

# Ukrainian nationalists commemorate massacre of Yanova Dolina

Sonja Bach  
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On April 24 Ukrainian nationalists, mostly members of the fascist Right Sector and Svoboda party, commemorated the perpetrators of the massacre of Yanova Dolina.

Seventy-one years ago, 600 Poles were murdered by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) in what is now Bazaltovoye. The massacre marked the beginning of ethnic cleansing in what is now western Ukraine, where tens of thousands of Poles were killed within a few months. Today the political successor of the UPA celebrates this mass murder as one of the “greatest victories over the Polish- German occupation.”

From April 1943 until their defeat at the hands of the Red Army in late 1944, the UPA carried out numerous massacres of the Polish population in western Ukraine. Together with the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) led by Stepan Bandera, the UPA sought to exploit the retreat of the German army to increase its influence in the provinces of Volhynia (today the region around Lusk) and Eastern Galicia (today the region around Lviv). The aim was to create a bourgeois Ukrainian state, independent from both the Soviet Union and Poland.

The UPA served as a military executive organ of the OUN. It was founded in the spring of 1943 and recruited primarily from Nazi collaborators who were previously active in the SS. The leadership and organization of the massacre of the Poles fell to Dmytro Klyachivsky, the first commander of the UPA.

Klyachivsky's battle cry was, "We should undertake the great action of the liquidation of the Polish element. As the German armies withdraw, we should take advantage of this convenient moment for liquidating the entire male population from the age of 16 up to 60 years. We cannot lose this fight, and it is necessary at all costs to weaken Polish forces. Villages and

settlements situated next to the large forests should disappear from the face of the earth.” (Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Genocide and Rescue in Wolyn: Recollections of the Ukrainian Nationalist Ethnic Cleansing Campaign Against the Poles During World War II*, p. 180)

The UPA ultimately targeted the entire population for extermination. The massacres began in Yanova Dolina in Volhynia.

The village was constructed in the late 1920s for the workers of a nearby basalt quarry. The population grew rapidly after the opening of the quarry in 1929. In 1939 the population of Yanova Dolina totaled over 2,000 people, 97 percent of whom were Polish.

From 1921 to 1939 Volhynia was part of the Second Republic of Poland. After the invasion of the Red Army in 1939 the region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The massacre of Yanova Dolina took place on the night of April 22, 1943. UPA soldiers led by Ivan ?ytyw?czuk invaded the village and brutally murdered the remaining 600 Poles in the manner of the atrocities carried out by the Nazis. Then the assailants burnt the village to the ground. In the months following, between 40,000 and 60,000 Poles died at the hands of the UPA in Volhynia alone. In Eastern Galicia the total of victims was over 30,000.

Today, two memorials commemorate the massacre of Yanova Dolina. One is dedicated to the Polish victims, while the other boasts of the “blow for freedom struck by the UPA against the Polish-German occupation”. The latter was the scene of the celebration by Svoboda a week ago. This action speaks volumes about the character of the transitional government in Kiev. The regime came to power February 22 as the result of a coup d'état with the help of the paramilitary thugs of

the Right Sector and with the support of the West. Three ministries are occupied by leading members of Svoboda.

Both the Polish and German media have failed to report the memorial march for the mass murderers of 1943. Berlin works closely with the Kiev government and helped organize the coup in February. The same applies to Warsaw. Although almost all of the victims of the massacre were Poles the Polish government regards it politically inopportune to protest against the glorification of the killers.



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