

The OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) is an organization of anti-Communist Ukrainian nationalists who strongly favor self-determination for the Ukrainian people. The OUN was founded in Prague in 1928 as an illegal secret group fighting for Ukrainian freedom under the leadership of Colonel Evhen KONOVALETS. Most of the members of the group are Galician Ukrainians who were Polish subjects from 1920 to 1939. The Ukrainians accused the Poles of treating them as an inferior people, denying them cultural autonomy, curtailing their chances for professional advantages and persecuting them for opposing in any way the complete Polonization of ethnically Ukrainian territory. The Poles erroneously believed that the Galician Ukrainians represented a disloyal Soviet fifth column in their midst. In actual fact, the Galician Ukrainians were in violent opposition to communism and wanted above all else to be part of a liberated, non-Russian Ukrainian state.

The OUN functioned until 1938 with such occasional difficulties as the revelation of the OUN archives to the Czech police in Prague in 1932 and the BANDERA affair of 1934. In 1932, Stefan BANDERA became commander of the OUN for Western Ukraine and Poland. In 1934, he and Mikola LEBED planned and organized the assassination of PIERACKY, the Polish Minister of the Interior, accused by the Ukrainians of anti-Ukrainian acts. Although the real assassin, a Ukrainian worker, escaped, the Polish police arrested a number of Ukrainians, including BANDERA, LEBED and Yaroslav STETSKO. Many were condemned to death, but the sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. All escaped during the first disorders of the German invasion in 1939. Meanwhile, in 1938 Colonel KONOVALETS was murdered by Soviet agents in Rotterdam. The OUN began to go to pieces. According to KONOVALETS' will, his leadership passed to Colonel Andrey MELNIK. The latter, however, was not sufficiently strong to hold the group together, and in 1940 a dissident faction which had formed around BANDERA forced MELNIK to abdicate in BANDERA's favor. For some time the OUN was composed of two factions, both claiming the name. The original OUN continued under MELNIK and was referred to as OUN-MELNIK or the MELNIK group; it held only about 20 percent of the membership. The dissident group under BANDERA, comprising about 80 percent of the organization, was called OUN-BANDERA or the BANDERA group.

Meanwhile, after 1928 persecution of the 40 million Ukrainians within the Soviet Union began in dead earnest. After the rebirth of Ukrainian nationalism in the early part of this century, the Russians treated the Ukrainians as a disloyal group, ready to use every opportunity to free itself from Russian domination, and in this their belief was justified. Polish and Russian anti-Ukrainian policies only served to strengthen the national consciousness of the Ukraine. Realizing that the aspiration for national independence was uppermost in the minds of a majority of Ukrainians, the Third Reich promised at the beginning of World War II that the Ukrainians would be freed from Soviet domination and could found a Ukrainian state. This promise accounts for the welcome the Germans received initially when they arrived on Ukrainian territory. The German promise also accounts in part for the tremendous number of Ukrainian deserters from the Red Army during the early stages of the war.

In 1941, the OUN, which had resembled a secret fraternity of revolutionaries from its birth in 1929, came out in the open, seized the radio station in Lvov and announced the creation of a free Ukrainian state. The Germans, who had promised independence for tactical reasons, immediately arrested

the perpetrators of the Lvov broadcast, including Stefan BANDERA, Yaroslav STETSKO, Stefan LENKAVSKY and several other OUN leaders, who spent the next three years in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In simple terms, the Germans wanted from the Ukrainians only food and supplies for their armies and forced labor for their factories, although it should be pointed out that opinions, particularly between the army and the party, differed sharply on treatment of Ukrainians. The army, which desired the genuine cooperation of the Ukrainians and was willing to allow the formation of a Ukrainian state, was quickly overruled by the party and the SS. The Germans used all means necessary to force the cooperation which the Ukrainians were largely unwilling to give. By summer 1941 a battle raged on Ukrainian soil between two ruthless exploiters and persecutors of the Ukrainian people, the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. The OUN and the partisan army created in late 1942, the UPA, fought bitterly against both the Germans and the Soviets and most of their respective allies. The OUN extended its activity even into the populous areas of the far Eastern Ukraine, where nationalism had been under terrific pressure since World War I.

By the end of World War II many members of the OUN had fled to Western Europe to avoid capture by the advancing Soviets. The OUN reformed in Western Europe with its headquarters in Munich. It first came to the attention of the American authorities when the Soviets demanded extradition of BANDERA and many other anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalists as war criminals. The attempt to locate these anti-Soviet Ukrainians was sabotaged by far-sighted persons who warned the refugees to go into hiding. From 1945 to 1948 members of the OUN and of the UPA arrived from the Soviet Ukraine on foot. The messages they and returning German prisoners of war brought, conclusively confirmed that the OUN and the UPA were continuing to fight against the Soviets with the weapons and ammunition which the retreating German armies had left behind. Over 35,000 members of the Soviet secret police system (MVD-MGB) were killed by the OUN-UPA after World War II.

The relationship of the OUN/BANDERA in the emigration to the OUN in the homeland is complicated. The three principal leaders of OUN/BANDERA had not been in the Ukraine since 1941. A decade of evolution in the Ukraine rendered the ideology and principles of the organization of these emigres ten years out of date. In July 1944 in a forest in the Carpathian mountains between Lvov and the former Hungarian border, the UHVR (Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council) was formed, chiefly by OUN members of the BANDERA—as opposed to MELNIK—faction. At the same time an executive organ for the movement was created, called the General Secretariat. The UHVR was based on democratic principles and acted as a provisional national assembly for the Ukraine, composed of elements of all the various parties, including the Eastern Ukrainians. The organization of the UHVR and its affiliated groups was rather complicated, with considerable overlapping of personnel. UHVR, as the Provisional National Assembly, formed the General Secretariat. This, in turn, formed a combination executive arm and war cabinet known as Referat-33. Co-existent with Referat-33 under the General Secretariat and thus under UHVR were two other administrative divisions of the Ukrainian forces which were regarded as autonomous—UPA, the formal army of UHVR and SB, the security service of OUN-BANDERA, which operated under UHVR control.

Thus the UHVR appeared to be the controlling factor, but UPA, nominally under it, was an affiliate rather than a subordinate organization, and the SB, which was definitely under it, was actually a subsidiary of a political group which was related to but not identical with the UHVR. In effect, the UHVR, which controlled all these organizations externally, was itself controlled largely by OUN-BANDERA (in the homeland, not abroad). The situation was not so paradoxical as it seemed, because many of the offices in all the organizations involved were held by a few OUN-BANDERA personnel who were really the heads of the entire network.

In August 1944, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UHVR, Mikola LEBED, together with others, was ordered to take refuge in Western Europe. This group was instructed to make contact with the Western Allies and to call world attention to the Ukrainian struggle for national self-determination. The group became the Foreign Representation of the UHVR or ZP/UHVR. Most of its members are now either in New York or Munich. LEBED himself maintains headquarters in New York City.

A struggle between the OUN-BANDERA abroad, headed by BANDERA himself, and the ZP/UHVR started in 1947 and reached its first climax in 1948, when the representatives of the UHVR were summarily expelled from the BANDERA emigre OUN group, which assumed for itself exclusive authority, but only to act as the major voice of the Ukrainian resistance movement, but also to direct the movement in the homeland along ideological and military lines dictated by Stefan BANDERA. Partisan couriers who arrived from the Western Ukrainian headquarters of General Taras CHUPRINKA in late 1948 revealed that the homeland leadership had no indication that a serious split, beneficial only to the Bolsheviks, had taken place in the emigration. Interrogation of these and other members of the underground who arrived in Western Europe at a later date in general confirmed the contention that the thinking of Stefan BANDERA and his immediate emigre supporters in the emigration had become radically outmoded in the Ukraine. Since BANDERA had not been in the Ukrainian SSR proper since the early 1930's and not even in Galicia since his arrest by the Germans in mid-1941, he was unable to participate in the evolution of the movement on home soil after 1941. During the period 1933 to mid-1941, when BANDERA was the supreme leader of the Ukrainian nationalist movement based in Southeastern Poland, leading Galician nationalists of the period considered it proper that the Greek Catholic (Uniat) Church, which adheres to Rome, should become the official state religion of an independent Ukraine. Since neither the Uniat Church nor any Christian morality had universal acceptance in the Soviet Ukraine (as opposed to Galicia) the leaders in the Ukraine rapidly decided after 1945 that sponsorship of any particular religion would handicap rather than facilitate the growth of the movement among eastern Ukrainians. BANDERA's thinking on this point had not been as advanced as that of the homeland leadership. Until 1941 a mono-party government had been advocated by the Ukrainian underground. This and other attitudes were abandoned during the Second World War, although BANDERA and several of his emigre followers disapproved of such changes in ideology.

BANDERA and other emigres who still favored the pre-1943 tenets of the movement were at odds with the evolution in their homeland on yet two other important ideological issues. When BANDERA led the movement in Southeastern Poland only ardently idealistic Ukrainian patriots were accepted into the movement. Materialists or persons with Marxist leanings were considered undesirable. During the Second World War this tenet was discarded as extremely unworkable in the Eastern Ukraine. BANDERA still believed in the correctness of the pre-1943 position on this point. BANDERA also adhered to the doctrine that the movement should combat by all available means every Soviet-Russian innovation or institution in the Ukraine. In 1950 the homeland leaders pointed out that, among other things, kindergartens, sanatoriums and schools were Soviet-Russian innovations and that it would be ridiculous for the movement to combat what the population found desirable.

It is clear from original documents from the Ukraine that the attempts of BANDERA to direct the movement from abroad irritated the leaders in the homeland. It is also reasonably clear that the members of the ZP/UHVR who were sent west in August 1944 as ambassadors of the movement were considered to be just that, and as such, they demanded BANDERA's allegiance.

In April 1953 the UHVR in the homeland sent word of diversionary activity being conducted in the Ukraine by Miron MATVIYEVYKO, a BANDERA lieutenant sent back into the Ukraine by BANDERA in 1951. In July of 1953 the UHVR leadership transmitted its stand on the ZP/UHVR mandate, its judgment on BANDERA's departure from the homeland position and its expectation that BANDERA would cease his schismatic activity and call MATVIYEVYKO to order. After at first agreeing to comply with the homeland instructions, BANDERA balked and the OUN abroad disintegrated into a new split, with supporters of BANDERA on one side and supporters of the homeland UHVR and its representatives in the West, the ZP/UHVR, on the other. This has remained the pattern to the present, although by 1953 the OUN and UPA in the Ukraine were quite effectively destroyed.