

12 May 1960

On October 15, 1954, Stefan BANIERA, anti-communist Ukrainian nationalist leader whose entire life was devoted to the struggle for Ukrainian freedom and liberation from Moscow, was found dead on the stairs of his residence, a victim of foul play. This was only one month after he received an anonymous letter threatening his death. An autopsy by the German police revealed death by cyanide poisoning. It is widely believed that he was a victim of a Moscow-directed murder plot the circumstances of which were comparable to those surrounding the death and assassinations of previous leaders of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, Simon PETLIURA (shot in Paris in 1926) and Evhen KONOWALETS (handed a package containing a bomb in Brussels in 1938).

The assassination of BANIERA was very important to the Soviets because, among other reasons, he was the most famous living Ukrainian anti-communist nationalist whose death would shock and demoralize anti-communist Ukrainians both in the Ukrainian SSR and abroad. BANIERA symbolized Ukrainian deep-seated opposition both to the Soviet Regime and to domination of their area by the Great Russians. The movement he represented has been conducting partisan and propaganda warfare against the Soviet Regime since 1934.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2004 2006