

BELARUSIAN PEOPLE'S SELF-ASSISTANCE

Authors: **Litvin, A. M.**

Bela'rusian 'People's 'Self-As'sistance (BPSA, BNS)

National organisation of collaborators in the territory of Belarus invaded by German Nazi troops during the Great Patriotic War.

It was formed on October 22, 1941, by the Order of General Commissioner of Belarus W. Kube. The BPSA (BNS) was headed by I. A. Jermachenka (until April 1943), V. L. Ivanowski (June 30 — November 1943), Ju. A. Sabaliewski (November 1943 — February 1, 1944). The governing body, i.e. the Central Council (Tsentral), consisted of 13 departments headed by Ju. Sakovich (administrative), F. V. Kushal' (self-defence), I. A. Jermachenka (politics), A. Ja. Adamovich (propaganda), P. Sviryd (judiciary), Ja. Skurat (schooling), and others.

The organisation operated under the control and leadership of the German occupation authorities. The members of the Central Council of the BPSA were approved by general commissioner W. Kube; the officials of akruha, rajon and chairmen of volasts (district) departments were appointed by the respective akruha commissioners, rajon and volasts German leaders.

The Rules of the BPSA declared itself as a charitable peoples' organisation which had a goal 'to help Belarusians affected by military actions, Bolshevik and Polish persecution, to help rebuild the Belarusian land destroyed by foreigners, to expand and develop Belarusian culture'. The BPSA collected money and material assets, food products, shoes, and winter clothes. It provided material assistance to war victims. The congress of the BPSA leaders (July 1942) stated that in a short time the BPSA had turned from a charitable organisation into a nationwide one that controlled schooling, educational activities, propaganda, politics, 'self-defence' issue (armed struggle against the partisan movement), and other areas of work among the population of Belarus. Also, the organisation became the centre of all Belarusian life that was loyal to the German authorities and its command headquarters. The Congress lobbied for changes into the Rules of the BPSA and recognition of the self-government right.

With the help of the BPSA, the [Belarusian Corps of Self-Defence](#) was formed to fight against partisans.

At the congress of the Central Council and akruha leaders of the BPSA (March 1943), a memorandum was drafted demanding full autonomy for Belarus from the German authorities, forming the Belarusian government and the Belarusian Army. It was emphasised that 'the government shall announce the separation of Belarus from the USSR and declare war on it (USSR) as the enemy of the Belarusian people'. However, the memorandum

caused a sharp negative reaction from the Nazi German authorities in Berlin, SS leadership, and police in Minsk. According to the Order of the occupation administration dated March 18, 1943, the activities of the BPSA were limited only to health care and material assistance to the population. I. A. Jermachenka was removed from his office and expelled from Belarus.

In June 1943, the BPSA was reorganised into Belarusian Self-Assistance (BSA, BS), whose activities, according to the new Rules were restricted to collecting donations, material assistance, and recruiting new members. On March 1, 1944, the BSA was placed under the subordination of the [Belarusian Central Council \(Rada\)](#).

Literature

1. Энцыклапедыя гісторыі Беларусі: у 6 т. Т. 1: А—Беліца / Рэдкал.: М. В. Біч [і інш.]. – Мінск: Беларуская Энцыклапедыя імя Петруся Броўкі, 1993.
2. Літвін А. М. Акупацыя Беларусі (1941-1944): пытанні супраціву і калабарацыі. – Мінск: Беларускі кнігазбор, 2000.