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Violence and the UPA Woman: Experiences and Influences

The Second World War in Ukraine cast the women of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army into a very different role. They were active members of the UPA and established their own roles within the insurgency. They also became active targets of the Soviet, German and Polish regimes in their fight against the UPA due to their visibility and because the men were already part of the Ukrainian underground. The regimes used different types of violence toward the UPA women because they had different end goals for them. The women however, established their own identities through their activity in the UPA and through the violence that was perpetrated against them.

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The Second World War in Ukraine was not an easy time to be a woman: war, hunger, insurgency and the fear of rape were only some of the issues that dominated a women's sphere during this time. This article will focus on the violence that took place during the Second World War and how it affected one particular group: the women of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). This article will address the differences of the occupying powers as they relate to the women members of the UPA and the responses to that violence by these women. How different was the violence exhibited by the German, Soviet and Polish powers? Why did this violence occur? Did this violence have any influences upon UPA women? The evidence demonstrates that even though Ukrainian women were represented as bearers of the Ukrainian nation by the upper echelons of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), they joined the UPA as individuals and the roles Ukrainian women played in the underground were just as important

as that of their male counterparts. This particular female experience was more dangerous due to the gendered violence that occurred during the Second World War. However, from their experiences, UPA women helped change their status in Ukrainian history. The women of the UPA empowered themselves through their functions and transformed the image of femininity within the Nationalist ideology.

The oral histories used in this article are from a previous extensive research-project collected by the author. Along with the author's interviews, other public oral testimonies obtained by researchers are utilized. This larger project uses a combination of both oral and archival sources and serves as an analysis of why western Ukrainians joined the UPA during the Second World War. One of the main observations of this work supports Oksana Kis' analysis in her extensive research on the history of Ukrainian women [1]. She states that for modern researchers, women's testimonies are one of the most important sources to have on the history of the Ukrainian National Liberation Movement. Not only do they inform us about the size of women's roles and the structure and responsibilities of the OUN and UPA, but they also allow us to track the changes in the system of values, awareness of a new life experience against the backdrop of war, identifies how women assessed their own participation in the underground and which values had an impact on their later life [2, p.593]. Some of the testimonies of the UPA women are used for this article and specify a certain level of awareness to the dangers of the underground work and the relationship between their roles in the insurgency and their gender.

Oral history has illustrated that remembering is a complicated issue. Recollections and memories in particular are socially mediated and relate to a particular group that is identified by the interviewee as either positive or negative [3, p.130]. However, memory itself is also influenced by other people and other cultural memories. As Nicolas Russell stated "The particular nature of a group's experience creates a shared memory and identity" [4, p.496]. This shared memory can be as wide as a nation but also as small as a local neighbourhood – it varies according to individual traits and experiences. The collective memory of these

particular UPA women however can best be defined as what Irina Shervakova describes as “underground” memory [5, p.103–104]. The memory of UPA women who stayed in Ukraine was hidden for years and even for those women who escaped the Soviet Union, their recollections were rarely heard within the mainstream Diaspora UPA historiography [6, p.130]. Another problem with collective memory is sampling: in this sample for example, there were no women who indicated they joined the UPA due to a romantic link. However, there were women who did just that, but they are not representative in this sample [1]. The same can be said of the theory that only single childless women initially joined the UPA: Oksana Kis’ example of the mother five, Hanna Svystun, makes that contradiction very evident [2, p.595–596]. However, even these anomalies have to be appreciated: while these women may not have chosen their paths into the UPA in the same manner as others, their testimonies only add to the history of the UPA in general, and not take away from it. Furthermore, even with the problems associated with collective memory, one has to agree with Oksana Kis’ argument made above, that oral history describes not only the factual situation of an event but also tells the emotional, mental and psychological understanding that can only be ascribed by an interviewee.

Ukrainian women were active political participants in modern Ukrainian history, beginning as early as the formation of the Ukrainian National Republic in 1917: Anastasia Hudymovych and Maria Tarasenko, had clandestine roles during this turbulent time and were tried and shot by the Soviets in 1922 for their clandestine work in the “Cossack Council” [1]. Women became active supporters of the Ukrainian nationalists, particularly in western Ukraine. They were involved with the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which united varying nationalists groups under one command in 1929 and wanted nothing more than Ukrainian independence from the Second Polish Republic (SPR). In 1928, for example, Olha Berbytska, a member of the Ukrainian Military Organization (a predecessor of the OUN), was tried for the assassination of the Polish school curator J. Sobinskyj. These actions, along with the trials of the OUN members by

the Polish government in the 1930's acknowledged that the OUN was a real threat to Polish rule. More importantly, the methods that the organization chose to use to fight the SPR (namely terrorist acts of state sabotage, arson and assassinations), included women who no longer hid their political consciousness and social commitment and were equally affected by the SPR's nationalistic policies of economic and social discrimination [8, p.87–88]. The women were seen not just as “faithful friends” but also as Lesya Onyshko states, “equal partners in the revolutionary fight” [9, p.31–32]. OUN female members believed in the same principles of Ukrainian nationalism as did the men: the right of Ukrainians to have autonomy over their own lands. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) formed in 1942 from the expansion of the OUN during the Second World War. There was an extensive need for Ukrainians to create their own self-defence forces against the numerous occupiers and attackers that western Ukraine faced during the Second World War. The women who joined these units did so hoping that after the war ended, they will be provided with national rights and equality. [6, p.130]

These women were placed alongside the men in regular armed units (usually as couriers and nurses) but also expanded their own professional and/or educational training in the medical or secretarial field. They were active participants of the insurgency, especially if they were deemed as intellectual individuals who could sustain a high level of physical and mental stress. [6, p.131]. Jeffrey Burds notes that the operational staff of both the German and Soviet intelligence constantly noted that female agents were far more stubborn than the males [10, p.113]. And even if their roles were minor (tailoring the uniform of UPA soldiers) or major (being the personal couriers of the supreme commander or establishing the Ukrainian Red Cross [9, p.33–37]), they were still instrumental in sustaining and even increasing UPA activities. It has only been recently that historians have begun to analyze the role and experiences of women. While it is not as bleak as Olena Petrenko's opinion that only historian Jeffrey Burds is interested in the history of women's participation in the Ukrainian underground, historiography of these particular women has been limited [11]. Petrenko herself

has written several pieces on the history of UPA women, in her latest piece she explains that UPA women often held multi-faceted and diverse roles in the insurgency and were not used as simple support [12, p.147–148]. Lesia Onyshko was the first to analyze the role of women in the UPA while Oksana Kis has added tremendous analysis and expertise to the history of women in UPA in her own right [6, p.131; 9, p.30–38; 1]. The works by these historians identify that the women who joined the UPA did so out of a national obligation rather than a gender one: national liberation outweighed their desire for personal liberation. While these women were known for their Nationalist links by the local Ukrainian population – it was their gender which allowed them to maneuver through the German and Soviet space until 1944. After that time, they became visible targets of Soviet repression for their Nationalist outlooks and activities.

Violence against women during the Second World War has been recorded and debated immensely, especially the sexual violence of the Red Army as it advanced westward into German territory. The use of extreme violence against civilians by the Red Army is described by Alexander Statiev as a perception of the “privilege of victors whose lives have been ruined by the invader” [13, p.277]. However, there has not been much on the topic of violence against women on the Eastern front, in the areas now associated with the former Soviet Union. Recounting the oral and written memoirs of veterans, there seems to be an indication that extreme violence occurred after the Red Army moved westward through Ukraine. Mass rape against Ukrainian women, for example, was traced back to 1942 during the Polish attacks on Ukrainian villages and villagers in the Chelm region [14, p.71]. Nevertheless, violence against women reached the highest peak under the Soviet Union when it took the form of sexual brutality. The primary reasons for the mass sexual violence against Ukrainian women and other eastern Europeans by the Soviet authorities were punishment and recruitment [15, p.9].

Rape and gender violence (a specific violence targeted towards women) is seldom mentioned in the oral histories and written memoirs. This is likely because

the stigma attached to the act itself: the victim already had a taboo of being a sympathizer or even a member of the Ukrainian Nationalists, but she was now also attacked in the most barbaric and brutal of ways [16, p.104]. Olha Ilkiv, for example, was severely beaten and tortured by the NKVD when her position was betrayed in a village while working for the Ukrainian Red Cross. However, she did not mention any of this during her interview [17]. Others, on the other hand, might not have witnessed the sexual violence at all – those who left to go to the West rarely had to cope with the post-war Soviet repressions unlike their kin who stayed behind. For this reason, the oral evidence that is provided is somewhat limited [18, p.202].

Gendered violence was not only used by the Soviet authorities during the Second World War – it was also instrumental in German and Polish communist prisons. Unfortunately, it was a commonplace experience during the Second World War and a brutal method used against Ukrainian women primarily because they were involved with the Ukrainian Nationalists. The Soviets were the first to use violence indiscriminately against their Ukrainian citizens during the 1939-1941 occupation. While the Second Polish Republic arrested Ukrainian Nationalists during the interwar period, they rarely used the same level of violence against them [19]. Beginning in 1940, Soviet authorities began arresting the intelligentsia of their newly occupied territories; this included all nationalities of both sexes. As it would be in the postwar years, the main protagonist was the NKVD because they were responsible for the political purity of the new socialist states. The NKVD certainly did not discriminate between the sexes when it came to torture and violence: during the mass executions in Vinnytsia, for example, all victims were shot in the back of the head using a small-calibre pistol and lead bullets. The majority of the victims, both male and female, were between 40 and 60 years of age [20, p.170–171]. The Soviet barbarity stopped for a short while with the German invasion of 1941. Soviet authorities used violence in a specific way: instead of trying to convince the population of socialism's benefits, the violence that occurred in the early 1940's centered on rooting out the bourgeoisie and

Nationalist elements in order to create a proletarian society. The majority killed during this time were members of the intelligentsia: teachers, professors, priests and anyone deemed politically unworthy [21, p.124, 169]. Although there was a specific set of targets for this Soviet repression, their principle aim was more class based rather than gender targeted.

The Germans, on the other hand, used violence in a gender-specific way. Female relatives of members of the Ukrainian Nationalist underground were arrested by the Germans because the males left to join the insurgency. For this reason, gendered violence became an important technique in not only rooting out insurgents but also in gathering information through the use of specific torture techniques. Vasyl Palyvoda, for example, wrote in his memoir how he recalled hearing both male and female voices from a cell next to his and he also heard how the Germans «began beating a fresh inmate, the noises were loud but then everything quieted down, then a general silence as you could clearly hear the questioning of the executioners after each beating» [22, p.18]. Sofia Stepaniuk also witnessed and experienced the German terror first hand – she was arrested on 16 July 1943 by the Germans because her husband was wanted by the Gestapo (he was in the UPA). While in the Rivne prison, she made friends with some female UPA agents including Raia Trofimchuk, a courier who was given the death sentence by the Gestapo [23, p.224, 234].

The majority of females imprisoned with her were there because they had a personal or familial relation to UPA soldiers: collective responsibility was the tactic used towards Ukrainian women. The Germans, as Anna Buryj stated in her interview, used torture for a different purpose than the Soviets [24]. Tamara Martyniuk was arrested because her mother's bookstore had ties to the UPA (she and her mother would later be shot at the same time) while Paraskeva (Stepaniuk did not remember her last name) was imprisoned because her sons were in the UPA. Paraskeva eventually lost her mind and the Gestapo took her away [23, p.235, 240]. Torture was typically handed out to Ukrainian women with known links to the UPA: Kharytia Kononenko, for example, worked with the Red Cross

assisting both the Red Army and the UPA and had known ties to Leonid Stupnyts'kyi (an UPA commander). She was tortured but never raped: she was forced to look at a bright light for hours or forced to stand with her face against the wall and when she fell she would be hit in the head by a German officer. Kononenko was eventually shot on 15 October 1943 [23, p.243]. Although rape was not used on Kharytia Kononenko, it was used regularly against other female insurgents: Stepaniuk recalled that five girls from the Dnieper region were brought in and were regularly interrogated by the SS. They would take turns in not only raping the girls but also in separating them into 2's and 3's and then alternating between the sets. All of them were killed in late 1943 [23, p.244].

The reasons behind rape – especially military rape – are difficult to explain. Some theorists suggest that Ukrainian women were raped by the Germans because they were either directly or indirectly involved with the UPA and not because these women were seen as “baby factories” [16, p.112–113]. The use of rape against these women was simply a way in which German power and dominance was asserted over the Ukrainian insurgents. The German use of violence (both in the form of rape and torture) against women during their occupation of Eastern Europe came about from the need to ascertain information and force German principles and objectives onto a section of society that was not fully cooperative. Ukrainian women were not alone in this pattern of sexual assault – rape and general violence towards all ethnic nationalities during the Second World War has been reported – but it was the Ukrainian insurgents (and Ukrainian Soviet partisans) who bore the brunt of the violence within Ukraine mainly because they were the ones who were imprisoned as opponents to state power. Ukrainian women were sexually tortured and violated by the Germans as «an expression of power and a form of communication between occupiers and occupied» [18, p.201]. However, could German attitudes toward the Ukrainian population have had an influence over the use of rape against these women? The German fascist ideology did not acknowledge Ukrainians as equals and the military officers often turned a blind eye if their officers raped those people who were deemed to be «slaves». These

«ethnically alien women» were used not only for the German's sadistic pleasure but also a way of acknowledging German power over the Ukrainian people [18, p.197].

Those women who experienced and saw the German violence and repression managed to instigate a deeper commitment to the Ukrainian Nationalist cause. Ukrainian Nationalist women became disillusioned with German occupation and their faith in their Nationalist cause was greatly affirmed. Anna Vasylyk, for instance, recalled that the Germans were no better than the Soviets, however the UPA offered her – as a woman – equality. Although she understood the chances of being a woman in an insurgency, she accepted those risks. She also had a certain level of faith that her position as a woman would be respected in the insurgency: if not by the common soldier, than by the reassurance of her commanding officer who only allowed her to sleep next to him while in the forests [25]. Her position in the UPA also allowed her the freedom to defend herself from aggressors – it was the UPA who armed her and taught her how to shoot. For Ukrainian Nationalist women who were affected by German violence, the UPA and the Nationalist underground offered them redemption through action: they could actively fight against those who made them suffer.

Ukrainian Nationalists knew of the possibility that Ukrainian females would be sexually violated by the incoming Soviet authorities. Already in 1943, there were rumours circulating within the UPA that Soviet partisans were killing, burning and raping women as they moved westward [26, p.47]. OUN-UPA propaganda furthered the rumours of a morally corrupt Soviet system by propagating the idea that the Red Army would force Ukrainian women into prostitution while spilling innocent blood among the fertile Ukrainian fields [27, p.385]. Protecting the female population was obviously propagated toward all Ukrainian men; however, the Nationalist propaganda in turn became a self-fulfilling prophecy as the NKVD terror swept through the region using a mixture of rape, sexual violence and brutal torture techniques to gain support throughout the region. The use of these procedures was also well known to the female

combatants of the UPA during the latter periods of its operations and, as a result, many women chose suicide over capture. 'Lida' for example, a friend of Yaroslava Levkovych, slit her own throat and died so she would not be captured by the NKVD [28]. Ukrainian women became the focus for the Soviets after they recaptured western Ukraine in 1944. Jeffrey Burds explains that, due to the general violence aimed at Ukrainian men, women became heavily involved with the insurgency, and as a result there was a shift by the NKVD which began targeting women as well [29, p.292]. By these actions, the Soviets recognized the position of women in the UPA and used them in their fight against the Ukrainian Nationalist insurgents. The Soviets used violence against women as a way to "induce feelings of weakness and helplessness in the male warrior who could not defend" the females from Soviet authority [11]. However, Soviet interrogation, and the mental and physical brutality of it, almost always managed to break the will of their captures – with no discrimination based on gender [10, p.133].

Ukrainian men who were part of the UPA however, had mixed reactions to the use of this violence towards women. The reaction was dependent on the knowledge of any violence committed by the Soviets against known Ukrainian female associates. Roman Petriw, for example, knew that the female members of the UPA were being arrested by the Soviets but did not know anything further than that. In his perspective, females only represented an active support base [30]. Unfortunately, the topic of sexual violence towards Ukrainian women is still a very taboo subject to discuss, among both men and women. That is why reactions to Soviet gender violence are difficult to pinpoint. Most men are rather vague about the subject while others, the majority, do not bring it up at all. Those who do discuss the effects of the Soviet use of violence towards Ukrainian women usually do so for personal reasons. Yaroslav Perchyshyn, for example, knew that Nationalist women were threatened by the Soviets on a daily basis because of his cousin's activity with the underground. However, he too recalled that these women fought just as heroically as the men –because they were specifically targeted by the Soviet authorities [32]. Those who witnessed gender violence regarded the

Ukrainian Nationalist movement as the protector against the evil Soviet empire – this became a clear example of the wrong doings of the communist state. Ivan Kurylo for example, strongly indicated that the Nationalists “never lied, they would always try to be respectful to the whole population” while the Soviets were deemed brutal because of their treatment of women. Although vague about the details, his response to the questions of gender violence was: “you know very well what they did to the girls. Those women. What the women went through was unthinkable” [32]. To him, and to many others, the UPA became the alternative to Soviet violence and Soviet actions only propagated this idealistic image of the Ukrainian underground.

Soviet violence was also generalized to include any known or suspected UPA members and their families: from 420 deported UPA families in a transit camp in the town of Truskavets in the spring of 1945, 70% were females. NKVD violence was also used as a general reprisal against the UPA’s actions, even if those killed or violated had nothing to do with the UPA itself. On 15 April 1946, for example, the NKVD murdered two local girls while they were collecting strawberries as revenge for the casualties suffered after an UPA attack on the village of Rozhniv [21, p.332, 325]. However, one of the main reasons why women were targeted by Soviet authorities was due to their role as intermediaries between numerous UPA combat units. As Oksana Romaniv stated, while the men fought in the forests and were killed regularly, women were less likely to die but held more of a risk because they were “the ones who stood against the enemy face to face or the ones who collected food and clothing, medicine from villages, prepared the food and carried it into the forests, endangering their entire family” [33]. Women were tortured in the same manner as the men by the Soviet officials; some of these girls withstood the beatings while others did not. Hanna Klumchyk, for example, was beaten severely by three different Soviet guards and was exposed to no sleep for two weeks but she refused to tell the officials the location of underground bunkers [34]. Women who were in the higher authorities of the UPA were exposed to far more severe torture than those girls who were local couriers or guides. Alexandra

Piech, for example, still remembered the face of the Soviet official who beat her. She experienced three weeks of daily beatings, her nose was broken and she was hit in the head with a pistol: «they threw me into the basement [cell] like an animal...I still have bruises today from that...[but] the worst fear was not knowing how long you would be able to withstand the torture...» [35] Halyna Dydyk survived two years of these «investigations»:

There were others who came to have some drunken fun with me...I was saved from death only for them to start the semiconscious murder once again. I was mercilessly beaten. The first half of the year they worked on me every day and I wasn't allowed to sleep at night or during the day. This 'investigation' lasted more than two years...The worst thing was getting ready for the beatings. The fear was worse than the physical pain. When I fainted – they would give me an injection, throw some water on me and start again. Day after day, night after night. [36]

Halyna Dydyk was specifically targeted because she was one of the highest ranking women in the UPA – she was the personal courier to Roman Shukhevych and was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit twice. This is not to say that men did not suffer at the hands of the NKVD – male or female, active UPA members were tortured for information and to seek revenge upon a section of the Ukrainian population who refused to conform to Soviet society. However, women had the additional horrors of the most barbaric torture technique – rape.

Thousands of women were raped by Soviet officials and Red Army soldiers during the Soviet conquering return westwards into the German Third Reich –they did this mainly because it humiliated and dishonoured the men. The Soviets were the conquering heroes and the rape of women was a strategic way to distinguish this fact [37, p.131]. However, an alternative explanation to the mass rape used in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Germany and other areas has been that these soldiers raped simply because they could. As Timothy Snyder points out, when a Yugoslav official complained to Stalin about the behaviour of the Soviets, Stalin responded by giving him a lecture about soldiers having “fun” [38, p.316–317]. With no direct consequences for their actions [39, p.454], Soviet soldiers and

officials were free to do anything and everything on their celebratory push westward.

The only female veteran who talked about rape by the Soviet authorities was Marianne Baran. For this reason, her testimony was reprinted in full:

You had to escort [the Red Army] here and there, back and forth. And you know, once I thought I wouldn't come out from their hands alive. But I was stubborn and refused to go with them. I simply said no. He took out a pistol and pointed at me but I still said «no, I won't go where you want me to go. I just won't». I said that my sister was living over there, in a house nearby...And I said I lived there, but I really didn't and I said, because they took two of us, me and another girl and he took her and me. We walked along that forest and I managed to walk out onto the road and tried to get to [my sister's] house. And he said: «the other way»...And this was an officer...And I said «no». And he said, «you have to!» He took out his pistol and said «go». But I still said «no, I'm going Home». And what I had to go through [in order to get out of there], I took two steps back for every step forward. And he kept on following me and wanted me to go back into the forest. He finally let me go and I went into the house...And I told her that if he came here, she had to tell him I lived there because I barely managed to get away. And he came to the house and he sat at the table like a raging dog. He sat there for a bit but didn't ask anything and then left. But there was a girl who was walking along and I knew her, she was a neighbour and she was walking to a neighbouring house by the side of the road near the forest. And I swear to you, once he saw that girl he ran over like a dog and took her into the forest. To this day I don't know what happened to her. He didn't kill her but he did what he liked with her. [40]

Although it was not certain that the girl was raped, Marianne had little doubt of what happened to her. However, Marianne's testimony was in the minority when it came to discussing the sexual violence used against Ukrainian women during this time.

In order to break the influence of the Ukrainian underground in western Ukraine, the Soviet authorities used unimaginably brutal and violent repressive tactics against the main supporters of the Nationalist underground. This began with violence and torture against those directly linked to the OUN and the UPA but also included general deportations. Eventually, these deportations decimated the Ukrainian underground because whole families were deported rather than just the guilty individual member: sixteen out of seventeen of Lubomyr Poliuha's family members, for example, were deported while his parents received 25 years in Siberian exile. [41] Most Nationalist families were deported, while members of the UPA were usually killed outright in local battles that they waged against the Soviets [42, p. 175-179, 188]. Those UPA members who were arrested during their time in the UPA were typically given long prison sentences and sent into exile in a Gulag. Maksym Wowk, for instance, was given a fifteen year sentence in Norilsk [43]. Women and men were just as likely to be targeted by this, even though female UPA members were more visible throughout Ukrainian village communities. Women were normally arrested because they worked within the civil sphere (they constituted about 90 percent of the UPA's liaisons and couriers) and they were placed in bunkers and hideouts only if they were already well established within the insurgency [29, p.295, 303]. Women's families were just as likely to be deported as men's and thousands of family relations suffered due to the actions of their relatives. It was this mass collective responsibility that finally destroyed the Ukrainian Nationalist underground in western Ukraine.

Violence specifically designed against Ukrainian women was also implemented by the Polish communist army in a similar way to that by the NKVD. The aim of Polish communist violence was more comparable to those of the Germans: it was the need for information and harassment, rather than gaining a strong foothold amongst the population that drove their actions. When the Polish communists began the deportation process in the Transcarpathian region in 1944, it was still a relatively peaceful process based on the desires of individual families. By 1946, however, it became a forcible removal of the Ukrainian (and mixed)

families of that area. Again, as in the case of western Ukraine, the majority of the male population was already either in hiding in the nearby forests [with], part of the underground or recruited to the passing Red Army. For these reasons violence against females was high due to the absence of self-defence units that were usually formed by the men of the village. A good example of this was the tragedy of Marusia ('Kalyna' and 'Nazar's' sister) who was killed in the Povlokoma massacre of 1945. Marusia was taken to the back of the house and the Polish attackers told her that they would not shoot her because they could still "have some fun with her because she was so pretty". Marusia told them to shoot her anyway because they already killed her mother and grandmother – Marusia was then shot [44]. Women were also used as symbols of Polish victory over the UPA insurgents – the Polish army forced one man to kill his sister, his fiancé and himself in one village after which their bodies were driven around the village as examples of Polish power: «See, how they have fought for their Ukraine» [45, p.32].

The People's Republic of Poland also instigated their own prison for those deemed to be important UPA members – Jaworzno concentration camp (a sub-camp of Auschwitz). There, they held German POW's and Ukrainian "bandits". Maria Kuzma-Kapustynska was one of many women who stayed in that camp and witnessed and experienced its tortures. She was arrested in 1947 and first sent to the prison in Tomaszow, Lublin region, where she was interrogated on the activities of the UPA and was asked if she helped the local insurgents. She was then taken to Jaworzno where she recalled the other female inmates who were treated worse than her because they knew more. From the memoirs written, there seems to be no mention of the Poles using rape against their inmates. Torturous interrogations were another matter and, in this, there was no distinction between male and female victims. Maria recalled incidents of older women having to carry cement blocks for hours. In another incident, she witnessed the effect of the severe beatings when her friend 'Marijka' came back from interrogations so badly beaten that the other girls in the cell had to put down their blankets for her because she could not lie on the hard boards. Maria also explained that some could not endure

the torture and killed themselves by throwing themselves onto the electrical fence, as 'Katrusia' – a young girl– did [45, p.33–37]. Even though the number of women who died at the Jaworzno camp was low [46], those females died because they accepted the risk of joining the UPA and understood that death was the result of their activities with the insurgency.

Along with targeting specific women with indiscriminate violence, Ukrainian women were targeted by the Polish communist authorities as a form of punishment for the actions of the males in joining the UPA or because the females stood in the way of a specific goal (by either stealing a certain item or simply because they were physically in the way). The general violence that occurred throughout the region targeted both males and females: «they break furniture, burn houses, beat until they are bruised, or until they are unconscious...break bones, gouge out eyes with knives and do not spare the women and children. The Ukrainian victims heard their Polish attackers yell out 'Szlach cie trafi ukrainko!' [sic]» («damned Ukrainian women») when referring to them [47]. Ukrainian women were targeted as much as Ukrainian men because they were the most visible targets in the area: with the men away either in prison for committed crimes against the state or away in the insurgency, the women were the visible Ukrainian representation.

Overall, even with the threat of physical and sexual abuse, women did join the UPA and being a member of the UPA changed these women's position not only in their own society but also within their personal historical context. The majority of the UPA females were generally allowed more personal freedom in the UPA than they would have experienced in the home: they were entrusted with serious matters that would otherwise not be available to them; they were travelled extensively and made connections throughout western Ukraine. All the while, they only needed to answer to their commanders rather than their husbands, boyfriends or even parents. Although the female members of the UPA were placed in a dangerous atmosphere, it was an atmosphere that allowed them to expand their personal knowledge and sense of identity. The majority of women who worked

with the UPA however, still held very traditional roles – as the nurturers and caregivers, although instead of their families it was now to the general UPA population. What changed was how these women viewed themselves and their work for the UPA. They were now outside their domestic roles and were active participants of the national struggle for independence. There was a fierce defensiveness over their part in Ukrainian history, a defensiveness which started immediately after the war. Julia Kaluszka, for example, recalled an incident in the Displaced Persons Camp in Germany:

Later, Milena Rudnytska came to the camp and everyone who was a member of the Women's Union was expected to show up...I was a bit late and there was no room to sit so I stood in the doorway and my son was playing with the other children...And she said: 'Who do we have in the forests today?' and I just came to the camp after being transferred [by OUN orders]. And she goes on: 'They are all bandits, Bandera followers, they are all scum and we should be ashamed of them'...and I just came from the forests! When I started to speak, my voice was very loud and I started to say: 'Ladies, who exactly do we have in the forests? It's your brothers, your husbands, you sisters! And they are bandits? Your sons are bandits? Who are you listening to?' And so I left and all the other women left with me...What would you do if she called those boys bandits? They were never bandits! They ruined their health and themselves all for the love of Ukraine. They left their family and everything, their youth. They were brave boys and girls...Those women left their families and their children to create our country and you call them worthless? How is that possible? [48]

The empowerment that the UPA gave to these women has been the core of their value systems and has forged their personal historical narrative, even if their experiences and perspectives have rarely been seen in the study of modern Ukrainian history [6, p.130; 2, p.591–592]. Javdokia Kochmaryk, for example, refused to be taunted about her role in the UPA. When she was called a «Banderite», she answered with: «I was, I am and I always will be!» [49].

This state violence did not affect every woman in the same way. There were those who succumbed to their torture and began to work as Soviet agents. Jeffrey Burds, for example, uses the example of «Natalka» – an OUN liaison officer and NKVD special agent. She faced hours of torture and finally broke psychologically when the Soviets gave her a choice between working with the NKVD or her and her family being killed [29, p.111]. These women chose family over nation however, the effects of this decision are still unknown because there has not been a concrete look into how the lives of these women compared with those who chose death or arrest and exile. The women sampled for this project, for example, knew of others who became Soviet agents but they themselves were either never caught or were arrested and sent into exile. Yaroslava Levkovych's testimony reveals the dichotomy of secret agents however: the good versus the bad. In Levkovych's testimony, the bad Soviet agent does not even have a name, she is simply known as «the NKVD agent» while 'Roma' is remembered as beautiful, intelligent and strong:

With us [in the bunker] was a provocateur, a major in the NKVD. She was in the bunker with us. [She came from another bunker which was raided by the NKVD]...In the bunker was also my sister..., the NKVD agent and there was also 'Roma', she was beautiful. She had this long braid and these grey eyes. She was strong and tall, very beautiful. She went into the underground with her sister...Their father went to Germany and they, with their mother, came here and [the UPA] gave them a house...The NKVD knew she was involved with the underground...They gave her poison laced cigarettes and chocolates to give to the UPA. But she told everything to our boys. They gave the chocolate to the dog and the dog died. The NKVD threatened that if she did not bring them UPA members by a certain day they would arrest her...One day ['Roma'] just couldn't take it anymore and asked for a pistol...She had a meeting with her handler and hid the gun...She turned around and said they were being followed, they said it was one of theirs...and [she shot the handler and fled back into the UPA].

The NKVD agent with no name on the other hand, betrayed the bunker and the UPA to the NKVD – Levkoyvch herself was the target of this betrayal. Levkovych was to be traded with another set of sisters but the exchange point was an NKVD trap and Levkovych barely escaped with her life [28]. To Levkovych, this particular NKVD agent is remembered with little sympathy – as she and her sister were the focus of the agent’s hatred. The female agents who did turn against the UPA were only pawns in the Soviet end-game against the Ukrainian nationalists – they were only one tool of many to finally rid western Ukraine of the OUN and UPA; for as Stalin once said: «the nationalists are the hardest to deal with, and he was right» [50, p.210].

The women who were active in the UPA joined because they too were influenced by the actions of the occupying powers and the deeds of their neighbours; in this, they were no different from their male counterparts. Their specific roles within the insurgency were distinct but no less important – they functioned as the support system of an insurgency that was dependent on the local population. It was the ties of the UPA women that made these connections happen: they were the ones who had established links to the towns and, in many places, they were trusted more so than the males. They were a far more visible target to state oppression than their male partners because of their location and roles: they were among the people and if there was a need to provide a specific service to the UPA, they were responsible for its implementation and coordination. For this reason, they were easy targets for the occupying powers. Gendered and sexual violence was used as a widespread weapon by all occupying powers as a means to an end – to end the insurgency by eliminating or silencing the female population that was so supportive of it. However, the results of this violence was complex and divisive: for while there were some who became agents of the occupying state, others found themselves being the representatives of the actions of the UPA well after their time in the underground ended. They not only placed their actions and deeds in equal footing with those of the men in the history of modern Ukraine but also cemented their own personal historical narrative within that of the UPA. They

came to represent the diverse nature of the Ukrainian underground movement and were proud to do so.

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НАСИЛЬСТВО І ЖІНКИ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПОВСТАНСЬКОЇ АРМІЇ: ДОСВІД І ВПЛИВИ

Внаслідок Другої світової війни жінки Української Повстанської Армії були вимушені виконувати незвичні ролі. Як активні повстанці УПА, вони брали участь у бойових діях, внаслідок чого жінки УПА перетворились на мішені радянських, німецьких і польських режимів в їх боротьбі проти УПА. Репресивні режими використовували різні види насильства щодо жінок УПА. Досвід участі жінок УПА в русі Спротиву сприяв формуванню власної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: *Друга світова війна, Україна, Українська Повстанська Армія, жінки, тендерне насильство, усна історія, Радянський Союз.*

НАСИЛИЕ И ЖЕНЩИНЫ УКРАИНСКОЙ ПОВСТАНЧЕСКОЙ АРМИИ: ОПЫТ И ВЛИЯНИЕ

Под влиянием Второй мировой войны женщины УПА были вынуждены исполнять необычные роли. Как активные участницы УПА, они участвовали в боевых действиях, в результате чего стали мишенями советских, немецких и польских режимов в их борьбе против УПА. Репрессивные режимы использовали разные виды насилия к женщинам УПА.

Опыт участия женщин УПА в движении Сопротивления содействовал формированию их собственной идентичности.

Ключевые слова: *Вторая мировая война, Украина, Украинская Повстанческая Армия, женщины, гендерное насилие, устная история, Советский Союз.*