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The History of Education

Organization of School Education in the Military Zone under the German Occupation in 1941–1943: the Sumy Region Example

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Abstract

Based on an extensive study of archival sources, the authors analyze the state of school education in the Sumy Region during the German occupation. A unique feature of this region is the fact that throughout the German occupation it remained within the so-called “military zone,” where the Wehrmacht was considered to be the supreme authority and local control was exercised by military commandants.

The authors conclude that, on the eve of the attack on the USSR, there was a debate among German leaders about future policies in the occupied territories. Alfred Rosenberg proposed fostering the development of Ukrainian national consciousness, which would include allowing the development of the educational system in Ukraine. However, other leaders, including Hitler, disagreed with this approach, and the education on these territories was officially restricted to the elementary level.

The policy on education in the military zone can be divided into three periods. The first period lasted from the Wehrmacht's occupation of various regions (in the Sumy Region – August-October 1941) until May 1942, when schools were closed for various reasons. During this period an active segment of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, hoping that the German occupation policy would resemble that of 1918, directed their efforts toward restoring the school network. There was a tendency to revive education based on pre-Soviet models, as evidenced by the opening of gymnasiums for boys and girls. However, it was impossible to fully restore the network of primary and secondary educational institutions due to objective factors. Educators also sought to use

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German authorities' permissions to establish new secondary-level institutions. The second period spanned from May to September-October 1942, during which no educational activities took place. All secondary educational institutions, such as gymnasiums, were closed under various pretexts in accordance with Directive No. 34. The third period began in September-October 1942 and lasted until the end of the occupation (for the Sumy Region – September 1943). This period was characterized by a gradual departure of the German military authorities from Hitler's initial educational policies, allowing Ukrainian activists to open primary and secondary schools.

Despite the vigorous efforts of Ukrainian activists, who understood the importance of education for national development, most of their plans could not be implemented due to prohibitions and restrictions imposed by the German occupation authorities. Even the Germans themselves eventually recognized the mistakes in their educational policies in the occupied territories.

Keywords: Sumy Region, German occupation, military zone, education.

1. Introduction

The level of educational development is, in many aspects, the foundation of the cultural, political and economic progress of a nation and state. Therefore, policies in this sphere act as a sort of "litmus test," reflecting the overall goals of the political forces in power. This is particularly true for occupational regimes.

An analysis of numerous documents from the leadership of Nazi Germany reveals that Ukraine, within the envisioned dominion of the "Thousand-Year Reich," was assigned the role of an important source of raw materials, agricultural products, cheap labor and a market for German industrial goods. Accordingly, this aim also shaped the educational policies.

However, there were certain differences among the German leaders regarding this issue. Alfred Rosenberg, who was regarded as an "expert on the eastern territories" within the Nazi Party, advocated for a differentiated policy in the occupied regions of the USSR. On June 20, 1941, in a speech addressed to a selected group of German leaders, he noted that every effort should be made to raise Ukrainian national consciousness, establish a university in Kyiv, open technical higher education institutions, promote the development of the Ukrainian language, publish works of Ukrainian classics and actively preserve the memory of Ukrainian leaders such as Khmelnytsky, Konashevych-Sahaidachny, and Mazepa. He reiterated some of these points at a meeting at the Fuhrer's headquarters on July 16, 1941.

However, other German leaders did not share his views. The decisive stance was taken by Adolf Hitler, who repeatedly addressed this topic. On September 17, 1941 he stated that it would be a mistake to educate the local population; he also opposed the opening of a university in Kyiv and suggested that it would be better not to educate those people at all. Rosenberg adjusted his position and, as the head of the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, directed Reich Commissioner (Reichskommissar)Erich Koch to allow only elementary schools and establish vocational schools for agriculture and crafts with limited functions (Kosyk, 1993:514, 533, 543).

The Sumy Region was not a part of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine(Reich Commissariatof Ukraine) and, along with Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Voroshilovgrad (Luhansk) and Stalino (Donetsk) regions, remained in the so-called "military zone" throughout the occupation period. Supreme authority in this area rested with the Wehrmacht and, on the local level, with commandant's offices. The local intelligentsia, working in "auxiliary" governing bodies, played an important role in restoring educational institutions. This defined certain peculiarities of the occupation policies in the region.

2. Materials and Methods

The main sources used in this research are case materials and issues of the local newspaper *Sumskyi Visnyk* (*the Sumy Herald*) from the period of the Nazi occupation of the Sumy Region (1941–1943), preserved in the State Archive of the Sumy Region (Sumy, Ukraine). Additionally, materials from the Central State Archive of the Supreme Bodies of Government and Administration of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine), particularly fund KMF-8, were used. This fund contains documents of German army groups and their rear security units, reports of field commandant's offices, the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories and others.

Both general historical and specialized historical methods were employed in the research. Universal methods such as analysis, synthesis, classification, periodization and generalization of factual material from sources were utilized. These methods facilitated important conclusions regarding general

trends and certain changes in the policies of Nazi occupational authorities in the field of education in the Sumy region and other regions within the military zone. The use of specialized historical methods helped to understand the key events related to the activities of the local Ukrainian intelligentsia in the sphere of primary and secondary education. In particular, the historical-typological method made it possible to evaluate specific achievements in the Sumy Region.

3. Discussion

To comprehend the processes that occurred in the sociocultural sphere of the occupied territories in Ukraine, it is necessary to understand the plans of the Nazi Germany's leadership, as well as the discussions among different German officials regarding changes in this sphere. In addition to the archival documents mentioned above, the work of V. Kossyk is particularly useful in this regard (Kosyk, 1993). While the author provides a multifaceted analysis of various aspects of occupation policies in Ukraine, including the education sphere (mainly in the regions of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (Reich Commissariat of Ukraine), the final part of the monograph contains a large number of German documents. Some of these were used in our research. In general terms, the educational policies of the Nazi occupiers were highlighted by M. Koval, V. Lenska, H. Hordiyenko (Koval, 1999; Lens'ka, 1990; Hordiyenko, 2015). V. Shaikan examined the state of education in Ukraine during the occupation period through the lens of ideological confrontation (Shaykan, 2008).

The regional aspect is of significant importance for studying the processes in the field of education. V. Hinda devoted part of his work to the Nazis' educational policies in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (Reich Commissariat of Ukraine) in general and the General District "Zhytomyr" in particular (Hinda, 2012; Hinda, 2008). F. Poliansky covered the Ternopil Region (Polyans'kyy, 2010), while K. Kostak, V. Arkhipova and O. Saltan studied the Kharkiv Region (Kostak, 2023; Arkhipova, 2008; Saltan, 2018).

Various aspects of education in the military zone of Ukraine were highlighted by V. Nesterenko, including the occupiers' policies on primary, secondary and vocational education, de-Sovietization and propaganda in education (Nesterenko, 2005; Nesterenko, 2014; Nesterenko, 2016). However, regarding the Sumy region, these studies provide only fragmented data, which identifies the relevance of the current research.

4. Results

On the eve of the German-Soviet war the education system in the USSR was actively developing. The transition from general primary education to incomplete seven-year secondary education had begun. At the same time, the number of schools offering full ten-year secondary education was increasing. In the Sumy Region, this looked as follows: in the 1940-41 academic year the region had 514 primary four-year schools with 34,484 students, 489 incomplete secondary schools with 127,776 students and 199 secondary schools with 113,204 students (Narodna osvita..., 1973: 92). Most of the population at that time lived in rural areas, but secondary and incomplete secondary schools were primarily established in cities. The largest city was the regional center, Sumy, with a pre-war population of about 70,000 people. On the eve of the war, the city had 19 schools, nine of which were secondary schools. These schools educated about 10,000 students and employed 380 teachers. In addition, there was a pioneers' palace, a young technicians' station and a music school. Higher and specialized secondary education was represented by the Pedagogical Institute with a workers' faculty, machine-building, chemical-technological and road construction technical schools, as well as a medical-nursing school (Istorija..., 1973: 112). However, due to the war and depopulation processes, the population of the city decreased to about 43,000 by the beginning of the occupation. During the occupation, the population continued to decline (Nesterenko, 2014). Other towns and smaller settlements in the region had considerably less population but were less affected by depopulation.

The occupation of the Sumy Region by the German forces began in late August 1941 from the north and lasted until mid-October of the same year. The regional center, Sumy, was occupied by Wehrmacht units on October 10. In February and early March 1943, units of the Red Army liberated a significant part of the region during their advance near Kharkiv but suffered defeat and were pushed back east. The German occupation of the region lasted until September 1943, with Sumy being liberated by the Red Army on September 2.

At the beginning of the German occupation in 1941, military-administrative bodies (field and local commandant's offices) did not always promptly arrive in their areas of responsibility and were unable to establish an effective management system immediately. Moreover, the areas of responsibility were significant (15-20 districts for a field commandant's office, 4-5 districts, sometimes more, for a local commandant's office). For instance, the local commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) in Sumy oversaw the Krasnopilskyi, Myropilskyi, Khotynskyi, Sumskyi, Shtepivskyi, Ulyanivskyi and Nedryhailivskyi districts. The commandant's offices faced staffing shortages, particularly translators and interpreters. In these conditions, some local intellectuals, unaware of Germany's true intentions and hoping the Germans would behave as they did in 1918 (during the Ukrainian State under Hetman P. Skoropadskyi), began working in the education departments of district and city administrations, aspiring to revive Ukrainian statehood and develop national education. Typically, the pre-Soviet education system served as their model.

There were also objective difficulties caused by military actions and other factors, such as the use of educational facilities for German military units, hospitals, etc. In Sumy the Education Department of the City Administration announced in the local newspaper *Sumskyi Visnyk* (*the Sumy Herald*) on November 20, 1941, that enrollment for primary schools, as well as separate gymnasiums for boys and girls, would soon begin. The delay was explained by ongoing repairs and the need to equip the facilities (SV, 1941, November 20).

In the November 23 issue of the same newspaper, it was again reported that the educational institutions mentioned above would soon open. However, since they could not accommodate all applicants, the City Administration temporarily allowed the opening of private schools and preparatory groups for enrollment in state schools and gymnasiums, as well as for taking exams externally. The Education Department provided the necessary permits and promised favorable conditions for those opening such institutions, including tax exemptions and, "if possible," the provision of premises (SV, 1941, November 23).

The same newspaper issue featured a large advertisement on its last page, announcing that starting December 1, 1941, applications for primary schools, gymnasiums for boys and girls would be accepted at the Education and Propaganda Department Office (Sumy, Lebedynska St., 10). The detailed admission rules were published there as well. The primary schools were four-grade institutions where boys and girls studied together free of charge. Children aged 8 to 10 years, who were illiterate, were admitted to the first grade; children aged 9 to 11 years, who could read, write, count and knew basic arithmetic up to 100, were admitted to the second grade; children aged 10 to 12 years, who could freely and expressively read and retell what they read, had basic knowledge of sentences and understood elementary spelling rules, could count and knew basic arithmetic up to 1000, were admitted to the third grade; children aged 11 to 13 years, who could consciously and expressively read books, retell what they read, knew basic morphological and syntactic rules and could apply them in practice (verified through dictation), perform arithmetic operations with numbers of any size, had knowledge of length, weight and time measurements, were admitted to the fourth grade. Children who had previously studied in secondary school were admitted to primary school without examinations in the corresponding grade to which they had progressed. Parents had to commit that their children would follow the internal rules of a school. The gymnasiums for boys and girls were eight-grade institutions with a tuition fee of 600 karbovanets per year, payable quarterly. Children aged 10 to 12 years, after passing exams based on the curriculum of two primary school grades, were admitted to the first grade; children aged 11 to 13 years were admitted to the second grade; children aged 12 to 14 years were admitted to the third grade; children aged 13 to 15 years were admitted to the fourth grade; children aged 14 to 16 years were admitted to the fifth grade; children aged 15 to 17 years were admitted to the sixth grade; children aged 16 to 18 years were admitted to the seventh grade; and children aged 17 to 19 years were admitted to the eighth grade. Additionally, students from former incomplete or complete secondary schools were admitted without examinations under the following conditions: to the first grade if they had completed two grades; to the second grade if they had completed three grades; to the third grade if they had completed four grades; to the fourth grade if they had completed five grades; to the fifth grade if they had completed six grades; to the sixth grade if they had completed seven grades; to the seventh grade if they had completed eight grades; and to the eighth grade if they had completed nine grades (SV, 1941, November 23).

The call from the Department of Educationof the Sumy City Council regarding private initiatives in education quickly found support among educators. In early December 1941, three

advertisements were published in the local newspaper. Teacher L.P. Erastova announced the formation of a group for preparing students for the first and second grades of gymnasiums for boys and girls, as well as for all grades of the four-year school (Sumy, Berestovska Street, 10; payment by agreement). Later she repeated that advertisement several times in subsequent issues of the newspaper. For preparation for the 4th-7th grades of the gymnasium, S. Sapun also invited students from the 6th-9th grades of secondary school for paid lessons (Sumy, Hitler Street, 17). Preparatory groups for younger children at home were organized by V.L. Nosovich and N.F. Tychinska (Sumy, Lebedynska Street, 6) (SV, 1941, December 4). Later, teacher S. Lyntvaryova placed a similar advertisement about preparing students for the 3rd-5th grades of gymnasiums for boys and girls, and all grades of primary school (Sumy, Nyzhna Voskresenska Street, 7, second floor) (SV, 1941, December 11).At the end of December, teacher V. Ignatyeva advertised lessons following the curriculum for the 1st-4th grades of primary school (SV, 1941, December 25). In this case, it was a replacement for primary school. In early January 1942, teacher L.D. Lazaryev announced preparations for the 1st-4th grades of gymnasiums for boys and girls,also preparations for primary schools and German language lessons (Sumy, Troitska Street, 53) (SV, 1942, January 4). In mid-January 1942, teacher Kinashevska announced the formation of a group for deaf-mute children to prepare them for various grades in a school for the deaf (Sumy, Kovalivska Street, 9) (SV, 1942, January16). In early April 1942, teacher P.S. Bilousov offered lessons for all grades of the gymnasium in the Russian language, physics, biology and chemistry, also for the first four grades of the gymnasium in mathematics (Sumy, Novomistenska Street, 5, apartment 12) (SV, 1942, April 1). In early May 1942, teacher Voloshina opened the first grade of a primary school on a paid basis – "by agreement" (SV, 1942, May 6).

On December 12, 1941, a four-year primary school was opened in Sumy on Doroshenkivska Street. Before the start of classes, the representatives of the Sumy Cathedral, led by the rector O. Shcherbyna, held a prayer service in the presence of students and their parents – something that had not occurred under the Soviet rule. The head of city schools, E.P. Popov, on behalf of the Department of Educationof the Sumy City Council, congratulated the teachers and students on the beginning of the academic year, wished them success and emphasized that teachers, with the support of parents, should pay special attention to educational work. The school director Ustymenko acquainted parents and students with the internal rulesof the school (SV, 1941, December 18). On December 21, the newspaper reported that classes were soon to begin in a second primary school on Romenska Street (SV, 1941, December21).

On December 18 of the same year, *Sumskyi Visnyk* (the local newspaper) published an announcement about the opening of a private gymnasium (Sumy, Ukrainian Square, 17) with separate classes for boys and girls. The organizer was the aforementioned S.S. Sapun. At the same time, student registration was extended until December 21 (SV, 1941, December 18). It can be assumed that in the difficult conditions of occupation and winter, parents' ability to pay for their children's education was limited. Additionally, there were issues with repairing the premises. In early January 1942, the evening and weekend German language courses for 80 people (four groups) were organized at the private gymnasium in Sumy by the same S.S. Sapun, with a fee of 70 karbovanets per month (SV, 1942, January 4). On January 2, a pedagogical meeting was held at the Sumy City Council regarding the opening of the gymnasium, although it had not been officially openedyet. The head of the Sumy City Council, I.P. Korniyenko, emphasized that the main task of educators was to "eradicate Soviet influence on youth and its morals,revive a national sense among young people, foster love for Ukraine, its customs, traditions and its national art" (SV, 1942, January 7).

The Education Department of the Sumy City Councilalso took care of homeless orphans. At the beginning of December of that year, *Sumskyi Visnyk* published anarticle titled "Caring for the Younger Generation," responding to a "correspondence" by a certain Mr. Toryanikov. The note criticized the unsatisfactory upbringing of the younger generation during Soviet times, claiming that children were leaving schools illiterate, uncultured and undisciplined. For orphans, the Soviet authorities opened orphanages in cities and patronages in villages. However, life for children in these institutions was described as "depressing" and "miserable." The article also reported the opening of a shelter for homeless orphans at 5 Petropavlivska Square, designed for 15 children. The publication included an appeal from the city council to the citizens to support the institution with clothing (SV, 1941, December4). By January 1942, the capacity of the shelter had been increased to 25 children (SV, 1942, January 7). By mid-February, the number of boys and girls had

grown to 35. The shelter included a playroom where children could play billiards and chess. For their nourishment, the Sumy Butter Plant provided milk daily, and each child received 300 grams of bread. The City Consumer Cooperative sent other food products. However, there was a significant shortage of linens. The shelter was managed by Mr. Bielchikov (SV, 1942, February 18).

In the January 1942 issue of the newspaper, an article authored by the head of the Education and Propaganda Department, V. Nits, and the head of the School Department, Ye. Popov, provided information about the educational institutions that had been opened and plans for new ones in the city of Sumy and the surrounding district. The article stated that theSchool Council had been established under the City Education and Propaganda Department, composed of experienced teachers who had worked in pre-revolutionary educational institutions. This council defined a four-year elementary school as a transitional type of educational institution, where the first two grades prepared children for entry into a gymnasium. The council developed curricula, programs, internal and extracurricular rules for schools, and reviewed Soviet textbooks.

Given the financial situationof the city, it was planned to open two gymnasiums during the current year–a classical gymnasium for boys and the onefor girls with eight general education grades, as well as four elementary schools. However, due to difficulties with repairs, only two schools were able to open on January 1, 1942: School No. 4 on Doroshenkivska Street and School No. 3 on Romenska Street. The opening of the gymnasiums was delayed because permission (presumably from the commandant's office) was only obtained a few days earlier, and rapid repairs were underway in the building of the former gymnasium for girls. The elementary schools were funded by the City Council, with 48,000 karbovantsi allocated to each, and education there was free of charge. The gymnasiums, in addition to an annual tuition fee of 600 karbovantsi per student, received subsidies from the city council: 20,000 karbovantsi for the gymnasium for boys and 32,000 for the one for girls. The City Council also provided some equipment. As the gymnasiums were temporarily housed in the same building, they shared a physics classroom and a library. However, there was no room for a natural history laboratory, a "fundamental" library, a sewing classroom and a music classroom.

The Education Department in Sumy received 320 applications from individuals wishing to work in schools, but only about 80 were approved. The remaining 240 unemployed teachers were issued meal vouchers and fuel orders or were sent to work in rural schools. As for students, initially, there were few applications, likely because parents did not expect schools to reopen. However, once School No. 4 began operating, the number of applications increased so dramatically that it was impossible to accommodate everyone.

285 applications were submitted to the gymnasium for boys and 450 to the one for girls. However, the delay in starting the school year raised concerns that classes might not begin. Therefore, the Department of Education worked out the "Regulations on Private Schools in the City of Sumy" and allowed S. Sapun to open preparatory groups corresponding to gymnasium classes, where 60 students began their studies.

The Department of Education in Sumy issued permits for opening schools in rural areas of the region, including Tereshkivka, Nyzy, Kosovshchyna, Mala Chernechchyna, Velyka Chernechchyna, Nyzhnia Syrovatka and Malyy Bobryk. In the village of Yastrubyne, teacher Brazhnyk received permission to open preparatory groups. Guidelines for opening schools were also provided to representatives of Stechkivka, Stepanyvka, Bitytsia, Vasylivka, Krynychne hamlet, Yastrubyne, Grebenykivka, Velykyy Bobryk, Yusupivka, Baranivka, Markivka, Tokari, Vyzyrivka, Mykolaivka and Basy station.

Education specialists identified a number of problems and outlined measures to address them. Firstly, children aged 6-7 in preschool groups remained outside the educational system, as far as a four-year primary school was insufficient for admission to vocational schools. They proposed creating a general Ukrainian school with a seven-year curriculum divided into two levels: the first, a four-year course for children aged 6-10, enabling them to enter gymnasiums; the second, for ages 11-13, preparing students for vocational schools, and to be mandatory and free of charge. Secondly, as an "extension" of general primary schools, three vocational schools were planned to open during the current year. However, there were challenges with providing them with material and technical resources. Thirdly, plans were underway to open a real school in Sumy with a seven-year curriculum and a second gymnasium for girls. Fourthly, it was proposed to establish a specialized school in the city for training and retraining teachers, drawing on experience found in German literature (SV, 1942, January 7).

The gymnasium for boys and the one for girlsbegan their operations in Sumy as their administrations accepted payments for the first quarter of tuition (150 karbovanets) in mid-January 1942 (SV, 1942, January 16). However, based on later publications in the local newspaper *Sumskyi Visnyk*, full-fledged classes only started in mid-February. The gymnasium for boys operated in the classrooms of former School No. 16, with classes held in two shifts: grades 1-4 began at 8 a.m., while grades 5-8 started at 12 p.m. The director of the gymnasium for boys was Pervukhin (SV, 1942, February 18). The gymnasium for girls began classes on February 16 in grades 5-8 in the building of the former School No. 5 on Pokrovska Street, 9 (SV, 1942, February 15).

More information is available regarding the German language courses offered at the gymnasium. Director S. Sapun discussed their operations in *Sumskyi Visnyk*. Instead of the planned 80 students, 140 people aged 17 to 60 enrolled within three days. Classes began on January 16, 1942, with three main and three parallel groups: beginners, preparatory conversational and conversational. Each course was designed for 300 hours, and graduates of the final course received translator qualifications. The courses were provided with instructors, lighting and heating. Due to high demand, they began enrollment for three additional groups in the third shift (SV, 1942, January 25). At the end of February, the additional admission for 40 students was announced (to the second and third groups), with classes planned to start on March 16. Enrollment required an upfront payment of 210 karbovanets for 150 hours – half the total cost (SV, 1942, February 27). Due to the high demand, the administration of the language courses required extra teachers (SV, 1942, March 8). By April 1, 1942, 300 people were studying in 14 groups in the German language courses in Sumy. On the same day, these private courses were subordinated to the state, with plans for further expansion. There were enough instructors, but there was a shortage of textbooks, so newspapers, technical and fiction literature were actively used in classes. After completing theoretical training, students underwent a two-week practical internship at enterprises and institutions (SV, 1942, April 1). In mid-April of the same year, a second evening group was formed, admitting individuals who had studied German in grades 7-9 of former secondary schools and technical institutes, with preference given to those already employed in organizations (SV, 1942, April 17). By mid-May, the courses had 18 groups, including eight advanced groups and seven intermediate groups, composed of individuals with prior the German language trainingin grades 7-9. The first three beginner groups consisted of “workers” with no prior preparation. Six groups studied after work hours, with a total of 389 students attending in four shifts, with each group studying for two hours. Practical training was scheduled to begin on June 26, and exams were planned for July 13. By then, 89 translators were expected to graduate, 10 of whom were already working as translators in organizations such as the labor exchange, the machine-tractor station and the forestry department (SV, 1942, May 22).From June 1, enrollment began for a new group of civil servants. Additionally, a translation bureau was organized at the courses, providing paid translation services of Ukrainian, Russian and German (SV, 1942, May 24).

However, the knowledge level of graduates from short-term courses was insufficient, as understood by their administration. Thus, in mid-June, a new enrollment was announced for the two-year state-run German language courses. Classes were scheduled to begin on July 1 in daytime and evening groups (SV, 1942, June 17). This new phase in the development of the courses was described by their director, S. Sapun, in the pages of the local newspaper *Sumskyi Visnyk*. In his opinion, “liberated Ukraine needs qualified translators and German language teachers,” which short-term courses could not provide. Therefore, he proposed opening a German language school in Sumy, which would train translators in two years and German language teachers in three years. The regulations and curriculum had already been submitted to the City Administration for approval. They proposed dividing the training into “six seminars with two five-month semesters per year.” After each semester, “students of the school” were required to pass an exam. In addition to the German language and literature, the curriculum included the Ukrainian language and literature, economic geography, Ukrainian culture, pedagogy, and methodology of teaching German. During the fourth semester, students were to undertake a one-month translator internship, and during the sixth semester they were supposed to have a teaching internship in German. Tuition was set at 50 karbovantsi per month, with the city administration also providing a subsidy. Applicants for the first-year course were required to pass exams in the German language and the Ukrainian language and literature at the level of a seven-year school curriculum, and for the second-year course – at the level of a nine-year school curriculum. The German language textbooks were to be provided free of charge. To accommodate students from the rural areas the

school planned to offer a dormitory and a canteen. It was also proposed to establish an external study program and six-month short-term courses under the old regulations (SV, 1942, July 8). Thus, the courses were aimed to evolve into a full-fledged educational institution similar to a specialized pedagogical college. In August 1942, student enrollment for the first and second years of the three-year German language school was announced, with exams in German and Ukrainian scheduled for August 24. Applicants also had to complete a questionnaire and pay six months' tuition upfront, amounting to 300 karbovantsi (SV, 1942, August 9). An interesting announcement from the course administration appeared in *Sumskyi Visnyk* at the end of August that year. Former course attendees were required to return their textbooks within three days, with a warning that failure to comply would result in legal action (SV, 1942, August 30). In September, an additional enrollment of students for the first and second years of studying German was announced, with entrance exams scheduled for September 19 and classes starting on the 21st (SV, 1942, September 13).

On the pages of *Sumskyi Visnyk* P. Butenko proposed, following the example of the Lublin newspaper *Nashi Visti* (Our News), publishing German language lectures for self-study. He expressed hope that the administration of the Sumy State German Llanguage Courses would support the idea (SV, 1942, April22). However, this did not happen. V.O. Pankova conducted paid private German lessons for junior high school students (SV, 1942, January 30). A.I. Zynevych offered private German lessons at home and via correspondence (likely by mail) (SV, 1942, February 25). In the village of Mala Chernechchyna, a rural teacher, F. Kolbus, organized a study group for villagers to learn German in mid-March 1942 (SV, 1942, March 18). In May 1942, N.A. Muravyov offered classes for adults in German, French and English (Sumy, Sadova Street, 41) (SV, 1942, May 15).

On January 2, 1942, an elementary school was ceremoniously opened with prayers at the Experimental Station, ten kilometers from Sumy (SV, 1942, January 11). However, after two weeks, the school was closed due to a lack of resources for heating. Appeals for assistance by the school headmaster to the village administration and the estate manager (former state farm) yielded no results. The school in Bitytsia faced challenges in providing material support for teachers, with the village elder being blamed. Two teachers sent from Sumy worked for more than a week without receiving food or money. The elder cited the absence of instructions from the District Land Administration (SV, 1942, March 15).A similar situation occurred in the village of Zaliznyak, the Krasnopilskyi District, where the head of the village council, despite orders from the District Land Administration, withheld teachers' food rations for two months. Salary payments were also delayed (SV, 1942, July 10).

On January 20, classes began at Primary School No. 1 in Sumy, located on Psilska Street (SV, 1942, January 18). By the end of January, there were four primary schools operating in Sumy and 16 primary schools in the Sumy and surrounding districts. The ceremonial opening of Yastrubine Primary School (People's School) was attended by the German commandant Fritz Konfetingaer, the village elder Andrukhov and the students' parents. The school was well-equipped with a good building, supplies, teaching materials, notebooks and fuel. However, in large villages like Yunakivka, Pysarivka, Khotin, Mykolaivka, Viry, and Ulyanivka local authorities (elders) did not take steps to open schools. In Stezkivka, out of five available school buildings, including one that previously served as a 10-year school, only one was opened, necessitating classes to be conducted in two shifts. The local elder Derevyanko hesitated to open additional schools, fearing there would not be enough students (SV, 1942, January 25). In the village of Stepankivka, classes began in the second half of February 1942. Over 100 students were enrolled in grades 1-4, and a total of 160 students had signed up, including those for grades 5-6. The headmaster, P. Taranov, managed to preserve school property and even establish a small auxiliary farm with two horses, a wagon and a sled (SV, 1942, March 15). On March 5, education commenced at the school in the village of Riasne, the Krasnopillia District, with a ceremonial prayer and the consecration of the building by Father Paladiy (SV, 1942, March20). In the District of Shtepivka (the Sumy Region), 21 schools were opened in December 1941, and in the spring of 1942 classes began at the Markivka Gymnasium (SV, 1942, May 10). By early May, three groups of youth from the Districts of Shtepivka and Nedryhailivwere admitted for preparatory studies at the gymnasium (SV, 1942, May22).By mid-May 1942, there were 34 schools operating in the Krasnopillia District (school types were not specified) (SV, 1942, May22).

Several shortcomings of the 1941-1942 academic year were noted. Teaching in many schools was still conducted in Russian. Even teachers, who held lessons in Ukrainian, communicated in

Russian during breaks and extracurricular time. At the gymnasium for girls in Sumy, for example, cosmography was taught in Russian because the teacher did not know Ukrainian. The same applied to teachers of German. The arithmetic curriculum for fourth grade was considered overly demanding, leaving insufficient time for reinforcing knowledge and solving problems. Efforts to enroll students and to staff schools with teachers were deemed insufficient, with responsibility placed on village elders, including those in Velyka Chernechchyna and Kekino. As for schooling process in Mariivska, Holovashivska, Hrytsakivska, Basivska, Pishchanska, Strilychanska and other village councils,it lacked the conditions for uninterrupted operation, causing schools to remain closed. In Tokari the teachers were not provided with housing (SV, 1942, August 23).

Information on the opening of gymnasiums and schools in other districts of the Sumy Region is fragmented. In January 1942, a gymnasium for boys operated in Lebedyn, and by March, a gymnasium for girls with an eight-year curriculum was also functioning. This is evidenced by records of teacher salary payments (SASR, F.R-1949, Op. 2, Spr. 3: 56, 132).

Following Adolf Hitler's directives, Alfred Rosenberg, Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, issued instructions to Reich Commissioner(Reichskommissar) Erich Koch on November 18, 1941, stating: "...To create the general conditions for establishing order, it is sufficient to allow the existence of elementary schools. Additionally, agricultural and craft vocational schools with limited objectives can be established" (Kosyk, 1993: 543). Similar directives were issued to the Wehrmacht command. Based on these instructions, on December 29, 1941, Section VII of the Wehrmacht Zone B (Ukraine) issued Directive No. 34. According to this directive, elementary schools, industrial, agricultural, forestry vocational schools, professional courses for female personnel in housekeeping, sewing, healthcare and hygiene were permitted in the occupied territories. However, universities, polytechnic institutes, gymnasiums, lyceums, secondary schools, teacher seminars, general secondary schools and specialized schools for specific professions were prohibited (Kosyk, 1993: 549-550).

Thus, during the initial period of the German occupation, the military authorities' policy on school education was ambiguous. The decision to open a particular educational institution, especially one providing more than four years of education, depended not on ideological guidelines but on the stance of officials from the local and field commandant's offices. The initiative of the local Ukrainian administration and intellectuals also played a significant role.

After the aforementioned Directive No. 34 had been issued, the situation changed. The closure of secondary schools was carried out gradually and under various pretexts. For instance, in the districts of the Sumy Region under the jurisdiction of Field Command 198(u) in Okhtyrka, the directive was enforced under the guise of spring fieldwork and the potential deployment of teachers and students aged 16 and older to work in Germany. However, in his report, a field command official expressed concerns about the possible negative consequences of the directive: "The closure of schools, whose curricula have caused no complaints, has been met with misunderstanding... Ukrainians are distinguished by their desire for education, and ignoring their education system will cause regret and distrust toward the authorities"(CSAHAAU, F. KMF-8, Op. 2, Spr. 157, T. 1: 10).

Thus, since May-June 1942, secondary schools and gymnasiums in the Sumy Region, as well as across the entire military zone of Ukraine, were no longer operational.

In the summer of 1942, German officials resumed discussions about the level of education permissible in Ukraine. The debate extended to the broader issue of how much cultural and national development should be allowed for Ukrainians and the formation of Ukrainian intelligentsia. Two perspectives were represented by General Commissioner of Dnipropetrovsk, Zeltzner, and Alfred Rosenberg's ministry official, Braun. Zeltzner argued that to ensure German dominance in Ukraine for centuries, all Ukrainians should be turned into farmers, the urban population relocated to rural areas, and industrial activity limited to raw material extraction. He viewed the establishment of medical, agricultural, and technical courses at institutes as temporary. Narrowly specialized courses at technical schools were acceptable, as they would prevent the emergence of a Ukrainian intelligentsia. In contrast, Braun contended that without creating conditions for the formation of Ukrainian intelligentsia, the strength and longevity of German leadership could not be guaranteed: "If these capable people are deprived of opportunities for intellectual development, they will respond to this prohibition by forming secret organizations and ideological circles." Braun also pointed out that Germany lacked sufficient human resources to provide the occupied territories with officials and specialists in various sectors. Therefore, the need

for local specialists was significant and it was necessary to establish various training courses for their preparation. He emphasized that the attendees of such courses should have an educational level above four years. He stated the following: "A higher level of education should not pose any dangerous consequences if sufficient German influence on higher education is ensured" (CSAHAAU, F. KMF-8, Op. 1, Spr. 274: 5-10).

The views of Rosenberg's supporters were shared by the military authorities. For instance, the head of the Frontline District "B", Military Administrative Department, noted in report No. 443/42 on August 9, 1942, that the school situation was unsatisfactory because the level of preparation of a student, who had completed a four-year school, was so low, that it was insufficient even for working as a craftsman or an office clerk (CSAHAAU, F. KMF-8, Op. 1, Spr. 6: 203-204). On December 18, 1942, a meeting was held at Rosenberg's Reich Ministry, with the chiefs of staff for the rear area of Army Group "B", during which, among other things, the opening of seven-year primary schools and technical schools was proposed(CSAHAAU, F. KMF-8, Op. 2, Spr. 189: 7).

Meanwhile, local authorities were preparing for the new academic year. In June 1942, the Education and Propaganda Department of the Sumy City Administration informed the population of Sumy and surrounding districts that, from September of the same year, a school for deaf-mute children aged 8 to 17 of both genders would be organized in Sumy. Applications were accepted until July 10 (SV, 1942, June 26).

In the village of Novo-Mikhaylivka of the Pidlisnivska Rural Administration, repairs of the school building, teachers' apartments, stoves and fuel sheds were being arranged;the fuel was being delivered. The head of the local school, V. Zhitkov, reached an agreement with the village elder Shkumat to organize hot breakfasts for children. Preparations were successfully underway at schoolsin Katerynivka and Verkhosulsk. However, in Shpylyvka, they were awaiting the appointment of a new school headmaster (SV, 1942, August 5). In August Sumy Primary School No. 3 was enrolling children born in 1934, as well as older students who had not finished the first grade (SV, 1942, August 21). Primary School No. 2 was also registering students for grades 1-4 at the end of August (SV, 1942, August 28).

There were hopes that the German authorities would allow schools beyond the four-year level to be opened. Therefore, preparatory work was also carried out in this direction. For example, the District Department of Propaganda and Education in Putivl planned to open 47 schools with 6,980 students, of which 33 would be four-year schools and 14 – seven-year schools (SASR, F.R-1955, Op. 1, Spr. 12: 78-81). However, these plans remained on paper. The local commandant's office in Konotop allowed the opening of only 46 primary schools in September, 43 in rural areas and three in Putivl. They enrolled 3,797 students, representing 77% of school-age children (SASR, F.R-1955, Op. 1, Spr. 15: 2, 7).

In September 1942, in Sumy, according to a decree from the Sumy City Administration on general primary education, "22 new sets were opened at existing primary schools" (likely referring to classes): at schools No. 1 on Piskivska St., No. 2 on Petropavlivska St., No. 3 on Svyshchanskyi Lane, No. 4 on Doroshenka St., No. 5 on Kholodnogorska St. and No. 6 in Pryshyb. Additionally, a new school No. 39 on Lebedynska St. was also opened (SV, 1942, September 18). By the 9th of October, primary schools were functioning in the city, and 40 – in the Sumy District. Also, in Sumy, a three-year German language school was operating, a vocational school for the training of turners, locksmiths and builders had been opened, a professional school for Ukrainian folk embroidery was active. From October 15, a secondary medical school for feldshers (medical assistants) and midwives was supposed to begin enrolling. Speaking of the latter, boys and girls with seven years of education were accepted, and preparatory groups were organized for those with only primary education. Short-term courses for training nurses were also to be opened. Establishing a commercial-industrial school was also planned (SV, 1942, October 9). The secondary medical school in Sumy (at Piskivska St.,9, in the building of the former School No. 65) was opened on October 20 of the same year, with a 3.5-year curriculum. Those with seven years of education or five gymnasium grades were admitted (SV, 1942, October14). By the end of October, 52 applications had been submitted for the first course, 25 – for the second course, 117 – for the three preparatory groups (SV, 1942, October 30). In October the vocational school also began its work in the building of the former School No. 16. More than 100 young men aged 14-17 enrolled. There were plans to expand the range of specialties, including foundry workers and blacksmiths (enrollment for these groups began in late October);a bit later such specialties as drivers, tractor operators and electricianswere supposed to be included (SV, 1942, October25). Thus, graduates of

the schools were given the opportunity to continue their education and acquire a profession. However, the issue of the development of vocational education requires separate attention.

On November 9, 1942, an inter-district meeting of burgomasters and school inspectors was held at the local commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) in Sumy. Among other topics, the issue of educating adolescents aged 13-18, who were not subject to mandatory four-year primary education, was discussed. It was decided that these young people must either study or work. Therefore, teachers in each district were tasked with registering all adolescents. For those who were unengaged, it was proposed to establish a youth service – *Yunginst*. Two adults in each district were to be appointed to lead groups (40–50 people), separately for boys and girls, with the burgomaster of the district being responsible for the overall work of the youth service. These groups were further subdivided into "communities" of 8–10 members, which would elect a leader, the "comrade." The primary goal of such groups was to promote labor education, carry out various community projects (e.g., maintaining parks and gardens, planting trees, beautifying cities or villages, assisting kindergartens and families, etc.), participate in various production workshops and engage in amateur artistic activities. The meeting also addressed the issue of teachers learning the German language. It was suggested to organize Sunday seminars for them, during which instructional lectures would be given to facilitate independent language learning. In Sumy teachers were to attend language courses. The City German Language School took on the task of developing the appropriate curriculum. Additionally, it was planned to establish at least two vocational schools in each district or to incorporate manual labor into primary schools (SV, 1942, November 13).

The Sumy Department of Education and Culture ordered two thousand copies of a primer prepared in Poltava to be printed (SV, 1942, November 20; Nesterenko, 2005; Nesterenko, 2016).

In February-March 1943, due to the Red Army's advance near Kharkiv, most educational institutions ceased operations. Some parts of the Sumy Region were liberated from the German occupiers, and the latter began preparing to leave Sumy. However, this offensive was unsuccessful. The German forces regained control over the Sumy Region and Kharkiv. As a result, only by the end of March did the educational process gradually resume. For instance, the German language courses in Sumy resumed on March 25 (SV, 1943, March 28). However, since the director of these courses, Semen Sapun, was exposed by the German special services as a leader of an underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists cell and executed, the German language school project he had initiated was likely closed, leaving only six-month courses operational. By mid-April, enrollment for two groups withsimilarstudy duration was announced (SV, 1943, April 14). Full-fledged school and language course enrollments resumed only on August 1, 1943 (SV, 1943, August 4). By April, all six primary schools in Sumy were operational. Some schools in rural areas never ceased their activities (SV, 1943, April 18). Furthermore, the German authorities and the city administration conducted a census of children in Sumy starting April 9 to involve adolescents in either education or socially useful labor. Responsibility for ensuring children attended school, playgrounds (for games and sports) or youth service inspections fell on parents. Any failure to comply the requirements allowed the city authorities to impose fines on parents or their substitutes (SV, 1943, April 14).

On May 5, 1943, by the order of the German command, the Education and Culture Department of the Sumy City Administration reopened seven schools and established 10 playgrounds for children aged 6-12. Plans were made to increase the number of playgrounds to 30. However, the number of children attending schools and playgrounds decreased, leading to dissatisfaction from school inspector H. Ustymenko. He again placed responsibility on the parents (SV, 1943, May 16).

Due to interruptions in the educational process, the academic year in rural schools was extended until June 30, while in the city of Sumy, it lasted until July 15. Following this, according to the instructions of the Department of Education and Culture, exams in Ukrainian and German, as well as arithmetic, were conducted for fourth-grade students. Examination commissions were to include a representative from the department as the chairperson. However, preparations for the exams faced certain challenges. In some rural schools, fourth-grade classes were not operational, and the revision of educational materials had not been arranged. In the urban schools of Sumy, exam preparation was underway, but attendance rates were approximately 75-80 %. Only School No. 2 failed to complete its preparation due to a lack of premises; it began functioning only in June and lagged behind other schools by a month in the academic process (SV, 1943, June 9).

By mid-July 1943, exams in rural schools were completed. A total of 30 schools were operational, but only 20 of them had fourth-grade classes. Only 107 students appeared for the exams, of whom 104 passed and received certificates of primary school completion. For example, in Nyzy School, out of 22 fourth-grade students, only 12 (55%) appeared for the exams; in Stepanivka School, only 6 out of 43 (13 %) attended. In Novo-Sukhanivska and Lyntvarivska schools, fourth-grade students stopped attending classes entirely by the end of the academic year. The German language instruction posed particular difficulties due to a lack of textbooks and limited study time. Students from Nyzy, Holovashivka, Kholodivka and Nyzhnosyrovatka schools performed well in German, while those from Lyntvarivska, Novo-Sukhanivska, Liubymivka, and Velykovilmy schools were poorly prepared. Handwriting was also unsatisfactory, attributed to an acute shortage of notebooks and insufficient attention to the matter by teachers. The most significant issue, however, was poor attendance, resulting in up to 60% of students in the Sumy District being held back for another year. By that time the exams in urban schools had just begun (SV, 1943, July 16).

Occasionally, teachers were honored for their dedicated work. For instance, in November 1942, the Sumy Department of Education and Culture, during a special ceremonial session attended by the mayor of the Sumy City Administration and the best teachers of the city, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the pedagogical career of Ivan Vasylovych Milovanov, a headmaster of Sumy School No. 4. Over his 51-year teaching career, he spent 15 years as a teacher at the Nyzhnosyrovatka two-grade school and 36 years in schools in Sumy. In July 1943, the mayor of Sumy awarded Ivan Vasylovych Milovanov with a personal stipend (SV, 1943, July 25).

In the summer of 1943, teachers once again carried out preparatory activities to open secondary schools. This included compiling records of youth under 17 years of age who had completed four or more grades, following the directive of the German authorities. The announcements about the introduction of incomplete secondary education and the opening of corresponding institutions for the 1943-44 academic year were made to local authorities and the population.

From July 18, 1943, applications were accepted for admission to Primary School No. 9 in Sumy (Lebedynska Street, 41), which offered instruction in Russian (SV, 1943, July 23). The final announcement from the Department of Education and Culture of the Sumy City Administration regarding changes in school operations reported the opening of fifth-grade classes for students who had completed four-year primary school in 1943. These classes were to be established at Primary Schools Nos. 1, 2, and 3 in Sumy, starting September 1, 1943 (SV, 1943, August 18).

5. Conclusion

On the eve of the attack on the USSR, debates arose among the representatives of the German leadership regarding future policies in the occupied territories. Alfred Rosenberg proposed promoting the national consciousness of Ukrainians, which included allowing the development of the educational system in Ukraine. However, other leaders, including Hitler, disagreed, and education was officially restricted to the primary level.

During the occupation, the Sumy Region fell under the military zone, and the policy in education can be divided into three periods. The first period: August-October 1941 to May 1942. During thisperiod of time schools reopened, the operating of the school network was renewed under the initiative of active members of Ukrainian intelligentsia, who hoped German policy would resemble that of 1918. Efforts were made to restore the school network, often modeled on pre-Soviet examples, such as the establishment of gymnasiums for boys and the ones for girls. However, it was impossible to fully restore primary and secondary education due to several factors, including damage to school buildings from warfare and looting, their repurposing for military use (e.g., for German troops, hospitals or prisoner-of-war camps), and the lack of initiative from local leaders, particularly in rural areas. For example, in Sumy only four out of 19 pre-war schools and two gymnasiums reopened. Approximately 70% of teachers were unemployed. Private education began to develop as a new phenomenon under these circumstances. Educators also attempted to use permissions granted by the German authorities to create new secondary educational institutions. For instance, the German language courses, initially offered at the gymnasium in Sumy, eventually transformed into a specialized pedagogical college with a three-year curriculum.

The second period: May to September-October 1942. No formal education was conducted during that period. All secondary schools, including gymnasiums, were closed for various reasons under Decree No. 34. During this period of time some German officials debated the level of

education permissible for Ukrainians and the fate of secondary and higher education institutions. Some officials from field commandants' offices criticized the restrictions imposed on education for the Ukrainian population. Meanwhile, Ukrainian activists prepared to open primary and secondary schools, sometimes without official permission from the German authorities.

The third period: September-October 1942 to the end of the occupation of the Sumy Region, September 1943. This period marked the German military authorities' gradual departure from Hitler's initial educational policies, allowing Ukrainian activists to establish primary and secondary schools. This shift was influenced by the stance of Rosenberg's ministry officials and military authorities, who, being in occupied Ukrainian territories, recognized the detrimental effects of strict policies on education, both from a propaganda perspective and in practical terms, as they needed skilled workers and staff from the local population. The network of primary schools expanded during this time. However, military operations in February-March 1943 temporarily halted educational activities in most schools in the Sumy Region. The repression of Ukrainian intelligentsia by the German occupiers, including the execution of Semen Sapun, a key figure in opening gymnasiums and the German language courses in Sumy, severely hindered educational development.

Despite the vigorous efforts of Ukrainian activists, who recognized the importance of education for national development, most of their plans were not realized due to the prohibitions and restrictions imposed by the German occupiers. Even the Germans later admitted the failure of their educational policies in the occupied territories. In the report "Organization of Military Administration" compiled after the occupation, this opinion was noted this way: "Experience has shown that delaying the opening of secondary and higher educational institutions in the occupied territories was an unacceptable mistake" (CSAHAAU, F. KMF-8, Op. 2, Spr. 332: 81).

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