

# The “Ukrainian National Revolution” of 1941

## Discourse and Practice of a Fascist Movement

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In July, August, and September 1941, in the aftermath of the German attack on the Soviet Union, hundreds of letters were addressed to the leader (*providnyk*) of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), Stepan Bandera; to the German *Führer*, Adolf Hitler; and to the head of the Ukrainian government proclaimed by the OUN-B shortly after the beginning of the German–Soviet war, Iaroslav Stets’ko.<sup>1</sup> The letters expressed feelings of respect for Hitler, love for Bandera, and gratitude to Stets’ko; affixed to them were several thousand signatures of mainly, but not only, western Ukrainian supporters of the OUN-B state.

The collection of these letters en masse was the OUN-B’s last attempt to rescue the “Ukrainian National Revolution.”<sup>2</sup> The OUN-B had initiated

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation OUN-B is used to distinguish the Bandera faction of the OUN from the faction led by Andrii Mel’nyk (OUN-M).

<sup>2</sup> The term “Ukrainian National Revolution” is a propaganda term that the OUN-B used in 1940–41 to describe its plans for the Ukrainian territories after the outbreak of the conflict between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. For this reason, in this article, this term is always placed within quotation marks. For use of this term by the OUN-B, see *Tsentrāl’nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads’kykh obiednan’ Ukrainy (TsDAHO) f. 1 (Tsentrāl’nyi komitet kompartii Ukrainy)*, op. 23, spr. 926, ll. 188, 193 (*Postanovy II. Velykoho zboru Orhanizatsii Ukrain’skykh Natsionalistiv*, 15, 25). For the alternative “Ukrainian Revolution,” see *Tsentrāl’nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchychk orhaniv vladly ta upravlinnia Ukrainy (TsDAVOV) f. 3833 (Kraevyi provid Orhanizatsii ukrains’kykh natsionalistiv na zakhidnoukrains’kykh zemliakh)*, op. 2, spr. 1, l. 17 (*Borot’ba i diial’nist’ OUN pid chas viiny*). The concept of a revolution, also termed a “national” or “permanent” one, is older than the OUN-B itself. The basic idea of the revolution was that it should liberate the Ukrainians from “occupiers.” In 1940–41, however, the OUN-B invested this idea with a fascist, antisemitic, and racial

this program of action with the outbreak of the German–Soviet war on 22 June 1941 and had been preparing, with Nazi acquiescence, in the General Government in 1940–41, as well as in western Ukraine as an underground movement. The two main goals of the revolution were, first, to proclaim and establish a Ukrainian state and, second, to clear the territory of this state of Jews, Poles, Soviets, and other enemies, according to the slogan “Ukraine for Ukrainians.” The “Ukrainian National Revolution” thus appears to be the main missing link between the proclamation of the Ukrainian state by Iaroslav Stets’ko in L’viv on 30 June 1941 and the involvement of the OUN-B in pogroms against Jews, either in collaboration with the Nazis or of its own accord.<sup>3</sup>

In 1940–41, according to its doctrine, the OUN had two main types of enemies. The first were the “occupiers,” that is, citizens of the states in which the majority of Ukrainians had lived during the past two decades. In particular, these were Poles and Soviets. The second group of enemies were the Jews, the largest stateless minority in Ukraine, who, according to the stereotype of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” were often associated with the Soviets. The OUN-B was eager to massacre and remove both of these groups from Ukraine. During the “Ukrainian National Revolution,” the pogroms against Jews were larger, better organized, and much more noticeable than were acts of violence against the Poles, primarily because the anti-Jewish pogroms were approved and supported by the Nazis, who did not have much interest in supporting or organizing similar measures against the Polish population at this time. The OUN-B conducted the main campaign of violence against the Poles later, in Volhynia in 1943 and in Galicia in 1944, when between 70,000 and 100,000 Polish civilians were murdered. Sections of the Ukrainian population were then subjected to violence in the brutal conflict between the OUN-UPA and the Soviets in western Ukraine between 1944 and 1951.<sup>4</sup>

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meaning. For the older concepts of revolution, see, e.g., “Permanentna revoliutsiia,” *Surma* 37, 10 (1930): 4–7; and Mykola Stsibors’kyi, “Peredposylka natsional’noi revoliutsii,” *Rozbudova natsii* 54–55, 7–8 (1932): 161–69.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars working on this topic have already indicated some overlap between the proclamation of the Ukrainian state and the organization of pogroms and other acts of violence, but to date no one has analyzed them as parts of the same event, i.e., the “Ukrainian National Revolution.” See, e.g., Franziska Bruder, *“Den Ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!” Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1929–1948* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), 149.

<sup>4</sup> For violence against Poles in Volhynia and eastern Galicia, see Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960: Działalność Organizacji ukraińskich nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej powstańczej armii* (Warsaw: Rytm, 2006); Motyka, *Tak Było w Bieszczadach: Walki polsko-ukraińskie 1943–1948* (Warsaw: Oficyna wydawnicza Volumen, 1999), 110–15, 125–28; Timothy Snyder, “To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943–1947,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, 2 (1999): 93–100. For the

This article has three interrelated aims. The first is to explore the "Ukrainian National Revolution" as a plan prepared by the OUN-B in 1940–41 and implemented in the summer of 1941. Second, this article analyzes the letters of the "Ukrainian people" to Bandera, Hitler, and Stets'ko, which are among the most important sources available for obtaining information on the conduct and social context of this purported revolution.<sup>5</sup> Finally, I argue that from its founding in 1929, the OUN combined elements of fascism with radical nationalism and revolutionary ideas. Particularly in 1940 and 1941, at the time when the OUN-B was preparing for the "Ukrainian National Revolution," fascist elements came to the fore. The goal of this organization was to establish a Ukrainian state in a "New Europe" under the aegis of the National Socialists.

### World War I and Ukrainian Fascism

The aftermath of World War I left the Ukrainian people without a state and in an even more precarious position than the malcontent, anti-Versailles fascist states. This was the main reason behind the founding in 1929 of the OUN, which—together with its military arm formed in early 1943, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)—went on to become the most radical and violent Ukrainian movement in the 20th century. The OUN fought for the creation of a state, adopting a radical national-fascist ideology that depended heavily

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second Soviet occupation of western Ukraine, the brutal conflict between the Soviets and the OUN-UPA, and the terror conducted by the Soviets and the OUN-UPA against the civilian population, see Jeffrey Burds, "AGENTURA: Soviet Informants' Networks and the Ukrainian Underground in Galicia, 1944–1948," *East European Politics and Societies* 11, 1, (1997): 89–130, here 104–15; and Bruder, *Den Ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 231–32, 261–62. For the murder of Poles after the beginning of World War II and the German–Soviet war, see Motyka, *Ukrainśka partyzantka 1942–1960*, 71–73, 99–100; and Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, 2000), 2:1034–37.

<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have studied these documents, but as far as I know nobody has given them adequate attention. See, e.g., Frank Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/1942* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 271–73. Grelka argues that in July and August 1941 the OUN-B had little support in western Ukrainian society. To justify this view, Grelka cited much too low a number of people signing the resolutions: he estimates "an average of no more than 60 per district" (Ger. *Bezirk*, Ukr. *povit* or *raion*) in Ternopil' oblast, referring to the document "Plebitytova aktsiia" in TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 32. Here Grelka mistakes 60 signatures for a village in Ternopil' oblast to refer to an entire district, which usually comprised dozens of villages. This same file also includes a list of 71 villages from Zboriv district in L'viv oblast. The village with the lowest number of signatures on this list is Popolivka, with 53, and the one with the highest number is Ozirna with 1,045. Most others lie somewhere between 53 and 1,045 per village. The number of signatures collected in a district was therefore much higher than 60. In Zolochiv district alone, for instance, the OUN-B collected 8,000 signatures. See TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 34, l. 40.

on notions of a mystical past. This belief system allowed it to transform its members into fanatics who would not refuse to perform any deed, including murder, to obtain a state. Its main aim was mass mobilization around a charismatic leader and a totalitarian state. At the Second General Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists in Rome on 27 August 1939, after the assassination of Ievhen Konovalets' on 23 May 1938, the first head of the OUN, Andrii Mel'nyk, took over the leadership. At this time the OUN consisted of two generations, the younger of which was more radical and combat-ready. Later known as "the Bandera generation," this cohort had been too young to fight in World War I but was old enough to have experienced the war and its aftermath for the Ukrainians. These elements of the OUN felt that Mel'nyk, an older, more cautious person, was not determined, radical, and charismatic enough to be a capable leader. They therefore replaced Mel'nyk with Stepan Bandera, who better fulfilled their expectations for a more radical and authoritarian leader. In the spring of 1940, this caused the split of the OUN into two rival factions: the OUN-M, which was led by Andrii Mel'nyk; and the OUN-B, led by Stepan Bandera.<sup>6</sup>

The OUN was particularly hostile and violent toward Ukrainians who disapproved of the OUN's radical nationalism. Such people were regarded as rivals and as traitors to the sacred concept of the nation. Thus the OUN was not only antidemocratic but also antiliberal and anticonservative, because it wanted to combat all other Ukrainian parties and establish a Ukrainian state in which it would rule dictatorially. The OUN tried, particularly in 1940–41, to assimilate to the leading European fascist movements and to adopt as many as possible of their rituals, symbols, and propaganda techniques. Furthermore, it was extremely antimaterialistic and anticommunist and rendered homage to the *Blut und Boden* (blood and earth) ideology, believing that the authentic ethnic Ukrainian territory should be cleansed of every non-Ukrainian element.<sup>7</sup>

In 1935, the OUN member Mykola Stsibors'kyi, who after the split stayed in the OUN-M and on 30 August 1941 was killed in Zhytomyr, elaborated a draft constitution. According to this document the future Ukrainian

<sup>6</sup> Frank Golczewski, "Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine," in *Kooperation und Verbrechen: Formen der "Kollaboration" im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*, ed. Christoph Dieckmann, Babette Quinkert, and Tatjana Tönsmeier (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 162; R. Lisovyi, *Rozlam v OUN (Krytychni narysy z nabody dvatsiatylittia zasnuvannia OUN)* (s.l.: Vydavnytsvo Ukraina, 1949), 38–40.

<sup>7</sup> For the ideology of the OUN, see Bruder, *Den Ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 37–48; and Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 163–69.

state was to be "independent," "totalitarian," and "authoritarian."<sup>8</sup> The political system in this state was to be a so-called *natsiokratiia*, which meant the "authority of the nation in the state" and could be characterized as the Ukrainian version of fascism.<sup>9</sup> The most important person in the state under this constitution was to be the leader of the nation (*vozhd' natsii*), who would "embody the independence and uniformity of the nation" and should rule as long as he was alive or wished to rule; the leader of the OUN was to be this leader of the nation.<sup>10</sup> Political and social life in this state was to be structured and controlled by the OUN. All other political groups, organizations, or parties were to be forbidden.<sup>11</sup>

Ukrainian nationalism, often characterized as "integral nationalism," has been the subject of numerous, mostly approving studies.<sup>12</sup> The concept of Ukrainian fascism, however, has not received the same scholarly attention. Most historians of Ukrainian nationalism have mentioned only certain fascist elements of the OUN, probably to avoid accusations of being

<sup>8</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 7, l. 2 (Draft of the constitution of a Ukrainian state).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. For a more detailed characterization of *natsiokratiia*, see Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 34–35.

<sup>10</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 7, ll. 2, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., l. 7.

<sup>12</sup> The term "integral nationalism" became popular among historians of nationalism in the 1940s. Integral nationalism has been associated with the OUN and the Ukrainian nationalist movement since studies such as John Armstrong's *Ukrainian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 19–21. To some extent, this is a problematic connection. The term "integral nationalism" was invented by the protofascist French monarchist Charles Maurras. Like Maurras, the OUN claimed that the nation is a "prior condition of every social and individual good" but the OUN did not claim, for example, that the "traditional hereditary monarchy" is a necessary condition for a state, as Maurras did. For this and several other reasons, the Ukrainian nationalist movement and in particular the OUN in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s can by no means be reduced to integral nationalism. Nor did contemporary ideologists of Ukrainian nationalism, like Dmytro Dontsov, who inspired the OUN in the 1920s and 1930s, use this term. Dontsov frequently characterized Ukrainian nationalism as being fascist and nationalistic, claiming that it belonged to the family of European fascist movements. From the contemporary point of view, Armstrong's *Ukrainian Nationalism* is a problematic study. It is partially based on interviews with OUN activists and UPA veterans and misses many important archival documents that were not accessible during the Cold War. Due to his method of investigation, Armstrong misses such crucial events as pogroms against the Jews in western Ukraine in the summer of 1941 and the ethnic cleansing of the Polish population by the UPA in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943–44. On Charles Maurras and integral nationalism, see Steve Bastow, "Integral Nationalism," in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Cyprian P. Blamires (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1:338. On Dontsov, see Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego: Analizy wybranych koncepcji* (Wrocław: FUNNA, 2000), 118–19, 132, 139–40, 143–51; Taras Kurylo and John-Paul Himka, "Iak OUN stavylasia do ievreiv: Formulovannia pozytsii na tli katastrofy," *Ukraina moderna* 13, 2 (2008): 264; and Motyl, *The Turn to the Right*, 68, 71–85.

anti-Ukrainian. For example, Alexander Motyl argues that the OUN was a nationalist organization with strong fascist influences but could not have been a fascist organization, because of the absence of a Ukrainian state.<sup>13</sup> For East European fascists, however, the “stateless state” was quite common. As Daniel Ursprung has recently shown, there were only a few fascist groups in Eastern Europe in the interwar period that succeeded in ruling over a state: “fascism in East Central and Southeastern Europe rarely manifested itself in the form of political systems but primarily in the form of groups and movements that strove for power but achieved it in only a few cases, and then only for a short time.”<sup>14</sup>

After the OUN was founded in 1929, such fascist Ukrainian organizations as the League of Ukrainian Fascists (*Soiuz ukrains'kykh fashystiv*) joined it.<sup>15</sup> Later, in 1941, the OUN-B adopted with gusto the entire symbolic and mobilizational framework of fascism, which was not in contradiction to but actually complemented the radical nationalist nature of the OUN.<sup>16</sup> Most likely, the OUN wanted to keep up with Nazi Germany as well as other

<sup>13</sup> Motyl, *The Turn to the Right*, 163–69. Heorhii Kas'ianov, in an article about the ideology of the OUN (“Ideolohiia OUN: Istoryko-retrospektyvnyi analiz,” *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 1 [2004]: 38–41), recently came to a similar conclusion. Kas'ianov's study emphasized the uniqueness of the OUN and underestimated ideological transfer from outside, quoting dubious semi-scholars from the OUN like Petro Mirchuk. The study lacks a sufficiently analytical approach, although it does provide a few useful interpretations of Ukrainian ideology.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Ursprung, “Faschismus in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa: Theorien, Ansätze, Fragestellungen,” in *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa*, ed. Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth (Munich: IKGS-Verlag, 2006), 22. For the peculiarities of East European fascism, see also Stephen Fischer-Galati, “Introduction,” in *Who Were the Fascists? Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet, and Jan Petter Myklebust (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 351–53.

<sup>15</sup> For the incorporation of the League of Ukrainian Fascists into the OUN in 1929, see Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), 550; Oleksandr Panchenko, *Mykola Lebed' (zhyttia, dial'nist', derzhavno-pravovi pobliady)* (Kobeliaky: Kobeliaky, 2001), 15.

<sup>16</sup> Excellent discussions of the theory of fascism, in addition to characterizations of fascism and fascist movements, can be found in Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–23; Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1995), 3–12; Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), 1–19; Jerzy W. Borejsza, *Schulen des Hasses: Faschistische Systeme in Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer TB, 1999), 54–56; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 3–19, 26–52; and Wolfgang Wippermann, *Faschismus: Eine Weltgeschichte vom 19. Jahrhundert bis heute* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2009). For the influence of fascism on East Central and Southeastern Europe, see Ursprung, “Faschismus in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa,” 9–52.

radical nationalistic and fascist states, believing that this could help the organization achieve recognition as an equal partner in the "New Europe."

At the Second General Congress of the OUN, which took place in April 1941 in Kraków, the membership legalized the split of the OUN-B from the OUN and called their faction the OUN Revolutionary Leadership (*revoliutsynyi provid*). They declared the current leader of the organization, Andrii Mel'nyk, a traitor who was acting against the OUN and causing harm to the organization. Furthermore, they named Stepan Bandera the Ukrainian *providnyk* (equivalent to the German *Führer* or the Italian *duce*) and celebrated him thereafter, especially during the "Ukrainian National Revolution," as the leader of the Ukrainian nation.<sup>17</sup> Bandera thus became a fascist-style symbol of the Ukrainian state.<sup>18</sup> Following its second conference, the OUN-B also employed the fascist salute of raising the right arm "slightly to the right, slightly above the peak of the head" while calling "Glory to Ukraine!" (*Slava Ukraini!*) and responding "Glory to the Heroes!" (*Heroiam Slava!*).<sup>19</sup> The red and black flag symbolizing blood and earth (*Blut und Boden*) was introduced at this conference as the emblem of the OUN-B. It resonated with the racist and nationalistic German ideology that suggested the inseparability of a people and their homeland as well as a natural attraction to "the soil" which took on spiritual and mythological connotations. The OUN-B tried to familiarize Ukrainian society with the fascist and authoritarian idea that the Ukrainian state should be governed and controlled by the OUN and the *providnyk*, whose body incorporated and symbolized the whole of Ukraine. All other Ukrainian parties and political organizations were perceived as "opportunistic" or obstructive and were to be combated and eliminated in the near future. The whole of society should be militarized and always kept combat-ready. The ethnic minorities of Ukraine were treated as potential enemies of the Ukrainian state, especially the Jews, in whom the OUN-B saw the "hand of the Muscovite-Bolshevik regime."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The other Ukrainian term for leader—*vozhd'*—was reserved for Andrii Mel'nyk after the Second General Congress of the OUN on 27 August 1939. Therefore, the OUN-B, to distinguish its *Führerprinzip* from that of the OUN-M, called Bandera *providnyk*. For more on this congress, see Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939*, 943–44.

<sup>18</sup> TsDAHO f. 1, op. 23, spr. 926, ll. 199–202, 207.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 199. This salute later embarrassed the OUN. In postwar publications reprinting the resolutions of the Second General Congress of the OUN-B in April 1941, the resolution about the fascist salute was deleted from the text. Compare, for example, *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh zboriv* (s.l.: Zakordonni chastyny Orhanizatsii ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv, 1955), 44–45, with the original publication *Postanovy II: Velykoho zboru Orhanizatsii ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv* of 1941 in TsDAHO f. 1, op. 23, spr. 926, l. 199.

<sup>20</sup> TsDAHO f. 1, op. 23, spr. 926, ll. 190–93.

Thus, if in the 1930s the OUN-B combined elements of both fascism and radical nationalism, in the early 1940s it prepared for the “Ukrainian National Revolution” by becoming an exemplary case of an East European fascist organization. The OUN-B ended up very similar to other East European fascist organizations: the Iron Guard in Romania, the Hlinka Party in Slovakia, the Arrow Cross Party in Hungary, and the Ustasha in Croatia. The fact that the OUN-B did not succeed in persuading the Nazis to support its state project, as some other East European fascist organizations did, does not mean that the OUN-B was acting against the Nazis during the “Ukrainian National Revolution” or did not want to become a part of the fascist New Europe under their aegis. Nor does it indicate that the OUN was uninterested in cooperating with the Nazis at the end of World War II, as the Soviets returned to occupy western Ukraine.

In 1943, as the Nazis started to lose the war, the OUN realized that its new main allies against the Soviets might be the United States and Great Britain, both of which were democratic states. From that point onward, the OUN began to clean up its fascist and antisemitic past and to develop a democratic image of itself. It represented itself as a movement of liberation and freedom. The OUN often called this process “democratization.” Yet, even as “democratization” was deemed to be underway, some divisions of the UPA stayed faithful to the fascist doctrine of “Ukraine for Ukrainians” and conducted ethnic cleansing of the Polish population in Volhynia and later in eastern Galicia.<sup>21</sup>

### **Planning and Preparing the “Ukrainian National Revolution”**

In 1940–41, the OUN-B prepared for a German–Soviet war in the General Government, mainly in Kraków. It expected that the war and the release of Ukrainian territories from Soviet occupation would bring about a convenient situation in which to establish a Ukrainian state. Therefore, the OUN-B maintained good connections with the Abwehr and Wehrmacht, though not with the entire Nazis apparatus, especially not the more extreme Nazi leaders such as Hitler or Himmler, who were in thrall to racial

<sup>21</sup> For a rethinking of these elements of fascism in the OUN, see O. I. Steaniv, “Za pravyl’nyi pidkhdid,” in *Ideia i chyn*, no. 2 (1943): 22. For a resolution to collect and remove from circulation documents which discussed the involvement of Ukrainian militia in the pogroms of 1941 and their assistance to the Germans in the shooting of Jews, see Kurylo and Himka, “Iak OUN stavylasia do ievreiv,” 260. See also the document itself: TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 43, l. 9 (Nakaz ch. 2/43). On the process of “democratization,” see David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 194–96.



ideology.<sup>22</sup> The latter were categorically opposed to the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. In Hitler's political imagination, Ukrainian territories, like many other East European territories, were to be regulated according to the *Generalplan Ost*: Germans should be settled on Ukrainian territories and the Ukrainians would then be in part enslaved and in part "eliminated."<sup>23</sup> How disjointed the Nazi apparatus was and how diverse the attitudes it displayed toward Eastern Europeans is well illustrated by the fact that, at a time when non-Germans were already serving in Wehrmacht battalions, Hitler still claimed that "no one but a German can ever be permitted to carry a weapon."<sup>24</sup>

In 1940 and 1941, the OUN collaborated with such officers of the Abwehr and Wehrmacht as Wilhelm Canaris,<sup>25</sup> Theodor Oberländer,<sup>26</sup> Hans Koch,<sup>27</sup> and Alfred Bisanz.<sup>28</sup> It was thus clearly involved in preparations for the German–Soviet war. The conditions attached to this collaboration were left unclear, which would later cause a good deal of misunderstanding between the OUN-B and the Nazis. For its services, the OUN-B expected political recompense in the form of a Ukrainian state in a fascist Europe under Nazi control. The German officers were not authorized to make such promises, although they may occasionally have done so. The OUN-B leaders either did not want or were not able to understand the situation. The military collaboration resulted, among other things, in the formation of the Wehrmacht battalions *Nachtigall* (Nightingale) and *Roland* with 350 and 330 soldiers

<sup>22</sup> Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung*, 269.

<sup>23</sup> On the "Generalplan Ost," see Czesław Madajczyk, "Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalumsiedlungsplan," in *Der "Generalplan Ost": Hauptrichtungen der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, ed. Mechthild Rössler and Sabine Schleiermacher (Berlin: Akademie, 1993), vii. For Hitler's attitude toward Eastern Europeans and Ukraine, see Czesław Madajczyk, *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalumsiedlungsplan* (Munich: Saur, 1994), 23–25; and Henry Picker, *Hitler Tischgespräche: Im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1942* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1951), 50–51, 69, 115–16.

<sup>24</sup> Hans Werner Neulen, *An deutscher Seite: Internationale Freiwillige von Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS* (Munich: Universitas, 1992), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Rolf-Dieter Müller, *An der Seite der Wehrmacht: Hitlers ausländische Helfer beim "Kreuzzug gegen den Bolschewismus" 1941–1945* (Berlin: Links, 2007), 194.

<sup>26</sup> Andreas Kappeler, "Hans Koch (1894–1959)," in *Osteuropäische Geschichte in Wien: 100 Jahre Forschung und Lehre an der Universität*, ed. Arnold Suppan, Marija Wakounig, and Georg Kastner (Innsbruck: Studien, 2007), 243; Philipp-Christian Wachs, *Der Fall Theodor Oberländer (1909–1998): Ein Lehrstück deutscher Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000), 55–71.

<sup>27</sup> Kappeler, "Hans Koch," 243; Ray Brandon, "Hans Koch," in *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften*, ed. Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2008), 329–32.

<sup>28</sup> Mykola Klymyshyn, *V pokhodi do voli* (Detroit: Ukrainka knyhnaria, 1987), 293–94.

respectively. Both were made up of Ukrainian soldiers and led by German and Ukrainian officers.<sup>29</sup> Besides these two battalions, the OUN-B used its network in western Ukraine to provide an espionage service for the Abwehr.<sup>30</sup>

The OUN-B members who did not join the Nachtigall and Roland battalions received military training in the Ievhen Konovalets' Military Academy in Kraków and served in the so-called "task forces" (*pokhidny hrupy*).<sup>31</sup> These units included between 750 and 1,200 OUN-B members.<sup>32</sup> The "task forces" were small groups which after 22 June 1941 marched behind the German army and organized the state administration in the liberated territories.<sup>33</sup> They also familiarized the local communities with nationalist, fascist, and antisemitic OUN-B propaganda, as the letters to Hitler, Bandera, and Stets'ko demonstrate.

The revolution was also backed by internal forces, which remained underground until the start of the German–Soviet war. These groupings, under the command of Ivan Klymiv, stayed in close contact with OUN-B activists in the General Government. According to Klymiv's estimate prepared for OUN-B leaders in the General Government, at the time of the revolution they numbered about 20,000 members in 3,300 locations.<sup>34</sup> Klymiv finished nominating candidates for the Regional Ukrainian Revolutionary Administrations (Oblasni ukrains'ki natsional'ni revoliutsiini provody) and the District Ukrainian Revolutionary Administrations (Raionni ukrains'ki natsional'ni revoliutsiini provody) as early as 20 May 1941.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Ukrainians called the battalions *Druzhyny ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv* (Brotherhoods of Ukrainian Nationalists). See John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 74; and I. K. Patryliak, *Viis kova diial'nist' OUN (B) u 1940–1942 rokakh* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 2004), 274–88.

<sup>30</sup> Klymyshyn, for example, mentions meeting with such a Ukrainian soldier working in the Abwehr (*V pokhodi do voli*, 322–23). On the recruitment of Ukrainians for the Abwehr, see Andrii Bolianovs'kyi, *Ukrains'ki viis'kovi formuvannia v zbroinykh sylakh Nimechchyny (1939–1945)* (L'viv: L'vivskyi natsional'nyi universytet im. Ivana Franka, 2003), 53–54.

<sup>31</sup> Klymyshyn, *V pokhodi do voli*, 297–301.

<sup>32</sup> Motyka, *Ukrainska partizantka 1942–1960*, 93. According to another estimate, there were between 5,000 and 7,000 OUN-B members in the "task forces"; compare Oleksii Leonidovych Khodanovych, "Viis'kovo-politychna diial'nist' pokhidnykh hrup OUN na terytorii Ukrainy v roky Druhoi svitovoi viiny" (unpublished dissertation available in Natsional'na biblioteka Ukrainy im. V. I. Vernads'koho, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 84–85. An autobiographical description of the organization and functioning of the *pokhidny hrupy* can be found in Klymyshyn, *V pokhodi do voli*, 315–53. This recollection is, however, as Klymyshyn himself admits, whitewashed of every dark spot at the request of Stepan Bandera (*V pokhodi do voli*, 333).

<sup>34</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 45, ll. 1–2. 5,000 in Volhynia, 13,000 in Galicia, and 1,200 in L'viv.

<sup>35</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 45, l. 2.

While preparing for its revolution in the spring of 1941, the OUN produced at least two important documents on the subject. The first is titled "Instructions for the Prewar Period, the Time of War and Revolution, and the First Days of State Building."<sup>36</sup> This document confirms the determination of the OUN-B to start a revolution that would lead to statehood. Written between December 1940 and April 1941 from a fascist, heroic, and military perspective, it was intended to orient the revolutionaries during the crucial first days of revolutionary action and agitation. The text indicates that the OUN-B leaders felt they should mobilize Ukrainians for the revolution, because in their understanding only such a mass movement could establish a state. For this purpose they should employ all kinds of propaganda, from spreading rumors to singing national-revolutionary songs, printing and distributing booklets and newspapers, and broadcasting "national revolutionary" propaganda by radio.<sup>37</sup> The main content of the propaganda was the "renewal" of the Ukrainian state by the OUN-B and the necessary war against the "Muscovite Jews" and other enemies; a characteristic slogan was "Kill the enemies among you—Jews and informers."<sup>38</sup> An important part of the "revolution" was the mobilization of Ukrainian villages against the cosmopolitan cities in which, according to the text, most of the Ukrainians' enemies lived. Another important goal was to convince the Ukrainian people that the proclamation or "rebirth" of the state was not mere theater but reality. For this purpose, the OUN-B members organized meetings at every opportunity and read to the gathered people their manifesto for the "renewal of the Ukrainian state."<sup>39</sup> The standard text of this manifesto ran as follows:

In the name of all Ukraine the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under the leadership of Stepan Bandera proclaims the Ukrainian state for which entire generations of the best sons of Ukraine have given their lives. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which under the leadership of its Creator and Leader Ievhen Konovalets' conducted an intense struggle for freedom in the last decades of Muscovite-Bolshevik oppression, calls upon the whole Ukrainian nation not to lay down its arms until there is sovereign Ukrainian authority over all Ukrainian lands.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., spr. 69, ll. 23–28 (Propahandyvni Vkazivki na peredvoennyi chas, na chas viiny i revoliutsii ta na pochatkovi dni derzhavnoho budivnytstva).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., ll. 23, 25–28. The OUN-B modified, for example, the hymn of the European proletariat, "The Internationale," for use in its "national revolution." See *ibid.*, l. 25.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., l. 24; *ibid.*, op. 2, spr. 1, l. 80 (Borot'ba i diial'nist' OUN pid chas viiny). In Ukrainian *Vbyvaite vorohiv, shocho mizh vamy—zhydiv, i sektotiv*. This slogan was developed for factory workers.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., op. 1, spr. 69, l. 26.

Sovereign Ukrainian authority will guarantee the Ukrainian people law and order, the universal development of all its forces, and the satisfaction of all its needs.<sup>40</sup>

The content of this proclamation is very similar to that of some of the letters addressed to Hitler, Bandera, and Stets'ko.

According to the "Instructions," the plan was to take power in the revolutionary territories by disarming the enemy (the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs [NKVD] or the Soviet authorities), then to organize a meeting of the local population and declare statehood by reading the proclamation. During the act of proclamation, the whole audience—including women and children—was to commit to the leadership of Stepan Bandera and swear an oath of loyalty until death to the Ukrainian state. Furthermore, everyone present was to swear that they would serve the Ukrainian state with their lives, defending it to the last drop of their blood. After the reading of the proclamation, every Ukrainian fit for service was to be inducted into the Ukrainian National Army and mobilized for immediate deployment in the area. The aim of the whole proclamation procedure was to "incorporate the assembled people into the Ukrainian national state," spiritually as well as officially.<sup>41</sup>

There was to be no mercy for Ukrainians who disagreed with the politics of the OUN-B and did not submit to its political expectations. The Ukrainian people should understand that the OUN-B was the only power in Ukraine. To convince the masses of this, OUN-B members tried to frighten recalcitrant parts of the nation with threats of punishment.<sup>42</sup> The authors of the "Instructions" equated the will of the OUN-B with the will of the entire nation, a common trope of fascist and radical nationalist discourse.

The other important document dealing with the "Ukrainian National Revolution" from May 1941 is called "The Struggle and Activity of the OUN during the War."<sup>43</sup> According to this document, the main goal of the revolution was not to combat NKVD units as they withdrew, although some OUN-B forces did so sporadically after the beginning of the German–Soviet war,<sup>44</sup> but to use the political vacuum left after the withdrawal of the Soviets and before the arrival of the Germans to establish the organs of the OUN-B

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., l. 43.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., l. 26.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., l. 27. For details on how the OUN-B wanted to control the political situation in the Ukrainian state, see *ibid.*, op. 2, spr. 1, ll. 44–45.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., op. 2, spr. 1, ll. 15–89.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., op. 1, spr. 15, l. 7 (Internal telegram of the OUN, 31 July 1941).

state.<sup>45</sup> In this period, a group of 10–15 OUN-B members in every village was to remove local power structures and to try to convince or force the population to support the OUN-B. An even more important revolutionary act was to welcome the German troops in the name of Stepan Bandera and the Ukrainian state, as well as explaining to the Germans that the OUN had cleared the terrain of the Soviets and expressing readiness for further struggle on the German side.<sup>46</sup>

### The "Ukrainian National Revolution" in Practice

As mentioned above, the "Ukrainian National Revolution,"<sup>47</sup> sometimes also called by the OUN-B the "Ukrainian Revolution,"<sup>48</sup> was planned as a seizure of power by forces both external and internal, familiarizing the population with the ideals of the Ukrainian state and OUN-B propaganda, organizing the new administration, and proclaiming statehood at public meetings throughout the country. According to the OUN-B's plans, several other East European countries, which like Ukraine were Soviet republics, were supposed to join the revolution and fight for their statehood. The slogan of the revolution was "Freedom for Nations, Freedom for the Person!" (*Svoboda narodam i liudyni!*).<sup>49</sup>

Most Ukrainians were not aware of the split and the animosities in the OUN in 1940, because life in the Soviet Union had cut them off from such information.<sup>50</sup> In the crucial first days of the German–Soviet war, this allowed the more active components of the OUN-B to claim to be the only authentic OUN, whose leader, Stepan Bandera, would lead the Ukrainian nation to a great and heroic future. Furthermore, since the 1935 Warsaw and 1936 L'viv trials against the OUN, Stepan Bandera had become one of the most popular figures among western Ukrainians.

The first and most important step in the "Ukrainian National Revolution" was the proclamation of statehood in L'viv, the largest city of western Ukraine. This proclamation was not as impressive as a proclamation in the national capital Kyiv would have been but was significant enough to be noticed and taken seriously by the new occupiers and the western Ukrainian population. It happened on the same day that L'viv was taken by the German and Ukrainian Wehrmacht troops—30 June 1941. Statehood was proclaimed

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., op. 2, spr. 1, l. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., ll. 22, 31–32, 83.

<sup>47</sup> TsDAHO f. 1, op. 23, spr. 926, ll. 188, 193.

<sup>48</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 2, spr. 1, l. 2.

<sup>49</sup> TsDAHO f. 1, op. 23, spr. 926, l. 189; Klymyshyn, *V pokhodi do voli*, 303–4, 311–13.

<sup>50</sup> Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 77.

at eight o'clock in the evening, in a small meeting room in the building of the Prosvita Society. Originally, the OUN-B had wanted to deliver the proclamation in the state theater, a more imposing building, but the German army had already requisitioned it.<sup>51</sup> Two German officers, Wilhelm Ernst zu Eikern and Hans Koch, attended the meeting; and Koch may even have welcomed it, though only as an event for celebrating liberation from the Bolsheviks, not for proclaiming statehood. The officers reminded those assembled that the war was not yet over, so this was not an appropriate time to proclaim statehood, and that the only person who could decide whether a Ukrainian state would come into existence was Adolf Hitler.<sup>52</sup>

Stepan Bandera, the most important figure in the revolution, was not able to proclaim statehood himself, as he had been “confiscated” by the Germans one day before the proclamation ceremony and was forbidden to go to L'viv.<sup>53</sup> Because of this quarantining of the most representative of Ukrainian politicians, statehood was proclaimed by Bandera's representative Iaroslav Stets'ko, who had come to L'viv with a “task force.” Stets'ko took advantage of the political vacuum. He tried to act as a representative of the national will and in no sense as an obstacle to German interests. During the meeting in the Prosvita hall, after greeting Stepan Bandera, Stets'ko read the formal statement: “In accordance with the will of the Ukrainian people, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under the leadership of Stepan Bandera declares the reestablishment of the Ukrainian state, for which entire generations of the best sons of Ukraine have sacrificed themselves.”<sup>54</sup> The declaration further stated that the independent Ukrainian authority would guarantee order to the Ukrainian people; second, that the Ukrainian state body emerging in western Ukraine would later be subordinated to the authority in Kyiv; and third, that the Ukrainian state would closely cooperate with the “National Socialist Great Germany that under the leadership of Adolf Hitler is creating a new order in Europe and the world and helping the Ukrainian nation liberate itself from Muscovite occupation.”<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 79–80.

<sup>52</sup> “Aufzeichnungen des Vortragenden Legationsrats Großkopf,” *Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945*, Serie D, Band XIII, ed. Walter Bußmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 167–68. See also Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA Berlin-Lichterfelde) R. 6 (Reichsministerium für die Besetzen Ostgebiete)/150, ll. 4–5 (Rücksprache mit Prof. Dr. Koch am 10.7.1941); and Kost' Pankivs'kyi, *Vid derzhavy do komitetu* (New York Toronto: Zhyttia i mysl, 1957), 30–32.

<sup>53</sup> Iaroslav Stets'ko dubbed the arrest of Stepan Bandera a “confiscation” (TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 6, l. 2).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., spr. 5, l. 3 (from the proclamation act signed by Iaroslav Stets'ko).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., l. 3.

According to the minutes of the evening, after the reading of the declaration, people gathered in the hall and sang the national anthem, breaking into applause several times. The Greek Catholic church was represented at the gathering by Iosyf Slipyi. Another clergyman, in Abwehr uniform, Dr. Ivan Hryn'okh, represented the Nachtigall battalion, which people in the national ecstasy of 1941 also called the "Stepan Bandera battalion"<sup>56</sup> and which, according to one soldier from this battalion under the command of Roman Shukhevych, slaughtered the entire Jewish population of two villages a few days after the noble ceremony in the Prosvita hall.<sup>57</sup> The gathering finished with salutes addressed to Stepan Bandera, Adolf Hitler, and Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi and sang the national anthem, "Shche ne vmerla Ukraina."<sup>58</sup>

Later that evening and on the next day, 1 July 1941, at 11.00 AM, OUN-B activists made use of a radio station in L'viv that had been occupied by the Nachtigall battalion after the Soviet retreat and rechristened it the "Ievhen Konovalets' station."<sup>59</sup> The OUN-B broadcasters reported, both in Ukrainian and German, on the proclamation ceremony and the existence of the Ukrainian state. A soldier spoke emotionally on the air of his arrival in L'viv and the fraternal relationship between the German and Ukrainian sides, especially their leaders, and sang German and Ukrainian songs.<sup>60</sup> The announcer also informed listeners of the existence of a "Ukrainian Wehrmacht."<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the OUN-B familiarized radio listeners with a letter by the head of the Greek Catholic church, Andrei Sheptyts'kyi, which announced, among other things, that the OUN-B state had come into being by the will of God.<sup>62</sup>

For theatrical purposes, the OUN-B erected triumphal arches in many localities with Ukrainian and German flags and inscriptions—among them, "Long Live Ukraine! Long Live Bandera! Long Live the German Army! Heil Hitler!" "Long Live Our Leader [*providnyk*] Stepan Bandera!" and "Freedom

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., spr. 4, l. 6 (Minutes of the proclamation ceremony).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., spr. 57, l. 17 (Autobiographies of well-known OUN members); Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 150.

<sup>58</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 4, l. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Myroslav Kal'ba, *U lavakh druzhynnykiv* (Denver: Vydannia Druzhyn ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv, 1982), 9–10; BA Berlin-Lichterfelde: NS 26 (Hauptarchiv NSDAP)/1198, l. 1 (Information leaflet no. 1, 1 July 1941).

<sup>60</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde: NS 26/1198, ll. 1, 12 (Niederschrift über die Rücksprache mit den Mitgliedern des ukrainischen Nationalkomitees und Stepan Bandera von 3.7.1941).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., l. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., ll. 1–3. For Sheptyts'kyi's pastoral letter, see *OUN v svitli postanov Velykykh Zboriv* (s.l.: Zakordonni chastyny Orhanizatsii Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv, 1955), 58.

to Ukraine—Death to Moscow!”<sup>63</sup> The local population, dressed in folk costumes, welcomed the Nazis with the traditional bread and salt. German troops soon took note of the OUN-B’s mechanical, repetitive, and theatrical enactment of the Ukrainian state.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the OUN-B encouraged the Ukrainian population to display Ukrainian and German flags in the villages. All communist books and portraits were to be brought to the main square and burned; at the same time, the local population was assembled for a propaganda speech. The graves of fallen OUN activists were to be decorated with flowers; passing the graves, people were expected to raise their right arm to honor the dead heroes.<sup>65</sup> Sheptyts’kyi ordered all Greek Catholic priests to decorate their churches with German flags and to obey the German and the new Ukrainian authorities.<sup>66</sup>

All the while, the embodiment of the revolution, Stepan Bandera, was not to be found in the revolutionary territories. His body was controlled by the Germans, first in Kraków and later in Berlin. But the spirit and the charisma of the *providnyk* were with the revolutionary masses. Bandera’s presence was palpable in the proclamation ceremonies and in all the letters addressed to Hitler, Bandera, and Stets’ko. Ivan Klymiv wrote to Stepan Bandera that he had immediately known where to place his loyalties after the split in the OUN, because he and other fellow OUN-members “saw Bandera twice under the gallows unconquerable and loyal to the idea.”<sup>67</sup> It was obvious to them that Bandera was the true Ukrainian *providnyk* and that during the “Ukrainian National Revolution” the whole revolutionary territory should be covered with

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<sup>63</sup> For an OUN-B instruction to erect triumphal arches, see TsDAVOV f. 4620, op. 3, spr. 379, l. 34 (Instruktsiia propahandy, ch. 1). For pictures and descriptions of triumphal arches, see V. Cherednychenko, *Natsionalizm proty natsii* (Kyiv: Polityvdav Ukrainy, 1970), 93; Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung*, 256; Archiwum Wschodnie (AW) II/737, l. 25; and the cover of Aleksandr Diukov, *Vtorostepennyi vrag: OUN, UPA i reshenie “evreiskogo voprosa”* (Moscow: Regnum, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde: R 58 (Reichssicherheitshauptamt)/214, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR, Berlin, 17 July 1941, no. 25, l. 202.

<sup>65</sup> TsDAVOV f. 4620, op. 3, spr. 379, l. 34.

<sup>66</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 15, l. 4 (Zvit pro robotu v spravi orhanizatsii derzhavnoi administratsiï na tereni Zakhidnykh oblastei Ukrainy). For a photo of Sheptyts’kyi with a swastika badge on his coat during the revolution, see B. F. Sabrin, *Alliance for Murder: The Nazi–Ukrainian Nationalist Partnership in Genocide* (New York: Sarpedon, 1991), 172.

<sup>67</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 45, l. 3. By claiming that he “saw Bandera twice under the gallows unconquerable and loyal to the idea,” Klymiv meant the trials against the OUN in 1935–36 in Warsaw and in 1936 in L’viv, at which Bandera was sentenced to death but was said not to have expressed any fear. At the second trial the death penalty was changed to life imprisonment.



posters and leaflets extolling Bandera. These propaganda materials incited the population to a series of violent and theatrical revolutionary acts.

Bandera—although less charismatic than the first OUN leader, Ievhen Konovalets', who had been assassinated in 1938 in Rotterdam—acquired a similar cult of personality. Under the influence of the OUN-B, the Ukrainian population in the "liberated territories" enthusiastically celebrated both Bandera and Hitler, the builder of the "New Europe." In many places portraits of Hitler were on public display. For example, in Ternopil', on 3 July 1941, portraits of Bandera, Hitler, and Konovalets' were exhibited at a meeting where OUN-B members greeted the Germans, celebrated the liberation from "Judeo-Bolshevism," and proclaimed statehood.<sup>68</sup>

On 3 July 1941, Iaroslav Stets'ko, the head of the newly established government, sent official letters to several European fascist leaders: one to the *Duce* of Italy, Benito Mussolini, one to the Croatian *poglavnik* Ante Pavelić, one to the *Caudillo* of Spain, Francisco Franco, and one, of course, to the *Führer*, Adolf Hitler. The letters were all written in German, the lingua franca of the new fascist Europe. Stets'ko informed Pavelić that "as a result of a centuries-long struggle of the Ukrainian people for their sovereignty, the Ukrainian state was proclaimed in L'viv on 30 June 1941." He stated his firm belief that "both revolutionary nations [Ukrainian and Croatian], hardened in battle, will guarantee the establishment of healthy circumstances in the Europe of the new order." A similar aspiration for "creative collaboration," this time between the Spanish and Ukrainian nations, was aired in Stets'ko's letter to Franco. Mussolini, meanwhile, was informed that the Ukrainian state had been reestablished in the territories "liberated from Muscovite–Jewish occupation ... according to the will of the Ukrainian people that finds its expression in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under the leadership of Stepan Bandera." Stets'ko also sent the Italian leader his warm greetings, wished a speedy victory to his brave nation, and expressed his conviction that Ukraine would be part of the "new just fascist order that must replace the Versailles system."<sup>69</sup> In the letter to Hitler, Stets'ko offered his congratulations and expressed his desire "in the name of the Ukrainian people and its government that came into being in liberated L'viv" that the German leader would "crown the struggle with an eternal triumph." Stets'ko also wrote that the victories of the German army would allow Hitler to expand the new Europe to its eastern

<sup>68</sup> The picture of a German officer and two men in plain clothes at the podium is printed in Cherednychenko, *Natsionalizm proty natsii*, 93. For the date of this event, see TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 15, l. 15.

<sup>69</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 22, ll. 1–3.

parts. "In this way you [Hitler] have allowed the Ukrainian people, as one of the fully entitled and free members of the European family of peoples in its sovereign Ukrainian state, to take part actively in the grand plan."<sup>70</sup> Besides these official letters to fascist leaders, Stets'ko planned to send foreign representatives of the OUN-B government to Slovakia, Romania, Japan, Croatia, Germany, and probably some other member states of the new fascist Europe.<sup>71</sup>

The government that Stets'ko was trying to announce to the fascist leaders of Europe, brought into being by Bandera's will, was called the State Administration of Ukraine (Derzhavne Pravlinnia Ukrainy). This government was not composed solely of OUN-B members, but all its members were loyal to the OUN-B. Some days after its formation, the State Administration of Ukraine was forbidden by the Nazis and ceased to function, but it established a Council of Seniors (Rada sen'ioriv) to carry on. These two institutions were to have performed the function of a parliament in the OUN-B state, and they expressed a desire to hold their meetings in the impressive building of the University of L'viv, which until 1918 had been used by the Galician parliament.<sup>72</sup> A draft of the parliamentary system of the future OUN-B state was prepared in the autumn of 1940 by the jurist and OUN-B member Mykhailo Stepaniak, who in the 1930s had been prosecuted for his communist activities.<sup>73</sup>

From fragments of the minutes of government sessions we know that the State Administration was willing to organize a campaign to annihilate the Jews in Ukraine. The participants in the discussion did not specify, however, exactly how this "annihilation action" was to be conducted. Furthermore, the government discussed very enthusiastically a kind of Ukrainian *Generalplan Ost*. According to this plan all non-Ukrainians living in Ukraine were to be evacuated or annihilated, and all Ukrainians living outside "ethnic" Ukrainian territory were to be resettled on "ethnic" Ukrainian territory, or the territories in which these Ukrainians lived were to be incorporated into the Ukrainian state. For example, all the Ukrainians from Moscow and Leningrad were to be resettled to Ukraine. In the words

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., op. 3, spr. 7, l. 26.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., op. 1, spr. 10, l. 4 (A list of deputies of the Ukrainian government abroad).

<sup>72</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 58/214, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR. Berlin, 4 July 1941, no. 12, l. 69. On the Council of Seniors, see also TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 15, l. 3.

<sup>73</sup> On all the projects of the state apparatus drafted by Stepaniak, see Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. R-9478 (Glavnoe upravlenie po bor'be s banditizmom MVD SSR), op. 1, d. 136, ll. 14–15. On Stepaniak's communist activities in the 1930s, see *ibid.*, l. 10.

of one member of the government, the ethnic question in Ukraine was to be resolved in the "German way."<sup>74</sup>

The withdrawal of the Soviets from the Ukrainian territories and the proclamation of the Ukrainian state in L'viv were indeed followed by a series of pogroms in western Ukraine.<sup>75</sup> In L'viv, the pogrom's most violent phase started sometime in the morning of 1 July 1941, only a few hours after the OUN-B had proclaimed statehood, which was unlikely to be a coincidence.<sup>76</sup> The violence was provoked by the Nazis in cooperation with OUN-B members who discovered in the cellars of L'viv prisons the bodies of about 3,000 people who had been killed and their corpses left behind by the NKVD. Forced by the Germans and the OUN-B members to carry the corpses from the cellars, Jews were blamed for the deaths. This was one of the most significant factors in a collective outbreak of violent anger. The trigger would

<sup>74</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 9, ll. 1, 3 (Copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Administration of Ukraine). Ukrainian *postavyty spravu po nimets'ky*. Ibid., l. 1. For a very similar statement about dealing with the "non-Ukrainians" in "Ukraine," see *ibid.*, spr. 69, l. 36.

<sup>75</sup> On the pogroms in western Ukraine, see Dieter Pohl, "Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Western Ukraine—A Research Agenda," in *Shared History—Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941*, ed. Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, and Kai Struve (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), 305–13; and Gabriele Lesser, "Pogromy w Galicji Wschodniej w 1941 r.," in *Tematy polsko-ukraińskie*, ed. Robert Traba (Olsztyn: Wspólnota Kulturowa Borussia, 2001), 103–26. Similar waves of pogroms also broke out shortly after the start of the German–Soviet war in northeastern Poland and in Lithuania. For pogroms in Poland, see Andrzej Żbikowski, "Pogroms in Northeastern Poland—Spontaneous Reactions and German Instigations," in *Shared History—Divided Memory*, 315–54. For pogroms in Lithuania, see Christoph Dieckmann, "Lithuania in Summer 1941—The German Invasion and the Kaunas Pogrom," in *Shared History—Divided Memory*, ed. Barkan, Cole, and Struve, 355–85.

<sup>76</sup> The pogrom started on 30 June 1941 or even before. For testimonies that date the beginning of the violence to 1 July 1941, see Kurt I. Lewin, *Przeżyłem: Saga Świętego Jura spisana w roku 1946* (Warszawa: Zeszyty literackie, 2006), 56–57; and ŻIH 229/54, Teka Lwowska, l. 2. For the course of the pogrom in L'viv, see Christoph Mick, "Ethnische Gewalt und Pogrome in Lemberg 1914 und 1941," *Osteuropa* 53, 12 (2003): 1810–11, 1824–29; Hannes Heer, "Einübung in den Holocaust: Lemberg Juni/Juli 1941," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 49 (2001): 410, 424; Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 140–50; Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung*, 276–86; Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944: Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), 60–62; and Wachs, *Der Fall Theodor Oberländer (1909–1998)*, 71, 78–80. For posters and other OUN-B propaganda in L'viv during the pogrom, see Jan Rogowski, "Lwów pod znakiem swastyki: Pamiętnik z lat 1941–1942" (unpublished manuscript) in Zakład narodowy im. Ossolińskich in Wrocław, 16711/II, 10; Lewin, *Przeżyłem*, 65; Eliyahu Yones, *Die Straße nach Lemberg: Zwangsarbeit und Widerstand in Ostgalizien 1941–1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1999), 18; and Diukov, *Vtorostepennyi vrag*, 47–52. According to Diukov, some soldiers of the Nachtigall battalion participated in the violence in L'viv as well (*Vtorostepennyi vrag*, 71–72). Eyewitnesses saw soldiers from the Nachtigall battalion beating Jews on 1 July in the yard of the prison on Zamarstyniv'ska Street (AŻIH, 301/2242, Zygmunt Tune, 1; Lewin, *Przeżyłem*, 61).

not have worked, however, without the powerful antisemitic stereotype of “Judeo-Bolshevism” and the revolutionary propaganda of the OUN-B, which was also directed against the Jews. The total number of pogroms and their victims, as well as the role that the Germans played in them, is difficult to assess. According to the most reliable estimate, about 4,000 Jews were killed in the pogrom in L’viv,<sup>77</sup> while in all of western Ukraine between 13,000 and 35,000 Jews were killed.<sup>78</sup>

While preparing for the “Ukrainian National Revolution,” the OUN-B decided to include the liquidation of “Polish, Muscovite, and Jewish activists” as an objective for the phase of revolutionary chaos.<sup>79</sup> This became mainly the task of the Ukrainian national militia (Narodnia militsiia), in which all men between 18 and 50 who were able to carry a weapon were to serve.<sup>80</sup> Because the OUN-B had no uniforms for the militia, every militiaman was obliged to wear either a blue-and-yellow armband or a white armband with the inscription “National Militia.” The leader of a militia unit should be a “well-known nationalist” loyal to OUN-B ideology.<sup>81</sup> These militia units took a prominent part in the pogroms<sup>82</sup> and were expected to take similar action

<sup>77</sup> Mick, “Ethnische Gewalt und Pogrome in Lemberg 1914 und 1941,” *Osteuropa* 53, 12 (2003): 1825. During this pogrom, 4,000 Jews were killed. In addition, on 5 July, between 2,500 and 3,000 Jews were shot by the German task forces. Cf. Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944*, 61, 69. Between 25 and 28 July 1941 another pogrom, dubbed the “Petliura days,” occurred in L’viv. Several hundred Jews were killed, mainly by Ukrainian militiamen and Ukrainian peasants who came to L’viv from adjacent villages to take part in the violence. Cf. AŽIH, 301/230, Jakub Dentel, 2; AŽIH, 301/1864, Salomon Goldman, 5; AŽIH, 301/4654, Henryk Szyper, 11; AŽIH, 301/1584, Izak Weiser, 1; AŽIH, 302/26, Lejb Wieliczker, 21; AŽIH, 301/4944, Jan Badian, 1–6; AŽIH, 301/1117, Leonard Zimmerman, 1; AŽIH, 301/1801, Henryk Baldinger, 1–4; and AŽIH, 301/2278, Lucyna Hallensberg, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Dieter Pohl, “Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Western Ukraine,” in *Shared History—Divided Memory*, ed. Barkan, Cole, and Struve, 306.

<sup>79</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 2, spr. 1, l. 32.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 62, 64. All Ukrainian men between 18 and 50 who were obliged to join the militia were to have been divided into professional militiamen who were employed full-time and reserve forces (“volunteer members”—*chleny-dobrovol'tsi*) who earned a living elsewhere but could be mobilized at any time.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 62.

<sup>82</sup> For the activities of the Ukrainian militia during the pogrom, see Yones, *Die StraÙe nach Lemberg*, 18–19; AŽIH, 301–1809, Jarosław Korczyński (*Zeznania ocalałych Źydów*), 1; AŽIH, 301/4654, Henryk Szyper, 6; AŽIH, 301/1864, Salomon Goldman, 1; AŽIH 229/22, Maurycy Allerhand (Tekla Lwowska), 1; and AŽIH: 229–54, Tekla Lwowska, 1. For general accounts of the Ukrainian police forces during World War II in Ukraine, see Dieter Pohl, “Ukrainische Hilfskräfte beim Mord an den Juden,” in *Die Täter der Shoah: Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?* ed. Gerhard Paul (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2002), 202–34; and Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Collaboration in Eastern

against other enemies of the Ukrainian nation, such as Russians (*moskali*), Poles (*okupanty*), and Ukrainian informers (*seksoty*).<sup>83</sup> The establishment of militia following the Soviet withdrawal had been planned in advance by the OUN-B, as we know from the previously mentioned document "Struggle and Actions of the OUN during the War." Iaroslav Stets'ko, strongly antisemitic at the time of the revolution,<sup>84</sup> wrote to Stepan Bandera on 25 June 1941, five days prior to the proclamation of statehood, from the village of Mlyny: "We will organize a Ukrainian militia that will help us to remove the Jews and protect the population."<sup>85</sup>

The individuals who were recruited for the militia also received ideological training. Volodymyr Panasiuk, a Volhynian who was trained as a militiaman by Ukrainian nationalists from Galicia, had to swear an oath to Stepan Bandera and independent Ukraine. After this induction, Panasiuk and his trainers sang the national anthem.<sup>86</sup> Panasiuk, like many other militiamen, was probably trained either by OUN-B members who had been in Klymiv's underground before the revolution or by "task forces" from the General Government that were propagating the idea of the "Ukrainian National Revolution" and organizing the OUN-B state.

Because the pogrom in L'viv took place almost simultaneously with the proclamation of the OUN-B state, the city was full of posters celebrating the OUN-B, Adolf Hitler, Stepan Bandera, the "Great German Army," the war against "Jewish Communists," and so forth.<sup>87</sup> Under these posters lay the bodies of slaughtered Jews. The national group most strongly represented among

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Galicia: The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust," *East European Jewish Affairs* 34, 2 (2004): 95–118. For information on German assistance in anti-Jewish measures, see Patryliak, *Viis'kova diial'nist' OUN (B) u 1940–1942 rokakh*, 232.

<sup>83</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 2, spr. 1, ll. 60, 62.

<sup>84</sup> On the antisemitism of the OUN-B leader Iaroslav Stets'ko, see Karel C. Berkhoff and Marco Carynnyk, "The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets'ko's 1941 *Zhyttiepyis*," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 23, 3/4 (1999): 149–84. For the activities of the Ukrainian militia, see Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, 46.

<sup>85</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 12, l. 10 (Telegram of Iaroslav Stets'ko to Stepan Bandera, no. 13, 25.6.1941).

<sup>86</sup> U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Record Group (USHMM RG) 31.018M, reel 20; Upravlinnia sluzhby bezpeky Ukrainy v Rivens'kii oblasti (USB v Rivens'kii oblasti), no. 19090, t. 3, ll. 3, 3v., 100, 101. On the militia, see also Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, 46.

<sup>87</sup> According to Dmytro Honta, the printer of the posters, ten Jews were forced to help print the propaganda posters: see his "Drukarstvo Zakhidnoi Ukrainy pidchas okupatsii," Konkurs na spohady, Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre Winnipeg, ll. 14–16. Some of the posters are in the collection of TsDAVOV. See TsDAVOV f. 3822, op. 1, spr. 63, ll. 112–14.

the perpetrators was Ukrainians incited by the OUN-B. It is likely, however, that some of the perpetrators were Poles, since they, like the Ukrainians, had found bodies of their relatives among the NKVD victims. OUN-B newspapers printed in the territories of the “Ukrainian National Revolution,” which overlapped with the sites of the pogroms, were full of admiration for the leaders of the revolution. The newspaper *Samostiina Ukraina* in Stanyslaviv oblast printed propaganda for the OUN-B state from 7 July onward; on 10 July it printed the text of the proclamation with a photo of Iaroslav Stets’ko on the front page.<sup>88</sup> On 24 July *Ukrains’ke slovo* printed a photo of the *providnyk* Stepan Bandera along with propagandistic articles about the Ukrainian–German–Hungarian war against the “NKVD and its villains who tortured the Ukrainian nation.”<sup>89</sup>

Although the OUN-B had close ideological ties to Nazi Germany and was keen to support the Nazis in their war against “Judeo-Bolshevism,” neither the leading Nazi politicians in Berlin nor the Abwehr officers in contact with the Ukrainian nationalists, who had collaborated with the OUN until the outbreak of the German–Soviet war and some of whom (including Hans Koch) had been present at the gathering on 30 June 1941, agreed with the proclamation of Ukrainian statehood. The undersecretary of state in the General Government, Ernst Kundt, organized a meeting on 3 July in Kraków at which four politicians from the newly proclaimed government and the *providnyk* of the OUN-B state, Stepan Bandera, took part. At the meeting Kundt informed his guests that, although the Ukrainians might consider themselves allies of the Germans, in fact they were not. According to the official nomenclature, the Nazis were the “conquerors” of Soviet territory, and it would be better for Ukrainian politicians not to behave in an irrational manner, meaning that they should not proclaim and attempt to establish a state before the war against the Soviet Union on Ukrainian territory was over. Kundt said he understood the Ukrainians’ hatred toward the Poles and Russians and their eagerness to build a Ukrainian state with a proper Ukrainian army, but he stressed that, if they wanted to remain on good terms with Nazi Germany and not compromise themselves in the eyes of the Ukrainian people, they should “stop doing things” and wait for Hitler’s decision.<sup>90</sup>

Bandera, who arrived late to the meeting, stressed that the Ukrainian nationalists were in battle against the Bolsheviks, “not passive observers but

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<sup>88</sup> “Akt prohloshennia Ukrains’koi derzhavy,” *Samostiina Ukraina*, 10 July 1941, 1.

<sup>89</sup> “Sviatochna akademiia,” *Ukrains’ke slovo*, 24 July 1941, 1.

<sup>90</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde: NS 26/1198, ll. 1–5, 10.

active members, in the form that the German side allows them." He explained that he had issued orders to his people to fight alongside the Germans and immediately establish in German-occupied territories a Ukrainian administration and Ukrainian government. He had tried to clear his policy with Abwehr officers, but they were not competent to resolve these political questions. Bandera declared himself to be the leader of the Ukrainian people. His authority came as leader of the OUN, the organization that headed the Ukrainian nation. Kundt replied that, as he understood the matter, only the *Führer* was empowered to establish a Ukrainian government; Bandera responded that, although this higher sanction had not been received, a Ukrainian government already existed and intended to cooperate with the Germans. The Ukrainian leader was not able to say whether OUN-B activists had obtained the approval of anyone from the German side before proclaiming statehood, but he stressed that the Ukrainian military chaplain Dr. Ivan Hryn'okh was present at the proclamation meeting in a German uniform.<sup>91</sup>

The meeting ended with short monologues from each of the two sides. Kundt repeated that the proclamation of Ukrainian statehood was not in the German interest and that only the *Führer* could decide whether and in what form a Ukrainian state and government could come into being. He also explained that even if the OUN-B had informed the German side of its intention to proclaim statehood, which is what the OUN-B had tried to do, this did not mean that the OUN-B was allowed to proceed.<sup>92</sup> Bandera recognized that it made no sense to continue to claim that he was acting with the approval of German institutions and stated that he was acting under the authority of the mandate that he had received from the Ukrainian people. Finally, seeking a reconciliation with Kundt, he said that at that moment he believed that a Ukrainian state could only be built with German agreement.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., ll. 9–12.

<sup>92</sup> The OUN-B member Volodymyr Stakhiv sent to "Your Excellency" Adolf Hitler on 23 June 1941 an official letter in which he informed Hitler that the OUN believed that the Jewish–Bolshevik impact on Europe would soon be checked and that the "recreation of an independent national Ukrainian state in the terms of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty will stabilize the national [*völkisch*] New Order." In the name of the OUN leader Stepan Bandera, Stakhiv also sent out a memorandum about the resolution of the Ukrainian question. See Bundesarchiv Koblenz R 43 II (Reichskanzlei)/1500, l. 61, memorandum on ll. 63–77. The OUN-B member Rikhard (Riko) Iaryi also sent a telegram from Vienna to Berlin; he assured Hitler of the OUN-B's loyalty, its readiness to struggle together with the "glorious German Wehrmacht" against "Muscovite Bolshevism," and its willingness to mobilize more Ukrainians living in Germany who could fight for the "liberation of Ukraine" and "finish with the chaos in Eastern Europe." See TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 22, l. 10.

<sup>93</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde: NS 26/1198, ll. 12–14.

On the one hand, disagreements between the Nazis and OUN-B politicians regarding the political system in Ukraine arose from the naïveté of the OUN-B leadership and its delusions of collaboration on equal terms with Nazi Germany. On the other hand, discord was caused by the intent of the Nazi leadership to exploit Ukraine economically without any political engagement from the Ukrainian people. As a result of this clash of interests, the state proclaimed by Stets'ko was not accepted by the Nazis as other East European fascist states such as Croatia or Slovakia had been. Bandera was arrested on 5 July and Stets'ko on 9 July, after surviving an assassination attempt in L'viv. Both were taken to Berlin. On 14 July, they were released from arrest on the condition that they report regularly to the police.<sup>94</sup> In mid-September 1941, several OUN-B members were arrested, and in the summer of 1942 some of them were delivered to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.<sup>95</sup> The offices of the OUN in Berlin and Vienna were closed.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, until the beginning of September 1941, the OUN-B was still attempting to reconcile with the Nazis. In December 1941, Bandera gave OUN-B member Ievhen Stakhiv, who was visiting him in Berlin at the time, a message informing his deputy in Ukraine, Mykola Lebid', that the OUN-B should not fight the Germans and should try instead to repair German–Ukrainian relations.<sup>97</sup>

### Letters as a Source for Studying the “Ukrainian National Revolution”

The letters written after the Germans had arrested Bandera and Stets'ko were probably the least drastic measure with which the OUN-B tried to salvage their revolution and improve their relationship with the Nazis. The Germans were aware of the letter-writing campaign and the collection of signatures on “petitions for an entry permit”<sup>98</sup> for Bandera, but as far as I have been able to tell, the Germans remained cold and calculating and did not pay much attention to these mass actions.

As of the writing of this article, the letters written during the “Ukrainian National Revolution” are located in seven files in the Central State Archive

<sup>94</sup> Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben*, 135.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 137. Franziska Bruder, “‘Der Gerechtigkeit dienen’: Die ukrainischen Nationalisten als Zeugen im Auschwitz-Prozess,” in *Im Labyrinth der Schuld: Täter—Opfer—Ankläger*, ed. Irmtrud Wojak and Susanne Meinel (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 138, 148.

<sup>96</sup> Diukov, *Vtorostepennyi vrag*, 66.

<sup>97</sup> Ievhen Stakhiv, *Kriz' tiurny, pidpillia i kordony* (Kyiv: Rada, 1995), 99–100.

<sup>98</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 58/217, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR, Berlin, 10 September 1941, no. 79, l. 10; Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 58/216, Ereignismeldungen UdSSR, Berlin, 9 September 1941, no. 78, l. 355.



of the Higher Organs of Authority and Administration of Ukraine in Kyiv<sup>99</sup> and in the Political Archives of the Foreign Ministry in Berlin.<sup>100</sup> The files in Kyiv are entitled "Resolutions concerning the Proclamation of the So-Called 'Ukrainian State,' Passed at Assemblies of Ukrainian Citizens" (Postanovy zboriv hromadian v spravi proholoshennia tak zvannoï "Ukrains'koi Derzhavy"). The letters are ordered in the files according to the oblasts in which they were written. The content of the letters in this collection varies slightly, but all the letters were written with the same goal: to support the existence of the Ukrainian state as proclaimed by Iaroslav Stets'ko on 30 June 1941 and to prolong the "Ukrainian National Revolution" that was to lead to the creation of a Ukrainian state under OUN-B control.

The seven files of letters are of different sizes. The smallest contains only 65 sheets with about 30 letters. The largest has 141 sheets, or between 80 and 90 letters. Some of the letters were only a few lines long,<sup>101</sup> while others were two or three pages.<sup>102</sup> Some were produced on a typewriter, while others were handwritten. Some began with the heading "declaration" (*zaiava*),<sup>103</sup> others with "resolution" (*rezoliutsiia*),<sup>104</sup> and still others are addressed directly, without any heading, to the "leader of the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists Stepan Bandera"<sup>105</sup> or to the "leader of the German people Adolf Hitler"<sup>106</sup> or to the "head of the government of the Ukrainian state Iaroslav Stets'ko."<sup>107</sup>

One slim file with only 65 sheets contains letters from Volhynia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Kamianets'-Podil's'k and Stanislaviv oblasts.<sup>108</sup> The two files of letters from L'viv oblast cover only places that begin with the letters B through K and P through Ia. Letters from Ternopil' oblast are located in

<sup>99</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 29–35.

<sup>100</sup> There are only four letters in the Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, R 105191 (Akten betreffend Ukraine: Lage der Volksdeutschen. Gebietsansprüche Rumäniens. Ukr. Nationalbewegung, Denkschrift z. Entwicklung d. ukr. Gebiete). I cannot say how many letters were actually sent to Berlin.

<sup>101</sup> For example, TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 29, l. 4 (Letters from Iavlon'ka, Raznychi, and Tel'chi).

<sup>102</sup> For example, *ibid.*, spr. 31, ll. 29–30 (Letter from Steniatyn to Stepan Bandera, 19 July 1941) or spr. 30, ll. 8–9 (Letter from Barani Peretoki to Iaroslav Stets'ko).

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 31, l. 1. The handwritten letter is titled *Zaiava do Uriadu Iaroslava Stets'ka*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 29, ll. 2–3 (Resolution from the village of Elblanivka, 13 July 1941). Here and below, these citations are example texts.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 13 (Letter from the village of Ksaverivka, 19 July 1941).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 31, l. 36 (Letter from Steniatyn to Adolf Hitler, 19 July 1941).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 29, l. 9 (Letter from the village Ksaverivka to Iaroslav Stets'ko, 18 July 1941).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 29.

three files. But here there are only letters from places with the initial letters B through D and Zh through Ia. Even from this simple assessment it is evident that many letters did not find their way to either of the archives.<sup>109</sup> The total number of letters written in 1941 can no longer be ascertained. It is probable that a significant proportion were lost during World War II.

The letters were generally signed by hundreds of people to convey the message that their political aims enjoyed a great deal of popularity. Considering that the letters were mostly written and signed in villages with a mixed Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian population, the average number of anywhere from 60 to 500 signatures per locality, depending on the district in which they were collected, indicates a good deal of support in Ukrainian society for the OUN-B's initiative. The numbers of signatures should be treated with caution, however, as it was in the interest of the OUN-B to keep them high.

What is interesting is the number of places and districts in which statehood was proclaimed by the OUN-B. According to a group of historians that the Ukrainian government established in 1997 to explore the history of the OUN-UPA, there were 213 districts across Ukraine, 187 in western Ukraine and 26 in eastern Ukraine, in which the OUN-B in 1941 conducted the revolution, tried to establish statehood, and mobilized the population to write letters.<sup>110</sup> If in each of these districts the OUN-B found 8,000 supporters, as was the case in Zolochiv district,<sup>111</sup> then altogether the OUN-B would have been able to persuade 1,704,000 people to back its state project. Considering the short time in which the OUN-B was working to establish statehood, the "Ukrainian National Revolution" of the OUN-B evidently spread quickly and ended and disappeared abruptly because of conflicts with the Nazis. By comparison, according to the account of a leading member of the OUN-B, Ivan Klymiv, the OUN-M proclaimed statehood in only two districts.<sup>112</sup>

The number of supporters of the OUN-B state must be estimated with care. For example, some of the letters were affixed with signatures or lists of signatures that make it possible to check the number of signatures declared in

<sup>109</sup> Letters and telegrams from various places declaring loyalty to the OUN-B government and the new administration as well as several descriptions of celebrations of the proclamation of the Ukrainian state are in *ibid.*, spr. 15.

<sup>110</sup> "Zvit robochoi hrupy istorykiv pry Uriadovii komisii z vyvchennia diial'nosti OUN i UPA," [www.ukraine-poland.com/u/publicystyka/publicystyka.php?id=3480](http://www.ukraine-poland.com/u/publicystyka/publicystyka.php?id=3480) (accessed 24 February 2009); TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 45, l. 2. See also "Zvit pro robotu v spravi orhanizatsii derzhavnoi administratsii na tereni Zakhidnykh oblastei Ukrainy," TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 15, ll. 1–4.

<sup>111</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 34, l. 40 (Report from the meeting of Ukrainian citizens of Zolochiv district).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 45, l. 2 (Ivan Klymiv's report to the leadership of the OUN).

the letters. Others, however, are without signatures and state only the number of people who agreed with their content and were supposed to have signed them. Quite possibly, the OUN-B members collecting the signatures exaggerated their number in some cases. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that in July and August 1941 in western Ukraine, the OUN-B succeeded in persuading a large number of people to support its "Ukrainian National Revolution."

### **Bandera, Hitler, and Stets'ko as Idols of the Revolutionary Masses**

The main aim of writing the letters was to support the existence of the "Ukrainian state" as proclaimed in L'viv on 30 June 1941. Some of the letters do not take a standard form. Their authors employ various arguments and strategies in support of the OUN-B state. Other letters are standard texts re-typed with minimal or no variation. They follow the model laid out in the "Instructions for the Prewar Period, the Time of War and Revolution, and the First Days of State Building." The most important difference between the letters and the proclamation in the "Instructions," written several months before the "Ukrainian National Revolution," is the introduction of arguments meant to convince Hitler or the Nazis of the necessity of a Ukrainian state and the release of Stepan Bandera. At the time the "Instructions" were written, the OUN-B did not anticipate how the revolution would unfold. After it began, OUN-B members adapted to the situation and used meetings to collect signatures and urge the population to write "plenipotentiary letters" to Hitler.

The standard letters were probably only read aloud at assemblies called by the OUN-B, discussed briefly or not at all, signed and sent off. Here is an example of one of these standard documents:

We citizens of the village Rudnyky were called to a ceremonial assembly, at which the Independent Ukrainian State was proclaimed. We listened to the text of the proclamation act with inexpressible pleasure: we are proud to have such a leader [*providnyk*] of the OUN and of the whole Ukrainian Nation as *Stepan Bandera*. We are very grateful to the invincible Allied German Army and to its leader [*vozhd*] Adolf Hitler who helps liberate the Ukrainian people from Jewish–Muscovite slavery [*z-pid zhydivs'ko-moskovs'koi nevoli*].

Long live the Great National Socialist Germany and its leader Adolf Hitler.

Long live the Independent Ukrainian United State.

Long live the leader of the OUN and of the whole Ukrainian Nation *Stepan Bandera*.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., spr. 29, l. 1. The text of the letter from the village of Rudnyky was used with small modifications in letters from other places like Omel'no, Kulikovychi, Iavlon'ka, Raznyi, Tel'chi, etc. See *ibid.*, ll. 1, 4–5.

We find here brief references to much that had occurred during the “Ukrainian National Revolution”: the activities of the OUN-B following the outbreak of the German–Soviet war, the interaction between the OUN-B and the local Ukrainian populace, the political mood in parts of Ukraine that had been directly occupied by Nazi Germany, and the popularity of Stepan Bandera among Ukrainians who yearned for their own state.

The second letter that I would like to present is not one of the typed, uniform texts but a handwritten one, probably drafted by a local person with a strong affiliation with the OUN-B. The letter is composed in a very simple style. It includes numerous grammatical errors that suggest the author was a peasant with a weak grasp of the written language:

To the leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists Stepan Bandera.

#### Announcement

We the citizens of the village Ksaverivka assembled on Sunday 19 July 1941 on the square to demonstrate before the world that the Ukrainian Nation fights for its rights and for an Independent Ukrainian State.

We are firmly subordinated to the Ukrainian Government that was proclaimed in L’viv, and we will carry out all the orders faithfully which will be given us. We ask the leader of the German Nation to confirm the temporary council of the village.

We are grateful to the German Army and its Leaders. First of all, we are grateful to the Chancellor Adolf Hitler for his command to his heroic Army to drive out the Bolshevik Jewish bandit and Polish treason which oppressed the Ukrainian People in jails and camps. We met the German Army with great happiness because it drove out the bandit army from our Ukraine and liberated us.

We believe that Germany will not desire to enslave the Ukrainian Nation and that it make the Ukrainian People once and for all a Nation of will and deed which will join the fight against Jewish communism [*zhydo komuna*] and all oppressors of the Ukrainian people who oppressed the Ukrainian People and severely opposed Germany and Hitler.

We ask the great Genius of the German People Adolf Hitler to release for us our Leader of the OUN Stepan Bandera who led the Ukrainian people many years under the terror of Poland and Moscow, and we believe that he will now also lead us on the right path as he has so far. The Ukrainian people and the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists believe in his forces and that only he as the Leader of the Ukrainian Nationalists is able to lead us and to put a stop to the whole communist diversion and to make the collaboration with great Germany possible.

Glory to the German Army

Glory to the Führer [*firerovi*] of the German Nation Adolf Hitler

Glory to Ukraine  
 Glory to the Heroes<sup>114</sup>

These two letters are representative of the other letters addressed to Bandera, Hitler, and Stets'ko. They provide important evidence about the OUN-B as well as about the mental and political state into which the OUN-B was trying to push the revolutionary Ukrainian masses. In all these letters, we find antisemitic passages discussing the liberation of Ukraine from the "Jewish–Muscovite occupation." The "Jewish–Muscovite" stereotype, which equated all Jews with communism, was widespread during the "Ukrainian National Revolution." It was strengthened by two years of Soviet occupation and by the murder of thousands of prisoners, among them Ukrainians, by NKVD officers in many western Ukrainian jails, then reinforced in the popular consciousness by the propagandistic use of the corpses by the Nazis and the OUN-B. This disdain for Jews and Communists, who in popular opinion became one and the same, was sometimes expressed even more violently than in the letters quoted above.

In the village of Steniatyn, for example, three elaborate letters were written to Bandera, Hitler, and Stets'ko.<sup>115</sup> The authors of this correspondence called themselves "peasants and intelligentsia." They expressed deep gratitude to and admiration for the German *Führer* and his army. They believed that the "Great Leader of the German Nation ... has destroyed forever the enemies of our [Ukrainian] nation and the communist threat to the civilized world."<sup>116</sup> Hitler had delivered them from communist barbarity, thus allowing them to rejoin the "civilized world." That Nazi morality actually made this "civilized world" one of modern barbarity did not influence their expressed desire to become a part of it. The writers of the letters admired Hitler for his "invincible, world-famous army," his "fairness," and his will to liberate the Ukrainian people from the "yoke of the Jewish–Muscovite and Polish Bolshevist subhuman beings, the hangmen of the Ukrainian people." All the letters and meetings proclaiming statehood ended with a salutation like "Long live the Great Leader and Genius Adolf Hitler!"<sup>117</sup>

The image of Adolf Hitler held by the letter writers of 1941 seems to correspond to the image that Galician peasants, the ancestors of the writers, had

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 13–14. A list of 80 signatures is affixed to the letter. The same letter was also addressed to Iaroslav Stets'ko and signed by 75 people (*ibid.*, ll. 9–12).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 31, ll. 29–30, 36–37, 31–32, respectively.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 36. In another part of the same letter the enemies are called "bestial Asiatics" (*zizvirili aziaty*).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

had of the Habsburg emperors in the 19th century. They genuinely believed and expected that Adolf Hitler would read their letters, understand their petition, and protect them from “all the enemies of Ukraine.” Yet, whereas the 19th-century writers had asked the Habsburg emperors to protect them from the Polish lords who kept the peasants in a state akin to slavery, their 20th-century counterparts appealed to Hitler with racially based petitions.<sup>118</sup>

However fair and glorious Hitler may have seemed to the “revolutionary masses,” he had arrested and imprisoned Bandera in Berlin. It was an act that the masses disliked but did not dare to protest against. Certain letter writers did express the hope that “Germany will not desire to suppress the Ukrainian Nation.” This indicates that, on the one hand, the masses admired Hitler as a liberator, but on the other, they were not certain about his attitude toward them and could only hope that Hitler would “once and for all make the Ukrainian People into a nation of will and action that will join the fight against Jewish communism.”<sup>119</sup>

Other letters were open in expressing the desire to have Bandera returned home. The OUN-B must have informed the writers and signatories of the leader’s arrest and convinced them that Bandera alone could lead the Ukrainian nation to independence. These Ukrainian authors hoped that the crucial importance of their leader would be understood by the “fraternal German nation.”<sup>120</sup> The OUN-B had borrowed the concept of “one nation, one party, one leader” from the more politically advanced fascist governments and organizations.<sup>121</sup> Its propaganda on this theme seems to have struck a chord at least among the people writing and signing the letters, who were thus unwittingly won over to fascist ideology.

Some authors stated that words were inadequate to express the strength of their admiration for the *providnyk* and that their love for Bandera was immeasurable. A few specified that they loved Bandera with “pure peasant hearts” (*sertsia chysto selians’ki*)—the highest form of love. Their only wish was to be “faithful servants of their *providnyk* and their nation.” They wanted to be like him and other great heroes of the Ukrainian nation.<sup>122</sup> With the help of such sentiments, the OUN-B organized paramilitary youth organizations

<sup>118</sup> Regarding plenipotentiaries in 19th-century Galicia and the Habsburg empire, see John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1998), 20–21.

<sup>119</sup> TsDAVOV f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 29, ll. 13–14.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 31, l. 36.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, op. 2, spr. 1, l. 85. In the Ukrainian language of the OUN-B, *Odyn narid—odyn provid—odna vlada*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, op. 1, spr. 31, l. 29.

named after Stepan Bandera. Children up to 12 years of age were to swear an oath to the leader.<sup>123</sup>

The last object of admiration, Iaroslav Stets'ko, is depicted in the letters as a famous freedom fighter and leading figure in the OUN. The letters greet Stets'ko with a nationalistic salute. He is the person who proclaimed statehood in L'viv and thus performed the most revolutionary of acts, a model now followed in villages, towns, and cities across Ukraine. As the main hero of 30 June 1941, Stets'ko evoked the same admiration and filial love as the *providnyk*.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusion

The "Ukrainian National Revolution" was a well planned course of action, which ultimately failed because the OUN-B was unable to persuade the Nazi leadership to acquiesce in it. High-ranking Nazi leaders, such as Adolf Hitler or Hans Frank, were interested only in economic exploitation, not in political collaboration with Ukrainians. The OUN-B managed to work successfully only with officers or lower-ranking politicians associated with the Abwehr and the Wehrmacht.

The two main goals of the "Ukrainian National Revolution" were to establish a Ukrainian state and to cleanse its territory of all enemies of the OUN-B's version of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, who included not only Jews, Poles, and Russians but also many Soviet or disloyal Ukrainians. These dual objectives go a long way to explaining why the territories in which the pogroms occurred overlapped with the territories where the state had been proclaimed.

The mass killing of Jews was the aim of both the OUN-B and the Nazis, but it occurred not only in western Ukraine. Pogroms also took place in other territories, including Lithuania and northeastern Poland, that had been "released" by the Germans from Soviet occupation. In western Ukraine, however, pogroms also occurred in cities, towns, and villages into which the Nazis had never marched, but where the OUN-B was active. In some other places pogroms occurred before the Nazis arrived. This indicates that the eagerness of the OUN-B to slaughter Jews during the "Ukrainian National Revolution" was similar to that of the Nazis.

This violent antisemitism, as well as general hostility toward the "enemies of the Ukrainian nation," is clearly articulated in the letters addressed to Hitler, Bandera, and Stets'ko. Although they were propagandistic documents,

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 12, l. 15.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, spr. 31, l. 31.

these letters came into being as the result of interaction between OUN-B activists and the local Ukrainian population. The letters were mainly written by western Ukrainian villagers who were incited or compelled to do so by the OUN-B. The letters help us understand the “Ukrainian National Revolution” of 1941 and its impact on the population. These long, individually crafted letters shed light on popular opinion and on the OUN-B’s propaganda campaign. The OUN-B mobilized the masses to participate in the revolution and incited them against Jews, thus encouraging the antisemitic violence that gave the “Ukrainian National Revolution” a significant part of its impetus. Finally, the letter campaign reveals that the revolutionary OUN-B overestimated its strength and misinterpreted Nazi aims toward Ukraine; it quickly lost control over the revolution and was not able to persuade the Nazis to contemplate an OUN-B Ukrainian state in the fascist New Europe.

The letters are especially remarkable for their fascist elements. In this period, the OUN-B strove to represent itself more effectively on the international stage, especially to the Nazis. For this reason, when preparing for and conducting the “Ukrainian National Revolution,” the OUN-B probably attempted to become more fascist, authoritarian, and antidemocratic than the original Italian Fascists or the Nazis had been. This was a dark side of the history of the OUN-B that it would later try to conceal. The Soviets, in contrast, used evidence of OUN fascism to blacken not only the OUN and the UPA but the entire Ukrainian national movement for decades after the war.

The fascist elements of the OUN-B came into sharper focus for OUN-B members during their confrontation with eastern Ukraine. Ievhen Stakhiv, who in 1941 was involved in one of the “task forces” which went from the General Government into eastern Ukraine to mobilize the masses for the “Ukrainian National Revolution,” soon realized that the eastern Ukrainians were very skeptical of and resistant to the OUN-B and its plans for a Ukrainian state. Stakhiv recognized that it was impossible to win them over. Consequently, he claimed, he began to understand the fascist, authoritarian, and antidemocratic side of the OUN-B.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ievhen Stakhiv, interviewed by author, Berlin, NJ, 11 November 2008.