

LARYSA ZARICZNAK

University of Nottingham, master of modern history (Great Britain)

FRIENDS, FAMILY AND KINSHIP TIES IN THE UKRAINIAN INSURGENT ARMY

Family ties and influence have been argued as very influential in creating a nationally conscious western Ukrainian generation who then joined the UPA during the Second World War. However, these kinship ties have not been analyzed. This article looks at the way in which familial relationships created the opportunity for western Ukrainians to join the UPA and their experiences with family members during their time in the insurgency. It also examines the danger that many family members were placed in because of a family member's decision to join the fight against the Germans and Soviets.

Keywords: *Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Second World War, kinship study, family bonds, friends, relationships, Soviet Union*

ЛАРИСА ЗАРІЧНЯК

Нотінгемський університет, викладач сучасної історії (Велика Британія)

ДРУЗІ, СІМ'Я ТА РОДИННІ ЗВ'ЯЗКИ У ЛАВАХ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПОВСТАНСЬКОЇ АРМІЇ

Родинні впливи відігравали помітну роль у становленні західних українців, які під час Другої світової війни приєдналися до УПА. Важливе значення мали сімейні зв'язки та впливи членів родини. Однак дана проблема досі не була проаналізована науковцями належним чином. У пропонованій статті розглядається, як саме сімейні взаємини вплинули на рішення українців з Західної України приєднатися до УПА, що відчували члени родин, перебуваючи у лавах повстанців. Увагу також приділено небезпеці, у якій опинилося багато родин, у зв'язку з рішенням приєднатися до боротьби проти Німеччини і Радянського Союзу.

Ключові слова: *Українська Повстанська Армія, Друга світова війна, родинні дослідження, сімейні зв'язки, друзі, відносини, Радянський Союз.*

ЛАРИСА ЗАРИЧНЯК

Ноттингемський університет, преподаватель современной истории (Великобритания)

ДРУЗЬЯ, СЕМЬЯ И СЕМЕЙНЫЕ СВЯЗИ В РЯДАХ УКРАИНСКОЙ ПОВСТАНЧЕСКОЙ АРМИИ

Семейное влияние играло заметную роль в становлении западных украинцев, которые во время Второй мировой войны присоединились к УПА. Большое значение имели семейные узы и влияние членов семьи. Однако данная проблема до сих пор не была надлежащим образом проанализирована учеными. В данной статье рассматривается, как семейные взаимоотношения повлияли на решение украинцев с Западной Украины присоединиться к УПА, что чувствовали члены семей, пребывая в рядах повстанцев. Также уделено внимание опасности, в которой оказались многие семьи, в связи с решением присоединиться к борьбе против Германии и Советского Союза.

Ключевые слова: *Украинская Повстанческая Армия, Вторая мировая война, семейные исследования, семейные связи, отношения, Советский Союз.*

As Ukrainian women were introduced and indoctrinated into the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), they became the link between the underground, its leadership and the community by being able to move around within their respective territories as couriers, guides and nurses. They also represented the wider family link that many in western Ukraine had to the UPA. These familial relationships were used to mobilize individuals into the insurgency. Personal relationships became important for recruitment because “*resisters were primarily recruited through family and socio-professional channels*” [1, p. 143]. Kinship and family ties among UPA member’s helps explains why so many siblings and other family relations joined the UPA during the war. Familial recruitment was not only important to Ukrainian females but also to Ukrainian males – through this process, groups of friends (direct family members were usually, but not always, split up) began to create family bonds. These solidarity ties were then maintained and strengthened in the first stages of the individual’s involvement “*when a clandestine group first took shape*” [2, p. 177]. This article examines the family connections that were used both as a motivational factor to join the UPA and as a danger. In this way, recruitment was made easier with an already existing link to the underground association in the form of either a friend or family member and a certain level of trust was built around that relationship. However, once that link was established, it also became a way to trace back UPA members by Soviet security organs.

Unfortunately, like many aspects of the history of the UPA, kinship studies has been very limited. The most one can conclude from UPA historiography is that the family environment had an influence on western Ukrainians in joining the UPA [3, c. 169]. It has also been established that these family links were also exploited by the Soviet Union’s security organs as a way to threatened UPA members [4, p. 292]. Kinship studies in general, have been fairly limited with the most research on the topic done on the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Mexico. Kinship, as a role in the recruitment process to the Zapatista Army, spread the word for recruitment amongst Zapatista members and made recruitment easier because of existing links to the movement [5, p. 169]. Furthermore, Paula Schwartz also noticed that women in the French Resistance who were either affiliated with or were members of the French Communist Party assumed the link between the underground and the leadership because they were able to move around more freely within French occupied society [6, p. 128]. These women too acted as not only the visible link of the population to the French Resistance but were also influential in recruiting others. The kinship studies of the UPA can most closely be linked to this particular movement and needs further examining and analysis.

For those joining the UPA, having a pre-existing link with the underground helped them leave their homes and find shelter and support in the UPA. Yevhen Shtendera recalled that he knew all of those who went into the UPA when he did because they were from a neighbouring village, and they were all arrested together [7]. Ivan Lyko was also influenced by his friends’ involvement with the insurgency and that was the final push he needed to join himself. His old friend Bober was most influential, because he was also a part of the OUN – this established an already existing link between Lyko’s own nationalist intentions and also gave the insurgency a familiarity that would not have existed if Bober was not already a part of it [8, c. 26, 29]. The same link was seen in Andriy Kordan’s involvement with the UPA – although it was not obvious to him at first: he was being recruited into the OUN-UPA by his Ukrainian police station commander Kotsur during the war, a 25-30 year old who was strongly determined to educate Kordan in the ways of the OUN. Kordan’s experience was typical of those recruited from the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police as they eventually joined the UPA mainly by the doings of their commander. In Kordan’s case his senior officer in the Auxiliary Police mobilized the whole unit to march from their German positions into the forests in 1943 [9, c. 55, 62].

Personal relationships were also instrumental in helping would-be UPA members in escaping from their native villages and gaining contacts with the underground network. Kateryna Pipka was rescued by her male friends from a Polish attack in April 1944 [10, c. 78]. After this attack, she was invited to join the UPA by her friends. Danylo Shumuk joined in 1943 because of his

personal relationship with a fellow teacher. As a disillusioned communist, it was those links that gained him the trustworthy reputation within the Nationalist camp (through an old OUN member) and gave him a way out of German persecution. As he stated: “*I joined the UPA because I was already linked to the Nationalists*” through Nina, that female teacher [11]. Joining the UPA was an individual decision and was made either early on (as Andrij Kordan did) or later during the war when a new fear of Polish, German or Soviet actions arose (as was the case of Kateryna Pipka and Danylo Shumuk). Regardless of when they were made, these decisions were made easier with the knowledge that there was already some support within the underground organization from one’s existing friends.

Friendships were a strong incentive in joining the ranks of the UPA. However, family relations were, by far, the most instrumental in helping Ukrainian men and women join the insurgency. Family relationships existed within the underground: brothers and sisters talked to each other about the insurgency, increasing the other’s interest in the organization [12, p. 169]. It was this grass roots propaganda that helped many siblings (and cousins) join the UPA together and which similarly allowed one family relation to follow in the footsteps of another. In a typical description of how his family relations influenced him to join the UPA, Yaroslav Wijtiw acknowledged his cousin as his main influence:

I had a cousin there...He told me one day to come to his house after church and he, how do you say it, influenced me. He told me how to act, what to do, how the Poles acted, what they did. He later went into the UPA. And it was about the time I was getting married and he came to the house to change...and he fell, [the Polish police] killed him. The police surrounded the house [13].

Maksym Wowk had a cousin, Yaroslav, who joined at the same time as he did (along with three village friends of his) – but, as he proudly pointed out, he was the first to join up from their circle of friends [14]. Anna Sadiwnyk, on the other hand, had one brother who was forced to go to Germany for work while the other went into the UPA in 1943. It was because of this brother that she learned about the UPA – some of the insurgents held regular meetings in her house after her brother joined its ranks [15]. Lubomyr Tutski also had close family relations who were tied with the UPA: his three brothers and two close friends joined at the same time in 1946 and were all involved in the insurgency until he was arrested in Czechoslovakia [16]. The timing of this volunteerism was certainly beneficial: the majority of recruits were teenagers or young adults and did not have the responsibility of raising a family. With this freedom from childbearing and childrearing responsibilities, the likelihood of women (and men) joining the UPA was increased [17, p. 151]. Young women who were married and had children were usually juggling work (either in the rural fields or in the city buildings) and home life – their children became barriers to underground work [18, p. 214; 24, p. 17]. Being unobstructed by work or family, many young adults joined the insurgency because there were no barriers in their way.

Family relations were also very instrumental in recruiting women UPA members. Natalka Kosarchyn-Marunchak, for example, was placed in the protective services of the UPA by her brother Yaroslav. As the front neared L’viv, she went into the forest while he stayed behind – this was made easier by the fact that her family “*was already used to “forest life”*. [Her] *older sister went into the forests with her husband*” Natalka even helped her sister Olia move her children into protective services before she was placed alongside a doctor and a pharmacist and moved to a training camp [19, c. 264]. The protective environment that the UPA offered was also taken up by parents when their children were in danger. Along with Olia’s children being taken in, Peter Potichnyj’s mother persuaded him to join in order for him to be taken away from their native village of Pavlokoma which was being destroyed by the Polish communist army. Through her efforts, Peter and the group of men who took him with them, managed to escape the village encirclement and eventually joined the UPA [20, p. 45]. “Kalyna” and

“Nazar” also joined the UPA because they, like Peter Potichnyj were from Pavlokoma and were in need of somewhere safe to go [21].

Due to the many siblings that joined the UPA, parents were at times left with no information regarding their children. Yaroslava Levkovych’s mother had four daughters who were all members:

LEVKOVYCH: There were four of us and you just couldn’t imagine. A mother has a daughter right?

Interviewer: Yes

LEVKOVYCH: It pains her when you go off somewhere but my parents prepared us well for the underground. What my mother went through. She didn’t know anything about me until 1952 from 1944. About my sister she only heard about in 1955...can you believe that?...And now you know what my mother went through but we all came back [alive] [22].

Parents were usually supportive of their children’s decision to join the insurgency, mainly because they knew the troubles that lay ahead if their children stayed at home. Larysa Tomchuk-Medvedchuk’s father, for instance, told his daughter to “*Go child, and when the war ends, God willing, you will go study to become a doctor*” [23, c. 108] when she left to go into a medical training camp run by the UPA. As already mentioned, unmarried women with no children were the ideal candidates for joining insurgencies and guerrilla movements due to a lack of barriers to keep them at home [24, p. 17]. The majority of women in the UPA were childless because they were either too young or still in school. However, they were still children and there certainly was concern from their parents – Marianne Baran’s mother for instance did not know if her daughter died in a Polish ambush because there was no way of getting contacts through [25].

With so many siblings and family relations within the UPA, its members did their best to take care of each other: Daria Husiak recalled that she had many cousins in the UPA:

There was some from my mother’s side and some from my father’s. How many were there? There were two from my father’s side and they were about my age, some younger or older. But I think most were a bit older than me. And two other from my mother’s side. Those two also worked in the Ukrainian police, but later, but I don’t want to get into the details about their lives. But basically they didn’t want to serve the Germans anymore and the Ukrainian police had close ties with the OUN. And at that time my sister was arrested by the Germans and [the UPA] helped her escape [26].

Daria Husiak’s sisters were involved with the underground work of the OUN and, because of the family link between the OUN propaganda network and the militant actions of the UPA, Daria’s sister survived the war. Paraskewia Hrycaj was also involved with the UPA as a courier and liaison officer and her family helped her in her endeavours. When her shoes were ruined by the tough terrain she was constantly trekking during her UPA duties, she came home, and her shoes were taken to a neighbour who, as well as being a cobbler, also had a son in the UPA. While she rested, her sister went to a neighbour’s house looking for the regional commanders that Hrycaj had to report to and her brother brought back her shoes. Her sister eventually came back and told her that the commanders “*are there and will continue to be at the Bajus house*”. When Hrycaj finally managed to deliver the mail, it was in part due to the help of her family members [27].

The bonds that linked UPA members with their communities were ironically also the same bonds that placed them in danger of arrest, deportation and death. Nationalist “*collaborators*” (as was their formal Soviet title) were usually denounced by a neighbour [28, p. 788]. The reasons for the denunciation were their own. Some passed on information in order to protect themselves, as the case of Mykhailo Dobhyj proves. Dobhyj was a veteran of the SS Galicia Division and agreed to work for the MGB (the Ministry of State Security of the USSR) for a lower prison sentence [29]. Others like Oleksander Patomkin wanted to protect their position amongst the

newly formed Soviet society. He was asked to report on the Ukrainian population in order to get a transfer back to his medical clinic in Leningrad [30]. Still others wanted to secure some material benefits like the local villager who exposed Javdokia Kochmaryk while others did so because they truly did believe in the Soviet political state [31]. However, it cannot be denied that a large number of villagers voluntarily went to the NKVD and other Soviet authorities to denounce OUN-UPA members and their families [32, p. 26; 33, p. 751; 34, p. 304-305]. A large number of these denunciations were made for very personal reasons, usually as retaliations against personal attacks. Hanna Klumchyk, for example, was denounced by a local village boy because she rejected his marriage proposal with the statement: “*If you were the last man on Earth and I was the last woman, I still wouldn't marry you!*” [35]. These personal vendettas were typical for those who denounced Nationalist supporters.

Those who joined the UPA had various reasons, including the actions of the occupying powers and the deeds of their neighbours. However, it was also the ties that the UPA had to the local community and the familial ties within the organization itself that also effected the actions of western Ukrainians. These ties represented a greater family to them - the insurgency itself. The UPA became a familial unit to many of its members and the kinship that was felt amongst immediate family members was transferred to their fellow soldiers and commanders. For example, Yaroslav Wijtiw openly cried over the death of his commander, even though he died years after the insurgency while residing in Canada [36]. The experiences that these men and women had in the UPA affected their lives and their relationships: many have remained in close contact with their fellow insurgents while others have suffered greatly for their actions in the UPA. Above all, as this article points out, the people that joined the UPA influenced its rank and file just as the UPA influenced its members, their families and familial ties and relationships. However, far more needs to be done in order to completely understand how kinship ties influenced UPA recruitment.

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