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The establishment of the first security and intelligence organs of the Ukrainian People's Republic: Historical experience and lessons (1917-1918)

Abstract. The importance of this study is due to the need for reconstruction of the process of establishment of national security and intelligence bodies in the course of formation of Ukrainian statehood in 1917-1918. The work was aimed at determining the historical prerequisites, organisational structure, functions and effectiveness of the first special security and intelligence bodies of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The source base comprised published scholarly works, normative acts of the period, and the memoir legacy of participants in the events, processed using historical-genetic, historical-systemic, retrospective, and biographical methods, with the application of critical analysis and cross-referencing of sources. It has been established that the initial attempts to institutionalise the security sector were situational in nature and were implemented through temporary structures – the Special Committee for the Protection of the Revolution and the Regional Committee for the Protection of the Revolution in Ukraine, which were engaged in countering political crises, armed insurrections, and external intervention. The formation of intelligence structures under the General Staff is traced, specifically the establishment of an intelligence sub-unit in March 1918 and its reorganisation into a department of the First Quartermaster General's Office under the leadership of V.V. Kolosovskiy. An analysis of the interaction between Ukrainian services and the intelligence agencies of Germany and Austria-Hungary, which did not acquire a character of parity, has been conducted. The determining factors behind the incapacity of the security organs have been identified. These factors are defined as a lack of professional cadres, insufficient funding, internal political contradictions, and the leadership's distrust of the special services. The dominance of socialist orientations and delays in building security institutions, along with the involvement of the special services in the internal political struggle, particularly in the case of banker A. Dobryi, preceded the armed dissolution of the government in the spring of 1918. It is substantiated that the absence of capable intelligence and counter-intelligence was one of the factors in the fall of the Central Rada. The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that the systematised factual material and the established chronology of the security sector's formation during the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic's establishment can be used for the preparation of synthetic works on the history of national special services

Keywords: army; Bolsheviks; agent network; protection of the revolution; insurrection

Introduction

The capacity of intelligence and counter-intelligence organs to promptly detect, pre-empt, and neutralise internal and external threats is among the factors upon which the preservation of state sovereignty in conditions of external aggression depends. Such a dependence lends

cognitive significance to the historical experience of forming security institutions during periods of state revival, as it allows one to trace the regularities of building the security sector in a state emerging under adverse military-political circumstances. The Ukrainian Revolution of

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1917-1921 is suitable for such an analysis: the security apparatus emerged simultaneously with the disintegration of the imperial administration, an undeclared war on the part of Soviet Russia, and internal political struggle, and these circumstances deprived the government of the time and resources for systematic institutionalisation. The initial segment of this process – the era of the Ukrainian Central Rada – has received uneven coverage. Attention has been drawn primarily to the later stages of state-building, the Hetmanate and Directory periods, or to isolated structures, whereas the organisational framework of the security organs of the Central Rada era, their effectiveness, and the loss of statehood have not yet been correlated within a single reconstruction.

The external conditions of Ukrainian statehood's functioning and its perception by foreign governments are reflected in the study by T. Kovács (2025), based on diplomatic dispatches of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry from the National Archives of Hungary. According to these materials, the question of Ukrainian independence constituted a genuine political interest for the Hungarian side, and Ukraine was considered a potential ally even after the war's end; concurrently, the researcher highlighted the difficulties of obtaining such intelligence, doubts regarding its reliability, and the dependence of forecasts for the region on the stance of neighbouring states, primarily Poland. Another dimension – theoretical conceptions of military intelligence among participants in the liberation struggle – was reconstructed by I. Monolatiy (2025) based on publications of the Ukrainian emigration during the interwar period; intelligence in these texts is treated primarily as an army service of external intelligence, tasked with secretly gathering and analysing information and deploying an agent network on enemy territory, with the Polish and French models serving as exemplars of structural organisation within the General Staff. Both studies delineate the external reference points and theoretical foundations of intelligence but leave the implementation of these conceptions in the concrete institutions of the Central Rada era undisclosed. The normative and administrative foundations of law enforcement and security activities have been elaborated in historical-legal studies. Y.V. Kryvytskyi (2025) demonstrated that the formation of the Central Rada's law enforcement system combined revolutionary expediency, normative inheritance from the Provisional Government, and the search for its own democratic models; his analysis of the people's militia, internal affairs organs, security structures, the Free Cossacks, and border guards led him to the conclusion that the practical implementation of adopted decisions was hampered by a lack of resources, weak coordination between central and local organs, low professional training of cadres, and political instability. The administrative component of these processes was illuminated by O.V. Yatsyno (2024) through an analysis of the actions of public administration bodies regarding army development and attendant difficulties. The aforementioned works are focused on the law enforcement and military-administrative dimensions, owing to which the actual intelligence and counter-intelligence structures remain on their periphery.

Specific security structures and the forms of their activity have been reproduced on a heterogeneous source

base. B. Malynovsky (2024) investigated the network of clandestine armed cells formed in the spring of 1918 to protect the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) from attempted overthrow: as the situation of the republic's leadership deteriorated, the Committee for the Salvation of Ukraine in Kyiv and a cell of the "Young Ukraine" society in Zvenyhorodka county emerged at the initiative of leading figures of the socialist parties, with members of the Council of People's Ministers entering the security leadership. The activities of Ukrainian services in exile were reconstructed by M. Kret (2025), who, using documents of Soviet state security organs, reconstructed the structure, functions, operational methods, and personnel policy of the 2nd Department of the General Staff under the leadership of V. Zmiienko, in particular the mechanisms of recruiting agents, communication channels, and methods of conspiracy. The intelligence activities of the State Centre of the UPR in 1926-1936 were characterised by I. Servetsky & O. Sushko (2025), who linked the re-establishment of the special services to Poland's political support and to the role of emigration leaders in deploying an agent network across European states.

The state of scholarly treatment of the topic was summarised by O.S. Lisov (2016) in a historiographical study systematising the most recent contributions to the history of intelligence and counter-intelligence of Ukraine from 1917-1991. A separate, informational dimension of the confrontation was revealed by V. Maraiev (2020): according to his observations, the governments of the UPR and the Ukrainian State failed to establish effective counter-propaganda against Bolshevik agitation, which was hindered by the weakness of the national movement, the spread of socialist ideas, and political instability. The corpus of processed works has laid the factual groundwork for the topic; however, the institutional structure of the security organs has not been correlated therein with the results of specific operations, owing to which it remains unclear how organisational decisions impacted the capacity to counter threats.

Thus, a holistic reconstruction is required of the evolution of the security organs of the Central Rada era as a single system, the connection between their organisational dynamics and the effectiveness of individual actions, and the extent of institutional weakness's influence on the loss of statehood; there is a lack of works in which intelligence, counter-intelligence, and law enforcement organs are examined in their interrelationship, which confirms the topic's relevance to the broader problem of sovereignty's dependence on the institutional capacity of the apparatus. The aim of the research was to elucidate the regularities of the institutional formation of the UPR security sector during the Central Rada era and the factors that determined its functional capacity. The research objectives encompassed outlining the preconditions for the institutionalisation of security structures, tracing the organisational evolution of intelligence and counter-intelligence, and identifying the personnel, financial, and ideological factors that defined the limits of their effectiveness.

Materials and Methods

By its type, the study is theoretical. The research object is defined as the process of establishing the security and

intelligence agencies of the Ukrainian People's Republic during the era of the Central Rada. The research subject comprises the organisational forms, functions, personnel provision, and effectiveness of the security and intelligence structures of the UNR from March 1917 to April 1918. The chronological boundaries of the study encompass the period from March 1917, when the formation of situational security bodies commenced with the establishment of the Ukrainian Central Rada, until the end of April 1918, when the change of power and the proclamation of the Ukrainian State brought the period of intelligence and counter-intelligence development under the Central Rada to a close.

The source base consists of published scholarly studies on the history of Ukrainian state-building, normative acts of the period, and the memoir heritage of participants in the events. The normative component of the source base encompassed the Universals of the Ukrainian Central Rada, in particular the Universal of the Ukrainian Central Council (III) (1917), by which the Ukrainian People's Republic was proclaimed, as well as the administrative documents of central departments, including the circular letter of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the UNR No. 312 of 25 March 1918 concerning the application of resolutions in the sphere of state security (Orders of the Ministry of Post..., 1918). These documents made it possible to establish the legal basis for the activity of counter-intelligence structures and to trace the normative continuity from the acts of the Provisional Government. The memoir component encompassed the recollections of direct participants in the events – D. Doroshenko (1969), who held the post of provincial commissar during the era of the Central Rada, and the military figure M. Omelianovych-Pavlenko (2007). The testimony of the former was drawn upon to characterise the personnel policy of the General Secretary of Military Affairs and the leadership's attitude towards professional officers; the testimony of the latter was used to assess the state of the personnel of the General Staff. The memoir evidence was processed with due regard for the subjectivity of the authors' assessments and the memoirists' political stances, and its collation with the data from normative documents and scholarly studies made it possible to delimit reliable data from the subjective assessments of contemporaries and to clarify the chronology and circumstances of organisational changes. The material was systematised according to the problem-chronological principle, which reconciles the sequence of events with the logic of the organisational development of the security apparatus.

The historical-genetic method was applied to the study of the origins and stages of the formation of the UNR's security agencies, in particular to the process of creating the armed forces and military institutions of 1917-1918, on the basis of which the intelligence units of the General Staff subsequently emerged. The work of V. Holubko (1997), devoted to the formation of the UNR Army, served as the source of factual material for this analysis. The application of the method made it possible to reconstruct the genesis of the military-organisational substratum, without which the development of military intelligence agencies was impossible, to establish the initial conditions in which the formation of the special

services commenced, and to trace the dependence of intelligence institutions on the state of the regular army. The historical-systemic method was used in the analysis of the security sector of the UNR as an interconnected system. The system components were the internal security bodies in the structure of the General Secretariat, then the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the military intelligence of the General Staff, counter-intelligence units, the militia and the irregular formations of the Free Cossacks. The method made it possible to analyse the structure, functions and institutional connections of these components, to separate the internal security bodies from the military intelligence structures by their functions and to examine the interaction between the civil and military dimensions of security. The factual basis for the systemic analysis was the monograph by V.S. Sidak (1998).

With the help of the retrospective method, the role of the stage of 1917-1918 in the general trajectory of the formation of the national special services was assessed. The consequences of the organisational decisions of the Central Rada era were analysed, which enabled to establish the importance of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff as the first example of state military intelligence, to determine which of these decisions were duplicated at later stages, and to assess the durability of the foundations laid down in this period. The factual material for the retrospective assessment was borrowed from the review work of O. Skrypnyk (2020) on a long period of the history of Ukrainian intelligence. The biographical method has been used to clarify the role of the main figures in the formation of the security structures of the Central Rada period – V.V. Kolosovskiy and M.O. Krasovskiy. The analysis included data on the place of origin, professional training, prior service experience, and functions performed in the state apparatus of the UNR, which made it possible to reveal the personnel dimension of the formation of the special services and to determine the role of the specified persons in the formation of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff and the internal security bodies of the capital. The collective work devoted to the heads of Ukrainian foreign intelligence (Khomenko *et al.*, 2011) served as the source of biographical data. The combined application of the aforementioned methods ensured the reconstruction of the process of institutionalisation of the security and intelligence agencies of the UNR during the Central Rada era and the substantiation of conclusions regarding the systemic nature of their ineffectiveness.

Results

Prerequisites and reasons for the creation of the UNR's security and intelligence agencies. The collapse of the Russian Empire as a result of the February Revolution in the spring of 1917 triggered centrifugal processes across the territory of the former state. The abdication of Emperor Nicholas II and the transfer of power to the Provisional Government created a power vacuum, which began to be filled by national liberation, socialist, and anarchist movements (Beavor, 2022). In Ukraine, this process was spearheaded by the Ukrainian Central Rada (UCR), established on 17 March 1917 in Kyiv (Yekelchuk, 2020). At the initial stage (before the issuance of the First Universal on 23 June 1917), the Central Rada fulfilled the role

of a national-cultural and coordination centre, uniting representatives of Ukrainian political parties, scholarly, educational, cooperative, student, and military organisations under the chairmanship of M.S. Hrushevskyi.

The early stage of Ukrainian state-building was characterised by the romanticisation of revolutionary transformations. Socialist and pacifist views predominated among the leadership of the Central Rada. A segment of the Ukrainian political elite, in particular V.K. Vynnychenko and M.S. Hrushevskyi, was oriented towards coexistence within a democratic federal Russia (Wilson, 2022). This strategic vision predetermined a diminished attention to the creation of regular armed forces and special services. The absence of national security, intelligence, and counter-intelligence structures deprived the Central Rada of information about threats that were forming in the foreign-political arena and within the country. The activity of Russian state, military, and revolutionary structures on the territory of Ukraine did not cease.

The first challenge that compelled the Ukrainian leadership to resort to the creation of situational security bodies was the Kornilov Affair of 1917. In order to prevent the attempt by the Russian General L.G. Kornilov to establish a military dictatorship, on 28 August 1917, at a joint meeting of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Kyiv, on the initiative of the Ukrainian Central Rada, a Special Committee for the Protection of the Revolution was established under the General Secretariat. This body included the Commander of the Kyiv Military District, K.M. Oberuchev, the Chief of Militia, the Mayor, the chairmen of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, as well as representatives of the leading political parties. The principal task of the committee was defined as organising the struggle against the Kornilov movement. During its period of activity, the committee organised the defence of Kyiv, drawing upon militia detachments, Cossacks, military cadets, and combat squads, removed from their posts several military and state officials suspected of sympathising with L.G. Kornilov, and shut down the newspaper "Kievlyanin". The effectiveness of the body was limited by the resistance of K.M. Oberuchev, who ignored the resolutions of the Ukrainian Central Rada. Following the suppression of the Kornilov uprising, in accordance with a decree of the Provisional Government, the committee ceased its activity on 2 September 1917. The Special Committee for the Protection of the Revolution became the first practical experience of coordinating administrative and coercive efforts to counteract threats to the state order during the period of the Ukrainian Revolution. Its insufficient effectiveness prompted the search for new organisational forms. As early as 31 August 1917, the head of the Ukrainian General Military Committee, S.V. Petliura, sent a letter under the classification "secret" to the General Secretariat, in which he proposed the creation of a regional body under the General Secretariat for the resolute struggle against counter-revolution on the territory of Ukraine (Sidak, 1998). A distinctive feature of the project was the proposal to include in the body's composition representatives not only of official institutions but also of civic associations, while structures controlling transport, communication routes, and means of communication were to become collective members. The head of the General Secretariat or one of

the General Secretaries, acting on the government's commission, was envisioned as the head of the body; it was planned that information, military, and investigative commissions would function under him. The idea of Petliura's regional body was not implemented at the time, as Ukrainian politicians viewed such structures as temporary.

The White movement also possessed its own clandestine network: in the autumn of 1917, an underground organisation known as the "Azbuka" ("Alphabet"), headed by V.V. Shulgin, operated on the territory of Ukraine, gathering political intelligence for the command of the White Guard forces (Hlibischuk *et al.*, 2022). However, the principal factor that engendered the need for permanent special services was the aggression of Bolshevik Russia. Following the armed coup in Petrograd at the end of October (Old Style) 1917 and the overthrow of the Provisional Government, the military-political situation underwent a fundamental shift. The Council of People's Commissars launched against the Ukrainian People's Republic, proclaimed by the Third Universal of the Ukrainian Central Council (1917) on 7 (20) November 1917, initially covert, and subsequently overt, undeclared military aggression. This war was accompanied by the subversive activities of Bolshevik agents and agitators in the rear of the Ukrainian forces, the instigation of armed insurrections – the most notorious of which were the Bolshevik uprisings in Kyiv in November 1917 and at the "Arsenal" plant in January 1918 – as well as acts of sabotage targeting transport infrastructure.

To lend the aggression the appearance of an internal conflict, the Bolsheviks proclaimed a puppet Soviet government in Kharkiv. In response to the Petrograd coup, the Ukrainian Central Council condemned it and, on the night of 7-8 November 1917, at a closed joint session of the Minor Council with representatives of revolutionary organisations, established the Regional Committee for the Protection of the Revolution in Ukraine to address matters of military defence and state security. M.V. Porsh was elected chairman of the committee. The body failed to achieve its designated objectives and proved unable to establish control even within Kyiv, where its directives were disregarded by the command of the Kyiv Military District; consequently, the Minor Council soon adopted a resolution to dissolve it, and its functions were transferred to the General Secretariat. The Ukrainian People's Republic's need for its own special services during the period of the Central Council was dictated by the very nature of state sovereignty. Without a system for gathering anticipatory intelligence on adversaries' intentions, mechanisms for preventing sabotage, protecting state secrets, and neutralising hostile agents, the preservation of independence was severely impeded. The realisation that national security could not rest solely upon political declarations, Universals, and the norms of international law compelled the Ukrainian government in late 1917 and early 1918 to initiate the process of institutionalising intelligence and counter-intelligence organs – a process attended by errors and political contradictions (Sidak, 1998). Thus, the unsuccessful experience of the Regional Committee for the Protection of the Revolution in Ukraine demonstrated that situational bodies, constituted on the basis of political representation, were incapable of discharging state security functions;

consequently, the establishment of fully-fledged special services acquired the character of an urgent state-building task for the Ukrainian People's Republic.

The establishment and organisational principles of the security and intelligence bodies of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The process of forming the first intelligence and counter-intelligence organs of the Ukrainian People's Republic during the era of the Central Council was not planned in advance. It was carried out under conditions of constant political pressure, ideological disputes, instability, and a de facto state of war with Soviet Russia. The

institutionalisation of the security system developed along two parallel trajectories: through the structures of the General Secretariat of Internal Affairs, tasked with ensuring internal security and counter-intelligence, and through the development of military intelligence within the framework of the General Secretariat of Military Affairs, subsequently the Ministry of War (Sidak, 1998). The resulting organisational structure of the Ukrainian People's Republic's security sector, which had taken shape by April 1918 and integrated both trajectories in the absence of a unified coordinating body, is summarised in the diagram (Fig. 1).

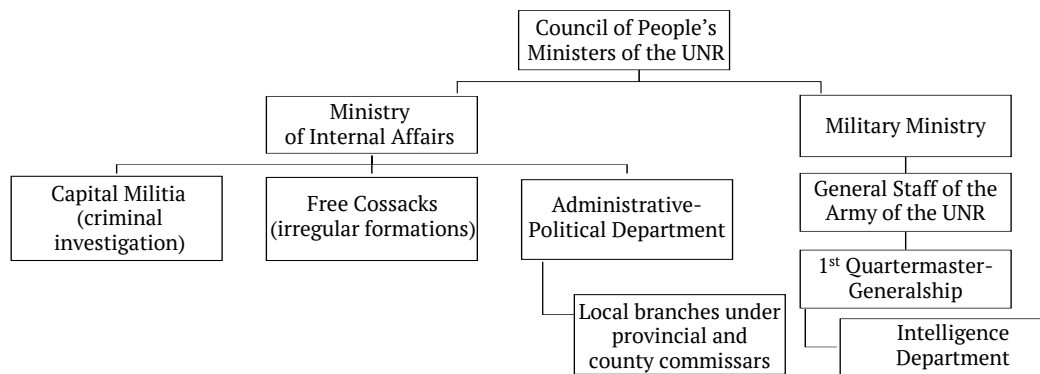


Figure 1. Organisational structure of the security sector of the Ukrainian People's Republic as of April 1918
Source: compiled by the authors based on V.S. Sidak (1998), P. Hai-Nyzhnyk (2021)

The first attempts to establish counter-intelligence and political protection for the republic commenced with the formation, within the General Secretariat of Internal Affairs, of a specialised subdivision – the Administrative-Political Department (APD), subsequently elevated to a department. This body was created pursuant to the resolution of the Committee of the Ukrainian Central Council of 15 June 1917, “On the Organisation of the General Secretariat”. In January 1918, with the proclamation of the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic by the Fourth Universal, the General Secretariat was reformed into the Council of People's Ministers, and the General Secretariat of Internal Affairs into the Ministry of Internal Affairs, thereby enhancing the status of the APD. The Administrative-Political Department was headed initially by L.I. Abramovych (September-October 1917), and subsequently by Yu.H. Haievskyi (November 1917 – April 1918) (Sidak, 1998).

This department and its cells attached to the gubernatorial and povit (district) commissars, who replaced the former governors, were charged with counter-intelligence and protective functions: the detection, prevention, and suppression of manifestations of counter-revolutionary and anti-state movements on the territory of Ukraine; surveillance of elements hostile to Ukrainian statehood, primarily Bolshevik agitators and Russian monarchists, with a view to preventing their agitation against the authorities and democratic organisations; the liquidation of counter-revolutionary insurrections at the preparatory stage; and the transfer of collected materials to the judicial authorities where evidence of anti-state activity existed (Sidak, 1998). Owing to the absence of an indigenous Ukrainian legal framework, as legislation was being created from scratch, the personnel of the APD conducted

counter-intelligence activities relying upon the normative base of the deposed Provisional Government of Russia. This is evidenced by the circular letter of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic, No. 312, dated 25 March 1918, bearing the signatures of the Minister of Internal Affairs, P. Khrystiuk, and the Director of the APD, Yu.H. Haievskyi, which obliged gubernatorial and povit commissars to apply the decree “On the Implementation of Measures Regarding Persons Threatening the Defence of the State, its Internal Security, and the Freedom Won by the Revolution” of 2 August 1917, the decree “On Amendments to Articles 100 and 101 of the Criminal Code” of 4 August 1917, the decree “On Liability for Insulting Diplomatic Representatives of Friendly Foreign States” of 5 August 1917, and the decree of 6 July 1917 (Orders of the Ministry of Post..., 1918).

The application of these acts was accompanied by the formal substitution of the term “Russia” with “Ukrainian People's Republic” in the corresponding passages of the text, while the remainder of the legal construct remained unaltered, a practice that attested not only to the absence of a ready-made legislative text but also to the lack of any intention to create an original normative act of analogous content. The enumerated decrees encompassed administrative measures against persons threatening the defence of the state, enhanced criminal liability for altering the state order and violating territorial integrity, as well as liability for insulting representatives of foreign states – in other words, they regulated predominantly the punitive rather than the procedural aspect of the APD's work. The Department's right to conduct inquests, carry out interrogations, searches, and arrests under such a normative foundation was not accompanied by separate procedural regulation – neither a procedure for authorising such

actions, nor time limits for detention, nor a mechanism for appealing the Department's decisions. The absence of an indigenous procedural act meant that the limits of the APD's powers were, in practice, determined by the departmental interpretation of inherited norms, rather than by a legislatively enshrined procedure, a circumstance which called into question the legal certainty of all measures undertaken by the Department throughout the entire period of its activity.

This served as a sign of the institutional crisis and transitional nature of the legal system of the Ukrainian People's Republic (Sidak, 1998). One of the key actors in guaranteeing internal security on the ground during this period was the Free Cossacks – volunteer armed irregular forces, which arose to protect public order and to defend against anarchy. In the poviets, the Free Cossacks acted as militia and security, organising patrols, identifying deserters and suppressing banditry (Dudnyk & Dudnyk, 2017). The question of foreign intelligence has been inextricably linked with the armed forces since the time of the formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917, as the main threat to the republic was military. The General Secretariat created the General Secretariat of Military Affairs, headed by S.V. Petliura, who laid the organisational foundations for the army and military institutions. In November 1917, the General Secretariat of Military Affairs issued a resolution on the creation of a General Staff of the Ukrainian Army and the formation of a regular army. The General Staff was headed by General B. Bobrovskyi, with colonels O.V. Slyvynskyi and E. Kilchevskyi as his deputies.

In the first stage, the General Staff did not have a specialised subdivision of military intelligence. The leadership of the Ukrainian People's Republic had long-standing mistrust of special services. The development of administrative bodies was complicated by ideologisation, and experienced officers did not want to join the new army (Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2020). The first practical steps toward the systematic organisation of intelligence are associated with the creation of the Ministry of War of the Ukrainian People's Republic led by Colonel O.T. Zhukovskiy (Kudlay, 2014). The Minister of War confirmed the penetration of Bolshevik intelligence into the central institutions of the Ukrainian People's Republic, a situation that required countermeasures (Riehle, 2022). The transition to systematic work occurred in early spring 1918. Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (February 1918) and the return of the Ukrainian government and troops to Kyiv on 1 March 1918, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Colonel O.V. Slyvynskyi, initiated a reorganisation of the military administration.

After its reorganisation, the staff comprised two Quartermaster-General Directorates: the first exercised operational command over the army's activities, while the second was responsible for the development of the armed forces; within the new structure, sub-departments for intelligence and foreign liaison were established. This process was finalised on 11 April 1918, when, pursuant to an order of the Minister of War of the UNR, the intelligence sub-department acquired the status of a department within the First Quartermaster-General Directorate of the General Staff of the UNR Army. This structure became

the first state body of strategic and operational military intelligence in the history of Ukraine with an approved table of organisation and a delineation of functional duties (Sidak, 1998; Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2020). As of 19 April 1918, its authorised establishment comprised a chief, his assistant, two staff officers for special assignments, two translators, and one official. The overall direction of the department's work was exercised by its chief, Colonel V. Kolosovskiy, who coordinated activities with the Minister of War and the General Staff. The assistant chief was responsible for the organisation and management of covert human intelligence, specifically the recruitment of agents, the assignment of tasks, and the collection of data across the front line. Staff officers for special assignments conducted interrogations of Red Army prisoners of war and the screening of civilians and refugees arriving from the territory of the Russian SFSR, identifying enemy agents and gathering data on the disposition of Russian troops; they also maintained contacts with counter-intelligence units for the exchange of intelligence information. Military officials and translators performed the translation of captured enemy documents, the foreign press, and agent reports, notably from German and Russian (Sidak, 1998). The funding sources for the intelligence and counter-intelligence structures of the Central Rada depended on revenues to the state budget, which, under conditions of economic crisis and war, was practically empty. This restricted the capabilities of agent intelligence abroad in comparison with the period of the Hetmanate and compelled intelligence officers to rely primarily on the patriotism of agents and on front-line tactical reconnaissance.

The leadership and personnel provision of the first Ukrainian special services. The formation of a professional and loyal personnel core for the Ukrainian special services during the time of the Central Rada became one of the problems of the revolutionary era. The Ukrainian authorities faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the socialist leaders viewed the professional officers of the former imperial intelligence and police with suspicion, regarding them as bearers of monarchist views and potential counter-revolutionaries. On the other hand, party activists, students, and members of the intelligentsia loyal to the UNR lacked experience in operational work, conducting external surveillance, recruiting agents, or the analytical processing of intelligence data (Holubko, 1997). The leadership's attitude towards professional officers was characterised by the political figure of the era of the Ukrainian Central Rada, D. Doroshenko (1969), who noted that the General Secretary for Military Affairs, S.V. Petliura, surrounded himself with young ensigns, sailors, clerks, and military officials, and his entourage treated experienced officers with distrust, even when those officers were ethnic Ukrainians. The state of the Main Staff was described by the military figure M.V. Omelianovych-Pavlenko (2007), who noted the motley composition of its personnel: alongside senior officers of high service qualification, the staff included military men without staff service experience, which reduced the effectiveness of the institution's work during the period when the foundations of military affairs were being established in Ukraine for the first time.

Despite these difficulties, several specialists who stood at the origins of the Ukrainian special services and

laid the foundations for their professional activity were successfully enlisted to work in the governmental structures of the UNR. The organiser and first chief of the intelligence department of the General Staff of the UNR Army was Lieutenant Colonel, subsequently Colonel, V.V. Kolosovskiy (1884-1944). He was born in Kyiv, was a career officer in the Russian Imperial Army, and had combat and staff experience from participation in the First World War. V.V. Kolosovskiy served as an assistant to the chief of the operations section of the Southwestern Front staff, where he studied the methods of planning military operations and processing intelligence information. Following the proclamation of the Ukrainian People's Republic, he supported the idea of an independent Ukraine and was enlisted in the creation of the Ukrainian army. V.V. Kolosovskiy is credited with structuring the intelligence activities of the UNR General Staff under the conditions of March-April 1918. Under his leadership, the analytical processing of intelligence information began to be carried out in Ukraine. A delineation of functions between front-line (military) intelligence and military diplomacy, i.e., the institution of military attachés, occurred. V.V. Kolosovskiy developed plans for the creation of foreign residencies intended to combine the clandestine collection of information with actions of political and propaganda influence in the interests of the UNR. He retained his post after the fall of the Central Rada and the accession to power of Hetman P.P. Skoropadskiy (Khomenko *et al.*, 2011).

For the development of internal security, the UNR government enlisted the detective and investigator

M.O. Krasovskiy (1871-1938). The Ukrainian Central Rada, taking into account his professionalism and loyalty to the idea of national statehood, appointed M.O. Krasovskiy in March 1917 as the commissioner of the criminal investigation department of the militia of the city of Kyiv. He headed the Kyiv criminal investigation until June 1918, simultaneously assisting the government in forming the counter-intelligence foundations of security in the capital and counteracting criminal groups and the Bolshevik underground (Skrypnyk, 2020). The recruitment of the rank-and-file for intelligence and security units was conducted from among experienced volunteers who had transferred to the Ukrainian army from the fronts of the First World War, as well as student youth, notably the cadets of the 1st Ukrainian B. Khmelnytskyi Military School and the Student Battalion (Holubko, 1997).

The activity of the Ukrainian special services in the period of 1917 – the first half of 1918 was characterised by its dynamism. It combined military forms of information acquisition on the fronts to ensure the combat effectiveness of the army with counteraction to Bolshevik infiltration and subversive activity in the rear. At the tactical and operational levels, under conditions of combat engagements with Bolshevik detachments, the command of the UNR Army relied on a system of army intelligence bodies that corresponded to the general principles of dividing intelligence into strategic, operational, and tactical (Muravska, 2022). Military regulations and practice provided for the formation of special subunits (Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of army intelligence subunits of the UNR army (1917-1918)

Type of subunit	Strength	Position/distance	Principal tasks
Reconnaissance detachment	up to 100 personnel	in the vanguard of the main forces, 6-15 km ahead	detection of the enemy's forward positions, prevention of ambushes
Reconnaissance patrol	5-10 personnel	dispatched from the main forces or a reconnaissance detachment	observation of the flanks, study of the terrain, visual contact with the enemy
Picket	2-3 personnel	stationary post on key axes and borders	visual observation, warning of the movement of enemy formations
Scout team	3-10 personnel	in the enemy's rear	reconnaissance and sabotage activities

Source: compiled by the authors based on V. Holubko (1997)

The Central Rada also employed technologies novel for the time. From December 1917, the formation of the 1st Ukrainian Aviation Detachment commenced. The aviation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) was engaged in aerial reconnaissance, surveillance of Bolshevik troop movements along railway arteries, and the dropping of propaganda leaflets (Holubko, 1997). The Department of the First Quartermaster General, under the leadership of V.V. Kolosovskiy, was responsible for gathering data on the disposition of Bolshevik forces in the Don region, the Kuban, and Soviet Russia. Attention was also paid to Romania's intentions on the south-western borders, particularly concerning Northern Bukovyna and Bessarabia (Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2021). The legal and organisational framework for legal intelligence was laid down by the Ukrainian General Staff in the spring of 1918 through a network of military attachés (Grawe, 2025). A special set of instructions was formulated for military agents working at UNR embassies, in which they were instructed to keep diplomatic contacts and clandestinely collect information

about military budgets, new weapons, cartographic publications, and the overall state of foreign armies, as well as analytical evaluations of these materials (Khomenko *et al.*, 2011). At the department of the First Quartermaster General a radio station was installed which worked both for reception and for transmission of signals. The information received was analysed and put in intelligence reports daily for the military command. The department sought to exchange information with the intelligence services of Austria-Hungary and Germany; however, co-operation on an equal footing was not achieved. Among the department's persistent problems were a shortage of experienced specialists and unsatisfactory material provision, prompting V.V. Kolosovskiy to raise the issue of staff expansion. The counterintelligence function was entrusted to the Administrative-Political Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the capital militia, headed by M.O. Krasovskiy. The primary counterintelligence efforts were directed against Bolshevik cells engaged in anti-government agitation, the instigation of strikes, and

armed insurrections. Agents of the department and the militia monitored suspicious individuals, investigated anti-government propaganda in the press that exerted influence over Ukrainian military units, conducted searches of safe houses, and carried out arrests of Bolshevik underground organisers in coordination with loyal units of the Kyiv garrison (Hai-Nyzhnyk, 2021). Thus, the counterintelligence activity of the Administrative-Political Department was mainly aimed at the already identified underground cells, and not proactive detection of threats before their organisational consolidation, which limited the department's ability to influence the course of events before a crisis situation arose.

Operational results and activities of the security and intelligence bodies of the Ukrainian Central Rada.

Analysis of the efficiency of special services in the period of the Central Rada creates an ambiguous picture. On the one hand, it shows the capacity to act effectively in a crisis situation. Instead, it shows institutional weaknesses, party-political bias and lack of systematic approach which ultimately resulted in the fall of the UNR government. The first achievement, secured through the joint actions of intelligence, law enforcement, and loyal military units of the Central Rada, was the pre-emption of Bolshevik armed uprisings in Kyiv at the end of 1917. Local Bolsheviks were preparing an armed seizure of power in the capital and the liquidation of the Central Rada. The Ukrainian side obtained pre-emptive intelligence regarding the preparation of the uprising, and on 30 November 1917, government forces disarmed and expelled from Ukraine those Bolshevik units of the Kyiv garrison that were preparing the insurrection. This operation temporarily thwarted plans for an internal seizure of power and precipitated the Bolsheviks' transition to overt external aggression. During the open offensive by Russian forces under the command of M.A. Muravyov in January 1918, the Bolsheviks instigated an armed uprising at the Kyiv "Arsenal" factory. The timely detection of the insurrectionary cell allowed UNR forces, notably the Haidamaka Kish of Slobidska Ukraine under the command of S.V. Petliura and the Sich Riflemen under the command of Ye.M. Konovalets, to localise the insurgents and, after street fighting, to suppress the uprising on 4 February 1918. This secured the capital from internal collapse but diverted reserves from the front (Holubko, 1997).

At the end of January 1918, the Battle of Kruty took place. The UNR command's lack of precise operational intelligence regarding the direction of the main thrust – M.A. Muravyov's offensive was anticipated from the Poltava axis, not the Bakhmach one – resulted in a small Ukrainian detachment, numbering, according to contemporary estimates, around 500-600 soldiers, primarily cadets of the 1st B. Khmelnytskyi Ukrainian Military School and volunteers of the Student Kurin, confronting a Bolshevik force of several thousand near Kruty. Despite the unfavourable conditions, the Ukrainian units organised a defence, inflicted casualties on the advancing forces, and delayed their advance on Kyiv by several days. This provided the UNR government with the time necessary to conclude negotiations and sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Quadruple Alliance powers.

A fiasco that demonstrated the dysfunctionality of the Central Rada government's law enforcement and

security system was the case of the banker A. Dobryi. On the night of 24-25 April 1918, when German and Austro-Hungarian troops were already present in Ukraine, the director of the Kyiv branch of the Russian Bank for Foreign Trade, A. Dobryi, was secretly abducted in Kyiv (Luschnat-Ziegler, 2024). This financier was a member of the financial commission negotiating a trade agreement between the UNR and Germany and was close to the German occupation command on matters of finance and food exports. The kidnappers transported the banker by automobile to Kharkiv. As a result of the investigation, which involved German special services, it was established that senior officials of the UNR were implicated in organising the abduction: Minister of Internal Affairs M.S. Tkachenko, to whom the Administrative-Political Department was subordinate; Head of Government V.O. Holubovych; and Minister of War O.T. Zhukovskiy, with the director of the Administrative-Political Department, Yu.H. Haievskiy, acting as the de facto organiser of the operation (Skrypnyk, 2020). The use of the security bloc leadership's administrative apparatus, subordinate agents, and special services transport for the abduction triggered an international scandal. The German military command exploited this crime as a pretext for armed intervention in the internal affairs of the UNR (Gerwarth, 2020). On 28 April 1918, during a session of the Central Rada, German soldiers arrested the government officials implicated in the case and conducted a search of the assembly hall; subsequently, the case was transferred to a German military field court, which sentenced Head of Government V.O. Holubovych and Minister of War O.T. Zhukovskiy to two years' imprisonment, and other participants to one year (Skrypnyk, 2020). On the night of 29-30 April 1918, with the support of the German command and conservative circles, a coup d'état took place: the Agrarian Congress, which brought together delegates from several governorates, declared in favour of establishing a Hetmanate, and P.P. Skoropadskiy was proclaimed Hetman, paving the way for the formation of the Ukrainian State (Holubko, 1997).

An analysis of the activities of the security agencies, military intelligence, and political counterintelligence during the period of the Ukrainian Central Rada (March 1917 – April 1918) allows for a series of conclusions concerning the principles of state-building. The first success was the ability to institutionalise under crisis conditions. Despite the collapse of the front of the First World War and the lack of trained personnel, the Ukrainian military leadership, thanks to the efforts of O.V. Slyvynskiy and V.V. Kolosovskiy, managed to lay the normative, structural and organisational foundations of military intelligence within the General Staff of the UNR Army, transforming the collection of military information from a spontaneous activity into a systematic state process (Khomenko *et al.*, 2011). The second achievement was the reliance on expert practitioners: the engagement of specialists in the law enforcement system, notably the investigator M.O. Krasovskiy, demonstrated the viability of depending on individuals who placed the law and national interests above party-political expediency (Skrypnyk, 2020).

Despite the achievements enumerated above, a number of miscalculations were also registered. The first miscalculation was the underestimation of the military threat

and the loss of time. The predominance of socialist views within the leadership of the Central Rada, particularly the belief in the non-necessity of a regular army, resulted in the state lacking fully-fledged special services and armed forces at the moment of armed invasion. The government relied on ad hoc situational committees and disorganised militia detachments, thereby squandering the time needed for the creation of a security system (Holubko, 1997). The second miscalculation was the party-political bias of the special services. The security forces, the militia, and the departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were regarded by certain government officials as a party resource for resolving internal conflicts, a stance which led to the involvement of the special services in the unlawful actions of ministers in the case of A. Dobryi in April 1918, discrediting the state and precipitating the termination of the government's mandate (Skrypnyk, 2020).

The experience of the Ukrainian Central Rada period of 1917-1918 demonstrates that state sovereignty cannot be preserved solely through political declarations, the issuance of Universals, or appeals to international law in the absence of an institutionally independent professional intelligence and counterintelligence apparatus. The first lesson concerns the risks of underestimating threats: the delay in financing, rearmament, and the establishment of professional special services, driven by an orientation toward peaceful coexistence, leads to the infiltration of enemy agents into the state apparatus, the disruption of mobilisation plans, and military defeats; therefore, intelligence should be built in advance, taking unfavourable scenarios into account. The second lesson pertains to the depoliticisation of the security sector: the use of security agencies, internal affairs bodies, intelligence, and counterintelligence in the internal political or corrupt struggles of elites destroys trust in institutions and results in the loss of state subjectivity; consequently, special services must act on the basis of law and national interests, rather than the interests of ruling parties. The third lesson addresses the effectiveness of preventive counterintelligence: the experience of foiling Bolshevik uprisings in Kyiv at the end of 1917 attests to the efficacy of pre-emptive operational actions, when enemy agents are neutralised before they transition to an open armed offensive. The historical experience of the Ukrainian Central Rada's activity demonstrates that professional, technologically equipped, and politically neutral special services constitute a necessary condition for the defence capability and resilience of the Ukrainian state in the face of external aggression.

Discussion

The conducted research has demonstrated that the institutional formation of the security sector of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) during the Central Rada era took place as a series of forced improvisational elements, in which the declared organisational structure outstripped actual operational capability. Juxtaposing this finding with the work of foreign researchers studying intelligence and counterintelligence in the era of the World War and the post-war reordering of East-Central Europe has made it possible to delineate the extent to which the identified patterns are specific to the Ukrainian case, and to what extent they reproduce broader regional tendencies.

Analysis of the obtained data has shown that the security sector of the UNR during the Central Rada era produced isolated coercive actions, and that the sole documented operation of the early clandestine structures resulted in the self-exposure of their organisers: the Committee for the Salvation of Ukraine intended to neutralise approximately twenty-seven individuals implicated in collaboration with the German command, yet detained only the banker A. Dobry, proved unable to hold him, while German intelligence swiftly established the complicity of the Rada leadership and freed the abductee. This result lends itself to the same verification that A. Bielenberg & J. Borgonovo (2023) applied to British intelligence, cross-referencing its compiled black list of suspects with actual data on arrests and the command staff of the Irish Republican Army. The data obtained in this study coincide with their conclusion in that a declared organisational structure alone does not ensure effectiveness, yet diverge regarding the nature of the gap: British limitations manifested within an already functioning apparatus that relied on the interrogation of prisoners and the analysis of captured documents, whereas Ukrainian structures lacked a comparable documentary-analytical foundation, so their failure was pre-institutional. As a result, the incapacity of the Ukrainian sector was systemic in character and cannot be explained by a lack of individual successful operations.

The conducted research has revealed that Ukrainian structures lacked organisational autonomy: the principles of their construction and a portion of the requisite intelligence came from outside, rather than being produced by their own apparatus. This result correlates with the conclusion of B. Kántás (2022), who reconstructed the unrealised Bavarian-Austro-Hungarian negotiations concerning the creation of an anti-Entente grouping, the "White Internationale", and demonstrated that the security projects of successor states were determined by the search for external allies and depended on factors beyond their governments' control. The external conditioning of security policy was common to successor states; however, the Ukrainian case was distinguished by the depth of its dependency: the Hungarian project remained an attempt at an alliance between existing armed forces, whereas the UNR security sector borrowed the very organisational principles, thus narrowing the space for producing its own solutions.

The research linked the incomplete institutional consolidation of the Ukrainian sector to two circumstances – the short-lived nature of the statehood itself and the inconsistency of the leadership in building the coercive apparatus. The Hungarian case, described by B. Revesz (2020), provides a control point for this conclusion. The secret services there, despite the turmoil of the revolutions of 1918-1919 and the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, coalesced into a stable system with a division of tasks between the police under the purview of the Ministry of the Interior, military intelligence and counterintelligence under the Ministry of Defence, and the gendarmerie, subordinated to both departments, and this structure endured until 1945. B. Revesz attributed the reorganisation of such services primarily to external historical-political upheavals: the apparatus transformed in the wake of the state within which it operated. From

this dependence follows an explanation for the Ukrainian outcome as well. The initial circumstance – the collapse of the empire – was identical for both cases, meaning the divergence in outcomes cannot be reduced to different starting conditions. The subsequent trajectories of the two states proved to be opposite. Hungary underwent a phase of construction in which competencies were demarcated and consolidated for decades, whereas the UNR did not get such a phase, because the state within which the apparatus was meant to stabilise did not endure. Added to this distinction were two circumstances absent in the Hungarian case. The first was the irresolution of the elites themselves regarding the state's future: the Ukrainian leadership-built services without a settled vision of the future order and the prospects of the republic, whereas Hungarian statehood, despite upheavals, preserved the continuity necessary for the apparatus's consolidation. The second was the presence of an aggressive neighbour: the formation of the security sector took place under the direct military pressure of Soviet Russia, which precluded postponing defensive tasks for the sake of systematic institutionalisation. To these external factors was added an internal one: if in Hungary the transformation of services was dictated predominantly from without, in the UNR external pressure was compounded by the leadership's vacillation regarding the very expediency of a coercive apparatus, as a result of which the available time and resources were expended on building the services inconsistently.

The research conclusion regarding the ideological and personnel underpinnings of instability is tested against the data of M. Bojcun (2021) on the societal environment of the era. According to the author's observations, the new national consciousness still encompassed a minority of the urban population, and the cities, immersed in a Russian-speaking cultural space, retained distrust of the Rada. These data align with the narrowness of the security apparatus's social base established in the research, and simultaneously clarify its cause: the lack of support was contingent on the actual condition of a society in which a nationally oriented apparatus lacked a sufficient constituency for recruitment and backing. The participation of volunteer formations did not eliminate this gap, but it aggravated it: the Free Cossacks, assigned to maintenance of order, avoided investigations in a number of localities and sometimes even themselves violated the law, which meant that the structure, whose purpose was to compensate the weakness of regular bodies, repeated their unreliability. Therefore, the juxtaposition both confirms the research conclusion and explains the reason for it: the apparatus consolidated where it was based on the existing bureaucracy, and it was unstable, not by accident but by the necessity of the structure, where it was based on heterogeneous leadership and volunteer formations in a society with limited national support.

It is worth separately talking about the adversary's apparatus, which the Ukrainian security sector fought. A. Sukalo (2021) reconstructed the Soviet political police in the western republics, especially in Ukraine, as a service deliberately staffed with local cadres and adapted by the Moscow centre to local circumstances. The centre's control over republican subunits proved weaker than previous historiography had assumed. Reliance on local human

resources was a characteristic common to that which has been established for the Ukrainian sector, but the outcome was antithetical. The Soviet side forged a centralised institution, whereas, as the present study shows, the Ukrainian structures remained fragmented. The comparison shows that the determining factor was not the composition of the personnel but the mechanism that tied them together: party discipline and submission to the centre in the Soviet case vs. reliance on civic initiative that preserved autonomy and reduced manageability in the Ukrainian case. This suggests a refinement of the study's finding: it was not the mode of recruitment but the lack of centralisation and stable subordination to a single centre that made the Ukrainian apparatus ineffective. This difference becomes more pronounced in light of the author's well-established limitation of Moscow's control over the republics: even a more loosely managed Soviet apparatus preserved the coherence that the Ukrainian structures lacked.

Services, free of constraints identified for the UNR, were also opposed to the Soviet apparatus. S. Masunaga (2017) demonstrated that the Japanese military intelligence with its resources and developed institutions, acting jointly with Estonian and German services against the USSR in the Baltic region and Finland, failed and didn't influence the international situation of the late 1930s. Here, lack of resources, personnel and centralisation were no factor, yet the result was negative. This shows that defeat depended not only on internal limitations, but also on the characteristics of the adversary. This does not cancel the study's conclusion about the role of the internal factor. The Soviet apparatus faced states with different institutional arrangements in the region, and the outcomes of their confrontation were different: Poland, which had an apparatus for receiving and utilising intelligence, kept its positions in encounters with the same adversary, while the UNR, which did not have such a structure, did not. The results were different because the adversary was the same in both cases, which means that the difference is due to the state of internal organisation and not only to external pressure. The author's data do not support a simplistic explanation: Soviet superiority was among the causes of defeat but did not exhaust them, for an institutionally ordered apparatus produced a different result under the same external conditions.

A common pattern emerges when the investigation is placed alongside findings from international scholarship. Successive states that organised their security sector into a delimited and financed departmental system maintained its institutional continuity. Whereas heterogeneous leadership, volunteer formations and external sources of intelligence did not work. The obtained data confirmed the systemic nature of the weakness of the security and intelligence bodies of the UNR in the period of the Central Rada, conditioned by the ideological, personnel, financial and organisational limitations of the revolutionary period. What was peculiar about the Ukrainian situation was that the building of the state and defence were happening at the same time, this limited the possibilities for systematic development of the services. The experience of other states in the region made it possible to distinguish the limitations peculiar to the Ukrainian organisation from the difficulties common to the post-war reordering

of East-Central Europe and to isolate the organisational condition, the presence of which ensured the institutional integrity of the apparatus.

Conclusions

The conducted research has revealed the patterns of institutional formation of the security sector of the UNR in the period of the Central Rada and determined the factors that limited its functional capacity. It has been shown that the formation of the intelligence and counterintelligence organs was reactive, under the impact of the external aggression and internal revolts. Institutionalisation unfolded along two parallel tracks: through the Administrative-Political Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the realm of internal security and counterintelligence, and through the Intelligence Section of the General Staff in the realm of military intelligence, which acquired a standardised status in April 1918 and became the first Ukrainian state organ of strategic and operational military intelligence. This was preceded by a phase of ad hoc structures – the Special Committee for the Protection of the Revolution and the Regional Committee for the Protection of the Revolution – which proved incapable of establishing control even in the capital and attested to the exhaustion of temporary forms of response.

It has been revealed that the capacity of these structures was determined by a nexus of constraints inherent to the revolutionary era. The socialist leadership's orientation toward peaceful coexistence within a federal Russia postponed the development of the army and special services; the personnel factor manifested itself in the contradiction between distrust of professional officers of the imperial school and the lack of operational experience among loyal activists – despite this, individual specialists, namely the organiser of the Intelligence Section V.V. Kolosovskiy and the head of the capital's criminal investigation M.O. Krasovskiy, whose activities laid the professional foundations of the services, were engaged in building the apparatus; the financial factor materialised in dependence on an absent state budget, which narrowed the possibilities for foreign agent networks; the organisational factor lay in the absence of an indigenous legal framework, compelling counterintelligence to rely on the

normative acts of the overthrown Provisional Government, and in reliance on irregular volunteer formations. Effectiveness analysis revealed the dual nature of the sector. It was effective in the time of crisis: the advance intelligence allowed to disarm the Bolshevik units in Kyiv at the end of 1917, suppress the “Arsenal” uprising and stop the offensive near Kruty, and thus give the government time to sign the Brest-Litovsk Peace. At the same time, the absence of reliable operational information in Kruty and the participation of the special services in the interdepartmental affair of the banker A. Dobryi indicated institutional weakness and political bias, which contributed to the acceleration of the government's fall.

The results obtained indicate that the preservation of state sovereignty in conditions of external aggression requires an institutionally independent, professional and politically neutral apparatus of intelligence and counterintelligence formed in advance with due regard to adverse scenarios. The experience of the security sector in the Central Rada period shows that the institutional incapacity of the intelligence and counter-intelligence bodies was not a set of accidental failures but a logical consequence of ideological, personnel, financial and organisational constraints, the combination of which determined the limit of the UNR's defensive capability. The study limitations are connected with its theoretical character and dependence on published works, normative acts and memoirs, which limits the access to primary operational documentation, and the shortness of the analysed period. Further research perspectives are in the comparative analysis of the security sector of the Central Rada, Hetmanate, Directorate periods, and in the in-depth study of the personnel composition of the first Ukrainian special services.

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