



## Historical Aspect of Penitentiary Denazification

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* in the article, the author addresses a historical aspect of the issue of penitentiary denazification in the USSR and Russia. The historical experience of penitentiary denazification in the context of the special military operation on the territory of Ukraine is of theoretical and practical interest. *Purpose:* to describe historical experience of denazification in the conditions of the Soviet correctional labor system of the 1940-1950s. *Methods:* universal method of cognition – dialectical materialism based on the laws of dialectics; formal logical methods – analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, abstraction, analogy; general scientific methods – observation, comparison, description, etc.; private scientific method of historical analogy. *Results:* the paper provides statistical data and examples that reveal various aspects of penitentiary practice in relation to Ukrainian nationalists. The formation and development of the idea of Ukrainian radical nationalism is analyzed. The material presented in the article can be used in practical activities of modern penitentiary bodies and institutions, in particular, to increase the effectiveness of work with adherents of the radical ideology of Ukrainian nationalism. *Conclusion:* the modern Russian penal system needs to ensure real denationalization of the neo-Banderites in places of detention. It is also necessary to initiate the creation of a regulatory framework that ensures an effective solution to this issue.

**Key words:** Ukrainian radical nationalism; the OUN members; the Banderites; atrocities of Ukrainian nationalists; penal system; clandestine terrorist actions; amnesty; neo-Nazis.

5.1.4. Criminal law sciences.

5.1.1. Theoretical and historical legal sciences.

**For citation:** Yakovets E.N. Historical aspect of penitentiary denazification. *Penitentiary Science*, 2024, vol. 18, no. 4 (68), pp. 398–410. doi 10.46741/2686-9764.2024.68.4.007.

There were animals  
Near the door.  
They were shot at,  
They were dying.  
But there were those who pitied them,  
Those who opened these doors  
to the animals.  
The animals were greeted with songs  
and loud laughter.  
And the beasts came in and killed them all.

A. Strugatskii

After the USSR collapse, heirs of the Banderites and the OUN members – modern Ukrainian nationalists – created the myth that their ancestors fought against Hitler and Stalin, being the basis of the Ukrainian anti-fascist resistance movement. However, in fact, the Banderites and the OUN members did not even try to fight the Nazis, strongly emphasizing that their spiritual mentors were Italian fascists and German Na-

zis. The very appearance of armed groups of “Westerners” was directly related to the policy of the Third Reich in Western Ukraine [1].

In the towns and villages occupied by the Germans, creating their own “people’s committees”, radical Ukrainian nationalists stated the following: “Our government should be scary for its opponents. Terror is for foreign enemies and their traitors”. They divided ethnic minorities into friendly and hostile groups, considering the latter as “Muscovites, Poles and Jews”. Captured Russian soldiers were ordered to be handed over to the Nazis or shot on the spot. If the Banderites had come to power, they had intended to ban non-Ukrainians (“outsiders”) from holding public office [2].

Even Westerners themselves did not hide the existence of its genetic connection with fascism, clarifying that “the closest relatives of Ukrainian nationalism should be sought not so much in German Nazism or Italian fascism – products of industrial and urbanized communities, as in parties of this type of the agrarian, economically backward peoples of Eastern Europe, such as the Croatian Ustashe, the Romanian Iron Guard, the Slovak Glinkov party, the National Radical Camp (Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR), etc. Ukrainian nationalism was a genetically independent phenomenon, although in its development it experienced undeniable influences from the corresponding foreign counterparts” [3, p. 530].

Mass atrocities were carried out by the Nazis on the territory of the Soviet Union primarily within the framework of the ideology of German National Socialism. Accomplices of the Nazis from among the collaborators, among whom were not only Ukrainian nationalists, but also representatives of other nationalities, took an active part in these crimes.

*A brief genesis of Ukrainian radical nationalism.* It is known that the Banderites ideology originated in Western Ukraine back in the late 19th – early 20th century. The core of the so-called Ukrainian project was the statement that “Ukraine is not Russia, Ukrainians are not Russians”. The idea of Ukrainians could have remained a fiction if the special services of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Galician Russia, had not seized on it. By that time, by the will of history, the Russian people had become divided, and the Austrians’ goal was to further weaken the Russian Empire as their potential enemy.

During the World War I, armed Ukrainian formations were formed on the basis of nationalist ideas strenuously promoted by the countries of the Triple Alliance, fighting against the Triple Entente. The revolutionary events in Russia contributed to further strengthening of these forces, first as part of the creation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, which collapsed during the Russian civil war, and then during the creation by leading European states of a “sanitary cordon” around the Soviet Union. Western diplomacy has always viewed Russia as a geopolitical threat and placed a special emphasis on inciting nationalist sentiments, separatist aspirations, and imposing self-appointed rulers within it. Back in December 1917, U.S. Secretary of State R. Lansing noted that any opposition movement in Russia had to be supported, even if there was little chance of its success [4].

After the incorporation of Galicia into the revived Poland, a new stage in the development of Ukrainian national identity began, which lasted until the World War II. Local organizations of Ukrainian nationalists played a key role in this process, which managed not only to achieve success in promoting their ideas, but also to become the head of a fairly powerful armed movement [5]. During the interwar period, the nationalist movement in Western Ukraine was involved in the circle of interests of the German special services, who intended to use it to weaken Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. During this period, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was formed (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned in the territory of the Russian Federation), which was led by E. Konovalets, A. Mel’nik, S. Bandera, etc.

Further development of nationalist ideas was associated with the outbreak of the Second World War. After the entry of Soviet troops into the territory of Poland and the annexation of Western Ukraine to the USSR in 1939, it would seem that the dreams of Ukrainian nationalists about the reunification of their homeland with the eastern regions came true. At first, the latter even helped the Red Army units in neutralizing the resistance of the Poles [6]. However, the “Westerners” realized quite quickly that the Soviet system was hostile to their goals and objectives. In this regard, in order to seize power on the territory of the whole of Ukraine, the Banderites reoriented to Germany, which they considered as a potential enemy of both Po-

land and the Soviet Union. In Berlin, they began to position this organization as the only official political representative of the Ukrainian emigration in Germany, and everyone who considered himself a Ukrainian had to register in its branches [7, p. 109].

Meanwhile, as a result of the internal party struggle in April 1941, the OUN (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned in the territory of the Russian Federation) split into two parts: the OUN-M (supporters of A. Mel'nik, who, after the assassination of E. Konovalts in Rotterdam on May 23, 1938, took his place and was subsequently recruited by the Abwehr) and the OUN-B (supporters of S. Bandera, who was also recruited by the Germans).

The activity of armed nationalist formations in the west of Ukraine acquired the greatest scope after the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union. Already on June 28, 1941, the Ukrainian government was proclaimed in Lviv, headed by S. Bandera's closest associate, Ya. Stetsko. However, the German authorities had their own views on the territory of Ukraine. The Nazis did not intend to create an independent Ukrainian state. The Slavic population was "superfluous" for the ideologists and leaders of Nazism in these fertile lands. They did not hide their intentions to annex Ukraine to the Reich in order to gradually settle its territory with the Germans. It was planned to exterminate or expell from the Reich up to 75% of Ukrainians. Those who remained were to be cheap labor for the German colonists [8]. Therefore, Bandera, Stetsko and other leaders of the OUN (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned in the territory of the Russian Federation), who were involved in the creation of the Ukrainian government, were arrested and placed in German concentration camps until their services were again required by the Germans. At that time, the Nazis placed the main bet on A. Mel'nik: it was his squad that was allowed to be the first to enter Kiev, captured by the Nazis.

In October 1942, the nationalists created the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned on the territory of the Russian Federation), headed by the chief of the Main Military Staff R. Shukhevych [9, p. 432]. In February 1943, the organization was renamed the OUN-B under the leadership of Bandera. The

organization under Mel'nik's control became known as the "OUN" (without the letter "M"). The army was created taking into account all the necessary requirements for regular armed forces; it was a kind of army without a state. A clear organizational hierarchy, strict discipline, a system of military ranks, as well as attempts to create charters and introduce a single uniform played a role in increasing the combat capability of the Banderites. The organization even had a system of schools for training officers and junior commanders, hospitals, weapons workshops, warehouses, etc. Its strong point was the personnel. The vast majority of militants shared the ideas of radical Ukrainian nationalism. Over 65% of them were the rural youth who were well-versed in their native places and had connections with the local population. Many Ukrainian nationalists acquired combat skills in various formations of Nazi Germany, including the sabotage military formation "the Brandenburg Division" [10]. The occupying German forces helped the Banderites turn into well-armed, numerous units of Nazi accomplices. Their composition was the most diverse, since both ideological militants and forcibly mobilized villagers fought here. There were ordinary criminals, deserters, looters, as well as people who had learned to fight and did not want to return to civilian life. At the end of the war, the armed formations of the Banderites consisted of about 75 thousand people. In addition, a significant number of Ukrainian residents served in the "noise" battalions (local police) and self-defense detachments, which were subordinate to the SS and police chiefs of Reichskommissariats. Along with the Banderites, they actively participated in the anti-Partisan struggle and punitive operations, and also replaced German troops in the rear areas [11, pp. 90, 173].

*Atrocities of the Banderites gangs on Soviet territories and their subsequent defeat.* It is simply impossible to list all the crimes, since there are too many of them. Therefore, we will focus on the main ones. Acting in close alliance with the Nazis, Ukrainian nationalists took part in many actions to exterminate Jews, prisoners of war, and civilians. The Germans themselves often psychologically could not stand such dirty work and willingly shifted it to the Banderites. Ukrainian nationalists were involved in the most serious crimes of fascists.

So, at the end of June 1941, the "Westerners" carried out a sweep of Lviv: they killed So-

viet and party workers, intellectuals, primarily Polish and Jewish. It was the OUN members who were engaged in the extermination of Jews in Lviv, Tenopolsky, Rivne and other Western Ukrainian ghettos.

A significant part of the murders of Jews in Kiev's Babi Yar were also carried out by Ukrainian radical nationalists in the service of the Germans.

On the territory of Russia and Belarus, hundreds of villages were burned by the Banderites, including the Belarusian village of Khatyn on March 22, 1943. In the USSR, for reasons of interethnic tolerance, it was kept silent that most of these acts of intimidation were carried out by Ukrainian militants. They were a striking force in such punitive "anti-partisan" operations against the civilian population in Belarus as "Swamp Fever" in Vitebsk, "Cottbus" in Minsk and "Triangular" in the Brest regions.

They killed ethnic Ukrainians, who denied nationalistic ideas and supported the Soviet government, with particular cruelty [12].

Ukrainian nationalists murdered Army General, Commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, Hero of the Soviet Union N.V. Vatutin, one of the leaders of the partisan movement in Ukraine, Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General S.V. Rudnev, legendary Soviet illegal intelligence officer, Hero of the Soviet Union N. I. Kuznetsov, Deputy Squadron Commander of the 104th Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment, Hero of the Soviet Union, Senior Lieutenant M.S. Likhovid, and others.

Special mention should be made of the atrocities committed by the Banderites in the spring of 1943 against representatives of Polish and other non-indigenous nationalities on the territory of Volhynia occupied by German troops. Surrounding Polish villages, they killed everyone – women, the elderly, children, even infants. The victims were shot, beaten with clubs, and hacked with axes. Corpses were buried in fields, victims' property was taken and their houses were burned. Only charred firebrands remained in place of some Polish villages. Mass killings of the Polish population reached their peak in July of the same year. More than 100 thousand people died in more than 150 settlements of the Volhynia region during the punitive actions of the Banderites, about half a million Poles were forced to flee [13].

The degree of cruelty caused amazement even among the SS men who were experienced in such matters [14].

The NKVD investigative teams investigating crimes of the gangsters compiled a list of 135 of the most frequently used methods of killing unarmed people. The atrocities they practiced are unprecedented and can only be associated with the deeds of the Roman emperor Caligula, who gained fame among his contemporaries and descendants as a cruel and mad tyrant [15].

In total, the Banderites murdered 850 thousand Jews, 220 thousand Poles, more than 400 thousand Soviet prisoners of war and about 500 thousand peaceful Ukrainians during the Great Patriotic War [16].

The most violent clashes of the Banderites with units of the Red Army and other law enforcement agencies were noted in 1944–1946. The certificate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR of May 28, 1946 provides the following results of the fight against banditry in western regions of the Ukrainian SSR during this period: about 90 thousand Chekist-military operations were carried out, during which 110,835 bandits were killed, 250,676 people were detained, 11,485 people turned themselves in [17, pp. 145–146].

After the liberation of the territory of Western Ukraine by Soviet troops, the OUN-UPA (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned in the territory of the Russian Federation) switched to terrorist activities (until the mid-1950s). According to official data, during this period they committed 4,904 terrorist acts, 195 sabotages, 457 attacks on fighter battalions from rural assets, 645 attacks on farms, authorities and institutions of the socio-cultural sphere, and 359 military expropriations.

Some detachments of Ukrainian radical nationalists, despite the local measures taken by the border troops of the USSR, the People's Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovakia, managed to fight their way through the territory of Poland and Czechoslovakia abroad – to West Germany and Austria [10].

During 10 years of the struggle against the Banderites (from 1945 to 1955), about 25 thousand Soviet servicemen, employees of state security agencies, police and border guards, as well as more than 32 thousand from among the Soviet party activists, died [18].

*The Banderites – prisoners of the Soviet correctional labor system.* The first Banderites prisoners were sentenced to Soviet correc-

tional labor institutions at a time when the final defeat of their main forces was still far away. The Soviet authorities were very determined to counteract the latter in places of detention, as evidenced by the adoption of appropriate organizational and legal measures. So, on April 19, 1943, M.I. Kalinin signed a closed Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On Punishment Measures for Nazi Evildoers Guilty of Murder and Torture of the Soviet Civilian Population and Captured Red Army Soldiers, for Spies, Traitors to the Motherland from among Soviet Citizens and Their Accomplices", which stipulated that these categories of Soviet citizens were punishable by death by hanging. Accomplices from the local population, convicted of assisting atrocities in committing reprisals and violence against civilians and captured Red Army soldiers, were punishable by exile to hard labor for a period of 15 to 20 years. The consideration of cases on their charges was entrusted to the military field courts established at the army divisions [19].

As a follow-up to the provisions of this decree, on June 11, 1943, L.P. Beria signed the Order of the NKVD of the USSR No. 00968 "On the Organization of Hard Labor Departments at NKVD Correctional Labor Camps" [20]. In the Vorkuta, Norilsk and Northeastern (Magadan) camps, 10 thousand convicts of these categories could be held. As part of the NKVD Karlag, a department was organized for the disabled and the sick, who were sentenced to hard labor. The same order approved the Instruction on the procedure for the detention of convicts sentenced to hard labor in NKVD camps.

As is known, from the time of tsarist Russia until 1943, such a type of punishment as hard labor was not imposed in the USSR. However, in the prevailing conditions, taking into account the special gravity of the crimes committed by the Banderites, the introduction of this type of punishment, which was used as an alternative to the death penalty, was quite justified.

Conditions of serving sentences for convicts were characterized by stricter regime requirements and increased isolation. Criminals (traitors) were kept separately from the rest of the convicts and were used in the most difficult underground work in coal mines, in the extraction of gold, tin, iron ore, granite stone, etc. [21, p. 106].

As of May 1, 1950, 61,572 convicts sentenced to hard labor were held in the camps

of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR (GARF. Archive R-9414. List 1. Case 368. Pages 85–86) [22]. In this regard, attention is drawn to the memo prepared in May 1945 by Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR V.V. Chernyshev and stating the following: "the experience of working with convicts in the Vorkuta coal camp shows that those sentenced to hard labor for 15–20 years, in conditions of a special regime for convicts, lose the prospect of enduring the regime and conditions of hard labor until the end of their term – 15–20 years. This leads to moral depression and a complete lack of motivation to work, and as a result, their work is much less effective than that of ordinary campers, while the loss of prisoners' ability to work after 5–6 years is almost inevitable" [23]. Apparently, for this reason, in the early 1950s, the courts stopped to sentence the Banderites to hard labor. Persons previously sentenced to this type of punishment were transferred to special camps of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which began to be established in 1948, and later – to ordinary correctional labor camps (ITL) and correctional labor colonies (ITK) with a strengthened regime.

*General characteristics of the contingent of prisoners from among the Ukrainian nationalists. The position of the Banderites among other categories of convicts.* At the end of the war, there were a few ideological militants, most of whom died during the liquidation of nationalist gangs by Soviet law enforcement agencies, among the Banderites prisoners. Most of them were accomplices of bandits – people from the farm environment who had not yet managed to fit into the collective farm life and assimilate the Soviet ideology. These persons were mainly brought to criminal liability under parts 2, 8, 9 of Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (counterrevolutionary crimes) and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment from 10 to 25 years with serving in corrective labor institutions located in remote areas. Some of them were convicted of ordinary crimes.

The Soviet government was not as bloodthirsty as various liberal ideologists of the Perestroika era tried to describe. Even I.V. Stalin allowed amnesties for the Banderites and other "forest brothers". The Soviet state skillfully combined the policy of carrot and stick, trying not only to suppress ideological nationalists, but also to return the bulk of ordinary militants to peaceful life. In Ukraine, the initiator of many

amnesties was personally First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine N.S. Khrushchev. His first memo addressed to I.V. Stalin was prepared on August 4, 1945. As a result of this amnesty, over 5,000 the Banderites turned themselves in.

In 1947, a very significant step was taken in the USSR towards humanization of Soviet criminal legislation – the death penalty was abolished [24]. In this regard, inveterate Banderites and other radical nationalists were no longer threatened with the highest measure of social protection for particularly dangerous war crimes and acts of genocide committed during the Great Patriotic War and after its end [25].

Against this background, in 1947–1948, N.S. Khrushchev made efforts related to the announcement of a number of amnesties for militants on condition of their voluntary renunciation of armed struggle against the Soviet government and return to peaceful labor. The population of Western Ukraine was tired of the war and the brutality of bandits. Gradually, people began to turn away from the Banderites and the latter began to surrender arms. The Banderites who had organizational skills and wide connections in the nationalist environment turned out in correctional labor institutions. This led to the strengthening of their positions in places of detention and the complication of the operational situation there.

Confrontation between “blatnye” (authorities) and “suki” (convicts belonging to the category of “blatnye” who fought on the front, were returned to the correctional labor institution and were not accepted by the community of “blatnye”, weakened powers of “blatnye” in penitentiary facilities. The Banderites, who kept themselves apart and possessed specific skills of survival in the underground organization, gradually began to occupy an empty power niche in correctional labor institutions, as well as positions in the camp structure available to convicts. At the same time, they successfully adopted the experience of “parasitic survival” inherent in communities of “blatnye” in camps [26].

The Banderites’s relations with various ethnic camp diasporas and categories of prisoners developed in different ways. They had the most acute contradictions with Chechens, who were supported by Asian prisoners. The Banderites tried to attract Georgians and Armenians to their side, but in the end they also did not have a good relationship with the latter. For ideologi-

cal reasons, the most solid was the alliance of Ukrainian radical nationalists with the Baltic “forest brothers” and the Vlasovites, who supported them in every possible way [27].

The “Westerners” could establish stable illegal contacts with accomplices who remained at large or were held in other detention centers. Their contacts with convicts transferred to remote areas of the USSR from western regions of Ukraine strengthened [28; 29]. As of January 1, 1955, 137,578 special settlers from among the family members of the OUN and band members with families evicted from western regions of Ukraine were registered with the 9th Directorate of the MGB of the USSR in 1945–1952 [30].

In 1948, Bandera could create a sub-political organization within the framework of the penitentiary system called “OUN-Pivnic” (“OUN-North”, it is also called “Polar Wire (center) of the OUN”). The OUN–North coordinated activities of the Banderites underground organization in most places of detention and special settlements. In this regard, the ITL and ITK leadership practically lost the opportunity to introduce its agents into the environment of Ukrainian nationalists. Under the circumstances, they were easily found and eliminated. It was also impossible to talk those who wanted to break with the Banderites over. The transfer of the latter to another camp as a measure to ensure their safety did not bring results. As a result, the administration of places of detention was unable to identify and isolate ideological, most active leaders of this organization [31], as it was unable to develop effective measures to counter nationalist propaganda among other prisoners, which in the specific conditions under consideration brought the desired results to the Banderites [32, p. 420].

In 1952, Ukrainian radical nationalists constituted a significant majority in the GULAG system. With a clear hierarchy, preserved from the days of the underground struggle against the Soviet government, they were able first to suppress “blatnye” and representatives of ethnic groups among the prisoners, and then, using already proven skills of conspiratorial activity, to proceed to the gradual realization of their main goal - release from prison.

At this time, the Banderites changed the paradigm of their actions radically. They moved from the idea of anti-Semitism and nationalism to active cooperation with all destructive forc-

es opposed to the Soviet government. Ethnic groups and Russian collaborationists hoped that a global military conflict between the USSR and the United States would soon begin. Insurgent sentiments in correctional labor institutions fueled by rumors that “America will help us”, began to spread widely among prisoners of various nationalities. This caused them to be somewhat optimistic, instilled confidence in their abilities and pushed them to take decisive action in confrontation with the administration of places of detention [31].

As a first step in this direction, the Banderites managed to achieve relaxation of the detention regime in the correctional facility. Their mass strikes led to the establishment of a 9-hour working day, permission of visits and correspondence with relatives, transfer of earned money to families, increase in salaries, etc. In addition, work in correctional labor institutions were counted in the total work experience [33].

The next stage of opposition of the OUN to the administration of places of detention took on a more serious character and was associated with the preparation of mass riots. To do this, they created their own security services, departments of political education, material and technical support, combat units and groups for carrying out terrorist acts – all as in the old days of active military confrontation with Soviet power structures. Being experienced conspirators, the OUN began to practice intimidation and blackmail of employees, primarily persons of Ukrainian nationality, in order to persuade them to their side, which they often succeeded in doing. It was almost impossible to recruit the “Westerners” themselves: even if they agreed, then, as a rule, employees of operational units or security officers found “double-dealers” in their person. The nationalists killed the identified informants of the administration of penitentiary institutions without hesitation. As a rule, murderers were people sentenced to maximum terms of imprisonment, since they had nothing to lose.

From 1952 to 1953, a wave of riots swept through the GULAG. Moreover, in 1953, six correctional labor institutions (about 30 thousand prisoners) rose up at the same time. Very serious consequences of the riots were recorded in the Steplag (another name is the Kengir camp), where Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists made up the majority – about 67%. They were supported by the Vlasovites, as well as a significant

part of the camp contingent. The planned mass riots in Steplag began on the morning of May 18, 1954 and lasted for 43 days. As a result, they were suppressed, although even tanks had to be used for this. According to official data, 46 prisoners died as a result of these events, 7 leaders of the riot were sentenced to death [33], which by that time had been partially restored for traitors to the Motherland, spies and subversive saboteurs [34].

*Beria and Khrushchev's amnesties. What is their difference?* Some sources note that it was due to the deadlocked situation associated with the increased aggressiveness of the “Westerners” who sought to break free, that relaxations were introduced in the regime of detention of the latter in penal institutions and eventually a decision was made to grant them amnesty. They note that it became practically impossible to correct the situation by forceful measures, therefore, on the initiative of L.P. Beria, who was the Minister of Internal Affairs at that time, in March 1953, after Stalin's death, an amnesty for prisoners was announced, on the basis of which many former Banderites were released [26].

However, only a small part of the accomplices and minor members of Banderites formations, who had an unserved term of imprisonment of less than five years, were able to get out of prison during that period. The draft decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, proposed by L.P. Beria, assumed the release, first of all, of women with children under 10 years old, pregnant women, minors under the age of 18, the elderly and seriously ill people. L.P. Beria, in an explanatory note to this draft law, noted that of the 2.5 million prisoners held in the Soviet correctional labor system, only 220 thousand were particularly dangerous state criminals. Amnesty should not be extended to them and other dangerous criminals (bandits, murderers), counter-revolutionaries, as well as persons convicted of theft of socialist property on a particularly large scale. The Minister proposed halving the punishment of persons sentenced to more than five years in prison and abolishing exile for those who served sentences under Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. L.P. Beria also proposed to immediately decriminalize less serious economic, domestic and official crimes with their transfer to the category of administrative offenses. Besides, he sent a separate submission

to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR G.M. Malenkov on the amnesty for all persons convicted by extrajudicial bodies and complete removal of their criminal records. It was mainly about those persons who were convicted during the period of political repression in 1937–1938.

The day after receiving the note (March 27, 1953), the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a decree “On Amnesty” [35], the content of which fully corresponded to the proposals of the Minister. Thus, L. P. Beria initiated the rehabilitation not of spies, saboteurs, wreckers, terrorists, the Vlasovites and Banderites, who caused real damage to the Soviet people and the state, but of illegally convicted persons. However, in the years of the Khrushchev thaw, a different trend prevailed, actually aimed at rehabilitating true enemies of the Soviet state [25]. This is evidenced, in particular, by the content of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of September 17, 1955 “On Amnesty for Soviet Citizens Who Collaborated with the Occupiers during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945” [36].

Some authors believe that this amnesty was caused by the continuing “daring antics of Banderita members in the camps”, and the Soviet law enforcement system finally signed its inability to resist it. Formally, it was timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War [37].

A.I. Solzhenitsyn, in turn, called it an “Adenauer amnesty”. In his opinion, this action was a kind of demonstration of the Soviet government’s goodwill towards Nazi collaborators [38]. In September 1955, the Chancellor of the FRG K. Adenauer visited the Soviet Union, who, in particular, asked N.S. Khrushchev to release 38 thousand German prisoners of war who were still in Soviet correctional labor institutions. First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR went to meet the Chancellor, but simultaneously with the release of former German soldiers, for some reason, he granted amnesty to the accomplices of the occupiers. According to the decree, only punishers and persons convicted under Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and the relevant articles of the Republic’s laws) for terms of more than ten years were not subject to amnesty (moreover, those who received long sentences were reduced by half). The criminal record and loss of rights were immediately removed

from the released. The amnesty also extended to collaborators who were abroad [39].

There is an opinion that the amnesty for the Banderites was facilitated by N.S. Khrushchev’s third wife N.P. Kukharchuk, who was a native of Western Ukraine [40]. According to a number of contemporaries, from the very beginning of married life Nina Kukharchuk, who was characterized by a very strong and powerful character, had influence on her husband [41].

Most of the Banderites, including those whose imprisonment terms were quite significant, were released after Khrushchev’s amnesty. This is confirmed by the documents showing that if on January 1, 1951 in ITLs and ITKs of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs were 129,476 persons convicted of insurgency and political banditry, then on April 1, 1956 there remained only 520 people (GARF. Archive R-9414. List 1. Case 258. Pages 1–17) [22], and this number included not only the Banderites, but also radical nationalists from Belarus, the Baltic States and other regions of the USSR.

In fact, most radical Ukrainian nationalists spent no more than 5–8 years in prison. In order to calm public opinion, a rumor was spread that those who had hands “with blood on their elbows” would forever remain exiles in harsh northern lands [32]. In fact, the closed Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR No. 134/27 of March 10, 1956 “On the Abolition of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 21, 1948 ‘On Sending Especially Dangerous State Criminals after Serving Their Sentences in Exile for Settlement in Remote Areas’” [42] was issued, which abolished the additional measure of punishment in the form of indefinite exile to a settlement for persons who had been serving and had served imprisonment for particularly dangerous state crimes by the time it was issued. The preservation of indefinite exile to a settlement and, moreover, in the extrajudicial order, which by that time had been abolished, was recognized as inexpedient. Persons who had been in settlements were exempted from further exile [43].

Soon, in accordance with the secret decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR No. 644-376s of May 15, 1956 “On the Removal of Restrictions on Special Settlement from Family Members of Ukrainian and Belarusian Nationalists Released from Exile in the Settlement” (GARF. Archive R-9401. List 1a. Case 568.



Pages 338–339) [22], persons of this category were released from administrative supervision of internal affairs bodies.

*Further fate of the Banderites not fully “denazified”.* As is known, quite a few former Ukrainian fighters stayed permanently in remote areas of detention centers. They were employed without any restrictions at Soviet enterprises, where some of them, who had relevant specialized education, were appointed to managerial positions. They were provided with housing and the conditions to run households on homestead plots. Many families left for other regions of the country in search of a better life. Some unmarried women, who decided to forget about their past, tried to marry non-resident men and change their surname. Over time, such families produced children who had no idea that their mother was an accomplice of the Banderites. However, not all “Westerners” chose such a fate. Too serious forces (both external and internal) were interested in keeping the Banderite ideology alive [40].

The overwhelming majority of former Banderites prisoners returned to their native places. According to various estimates, as of August 1, 1956, more than 200 thousand former active members of Banderite formations and exiled members of their families returned to the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. In accordance with the above-mentioned decree, another 40 to 60 thousand of their associates returned to Ukraine from abroad. Without undergoing the procedure of real denazification, both of them began to spread the bacillus of nationalism throughout the republic, settling not only in western but also in eastern (Odessa, Kharkov, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Kherson, etc.) regions of the republic.

Western mentors defined a new vector of confrontation with the USSR authorities for their mentees. This time they were instructed to infiltrate the party and soviet bodies of Ukraine, to occupy leading positions in them and, under plausible pretexts, to gradually promote nationalist ideas among the masses, creating an alternative to the Russian world in the republic. Already by the 1970s, many rehabilitated Banderites had been employed at district committees, regional executive committees, and other power structures. Their children, having received higher education, also became officials and responsible managers, including in law enforcement agencies. According to Soviet

party archives, in the 1980s, from 35 to 50% of the staff of district committees and regional committees of the CPSU in Western Ukraine were persons who had been amnestied for participation in the Banderite movement [44].

Thus, in May 1972, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party P.E. Shelest was removed from office with the wording “in connection with the transition to another job”. However, according to V.V. Shcherbitskii, who headed the Central Committee of the Communist Party for 17 years after P.E. Shelest’s dismissal, his nationalist views was the real reason for his resignation. During his tenure former Banderites enrolled in the party, were employed at state bodies of the republic, and made good [45].

In the first years of Ukraine’s independence, the ideas of neo-Nazism began to regenerate at an accelerated pace, taking advantage of the patronage of the first persons of the state. Suffice it to recall President L. Kravchuk, who took part in the collapse of the USSR, and who was once proud of the fact that as a teenager he used to carry foodstuffs to the Banderovite cache. The second president of the republic L. Kuchma wrote a book “Ukraine is not Russia”, thus putting himself on a par with the founders of Ukrainian radical nationalism. V. Yushchenko awarded the title of hero of Ukraine to S. Bandera and R. Shukhevych, and P. Poroshenko, who actually unleashed a “hot war” with the Russian world, initiated the use of the nationalist greeting “Glory to Ukraine – glory to heroes!” by Ukrainian security forces. The current president of Ukraine, V. Zelensky, being a “worthy successor” of the traditions of his predecessors, despite his Jewish roots, openly preaches the ideas of neo-Nazism of the Bandera type.

#### *Conclusions*

The Soviet government did not humanize relations with its implacable enemies – radical nationalists – because of the weakness of the Soviet power structures, including the penal authorities, and their inability to cope with the situation in places of detention. In case of acute necessity, it would have been possible even in the times of Stalin-Beria to use the repressive apparatus at full capacity and put the Banderites in their place. The matter here is different. The main reason is political. The authorities tried to socialize participants of the collaborationist movements and make a social compro-

mise with them, the main goal of which was to find ideological approaches to them.

Let us recall the steps taken by the authorities in this direction: 1) the first amnesty for militants, initiated by N.S. Khrushchev (1945); 2) abolition of the death penalty for all categories of criminals (1947); 3) additional amnesties for militants, initiated by N.S. Khrushchev (1947–1948); 4) abolition of hard labor for the category of convicts in question (early 1950s); 5) significant relaxation of the detention regime in correctional labor institutions; 6) Beria's amnesty of March 27, 1953; 47) Khrushchev's amnesty of September 17, 1955, which opened the way to freedom for the majority of the Banderites; 8) abolition of exile for them (1956).

However, this strategy did not succeed in the end.

We see the reasons for this situation in the following: insufficiently active operational response to the emergence of the underground organization "OUN-North" (1948); spread of the ideas of Ukrainian radical nationalism among prisoners (the special camps created in due time to facilitate this did not solve this problem). Undoubtedly, the situation was aggravated by the advancement of the amnestied Banderites into the power structures of the Ukrainian SSR.

Thus, there was no official denazification of Western Ukraine in the 1940s–1950s. The USSR did not adopt a law condemning the OUN-UPA (an organization whose activities are recognized as extremist and banned in the Russian Federation).

As is known, after the end of World War II, denazification was carried out in some Western countries by the decision of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, on the basis of the law on denazification. It provided for a set of measures to purify German and Austrian society from the ideas of Nazism. Subsequently, the process of denazification also affected some former satellites of the defeated Nazi Germany – Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and others.

The main disadvantage of these measures in that period was their mass character; they played the role not of a catalyst, but, on the contrary, of a retarder of these processes. With such a mass purge in German society, a second negative factor became apparent: the difference between ordinary members of the NSDAP and the ideological inspirers of the Nazi movement was practically leveled, which often allowed the latter to avoid more serious criminal

punishment. Having initially focused on working with ordinary citizens, the state authorities had to gradually soften the regime of repressive measures, including amnesties for convicted Nazis, which undermined the essence of the denazification process itself [46].

In 2022, after the start of the Special Military Operation (SVO), Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin set to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. During an interview with T. Carlson, he explained that denazification of Ukraine should be understood as the prohibition of all neo-Nazi movements and the need to get rid of those people who spread this theory [47].

In this regard, denazification in general can be presented as a process of eliminating Nazism. Penitentiary denazification, which is the subject of this article, is one of the elements of general denazification, realized through penitentiary action against specific individuals involved in committing crimes against humanity based on Nazi ideology.

Unfortunately, due to the limited scope of this article, it is impossible to pay special attention to analyzing the events taking place today in the SVO zone. However, we would like to dwell on one circumstance. Everything that is happening there today has not arisen out of nothing, but solely due to reanimation of the Bandera neo-fascist ideology. In this regard, the ideology of the neo-Banderites should be burned with a hot iron in the current conditions not only on the political fronts and battlefields of the NVO, but also in places of imprisonment, where captured Nazi supporters guilty of committing crimes against humanity end up after conviction.

In this regard, it is necessary to make appropriate amendments and additions to certain provisions of Russian criminal, criminal procedure and penal legislation. Along with this, it is advisable to develop a draft law on denazification which should define the concept of this process, as well as measures, including penitentiary measures, designed to prevent the ideology of the Banderites. It seems reasonable to establish for ideological neo-Nazis such optimum terms of imprisonment, which will help ensure their further resocialization in a normal human society. To assess the actual state of their correction, it is necessary to use methods of instrumental diagnostics of the emotional state of a person and profiling, as well as artificial intelligence technologies. Only the use of such

radical measures can ensure the achievement of the goals of punishment [48] of the neo-Ban- derites and suppress the spread of nationalist ideas.

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*Received May 18, 2024*