

CHAPTER «HISTORICAL SCIENCES»

OUN ACTIVITIES ON THE TERRITORY OF THE RAVSKYI DISTRICT IN 1939-1941

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Abstract. The organizational and military-political activities of the OUN in the territory of the Ravskyi district in 1939-1941 were the part of the European Resistance Movement. OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) was the basis of the national liberation struggle. Its structure included not only direct members of the OUN, but also their sympathizers and supporters, since they were also active participants in the activities of the OUN. The reliable support of the OUN in the territory of the Ravskyi district was the majority of the local population, which provided moral and material support. The main goal of national liberation movement was the restoration of an independent Ukrainian state. Dissatisfaction with the occupation regime grew, which prompted the struggle in the Zhovkva and Ravskyi regions, as in any other regions of Western Ukraine. Such a confrontation took place in every county, in every smallest settlement. *The purpose* of the paper is to illustrate the organizational activities of the OUN at the initial period of World War II. It is also necessary to point out the military and political steps of the activities of Ukrainian nationalists in the Zhovkva, Lyubachiv and Ravskyi regions, which were part of the Ravskyi District of the OUN. *Methodology* of the study is based on general research methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, which are used to studying the quantitative composition, structure and characteristics of the capabilities of the combat units of Ukrainian nationalists. General scientific methods also include the method of system analysis. In our work, the use of this method is necessary to

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process information available in sources of various types and to reduce this information to a coherent historical picture. The critical method of working with sources is supplemented by the comparative method and the method of conducting semi-structured interviews with eyewitnesses to the events. The testimonies of people who lived in the territory of the Ravskyi district of the OUN from 1939 to 1941 about the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist forces in their settlements have been verified with archival data. This allows us to more objectively cover the events of World War II in the territory of the Ravskyi district. Results of the study are especially relevant for research on the history of individual territorial units of the OUN, for further study of the history of the Ukrainian liberation movement of the mid-20th century; for the analysis of its structure, leadership, forms and methods of struggle against the occupation regimes. The collected factual material and the conclusions of the work will be useful for writing generalizing works on the modern history of Ukraine, for studying the history of Ukrainian armed formations of the 1940s, the history of individual settlements of Galicia and for research of a local history nature, and the obtained biographical material can be used for compiling encyclopedic and reference publications, for creating museum expositions and thematic exhibitions.

1. Introduction

It is necessary to find out what influenced the intensification of the national liberation struggle to understand the activities of the OUN during the World War II on the territory of Ravskyi District: were the actions of Ukrainian nationalists caused only by the political situation that existed at that time, or were there other factors that contributed to the growth of the quantitative composition of the OUN and prompted its members to take decisive actions against the occupiers. It should be noted that some villages on the terrains of Ravskyi District were considered by the Soviet authorities to be completely pro-Bandera even after the war. It is no secret that Mokrotyn, Krekhiv, Zashkiv and others belonged to these. Our task will be to find out why national ideas prevailed over everything on the territory of the Ravska district during the Second World War and where the phenomenon of nationalism in the studied territory originates.

Historian I. Patrilyak quotes nationalism researcher Benedict Anderson: "The great wars of this century are extraordinary not so much

in the unprecedented scale on which they permitted people to kill, as in the colossal numbers persuaded to lay down their lives. Is it not certain that the numbers of those killed vastly exceeded those who killed? The idea of the ultimate sacrifice comes only with an idea of purity, through fatality. Dying for one's country, which is mostly not chosen, a person gains moral greatness" [21, p. 502].

Our observations show that modern historians are trying to objectively assess the Ukrainian resistance against occupants during the World War II. The collected and analyzed documents, memoirs give helps us to conclude that the OUN members sought to win back their native lands from the occupiers. It should be noted that scientific research on the activities of Ukrainian nationalists in the territory of the Ravskyi District of the OUN is fragmentary.

The struggle against Soviet power is also discussed in the essay "Zhovkivshchyna". In 1939–1941, the district OUN rose up against Soviet power, led by Zavada Stepan ("Kozhumiaka") [8, p. 209]. The essay "Zhovkva Region" draws attention to the improvement of the organizational structure of the national underground, and analyzes in detail the district leadership of the OUN of Zhovkva Region, headed by V. Gotsiy. In fact, the city of Zhovkva had the status of a region lead within the Ravskyi District of the OUN. Each region included 2–3 sub-districts (kushchi), which were subordinate to 6–7 village organizations (stanytsia). In total, there were 45 stanytsia's in the Zhovkva region [8, p. 232].

Scholars generally agree that Ukrainian nationalists put the national idea first in a struggle against occupants. It was the defense of the national idea that determined the tactics of action of Ukrainian nationalists at the Ravskyi district of the OUN (b). OUN formed a plan for its radical actions and resistance at the initial stage of World War II.

2. Ravskyi District of the OUN as a Place of Formation of the National Liberation Movement in Ukraine

These words also apply to the fighters for the national idea during the Second World War in the Ravskyi District. In order to understand what guided the consciousness of Zhovkva nationalists and called them to fight, to understand why young people joined the ranks of the rebels, although there was no chance of victory at that time, to explain why this land was so

dear to its inhabitants, who sacrificially gave their lives for it, let us turn to the historical reference about this region.

The Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine states that until 1603 the city, which is now one of the district centers of the Lviv region, was called Vynnyky, then Zhovkva, and from 1951 to 1991 Nesterov. Today it is a city of the Lviv region. It is located on the Svinia River (a tributary of the Rata, the Vistula basin), 32 kilometers from Lviv. In 2014, 13.4 thousand people were recorded here. The first written mention of Zhovkva dates back to 1368. Initially, the settlement belonged to the nobleman Dreventy. From 1560 it was owned by the magnate family of Zhovkva, later the city was owned by the Sobieski and Radziwill families. In the 17th century, the city became a significant trading center. In 1603, it received Magdeburg law and had privileges for distilling, trade and permission to hold four fairs a year. The city was built of stone. In the 17th century, famous painters I. Rutkovych, D. Raevich, V. Petrakhnovych worked here. In 1613, an Orthodox brotherhood and school were founded at the Church of the Nativity of Christ. According to the hypothesis of I. Krypiakevych, Bohdan Khmelnytsky was born in Zhovkva, who later studied here at the brotherhood school [7, p. 46].

Since 1994, Zhovkva has been a historical and architectural reserve. On its area of 27 hectares there are 40 monuments of urban planning, architecture and monumental art, of which 25 are of national importance, in particular the Zhovkva-Sobieski castle, which is one of the largest in Europe, as well as the church of St. Lawrence, built according to the design of the architect P. Schaslyvy and is one of the best examples of Renaissance construction in Ukraine [8, pp. 163–165].

The Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies states that Zhovkva is a city in Galicia, on the border of Roztochchya and the Nadbuzha Basin; a district center of Lviv region. In 1931, 8,000 inhabitants lived here (apparently, during the World War II, a census was not conducted, so there is no data on the population in the period under study (S. K.)). At that time, a small industry was developing in Zhovkva – glass, food, and there was a brick factory [16, p. 696].

Zhovkva was founded in 1603 by the Polish hetman Stanisław Żolkiewski and played a major role in the 17th century as a fortress and residence of the Polish king Jan Sobieski. Valuable architectural

monuments date from that time; a large castle, a church and a synagogue from the late Renaissance, a market with old houses, the church of the Basilian Fathers, defensive walls and towers, the Zvirynetsk Gate, residential buildings, bell towers, and a Dominican monastery. All these buildings were masterfully crafted and perfect. And the decorations of Zhovkva cathedrals demonstrated an artistic synthesis of architecture, painting, and decorative carving. Masters of the Galician school of Ukrainian painting of the 17th century, to which I. Rutkovich belonged, contributed to all this. This is stated in the “History of Ukrainian Art”, in the book “Monuments of Town Planning and Architecture of the Ukrainian SSR”, in the work “Zhovkva Region: Historical and Architectural Sketches of Churches”, authored by V. Slobodyan, in the reference book “Monuments of Architecture and Town Planning of Ukraine” [7].

From these brief references, we can conclude that Zhovkva on the eve of World War II was a beautiful small city with rich architecture. Luxurious carvings with high reliefs of saints in semicircular niches and works of white, black, and red marble in the church, painted by master Yu. Butsmanyuk in the neo-Byzantine style on the walls of the church of the Basilian Fathers, majestic and artistically accomplished buildings that adorned Zhovkva, added a special charm to it, and the inhabitants of Zhovkva treated these achievements with respect.

A significant number of religious buildings testifies that the city had its own religious traditions and that people of different nationalities were able to visit their churches (obviously, Ukrainians visited the church of the Basilian fathers and the very ancient wooden church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is in the cemetery (by the way, for some reason it is not mentioned in the Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies) or the Church of the Holy Trinity, which dates back to 1720 (there is no information about it in the Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies either), Poles prayed in the church, and Jews in the synagogue).

A resident of Zhovkva, H. Marcin, says: “There was no such thing that anyone would not go to church on a holiday or on Sunday. And they had special clothes: for every day – everyday, and for church – they kept new ones in a chest. Because you have to wear the most beautiful clothes to church” [8]. Another resident, L. Tymtsiv adds: “I went to church when I was a child. I probably didn’t know how to walk yet, when my mother

and father took me there with them. We visited the Church of the Holy Virgin, because our house was right next to it. And my Jewish friend Lida went to the synagogue with her parents every Saturday” [10]. And here are the words of P. Galapacs: “Our Church of the was small. There was not enough space in it. There were not enough benches for everyone. So some people stood, and when the weather was good, they also stood near the church” [11].

As we understand, the churches that towered over Zhovkva performed their missionary function, and not only decorated the city. A fairly large number of buildings of various religious purposes indicates both that the city needed them and that adherents of different confessions lived here.

From the memories of the local residents, we learn that they were proud that their Zhovkva had an ancient history. Thus, I. Hubka is proud that he was born on the land, "where, according to the latest data, people lived about 20 thousand years ago, which is confirmed by archaeological finds and that it was on this land that in the Middle Ages, despite the Tatar invasion, the towns of Zhovkva, Krekhiv, Mageriv, Rava-Ruska grew up. [17, p. 11].

From dictionary entries we also learn that certain crafts were developed in Zhovkva and fairs were held, which were attended by many people. This indicates that the residents of Zhovkva were mainly business people, each knew his own craft and lived a normal life.

A resident of Zhovkva region A. Pelekh says: "My father Ivan Pelekh was a good carpenter. People always turned to him to make doors for someone, windows for someone. He also installed floors. He was very well-known. He knew how to do carpentry, because my grandfather Prokip taught him” [12]. Another resident, B. Furtak, adds: “We had a family of farmers from my grandfather to my great-grandfather. But everyone knew which family knew which craft: there were good potters, good bakers, shoemakers, tailors” [13].

And it also happened that people in whole settlements mastered one business. For example, even today, the residents of the village of Kulikova are famous for producing delicious sausages, making shoes and sewing beautiful dresses, and the village of Hlynska is home to unsurpassed chefs. The village of Potelych is famous for potters who decorated tiles and houses with ornaments (pottery has been developing here since time immemorial,

as mentioned in the Ipatiev Chronicle). In the Zhovkva region, every able-bodied resident had some kind of occupation: at the beginning of the 19th century, a brick factory began operating, at the end of the 19th century a glass factory was built here, and at the beginning of the 20th century a distillery. There was also an oil press in Zhovkva. The main occupations of the population were, as we understand, handicrafts, crafts and work in factories. In addition, as we also learn from the memoirs of Zhovkva residents, small trade was popular in Zhovkva. All this confirms that Zhovkva is a unique region, the inhabitants of which are accustomed to stability and therefore, as a rule, always continued the work of their fathers and improved in that matter.

The inhabitants of Zhovkva also enjoyed the fact that they had the opportunity to get an education. It is known that at that time there were five brotherhoods in Zhovkva, the first of which, with a school attached to it, was founded in 1603 at the Church of the Nativity of the Lord.

The Basilian Monastery, which was founded in 1682 with the participation of Bishop J. Shumlyansky at the Church of the Nativity of the Lord, was of great importance not only in religious but also in cultural and educational life. In 1690, this monastery burned down, but later it was rebuilt with the help of the Polish king Jan Sobieski. The monastery housed the relics of Saint John of Suchavsky. This monastery experienced significant development after the reform of the Basilian Order. In 1895, a printing house and publishing house for popular literature were founded at the monastery, and from 1897 to 1944, the monthly magazine “Missionar” was published here, which had the largest circulation compared to other publications in Galicia [20]. Thanks to the Zhovkva Monastery and its publishing activities, Zhovkva was an important Ukrainian religious and cultural center until 1944 [8, pp. 196–197].

The inhabitants of this region were mainly literate people and loved to read. The spread of book knowledge is evidenced by the fact that the school and church libraries of the city had many books written in different languages, and since 1623 a bookbinder worked in the city of Zhovkva.

So, since the 17th century, Ravskyi District (with Zhovkva inside) has declared itself as a region where education and publishing were developing. The residents of Zhovkva region were aware that they had certain cultural, religious, and educational heritage. They liked everything

on their territory: the buildings and the terrain itself. It should be noted that Zhovkva itself is located on the banks of the Svinia River near Mount Garai, which is overgrown with pines and deciduous trees. On the other side of Zhovkva are the forests of Zaruddia and White forest (Bilyi lis). The picturesqueness is added by the park, which is located in the historical part of the city and is today considered a monument of landscape art. In the 17th-19th centuries, this park was also completed by masters, decorating it with sculptures.

From all this, we can conclude that Zhovkva is one of the most cozy cities in Ukraine. Other settlements of the Rav district also had their own ancient history and traditions. For example, the city of Rava-Ruska dates back to 1455 and its buildings combine styles from different eras, and a major trade route that has long connected Lviv and Warsaw still runs through the city itself.

The surrounding villages also had their own prestige and comfort. They were also immersed in gardens, greenery, and were picturesque. They also had their own cultural and educational centers. I. Hubka talks about his native village of Krekhiv: "...look now at the former educational center, the famous Krekhiv printing house on the territory of the monastery, where Ukrainian books originated. The miracle of the hands of the architectural ensemble of the Krekhiv Monastery, founded at the beginning of the 17th century, three kilometers from the village of Krekhiv, can now be seen only in an engraving by Dionysius Sinkevich or on other prints" [4, pp. 116–117].

Similar stories can be heard from residents of other settlements of the Rav district. It is known that the villages also had clubs, libraries, and schools. So, everything in the Ravskyi District contributed to the spiritual growth of a person.

Let us pay attention to how the political events that took place in the pre-war period influenced the region under study. 1939 was the twentieth year of the Polish occupation. In 1919, the state fate of the Western Ukrainian lands was decided by the unfortunate outcome of the Ukrainian-Polish war of 1918–1919, as well as the outcome of the Soviet-Polish war of 1918–1919. The final fate of the Western Ukrainian lands was determined on March 14, 1923 by the Council of Ambassadors (England, France, Italy, USA), which decided to annex Eastern Galicia to Poland

and legalized the Polish occupation with its decision. According to the agreement between the Entente powers and Poland, the Poles were to carry out only military occupation on the territory of Eastern Galicia. Poland did not have the right to introduce its own civil administration here. Before the Entente powers, it undertook to guarantee Ukrainians cultural autonomy, to legally grant them the right to use their language in schools and in public life, and to ensure the right to self-government of the three Galician voivodeships.

In fact, Poland did not fulfill and did not even try to fulfill these obligations. The Polish occupation authorities began to implement a policy of terror and mass imprisonment against Ukrainians [5, p. 12].

Under the influence of such historical circumstances, under the pressure of emotional stress that Ukrainians, conscious of their national belonging, had to experience under foreign occupation, the desire to get rid of humiliation and contempt for their national community at any cost ripened.

Pride for their land, great love for their native land prompted them to fight. This is how the patriots stated it in the publication "Surma": We will not let our people perish... We will not let peace reign in ethnic Ukrainian lands. Because peace is slavery for us. If we lose one liberation war – we will prepare a second; if we lose the second – maybe we will win the third. In the end, we must win [2, pp. 4–7].

It was in Zhovkva, in the village of Matsoshyn, in Zashkiv and other villages of the district in 1930–1931, the first cells of the radical right-wing organization of the national liberation movement – OUN were formed. It was with the territories of the Ravskyi District of the OUN that the lives of famous leaders of the national liberation struggle were connected: S. Bandera, D. Mayivskyi, E. Konovalets.

So, there have long been traditions here. Zhovkva itself was a center of education, culture, and religion. From generation to generation, people passed on experience in the development of certain crafts, instilled in their children a love of work, and at the same time – the desire to live affluently. In the territories of the Ravska district, the indigenous inhabitants especially appreciated the achievements of their ancestors and were ready to defend their families, their possessions, and therefore their land from any encroachment on it. That is why the people of Zhovkva can be considered patriots of their land.

On the territory of the Ravskyi District, national consciousness was established and the national idea was improved for centuries. This contributed to the fact that this region became the birthplace of the national liberation movement in Ukraine.

3. Prerequisites for the creation of sub-district groups of the OUN

At the beginning of World War II, sub-district groups of the OUN operated in the territory of the Ravskyi District. Let us find out what initially gave rise to the OUN movement in the territory of the Ravskyi District, what exactly caused the creation of these groups and what their goal was. We had to review the socio-political situation that existed before the beginning of World War II.

After the Great War (First World War), the Western parts of Ukraine were under the rule of Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. Galicia, in particular, felt a significant influence of Poland. The state fate of the Western Ukrainian lands was decided by the unfortunate outcome of the Ukrainian-Polish War of 1918–1919, as well as the outcome of the Soviet-Polish War of 1919–1921. The Treaty of Riga, concluded between Soviet Russia and Poland in 1921, defined the state border between these two countries along the Zbruch River, through Volyn, Podolia, and further through Belarus to the Dvina River. All Western Ukrainian lands were under Poland according to this treaty. The fate of Western Ukrainian lands was finally determined in 1923 by the Council of Deputies, which decided to annex Eastern Galicia to Poland and legalized the Polish occupation of Eastern Galicia by its decision. The Poles were to carry out only military occupation on the territory of Eastern Galicia according to the treaty between the Entente and Poland. Poland did not have the right to introduce its own civil administration here. It undertook to the Entente countries to guarantee Ukrainians the right to use their language in schools and in public life, and to ensure the right to self-government of the Galician region. In fact, Poland did not fulfill these obligations, but began to implement a policy of terror, mass imprisonment, and exile to concentration camps against Ukrainians. The Polish occupation authorities liquidated all Ukrainian departments at Lviv University, and the university itself was Polonized in 1919. The attack on schools was also noticeable. If in 1918 there were 3,600 state Ukrainian schools in Eastern Galicia, then during the Polish rule there were only 416 of them. The Galician

Sejm and the Regional Department were abolished as the autonomous government of Eastern Galicia in 1920. The name “Eastern Galicia” was changed to “Eastern Lesser Poland”. Thousands of Ukrainians – former state government officials – were not accepted into the civil service. Clear political censorship of the Ukrainian press was introduced. A separate cooperative law placed Ukrainian cooperation under Polish government control [23, pp. 11–13] Even before World War II, Galicians were deprived of the right to independently decide their fate. The Ukrainian intelligentsia was already fighting to preserve its national identity. This is discussed in more detail in the works of I. Havryliv and T. Hryvul [1; 3]. For example, Ukrainian nationalists saw only the path of national revolution for the restoration of the Ukrainian because of the difficulties of the development of Ukraine at that time, and its providing – only by the establishment of a national dictatorship.

The OUN’s strategy of struggle was aimed at “revolutionizing and activating the masses of the people...first of all” as it is noted in the scientific work of V. Kosyk [14]. The OUN leadership believed that the Ukrainian question could be resolved as a result of decisive radical actions. Therefore, OUN members were constantly trained.

We could find out in scientific sources and eyewitness that even on the eve of World War II, the inhabitants of the Zhovkva region felt national and social injustice from Poland. A resident of the village of Matsoshyn Teodor Pelekh recalls: “The Poles who entered Galicia themselves made a provocations and brought upon themselves hatred for the poor treatment of the Ukrainian people on Ukrainian soil.” Teodor Pelekh talks about the abuse of Ukrainians by Polish gendarmes, about the condescending attitude towards Ukrainians even by ordinary Poles [22, p. 38].

A residents of the village of Nova Skvariava, near Ravskiy District, Zhovkva region, testifies that the Polish authorities carried out repressions against the Ukrainian people. Polish chauvinists tried to destroy and ignore everything Ukrainian in order to prove to the world that Galicia belonged to Polish ethnographic lands [6]. The occupiers identified public and political figures, soldiers of the Ukrainian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, activists of state construction, patriotic representatives of the clergy and intelligentsia, peasants and townspeople, arrested and sent them to newly created concentration camps in Wadowice, Dombie, Pikulychy, Strzałków,

Tuchola, Yaliwce, and Janów. Ukrainian institutions, schools, branches of the Prosvita and Silsky Hospodar societies, youth organizations Sokil, Sich, Plast, and newspapers were closed. Ukrainian songs, the trident, and the blue-and-yellow flags were banned.

The Polish authorities tried to forcefully Polonize the Ukrainian population. Here is evidence: “In the village of Soposhyn, Vyazivsky had a consumer crypt. The Poles twisted his surname to Vyonzowski. Peasant Hrabowskyi, whose two sons, Fedor and Ivan, belonged to the OUN lived in the village of Machoshyn. Their father had a brother who had to change his surname to Grabowski in order to get hard physical labor on the railway. There were many more such cases” [22, p. 39].

The Poles pursued a policy of assimilation. They sought to create the so-called “Shlakhta Zagrodova”, whose members were to be persons with surnames ending in “ski”. A resident of Zhovkva region D. Nedoviz recalls: “The Polish administration arbitrarily changed the endings in surnames, for example, instead of Sazhynskyi – Sarzynski. I myself fought for the correct spelling of my surname in high school, because the Polish administration twisted it to “Nedovuz”. Arguing with the professor of Polish language Ratusinski, I managed to have the surname written again as “Nedoviz”. It was an unpleasant affair. The Polish police intervened, and my whole family was implicated” [18, p. 29]. From the stories of people who felt the influence of Poland, it becomes clear that they did not want to change their surnames, they defended the right to bear their Ukrainian surname. However, in order to occupy a certain position in society, for example, to get a job, they were forced to compromise their principles.

Already in 1930–1931, the first OUN cells were formed in Rava-Ruska, Zhovkva, Matoszyn, Zashkiv and other villages of the analyzed region. Their activities were coordinated by the district executive, headed in 1932 by the printer-binder Volodymyr Kasaraba from the city of Zhovkva. In the mid-1930s, local cells (“links” of 3–5 people formed a “bush” (kushch) or “stanytsia”) were subordinated to the Lviv and later the Ravskyi District of the OUN. The OUN members denied any legal contacts with state authorities and prepared the youth for a future armed uprising against the occupiers [8, p. 218].

On September 1, 1934, the OUN member Hryhoriy Kulykivets shot and killed police agent Stanislav Yatsyna near the People’s House

in Zhovkva. On the same days, an attempt was also made on the famous cooperator Anton Humen, who, even during the terrible famine in the Dnieper region, did not renounce Sovietism. And already in October-November, a high-profile trial of the organizers of these attempts took place, which testified to the high agitation and propaganda activity of local nationalists, their authority among the population, especially the radical youth – workers, high school students of folk schools and gymnasiums, students [8, p. 220].

Summarizing the issue of political ambitions that were formed on the eve of World War II, we can state that Ukrainians always sought to preserve their language, wanted to manage production and social processes themselves. And they also wanted to live more prosperously, more freely. They were tired of the pressure of the Polish authorities.

The residents of the Ravskyi District, of course, were outraged by the arrogant behavior of the Poles, and therefore they rallied to resist Polonization in their native villages. A resident of Matsoshyn village, Teodor Pelekh, says: “As a young man, I dreamed of being a monk, to live in caves and deserts. When I became an adult, I began to experience a hard life, and then I decided to be just and serve Ukraine to the best of my ability” [22, p. 41]. This indicates that conscious Ukrainians became nationalists.

Teodor Pelekh, who at one time (as early as 1937) belonged to Prosvita organisation and was a member of the senior historians’ group, voluntarily joined the OUN. His fellow villagers Volodymyr Roman, Teodor Kyryk, and Teodor Grabovsky joined the organization with him. Each of them took the oath. “Our goal was to demonstrate that we are the masters of our land,” says Teodor Pelekh [22, p. 45].

OUN members hung national flags on the state school building, painted over Polish symbols – they resisted Polatization in various ways. The number of OUN members grew. In 1939, Andriy Hrynyk also joined the OUN unit to which Teodor Pelekh belonged. Later, other boys became members of the OUN: Volodymyr Bogonis, Teodor Didyk, Mykola Hrynyk, Ivan Grabovsky, Yaroslav Matsko and Mykhailo Pavnyk [22, p. 42]. Thus, a sub-district unit (group) of the OUN was organized.

As we understand, a negative attitude towards the Polish authorities had developed in the territory of the Ravskyi District even before the beginning

of World War II. The rejection of this authority and the intention to resist it gave rise to the creation of sub-district and district groups of the OUN.

The organization, which set itself the goal of gaining an independent Ukrainian state through a revolutionary path, had well-developed its network. In particular, 10 district executives of the OUN operated in Western Ukraine. A clear organizational vertical functioned, the main elements of which were: region – okrug – county – district – village. At that time the number of OUN members in Galicia was about 3,000, in Volhynia – 1,000, not including members of the OUN Youth and sympathizers according to the Polish researcher Roman Vysotsky [24, p. 350].

However, at the beginning of World War II, the OUN was reorganized into the ZUZ (Western Ukrainian lands), which was due to the need to improve the structure of the organization and its leadership vertical. The new vertical consisted of the following elements: OUN leadership – region – oblast – okrug – county – district – sub-district – village. The organizational structure of the OUN combined elements of the Polish and Soviet administrative-territorial systems. The boundaries of the districts mostly coincided with the boundaries of the judicial districts of the Polish state, the counties with the boundaries of the counties of the territorial division before 1939, the districts with the boundaries of the districts of the Soviet administrative-territorial system. Such organizational reforms had a number of advantages: firstly, the organizational vertical was decentralized, and secondly, it contributed to the strengthening of conspiracy and the role of the district leaderships of the OUN in building the network. The latter, having 15–20 settlements under their control (previously, the counties controlled 90–100 villages), could carry out their work more effectively and achieve much better results [24, p. 357]. The structural reorganization also affected the region we studied. On the territory of the Ravskyi district, Dmytro Mayivskyi became the head of the Zhovkva region at the beginning of World War II.

Thus, the main prerequisite for the creation of sub-district groups of the OUN was the pressure of the Polish authorities. It was the attempt to resist Polonization that prompted conscious Ukrainians to unite at the local level and to create sub-district groups.

In 1939, the political situation changed: the Polish authorities were replaced by the Soviet authorities. At the end of August, at an organizational district meeting (departure) in the village of Matsoshyn, the leading district

head of the OUN, Dmytro Mayivskyi, directed the local members of the OUN as follows: "The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) has clearly placed the principle from the beginning of its existence that in order to liberate Ukraine from the yoke of various occupiers, it will be necessary to organize the Ukrainian armed forces. The German-Polish war is approaching, and we, Ukrainians, must prepare for a partisan war with the Poles, give the Poles a proper answer for the wrong they have done us."

At the second meeting (departure) in September 1939, Dmytro Mayivskyi spoke briefly, but convincingly and decisively: "Germany attacked Poland on September 1. We, as members of the OUN, will wage a partisan war against the occupants. We will obtain weapons by treachery and courage from our enemy. First of all, we will go to the Polish police villages, disarm the policemen and start with the guns" [19, p. 12].

Members of the OUN's sub-district group of the village of Matsoshyn in particular and the Zhovkva region in general in August-September 1939 set the fight against the Poles as their primary task. They organized a military camp in the forest near Volya Zhovtanetska under the leadership of Dmytro Mayivskyi. The camp included OUN members from the surrounding villages: Zibolky, Zheldtsia, Vereny, etc. The purpose of the camp was as follows:

- to act in an organized manner;
- "to stockpile weapons that the Polish army had left in the forests";
- to educate young people politically and organizationally [7, p. 209].

The organization of such a military camp indicates that the OUN members were preparing for possible armed actions against the Poles. The plans of the district organization of Ukrainian nationalists until September 1939 were guided by hatred of the Polish authorities.

On the territory of the Lyubachiv region, which in 1939 belonged to the Ravskyi District of the OUN (b), military schools were organized and OUN (b) departments were formed. At the beginning of the war in the vicinity of Narol, Plaziv, Chesaniv and Dzikiv Stary, the OUN activity was associated primarily with the brothers Ivan and Omelyan Grabets from the New village, as well as a circle of people from the New and Old Lyublynets: Ivan Bily, Vasyl Levkovych, Ivan Shymansky. It is worth noting that Omelyan Grabets under the pseudonyms "Batko", "Lemko" in 1944 was one of the main organizers of the Ukrainian underground in Podolia [25, p. 84].

In 1940, the Grabets brothers organized the first "youth camp" in the village of Horayets. Such an initiative was taken by Oleksandr Bablak, Ivan Komar, Hryhoriy Harasym, and Mykola Kozak in New and Old Lyublynets. The members of the "kurin" organized cultural and educational life in their native region. They performed at festivals, events and sports competitions. It was also possible to conduct underground work, to collect weapons, ammunition, and military equipment which were left after the events of September 1939. In the meantime, the Grabets brothers organized military schools (semi-official, under the guise of various courses organized through the field delegations of the Ukrainian Central Committee). One of the participants of such courses was Vasyl Levkovych "Voronyi" [25, p. 84].

At the same time, Omelyan Grabets, as the head of the Lyubachivskiy region of the OUN (which was part of Ravskiy District) and, an employee of the UCC (Ukrainian Central Committee) delegation in Chesaniv, had an influence on the formation of police departments during the years of German occupation. For example, Ivan Shymansky was appointed as a commandant of the police department in Chesaniv [25, p. 147].

Since 1941, many young activists from Lyubachivskiy region have reoriented their activities to expand the OUN network in the Eastern Ukrainian lands, the organization's activities in the vicinity of Chesaniv, as well as in the neighboring Kholm region, have significantly weakened. At a time when Omelyan Grabets was performing the functions of the leader of the OUN of the Rivne region, the district leader of the OUN in Lyubachiv region was Ivan Bily ("Bureviy"), who died in battles with the Polish Home Army on December 5, 1943. The last leader of the Lyubachiv region of the OUN until January 1945 was Ivan Grabets ("Oles", "Garmash") [25, p. 192].

Mykhailo Levus (born in 1926), a resident of the village of Mokrotyn, believes: "In order to understand the need to create OUN groups, it is necessary to "give an image of the events and conditions in which my generation, which lived in the 1930s and 1940s, entered the historical arena and took on the burden of the struggle for the freedom of our people, lived and reached national consciousness." Mykhailo Levus notes that even in childhood, his fellow villagers did not want to accept either the Polish orders, or the portraits of Bolshevik leaders that appeared in school classrooms instead of images, or the atheistic interpretations and fairy tales about a bright future that teachers offered under Soviet rule [15, p. 213].

At the first opportunity, young Mykhailo Levus in the village of Mokrotyn joined the OUN youth network. Here is his story: "At the end of 1942, I joined the OUN youth network. There we studied the Decalogue, the history of Ukraine, learned how to march, and so on. Then I joined the military network, where we were taught how to handle weapons of various types and systems – from a crossbow to a machine gun, drill training, the ability to fight and retreat if necessary, the ability to provide medical assistance, etc. I want to note that military discipline reigned here. In order to ensure a peaceful life for the civilian population, the OUN organized self-defense units from young volunteers in each village. We received weapons from the Polish army, which capitulated in 1939, from the Russian army in 1941, and even from the Austrian army – from the time of the First World War. At the end of 1943, hundreds of rebels were gathering in the forests near Mokrotyn, and I was tasked with keeping in touch with them. Even then, I was an infrequent guest at home."

A resident of the village of Mokrotyn, M. Pakholok (born in 1932), talking about the creation of OUN groups in his native village, notes, I don't know of another village that would have so sacrificially accepted the OUN slogan: "You will gain the Ukrainian Independent State or you will die fighting for it!" And I don't know of a family in the village that would not have been affected by the hardships of war to one degree or another.

M. Pakholok talks about the nationally conscious Haschuk family, which had ten children who, in one way or another, joined the national liberation movement during the Second World War: "at the call of the OUN, its members and sympathizers collected weapons abandoned by the Poles and stocked up. Haschuk's sons did not stay away and took the most active part in this event. Their relatives saw all this and did not object, because they knew that no one would just give freedom to Ukraine – it had to be won with weapons in hand. With the arrival of the Red Army in Galicia, Hrytsko Haschuk, by order of the OUN, moved to Zakerzonnya by communication, where he underwent military training and returned in early July 1941 together with the OUN Field Groups" [15, p. 238].

Other Haschuk boys also joined the OUN structures. Later, they became active defenders of the region: Fedir Haschuk ("Chumak") headed the self-defense bush department (SKV) of the villages of Hlynske, Nova Skvariava, Stara Skvariava, Mykhailo Haschuk ("Snigur") was a rifleman in one of

the militias in Mokrotyn. Hrytsko, Mykhailo, Ivan, Fedir were members of the OUN and militants of the Mokrotyn Self-Defense. In the early forties, Haschuk's barn was overflowing with weapons and ammunition [15, p. 254].

The evidence presented also proves that the residents of the Ravskyi District actively participated in the implementation of the OUN's priority tasks. Not only OUN members, but also their sympathizers collected weapons. The people's desire to defend their national and religious traditions determined their priorities. Therefore, the OUN leaders did not have to spend much effort to convince the population of their political line.

The main prerequisite for the creation of OUN combat groups was the negative attitude towards the Polish authorities, which had developed even before the start of World War II. However, as we can conclude from the above memoirs, the real reason for the creation of OUN sub-district groups was dictated by life itself: people sought to defend their religious beliefs and national preferences at all costs, they were ready to defend what was most dear to them from any occupier.

The great desire to live in an independent state prompted the OUN to form an extended network, which was joined by local boys. Families and friends of members of these groups became sympathizers and also joined the struggle in various ways.

Conclusions

The methods of the OUN's work at the beginning of World War II were determined by the historical conditions that had developed. The opposition of the OUN members to the Polish authorities changed to opposition to the occupying Soviet authorities. Since the Soviet authorities were wary of those who had already proven themselves as fighters against Polonization (such people were already considered nationalists and automatically fighters against the Soviet regime; they and their families were taken out of Western Ukraine), the Ukrainian nationalists were forced to act underground. Their participation in the national liberation movement was mainly determined by the OUN leadership. OUN members in the Ravskyi District in 1939–1941 mostly carried out explanatory work among the population, distributed leaflets in which they propagated the national idea. At the same time, OUN activists studied weapons and tried to achieve a professional level in all branches of the economy. Everything indicated

that the OUN in the territory of the Ravskyi District aimed to move from underground activities to armed resistance to the occupier. In the same period from September 1, 1939 to June 22, 1941, no organized armed actions by the OUN were observed in the Ravskyi District. This indicates that the OUN at the initial stage of the World War II was forming a plan for its radical actions of resistance to the occupiers.

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