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**Valentyna DOBROCHYNSKA**

*PhD (History), Associate Professor of the Department of History of Ukraine of Rivne State University of Humanities, 12 Bandera Street, Rivne, Ukraine, postal code 33028 (dobrochynskav@gmail.com)*

**ORCID:** 0000-0002-6625-5108

**Oleg LENARTOVYCH**

*PhD hab. (History), Professor of the Department of History of Ukraine and Archaeology, Faculty of History, Political Science and National Security, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, 13 Voli Street, Lutsk, Ukraine, postal code 43025 (oleg.lenartovich@gmail.com)*

**ORCID:** 0000-003-2761-3803

**Валентина ДОБРОЧИНСЬКА**

*кандидатка історичних наук, доцентка кафедри історії України Рівненського державного гуманітарного університету, вул. С. Бандери, 12, м. Рівне, Україна, індекс 33028 (dobrochynskav@gmail.com)*

**Олег ЛЕНАРТОВИЧ**

*доктор історичних наук, професор кафедри історії України та археології, факультету історії, політології та національної безпеки Волинського національного університету імені Лесі Українки, вул. Волі, 13, м. Луцьк, Україна, індекс 43025 (oleg.lenartovich@gmail.com)*

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**PERSONALITY OF YURIY KOSACH IN THE UKRAINIAN  
NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research is to study Yu. Kosach's influence on the social and political processes in Volyn Voivodeship, which were connected with the organizational formation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1920 – 1930, reconstruction of the image of Yu. Kosach as the founder of the nationalist underground organizational network in Volyn, the study of his political views evolution. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of objectivity, historicism, systematicity, scientificity. The following methods have been used: comparative, statistical, synchronous, diachronic and comparative analysis. The scientific novelty is that the author managed to reconstruct the image of Yu. Kosach as an active participant in the National Liberation Movement, a leader and founder of the OUN organizational network in Volyn for the first time; there has been analysed the personal composition of the OUN small groups: the first threes and fives in Kovel region; information on birth date and reasons for forced emigration have been clarified. The Conclusion.* Yu. Kosach was born into the renowned Drahomanov-Kosach family, he developed as a creative and charismatic person. After graduating from the first Józef Pilsudski Gymnasium in Lviv in

1928 successfully, he entered the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw. While studying at the University he began to support the idea of the Ukrainian state revival actively. Due to an active communication with D. Dontsov, A. Livytsky, B. Kravtsiv and other participants of the National Liberation Movement, Yu. Kosach was convinced that there was a drastic need to prepare and implement the national revolution. The ideology of the Ukrainian integral nationalism could be traced clearly in the work, written by Yu. Kosach. He tried to implement his own political views into practice by creating the first OUN headquarters in Volyn. Owing to his efforts, the first nationalist underground network was established in Kovel, and later on, in the territory of Volyn Voivodeship Yu. Kosach was persecuted by the Polish police, which forced him to emigrate in 1933. In the future, he didn't have a direct connection with the nationalist underground, but Volyn leadership that he founded increased in number and took an active part in the National Liberation Movement.

**Key words:** nationalism, National Liberation Movement, underground, Volyn, police, emigration.

## ПОСТАТЬ ЮРІЯ КОСАЧА В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ НАЦІОНАЛЬНО-ВИЗВОЛЬНОМУ РУСІ

**Анотація.** Метою роботи є дослідження впливу Юрія Косача на суспільно-політичні процеси у Волинському воєводстві, що пов'язані з організаційним становленням Організації українських націоналістів (ОУН) у період 1920 – 1930 рр., реконструкція образу Ю. Косача як засновника організаційної мережі націоналістичного підпілля на Волині, дослідження еволюції його політичних поглядів. **Методологію** складають принципи об'єктивності, історизму, системності, науковості. Застосовано біографічний, статистичний, синхронний, діахронний та метод порівняльного аналізу. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що автором реконструйовано образ Ю. Косача як активного учасника національно-визвольного руху, провідника і засновника організаційної мережі ОУН на Волині; відтворено персональний склад першої трійки і н'ятірки ОУН на Ковельщині; уточнено інформацію про дату народження та причини вимушеної еміграції. **Висновки.** Народжений у відомій сім'ї Драгоманових-Косачів, Ю. Косач сформувався як творча і харизматична особистість. Після успішного закінчення навчання 1928 р. у першій Львівській гімназії імені Юзефа Пілсудського, вступив на правничий факультет Варшавського університету. У студентські роки активно підтримував ідею відродження Української держави. Активне спілкування з Дмитром Донцовим, Андрієм Лівіцьким, Богданом Кравцівим та іншими учасниками національно-визвольного руху переконали його в необхідності підготовки та реалізації національної революції. Ідеологія українського інтегрального націоналізму яскраво прослідковується у творчості Ю. Косача цього періоду. Реалізувати на практиці власні політичні погляди він намагався через організацію перших осередків ОУН на Волині. Завдяки його зусиллям було створено першу націоналістичну підпільну мережу у м. Ковель, а згодом і на території Волинського воєводства. Переслідування з боку польської поліції змусили його у 1933 р. емігрувати. В подальшому він не мав прямого стосунку до націоналістичного підпілля, але започаткований ним волинський провід збільшувався чисельно, брав активну участь у національно-визвольній боротьбі.

**Ключові слова:** націоналізм, національно-визвольний рух, підпілля, Волинь, поліція, еміграція.

**The Problem Statement.** The study of the National Liberation Movement requires elucidation of such aspects as the formation of ideology, organizational formation, an attempt to implement a political doctrine and consequences to which this struggle led. The study on the charismatic leaders' personalities, who not only headed parties or their branches, but also had influence on the social and political processes, built tactics and strategies of the struggle, and determined its ultimate goal remains a crucial aspect. During the period of 1921 – 1939, Galicia became the leader in the spread of radical nationalist ideas, where the right-wing parties were active, among which the OUN, which personified the National Liberation struggle of the 1930s – at the beginning of 1950s, should be singled out. The Liberation Movement had regional features in Volyn, among which personalities, who played the role

of local leaders of the OUN, structured this movement and were its spokesmen. The figure of Yu. Kosach stands out among such leaders, who came from the glorious Drahomanov-Kosach family, a son of Lesia Ukrainka's younger brother Mykola. The family environment, upbringing in a creative atmosphere set Yu. Kosach a difficult task to meet high criteria of the family, to find his own place as a representative of the Ukrainian cultural or political elite. He grew up as a gifted, multifaceted personality. The majority of people accept him as a writer, literary critic, publicist or artist. Therefore, philologists and culturologists dominate among the researchers of his figure, and as a result, the majority of scientific studies focus on the analysis of his creative work. The activity of Yu. Kosach as a politician is little known and is limited to a few theses about involvement in the Ukrainian military organization and persecution by the Polish government agencies. The following research is done in order to fill a gap in Yu. Kosach's biography and correct some inaccuracies that are spread in the publications of both Ukrainian and foreign scholars.

**The Analysis of Publications and Recent Research.** The person of Yu. Kosach stirs up the interest of both Ukrainian and foreign researchers. First of all, it is connected with his creative activity and belonging to the family of the Ukrainian luminaries, the classics of national literature – the Drahomanov-Kosach family. The vast majority of scholars were Philologists, who studied the biographical pages and creativity, and, therefore, focused on the writer's periodization, historical prose, poetry collections, and characterized him as a personality mostly. They were the following scholars: V. Aheieva (Aheieva, 2018), M. Hnizdytska (Hnizdytska, 2018), Lviv researchers I. Denysiuk, T. Skrypka (Denysiuk & Skrypka, 1999), S. Romanov from Lutsk (Romanov, 2009). The political activity of Yu. Kosach was only stated in their research papers and highlighted through the prism of the content load of the works. Certain aspects of the current issue were highlighted in the work, written by S. Hupalo (Hupalo, 12 July 2002). S. Hupalo focused on separate issues – Kovel underground and Yu. Kosach's trials. The works, written by O. Kalishchuk (Kalishchuk, 2019; 2020), Ya. Bruskyi (Bruskyi, 2020), Y. Kramar та A. Shvab (Kramar & Shvab, 2020) deal with the study of the socio-political situation on the territory of Volyn and its influence on the Polish-Ukrainian relations, activation of the National Liberation Movement during the interwar period. Hence, the above-mentioned studies are relevant and are designed to correct inaccuracies in the biography and highlight unknown pages of Yu. Kosach's biography through the prism of the history of Volyn during the interwar period.

**The Purpose of the Research.** The main purpose of this research is the study of the Ukrainian National Liberation Movement, the peculiarities of its spread in Volyn in the 1920s and 1930s, and reconstruction of Yu. Kosach's image of as the founder of the of the nationalist underground organizational network.

**The Results of the Research.** Yu. Kosach was born on December 5, 1908 in the village of Kolodiazhne of Volyn hubenia (province) of the Russian Empire, as it was evidenced by the entries in the metric book of this village parish, which are kept in the State Archives of Volyn region. He was given the name Heorhiy at baptism. Yu. Kosach travelled a lot in his childhood. The family lived in Chernihiv region, Poltava region and Zhytomyr region until they returned to the village of Kolodiazhne after his father inherited the family estate. In 1918, he went to study at Józef Pilsudskyi first Lviv academic gymnasium, which he finished in 1928 successfully (Romanov, 2009, pp. 29–42). Getting into the atmosphere of politically active Galicia, where the ideas of the Ukrainian state sovereignty and resistance to the Polish policy of assimilation were widely spreading, Yu. Kosach became interested in

the rights violation of the national minorities in Poland and chose the profession of a lawyer. During this time, his civic position was formed – the desire to join the process of the National Liberation of Ukraine and the motives of a creative personality were observed. In 1927, Yu. Kosach's poems were first published in Lutsk magazine the "The Ukrainska Hromada" ("The Ukrainian Community") (Aheieva, 18 October 2018). A period of a constant search of self-affirmation, philosophical reflections on the role, place and duty of a Ukrainian writer began in his life (Hnizdytska, 2018, pp. 47–57).

After entering the Faculty of Law of Warsaw University in 1928, Yu. Kosach got into the environment of politically engaged Ukrainian youth, some of whom professed radical ideas of the Ukrainian nationalism. He got acquainted with Bohdan Kravtsiv, who was a member of the regional executive of the OUN (established in 1929), Andriy Livytskyi – the future President of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile, began an active cooperation with the magazine "The Literature and Scientific Bulletin", which was published in Lviv under the editorship of Dmytro Dontsov, a renowned ideologue of the Ukrainian radical nationalism. There were also left radicals among Yu. Kosach's circle of communication, in particular Olha Bachynska, who tried to convince him to join the support of the communist ideology and persuaded him that the socialist revolution in the western Ukrainian lands had no alternative. Although, at that time Yu. Kosach's choice was in favour of the right-wing radicals, in the future he vacillated between this choice, for which he was isolated by the political Ukrainian emigration, which could not forgive him for his Sovietophile views (State Archives of Volyn Region, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1326, p. 22).

The choice in favour of the nationalist movement could be confirmed by Yu. Kosach's participation in the student organization "The Party of the Ukrainian State Nationalists" in 1928, later in the more radical organization "The Chornomorti", for which he developed the "Plan for the Development of the Nationalist Movement in Volyn". The Ukrainian researcher Serhii Hupalo stated that the text of the above-mentioned document was prepared by Yu. Kosach on the personal instructions of A. Livytskyi (Hupalo, July 12, 2002). Mostly, Volyn remained apolitical during World War I and the Ukrainian revolution. The emergence of the first Ukrainian schools and the national patriotic education of the population were connected with the activities of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, later on, the veterans of the liberation struggle (Kalishchuk, 2020, pp. 101–111; Vasianovych & Lozynskyi, 2019, pp. 94–103). The attempts made by the Polish authorities to implement their own political programme and create a single-national state were opposed by the local population. Radical ideas gained popularity (Bruskyi, 2020, pp. 22–37). At the beginning of the 1920s, the Sovietophilism dominated in Volyn due to the active propaganda and subversive activities of the Soviet special services (Kramar & Shvab, 2020, pp. 163–175).

Eventually, the OUN had a decisive influence on Yu. Kosach's political choice. Yu. Kosach kept in touch with Lviv Regional Executive owing to the above-mentioned B. Kravtsiv. Illegal propagandistic literature and instructions for organizing the nationalist underground came from Galicia. In the end, after becoming a member of the OUN, he was ordered to establish the organization's branches in Volyn. The implementation of this task required a thorough plan and keeping to a strict conspiracy. Yu. Kosach came to the conclusion that, first of all, it was vital to create a literary society in the village of Kolodiazhne in his family home, while he was pondering over where to start. It was planned to involve old friends, who could be trusted in order to establish the literary society. Yu. Kosach planned to promote the idea of the need for a national liberation struggle among the former classmates and patriotic youth

carefully as he acknowledged the danger of exposure by the Polish police and the possibility of betrayal. First and foremost, Yu. Kosach planned to put on patriotic plays, provoke conversations about the drastic need to revive the Ukrainian state, observe the reaction, and only then offer the nationalist literature for reading. The final stage was the formation of the basic small groups of the OUN: threes (tryky) and fives (piatirky). The above-mentioned plan was approved by Lviv Regional Executive of the OUN and began to be implemented in 1930 (Lenartovych, 2011, pp. 84–85).

When Yu. Kosach came back home for the holidays after the end of the academic semester, in the village of Kolodiazhne he created the theatre troupe and put on stage several plays, the audience was the residents of surrounding villages and the town of Kovel. The troupe members consisted of 8 people, which corresponded to the number of the OUN members in the lower ranks (the so-called group of threes and fives). There were among them: Pavlo Vitruk, Illia Sydorskyi, Volodymyr Markevych, Myroslav Onishkevych, Zinovii Samchynskyi, Serhiy Samchynskyi, Illia Kunytsia, Mila Hilevska (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1826, p. 22).

Yu. Kosach supplied them with illegal literature, which he brought personally, mostly the magazine “The Surma”. Reading such literature became mandatory for the former members of the theatre troupe. In order to protect themselves from being exposed, they went to the Turiya River, got into boats, sailed from the shore and read the literature, discussing the received information and agreeing on the plans to join the nationalist underground. In case of danger, the prohibited literature was thrown overboard and they explained their own presence on the river as an ordinary entertainment.

One of the primary tasks of the OUN branch created in Kovel region was to supply and distribute the illegal literature to the territory of Volyn Voivodeship, which was in a kind of isolation from the rest of the Ukrainian territories as part of the Polish state, particularly Galicia. It was a consequence of the state assimilation policy implementation carried out by the Polish government and, directly, its representative in Volyn, H. Jozewski. One of its elements was the creation of such kind of “sanitary” or Sokal border. Everyone who went to Volyn had to go through the procedure of checking documents and inspecting personal belongings. It was forbidden to transport the Ukrainian-language literature, even fiction. Despite the security measures taken by the authorities, the Polish police stated that about 2,000 copies of the nationalist literature were getting into Volyn every month. Mostly, it was about the above-mentioned magazine “The Surma”. The local OUN underground took part in this work actively. In order to distribute it couriers and railway transport were used (the literature was hidden among building materials in Galicia, and in Volyn railway workers handed it over to the OUN members), horse-drawn carriages that secretly crossed the above-mentioned “sanitary” border (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1826, p. 44).

The need to distribute propaganda literature was connected with the process of the OUN organizational formation in Volyn. The main object of the nationalist propaganda was the youth, because it was the youth, who was supposed to become the basis of the combat units that would carry out the national revolution and revive the Ukrainian statehood. Due to Yu. Kosach’s efficient activities, the number of the OUN sympathizers grew rapidly. He communicated with them in person and encouraged the creation of lower ranks of the organization. After such meetings, the small groups and circles of the OUN with their leaders emerged in the village of Dovhopole of Dubenskyi povit (Leonid Berezovskyi), the town of Torchyn of Lutskyi povit (Yevhyniy and Oleksandr Novitskyi), the village of Bila Tserkva

of Kremianets povit (Yuriy Trofymchuk-Novytskyi), Kremianets town (Pavlo Kravetskyi), the village Derazhno of Rivne povit (Nil Khasevych), Pochaiv town of Kremianets povit (Oleksandr Sadovskiy), the village of Sedlyshche of Kovel povit (Serhiy Hrytsiuk) and the others (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1826, p. 22). Hence, owing to Yu. Kosach's efficient activities, the organizational structure of the OUN grew on the territory of Volyn.

In general, since the creation of the OUN in 1929, the Polish state security agencies and the police recorded an increase in violent actions against the Polish population. In 1931, the following crimes were registered: destruction of private and state property – 11 cases; terror against people – 10 cases (4 people killed, 2 injured, 3 people beaten, 1 arson); robbery – 8 cases (2 attacks on state authorities, 1 attack on the post office, 1 attack on a representative of the state administration, the rest – on ordinary citizens). The majority of those actions were recorded on the territory of Galicia (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 2003, p. 15). There was only one case, among them, which was related to Volyn. It was the arson of a bridge near the town of Ratne on November 11, 1931. Even nowadays, the local population calls this place, which is located at the entrance to the settlement from Kovel direction, the “burnt bridge”.

According to the documents of the district branch of the state police, this combat operation was carried out by Kovel branch of the OUN. The personal composition of the arson was mentioned above, organized by Yu. Kosach. It is known that in addition to the members of the organization, H. Lisnevych took part in the arson, who probably aspired to become a member of the organization, implementing a personal task-test performed by the applicants for the membership in the OUN. The report says that it was he, who set the fire, and the rest of the people helped him and provided security. It was their first combat training. In the future, the activity of the OUN increased in Volyn (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1826, p. 7).

The terrorist attacks and political actions of the OUN in the territory of the voivodeship began to spread massively. Volyn, which was considered to be apolitical and was chosen by the Polish authorities as a region for conducting political experiments, declared itself by activating the National Liberation Movement. If in 1931 there were only two cases of terrorist attacks recorded, then in 1932 – 16, and in 1933 – more than 100 (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1076, p. 26).

The Polish police linked this activity with the activities of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UMO), created in 1920 from the former soldiers of the UNR army and the Sich riflemen, who set the goal of reviving the Ukrainian state within its ethnic boundaries and practiced violence against the Polish authorities representatives. The police didn't have sufficient information about the OUN at that time, usually enrolled the right-wing radicals in the UMO, which had influence on the false information formation about the political activity of certain figures of the Ukrainian National Liberation Movement, in particular Yu. Kosach. It was also facilitated by the position of Yu. Kosach's defense in the person of his lawyer Samiylo Pidhirskyi after his arrest in February of 1931. In order to reduce the sentence, he stated that his client belonged to the non-existent, at that time, organization of the Ukrainian State Nationalists Party, which aimed at fighting against the Soviet authorities in the Dnieper Ukraine (Naddniprianshchyna). The defendant himself also confused the investigation in every possible way, trying to avoid punishment, in particular, he emphasized that he considered the Soviet government to be the enemy of the Ukrainian people, he was born in Kyiv and supported the Liberation Movement in the Dnieper Ukraine (Naddniprianshchyna), that he received offers to lead the nationalist movement in Volyn, but he refused. The efforts of the lawyer and the family were successful. After eight months of imprisonment, Yu. Kosach was released from Warsaw prison. There was mortgage of 500 zlotykh (Hupalo, 2002).

After being released from prison, Yu. Kosach found himself under constant police surveillance. The activation of the nationalist underground in 1932 and the expansion of its network within the voivodeship instigated the investigation to renew the criminal case. The reason for the next arrest was the denunciation of one of the members of the underground, Yevhen Dmytruk, who reported on the preparation of the terrorist attacks in Volyn and the supply of weapons from Lviv. This time, Yu. Kosach ended up in Lutsk prison. At the court proceeding on November 4, 1932, the prosecutor K. Skorupskyi accused him of belonging to the UMO and preparing an armed uprising. The sentence provided for a year in prison, but half a year was considered as time spent under investigation, and the rest of the term was subject to amnesty. Hence, Yu. Kosach was free again. The prosecutor, who was dissatisfied with the verdict, appealed to the Court of Appeal in Lublin. According to a new court decision in mid-1933, Yu. Kosach was sentenced to four years in prison and five years of deprivation of civil rights. The threat of a new arrest forced him to flee and emigrate. At first he stayed in Lviv, later he went to Prague and finally to France.

It should be mentioned that his departure did not end the national liberation struggle in Volyn. S. Hupalo wrote about the “end of Kovel underground”, but this is not true. V. Markevych took the place of the district leader of the OUN in Kovel povit. Under his leadership, the nationalist underground increased in numbers and took an active part in the political actions of the OUN, in particular, the “anti-school” (struggle for the Ukrainization of schools) and the others, which took place during the period of 1933 – 1934. The threat of arrest also prompted him to emigrate. On August 30, 1936, he went to France. Since 1935, Yevhen Supruniuk headed the OUN in Kovel povit (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 4678, p. 8).

Propaganda work became the primary task of the nationalist underground. Gradually, the OUN spread its influence on public, cultural and educational organizations in Volyn, in particular, “The Ukrainian Women’s Union”, “Osnova”, “Prosvita”, as well as the cooperatives – “Narodna Torhivlia”, “Dobrobut”, “Hospodar”, “Zlahoda”, etc. The priority task was to attract young people to the future struggle, therefore, the organization’s attention was focused on spreading its own influence on the youth military and sports organizations “Sokil”, “Luh”, “Plast” and creating its own organisation “Yunak”.

The active work of the OUN underground made it possible to create centres of the organization in every county of Volyn Voivodeship. On January 1, 1935, the structure of the OUN was the following: regional executives – 2 (in Lutsk and Rivne), district – 9 (in Dubno, Horokhiv, Kovel, Lutsk, Rivne, Volodymyr, Zdolbuniv), district – 8, circles – 34, fives – 22, threes – 67.

On January 1, 1935 the total number was about 932 people (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1825, p. 34). These were the underground people, who were found by the Polish police, so the number could be much bigger (SAVR, f. 46, d. 9, c. 1825, p. 34). The activity of the nationalist underground increased year by year, regardless of the mass arrests and the risk to one’s own life. The Volynians took an active part in the defense of the Carpathian Ukraine, where some died, the others were captured by the Polish border guards and were shot, the rest were forced to emigrate to Germany. Volyn leadership was weakened, organizational ties were severed. Ivan Skopiuk restored the organizational structure of the OUN in the region in 1939 (Adamowych, 2022, pp. 115–126; Pahiria, 2019, pp. 121–146).

**The Conclusion.** Therefore, despite the forced emigration of Yu. Kosach and several of his friends, who started the first OUN circles in Volyn, the nationalist underground, both in Kovel region and in the rest of the voivodeship, not only did not disappear, but became

much more powerful. In the future, Yu. Kosach had no direct relation to the development of the organizational structure or leadership of the OUN branches. Being an emigrant, he was engaged in creativity. In 1935, he received the prestigious prize of I. Franko Society of Writers and Journalists for the published works “The Sun in Chyhyryn” (a historical novel about the Decembrists) and the poetry collection “Cherleny”. He returned to Ukraine in 1943, to the Nazi-occupied Lviv for a short time, but in the end he was forced to emigrate again. He was a talented and creative person, who is treated ambiguously. An internal search prompted him to side with the right-wing radicals and then with the Sovietophiles. Therefore, criticism in his direction came from both sides. Someone considered him to be a genius writer, and someone considered him an “intellectual vagabond.” In any case, he played a crucial role in Ukrainian history and culture.

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