UDC 947.7.8: 323.28 “1972”
DOI: doi.org/10.21272/shaj.2019.i32.p.20

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“DOBOSH CASE”: THE BIGGEST FAILURE OF ZCh OUN SECURITY SERVICES IN RESISTANCE TO KGB APPARATUS

Abstract. *The article carries out a research on circumstances of the arrest of Yaroslav Dobosh, who was a courier of the OUN Foreign cells (hereafter – ZCh), by the KGB authorities, using the documents of the Branch State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine as its basis. It was indicated that the mentioned arrest had a significant influence on the dissident movement in Soviet Ukraine. It was proven that the KGB bodies used the “Dobosh case” to launch their massive repressions against the anti-Soviet intelligentsia (“Block” operation), and also to undermine the OUN’s credibility among the Ukrainian diaspora environment in the Western countries. The consequences of that event were reflected in the development of the entire Ukrainian national liberation movement of the 1970s.*

After analyzing the personality of Yaroslav Dobosh, we discovered that he had been raised in a nationally conscious and religious environment of the Ukrainian diaspora of Belgium. From his early years he joined the Ukrainian Youth Association and agreed to conduct a dangerous mission in Ukraine solely because of his convictions. During that period the OUN Foreign cells had been trying to establish connections with the dissident movement in Ukraine and support it. The tourism was one of the most effective ways of bringing couriers to the Soviet Union. The KGB bodies regularly arrested those couriers. Nevertheless, there was no better communication means between the ZCh OUN and the dissidents.

Yaroslav Dobosh had walked into a trap, previously prepared and set by the KGB employees, that was a reason why he failed to spot any danger and was arrested. During interrogations, he revealed his connections with the dissidents in Kyiv and Lviv – Zinovia Franko, Ivan Svitlychnyi, Leonid Selezenko and Stephania Gulyk. In addition to that, he agreed to publicly make a repentance. After that Yaroslav Dobosh was allowed to return home. In Belgium he immediately abandoned his testimonies and claimed that he had been forced and pressed to come out with a speech. However, those statements were of no importance. The KGB organs actively used Dobosh image as a proof of the dissidents cooperation with the Western intelligence services. Emphasizing the failure of the ZCh OUN operation, they launched a campaign to combat “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism” in Western Ukraine and made provocations to intensify disputes in the anti-Soviet camps of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Keywords: *dissidents, KGB, ZCh OUN, UYA, Belgium, “Dobosh case”, repressions, «”Block” operation, Kyiv, Lviv, Soviet, diaspora.*

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“СПРАВА ДОБОША”: НАЙБІЛЬШИЙ ПРОВАЛ СПЕЦСЛУЖБ ЗЧ ОУН У ПРОТИСТОЯННІ З ОРГАНАМИ КДБ

Анотація. *У статті, на основі документів ГДА СБУ, досліджено обставини арешту кур’єра ЗЧ ОУН Ярослава Добоша. Доведено, що КДБ використав “справу Добоша” для розгортання репресії проти дисидентів (операція “Блок”), а також підриву авторитету ЗЧ ОУН в середовищі української діаспори. Впродовж тривалого періоду “образ Добоша” слугував радянській пропаганді доказом співпраці опозиційної української інтелігенції з західними розвідками.*

Проаналізувавши біографію Ярослава Добоша, з'ясовано, що на виконання небезпечної місії в Україні, він погодився виключно через свої патріотичні переконання. Потрапивши у заздалегідь підготовлену органами КДБ пастку, кур'єр ЗЧ ОУН виявився погано підготовленим. На допитах розповів про свої зв'язки із дисидентами у Києві та Львові, а також погодився публічно виступити із "каяттям". Повернувшись до Бельгії, Добош відмовився від своїх слів, виправдовуючись, що говорив під тиском. Однак його заява уже не мала суттєвого значення.

Ключові слова: *дисиденти, КДБ, ЗЧ ОУН, СУМ, Бельгія, "справа Добоша", репресії, операція "Блок", Київ, Львів, радянська преса, діаспора.*

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"ДЕЛО ДОБОША": НАИБОЛЬШИЙ ПРОВАЛ СПЕЦСЛУЖБ ЗЧ ОУН В ПРОТИВОСТОЯНИИ С ОРГАНАМИ КГБ

Аннотация. *В статье, на основе документов ОГА СБУ, исследованы обстоятельства ареста курьера ЗЧ ОУН Ярослава Добоша. Доказано, что КГБ использовал "дело Добоша" для развертывания репрессий против диссидентов (операция "Блок"), а также подрыва авторитета ЗЧ ОУН в среде украинской диаспоры. В течение длительного периода "образ Добоша" служил советской пропаганде доказательством сотрудничества оппозиционной украинской интеллигенции с западными разведками.*

Проанализировав биографию Ярослава Добоша, установлено, что исполнять опасную миссию в Украине он согласился исключительно по причине своих патриотических убеждений. Попав в заранее подготовленную органами КГБ ловушку, курьер ЗЧ ОУН оказался плохо подготовленным. На допросах рассказал о своих связях с диссидентами в Киеве и Львове, а также согласился публично выступить с "раскаянием". Вернувшись в Бельгию, Добош отказался от своих слов, оправдываясь, что говорил под давлением. Однако его заявление уже не имело существенного значения.

Ключевые слова: *диссиденты, КГБ, ЗЧ ОУН, СУМ, Бельгия, "дело Добоша", репрессии, операция "Блок", Киев, советская пресса, диаспора.*

The struggle for civil rights in Ukraine has a long and complex history. The Soviet dissidents' activities in the periods of "Khrushchev Thaw", "The Era of Stagnation" and "Perestroika" were one of its chapters. On Ukrainian territories, the activities were strongly intermixed with the national liberation movement. To a large extent, dissidence had become a bridge, which linked the epochs of struggle for Ukraine's independence. Foreign centers the the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (hereinafter – OUN) and the intelligence of the western countries were its allais in the anti-Soviet movement. They tried to support the dissidents. Periodically, they sent their aid through the secret couriers and transported the prohibited publications abroad for the publishing. Eventually, the mentioned connection converted into a fatal one for the Ukrainian dissidents in 1972. The KGB organs managed to arrest Yaroslav Dobosh, a secret courier of the OUN Foreign cells (hereinafter – ZCh). They used his testimonies to deploy the repressions against an opposition of intelligentsia. In the official documents and scientific literature, that KGB organs' operation is mentioned under an operative term "Block".

The magnitude of the "Dobosh case" consequences attracted the attention of many researchers. Vasyl Ovsienko and Liudmyla Alekseeva, who are the former dissidents, described some of their aspects (Алєксєєва, 2001: 24-25), it was also studied by historians: Oleg Bazhan (Бажан, 2004: 417), Georgii Kasianov (Касьянов, 1995: 121), Dmytro Vedeneev, Gennadii Bystrukhin (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін, 2007: 207-209) and many others. Nevertheless, none of the studies has yet been

devoted to a key figure of the notorious "Block" operation – Yaroslav Dobosh. At the same time, an insufficient attention was paid to the role of the special services of the ZCh OUN in that event. The purpose of the article is to investigate this prominent individual. The article is mainly based on archival documents. A significant part of the documents is first introduced to the scientific circulation and allows to reveal a number of previously unknown facts.

Yaroslav Dobosh was born on July 19, 1947 in the city of Wildenfels (Saxony, West Germany) in the family of Ukrainian emigrants. His parents soon moved to Belgium where they worked at the factory. In 1965 Yaroslav graduated from the Ukrainian Pontifical College of Saint Josaphat, and in 1967 gained a degree from the Faculty of Philosophy of the "Great Ukrainian Seminary" in the Vatican. That year he also joined the Ukrainian Youth Association. Since 1968 he had been a secretary of the Main Board of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Committee of Belgium, and the following year he became a member of the editorial board of the "Avangard" magazine (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 1: 41-43). At the same time Yaroslav entered the Catholic University of Leuven and settled in Maasmechelen town in an apartment on Korgan Street, 11 (Farmer, 1980: 197). On May 15, 1969, Dobosh was elected to be a secretary of the Ukrainian Scientific and Educational Society, and on December 13, 1970 – a secretary of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Committee of Belgium. During April 8-11, 1971, Yaroslav had been participating in the "Congress of Ukrainian Students", which occured in Rome in the Ukrainian Catholic University. There Dobosh was elected as a member of the supervisory commision of the University Administration. On November 7, the same year, Yaroslav headed the Regional Executive of the Ukrainian Youth Association (further – UYA) in Belgium (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 4: 221).

The gifted and energetic leader of the underground segment immediately drew the attention of Omelyan Koval ("Dyr"), a head of the ZCh OUN Regional leadership of Belgium and "Central Educational Council" of the UYA (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 3: 199). It was he who recommended Yaroslav Dobosh to go for a secret mission to Ukraine. The Cardinal Josyf Slipyi personally blessed his mission.

Dobosh received 25.000 Belgian francs and 150 US dollars which were donated for his "tourist trip" to Ukraine. The telephone numbers, passwords, names and addresses were learned by heart. In addition, he was trained and instructed to adhere to secrecy (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1006: 143). Omelyan Koval recommended to call the courier only from pay phones, not to use a taxi and always carry cash (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін, 2007: 208).

With the assistance of the Belgian travel agency "Galitur", on December 27, 1971, Dobosh departed from Brussels and flew to Prague, and after two days arrived in Kyiv on a train (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 1: 54-55). He rented a room at the Dnipro hotel, for December 29 – 31, during that period he had been meeting dissidents Zinoviy Franko, Ivan Svitlychnyi and Leonid Selezenko (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 2: 181-185). They told him about the KGB persecutions of the creative intelligentsia, the circumstances of Nina Strokata and Valentyn Moroz arrests (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1007: 176). They handed the film made by Svyatoslav Karavanskyi, "Ukrainski ryphmy", to Yaroslav Dobosh, and Franco gave him the sixth issue of "Ukrainskyi visnyk" (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1003: 113-114). On his part, Dobosh provided dissidents with some "material assistance" (30-50 rubles each) (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін, 2007: 208).

On January 2, 1972, Dobosh traveled to Lviv, where he settled in the "Inturyst" hotel. The next day, he met with a dissident, Stephania Gulyck, in a flat on Descartes street, 5 (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 26-27). Two days later, Dobosh departed from Lviv. At the border crossing point in Chop (Zakarpattia region), customs officers conducted a search on him, following the KGB order. Among his personal things, the officers discovered a telephone number with a name of Igor Kalynets written on it (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін, 2007: 208), a roll of "Kodak" film with the second part of Karavanskyi's work called "Slovnyk ryphm", photos of the dissidents Valentyn Moroz and Vasyl Stus, and also a letter from Selezenko to a Canadian citizen, Tkachenko

(ГДА СБУ. Ф. 6. Спр. 74894. Т. 1: 18). In that regard, on January 7, Dobosh was detained, and three days later, arrested on a sanction of a military prosecutor of the Precarpathian military circuit (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1006: 143-144).

On January 20, 1972, Dobosh was charged according to the Article 57 of the UkrSSR Criminal Code (conduct of the political espionage) (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1003: 330). During that period, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had appealed three times to the Soviet authorities to return their subject home (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 19). On March 27 the same year, the third secretary of the Belgian Embassy in Moscow, de Gruben, and the Consul, Arnalsten, visited detained Dobosh at the KGB investigation detention facility of the Lviv region. The representatives of the military prosecutor's office notified the foreign diplomats that they could not disclose more information than had been already reported. During a 45-minute meeting with the prisoner, de Gruben and Arnalsten were interested in the prisoner's living conditions of detention. Whether he needed material assistance and if he had any communication with his family? Dobosh replied that he was in the general cell, felt good and had not received any letters from Belgium. After that, Arnalsten asked for a permission to ask whether the prisoner pled guilty. However, he was rejected to ask that question. Then the diplomat asked the detainee whether "he had his power of will". Dobosh answered affirmatively. At the end of the conversation, the diplomats told the prisoner that his father had hired a lawyer in Belgium, who would be present at the trial if the Soviets granted the permit. In addition to that, Dobosh made a request that a Belgian embassy representative would be present at the court (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1006: 345-346). On May 15, 1972, imprisoned Dobosh had a next meeting with de Gruben, which occurred in Lviv and lasted for 25 minutes. The diplomat informed the arrested that his case was discussed in the Parliament of Belgium. Particularly "one person from the ministry" is very concerned in Dobosh case. Subsequently, de Gruben asked whether the prisoner was transferred to another cell. Nevertheless, the KGB officers forbade them to talk about that issue. After that, the diplomat send his best to Dobosh from his father, whom he had met in Belgium. De Gruben notified that he had brought a letter from the Dobosh's father, cigarettes, fruits and beer. All the items were handed over to the convict, except for the beer (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1009: 203).

On May 25, 1972, Dobosh wrote a letter to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet requesting for a pardon (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін: 209). The letter stated: "I am a Belgian subject, Yaroslav Dobosh, who was raised from the childhood in the Ukrainian seminary in Rome, and after returning to Belgium, I became involved with the Ukrainian nationalists. That was a reason why I was brought up in an anti-Soviet social-background… During the investigation, I saw a humane attitude toward me and realized that I had committed a crime against the Soviet government and its people. With a good understanding of all those issues, I told all the truth about my hostile activities against the USSR during my interrogations. I ask the Soviet government to make a humane decision regarding my case, which is to pardon me for my activities, given my youth and my full confession. I can assure the Soviet government that I will never conduct anti-Soviet activities in my life" (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 310-311).

Six days later, the KGB staff organized a first press conference with Dobosh in Lviv. The conference was attended by the correspondents of state newspapers, magazines, radio and television, representatives of production groups, creative unions and public organizations. In total there were more than 100 people in the conference hall. In his speech, Dobosh condemned his anti-Soviet activities and asked for a pardon. He answered the asked questions clearly and meaningfully. The conference development was recorded on a cine-film and magnetic tape (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 334-337).

On June 2, 1972, Dobosh was notified that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet had made a decision to release him from criminal responsibility (Farmer, 1980: 198). The same day, he attended a major press conference which took place in Kyiv. On the conference Dobosh uttered a text on

demand of the KGB authorities (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 19-28). When asked by a Soviet correspondent about his impression of his tourist trip, he replied: "I am very sorry that I had a limited time to get acquainted with Soviet Ukraine, and by force of circumstances I was deprived of an opportunity to meet with the real representatives of Ukrainian nation. But even for that short period of time, my impressions are enough to make sure that I did not know anything about Ukraine before, because I was influenced by the false fabrications of nationalist leaders, who stubbornly bewilder minds of the Ukrainian youth from the emigrational environment about the Soviet reality and about real life of the Ukrainian nation" (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 29-30). After the conference, on June 2 at 21:00 Dobosh flew from Kyiv to Moscow. The next day he returned home to Belgium from Moscow (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 338).

On June 3, 1972, the announcements about Dobosh speech were posted in the state press and spread among all of the regional newspapers, as well as Ukrainian radio and television (Українські буржуазні націоналісти, 1972: 2).

Two days later, in an interview to the Belgian press, Dobosh confessed that he had become a victim of provocation. At the end of September, the same year, he sent an application by the international mail to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Soviet of the UkrSSR, the Supreme Court of the UkrSSR and the Prosecutor's Office of the UkrSSR. In the application Dobosh emphasized that he had testified against the dissidents under pressure. He demanded their immediate release as arbitrarily arrested (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1015: 291-292).

Despite that "repentance", the consequences of the Dobosh arrest by the KGB organs were catastrophic for the Ukrainian liberation movement. During the period of 1972-1973 89 dissidents, who appeared in the "Block" operation, were imprisoned. 55 of them were in Western Ukraine (13 in Lviv), and 48 in Central and Eastern (28 in Kyiv). The scale of repression exceeded even the similar trials of the "Sixtiers" (they were usually convicted to 5-7 years of imprisonment) (Вєдєнєєв, Биструхін, 2007: 209). The repressions of the dissidents on the "Block" case continued and lasted until 1976 (Бажан, 2013: 34).

Zinaida Franco was fired from work. After that, the KGB organs decided to publicly disgrace Franco in her circle. For that purpose they were spreading rumors that Zinaida Franco secretly provided them with an information about dissidents (Зінкевич, 2012: 772). Eventually, she did not withstand the pressure, and on March 2, 1972 she published an open letter condemning Yaroslav Dobosh in a newspaper "Soviet Ukraine" (Apor, Horvat, 2018: 512). She called him an agent of the "foreign hostile nationalist centers". Franco explained that, she, allegedly by his deceit, fell under the influence of Yaroslav Dobosh (Svoboda, 1972: 1). She noted that the "enemies of Ukrainian nation" had been trying to use the surname of her grandfather – Ivan Franko, for their anti-Soviet struggle (Франко, 1972: 1).

From Kenneth Farmer's point of view (an American historian), the KGB bodies fabricated the Dobosh case the same as they had done with the repressions against the intelligentsia in the 1930s. The purpose of that provocation was to show the dissidents connection with the OUN foreign centers and Western intelligence (Farmer, 1980: 197). The same opinion was shared by another American historian – Oleksandr Motyl (Motyl, 1982: 77).

A burst of condemnation of Yaroslav Dobosh actions involved the entire Ukrainian emigration press. It appeared in the newspaper "Freedom" (USA) dated July 6, 1972: "A young man, brought up in the West, recklessly goes to Ukraine, under the protection of a Western state passport. There he tries to connect with the people who are in an intellectual opposition. Even though he was spared in prison, he confessed in everything, hardening a position of those people with whom he had met. Subsequently, being in a free world, he talked, for a self-promotion, about secret meetings in Kyiv and Lviv. Thus again compromised the arrested ones". On June 25, 1972, "Ukrainian News" (FRG) resented Dobosh actions: "He is only a fake "western hero"…he was involved into a certain challenging situation but appeared to be just a spoiled mother's boy..." (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1015: 291-

292). Chicago "New Star" newspaper (USA) reported: "After a five-month imprisonment in the Soviet prison Yaroslav Dobosh happily returned home. He made a statement in the Belgian press by which he tried to justify himself… However, all the Dobosh statements require evidence. As this is not just about lives of the five Ukrainian intellectuals with whom he have met. In our experience, we are aware that a hundred more people will follow these five ones. Someone will say that: "Losses are where the fight is". Yet if the fight now does not have a chance to win, is it worth to sacrifice?" (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1014: 142). The publications which bear a resemblance to the previously mentioned were issued in the "New Way" (Canada), "Ukrainian Life" (USA), "Modernity" (FRG) and many other newspapers (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1015: 293).

In addition to that, the Dobosh arrest intensified criticism of the ZCh OUN on the part of the ZP UHVR (External Representation group of Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council), OUN-z (Organization of Ukrainian nationalists abroad), OUN-s (solidarysty) and other Ukrainian organizations in exile. Yaroslava Stetsko assumed that the arrests of dissidents were deliberately "delayed", in order to use them at a convenient time for a disruption of the OUN foreign cells union (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1014: 157). The leadership of the External Representation group of Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (ZP UHVR) noted that, due to mass dissidents arrests in the UkrSSR, it was necessary to close a recently established communication line through Yugoslavia (ГДА СБУ. Ф. 16. Спр. 1010: 8-9).

The further life of Yaroslav (Slavko) Dobosh is vaguely known. On returning to Belgium, he gave up his active work in UYA. The last years of his life he was seriously ill and died on June 29, 2015 at the hospital in Brasschaat (Belgium) (Міняйло, 2015: 2).

To summarize, the Dobosh case played a major role in the development of the dissident movement of Soviet Ukraine. Being a native of West Germany and a Belgian subject, Yaroslav always remained a devoted patriot of Ukraine. In his early years he joined the Ukrainian Youth Association. It was him that the special services of the OUN Foreign cells entrusted to establish connections with the dissidents in Kyiv and Lviv. Nevertheless, the fate resulted otherwise and Yaroslav Dobosh fell into the trap diligently set by the KGB organs. The young Belgian citizen was not properly prepared for such a difficult situation, thus agreed to cooperate. Subsequently, in 1972-1973, under the Dobosh name, a wave of repressions emerged against Ukrainian dissidents. Simultaneously, the special services of the OUN foreign cells were subjected to severe reputational strikes in the West.

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Отримано 16.03.2019