AGENTURA: Soviet Informants' Networks & the Ukrainian Underground in Galicia, 1944–48

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> "We do not fear the open enemies, but rather the ones who with a friendly word
> on their lips come to us in order to tear our soul to pieces,
> to sow the seed of dissension in our hearts."
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> —Iu. Klen, The Cursed Years[1]

October 29, 1945. Stanislav oblast, in the Carpathian mountains. West Ukraine. Acting on a tip from local sources, a heavily armed People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) force raided the Kolomiya regional headquarters of the *Sluzhba bespeky* (SB), the counterintelligence unit of the Ukrainian nationalist underground.[2] In the ensuing

1. Cited in a pamphlet of the organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, "Toward Greater Revolutionary Vigilance." Iu. Klen was the pseudonym of Ukrainian Volksdeutsche writer, Oswalt Burghart. [*Prokliatie roky*]. Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. R-9478, *Glavnoe upravlenie po bor'be s banditizmom MVD SSSR* (1938–50 gg.) (GUBB MVD/NKVD SSSR), op. 1s, d. 643, ll. 181–99. This copy of the document was submitted by T.A. Strokach, Ukrainian People's commisar of internal affairs, to V.S. Riasnoi, Soviet People's commissar of internal affairs in Moscow on 8 February 1946. The underground pamphlet was one of several "anti-Soviet *listovki*" distributed in L'viv on the night of 3 February 1946.
2. Throughout this paper, OUN refers to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and UPA to the the Ukrainian Insurrection Army, which grew out of it after July 1941. Contrary to the im-

firefight, NKVD *spetsgruppy* (black-operations units or "blackops") killed the regional chief of rebel counterintelligence, known only by his pseudonym Iaroslav.[3]

Searching the premises, NKVD agents discovered a large cache of documents from the archives of the Ukrainian rebel underground. One extraordinary document drew their particular attention. It was a twenty-page, closely reasoned analysis of Soviet secret police methods in West Ukraine, entitled "NKVD-NKGB *Agentura* in Practice." The rare document had been printed in limited typescript edition specially for the leadership of the SB. It was a sort of *Malleus maleficarium* of anti-Soviet espionage, a primer for hunting Soviet spies.

This document was so stunningly accurate that it was passed quickly through the Soviet command structure, eventually making its way to the desk of Lieutenant-General Timofei Strokach, then deputy commissar of internal affairs of Ukraine and from there to Lieutenant-General A. M. Leont'ev, chief of the state directorate for the Struggle against Banditism (GUBB), a clandestine branch of the NKVD in charge of spetsgruppy and diversionary actions against bandit and nationalist underground groups.[4] The cover letter to the document, signed in Strokach's own hand and annotated in heavy, blue pencil by Leont'ev, provides perhaps the best testimonial of its accuracy. Strokach wrote: "The author of the instructions has not been established, but its contents attest to the fact that there are 'rebels' in the SB who know

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pression left by Soviet archives, the Ukrainian rebel resistance was *not* monolithic, but represented a diverse motley of rival bands with widely varying methods and visions. See John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (Englewood, N.J.: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990)

3. The two key agencies of the Soviet secret police were the NKVD and the People's Commissariat of State Security (NKGB). In March 1946, they were renamed the Ministry Internal Affairs (MVD) and the Ministry of State Security (MGB). The spetsgruppy were subordinated to the NKVD's GUBB. They were usually headed by three-man teams made up of representatives from the NKVD and SMERSH (the Soviet military's counterintelligence unit) with ranks of at least junior lieutenant. For a comprehensive personnel list of members in GUBB in West Ukraine as of May 1946, see State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 527, ll. 109–17.

4. The chief task of GUBB agents was infiltration, sabotage, and annihilation of anti-Soviet opposition. The Soviet *Military Encylopedic Dictionary*, published in Moscow in 1983, defines *diversiia*—diversion or sabotage—as "the actions of individuals or groups (squads, units, or partisan detachments) in the enemy rear to put military production or other facilities out of commission, interfere with the command and control, cut communications lines, and destroy military personnel and equipment." See Colonel I. G. Starinov, *Over the Abyss: My Life in Soviet Special Operations* (New York: Ivy Books, 1995), viii.

well the methods of work of the organs of the NKVD-NKGB, and it is even possible that they once worked in our organs."[5]

The discovery sent a tremor through Soviet security agencies, who immediately began a search for the mind behind the document, a search that would only come to an end more than three years later, on 10 November 1948.

That report, and a veritable mountain of materials gleaned from the archives of GUBB containing the operational history of the covert Soviet war against underground resistance in West Ukraine from 1944 to 1953, provide the sources for this case study.[6] They demonstrate

5. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 643, l. 13. Top secret letter from T. Strokach, then Deputy Commissar to MVD in Ukraine, to A. M. Leont'ev, Chief of GUBB NKVD SSSR in Moscow, dated 30 December 1945. I have consistently translated the Soviet Russian term *"bandit"* in this context as rebel, *'bandgruppy'* as rebel bands, and *'bandproiavleniia'* as rebel actions. This is to distinguish anti-Soviet rebel opposition from genuine bandits who were lumped together in Soviet official parlance.

In heavy blue crayon on the cover page of the document, Leont'ev wrote: "To Konstantinov: Familiarize yourself with this document, [and pass it on] to the chiefs in your section, (dated 12 March 1946)" Konstantinov added below: *"Comrades Goroshenko, Starochuk, Sharanov:* Carefully study [this document] and put forward your proposals. Konstantinov," dated 1 April 1946.

The report, "Agentura NKVD-NKGB v deistvii," is a Russian translation of the original Ukrainian version: ll. 14–34. Its contents are remarkably consistent with the standard Soviet text for training NKVD personnel to organize information networks: Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie Ukrainskoi SSR. Sekretno-Operativnoe Upravlenie. Otdel Informatsii i Politkontrolia. *Instruktsiia o postanovke informatsionno-osvedomitel'noi raboty okruzh-nykh otdelov GPU USSR* (Khar'kiv, 1930). [Numbered copies]. From a copy preserved in the Arkhiv SB Ukrainy, Kiev.

6. This paper is based on research in six archival collections in Moscow, Kiev, and L'viv. Besides work in the secret collections of the *State Directorate for the Struggle against Banditism (1938–1950)* in Moscow, I have also drawn from materials in the archives of the Ukrainiian SB, as well as the archives of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine in Kiev, supplemented with materials from L'viv, the command center for the Soviet pacification of West Ukraine. These local materials have been particularly useful, since they contain the bottom-up picture, as expressed in field reports from ongoing operations, as well as confiscated documents copied to I.S. Grushetskii, secretary of the Executive Committee of the L'viv Party apparatus.

(Most of the original materials used in this paper have been copied and facsimile copies are presently available (from 1 July 1998) for researchers to study and review in the *Ukrainian Archives Collection* at the University of Toronto. The collection, constructed by the author work-ing in collaboration with archivists in Moscow, Kiev, and especially L'viv, contains xerox copies of over 40,000 manuscript pages on the history of West Ukraine during the period 1943–1953. As such, it is the largest and most comprehensive collection on the subject avail-able outside of the former Soviet Union. Place names and transliterations correspond with the Library of Congress system for translations from Russian and Ukrainian. For the sake of con-sistency, all place names have been rendered in their Ukrainian equivalents.

By far the most horrifying documentary evidence on the operation of Soviet spetsgruppy was the material seized from the corpses of Ukrainian rebels. As a rule, following a firefight, the

conclusively the overwhelming Soviet reliance on networks of inform-
ers or agentura in consolidating newly conquered and reconquered re-
gions. As the author of this report put it most starkly:

> As a consequence of their insignificant numbers and the lack of any di-
> rect contacts with the region's [local] population, the several dozen staff
> workers of the NKVD-NKGB who are located in the regional appara-
> tus are in no position to manage this work. To assist themselves, in
> every village they clandestinely organize a special agentura information
> network from the civilian population. Only after the creation of such a
> network in every populated area do the organs of the NKVD-NKGB
> begin their activity. With the assistance of this network, they have the
> opportunity to control the internal life of every populated area, to ex-
> pose and "cultivate" assets which present them with distinct opera-
> tional interest.[7]

Drawing extensively from the highly restricted collections of GUBB
in Moscow, supplemented by collections in Kiev and L'viv, this narra-
tive presents the Soviet war to pacify West Ukraine, which was fought
on a scale that far surpasses the impressions even of many of its partic-
ipants and was also a war that was eventually won by Soviet power not
on the battlefield, but in the successful construction of an intricate sys-
tem of internal spy networks, or agentura.

A Well-Entrenched Opposition

The Ukrainian nationalist underground prepared for the return of
Soviet forces to West Ukraine in three ways. First, by March 1944,

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corpses were photographed and searched, and any documents were immediately turned over to
the NKVD for analysis. Those documents were reviewed and, in the event of discovery of some-
thing of particular importance, translated, analyzed, and passed on to appropriate officials in
Kiev or Moscow.

7. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 643, l. 16. The pivotal role of agentura in Soviet operational plans
was likewise powerfully reflected in the printed instructions for all NKVD regional directors
in the *kalendarnyi plan* or schedule for the Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe in September
1939. See the full text in GARF, f. 9401, *Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del SSSR, 1934–1960 (MVD
SSSR)*, op. 12, d. 51, ll. 34–40. MVD Circular No. 199ss, "O razrabotke operativnogo mob-
plana po agenturno-operativnym meropriiatiiam na voennoe vremia," issued under the name
of NKVD I.I. Maslennikov and supervisor of the *moblan* (plan for mobilization) General
I.S. Sheredega. For instance, by the end of the first month of occupation (25 October 1939),
the First Special Section of the NKVD was expected to "Prepare a list of agentura, investiga-
tive and other archival materials" (l. 35 ob.) Likewise, the first step after reconquering German-
occupied zones at the end of the war always consisted of capturing and processing archives of
the German occupying forces. For examples, see the detailed top secret surveys of materials per-
formed by NKVD analysts in *Derzhavnyi Arkhiv L'vivskoi oblasti* (DALO), f. 3, op. 2, d. 127,
ll. 132–49. Likewise, numerous examples of the use of archives by the NKVD to track down
enemies: for example, DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 67, ll. 78–104.

Ukrainian nationalist partisans had largely ceased hostilities against German occupation forces. In some regions, and despite strict prohibitions from the leadership of Ukrainian Insurrection Army (UPA), the changing fortunes of Germany in the war had led to an explicit rapprochement, and even a strategic alliance, which enabled joint actions against the Soviets or pro-Soviet partisans. The underground tactics had been transformed from a concerted effort to drive out the Germans to a renewed initiative to keep out the Soviets.[8] In late December 1944, numerous sources confirmed the existence of "Ukrainian-German bands in a majority of villages. . . . They roam [the countryside] in large groups, terrorizing the local Soviet *aktiv*. They give *raion*-level [Party] workers no opportunity to go out into the villages."[9]

Second, the approaching Soviet "liberation" of German-occupied areas was greeted by a massive "digging in" as nationalists prepared for their struggle for independence. By the time the Soviets arrived in West Ukraine in the spring of 1944, virtually every peasant household had prepared several dugouts (*skhrony, ubezhishcha, ukrytiia*) in which they concealed stockpiles of weapons and munitions, food stocks, and clothing, and to which they and their families could escape in the event of a raid by Nazis, Rumanians, Poles, Soviets, or one of the many genuine bandit groups that marauded in regions devastated by the war. Such sanctuaries of refuge were essential in a region where the war had left a powerful mark on locals, where a large proportion of the population had been killed or carried off for hard labor to Germany, and where another large proportion of the people would be killed or exiled to Siberia and the Far East (mainly Vorkuta) under the Soviets.

The hideouts were always close to a peasant's home, since advance notice of a raid left little time for retreat. In initial raids in 1944, Soviet forces found 700 underground shelters hidden in Ponikovetskii raion (L'viv oblast), 339 in villages of Olesko and Kravchenskii raions, 305 in Zolochiv raion, and 368 in Peremyshlian raion.[10] I emphasize that

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8. See "O sovmestnoi deiatel'nosti OUN-UPA s okhrannoi politsiei i SD," a twenty-seven-page top secret report of NKGB Colonel Voloshenko to Grushetskii, dated 7 October 1944. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 67, ll. 78–104.
9. From a top secret report of the Lopatyn raion regional chief Malanchuk (25 December 1944), DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 66, l. 46.
10. Top secret report entitled "Spravaka o 'skhronakh' OUN-UPA," prepared by Major Volchenko, Chief of the Second Department of the First Section of GUBB NKVD (5 July 1945). GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, ll. 136–41.

these represented just the hideouts the Soviets found, since they reflected only a small proportion of the real numbers.

On the average, Soviet forces reported finding such hideouts in every fourth peasant cottage.[11] The placement and style of rebel hideouts were limited only by the imaginations of their builders. Examples are numerous. In village Sukhozholy (Ponikovetskii raion, L'viv), an underground hideout was built under the kitchen garden adjacent to a peasant cottage. There were four exits from the hideout: under the stove inside the cottage, under a haystack, through a hollow in an old oak tree, and into a nearby ravine.[12] In the village of Hai-Dubovetski in the same raion, a concealed room of the cottage was accessed through a hole in the wall covered by a hanging portrait.[13] The entrance to yet another underground hideout was a trapdoor covered with dirt and a small pine tree, which lifted with the opening and closing of the hatch.[14] The internal layout of the skhrony set a balance between pragmatic need and comfort for long-term stays. Smaller hideouts were literally dark tombs two-meters square—good for hiding and nothing more. Larger hideouts had several chambers, with ample room for food and munitions, as well as lavatory, living, and sleeping quarters.[15]

Set behind stoves, under or through dog houses, smoke houses, churches and church altars, inside wells, under or through trees, rocks, cliffs, and any other imaginable formation, the hideouts were designed especially to resist discovery even in the most vigilant search. Certainly, the hideouts posed a powerful challenge to Soviet consolidation of power in the area.[16] They represented in their own way the underground world of a parallel government with its parallel citizens well dug-in for a long war against the Soviet presence in the region. There

11. Report of Grushetskii to Khrushchev in May 1945. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 212, l. 121.
12. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, l. 136.
13. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, l. 136.
14. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, l. 136. Cf., DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 212. ll. 121–22.
15. See the schematic drawings of West Ukrainian rebel hideouts in GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, ll. 138–40.
16. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 381, l. 136. In 1995, the author visited his first skhron in Dora village, near Yaremche, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast in the Carpathian mountains. The hideout was located at the ridge of a cliff overlooking the local river, a treacherous 100 meters down from a difficult mountain path. In 1954, four Ukrainian nationalists were betrayed by a fifth member of their unit. Held under siege in the hideout for more than a month, the four rebels—three men and a woman—chose to commit suicide rather than to surrender to the Soviets. In 1991, a large white cross and crude cement plaque have been erected to honor the dead.

were special skhrony designed to function as hospitals, police stations, typographies, libraries, and archives, as well as central warehouses for needed items.[17]

For the two-year period 1945–1946, Soviet forces uncovered 28,969 such rebel hideouts in West Ukraine alone.[18] Their mushrooming during and after the war was a direct result of rebel instructions, which repeatedly invoked local units in the Ukrainian underground to build more and more underground hideouts, a minimum of five per member in each local rebel unit.[19]

Third, the Ukrainian nationalist underground began a new propaganda initiative aimed at preparing Galicians for the new era of struggle. In widely distributed propaganda, brochures, newspapers, broadsheets, OUN-UPA underground writers painted a horrid picture of the future of Soviet power in West Ukraine. Their tactics were spelled out in instructions issued by the OUN-UPA leadership on 11 August 1944: "Conduct a struggle against mobilization [of locals] into the Red Army. 1. By means of posting false lists. 2. Through a mass failure to appear (*neiavka*) at the Military recruitment center (*voenkomat*). 3. Through the organization of escape [from Soviet power]. 4. With leaflets [summoning locals to boycott Red Army service]."[20]

Saturated with rumors of the terror that would follow the coming of the Red Army, teenage and adult men throughout Galicia took to the forests, resisting Soviet power by hiding. Everywhere the Soviets went, mass recruitment levies were accompanied by a melting away of men. For example, in conscription levies in Iarovskii raion on 5–6 August 1944, 341 conscripts were summoned from the local population, but only 42 showed up for service; the rest disappeared into their hideouts or the nearby forests. The same thing happened in other regions. In

17. The underground hideouts in Galicia accounted for a development that deeply frustrated Soviet authorities, who noted repeatedly in 1944 and 1945 that local populations "faded away" into the forests when Soviet forces appeared. But the role of underground hideouts in Galicia was nothing like the central tactical significance of tunnels in Vietnam, which transformed mere peasant villages into powerful fortresses; see Tom Mangold and John Penycate, *The Tunnels of Cu Chi* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1985).
18. Adapted from top secret monthly reports to Zlenko, *Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromadskykh Organizatsii* (TsDAHO, formerly the Central Party Archives of Ukraine), f. 1, op. 23, d. 1741, ll. 23–25, 27, 31–36, 40–41; and top secret report of Korotchenko, et.al. to Nikita Khrushchev, dated 2 January 1947, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 4965, ll. 3–4.
19. See OUN-UPA instructions on the construction of underground hideouts in TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 931, ll. 36–39; TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2968, l. 22.
20. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 38.

Dobromysl raion 258 conscripts were called up, but only 14 appeared for service.[21] Fleeing the Red Army, these "conscientious objectors" became fugitives from Soviet law and rapidly swelled the size of bands that marauded through the forests of postwar Galicia, where over 24,000 square kilometers of forest land provided a ready escape route and hideout for fugitives from Soviet power.[22]

That avoidance of Soviet power and a boycott of military service coincided with UPA appeals was not—to the dismay of the Ukrainian rebel leadership—synonymous with joining the ranks OUN/UPA. In this way the war spawned not just a reinvigorated underground rebel force, but also countless independent bands of marauders, bandit forces who terrorized locals, rebels, and Soviets alike. Even among themselves, nationalist underground forces in West Ukraine complained bitterly of actions of genuine, nonpolitical bandit groups. The leader of a delegation for the Polish Home Army (AK, *Armia Krajowa*) declared in a meeting with OUN rebels in July 1945 that there are ". . . many irresponsible elements in Polish society . . . who have contacts with the bandits and in large measure are from the younger generation, who abuse the authority of the AK [by acting in its name], who pillage and blackmail for personal gain not only Ukrainians, but Poles [as well]. We need to annihilate them with all our might."[23] The inability of legitimate underground rebel groups like the Ukrainian OUN and the Polish AK to subordinate these independent units to military discipline was a critical failure, because the terror activities and banditry of undisciplined units would provide a powerful bludgeon against them in Soviet propaganda. The gist of the Soviet charges—that the OUN was nothing more than a fascist force that, during and after the war, terrorized local populations—would become an effective weapon in the rival visions of postwar Galicia.

THE SCALE OF THE SOVIET REPRESSION

The arrival of the Red Army, followed by NKVD border patrols, did little to allay the dreaded anticipation of the Soviet return to a region largely antipathetic to Soviet authority. During the first seventeen

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21. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, 1. 5 ob.
22. Based on report of Pomorianskii *raikom* (raion Party Committee) secretary Kunits, f. 3, op. 1, d. 192, ll. 125, dated 25 January 1945.
23. From a captured UPA Protocol, dated 11 July 1945. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 213, ll. 170.

months of the Soviet reoccupation of West Ukraine (February 1944 through June 1945), formerly top secret NKVD reports reveal that the Soviets conducted 15,733 military and paramilitary operations against Ukrainian nationalists. The figures of the results of their efforts are staggering: 91,615 Ukrainian nationalist "bandits" were killed; 96,446 were captured, 41,858 surrendered. Associated with the brutal military campaign, 10,139 Ukrainian families (26,093 persons) were deported during the first year of Soviet pacification of the region, with tens of thousands more to follow in the next few years.[24] Table 1 presents a comparative picture of the scale of Soviet repression throughout its reconquered western borderlands:

Table 1. *Soviet Pacification of the Western Borderlands, February 1944 through October 1995*

	Period	Killed	Captured & Arrested	Surrendered*
Belarus	July 1944–October 1945	3,320	97,607	8,992
Estonia	September 1944–October 1945	290	5,135	n.a.
Latvia	July 1944–October 1945	925	6,160	8,075
Lithuania	June 1944–October 1944	3,935	13,830	33,750
Ukraine	February 1944–October 1945	98,696	107,485	92,219
Total		107,166	230,217	143,036

* Includes "nationalist bandits" as well as "deserters" refusing to serve in the Red Army.
Source: From a top secret report of Beria to Stalin, dated 22 November 1945. GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 102, ll. 1–5.

Other data suggest the scale of the repression did not abate. In a top secret communiqué to Nikita Khrushchev dated 28 May 1946, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Strokach summarized the blow dealt the nationalist underground in West Ukraine: for the twenty-eight-month period from February 1944 to 25 May 1946, Soviet Party-state organs and the internal forces of the MVD conducted 87,571 military and paramilitary operations and ambushes against the nationalist underground rebels in the region, in the process killing 110,825 so-called "nationalist bandits" and other illegals, and arresting 250,676 persons.[25]

The Soviet leadership was indeed confident of its superior military might. In this first stage, and throughout, side-by-side with ruthless

24. Data for seven districts in West Ukraine compiled from reports in GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 349, l. 1; d. 352, ll. 69–77.
25. Top secret communiqué entitled "Ob operativnoi obstanovke v zapadnykh oblastiakh Ukrainy," dated 28 May 1946, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2867, l. 26.

military actions were various mass agitation, education, and propaganda initiatives "in order to resolutely undermine the influence of the OUN underground on the population and particularly on rural youth, among whom they have their principal support in their operations."[26] And the effects of Soviet repression and propaganda were taking their toll. As an OUN-UPA memorandum reported: "In recent times the Bolsheviks have escalated their campaign to drive a wedge between the masses and us. The Ukrainian population is wavering under the influence of Bolshevik terror and propaganda."[27]

One of the most effective brands of Soviet propaganda in the immediate postwar era was the representation of the underground as nothing more than a pack of Nazi butchers who terrorized the Ukrainian people. Reprisals were provoked by highly orchestrated dramas in which captured OUN rebels were forced by Soviet authorities to confess the details of their guilt to locals in their base villages. In one such case from mid-March 1946, when the Ukrainian nationalist rebel Bat'ko "spoke at a meeting, the peasants fell upon him and killed him. Following this, peasants at the meeting denounced [various] bands and their accomplices [living] in the village."[28]

> In the village of Leshniv on 24 March 1946 spontaneously there assembled a meeting of 600 persons, who demanded that [the authorities] give up the bandit "Kazak" so that he could recount the evil deeds conducted by him and [his] band in the village.
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> Seeing that peasants were inclined to conduct a vigilante action (*sdelat' samosud*) against the bandits, a garrison of 30 persons was raised, from whom the local population likewise tried to seize the bandits for a vigilante action. At the meeting, thirteen of the local peasants spoke—particularly women, whose husbands and daughters had been murdered by the bandits.
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> There were similar meetings in the villages of Korsuv, Shnyriv, and others.[29]

Such public trials provided an outlet for popular frustration and anger and became a powerful channel for building Soviet support in the West Ukrainian countryside.

26. Top secret report to L'viv Obkom Secretary Grushetskii from the deputy director of the NKVD Border Patrol (in L'viv) on the Ukrainian Front, dated 6 October 1944. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, ll. 5–6 ob.
27. OUN-UPA instructions to raion directors issued in the late spring of 1946. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2968, l. 47.
28. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 423, ll. 57–60.
29. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 423, ll. 57–60.

From War to Civil War

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З хати до хати, з рук до рук.
ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС—
ВОСКРЕСНЕ Й УКРАЇНА
From house to house, from hand to hand.
CHRIST HAS RISEN— AS UKRAINE WILL RISE.

OUN-UPA *Underground leaflet (1944)*[30]

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While in retrospect, it is easy to doubt the likelihood of a successful battle for Galician independence, in 1944 and 1945 the OUN depended on three factors. The first was the full support of the Galician people: the OUN leadership was convinced that no foreign occupying force could effectively conquer Galicia if Galicians themselves refused to accept the legitimacy of its authority. The second, a faith in success through numbers: Galicians counted on the hope that postwar reconstruction and consolidation of Soviet authority would be beyond the power even of Joseph Stalin, if all newly occupied regions were transformed into staunch pockets of resistance to Soviet power. And the third, a faith that the Western allies would insist on a democratic solution to the postwar reconstruction in Eastern Europe. Numerous articles in the underground press, as well as captured intelligence, reveal that the OUN placed high hopes on a Third World War between "Russia" and America. Particularly after August 1945, the Ukrainian nationalists were counting on protection under the American nuclear umbrella.[31]

Still, the sheer enormity of the scale of the pacification campaign during the first six months of Soviet reoccupation of West Ukraine had a devastating impact on morale in the Ukrainian nationalist underground. In their efforts to sustain popular resistance to the imposition of Soviet authority, the rebel underground leadership fought on numerous fronts.

THE UNDERGROUND WAR

So long as the Ukrainian nationalist resistance openly opposed Soviet power, the task of Soviet military and security agencies was relatively

30. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 70, e. 42.
31. See, for instance, the report in DALO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 458, l. 69.

straightforward: open refusal to toe the Soviet line was synonymous with disloyalty and sufficient grounds for arrest, imprisonment, forced exile, or execution. But the nationalist underground proved quite adept at adjusting to the pressures posed by Soviet strong-arm tactics. An analyst in Soviet counterintelligence noted the subsequent change in OUN-UPA tactics as early as the autumn of 1944:

> . . . the active part of the "UPA" bands and OUN organizations do not as yet show any signs of disintegration and continue to operate. Proceeding from the [new] situation taking shape for them, they are changing the tactics of their struggle against Soviet power.
>
> At the present time "UPA" units (*bandgruppy*) have begun to avoid open struggle with [Soviet] border troops. The OUN underground is recommending that all *banderovtsy* enlist in the Red Army, where they should obtain a weapon, receive military training, win the confidence of the officers, and illegally conduct a broad [campaign] of propaganda among non-Russian soldiers [in the Red Army], particularly among Ukrainians, [to urge them] to commit a mass desertion and join "UPA" units.[32]

Throughout the months and years from February 1944, the Ukrainian nationalist underground proved itself quite adept at adapting to Soviet repression. Forced by initial heavy losses to change their tactics from open warfare during the first six months of the war for liberation, the underground nonetheless effectively retreated, expressing a new goal of keeping the resistance intact, of holding out until a new opportunity was presented. The new tactics consisted first and foremost of a transition from open to clandestine war and the general dismantling of large heavily armed units in favor of smaller operations and ambushes conducted by teams of three or four persons or, when necessary, larger squads of not more than forty to sixty men and women. UPA instructions in early 1945 indicated the dramatic shift in tactics: "We will continue our organizational, political and war work with full intensity, but more conspiratorially, in the deep underground."[33]

32. Top secret report to Grushetskii from the deputy director of the NKVD Border Patrol (in L'viv) on the Ukrainian Front (6 October 1944). DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, ll. 5–6 ob.
33. UPA instructions to all units and ethnic Ukrainian villages based on the West Ukrainian-Polish border, seized by NKVD border troops on the Rava-Rus'ka line in July 1945. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 213, ll. 162–164.

From the autumn of 1944, the Ukrainian underground constantly fought against an infectious pessimism that threatened to erode Ukrainian partisan support. Repeated Soviet victories over Germany gave the Red Army an air of invincibility throughout previously German-occupied territory. And most Galicians were weary of war, reluctant to fight against seemingly invincible Soviet forces. A confidential OUN report from agent Bur'ian in Buz'k on 4 November 1944 reflected the general atmosphere in which the Ukrainian nationalists had to operate: "The attitude of the organized population toward our movement is favorable. The attitude of the unorganized population is negative, because the majority of them do not believe in our victory over a powerful enemy."[34] Two weeks later, on 13 November, Bur'ian returned to this theme: "The whole population is losing spirit. . . . The attitude of the population has considerably changed in comparison with a month ago. People have been powerfully intimidated by arrest and exile to Siberia. Now in general they don't want to take [anyone] into their apartments, because they are afraid of denunciations. During the past month, we have carried on no propaganda [while] the Bolsheviks are conducting propaganda" of their own.[35] The general loss of spirit was aggravated considerably by Soviet-imposed martial law and a rapidly deteriorating material situation. "In our district there are many men [in the underground], but everyone sits without work, and there are no contacts [being made] at night."[36] Or, as another rebel complained: Soviet authorities so "terrorize us, that many are defecting" from our cause.[37] This melting away of support from the OUN-UPA cause became the chief threat to the underground. As a top secret NKVD report revealed in October 1944: "The [local ethnic Ukrainian] population is likewise beginning to display a lack of faith in OUN propaganda and is gradually receding away from them. A part of the population [has begun to] render assistance to [Soviet] border troops in the struggle with [underground] bands."[38]

The principal challenge for the underground—and success for Soviet

34. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 1.
35. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 2.
36. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 2.
37. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 194, ll. 59–60.
38. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 6.

agents—was the inescapably despondent mood pervasive in the rebel camps, as masses of sympathetic Ukrainians resigned themselves to the utter inevitability of failure and by their very complacency acted to generate a self-fulfilling prophesy. "The population looks on us (members of the [Ukrainian] underground) as if we were sentenced to death. They sympathize with us, but do not believe in our success and [therefore] do not want to tie their own fate with us. The majority of the population, particularly elderly persons, would like to live in those conditions like [we have] now, but only so that no one troubled or disturbed them".[39]

The documents demonstrate conclusively the deliberate use of terror led by the Ukrainian SB against two types of defectors: against cadres and against members of the general population. Operating in an atmosphere of fatalism and repeated losses to superior Soviet forces, the underground leadership applied stiff sanctions to discourage such defections. The Ukrainian rebel leader Bur'ian exhorted an insubordinate deputy in a letter dated 10 November 1944:

> Friend Ul'ian! I [hereby] order you to appear at a meeting of the [underground] field intelligence officers, which will take place on 11.12.44 at 1600 hours. You must bring with you all intelligence reports for the period from 11.1 through 11.12.
>
> I ask you: Why have you become so insubordinate? You have twice been summoned to meetings, but you did not even give any explanation about the cause of your failure to appear.
>
> Why don't you report in as you have been told? Or, do you think you can deceive us even further? Be forewarned that we will not accept this [insubordination] any more.
>
> Your excuse that [you are] too busy is unacceptable. A soldier at the front will never say this. Otherwise a bullet awaits him. Do your duty. Read the general instruction well and you will learn of what your work is comprised.
>
> I am warning you for the last time: if you do not subordinate yourself to your superiors and if you will not carry out explicit orders, we will consider you a traitor to the Ukrainian State and it will become necessary to reckon with you by another means. You can guess what kind.
>
> The meeting is in village Podushana. Write your report in accordance with the form.
>
> "Bur'ian"[40]

39. Report of raion rebel chief, L'viv oblast dated March 1947. DALO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 121, ll. 108–13.
40. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 3.

Explicit reprimands or threats could work only in cases of insubordination. To equate insubordination or negligence—symptoms of declining rebel morale—with traitorous acts against Ukraine was a powerful bludgeon to discourage indiscipline in the ranks.

When actual connivance or collaboration with the Soviet enemy was suspected, such reprimands were bypassed in favor of a far stronger response, namely, the secret construction and circulation of "hit lists." In early September 1944, Vlas, the chief of the rebel SB in Kamin-Koshyrs'kyi raion, sent a memorandum to an unnamed underground officer indicating the need to vet and liquidate two Soviet informants in his unit:

> I hereby inform you that there are secret agents (seksoty) in your unit. Check out the following persons:
>
> 1. Bahniuk Pavol Vasil'evich, born 1923 in village Farynok, Kamin'-Koshyrs'kyi raion.
>
> [Bahniuk] joined UPA in September 1943. He was in the "Mazepa" regiment until the arrival of the Red Army. He willingly accepted recruitment as an agent of the NKVD, prepared and signed with his own hand his autobiography. Moreover, he signed an affidavit to serve as an agent in the counterintelligence unit of the 70th army of SMERSH, selecting for himself the pseudonym Myrnyi.
>
> Major Daronkin, chief of the Fifth Department of the 70th army of OKR SMERSH, witnessed the affidavit.
>
> Recruited on 24 June 1944, he informed [the Soviets] of the location of the [UPA] military group "Duba." He submitted all reports under the pseudonym Myrnyi. . . . [41]

This type of document in particular—rather common in the files of the SB—shows the astounding degree to which the Ukrainian rebel underground had become privy to detailed reports *from within* the Soviet NKVD and other agencies. In his interrogation with an agent from the rebel SB, Bahniuk confessed his collaboration, was persuaded under torture to disclose other useful information, and was subsequently executed along with another soldier in his unit, a peasant from the same village named Mykhailo Faryna.[42]

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41. The memorandum was dated 4 September 1944. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 126, l. 355. For similar cases, see GARF, f. R-9478, op 1, d. 126, ll. 327–29. The inclusion of the patronymic "Vasil'evich" in this document (generally identified with Russian usage and not typical of Galician forms of address) was rather common in lists of targets generated by the Ukrainian rebel underground.

42. See the separate transcripts of the interrogations of both men at GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 126, ll. 356–59.

Because such lists were largely constructed on the basis of suspicion and rumor, underground rebels found themselves frequent victims of what the Soviet security agencies referred to as "disorganization" (*dezorganizatsiia, razvorot*). Disorganization was the deliberate sabotage of underground operations. Generally, it consisted of the false implication of rebels as Soviet collaborators.[43] Other common forms of disorganization included frequent raids in which "suspects" were rounded up and sweated in NKVD interrogation; some held longer, some released immediately. Such raids were so commonplace that they served a dual purpose: both to conceal actual agentura networks and to spread fear and suspicion among the underground rebels. The never-ending cycle of arrest and interrogation considerably undermined objective criteria for demonstrating Ukrainian partisanship and loyalty, and had the effect of making virtually everyone suspect in the eyes of each other. Confidences lost, systematic disorganization activity bludgeoned the morale of the underground resistance. As a report from Buz'k noted on 13 November 1944: "The attitude of the Bolsheviks toward us is negative (hostile). The NKVD tries with all its power to terrorize us: everyday they conduct raids and arrest locals, both the guilty and the innocent. They detain them at the NKVD office, [where] they interrogate them."[44]

REBEL TERROR: FIGHTING POPULAR DEFECTIONS

"We warn Ukrainian citizens: anyone who works with the organs of the NKVD-NKGB, all those who by any means whatsoever work with the NKVD . . . will be considered traitors, and we will deal with them as with our greatest enemies."

UPA Instructions, 11 July 1945[45]

As a rule, acts of terror perpetrated by the Ukrainian underground followed strict procedures outlined in written OUN-UPA instructions. In direct response to NKVD efforts to penetrate Ukrainian underground networks, the OUN put in place as early as August, 1944 *"Our Countermeasures*. . . . Liquidation of [Soviet] undercover agents (seksoty) with all available methods (execution by firing squad, hanging, and even quartering, with a note on their chests: 'For collaborating with the

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43. On deliberate Soviet operations to falsely implicate underground rebels as Soviet collaborators, see two such cases in TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 1742, ll. 310–311.
44. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 1.
45. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 292, 1.29 ob.

NKVD').”[46] Other instructions extended acts of violent reprisal beyond the individual collaborators: "In the course of liquidating the designated persons, spare neither adult members of their families nor their children. . . ."[47] The underground's terror message was distributed in printed broadsheets, such as the 1945 rebel sheet: "To Secret Agents, Informers, Wreckers, . . ."[48]

To prevent leaks and to discourage collaboration with Soviet authorities, the Ukrainian underground regularly produced lists of suspected collaborators, which became hit lists for vigilante-style executions, usually conducted in night raids. This example was taken from the area around Buz'k, dated 17 November 1944:

> Friend D-R!
>   In raion 2 D unbelievable things are going on which we must counteract! In village Volitsa Derevianska two men have agreed to work for the KGB: Konts Illia—a sympathizer [with the OUN] and Koniukh Stepan—a member. With their agreement to work for the NKVD, they have demoralized the population. . . . [T]his [betrayal] could affect others as well. In village Maroshchanka Sakharelych Mykola first gave consent to work for the NKVD. In order to conceal [his betrayal] from us, he told the Bolsheviks to arrest him. Besides this, he gave away two neighbors Khor'ka and Chaikovs'kyi. We will do away with these three traitors today or tomorrow.
>   In village Spas, 6 persons have given their consent to work for the NKVD:
>
>   1. Kovalyk, Volodymyr—member,
>   2. Terpii, Ivan—member,

46. From top secret instructions of OUN officer Baty on 11 August 1944. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 70, l. 37.
47. From the interrogation transcripts of the commandant of the rebel SB in Mdinovskii raion, Rivne oblast, Ivan Iavors'kyi, dated 14 April 1944 (l. 54). In a top secret report on OUN-UPA terror prepared by the chief of the First Section of GUBB NKVD, Major General A.P. Gorshkov, dated 26 December 1944. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, ll. 53–61. A copy of the original instruction from Oleksa appears in a cache of documents captured by Soviet forces. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 126, l. 326.
    Popular anger over whole-family reprisals led OUN-UPA officials to repudiate such actions by 1945. In "Instructions to Unit Commanders" dated 21 November 1944, rebel officers were issued a gentle reprimand against cutting off the heads of suspected collaborators: "You ought not to cut off the heads of [Soviet] secret agents (seksoty) any more." GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 126, l. 306. Within five months, the signals were much clearer and more strongly worded; instructions from UPA General Command in May 1945 ordered: "Conduct mass annihilation of secret agents (seksoty), but do not transfer guilt to their family members. You can [however] confiscate or destroy their property." GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 292, l. 14.
48. "K seksotam, donoschikam, istrebitel'iam, i t. d." In a top secret OUN directive, dated February 1946, preserved in KGB files in L'viv, the OUN commander "Iuliian" upraided regional chiefs for not circulating the broadsheet in its entirety. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 436, l. 44.

3. D'iakovs'kyi, Vasyl'—member,
4. Buitsinytskii, Semen—member,
5. Nakonechnyi, Ivan—sympathizer,
6. I do not know precisely.

Friend K-R

Come to Pobuzhany today, Suprun (Kutas) and I will also be there. We
will speak more candidly there.

"Bur'ian"[49]

Numerous UPA instructions contained explicit procedures for ter-
rorist executions. Ritual vilification of corpses was an important part of
the tactics of underground terror: "Rebels profaned corpses [of sus-
pected collaborators]. All corpses were stripped of shoes and clothing,
the arms and legs were hog-tied, and the faces were cut to pieces."[50] In
Rivne oblast in June 1944, Ukrainian rebel troops executed a local
peasant suspected of collaboration by hanging him by a noose in the
village center. Then the rebels instigated a public vilification ritual and
"hacked the corpse of the hanged bandit to pieces with an ax."[51] In
L'viv oblast in August 1944, two whole families of suspected Soviet
sympathizers, one by one, in front of the others had their eyes gouged
out—allegedly for reporting underground rebel movements to the
Soviets—and their bodies were then hacked to pieces in front of horri-
fied villagers.[52]

The Ukrainian underground reserved its worst ritualized violence
for outsiders mobilized into West Ukraine for postwar rebuilding. On
13 September 1944 in Rivne, rebels staged an attack on fifteen Soviet
raion agents. While one of the fifteen managed to escape, the others
were led to the forest and shot. The rebels then defiled the corpses, cut-
ting off the head of one male member of the *Sovaktiv*, and the legs and
face of a female in the group.[53] Such atrocities were all too common
events throughout Galicia in the postwar era of terror and counterter-
ror in which there is ample evidence to heap blame on all sides.[54]

49. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 4.
50. From a top secret report of the Lopatyn raion chief Malanchuk, dated 25 December 1944.
    DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 66, l. 47. On the social and cultural meaning of alternative forms of vi-
    olence, see Natalie Davis, "Rites of Violence," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*
    (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 152–88.
51. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 58.
52. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 58.
53. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 60.
54. The focus here on Ukrainian rebel use of terror and atrocities to intimidate Soviet collabora-
    tors by no means implies that Ukrainians were any more violent than other ethnic groups

Evidently, particular forms of corpse vilification corresponded with distinct varieties of perceived betrayal. When the argot of corpse vilification was not enough to convey a particular message, the rebels added text. On the night of 21 November 1944, at two o'clock in the morning, a company of forty Ukrainian rebels raided the village of Dubechno in Volynia. Conducting a search of the homes of the president and secretary of the village soviet, the armed force then shot the president in front of his fellow villagers. A note was fastened to the back of the murdered peasant's corpse: "The person who has been shot is the chief of the village soviet, and if any one takes his place the same fate will befall him." The armed company then broke their way into the barricaded premises of the village soviet, where they killed the armed guard, an ethnic Ukrainian peasant named Tkachuk. On his back, the rebels fastened another note with a bayonet driven into his spine "This corpse is a traitor of the Ukrainian people who defended the soviets. If any one will come to work in his place, he will perish the same way." The rebels then set about defiling the premises of the village soviet, where they glued anti-Soviet slogans and statements to the walls, while the portraits of party and state leaders were seized and torn, and the faces of the defiled portraits were smeared with the blood of the murdered Ukrainian guard.[55]

Rituals likewise included forcing members of the Soviet aktiv to scream anti-Stalinist epithets before a gruesome public execution and excoriation of their dead bodies. Ritual terror just as often consisted of profanation of objects, usually symbols of Soviet power. When, for instance, a UPA raiding party in Dobriany village failed to find a woman Komsomol member Teklia Balias (who was hiding on her roof), they instead carried away her Komsomol uniform, which they threw to the ground and profaned in a highly ritualized act of vilification.[56] Decree No. 1 from the commandant of UPA division "Skhid," dated 14 November 1944, issued detailed instructions to unit commanders: to write anti-Bolshevik graffiti with various substances and colors that would provoke a particularly powerful effect on the local population, including the use of human and animal blood, soot dampened with

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(Poles or Soviets). The point is not to attribute guilt, but to study the tactical role of violence and terror.
55. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 60.
56. Report from L'viv from *gorkom* (city Party committee) secretary Shyptiak (27 August 1944), DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 66, l. 12.

milk, and so forth.[57] The goal of such methods was always to raise the conspicuousness of the Ukrainian rebel presence. As UPA instructions from February 1944 indicated: "Our blows against the [Soviet] enemy, against the enemy system, against secret agents (seksoty) and their sympathizers, should be manifest at every step."[58]

Of course, personal reprisals often carried their own personal symbolic qualities. A. V. Hrytsiuk, ethnic Ukrainian rebel in the 10th Rivne Regional Company of the SB, confessed later to Soviet interrogators that he had, in January 1944, strangled a young ethnic Ukrainian woman in Hrushvitsa village with the same noose used by Soviet spetgruppy to execute two members of the regional SB (Nechai and Kruk). The women had been suspected of betraying the two rebel counterintelligence operatives to the Soviets.[59]

As shocking as these actions were, the style of the ritual executions powerfully demonstrates the ways in which Ukrainian rebels worked to display the selective use of atrocity in order to intimidate whole populations from collaborating with the enemy. As the text of UPA instructions from early 1945 ordered: "Do not conduct a wide terror against the masses. Annihilate our malicious enemies (*zlochyntsi*) individually."[60] Deeply cognizant that the indiscriminate use of mass terror by undisciplined local units could isolate them from broadly based partisan support, Ukrainian nationalist rebel leaders fought to communicate a clear set of guidelines to the local population: follow the rules, and you will not get hurt. The use of individual terror was particularly effective for the intimidation of rebels arrested in Soviet operations who then began to cooperate with Soviet authorities.[61]

But the ever-present rebel threat of individual reprisals is precisely what proved most effective as a form of psychological terror on the general population. For instance, during the Soviet efforts to raise grain requisitions in the autumn of 1946, the Ukrainian underground left messages like these: "Soon the Bolsheviks will conduct the grain levy.

57. From a top secret report on OUN-UPA terror prepared by chief of the first section of the GUBB NKVD, Major General Gorshkov, dated 26 December 1944. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 54.
58. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2968, ll. 201–03.
59. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 381, l. 57.
60. From OUN Instructions in 1945. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 292, l. 29.
61. Directive of Ukrainian Minister of State Security S.R. Savchenko to regional MGB chiefs, dated 15 June 1948. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5465, ll. 307–13.

Anyone among you who brings grain to the collection points will be killed like a dog, and your entire family butchered."[62] "You should not fulfill the demands of the Soviets because anyone who works will be hanged as a traitor to the Ukrainian land. . . . If anyone of you carries grain to the stations, then we will kill you like a dog, and your whole family will be hanged or cut to pieces."[63] The same style of instructions was issued against holding offices in village soviets. The results were indicated in a Soviet report from autumn, 1946: "No one wants to be a village leader, because they elect him in the day, and by the next morning he's been hanged."[64] Numerous reports from interviews with Galicians in recent years indicate one common theme: that when village officials were elected, villagers tried as much as possible to choose unmarried men with no dependents. Until the very end of the 1940s, most village soviets existed on paper only, since locals generally refused to fill offices vacated by rebel assassinations.

The Ukrainian underground's harsh terrorist methods were applied disproportionately against fellow Ukrainians and their families who were suspected of collaborating with Soviet power. Of the 11,725 known assassinations perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists against Soviet agents during twenty-four of the first thirty-five postwar months for which data are available (February 1944–December 1946), more than half (6,250) were Ukrainian locals. If members of the Destruction Battalions (*istrebitel'nye batal'iony*) are included, the proportion rises to nearly two-thirds (6,980).[65] Using less precise figures without a breakdown of Soviets versus local collaborators, a Kiev historian recently estimated that the Ukrainian underground perpetrated 14,500 diversionary and terrorist actions against the Soviets and their

62. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 1741, l. 48.
63. Gleaned by NKVD investigators from eyewitness reports of a speech of an OUN-UPA colonel in a village assembly convened by force at the end of June 1945 in village Lishnevichi in Brodsk raion (L'viv). DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 212, l. 166.
64. Six-page top secret report of Lieutenant-General MGB-L'viv A.I. Voronin to the Drohobych obkom in September 1946. DALO, f. 5001, op. 7, d. 279, ll. 119–21 ob.
65. Data for February 1944–April 1945 adapted from top secret report of Leont'ev, dated 17 May 1945. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 43–45. Data for 1946 adapted from top secret monthly reports to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Zhdanov, and Kuznetsov from Minister of Internal Affairs S. Kruglov (12 May 1946–28 January 1947). GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 136, l. 5; d. 137, l. 176; d. 138, ll. 133–134; d. 139, ll. 48–49; d. 139, l. 143; d. 139, ll. 267–268; d. 139, l. 105; d. 168, l. 94. Aggregate data total over 18,000 assassinations for the period up to April 1947. However, categories of victims were available for only 11,725.

collaborators, killing more than 30,000 Communists, soldiers, and local collaborators by the end of 1945.[66]

In contrast, the Soviets relied upon an alternative method: mass terror through the sheer public demonstration of their superior fire power. In those early days after the war, Soviet raids were not surgical; they followed a tactic of social control by mass intimidation. Meanwhile, through disorganization, diversion, and sabotage by special units disguised as rebel bandits, Soviet forces committed numerous atrocities working in this way to confuse locals in the battle for alternative forms of justice.

The Soviets also practiced their own brand of ritualistic violence and corpse vilification. While Ukrainian descriptions do not refer explicitly to the practice, the account of a Lithuanian anti-Soviet rebel reflects the general practice of the NKVD-NKGB establishment in pacification campaigns throughout the Soviet Union's western borderlands after the war:

> . . . [the] NKVD had recently begun to desecrate partisans' bodies in an attempt to discourage the continued growth of the armed resistance ranks. The policy had been adopted on 15 February 1946. Henceforth, the bodies of all partisans were to be seized and conveyed to the nearest public square, where they would remain exposed in full view of everyone.
> One of the first incidents of this kind involved seven members of Viesulas's company, who had been killed during the course of an NKVD ambush. Their bodies were promptly taken to the village of Garliava, where they were first of all dumped in the public square to be abused, cursed, pummelled, and spat upon by the *enkavedisti*. Afterwards, the corpse of the group commander was propped in an upright standing position and made to look as though he were addressing the others. After the finishing touch had been added by stuffing a faucet into the corpse's mouth, the tableau was considered ready for the eyes of the town's people.[67]

In another case, five partisans who had killed thirteen Soviets before they lost their own lives "were subjected to those hideous forms of desecration of which the Communists were masters. Some of them were

66. M. V. Koval', *Ukraina i drugii svitovii i Velykii Vitchyznianii viinakh, 1939–1945 gg. Proba suchasnoho kontseptual'noho analizu* (Kiev, 1994), 46–47.
67. See the fascinating and generally reliable account of guerilla leader Juozas Daumantas, *Fighters for Freedom: Lithuanian Partisans versus the U.S.S.R (1944–1947)* 2nd ed. (Toronto, 1975), 125. We can extend such practices to all countries in the Soviet western borderlands, since the same NKVD/NKGB officers often moved from one republic to another, depending on the degree of local resistance.

'bridled' with rosary beads found on their persons; prayer books were stuffed into the mouths of others; and the Lithuanian [national] insignia . . . was carved into the flesh of them all."[68] The Soviet practice of displaying the corpses of dead rebels went beyond the immediately obvious symbolic logic of showcasing terror and brutality in order to intimidate potential opposition.The practice was also integral to Soviet police method: the NKVD-NKGB "had no trouble making out the expressions on the faces of the spectators when they came filing past. Because they were eager to find out the identities of these dead partisans, they posted a [clandestine] watch and picked up for interrogation any individuals who looked like they were moved or upset by the sight."[69] Soviet police officials also posted a watch or desecrated partisan burial sites in an effort to resist the transformation of dead "bandits" into martyrs of the anti-Soviet rebellion.[70]

UKRAINIAN REBEL COUNTERINTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

Soviet efforts in West Ukraine were from the very beginning plagued with repeated and gross intelligence failures, and a general inability to detect and resolutely annihilate Ukrainian underground resistance. The very low quality of Soviet agentura in West Ukraine during the first years after the war was a product of several factors, which merged to critically undermine Soviet efforts. First and foremost was the sheer dimension of the problem of administration the Soviets faced. The limits of the early Soviet pacification campaigns are best understood in the context of the massive reconstruction necessitated by the scorched-earth campaigns of Soviets and Germans had wrought in the occupied zones.[71] Remember, too, that most of Soviet territory was fully liberated by the Red Army by the early Spring of 1944, more than a year before victory in Europe.

Stretched way beyond capacity, Soviet security forces were vulnera-

68. Ibid., 138.
69. Ibid., 125.
70. Ibid., 125–26. Today, throughout West Ukraine, one can find in isolated hills or woods well-tended crosses or other monuments to fallen rebels from this era.
71. The legacy of devastation in the western borderlands has been summarized in several studies. See Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989–1991); James R. Millar, "Conclusion: Impact and Aftermath of World War II," in Susan J. Linz, ed., *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), 283–91; and William Moskoff, *The Bread of Affliction: The Food Supply in the USSR During World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 47.

ble to virtually any degree of local resistance. In West Ukraine, the Soviets were challenged by near total popular noncompliance and an ethnic hatred which bred widespread anti-Russian opposition. The region had been reconquered from the Germans, but not pacified and fully re-Sovietized. And West Ukraine was not isolated. Throughout formerly German-occupied territory, the Soviets faced virtually intractable problems of rooting out roving bands of criminal bandits (which reached its height in 1947), detecting and annihilating wartime collaborators (who until May 1945 often continued to perpetrate sabotage behind Soviet lines), reimposing civil law and discipline in regions weary of war and populated with people adept at undermining state initiatives. When the Soviets tried to force local men into military service, they fled to the woods and joined partisan bands, or they deserted *en masse* for parts unknown. When the Soviets tried to enforce higher voter turnout in key postwar elections, the majority of locals would disappear until election day had passed.

There was also the problem of manpower. The most experienced cadres were at the front until late in 1945, and thereafter the Soviets faced huge problems of setting up occupation governments and quashing local protests throughout occupied territory in Central and Eastern Europe. Party officials and raion chiefs with virtually no military experience and with little or no support from the local population were sent cold into the field and expected to detect and destroy battle-hardened underground rebels. The few handfuls of expert cadres initially had little impact on the region.[72]

Drastically understaffed, comparatively weak Soviet forces relied especially on the overuse of coercion, on violence and terror to pacify reconquered territories. That made it difficult during the first two to three years after the war for the Soviets to rely on incentives, cultural initiatives, and propaganda to build a base among war-torn and war-weary populations throughout the western borderlands, who initially had been inclined to greet the Soviets as liberators.

Comprehensive inventories of operational personnel (*opergruppy*) in

72. One finds repeated complaints from NKVD commanders regarding the shortage of qualified personnel to run agentura operations against local ethnic groups. See, for instance, then Minister of Public Security in Poland Ivan A. Serov's top secret report to Beria, dated 16 October 1944, reprinted in *NKVD i pol'skoe podpol'e, 1944–1945 (Po 'osobym papkam' I. V. Stalina)* (Moscow, 1994), 37–42. Also see the complaints among raion chiefs in various conferences in L'viv throughout 1944 and 1945: DALO, f. 3, op. 1, dd. 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 201.

the spetsgruppy in six of seven West Ukrainian oblasts reveal that there were only 101 Soviet officers with the rank of lieutenant or above, commanding just a few thousand special MVD troops, in a region of 79,000 square kilometers (roughly equivalent to the size of the state of South Carolina) with a population in 1946 of over 5.3 million.[73] This intelligence—that Soviet control depended on a few cadres who would organize the rest—suggested distinct tactics to the leaders in the Ukrainian rebel underground: namely, that much could be gained by focusing SB actions toward assassinations of key Soviet personnel. OUN/UPA instructions from January 1945 made the inevitable logic clear: "Thrust actions should be organized against leadership personnel, the [Soviet] regime, and its weakest spots. Such attacks throw the ranks of the enemy and its system into confusion. For the Bolsheviks have no one with whom to replace their leadership personnel, but must send for them from other regions [in the Soviet Union]. Such novices must study for a long time [to become acquainted with our local conditions, and the Bolsheviks must] watch after them and in practice manage them [more closely]."[74]

It was the Ukrainian underground's uncanny capacity to infiltrate institutions of Soviet repression that made it so effective. The data are impressive. In previously top secret NKVD data for twenty-four of the first thirty-five months of Soviet reoccupation of West Ukraine (February 1944–December 1946), Ukrainian underground terrorist groups successfully assassinated 11,725 Soviet officers, agents, and collaborators. In the same period, 3,914 Soviet officials or collaborators were injured, and 2,401 were "missing," presumed kidnapped by OUN-UPA forces.[75] As late as 1947 and 1948, in only the L'viv oblast,

73. Top secret report of V.S. Riasnoi and Leont'ev to MVD SSSR S. Kruglov, dated May 1946. GARF, f. 9478, op. 1s, d. 527, ll. 109–17.
74. GARF, f. 9401s, op. 2, d. 92, l. 68. From top secret copies of UPA-NVRA documents and instructions forwarded from Soviet People's Commissar of Internal Affairs V. S. Riasnoi to Beria, and then to Stalin on 6 January 1945. In over seventy documents from the Special Files for Stalin regarding West Ukrainian affairs, 1944–1948, this is the only one where a verbatim translation of OUN instructions was included for Stalin's personal review. The obvious issue was the threat posed to the security of the Soviet presence by such rebel assassination squads. See also Yuriy Tys-Krokhmaliuk, *UPA Warfare in Ukraine: Strategical, Tactical and Organizational Problems of Ukrainian Resistance in World War II* (New York, 1972). On underground tactics from a Soviet perspective, see A. P. Kozlov, *Trevozhnaia sluzhba* 2nd edition (Moscow, 1975), 159–228.
75. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 43–45; GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 136, l. 5; d. 137, l. 176; d. 138, ll. 133–34; d. 139, ll. 48–49; d. 139, l. 143; d. 139, ll. 267–68; d. 139, l. 105; d. 168, l. 94.

there were 635 reports of underground nationalist activity and 853 assassinations of Soviet agents or local collaborators.[76]

Local data of Soviet losses reveal the powerful impact of the underground's assassination tactics. In twenty-one rebel attacks on the raion center of Ponikovetsk (L'viv) after it was "liberated" by the Soviets in the autumn of 1944 to January 1945, Ukrainian rebels had killed ten members of the Soviet Party aktiv, plus one raikom secretary , and kidnapped four other Soviet officials. That meant a total of fifteen dead in a full staff targeted optimally to remain at thirteen! Because of the assassinations, Soviet staff in the raion rarely exceeded six nonlocal Soviet personnel. As a result, the raion operated on less than 50 percent of required staff at any given moment, deeply affecting the integrity of the Soviet presence in the region. For instance, there were no courts, no procurator's office, and the local NKVD station had three instead of the required six officers. In a raion of fourteen village soviets and thirty-four distinct populated zones spanning up to forty kilometers from the raion center, the presence of Soviet power was more theoretical than real: anti-Soviet rebels moved at will throughout the region. In addition, thirty-eight locals had been killed in the raids, and five had been kidnapped and were presumed dead. In all, seventy-three Soviet officials and their local collaborators had been killed over the course of just a few months.[77]

For Soviet authorities in West Ukraine, Ukrainian nationalist resistance was a hydra: for years, day after day, Soviet raids would annihilate pockets of resistance. Repeatedly, Soviet authorities would receive reliable information that they had beheaded the organizational structure of the Ukrainian underground. Repeatedly, they would read from internal OUN-UPA documents of the hardship, desperation and losses inflicted by the enemy, of the low morale, the utter hopelessness of resistance. Yet, time and again Ukrainian organized resistance proved to be miraculously self-sustaining: leaders and their families could be murdered, imprisoned, or deported, but people would always step in to fill the places of those who came before them. Considerable financial and organizational assistance as well was provided by the Ukrainian community abroad, aided as early as 1943 by American and

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76. Data based on preceding twenty-three months in report for 10 December 1948. DALO, f. 3, op. 2s, d. 467, l. 92.
77. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 191, ll. 13–15.

British intelligence.[78] Everyday forms of resistance against Soviet authority proved far less detectable and far more effective in the nationalist struggle.

The sheer depth and breadth of the underground resistance forced the Soviets to depend on agentura. The war against the well-entrenched and highly conspiratorial Ukrainian underground could only be won with a wide base of informants and local agents.

The Main Features of Soviet Agentura in West Ukraine

"Several cases from practical experience and from secret orders seized from the organs of the NKVD-NKGB show that . . . on Galician territory there was organized and still remains active a peculiar form of agentura, created with adolescent children (twelve to fourteen years old). They catch these children during raids, and under various pretexts, carry them off to the raion headquarters of the NKVD-NKGB. In interrogations, {the NKVD} threatens them with death if they do not tell {everything}: in whose homes are the banderovtsy quartered; who in the village makes them something to eat; where are their stores; who is the local leader; where is the clandestine rendezvous point; and so on. Given the particular mass character of our movement, many children throughout the countryside really are able to answer at least some of these questions (and there are some who can answer all of them) since the majority of {Ukrainian children}, at a certain age, can be quite observant and have a good memory. The NKVD reckons on this, and exploits it."

"NKVD-NKGB AGENTURA IN PRACTICE"[79]

As we have seen, Soviet forces relied upon an air of invincibility to undermine the morale of popular resistance movements throughout the Western borderlands, on maintaining the myth that Soviet power was not just powerful, but inevitable. Besides vastly superior fire power and numerous tactical advantages, Soviet spetsgruppy also drew considerable strength by playing upon the passions of long-standing local rivalries between competing ethnic groups.

In Galicia, the long-standing enmity and internecine strife between ethnic Poles and Ukrainians did not cease with the coming of the Red Army, but rather adapted to the new conditions as each side worked to

78. See the instructions of Soviet Deputy of Internal Affairs Lieutenant-General V. Riasnoi to Ukranian MVD T. Strokach, dated 17 December 1946: "O razrabotke OUN v sviazi s orientirovkoi ee na anglichan i amerkiantsev." GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 521, ll. 279–280.
79. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 643, ll. 14–34.

use Soviet power to crush the other. The early collaborators of 1944 and 1945 were by and large ethnic nationalists whose interests, at least on this point, overlapped with Soviet power. In this regard, Polish nationalists in particular were more likely to identify a common front between Soviet and Polish interests in rooting out ethnic Ukrainian underground resistance in what had traditionally been identified as southeastern Poland.

That Soviet authorities did indeed work to exploit ethnic rivalries was vividly demonstrated in the 23 March 1944 six-page report of chief of the Ukrainian staff of the NKVD's partisan brigades, Timofei Strokach. After reviewing the principal Polish nationalist partisan groups and political factions, Strokach recommended specific tactics for annihilating the effectiveness of the Polish underground in East European affairs. "The Ukrainian staff of the partisan movement currently presents us with great opportunities: (1) for the dispatch of qualified agentura in Poland, Germany; (2) for the direction toward Poland of [ethnic] Polish partisan formations; [and] (3) by means of assistance to partisan detachments of the [Polish] "People's Guard" ([GL]— *Gwardia Ludowa*), to guarantee the speedy growth and broad disorganization (razvorot) of the partisan movement on Polish territory."[80] This cryptic jargon translated into a clear message for field operatives: the Soviet NKVD seized upon ethnic divisiveness in reconquered territories of Central and East Europe as a means by which to enhance Soviet control. The ethnic typing of enemy nationalities was common in the NKVD as well, who were similarly convinced that anti-Soviet "spies were correlated to ethnic or social backgrounds."[81] Throughout the postwar years of Stalin's reign, the intensification of enmity between ethnic groups long-feuding for hegemony over various regions of Eastern Europe was *the central tactic* of Soviet power. In West Ukraine, that meant, above all, playing ethnic Ukrainians against ethnic Poles and vice versa.

Numerous underground reports and instructions from the period 1944–1945 reflect the suspected role of Polish collaborators with Soviet authorities. "Assistance [to the NKVD] can be found in the ma-

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80. Top secret report from Strokach to Beria dated 29 March 1944, regarding the activities of the Polish underground in Polish territory. GARF, f. R-9401, op. 2, d. 64, l. 227.
81. Gabor Rittersporn, "The Omnipresent Conspiracy: On Soviet Imagery of Politics in the 1930s," in J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning, ed., *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

jority [of cases] among the [ethnic] Poles or from within Polish social circles, and likewise from among [ethnic] Ukrainians ([who operate as] secret agents)."[82] "The Poles, who are in Destruction Battalions, injure us badly because they actively look for us in the villages."[83] Similarly, in an OUN-UPA communiqué dated 22 September 1944, the rebel leaders evaluated the critical threat posed by ethnic Poles in Galicia:

THE FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESS OF [SOVIET ANTI-REBEL] ACTIONS.
    1. Before the actions, the NKVD prepares a designated unit for the operation. The robber-*NKVDysty* arrive in many villages with pre-pared lists of honest Ukrainian citizens together with members of our cadres.
    Where do the Bolsheviks get such information?
        a. Local secret agents (seksoty) report on everything in the village. (There is inadequate conspiracy in the countryside. We must be cautious even around our own [cadres].)
        b. Even on a first visit to a village, the NKVD often succeeds in learning about all the work of our active units, the attitude of the [local] population towards the UPA, the location of stores, of the wounded, and so forth. This is due to the general absence of con-spiracy in the countryside—people tell anyone everything they know. . . .
        c. *Many local {ethnic} Poles are in the NKVD.* Extreme caution is necessary in front of mixed [Polish-Ukrainian] families.[84]

As a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences declared in a conver-sation with a secret Soviet collaborator in the spring of 1945: "You don't know the Poles. They are even more impudent than the Jews. . . ."[85]

Just one of numerous examples will illustrate the crucial role played by deep-seated intravillage ethnic rivalries. Armed with agentura in-formation provided by Polish collaborators inside the village, Soviet forces in January 1945 conducted a raid on the village soviet at Snovychi (L'viv oblast), a large village with 578 peasant households. Past reports had always cited this as an extremely passive village, with almost no Ukrainian rebel activity. Yet intelligence reports supplied in

82. 25 November 1944 Addendum to instructions, dated September 1944. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 292, l. 35 ob.
83. DALO, f. 3, op. 1s, d. 70, l. 2ob.
84. Emphasis added by the author. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 126, l. 320 ob. OUN-UPA in-structions to regional propagandists dated 22 September 1944.
85. From a report to the Central Committee of the CPSU of I. Bogorodchenko of the L'viv obkom (oblast Party committee), dated 24 September 1945. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 214, l. 111.

secret by local Polish collaborators revealed a rebel underground of 120 active members in just this one village. Red Army forces sealed the village on the night of 17 January 1945, and then an armed Soviet force raided in early morning on 18 January.

Their discovery in this village will give the reader a good idea of what the Soviet forces were up against. In all, 104 hideouts were found in just this one village of 578 households. The commander was sure that not all hideouts had been found, but these were uncovered because of their intrinsic similarity to one another. Each hideout was literally a tomb dug into the stone walls of potato cellars, through which rebels had burrowed holes as narrow as forty centimers wide. They would crawl inside, then be sealed in (with just a small air hole) by family members.[86]

The Soviet discovery at Snovychi led field commanders to revise upward their estimates of the scale of local opposition. Prior to the raid, military intelligence had estimated a mere 140 active rebels throughout Pomoriany raion. In the raid of Snovychi alone, seventy-four Ukrainian rebels were found, which led to a new adjusted estimate nearly eighteen times higher, to 2,500 active rebels in just one of twenty-five raions of L'viv oblast![87] As the author of the field report explained: the rebels were so well hidden that ". . . if there had been no agentura information, we would have found nothing."[88] An additional obstacle to Soviet pacification was caused by the fact that the underground war left the Soviets little time to enjoy the fruits of their victories. Within just a few days after the raid, UPA justice was swift and brutal: ten peasant houses in the village were burned, and eight men and one woman—all ethnic Poles—were executed in a particularly grisly fashion. They were bound and left to be burned alive inside their own cottages, a macabre monument to betrayal intended to intimidate future collaborators.[89]

The political decision made in Moscow in November 1944 to deport ethnic Poles from West Ukraine was a disaster for the NKVD's agentura networks in the region. This was true for two reasons. First, the deportation of the Poles dealt a fatal blow to Soviet penetration of the countryside. A direct result of the post-First World War re-Polinization of the region had been the rather even spread of ethnic Polish "colonizers" throughout Galician villages. By 1939, the large majority

86. Based on report of Pomorianskyi raikom secretary Kunyts, f. 3, op. 1, d. 192, ll. 121–22.
87. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 192, l. 126.
88. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 192, l. 122.
89. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 192, l. 123.

of Galician villages were mixed—with 10 to 30 percent ethnic Poles, 70 to 90 percent ethnic Ukrainians. It was this mixed character of Galician villages that generated a steady flow of agentura information to Soviet authorities in the postwar era, as the ethnic element promoted denunciations of local opposition to Soviet power. By the end of 1945, field officers in the NKVD were complaining that they no longer had *any* agentura assets to monitor the movements of local rebels.[90] The work of building informants' networks throughout West Ukraine had to begin anew.[91]

Second, just as devastating was the fact that with the war for ethnic Ukrainian homogeneity now won—ironically, by Soviet fiat—the OUN-UPA forces were no longer caught between Polish partisans, on the one hand, and Soviet power, on the other.[92] Ukrainian nationalist forces could now focus their energies wholly on opposing Soviet power. Paradoxically, Soviet estimates of Ukrainian rebel strength began to rise dramatically by the end of 1946—largely corresponding with the pace of deportation of ethnic Poles from West Ukraine.

AGENTURA BY DECREE

Soviet instructions to regional NKVD officers reveal that Soviet informants' networks in postwar West Ukraine were largely organized "by decree." Essentially, NKVD field officers were ordered to recruit a set number of local agents and informants before a specified date, usually in seven to ten days.[93] The result—before the development of "parallel

90. On the multi-ethnic mix in interwar southeastern Poland, see Stephan Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities, 1919–1939* (New York: Vantage Press, 1961).
91. In the long run, the deportation of the Poles (exchanged for ethnic Ukrainians deported *en masse* from Polish zones) favored Soviet pacification of West Ukraine by uprooting the partisan base of underground rebel units living just over the border in Poland, outside the jurisdiction of Soviet forces. On the exile of Poles from western Ukraine and western Belarus, see Keith Sword, *Deportation and Exile: Poles in the Soviet Union, 1939–1948* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); and Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
92. It is ironic that Soviet power was able to accomplish what years of war between ethnic Poles and Ukrainians could not: the "liberation" of West Ukraine from the Poles. As an ethnic Ukrainian stage actress declared in 1945 to a Soviet informer, "This is the first intelligent step on the part of the Bolsheviks since the liberation of L'viv. If the Bolsheviks had from the very beginning of the liberation of L'viv not been so preoccupied with the *Banderivtsi*, but instead arrested the Poles, then today there wouldn't be a single Banderivets: they would have all crossed over to the side of Soviet power. . . ." DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 214, l. 7 ob.
93. See for example the instructions to raion NKVD field officers on "The Mass Recruitment of Informants," dated 10 December 1945. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 226, ll. 71–72.

agentura networks" in West Ukraine in mid-1947—was to generate an internal spy system on paper, but one with little real operational effectiveness. The pressures on NKVD field officers to produce dramatic results quickly had four direct consequences. First, pressures from Moscow seriously escalated violence perpetrated by Soviet authorities against local populations. Caught between a rock and a hard spot, field agents preferred the use of excessive measures against native populations over more systematic forms of network building. Second, those pressures generated a large number of fictional networks—that is, rather than report failure, Soviet field agents often preferred to fabricate successful results. This too led by the end of the 1940s to the generation of statistical data and new reporting schemes, which subjected the war against the rebel underground to regionally distributed efficiency quotas: failure to get concrete results would be reflected in aggregate data on rates of arrests and liquidation of rebels and their hideouts. Third, pressures from Kiev and Moscow also seriously undermined vetting procedures, so that most Soviet agentura networks were riddled with double agents who worked for the Ukrainian underground. As a result, the loss of field agents betrayed by duplicitous informants was common. Finally, NKVD personnel files reveal that these combined factors shattered cadre morale: even in the dangerous milieu of Soviet state service during the late-Stalin era, West Ukraine was a hardship post. Personnel files of spetsgruppy cadres reveal higher rates of transfer requests, alcoholism, nervous breakdowns, and extinction (that is, the refusal to serve) among NKVD field agents.[94]

The Soviet internal spy network in West Ukraine was impressive on paper. On 1 July 1945, the NKVD reported a total of 11,214 local collaborators in the agentura networks of West Ukraine: 175 residents, 1,196 agents, and 9,843 informers (osvedomiteli). Nearly half (47.2 percent) of these intelligence assets were recruited in the first six months of 1945: 156 of the residents (89.1 percent), 527 agents, plus an additional 41 agents-marshrutniki and 84 agenty-vnutrenniki (total agents: 652, or 52.3 percent), and 4,483 informers (45.6 percent) were new recruits.[95] According to a top secret report issued on 14 September 1946, just under 9 percent (2,968) of the 33,740 Galician peasants in 1,617

94. See GUBB personnel files in GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 527, "Perepiska po shtatam i lichnomu sostavu ob pereferiinikh organov NKVD" (1946).
95. From a top secret report of A. Leont'ev to S. Kruglov. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1s, d. 352, ll. 75–76, dated 3 August 1945.

Destruction Battalions in mid September 1946 were secret osvedomiteli working for the Soviets.[96]

In practice, however, these impressive data often failed to live up to expectations. The vast majority of Soviet special operations throughout West Ukraine were compromised from their inception. One case will be presented to illustrate this.

In October and November 1944, the NKGB in Ukraine launched an operation to place an agent inside the command structure of the Banderist OUN, the most powerful faction in the Ukrainian underground. The basic goal was to activate two women agents—Irina in Luts'k and Aprel'ska from Kiev—who would be used to establish the credentials of a third agent Svii—an East Ukrainian who had worked for the NKGB since 1924. The legend of the case was that Aprel'ska would be the linchpin to link Svii, chief of a fictitious Ukrainian nationalist underground organization based outside of Kiev, to the regional OUN headquarters based in Luts'k.[97]

The operation was compromised almost as soon as it got underway. Taras Chuprynka, commander-in-chief of the UPA, was mainly responsible for foiling the poorly laid Soviet plan. Irina and Svii were interrogated, then executed by the underground. Aprel'ska was rehabilitated by her willingness to cooperate, and though she was prohibited from future operations, she was permitted to go on living and serving, by lecturing West Ukrainian women about her ordeals.

The special twist in this case is that the underground's regional chief of counterintelligence was killed in his hideout during a Soviet raid, which took place two weeks after the interrogations and executions of Irina and Svii. That raid yielded a rich cache of documents, including

96. Top secret report of Saraev, entitled "Spravka o sostoianii operativno-boevoi deiatel'nosti istrebitel'nykh batal'ionov zapadnykh oblastei USSR." TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2967, ll. 53–54.

97. The complete file of the case, including transcripts of NKGB interrogations of the agents as well as the transcripts of the underground's interrogation, are preserved in GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 643, ll. 237–311. On the request of archivists, and out of respect for the rights of individuals (in accordance with the Russian Federation's law on state secrets dated August 1993, which restricts such material for seventy-five years), I have released only the field pseudonyms (*klichki*) of key collaborators. Apparently, the NKGB mistakenly identified a corpse at the scene as Chuprynka. In fact, Roman Shukevych, the supreme commander of the UPA—alias Taras Chuprynka—was killed outside of L'viv on 5 March 1950. See Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 223. According to Pavel A. Sudoplatov, the chief of the NKVD section devoted to diversion and sabotage who ran the operation which liquidated Shukevych, "The organized guerilla resistance in Western Ukraine collapsed after his death." Pavel and Anatolii Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1994–1995), 256.

transcripts of interrogations of all three Soviet agents, as well as numerous other materials relevant to the operation. Evaluating the case in March 1946, the deputy director of the first department at GUBB, Colonel V. Konstantinov, analyzed the reasons for the mission's failure. Concluding that the NKGB operation to penetrate the central command structure of the OUN was "inadequately thought out and prepared," Konstantinov emphasized three overriding weaknesses in the NKGB's operation. First, Konstantinov pointed to the general lack of vetting of two of the three NKGB spies. Irina was a whimsical girl of twenty-three who broke under pressure from the underground just as easily as she had broken during the NKGB's initial arrest and interrogation. An agent of the NKGB since October 1944, she had never received serious training in clandestine warfare and was little prepared for such a major operation, launched less than a month after her recruitment. Moreover, Irina had been denounced to the underground by a woman friend at work almost immediately after her initial arrest, so that the whole basis of the operation was compromised from the start. Aprel'ska, a more serious woman aged twenty-two, had worked for the NKGB a mere six months before the operation began.

Konstantinov also lamented the general lack of conspiracy and compartmentalism in the operation. Ostensibly, each agent operated on a need-to-know basis. In reality, though, each agent was exposed to far more information than he should have. In their overreliance on turned agents of the underground for their own purposes, the Soviets seem to have fallen for the same myth as Big Brother in George Orwell's classic novel *1984*: that once a resistor was broken, he was broken for all time. In reality, as Aprel'ska was to prove, the turned agents' inner conflicts generally led them to welcome apprehension by the underground: once apprehended, Aprel'ska—like so many others—cooperated in every way she could to support the underground's war against Soviet power. Even such an inexperienced Soviet agent—closer to the norm than the exception—could become a great asset to rebel counterintelligence.

In his conclusion, Konstantinov explicitly condemned the whole operation, as well as the premises upon which it had been based: if a separate operation had not wholly coincidentally uncovered "Chuprynka" and his archive, the Ukrainian underground probably would have succeeded in turning all three Soviet agents and thereby managed to penetrate the internal workings of numerous NKGB operations, not the

other way around. Only chance had served to protect the NKGB from this potentially catastrophic development.[98]

This one case serves to illustrate the powerful obstacles in the path of Soviet efforts to pacify West Ukraine: the NKGB in Ukraine leaked like a sieve, and something had to be done about it. That truth was only too self-evident in the general failure of Soviet forces to engage the enemy. The operating principle of Soviet pacification in hostile areas was to blend a system of spies and informants with a ruthless suppression of the general population. But, while the Soviets had the fire power, they utterly lacked reliable information. For the first three years of the Soviet reoccupation of West Ukraine, one gets the impression of a lot of haphazard activity in which ominous terror was exerted on the whole local population without inflicting many serious casualties upon underground rebel groups or their leaders. In a report to Khrushchev (then secretary of the Communist party of Ukraine) dated 8 August 1946, his deputy for West Ukrainian affairs in the Central Committee, A. A. Stoiantsev, was vehement in his condemnation of Soviet operations in West Ukraine, suggesting they represented far more empty talk than real action: "In view of their weak agentura preparation, [Soviet] military operations in a majority of cases bring no results. Of 3,753 operations conducted in July [1946] in all [seven] western oblasts [of Ukraine], 2,813 or 75 percent [produced] no results whatsoever; of 4,238 ambushes, 3,929 or 93 percent likewise [produced] no results."[99]

The figures were neither isolated nor atypical. In a top secret report to Khrushchev in September 1946, Stoiantsev indicated that of 42,175 operations and ambushes by the Destruction Battalions in West Ukraine, less than 10 percent (4,210) had satisfactory results. In the vast majority, there was either no contact or the individual unit was disarmed and pro-Soviet leaders murdered or kidnapped.[100] Here too Stoiantsev's indictment was devastating: "The organs of the MVD, the

98. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 643, ll. 307–11. On the enormous success of Ukrainian rebels in compromising the security of Soviet operations, see the numerous complaints of raion NKVD-NKGB officials: DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 191, ll. 9–10. In a top secret communication to Khrushchev, dated 13 July 1946, MVD-Ukraine Kruglov complained of the failure of raikom and obkom leaders in West Ukraine to respect clandestinity of agentura operations. TsDAHO, f. 1. op. 23, d. 2966, ll. 78–79.
99. From a top secret report of A. A. Stoiantsev to Khrushchev, dated 8 August 1946. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2966, l. 73.
100. From a top secret report of A. A. Stoiantsev to Khrushchev, dated 14 September 1946. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2966, ll. 23–34.

MGB, the interior and border troops, to date have not reorganized their work from active military operations to deep agentura penetration of the OUN underground. The majority of rebel actions remain uninvestigated, response measures are not organized, and the rebels depart without any punitive action whatsoever. Commanders of MVD military units endeavor to avoid directing their units, which in the majority of cases strike blindly."[101] Stoiantsev excoriated the MVD/MGB in the western oblasts for abandoning the tried and true formulas of "baiting" the opposition and mass arrests to recruit informants, for submitting deceptive and overly optimistic reports, for failing to rebuild lost intelligence assets, or to utilize fully those still in operation, and even for "cowardice and indecisiveness" in the field.

Overall, the data powerfully illustrate the degree to which Soviet forces throughout West Ukraine were riddled with informants who were sympathetic to rebels. Until 1947, Ukrainian rebel counterintelligence so undermined Soviet informants' networks that they virtually nullified Soviet advantages derived from their vastly superior fire power. Leaking disinformation through Soviet informants, more often than not, the Ukrainian underground led Soviet forces by the nose in a dangerous life-and-death burlesque.

Moreover, the data indicated how risk-averse raion and oblast leadership in West Ukraine put more effort into the mere appearance of energetic action rather than in taking genuine steps toward the concrete liquidation of Ukrainian nationalist rebel opposition. Based on his close study of the data from July 1946, Stoiantsev rendered his sobering conclusions: "Many obkom and particularly raikom secretaries [in West Ukraine], despite the escalation in activities of OUN-UPA bands, have slackened in their struggle with [the underground]. Failing to take into account the reshaping of the enemy's methods of struggle—. . . . flight into the deep underground, individualized terror, and operations and ambushes [conducted] by local teams of three to four persons . . .—[local Soviet officials] continue to conduct mass operations without requisite agentura preparation, [operations] which in the majority [of cases lead] to nothing."[102] As Stoiantsev wrote to another secretary in the Ukrainian Central Committee, D. S. Korotchenko, just two days later: "It is necessary to emphasize that although

101. Ibid., l. 30.
102. From a top secret report of A. A. Stoiantsev to Khrushchev, dated 8 August 1946. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2966, ll. 73–74.

there has been a weakening in the struggle against [Ukrainian rebel] bands, [we have observed] in a series of cases more effort [by local Party officials] to *show* that the struggle has been conducted successfully than" actual efforts to liquidate the rebels. Local Party officials in West Ukraine "have grown sluggish in their attention to the business at hand."[103]

Information and disinformation therefore became powerful weapons in the hands of underground rebels, who deliberately worked to sever the brain of the Soviet presence in West Ukraine from its operations units. The rebel underground was driven by the imperative of enforcing conspiracy on its members: "Therefore, it is necessary to (1) Purify the [rebel] organization of unjustified confidence, of the unstable (*nestiikyi*) element, annihilate agentura from within. THE BOLSHEVIKS KNOW THAT THEY CANNOT LIQUIDATE US WITH ARMED ACTIVITY AND TERROR ALONE."[104] Without reliable agentura, Soviet military operations had come to naught.

PARALLEL AGENTURA NETWORKS

For the Soviets, the situation was to get worse before it got better. In a strongly worded letter of 25 April 1947, Soviet Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov took his Ukrainian deputy Strokach (by then minister of internal affairs in the Ukrainian SSR) to task for the dramatic rise in criminal banditry and rebel actions. During the first quarter of 1947, rates of banditry and rebel activity throughout Ukraine had grown more than 100 percent over the rates for the last quarter of 1946! "Agentura work and efforts to liquidate active bands are weak."[105] The move to radically modify Soviet agentura tactics had begun largely on Strokach's initiative a year before, in a top secret communiqué dated 20 July 1946.[106] The catastrophic turn of events in early 1947 gave Strokach the opportunity he had requested to test new procedures in a zone restricted to the seven western oblasts of Ukraine.

The development of parallel agentura networks marked a crucial turning point in the Soviet war against the Ukrainian underground.

103. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 2971, l. 11.
104. Ukrainian underground nationalist rebel Bohun to 3ov, dated September 1946, from a package of captured materials sent by Drohobych obkom secretary Horobets to Khrushchev, 15 October 1946. DALO, f. 5001, op. 7, d. 220, l. 142.
105. Top secret. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 755, ll. 51–52.
106. GARF, f. R-9478, op. 1, d. 521, ll. 87–88.

The records of the Soviet security apparatus, supplemented by captured files of the Ukrainian nationalist resistance, reveal beyond any doubt that the Soviet victory was won with development of an effective spy network in West Ukraine. Agentura—the clandestine war of the Soviet security forces to penetrate and destroy Ukrainian underground resistance from within—was the chief means by which Ukrainian opposition was crushed. Frustrated by the continuing setbacks, the L'viv raion chiefs of the MVD and the MGB were called to a meeting on 16 April 1947. The stenographic reports from their meeting reveal exasperation at staunch Ukrainian nationalist resistance more than two years after the Soviet victory in Europe.[107] It was out of repeated frustrations and in the face of enormous pressure from Moscow that local officials introduced a shift in tactics, with an intensification of the agentura campaign. Reflecting the high stakes in the experiment, Khrushchev was temporarily removed from his position as general secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party from April to December, 1947. His mentor Lazar Kaganovich was largely responsible for overseeing the retooling of Soviet tactics for suppressing opposition in West Ukraine.[108]

By 1948, the new policy was clearly taking its toll. In papers found after he was killed in a firefight with the MVD, the OUN rebel Ruslan wrote of the atmosphere of distrust that had developed in the Ukrainian underground as a result of increasing penetration by Soviet spies (seksoty): "The Bolsheviks try to take us from within, through agentura. And this is a horrifying and terrible method, [since] you can never know directly in whose hands you will find yourself. At every step you can expect [an enemy] agent. From such a network of spies,

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107. See the full typed transcript of the meeting in DALO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 90, ll. 1–98.
108. In the absence of concrete information, historians have generally accepted Khrushchev's own erroneous assertion that he was removed because of Stalin's resentment of his alleged pro-Ukrainian sympathies. In fact, Khrushchev's temporary fall from grace was clearly a repudiation of his policy of using mass terror to squeeze the underground. Three years of Khrushchev's management had not only left the leadership and main infrastructure of the Ukrainian rebel underground intact, but it had actually generated greater active support for anti-Soviet opposition among the local population. The new policy from 1947 would focus on clandestine surgical operations aimed directly against the rebel underground and consensus-building policies to win the sympathies of the general population. For a more detailed discussion, see the author's unpublished paper, "Khrushchev Remembers? New Evidence from West Ukraine." For a summary of the debate surrounding Khrushchev's temporary removal from office, see David R. Marples, *Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 82–96.

the work of whole teams is often penetrated. . . . Agentura has brought major losses to the [Ukrainian underground] organization."[109] In November 1948, the new tactics of the Soviet agentura campaign scored two great victories that marked a distinct turning point in Soviet pacification of the region: the 4 November annihilation of Fedir and three other rebels, the commanders of the most active and vital remaining OUN-UPA network in West Ukraine, which covered L'viv and Drohobych oblasti, along with parts of Stanislav and Ternopil. Of even greater impact for the rebel underground was the 10 November 1948 annihilation of Myron, the notorious chief of the underground's regional counterintelligence unit or SB.

Agentura sources reported that the secretary of Hrynevka village soviet in Bibrka raion, a Galician peasant named Tyshyshyn, was linked with the nationalist underground. Breaking Tyshyshyn with "special agentura-operative measures" (meaning torture), MVD interrogators forced him to reveal the bunker-hideout of five of his compatriots in the village. Among them was his son who, with four others, was annihilated in a Soviet raid by spetsgruppy on 10 November 1948.[110] A subsequent investigation revealed that the Soviets had finally managed to liquidate their arch nemesis in the L'viv region, one Myron, later identified to be Iaroslav A. Diakon, originally from Deviatnyky village, Drohobych.[111] According to the MGB report, Myron "was distinguished by [his] extraordinary cruelty and despotism, and did not hesitate to use the most vile methods of torture and killing . . . ,"[112] extreme and brutally violent methods used equally against Soviets as well as local ethnic Ukrainians suspected of collaboration. More than just ruthless, Myron was also the creative force behind the development of numerous rebel counterintelligence techniques that had proved so

109. DALO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 456, l. 190.
110. DALO, f. 3, op. 2s, d. 467, ll. 92–93. See also the top secret report of Grushetskii to Khrushchev, dated 27 November 1948, TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5047, ll. 5–9. Unfortunately, the cache of documents of this key agent of the Ukrainian nationalist underground's counterintelligence unit in L'viv, Drohobych, and Stanislav oblasti were destroyed when the rebels soaked the archive with phosphoric acid, thereby managing to burn or otherwise ruin nearly all of it.
111. See the summary in a War Crimes Trial investigative file of V. I. Lukasevych in DALO, f. R-239, op. 2, d. 8, ll. 1–45. Along with D'iakon, three other rebel fugitives were killed in the raid in 1948: Bohdan Prokof'iv (Stepan), Mykhailo Kovalyk (Stalevyi), and Vasyl' Sokhan' (Dovbach). There are numerous indications to suggest that Myron was the author of the primer mentioned at the start of this paper: "Agentura NKVD-NKGB v deistvii."
112. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5047, ll. 3–4.

successful in penetrating or liquidating Soviet assets throughout West Ukraine.[113]

In response to the devastating news of Myron and Fedir's capture and executions, the OUN fought off the potentially grave demoralization of such a deep loss by disseminating the rumor that these two key leaders had not in fact been killed, but instead had managed to escape to the Carpathian mountains, where they were continuing their active resistance work.[114] The photographic and pathology evidence preserved in the archives of the spetsgruppy confirm a different story.

The Repudiation of Violence

After years of pressuring oblast and raion authorities in Ukraine's seven western provinces to carry out wholesale atrocities against the local population, in 1948 Soviet central authorities began the systematic purge of local officials for their use of "vicious methods" and chronic mistreatment of peasants in mass political work. Local officials were blamed for the excesses of Soviet power throughout the region during the postwar years. New policies of consensus-building and a softer, kinder face of Soviet authority were won by publicly excoriating local officials for their abuses. This campaign corresponded with a series of highly publicized show trials, which dramatically demonized the Ukrainian nationalist underground.

Although the war between Soviet power and the Ukrainian rebel underground would continue actively well into the 1950s, the situation had more or less stabilized in most regions of West Ukraine by the end of 1948. Already by the end of July 1948, strong signals were being sent from Kiev and Moscow that the era in which Soviet power made a virtue of the use of excessive force in West Ukraine was coming to a close. The time for war was over, and the call for active cadre building had begun. In stark contrast to Khrushchev's personal berating of raion officials for an insufficient use of violence back in 1945, a strongly

113. Myron's biography offers fascinating insight into the making of a chief officer of Ukrainian rebel counterintelligence. Born a peasant in 1912 in village Deviatniki, Novi-Strilyshcha raion, Drohobych oblast, he worked until 1941 as a teacher in the nearby village of Iushkivtsi. In 1941, he was appointed burgomaster or chief magistrate of Bibrka raion in L'viv oblast, and later became chief of police of Bibrka until the end of the German occupation. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5047, ll. 3–4. As Bibrka's chief of police, Diakon oversaw, in April 1943, a brutal annihilation of local Jews carried out by a combined unit of German soldiers and Ukrainian nationalists. DALO, f. 3, op. 2s, d. 467, l. 94.
114. DALO, f. 3, op. 2s, d. 467, ll. 92–93.

worded statement of 24 July 1948 rejected the use of "vicious methods" and the chronic mistreatment of peasants in mass political work. The leadership in Sokal' raion were specifically rebuked for their ". . . violation of the principle of voluntariness in the organization of collective farms, for substituting mass political work with naked use of orders and decrees, for intimidation, harsh treatment and an incorrect approach to the poor and middle strata of the [West Ukrainian] peasantry."[115]

Soon after, on 10 September 1948, a woman typist in a local office of the MGB submitted a nineteen-page denunciation of MGB abuses against the local West Ukrainian population (under the cover of the "struggle against banditry"). This led to the arrest and imprisonment of an oblast procurator and his staff. The allegations—later proven—included use of excessive force, illegal murders, extortion, and embezzlement.[116]

In a top secret memorandum to Khrushchev dated 15 February 1949, Procurator of the Soviet Military Tribunal in Ukraine Koshars'kyi spelled out the new official policy with unequivocal clarity. Under the heading "Facts Surrounding the Blatant Violations of Soviet Law by the Spetsgruppy of the MGB," Koshars'kyi condemned the systematic abuse of ethnic Ukrainians at the hands of members of the State Security's black-ops teams:

> . . . . 4. On the night of 23 June 1948 the same spetsgruppa from Podvysots'ke village abducted in the forest a young woman Repnytska Nina Iakovlevna, born in 1931.
>
> In the forest Repnytska was subjected to tortures.
>
> While interrogating Repnytska, members of the spetsgruppa beat her severely, hung her upside down by her legs, forced a stick into her genitalia, and then one-by-one raped her.
>
> In a helpless condition, Repnytska was abandoned in the forest, where her husband found her and took her to the hospital, where Repnytska spent an extended period recovering.
>
> *From the examples presented above, it is evident that the actions of these so-called* spetsgruppy *of the MGB have a starkly banditlike, anti-Soviet character and—it stands to reason—that they cannot be justified by any operational considerations.*
>
> *Operating on the grounds of insufficient information, these so-called* spetsgruppy *of the MGB act blindly, as a result of which the victims of their*

115. DALO, f. 3, op. 2s, d. 467, ll. 43–45. In contrast, see the transcripts of Khrushchev's meeting in May 1945 with NKVD and Party regional chiefs where he repeatedly called for an escalation of the use of violence. DALO, f. 3, op. 1, d. 196, ll. 1–73.
116. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 23, d. 5174, ll. 86–104.

arbitrariness frequently are persons with no connection at all to the Ukrainian rebel nationalist underground.

Equally with this, it is necessary to point out that this method of work of the organs of the MGB is well known to the OUN underground, which has warned and continues to warn its members.[117]

By the end of 1948, Soviet tactics for pacifying West Ukraine had moved from mass terror and intimidation to mass propaganda and education. The use of violence, arrest, intimidation, and threats would continue, but the wholesale slaughter of the immediate postwar years was repudiated.

117. Emphasis added. TsDAHO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 68, ll. 10–17. I am grateful to Iurii I. Shapoval for bringing this extraordinary document to my attention. The full Russian text appears in his *Liudyna i systema (Shtrykhy do portretu totalitarnoi doby v Ukraini)* (Kiev: 1994), 52–61. The account, and numerous others like it, suggests that Norman Naimark was hasty in his fascinating study of rape perpetrated by the Red Army during the postwar years of occupation, concluding that "in general, ... Slavic women . . . were not subject to the same depredations by Soviets as non-Slavs— Germans and Hungarians." Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 107; see also Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge: The Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans, 1944–1950* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 34–63.