

UDC 930.2(477):94:352.07(477)"1941/1944"  
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.21.246911

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**Bibliographic Description of the Article:** Honcharenko, O. & Potyl'chak, O. (2021). The Activity Issue of Local Authorities of the Reich Commissariat "Ukraine" (1941 – 1944) in Modern Ukrainian Historiography. *Skhidnoievropeyskyi istorychnyi visnyk [East European Historical Bulletin]*, 21, 149–161. doi: 10.24919/2519-058X.21.246911

**THE ACTIVITY ISSUE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
OF THE REICH COMMISSARIAT "UKRAINE" (1941 – 1944)  
IN MODERN UKRAINIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the article is a historiographical analysis of researches by domestic scholars on the activities of local authorities bodies of the Civil Administration of the Reich Commissariat "Ukraine" (hereinafter – the RCU) in the vertical of the Nazi occupation regime, clarifying the main directions of these studies, determining insufficiently studied issues and outlining promising areas for further research on this topic. The research methodology is based on the scientific principles of historicism, objectivity, continuity, scientificity and systematics. To study the historiographical context of the problem, the authors used the methods of historical comparative studies, source studies, structural*

and functional, retrospective analysis. **The scientific novelty** of the study consists in the systematic analysis of the main achievements and problematic issues of domestic historiography in the field of reconstruction of one of the little-known, in general, insufficiently studied and controversial pages of the past of Ukraine during the Nazi occupation of 1941 – 1944. **The Conclusions.** The issue of functioning peculiarities of local authorities bodies subordinated to the German civil administration of the RCU is analyzed quite actively in modern Ukrainian historiography. As a result of these researches the basic directions of activity and powers of regional, city and rural administrations in social and economic, cultural and educational, municipal and household spheres are found out. Objectively contributing to the implementation of the occupation policy tasks, these local authorities worked in parallel to meet the needs of local socium under the extreme conditions of the war. The regional aspects of local authorities functioning of the RCU seem to be studied sufficiently. The authors elucidated the organizational structure, official powers, clarified the relationship with the structures of the German military and civilian occupation authorities. Despite these positive tendencies, in the scientific narrative there is some confusion in the conceptual apparatus, especially in the segment of identifying these bodies as “self-governing”, “Ukrainian” or “public”. Some researchers exaggerate the participation of the OUN and nationally oriented Ukrainian intelligentsia in the creation and activity of local authorities bodies, in particular during the period when the occupied Ukrainian lands were under control of the German temporary military administration.

**Key words:** occupation regime, local authorities body, the Reich Commissariat “Ukraine”, self-government, temporary military administration.

## ПРОБЛЕМА ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ОРГАНІВ МІСЦЕВОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ РАЙХСКОМІСАРІАТУ “УКРАЇНА” (1941 – 1944) У СУЧАСНІЙ УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ІСТОРИОГРАФІЇ

**Анотація.** Метою статті є історіографічний аналіз досліджень вітчизняних вчених з проблематики діяльності установ місцевого управління цивільної адміністрації Райхскомісаріату “Україна” (далі – РКУ) у вертикалі органів нацистського окупаційного режиму, з’ясування головних напрямів цих студій, виявлення недостатньо вивчених питань та окреслення перспективних напрямів подальших досліджень цієї тематики. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на наукових принципах історизму, об’єктивності, наступності, науковості та системності. Для студіювання історіографічного контексту проблеми автори застосовують методи історичної компаративістики, джерелознавчого, структурно-функціонального та ретроспективного аналізу. **Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає у системному аналізі основних здобутків і проблемних питань вітчизняної історіографії у сфері реконструкції однієї з маловідомих, назагал недостатньо вивчених і контрверсійних сторінок минулого України доби нацистської окупації 1941 – 1944 рр. **Висновки.** Проблематика особливостей функціонування органів місцевого управління, підпорядкованих німецькій цивільній адміністрації РКУ, в сучасній українській історіографії наразі розробляється доволі активно. У результаті цих досліджень з’ясовано основні напрями діяльності та повноваження районних, міських і сільських управ у соціально-економічній, культурно-освітній, комунальній та побутовій сферах. Об’єктивно сприяючи реалізації завдань окупаційної політики, ці низові управлінські структури паралельно працювали й на забезпечення в екстремальних умовах війни потреб місцевого соціуму. Достатньо вивченими виглядають регіональні аспекти функціонування органів місцевого управління РКУ. Авторами встановлено їх організаційну структуру, службові повноваження, з’ясовано взаємостосунки зі структурами німецької військової та цивільної окупаційної влади. Попри ці позитивні тенденції, напрацьований науковий наратив не позбавлений певної плутанини в понятійному апараті, особливо у сегменті ідентифікації цих органів як “самоврядних”, “українських” або ж “громадських”. Окремі дослідники гіперболізують участь осередків ОУН і національно орієнтованої української інтелігенції у створенні та діяльності інституцій місцевої влади, зокрема у період перебування окупованих українських земель під контролем тимчасової німецької військової адміністрації.

**Ключові слова:** окупаційний режим, орган місцевого управління, Райхскомісаріат “Україна”, самоврядування, тимчасова військова адміністрація.

**The Problem Statement.** Documentary reconstruction of the objective events picture of the history of World War II and the Nazi occupation regime, established and maintained by the Nazis in Ukraine in 1941 – 1944, belongs to the range of leading objectives of modern domestic historiography. This process is facilitated by both democratization of a public life in the country and almost complete, in contrast to the Soviet period of time, openness of archival sources, in particular the so-called “occupation funds”. Analyzing the occupation past in the aspect of power and society, modern researchers inevitably face the need to clarify the place and role of local authorities, which in the tradition of the post-Soviet historiography continue to be not quite justifiably called “subsidiary”, in the system of the “new order” established on the territory and population of the Reich Commissariat “Ukraine”. At the same time, the issue of the local authorities bodies functioning of the RCU are analyzed either superficially, within the framework of research on other aspects of the occupation period, or are singled out in a special subject of scientific research.

**The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications.** Nowadays, domestic historical science has a fairly wide range of different in volume, depth and quality of scientific analysis of historical works, the subject of study which are certain aspects and features of rural, township and city administrations on the territory of the RCU, the functional component of these local authorities bodies is analyzed in the vertical of the Nazi “new order”. At the same time, there is still a lack of deep historiographical analysis of the outlined range of issues. In general, these attempts were made by the authors of qualification research for Candidate of Sciences and Doctor of Sciences Degrees, and were published in separate sections of monographs by dissertators as approbation results of doctoral research. In professional scientific journals publications on this topic also belong to the post-graduates and were written by them in accordance with the procedure requirements for the qualifications research.

In the sphere of thematic special researches in which there were various, in particular regional aspects of local authorities bodies functioning of the RCU, there should be mentioned the monographs by Oleksiy Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2011), Serhiy Stelnykovich (Stelnykovich, 2015; Stelnykovich, 2016), Yuri Levchenko (Levchenko, 2017), the dissertation researches of Lina Melnichuk (Melnichuk, 2013b), Bohdan Zek (Zek, 2016), Oleksandr Kostiuchok (Kostiuchok, 2012), Yuri Levchenko (Levchenko, 2015), Oleksandr Tishyn (Tishyn, 2020). There are also special monographic studies by O. Honcharenko and Mykhailo Kunytsky, in which the establishment and work issues of local authorities bodies of the RCU are analyzed (Honcharenko, 2014; Kunytsky, 2014). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of separate historiographical studies of the outlined scientific achievements. One of these historiographical studies has been recently published by the co-author of this article (Honcharenko, 2020b). Other similar studies are mostly small publications by Tetiana Zabolotna, L. Melnichuk and A. Ivanenko, the authors of which analyze some works of researchers known to them (Zabolotna, 2010; Melnichuk, 2012; Ivanenko, 2019b). It should be also mentioned that with few exceptions (Honcharenko, 2010; Honcharenko, 2020a), in modern domestic historiography there are almost no works, the subject of which is the activities of village and regional administrations under the Nazi occupation.

**The purpose of the article** is a historiographical analysis of researches by domestic historians on the activities of local authorities bodies of the civil administration of the RCU in the vertical of the Nazi occupation regime, clarifying the main directions of these studies, identifying insufficiently studied issues and outlining perspective areas for further research on this topic.

**The Main Material Statement.** Researches on the reconstruction of the functional activities of local authorities bodies of the RCU, carried out by modern researchers, are mostly concentrated in several problem-thematic niches. There are the following ones among them: determining the legal status of local authorities bodies; finding out their place in the hierarchical vertical of the German occupation authorities; studying the facts of direct participation of local authorities officials in providing the repressive measures of the Nazis (including the Holocaust); analyzing the social and legal status of administrations employees of different levels; finding out the reasons for the participation of local population in the work of these authorities bodies.

Analyzing the work of modern Ukrainian researchers in the thematic context outlined in the title of the article, it is impossible to ignore the scientific heritage of Mykhailo Vasyliovych Koval, a famous historian, a researcher of the Ukrainian history during World War II (1939 – 1945). He was one of the first titled and well-known researcher in the domestic historians world, who in the mid-1990s made the so-called radical departure from the Soviet historiographical tradition and outlined a number of scientific problems of the Ukrainian history during the Nazi occupation, which remain completely or partially unanalyzed even nowadays. Among other problems of the occupation past, which, according to M. Koval, needed to be reconsidered, the researcher named the work of local authorities bodies on the Nazi-occupied territories. Presenting the German strategic line in conquered Ukraine as purely colonial, the historian noted that without the participation of local authorities, the Nazis would not have been able to implement in practice certain tasks of the occupation policy so quickly (Koval, 1999). The conceptual nature of M. Koval's research did not allow the author to dwell on clarifying the structure or official competence of local authorities bodies in detail.

In the mid-1990s Pavlo Rekotov initiated the tradition of an interdisciplinary historical and legal analysis of administrative bodies establishment and activity of the Nazi occupation regime. The author's historical research is characterized by the application of the legal science methods. The scientist clearly identifies local authorities bodies both during the period when the territory of Ukraine was in the area of responsibility of the temporary military administration, and after their transfer to the RCU. Having determined the organizational structure of the city, district and village administrations established by military officials, the researcher claimed that the RCU administration maintained the same approaches in its organizational and administrative activities.

Despite the undeniably positive features of P. Rekotov's researches, they did not do without obviously erroneous approaches in analyzing the nature of the RCU local authorities. These are the characteristics of the RCU rural and urban administrations proposed by the scientist as "public administrations" and "self-government bodies" (Rekotov, 1997). Describing local authorities as "self-government bodies", the researcher began a false tradition of identifying such local authorities bodies. These local authorities bodies under the Nazi occupation regime were not and could not be self-governing and have at least some signs of independence in decision-making. It should be noted that such authorities as "public administrations" did not operate in the military occupation zone or in the RCU. A short period of "public administrations" operation during the first weeks of the German occupation, mainly in the western regions of Ukraine, did not form any experience, because these bodies were liquidated.

Clarifying the typical organizational structure of local authorities bodies, P. Rekotov did not take into account some independence of the German military and civilian administrators in this issue. This independence led to the approval of different officials in staff lists of village and city administrations, to constant transformations, to the search of optimal management models, and etc.

By analogy with P. Rekotov, Ivan Terliuk characterizes a typical structure of local authorities bodies. As a result, for some reason, the control of police departments activity was included into the list of official powers of local authorities bodies (Terliuk, 2009). The researchers did not take into consideration the fact that purely nominal inclusion of police departments into the staff lists of local authorities bodies did not mean the transfer of power to local authorities to control the activity of police departments. Moreover, the German administration sought to limit the powers of local authorities as much as possible, to turn them into an appendage necessary for the implementation of the main tasks of the occupation policy.

Oleksandr Lysenko, one of the leading researchers of the occupation period, does not consider the local authorities bodies established by the German authorities to be self-governing either. On the contrary, he argues that these local bodies, by their nature and official competence, were much closer to the subsidiary authorities than to the self-governing ones (Lysenko, 2009). Similar conceptual conclusions were developed by the historian in other, later publications (Honcharenko, 2010), as well as in a joint generalizing monograph by O. Honcharenko and M. Kunytsky (Honcharenko, 2014).

L. Melnichuk's dissertation is the only special research which deals with the study of the activity of local authorities bodies of the RCU. The author of this dissertation quite reasonably, on the basis of the analysis of various layers of archival sources, singles out the main directions of local authorities activity, proves their complete dependence on the German administration of the Reich Commissariat. L. Melnichuk states that the reason for the emergence of a certain degree of autonomy in the activity of city and district authorities was the administrative procedures introduced by regional and local leaders of the German authorities of the RCU. However, any act of disobedience or independence was punished by the German authorities severely and without any hesitation (Melnichuk, 2014).

The participation of local authorities in the economic and tax spheres was reconstructed in the works of Oleksandr Potylchak (Potylchak, 1999), Ihor Vietrov (Vietrov, 1999), Natalia Handrabura (Handrabura, 2017), Natalia Hlushenok (Hlushenok, 2005), Oleksandr Perekhrest (Perekhrest, 2011), M. Kunytsky (Kunytsky, 2019a, 2019b). This direction of local authorities activity is interpreted by the researchers as the one that corresponds to the general, strategic line of the German administration regarding the organization of an overall and openly predatory exploitation of all available resources of Ukraine to provide Germany and the Wehrmacht with food and raw materials. It is obvious that without a proper activity of local authorities bodies, the German occupation administration would not have been able to implement strategic and vital tasks under conditions of a total war.

The socio-cultural sphere in the local authorities activities during the occupation period was also the subject of research by modern domestic historians. These aspects of local authorities activities were studied by Inna Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2012), O. Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2014), Volodymyr Hinda (Hinda, 2007), O. Potylchak (Potylchak, 2006), Iryna Spudka (Spudka, 2013), Bohdan Kytsak (Kytsak, 2018). These authors review and analyze the activities of local authorities bodies in the field of resumption of general and vocational education. Historians interpret such steps of the occupation authorities as forced and caused by an acute shortage of qualified personnel in almost all sectors of economy and utilities. Domestic researchers focus on the provision of certain forms of social assistance to the local population, the organization of a medical care by the local authorities bodies.

A characteristic feature of a current state of researches on the activities of local authorities bodies of the occupation period is an active elaboration of regional thematic niches of the

outlined issue. Therefore, the objective of such researches is to single out and analyze certain territorial specifics, which was found out in the activity of local authorities bodies. For example, S. Stelnykovich states that local authorities bodies established by the occupation administration of “Zhytomyr” General District were essentially subsidiary formations. The researcher emphasizes that some of these local authorities bodies were established by members of local branches of both factions of the OUN, “Polissia Sich”, as well as individual representatives of the Ukrainian national intelligentsia. The specificity of this region was functioning of the Belarusian subsidiary administration at the beginning of the occupation. However, with the establishment of the RCU, the German occupation administration began a systematic elimination of the influence of nationalists on local authorities bodies, and previously controlled by nationalists various levels of authorities came under a total control of the German administration (Stelnykovich, 2016).

Regional features of local authorities bodies activities in different administrative districts of the RCU were analyzed by Valentyna Vlasenko (2013), Serhiy Ivanov (Ivanov, 2017), Volodymyr Udovik (Udovik, 2005), Bohdan Zek (Zek, 2016), T. Zabolotna (Zabolotna, 2010), O. Kostyuchok (Kostyuchok, 2012), Volodymyr Orliansky and Oleksandr Tedeiev (Orliansky & Tedeiev, 2010), Yuriy Oliynyk and Oleksandr Zavalniuk (Oliynyk & Zavalniuk, 2012). Clearly defined territorial issues of their studies relate to the analysis of the main areas of activity of local authorities, mostly in the socio-economic, cultural, educational and household spheres. It is also important that in their works the above mentioned authors trace the transformations and changes, which took place in the activity of local authorities bodies, especially after their transition under control of the civil administration of the RCU. However, there were recurrences of erroneous opinions of the 1990s concerning the nature of local authorities bodies activities during the occupation period as “self-governing”.

Valentyna Shaikan analyzes the issue of the local authorities activity in the context of collaborationism manifestations on the occupied territory of Ukraine. The researcher elucidates different activity areas of local authorities, determines their structure, analyzes the activities of individual units, in particular, legal departments; in the context of collaborationism phenomenon she characterizes the activity of individual executives and ordinary employees (Shaikan, 2005). A. Ivanenko analyzes such a specific area of activity of local authorities as the establishment of a regulatory framework for the application of occupation criminal and civil law and justice (Ivanenko, 2019b).

Peculiarities of personnel formation of local authorities bodies on the territory of the RCU were studied by M. Kunytsky. According to the historian, the social and legal status of administrations employees of different levels was different from the rest of the civilian population and was determined, primarily, by the professional powers. Endowed with considerable rights, employees of district, city and village administrations had a privileged position. Their place between the German authorities and the local population was conditioned by the fact that the Nazis set them specific tasks, without a particular resorting to the means and methods of their implementation. The historian is convinced that the heads of administrations, although they could, within the limits of the issued normative prescriptions, at their own discretion determine the directions of realization of the tasks set by the occupiers, however, this fact did not mean their independence from the German administration (Kunytsky, 2014).

M. Koval also made some significant remarks concerning the staff of local authorities. The researcher argued that representatives of various social groups of the population of Ukraine went to work for the occupation authorities bodies. The researcher considered such

behavior of people to be one of the consequences of the Bolshevik policy during the period of the 1920s and the 1930s (Koval, 1999).

Ihor Shakhraichuk, a researcher of Dnipropetrovsk city administration during the years of occupation, emphasized that in the activity of this administrative body took part mainly those citizens, who were oppressed by the Soviet authorities during the pre-war period, such as the former dispossessed, as well as representatives of the Bandera underground. In addition, the researcher pays tribute to the city administration in providing all possible social assistance to the poorest strata of the city population (Shakhraichuk, 2020). Another researcher of the history of Dnipropetrovsk during the Nazi occupation, Vladyslav Borysov, studies the issue of local intelligentsia participation in the activity of Dnipropetrovsk city administration. According to the author, despite solving the tasks on social assistance to the local population and the work to preserve the municipal infrastructure of the city, the practical activities of city administration officials were subordinated to the political, ideological and economic needs of the German authorities in general (Borysov, 2020).

One of the popular genres of researches on the occupation past is historical biographic studies. The subject of such researches is the details of the life and work of individual heads of local authorities. The authors: Ihor Verba (Verba, 1999), Vitaliy Hedz (Hedz, 2014), Oleksandr Kucheruk (Kucheruk, 2007), researching the personal stories of such people, not only dwell on the characteristics of these mostly extraordinary personalities, but also try to find out for what reasons and life circumstances these people agreed to work in the occupation apparatus of power. Characteristic features of the majority of these researches are avoiding any labelling of "traitors", who went to the service of the occupiers, and the depiction of the professional activities of these people in a much broader context of events. In particular, it concerns the activities of local authorities heads aimed at helping the local population to survive under the extreme conditions of the war.

The degree and nature of the participation of representatives of the local authorities bodies in providing repressive and punitive measures is an extremely difficult and contradictory issue, which researchers of the occupation period try to find out. It is obvious that local authorities did not have punitive functions in their list of powers. However, by their daily activities they formed the very system of occupation administration. Following the regulatory framework of the German authorities, local authorities ensured punitive actions, including those directed against the Jewish population of Ukraine. These aspects of local authorities activities are emphasized by O. Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2010) and M. Kunytsky (Kunytsky, 2014).

A clear feature of the modern historiographical process in the context of research on the Nazi occupation regime in Ukraine is the formation of a national school of the Holocaust researchers. Some of its researchers consider, among other issues, the problems of local authorities bodies involvement in providing measures for the Nazi repression against the Jews. The limited scope of this publication does not allow us to do a detailed analysis of the entire layer of such studies. Therefore, we dwell on historiographical researches on this issue. In particular, the insufficient study of the issue of local authorities bodies participation in the Holocaust is emphasized by O. Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2017) and Maryna Strilchuk (Strilchuk, 2018) in their publications. Some facts of the participation of local authorities bodies in the Holocaust were covered on the pages of the monograph by M. Kunytsky (Kunytsky, 2014), in the publications by Faina Vynokurova (Vynokurova, 2009) and Ihor Shchupak (Shchupak, 2012).

The participation of Dnipropetrovsk city administration in the registration of the local Jewish population is analyzed, in particular in a collective monograph edited by I. Shchupak.

The authors of the monograph convince us that the local authorities did not organize the Holocaust in Dnipropetrovsk. Nevertheless, the local authorities, following the German regulations, carried out measures for the operational registration of the city Jewish population, distributed and used confiscated property for their own purposes. It is important that non-compliance with the orders of the city administration threatened the heads and owners of houses with repressions “according to the laws of wartime”. The same can be said about discriminatory decisions of local authorities concerning food supply of the Jewish population of the city, who was deprived of food totally (Shchupak, 2017).

Roman Mykhalchuk analyzes organization and carrying out of passport-registration actions by local authorities of Rivne region. According to the text of his publication, the heads of local authorities took the appropriate measures not on their own initiative, but only on the basis of the mandatory German directives (Mykhalchuk, 2011). This author also did the research on the economic aspects of the Holocaust in the region. R. Mykhalchuk proves the fact of participation of local authorities of Rivne region in the robbery of real and movable property, which belonged to the Jews, in particular after the mass murders of the latter. All property of the Jewish population was registered by local authorities bodies, and a large part of it was recorded on the balance sheets of these authorities bodies after the murder of people (Mykhalchuk, 2013). R. Mykhalchuk drew the conclusion that the local authorities of Rivne region took part in the direct economic exploitation of these collective victims of the occupation regime (Mykhalchuk, 2015). The same economic aspects of the Holocaust, in particular the participation of local authorities employees, but on the example of Kyiv region, were analyzed by O. Honcharenko (Honcharenko, 2006).

**The Conclusion.** Nowadays, the peculiarities issues of functioning of local authorities bodies subordinated to the German civil administration of the RCU is analyzed quite actively in modern Ukrainian historiography. As a result of these researches the basic directions of activity and powers of regional, city and village administrations were found out in socio-economic, cultural and educational, municipal and household spheres. Objectively contributing to the tasks implementation of the occupation policy, these local authorities bodies worked in parallel to meet the needs of local socium under extreme conditions of the war.

The regional aspects of the local authorities bodies functioning of the RCU are studied sufficiently. The authors elucidated the organizational structure, official powers, clarified the relationship with the structures of the German military and civilian occupation authorities. Despite these positive tendencies, in this scientific narrative there is some confusion in the conceptual apparatus, especially in the segment of identification of these bodies as “self-governing”, “Ukrainian” or “public”.

Some researchers exaggerate the participation of the OUN and nationally oriented Ukrainian intelligentsia in the establishment and activity of local authorities bodies, in particular during the period when the occupied Ukrainian lands were under the control of the temporary German military administration.

The reasons for the participation of representatives of the Ukrainian civilian population in the work of local authorities bodies are largely explained by the consequences of the pre-war Soviet reality, or by the desire of people to survive on their own and save the lives of their loved ones under the extreme conditions of the war and occupation.

The participation of local authorities bodies of various levels in providing measures for the Holocaust remains a relatively insufficiently studied area of local authorities activity. Researchers, who work in this problem-based niche, mostly consider the participation of



local authorities bodies in passport and registration activities and in organized property looting of the Jewish population.

**Acknowledgement.** The authors are sincerely grateful to all members of the editorial board for the advice provided during the preparation of the article for publishing.

**Funding.** The authors did not receive any financial support for doing the research and its publishing. publication.

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*The article was received November 21, 2020.  
Article recommended for publishing 24/11/2021.*