the operational situation and personal instructions of A. Hitler.⁵³ According to this order (as amended November 1, 1941), in the occupied territories of the USSR, religious movement was allowed but was planned to be used (as in the Reich) for political purposes to combat Bolshevism. Measures had been put in place to prevent its unwanted consolidation

⁴⁸ Д. Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах: Советские спецслужбы и религиозная сфера Украины*. (Москва: Алгоритм, 2016), с. 69. [D. Viedienieiev. *Atheists in Uniforms: Soviet Special Services and the Religious Sphere of Ukraine*. Moscow: Algorithm, 2016], p. 69.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ RSHA (Germ. *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) – The Reich Security Main Office.

⁵² *Органы государственной безопасности СССР в Великой Отечественной войне*. Сборник документов. Т. 2. Начало. Кн. 1 (22 июня – 31 августа 1941 г.), с. 649. [Bodies of state security of the USSR in the Great Patriotic war. Collection of documents. Vol. 2. Start. Book 1 (June 22 - August 31, 1941)], p. 649.

⁵³ SSU BSA. F. 9. (Ukr/SSR). 74. P. 13, 101; Ibid, p. 13, 101-103.

around the ROC, the diocese, controlled by Moscow. To do this, they proposed to de-energize the ROC and, in its contrast, to intensify the activities of Protestant denominations⁵⁴ (primarily Baptists who appeared in the Ukrainian lands as a result of German colonization). In this way, they planned to create a "favorable balance of power" in the religious environment, which after the victorious end of the war would contribute to the "fascist modernization of religion in general."⁵⁵

To revive the activities of the Baptist communities and unite on their basis other Protestants into one religious council, Ukrainian Baptist preachers and missionaries (who attended the corresponding preparatory courses in the Reich) arrived from GG and Germany to the occupied territories of Ukraine. They were headed by V. Husaruk and S. Nischik. Vice-President of the Council of Slavic Baptist Communities in Poland (which was reorganized by the Nazis into BNEFG), ethnic German W. Gutsche wrote to one of the leaders of the former AUCB, P. Kaplienko, that "the German authorities want to unite all believers of the Baptists, Evangelicals and Adventists into a single Church of Christ."⁵⁶

The formation of a single "Christ's Church" in Ukraine, which would be based on Baptist communities, began with the formation of the Volyn-Podolsk association of the EC and B. Having arrived in Rivne, V. Husaruk and S. Nischik, as BNEFG missionaries and former leaders of the Evangelical-Baptist movement of Western Ukraine, began re-registration in the occupation authorities of the Baptist communities and Evangelical Christians of the Western regions of Ukraine (Rivne, Volyn, Kamenetz-Podilsk and partly Tarnopil). These communities, until 1939, were part of the Council of Slavic Baptist communities in Poland and the Council of Slavic communities of Evangelical Christians in Poland, respectively. After the occupation of the western regions of Ukraine by the Soviet Union in 1939, some community leaders were repressed by the NKVD, and the communities themselves were re-registered by the cult departments of the NKVD. Therefore, after the occupation of Western Ukraine by the Wehrmacht in 1941, for V. Husaruk and S. Nischik, as their former leaders and later missionaries of the BNEFG, it became possible to quickly restore the activities of these communities already under the Nazi occupation to the patronage of the BNEFG. Through the efforts of V. Husaruk and S. Nischik, these communities were first integrated into regional associations of Evangelical Christians Baptists (ECB), and then into a large religious council

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 13, 101-103.

⁵⁵ CSA SAG. F. 4648. Inv. 2. File 237. P. 29, 31; SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 1. File 476. P. 194.

⁵⁶ Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах*. p. 122.

called the “Council of ECB Generalkommissariat Volyn-Podolia” with the administrative center in Rivne.⁵⁷ V. Husaruk became the chairman of the association, and S. Nischik took the post of the secretary. According to operational materials of the NKVD, this association arose with the assistance of the German special services, and its founders were V. Husaruk and S. Nischik, who were a resident and an agent of the Gestapo, respectively.⁵⁸ After the formation of the ECB association in the Generalkommissariat Volyn-Podolia, V. Husaruk began to form similar associations in other territorial units of the RKU. On behalf of V. Husaruk, S. Nischik went to the Generalkommissariat Zhytomyr, where in cooperation with another BNEFG missionary, Z. Reczun-Panko, he resumed the activities of ECB communities in Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, and partly Polissya regions (Belarus). After that, on the initiative of V. Husaruk, a congress of delegates of the restored communities was held in Zhytomyr, where a decision was made to unite these communities into the Council of ECB of the Generalkommissariat Zhytomyr. Z. Rechun-Panko became the chairman of the Council.⁵⁹

To create similar associations in Eastern Ukraine, S. Nischik, on the instructions of V. Husaruk, established contact with the leaders of the former AUCB, P. Kaplienko, P. Metelitsa, and I. Tatarchenko who survived the repressions and were presbyters of the central Baptist communities in Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Kyrovograd, respectively. With their help, from August to October 1942, V. Husaruk and S. Nischik organized the Councils of ECB of the Generalkommissariats Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, and Mykolaiv.⁶⁰ Considering that on June 18, 1943, in Dnipropetrovsk (modern Dnipro) the revival of the AUCB was proclaimed, chaired by the presbyter of the Dnipropetrovsk regional community, D. Shapovalov; I believe it’s necessary to consider the mechanism of its formation in more detail (the formation of the Council of ECB in other Generalkommissariats took place according to a similar scheme). From the beginning of the Nazi occupation in Dnipropetrovsk, there was a former All-Union evangelist of the AUCB, liquidated by the Bolsheviks in 1935-1937, I. Tatarchenko. Together with his friend D. Shapovalov, and with another baptist, S. Varlyga, he visited the city council. There I. Tatarchenko received permission from the German occupation authorities to resume the activities of the Dnipropetrovsk Baptist community in exchange for the support of its future leadership under the policy of the Nazi regime.⁶¹ Therefore, I. Tatarchenko picked up the

⁵⁷ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. P. 94, 96b.

⁵⁸ SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 5. P. 2; SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 6. P. 45-46; SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 476. P. 194; SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 169; SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 564. P. 12.

⁵⁹ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. P. 22, 93b, 114b, 115.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 96b, 113b, 114.

⁶¹ SA of Kirovograd region. ФП-5907. Inv. 2p. File 10601. P. 16b.

leadership of the newly created community, offering to appoint S. Varlyga as the head of the community, and D. Shapovalov as the deputy chairman of the community. The activity of the new leadership of Dnipropetrovsk community took place in the pro-Nazi spirit and was directed by I. Tatarchenko to subordinate his influence on the communities of B and EC located on the territory of the Generalkommissariat.⁶² After carrying out the necessary organizational measures, I. Tatarchenko left for the place of residence in the Generalkommissariat Mykolaiv, where he began similar work to restore activities and unite communities of EC and B into one council.⁶³

Fulfilling the instructions of I. Tatarchenko, D. Shapovalov asked for a certificate of a cult minister from the chairman of the department of cults at the city government, A. Sharek. This would allow him to move around the territory of the Generalkommissariat to restore the activities of the Baptist congregations. Considering the need to register each community in the department of cults, D. Shapovalov, in addition to the certificate, received from A. Sharek the task of not only restoring the activities of the Baptist communities, but also collecting and submitting to the cult department all the necessary documentation for their registration. This includes, namely: an application for permission of restoration of the community's activities, information about its leadership, and lists of believers with the obligatory indication of their surnames, year of birth, nationality and religious experience.⁶⁴ Thanks to such activities of D. Shapovalov, the Nazis received all the registration information to control the activities of all Baptist communities in the Generalkommissariat. A harmonious hierarchy of their subordination had also been formed: the department of cults → the regional presbyter (D. Shapovalov) → the elders of the local communities. Realizing the support that the Nazi authorities provided to the Baptists, the leader of EC, J. Khodyush, refused to register the communities subordinate to him separately from the Baptists and handed over the registration of EC communities to D. Shapovalov.

Upon completion of the registration of the ECB communities by the German occupation authorities, S. Varlyga and D. Shapovalov initiated the formation of the Dnipropetrovsk association of the ECB on their basis, but the Propaganda Department and the Gestapo did not allow them to do so. In a private conversation with representatives of the occupation authorities, who first introduced themselves to D. Shapovalov and his German co-religionists

⁶² SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. P. 18, 44, 45.

⁶³ SA of Kirovograd region. ФП-5907. Inv. 2p. File 10601. P. 16b.

⁶⁴ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. P. 18, 47.

(members of the BEFG) as employees of the mission "Light in the East,"⁶⁵ D. Shapovalov focused not on independent actions, but on cooperation with other Christian colleagues for formation (according to the BEFG principle), not just a regional association of the ECB but an interfaith council of Ukraine "to represent a solid unit" for the Nazi government.⁶⁶

Taking into account these instructions, D. Shapovalov turned to S. Nischik and V. Husaruk for help in establishing the ECB council of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk with the hope of forming the All-Ukrainian Council of ECB. V. Husaruk created the Council of the ECB Generalkommissariats Volyn-Podilia and Zhytomyr by convening congresses of delegates from all ECB communities operating on the territory of the named commissariat generals. Usually, organizers of such congresses had to get permission from the Propaganda Department and the Gestapo. However, V. Husaruk had an order from E. Koch on the need to create and register ECB associations by the occupational authorities. V. Husaruk used this order as the highest permission for convening and holding unification congresses of the ECB.⁶⁷

Therefore, V. Husaruk appointed a unifying congress in the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk on August 30, 1942 (in Generalkommissariats Mykolaiv and Kyiv on September 6, 1942, and October 6, 1942, respectively).⁶⁸ Two weeks before the start of the congress, S. Nischik and I. Polischuk (another BNEFG missionary) arrived in Dnipropetrovsk as envoys from V. Husaruk. Their task was to notify D. Shapovalov about the date of the congress, help prepare the event, and select leading personnel for the future organization. Since D. Shapovalov, as the future chairman of the association, had no clergy (and therefore could not claim spiritual leadership), I. Tatarchenko was invited from Kyrovograd (present-day Kropyvnytskyi) and immediately ordained D. Shapovalov to the rank of presbyter. After approving the candidates for the leading positions of the future association, the members of the board of the Dnipropetrovsk Baptist community left the territory of the Generalkommissariat in order to convene delegates to the planned congress.

On August 30, 1942, in the central community of Dnipropetrovsk, which was located on the premises of the former Jewish synagogue on the street Komsomolska, 34 (present-day

⁶⁵ According to the investigation, one of the "missionaries" (Wessel) was the deputy head of the Propaganda Department of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk. The identities of the other two "missionaries" were never identified by the NKGB. According to the NKGB, they were listed as Gestapo agents. According to operative sources, the NKGB officers found out that under the rule of A. Hitler, the mission "Light in the East" became a "German intelligence body" (SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. П-24066. Vol.1. P. 70) and "spy organization" (SSU SBA. F. 13. File 375. P. 168); (Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах*, pp. 122, 123).

⁶⁶ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. П-24066. Vol.1. P. 19-21, 48, 50b, 78, 100b.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 93, 100.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

Starokozatska St., 34), a unifying congress of the ECB was held with 80 delegates from 40 communities of the ECB Generalkommissariat of Dnipropetrovsk. In addition, V. Husaruk, S. Nischik, Z. Rechun-Panko, I. Tatarchenko, and I. Tarasyuk (as a representative from P. Kaplienko) arrived at the congress. The agenda of the Congress consisted of two issues: 1. Formation of the union of the ECB Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk; 2. Election of the leadership of this union. D. Shapovalov opened the congress with a welcoming speech and prayer for the occupation authorities. V. Husaruk spoke on the first issue, who noted that for better functioning of the ECB communities in the conditions of the Nazi occupation regime, they needed to unite, following the example of the religious organizations of the Reich. Such an association, according to V. Husaruk, was created in the Generalkommissariats Volyn-Podilia, Zhytomyr, and existed for a long time in Germany. Taking this into account, V. Husaruk set before the delegates of the communities the task of creating the same association in the Generalkommissariat of Dnipropetrovsk.

V. Husaruk's speech was supported by the head of EC, J. Khodyush, and the head of the Baptists, D. Shapovalov. Delegates of the congress unanimously voted for the formation of an association of the ECB in the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk. D. Shapovalov was elected as the head of the newly created association, and his deputy was J. Khodyush. Then S. Nischik made a call to the audience to rally around the occupying power, which sanctioned the creation of the association, and "actively [implemented] its instructions." The congress was closed by V. Husaruk, who advised the newly elected leadership of the ECB to form regional associations.⁶⁹

Following the instructions of V. Husaruk and using the assistance of Hitler's occupation authorities, D. Shapovalov and J. Khodyush, in a short time provided the formation of district (Germ. *Gebietskommissar*) associations of the ECB and the election of their leadership on the territory of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk. In the end, the regional union of the ECB of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk included about 100 communities from the ECB with a total number of about 10,000 persons. At the regional associations of the ECB for effective functioning, five departments were created (missionary, publishing, women, youth, and educational). Finances for the activities of the association were provided by the German mission "Light in the East." From the territory of the GG and the Reich, with the assistance of P. Schmidt and W. Gutsche (through V. Husaruk), the spiritual literature was received, which

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 17, 83, 84, 93, 94, 99, 101-106.

was used by the departments of the regional council and local communities of the ECB of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk.⁷⁰

D. Shapovalov registered the formed association in the Propaganda Department of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk. The main condition for registration was the support of the members for the ECB board on all measures of the occupying authorities. The activities of the association were not to affect or contradict the interests of the Nazi occupation policy. D. Shapovalov and other members of the regional leadership committed to carrying out proper explanatory work with their flock. They received certificates as ministers of worship from the head of the Propaganda Department, which gave them the right to move freely through the territory of the Generalkommissariat. BEFG Federal Director P. Schmidt passed a similar certificate of a cult minister to D. Shapovalov through V. Husaruk. With this document, P. Schmidt testified to the position of D. Shapovalov and petitioned the Nazi administration to assist D. Shapovalov in resolving organizational issues related to his activities.⁷¹

The handing over of this certificate to D. Shapovalov, in my opinion, testifies to the existence of the not yet legalized subordination of the newly formed regional unions of the ECB RKU to the German Nazi council BEFG. According to a similar scheme, in September-October 1942, the ECB councils of the Generalkommissariats Mykolaiv and Kyiv were created. In the Generalkommissariat Kyiv, EC did not want to unite with the Baptists, so Gestapo and P. Schmidt had to intervene in the unification case. According to the information of the NKVD, in April 1942, Gestapo recruited V. Skrynnik (an active member of the EC of the central Kyiv community) as an agent for the unification of EC with B in the Generalkommissariat Kyiv. On September 23, 1942, residents of the Gestapo, R. Fogel and P. Schmidt, met with V. Skrynnik in Berlin. From P. Schmidt, V. Skrynnik received an open letter to the presbyters of the central Kyiv communities of the EC and B, O. Trynadtsiatko and P. Metelytsia, respectively, as well as to all EC and B of the Generalkommissariat Kyiv with a call to form a council of the ECB in the interests of “Great Germany” and “New Ukraine.”⁷² After that, with the help of the Gestapo and personally the SS *Obergruppenfuhrer* SS P. Wegener, V. Skrynnik returned to Kyiv. There, on November 6, 1942, at a unifying meeting of the heads of the EC and B Generalkommissariat Kyiv, he read an open letter to those present. In the speech of V. Skrynnik and the speech of Hrushke (representative of P. Schmidt),

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 21, 78b, 105-107, 132, 133, 144, 149-151.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 108, 109, 132, 133.

⁷² SA of Cherkasy region. F. P-5625. Inv. 1. File 9742. Pp. 65, 76b, 80, 91, 110.

convincing arguments were made about the expediency of forming the ECB association in the Generalkommissariat Kyiv. Soon, V. Skrynnik visited the EC communities of the Generalkommissariat Kyiv, where he read a letter from P. Schmidt, agitating for the council, and persuading the leadership of these communities to unite with the Baptists.⁷³

On November 21, 1942, a meeting of the heads of all ECB Councils (Volyn-Podilia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv) of the RKU took place in Zhytomyr, with the assistance of the occupying German authorities and under the leadership of V. Husaruk, and the All-Ukrainian Council of ECB with the center in Rivne (hereafter, AUCECB)⁷⁴ was created. According to the documents of the NKVD, 1,880 communities joined the Council, in which there were 87,000 believers.⁷⁵ The Council was controlled by a special Committee headed by I. Tatarchenko, but in fact the functions of the head of the AUCECB Committee were performed by V. Husaruk.⁷⁶ After the creation of the AUCECB, the leadership immediately began work on the membership of other Protestants. In Rivne, on January 12, 1943, with the assistance of the occupying authorities, the members of the AUCECB Committee held talks with the leaders of the Council of Free Christians (hereafter, CFC) and the Council of Churches of Christ (hereafter, CCC), whose communities were located mainly on the territory of Volyn-Podilia. The result of these negotiations was an agreement on the incorporation of these denominations into the AUCECB and the reorganization of the latter, following the example of BEFG, into the Council of Free Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (*Bund Evangelisch Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in der Ukraine*, BEFGU) headed by V. Husaruk.⁷⁷

According to agents of the Soviet secret services, the main purpose of creating such an alliance was the desire of the Nazis to use it to fight Bolshevism and strengthen Nazi rule in the occupied territories of Ukraine. The reports and directives of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR indicated that the main lines of use of the Gestapo and other Nazi bodies of the AUCECB were: “1. Conducting pro-fascist anti-Soviet agitation; 2. Carrying out work among the population to decompose and paralyze the partisan movement; 3. Conducting intelligence and counterintelligence work; 4. Conducting campaigning for the voluntary departure of the population to work in Germany, etc.”⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 19, 21, 80, 82 s., 92, 93.

⁷⁴ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. P. 131.

⁷⁵ SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 1. File 476. P. 194.

⁷⁶ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 110.

⁷⁷ SA of Cherkasy region. F. P-5625. Inv. 1. File 9742. P. 22b.

⁷⁸ SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 167; SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 539. P. 197, 198; SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 5. P. 2; SSU BSA. F. 6. Inv. 1. File 6. Pp. 45-46.

The data given in the service documentation of the NKVD bodies of the Ukrainian SSR found their confirmation in my research of the investigative cases initiated by the NKVD-NKGB bodies against the presbyters of the ECB, and other operational information. For example, I. Tatarchenko, on the instructions of the Propaganda Department, “published articles on the pages of the local pro-fascist press in which he called on the population to provide the Germans with all-round assistance,” and he himself “actively provided the German occupiers with monetary and other assistance” (held six charity concerts for the Nazis and the funds received for them, 15,000 marks, and handed over for the needs of the occupation regime).⁷⁹ The prescient management asset of the association of ECB Mykolaiv (F. Mitryayev, K. Hnatenko, and S. Krugikov) and Kharkiv regions (P. Kaplienko, I. Tarasyuk, Chepachkov, Morozov), on the instructions of the occupation authorities, made and distributed special appeals among believers—in which he urged them to support all Nazi measures and agitated the population for leaving for Germany. Presbyter A. Fedorchenko (Kharkiv region) also confiscated the cattle of believers.⁸⁰ Receiving the task from the Propaganda Department, D. Shapovalov systematically conducted pro-Nazi campaigning among the members of the ECB, urging the believers of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk to support all measures of the occupying Nazi authorities and work conscientiously for the needs of the Wehrmacht.⁸¹ In addition, D. Shapovalov provided a church altar to the employees of the occupation administration to proclaim Nazi agitation. Deputy head of the Propaganda Department of the same Generalkommissariat, Wessel, on July 18, 1943, personally spoke at the All-Ukrainian Congress of the ECB in the central community of the ECB in Dnipropetrovsk and called on believers to support the Nazi regime in the fight against the Bolsheviks as a sign of gratitude for their religious freedom.⁸² To strengthen the Nazi agitation through the institution of the church on January 3, 1943, employees of the Propaganda Department organized a reception of local clergy on the premises of the general commissariat of Mykolaiv; at which, according to NKVD documents, they expressed gratitude to the general commissar for religious freedom and promised the Nazis all kinds of support in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The head of the regional association of ECB, F. Mitryayev (former agent of NKVD), at this reception said that “he will use all his abilities to strengthen the German armed forces and to achieve victory over

⁷⁹ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 1.

⁸⁰ CSA SAG. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 4. P. 84.

⁸¹ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol. 1. Pp. 44, 45, 133b.

⁸² SA in Dnipro region. F. 6463. Inv. 1. File 2. P. 6; SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol. 1. P. 81, 82; SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 569. Pp. 35-36.

Bolshevism.”⁸³ Along with the Propaganda Department, the Nazi special services also used ECB elders to fight the Bolsheviks. According to D. Viedienieiev and A. Lysenko, “among the legalized or artificially created ‘sects’ they vigorously recruited agents of the Abwehr, the Gestapo, the Romanian intelligence service and counterintelligence Cigurans.”⁸⁴

According to the operational information of the NKVD bodies, the agents recruited among the Protestant confessions, the Nazi special services (Gestapo and SD) were actively involved in the conduct of intelligence and counterintelligence measures against the NKVD.⁸⁵ In particular, the head of AUCECB, I. Tatarchenko, was summoned three times to SD, where he was tasked, under the guise of a cult minister, to identify guerrillas, communists, and underground party members.⁸⁶ A similar task was performed in Sazonovka, Kirovograd district, Kirovograd region, by six people from the leadership of the local Baptist community under the control of V. Chumachenko, the head of the village administration of Baptists. According to NKVD documents in the district, they resorted to active struggle against the guerrilla movement, identifying and reporting to the German punitive authorities of Soviet guerrillas and underground communists.⁸⁷ The Nazis also involved a “well-known resident of the German secret services,” the head of the BEFGU, V. Husaruk, in the fight against the guerrillas.⁸⁸ He urged his followers not to join the guerrillas and not to fight against the Germans.⁸⁹

In addition to intelligence and counterintelligence work, the German secret services conducted information-analytical and intelligence-operational work among the ECB. The use of the Gestapo of its agents, V. Husaruk, S. Nischik, P. Schmidt, and others, serve as an example of the intelligence and operational work of the German special services among the ECB of Ukraine to establish in the territory such Nazi religious councils as the AUCECB and the BEFGU. As part of the information and analytical work of the Nazi secret services within the ECB, the Gestapo used the ECB’s presbytery and leadership to obtain information on the religious situation in their communities. For example, for this purpose, the Gestapo was

⁸³ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 573. P. 154.

⁸⁴ Д. Веденієєв, О. Лисенко. “Релігійні конфесії України як об’єкт оперативної розробки німецьких і радянських спецслужб (1943-1945 рр.)”. *Український історичний журнал*. 2012 р. Вип. № 4. С. 122. [D. Viedienieiev and O. Lysenko. Religious denominations of Ukraine as an object of operational development of German and Soviet special services (1943-1945 biennium). *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2012. Vol. 4, p.122].

⁸⁵ SSU BSA. F. 9. Ukr/SSR. File 74. P. 13; SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 167; SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv 1. File 539. Pp. 197, 198.

⁸⁶ SA of Kirovograd region. ФП-5907. Inv. 2р. File 10601. P. 29.

⁸⁷ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. Pp. 18, 19.

⁸⁸ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 179.

⁸⁹ CSA SAG. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 4. P. 84.

systematically summoned by the Chairman of the Committee of the EC of Ukraine, V. Skrynnik,⁹⁰ and the Presbyter of the Kyiv community of the ECB, O. Trynadtsiatko.⁹¹ Similar tasks were set by the German special services to the presbyteries of Dnipropetrovsk (S. Varlyga),⁹² Kyrovograd (I. Tatarchenko),⁹³ and Poltava (M. Hnatenko)⁹⁴ communities of the ECB.

The documented facts allow us to conclude that as a result of the vigorous activity of the Propaganda Departments and the Gestapo, in a short time (in just a year and a half), the Nazis managed, on the basis of Baptist communities, to create a religious council controlled by them (Free Evangelical Churches of Ukraine, BEFGU) and to direct its presbyter-preaching active to the fight against Bolshevism.

But the Nazis did not have time to unite all the Protestant denominations of Ukraine during this period into the said religious council. The fact is that in the first place, only those denominations were united in this council, which did not have fundamental differences in doctrine with the Baptists. The denominations, whose beliefs differed significantly from Baptist doctrines, such as the Pentecostals, were given the opportunity by the Nazis to act separately from the Baptists so as not to complicate the unification process itself. It was only a tactical move dictated by the conditions of the war, because in the Reich itself the activities of the Pentecostals were banned, and they were forced to integrate with the Baptists. But in occupied Ukraine, to gain their support in the fight against Bolshevism and to create a stronger counterweight to the ROC, the Nazis decided to suspend Himmler's decree until the final victory over the USSR and allowed the Pentecostals to act independently of the Baptists.

Unaware of such intentions of the Nazis, the Pentecostals greeted them as liberators, and quickly intensified their activities and began to support the occupation authorities. In January 1942, in Dnipropetrovsk, one of the board members of the AUCCEF, liquidated by the Bolsheviks in the 1930s, G. Ponurko organized the former leaders of this council (D. Ponomarchuk, P. Bidash, D. Boyun, P. Shokalo, etc.) into the so-called Collegium of Bishops. The Collegium was registered in the Propaganda Department of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk, initially as the governing body of all Pentecostals of the Dnipropetrovsk region.⁹⁵ Subsequently, with the support of the Nazi occupation authorities,

⁹⁰ SA of Cherkasy region. F. P-5625. Inv. 1. File 9742. Pp. 65, 87, 88.

⁹¹ SSU BSA. F. 6. File. 58633-ФII. Pp. 2, 3, 24.

⁹² SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol.1. Pp. 49, 50b.

⁹³ SA of Kirovograd region. ФII-5907. Inv. 2p. File 10601. P. 29.

⁹⁴ SA SSU in Poltava. F.6(P). File II-11840. Pp. 39-41, 58, 72.

⁹⁵ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. File II-21827. P. 19b.

the Collegium subordinated almost all Pentecostal communities of the entire RCU (except for the western regions), which were previously part of the AUCCEF.⁹⁶ Then on November 1, 1942, with the permission of the Propaganda Department and Gestapo, G. Ponurko convened in Pyatykhatky, Dnipropetrovsk region—a regional, and in fact all-Ukrainian congress of Pentecostals. It proclaimed the revival of the AUCCEF, elected Collegium of Bishops headed by Chief Bishop G. Ponurko, and appointed presbyters for local Pentecostal communities.⁹⁷ The total number of the AUCCEF in 1942 was about 25,000 people.⁹⁸

The registration of the AUCCEF in the Propaganda Department of the Generalkommissariat Dnipropetrovsk under the name “Episcopal Church” took place on the same conditions as the regional council of the ECB, headed by D. Shapovalov. This meant that the Collegium of Bishops and presbyters of the local Pentecostal communities, like the Baptist leadership, were obliged to support the Nazi regime. In speeches at congresses and during worship meetings, G. Ponurko, other bishops, and presbyters urged their flock to pray for the Hitlerite government, to help it with conscientious work in the rear, and also convinced Ukrainians of the advisability of leaving for forced labor in Germany.⁹⁹ According to the documents of the Soviet special services, all the regional centers of Pentecostals and Baptists “were closely connected with the propaganda departments and the Gestapo, the latter controlled¹⁰⁰ and directed their work in a direction favorable to them.”¹⁰¹

For example, the leadership of the Pentecostals of the Generalkommissariat of Kyiv, through the presbyter-liaison Yu. Yurchak along with members of the community, Polyakov and Barakin, kept in touch with the German special services and regularly informed the Gestapo on the operational state of the confessional environment, the fight against partisans, the identification of Jews, etc.¹⁰² In Voroshylovgrad (now Luhansk) the same work was done by the presbyter Bezobrazov, and in Sumy by the presbyter Shablo.¹⁰³ According to the documents of the Soviet special services, the presbyter of the Pentecostal community of Velyko-Oleksandrivka of the Kazansk region of the Mykolaiv oblast, P. Kovalenko, on the instructions of the Gestapo, identified the members of the communist party and the local party

⁹⁶ SSU SBA. F. 13. File 375. P. 128.

⁹⁷ Д. Веденеев. *Атеисты в мундирах*.

⁹⁸ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. File П-21827. Pp. 133, 142.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 20, 30-32, 47, 140, 142.

¹⁰⁰ According to the operational materials of the NKVD, D. Shapovalov and G. Ponurko were agents Gestapo (SSU SBA. F. 9. US/SR. File 225. P. 16; SSU SBA F. 9. Ukr/SSR. File 89. P. 89).

¹⁰¹ SSU SBA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 165b.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

activists. Investigators of the NKVD accused P. Kovalenko and other community members of resorting to pro-Nazi agitation among the local population, collecting warm clothes and food for the *Wehrmacht*.¹⁰⁴ According to the Soviet special services, the presbyter of the Brovary Pentecostal community, A. Tatarchenko, as the head of the communal economy, worked closely with the SD, regularly informing them about the persons who sabotaged the work at the enterprises in the Nazi occupied territories. Enkavedists (NKVDists) accused A. Tatarchenko of carrying out Nazi agitation and facilitating the forced sending of the local population to work in Germany.¹⁰⁵

Thus, it can be concluded that the AUCCEF was established on the same principles as the BEFGU and operated under the control of the Gestapo and Propaganda Departments to establish the Nazi regime in the occupied territories of Ukraine in the fight against Bolshevism.

Pentecostals of western regions of Ukraine, led by D. Adamik, decided to restore a separate religious council (CCEF), which was formerly part of the Council of Pentecostal Christians in Poland (and was abolished in 1939 by the Bolshevik occupation regime). But, without the permission of Hitler's authorities, they had to join the AUCECB and continue to act in coordination with the Baptists.¹⁰⁶ Pentecostals of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovyna could not obtain permission to revive the religious council (BCP) from the Romanian occupation authorities, so they carried out religious activities underground.¹⁰⁷

As the front approached, the heads of the BEFGU (V. Husaruk, S. Nischik, S. Rechun-Panko, P. Kapliencko, and others), fearing arrest by the NKGB officers, left for the rear of the German troops. The escape of the leadership led to the gradual disintegration of BEFGU. Evangelical Christians and movements close to them, such as CFC and CCC, emerged from it—which formed a separate governing center (Collegium), headed by V. Skrynnik.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, on July 18, 1943, Baptists held an All-Ukrainian Congress in Dnipropetrovsk with the permission of Gestapo, where they proclaimed the revival of the ACB, headed by D. Shapovalov.¹⁰⁹

The general result of Gestapo and other bodies of Hitler's occupation authorities in the religious sphere in Ukraine was the resumption of activities of 4,200 communities of Protestant

¹⁰⁴ SSU SBA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 566. Pp. 50, 51.

¹⁰⁵ SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 172.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168b.

¹⁰⁸ SA of Cherkasy region. F. II-5625. Vol. 1. File. 9742. Pp. 20b, 99.

¹⁰⁹ SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 132; SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-24066. Vol. 1. Pp. 144-148.

denominations and three religious centers as of 1944.¹¹⁰ Among them there were 2,778 communities of ECB with a total population of 98,681 believers¹¹¹ and 828 Pentecostal communities with 33,794 persons.¹¹² The remaining 594 communities covered representatives of Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Darbists, and other small denominations. The number (2778)¹¹³ of ECB communities that resumed their activities during the Nazi occupation was 6.5 times more than their pre-war number (426) and half their number (4875) in 1929.¹¹⁴ The number of Pentecostals in 1944 (33,794 people in 828 communities) almost equaled their number from 1930 (35,000 people in 350 communities) when the chekists eliminated the AUCCEF.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

The conclusion is that during the years of the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, under the control of Gestapo and Propaganda Departments, the All-Ukrainian Council of Baptists and the All-Ukrainian Council of CEF, that had been liquidated by the Stalinist regime, were revived. At the same time, the Nazis reorganized the Baptist's Council into a large Council of Free Evangelical Churches of Ukraine (BEFGU) under the leadership of the Gestapo agents or the presbyterian-preaching activists loyal to the Nazi regime. The Nazis rationally took advantage of the aggressive anti-religious policy of the Bolsheviks and resorted to the restoration of almost all religious councils of the Protestant confessions of Ukraine that had been liquidated in the 1930s by Soviet communist regime. This confessional policy of the Nazis was supported by representatives of the presbyterian-preaching activists of the Protestants. By cherishing this support, the Gestapo, SD, and Propaganda Departments were able to quickly take control of the activities of these religious councils and send their leaders and religious communities under their control to fight Bolshevism.

A question can be raised about the objectivity or subjectivity of the NKVD's conclusions about the cooperation of Protestant leaders with the Gestapo. Of course, NKVD was, after all, the organ of Soviet state security, which were called upon to protect the Soviet government. My scholarly opinion on the reliability of the cooperation of V. Husaruk, S. Nischik, P. Schmidt, and others as Gestapo agents is that the NKVD's accusation that these

¹¹⁰ SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1103. P. 90.

¹¹¹ CSA POU. F. 1. Inv. 23. File 5377. P. 29.

¹¹² SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 1. File 476. P. 196.

¹¹³ CSA POU. F. 1. Inv. 23. File 5377. P. 29.

¹¹⁴ CSA SAG. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 27. P. 80.

¹¹⁵ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. II-21827. Pp. 133, 142.

individuals and other leaders of religious unions were Gestapo agents is well-founded. It was not a political trick. The Protestant leaders did work closely with the Gestapo and supported the Nazi occupation regime. Their intelligence connection with the Gestapo can be explained due to the Gestapo granting them permission to rebuild their communities and to create regional and republican unions. The secret documents (operational reports and archival investigative files) contain data which show that these persons were provided with finances, relevant documents, special passes, and railway tickets—which allowed them to move freely through the territory of the RKU and conduct their activities. According to historical documents, during the Nazi occupation, these issues could be resolved only with the permission of the Gestapo. In exchange for such "assistance," these individuals undertook work for the Gestapo (as specified in the article) and supported the occupation regime. Unfortunately, there is currently no information on the number of Gestapo agents among Ukrainian Protestants during this period. Therefore, it is impossible to say how widespread this phenomenon was and what strata of Protestant communities it covered. This issue still needs to be clarified. In fairness, it is my personal opinion, that another reason (apart from receiving this "help") that motivated religious figures to cooperate with the Gestapo was their hatred of the "godless" Soviet government (for example, during the occupation of Western Ukraine). Many communities were liquidated by the Soviets and their leaders were repressed; for example, V. Husaruk's father, Ignatius Husaruk, also perished. These conditions prompted Ukrainian Protestants to support the Nazis; the Gestapo did not have to work too hard to gain an agency among the faithful. They were united by hatred of the Soviets, and they were happy to serve the Nazis in eliminating the remnants of Soviet power.

When it became clear that Nazism was no better than communism, and religious gatherings in the Reich, as before in the USSR, were banned, religious figures who were Gestapo agents themselves became victims of the Nazi regime (V. Gusaruk, for example, was sent to a concentration camp in Gross Rosen). Thus, they had opportunity to reflect on their own actions and repent. The NKVD used the facts of cooperation between religious figures and the Gestapo as an excuse to later recruit them, or if this was impossible, to replace them with their own agents. The Protestants' mistake was later used by the NKVD to subdue the faithful, Sovietize the church, and direct its ministers to fight first the remnants of Nazism and then the countries of Western Europe and the United States.

In addition to the above reasons, there were two more equally compelling reasons that prompted believers to cooperate with the Nazi authorities and the Gestapo. They were political conformism and a distorted understanding of the words of the Apostle Paul that "the authorities

that exist are appointed by God” (Romans 13: 1-2, NKJV). Thus, explaining to the MGB officers the reasons for his cooperation with the Nazis, the chairman of the All-Ukrainian Council of Baptists, D. Shapovalov noted: “I believe that the form of government is not important to me. I personally do not care what kind of political system exists: Soviet or Nazi, or some other. I am ready to exist under any form of government and state. If only there was a possibility of free religion.”¹¹⁶ Similar statements were made during the investigation by the chief-bishop of the AUCCEF, G. Ponurko. Justifying his views by the Holy Scriptures, he noted that “according to the Gospel teaching, while living under the Soviet government, we prayed for it, and now, due to the fact that the government is Nazi, we will pray for it.”¹¹⁷ For their cooperation with the Nazi occupation authorities and the Gestapo, these persons received a sentence of 10 years of concentration camps. After their liberation (early 1950s) D. Shapovalov and G. Ponurko were recruited by the KGB and appointed to the posts of presbyters of the AUCECB of the Kharkiv and Dnepropetrovsk regions, respectively. Until the end of their lives, they devotedly served the KGB and the Soviet regime. The agent pseudonym of G. Ponurko was “Goroshko” and the agent pseudonym of D. Shapovalov is still unknown.

Examples from the lives of these people and the lessons of history should make modern Christians think about the dangers of political apathy, on the one hand, and veneration of any political leader or party, on the other. As I understand it, Christians today, more than ever, must not be deceived but hold fast to the words of Christ that “No one can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24, NKJV).

¹¹⁶ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. File II-24066. Vol. 1. P. 29b.

¹¹⁷ SA SSU in Dnipro. F.6(P). Inv. 1. File II-21827. P. 20b.

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