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**Вікторія ВЛАСОВА**

аспірант, кафедра історії та археології Мелітопольський державний педагогічний університет ім. Б. Хмельницького, вул. Наукового містечка, 59, Запоріжжя, індекс 69017, Україна ([viktoria.bp8@gmail.com](mailto:viktoria.bp8@gmail.com))

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-2739>

ResearcherID: GWC-2279-2022

**Лариса ПОЛЯКОВА**

кандидат історичних наук, доцент, завідувач кафедри історії та археології, Мелітопольський державний університет ім. Б. Хмельницького, вул. Наукового містечка, 59, Запоріжжя, індекс 69017, Україна ([klioiist@ukr.net](mailto:klioiist@ukr.net))

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-2739>

ResearcherID: <http://www.researcherid.com/rid/V-5204-2017>

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**ПРОБЛЕМА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ ЖІНОК В ПЕРІОД УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ НА МАТЕРІАХ ПАМ'ЯТІ НАДІЇ СУРОВЦОВОЇ ТА СОФІЇ РУСОВОЇ**

*Анотація.* Проблема професійних досягнень жінок в умовах Української революції 1917–1921 рр. є малодослідженим аспектом української історичної науки. Вивчення цього питання

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дає повне розуміння того, чого саме жінки вже досягли на ниві державного будівництва, а що ще залишається невирішеним. **Мета дослідження** – за допомогою мемуарів дослідити момент, коли революція дала жінкам можливість не лише служити державі, а й розкрити свій потенціал на політичному полі. В основу методології дослідження покладено принципи історизму, науковості та об'єктивності, системності, використання просопографічного методу. **Наукова новизна** полягає в аналізі спогадів діячів часів Української революції з метою виявлення ступеня їх професійної реалізації в нових умовах. Вперше досліджено окремі фрагменти спогадів громадських діячів Софії Русової та Надії Суровцової. Вони розповідають про труднощі та нові випробування, з якими вперше зіткнулися ці жінки в революційних умовах. Враховується суб'єктивність мемуарів як історичного джерела. Вперше проаналізовано шлях кар'єрних досягнень цих публічних діячів та їхню власну реакцію на нові можливості, які надають нові соціальні умови. На основі спогадів Софії Русової та Надії Суровцової можна зробити деякі висновки щодо еволюції гендерної рівності в першій половині ХХ століття. **Висновки.** Українська революція дійсно дала багато нових можливостей для жінок. На шляху розбудови незалежної держави вони здобували освіту та підвищували кваліфікацію за фахом. Можна зробити висновок, що спогади Софії Русової та Надії Суровцової свідчать про один із перших етапів жіночої активності на політичному полі, який підготував ґрунт для майбутніх поколінь вольових жінок.

**Ключові слова:** Українська революція 1917–1921 рр., мемуари, гендерна рівність.

### **Viktoriia VLASOVA**

Postgraduate student, History and archeology department, Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Naukovogo mistechka str., 59, Zaporizhzhia, postal code 69017, Ukraine ([viktorija.bp8@gmail.com](mailto:viktorija.bp8@gmail.com))

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-2739>

**ResearcherID:** GWC-2279-2022

**Larisa POLIAKOVA**

*PhD (History), History and archeology department, Bogdan Khmelnitsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Naukovogo mistechka str., 59, Zaporizhzhia, postal code 69017, Ukraine (klioist@ukr.net)*

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-2739>

**ResearcherID:** <http://www.researcherid.com/rid/V-5204-2017>

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### **THE PROBLEM OF PROFESSIONAL REALIZATION OF WOMEN DURING THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION BASED ON THE MEMORY LANE OF NADIYA SUROVTSOVA AND SOFYA RUSOVA**

**Summary.** *The problem of women's professional achievements in the conditions of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917-1921 is an understudied aspect of Ukrainian historical science. The study of this issue gives us a full understanding of what exactly women have already achieved in the field of state building, and what still remains unresolved. The purpose of the research is to use memoirs to explore the moment, when the revolution gave women the opportunity not only to serve the state, but also to reveal their potential in the political field. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, scientificity, objectivity, systematicity and the use of the prosopographic method. The scientific novelty lies in the analysis of the memoirs of figures from the time of the Ukrainian revolution in order to identify the degree of their professional realization in the new conditions. For the first time, the authors researched some parts of the memoirs of such public figures as Sofia*

*Rusova and Nadia Surovtsova who narrate about the difficulties and new challenges that those women had to face in revolutionary conditions taking into account subjectivity of memoirs as a historical source. They also analyze the path of career achievements of these public figures and their own reaction to the new opportunities provided by the new social conditions. Based on the memoirs of Sofia Rusova and Nadia Surovtsova, we can make some conclusions about the evolution of gender equality in the first half of the twentieth century.***Conclusions.** *In fact, the Ukrainian revolution provided many new opportunities for women in fact. On the way to building an independent state, they got education and improved necessary skills in their profession. It can be concluded that the memories of Sofia Rusova and Nadiya Surovtsova indicate to one of the first stages of women's activism in the political field, which prepared the ground for future generations of strong-willed women.*

**Key words:** *Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1921, memoirs, gender equality.*

**Problem statement.** The Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1921 has brought fundamental changes to Ukrainian society. In many ways, it summed up the long path of national revival and established qualitatively new forms of social relations.

Undoubtedly, the attempt to create a full-fledged independent state affected the entire Ukrainian people. As you know, revolutions always mark new opportunities, undermine old established norms. And most importantly, they provide a previously inaccessible opportunity for many to take part in state processes and prove themselves. The Ukrainian Revolution was no exception, and was, among other things, a catalyst for the social activity of women, who now had the opportunity to expand the scope of their activities to political ones. The deep interest in gender equality issues in Ukrainian history is undoubtedly relevant, and is explained by the judgment that solving the problem of equality without regard to gender identity provides equal opportunities for the realization of women without obstacles in modern society.

**The analysis of sources and recent researches.** We chose memoirs of direct participants of those events, as well as their historical and journalistic works as sources of research. These are first of all the memories of public figures – Nadiya Surovtsova and Sofia Rusova.

Each of them in its own way successfully participated in this nationwide attempt to build an independent state (Rusova, 1937; Surovtsova, 1996).

The historiography of the topic is mostly biographical in nature. Research on the fate of female personalities in Ukrainian history is a fairly significant component of modern historiography. Among the studies carried out on the basis of the memoirs of prominent women participants of the Ukrainian revolution, one can single out the research of Natalia Polonska-Vasylenko, who in the scientific work «Outstanding Women of Ukraine» analyzes the biography of women elected to the Central Rada (Polonska-Vasylenko, 1969). Ukrainian ethnologist Valentyna Borysenko also dedicated her work to Ukrainian women in history, where in a separate section she examines the participation of women in the national struggle, using, among other things, the memoirs of participants in the events – in particular, Zinaida Mirna and Nadiya Surovtsova (Borysenko, 2004). However, quite a few studies focus on the issues of reflection by contemporary women of historical events, and on changes in their daily life and professional activities.

**The publication's purpose.** The purpose of the study is to trace the turning point when the Ukrainian Revolution began not only to unite the nation around the idea of statehood, but also became a field for women to achieve professional success and career growth, work for the benefit of their native country.

**Statement of the basic material.** We should start with the fact that in general, the revolution is the apogee of complex social, cultural and, ultimately, political processes. Their consequence is the emergence of a qualitatively new social and political structure, new values, behaviors and social relations. It is also a social cataclysm, but as a result of which the broad masses of the people, including women, could become part of the political struggle (Bevz, 2017). Women were delegated to the Central Rada and also were elected from various organizations and Ukrainian communities on an equal basis with men. First of all, this was due to the fact that the emancipation movement was inextricably linked with the liberation movement as a whole. Working together with men for the benefit of the state, the women simultaneously acquired their rights and asserted themselves (O.Ch., 1953).

In this study, we intend to determine what new things the Ukrainian Revolution gave to Ukrainian women, whether they received the rights and opportunities that they did not have until that moment and

if those events allowed them to be realized in an arena which was under the absolute control of men for a long time.

To do this, we can turn directly to the memoirs of our contemporaries. It should be noted that memoirs are a rather specific source. On the one hand, they provide an opportunity to learn many facts that are ignored or presented schematically in the official literature. Also, memoirs are an opportunity to view an event, sometimes from an unexpected angle. On the other hand, there is a problem of human memory, which can distort information, and the text itself is often an imprint of the author's worldview, character, which rejects the possibility of objectively looking at things. Thus, memoirs have their drawbacks and advantages (Synytskyi, 2006).

Taking this into account, we propose to consider the above-mentioned changes in the lives of women, using the example of Nadiya Surovtsova, who was a public figure, journalist, author of memoirs, some of which are devoted to her participation in the socio-political life in 1917–1921 (Surovtsova, 1996). Based on her notes, we are able to analyze in detail not only the milestones of her biography, but also draw conclusions about many aspects of state processes, as well as highlight what is necessary for a more detailed study. The fact is that being a woman herself, she pays additional attention to the situation of women, the reaction to the revolutionary events of this particular part of the population. This applies not only to her environment, which consisted of intellectual class, but also to all classes, including the peasantry. A good example is the one when Nadiya Surovtsova started working in the Zemstvo of Uman, in the city's self-government, and participated in propaganda events. Thus, speaking to the peasantry, Nadiya drew attention to the lack of education of women of that time, and sought to take that into account so that they would not be excommunicated from the revolutionary events of that time: *«We really wanted the resolutions of the villages to be set out in the Ukrainian language, not to mention that it was already simply more expedient, because that language was better understood, especially for women who did not have the opportunity to learn the Russian language from the army, like the men»* (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 65).

Even small things report changes that occur in the field of women's activities. For example, when Nadiya Surovtsova began to promote involvement in the Ukrainian Liberation Movement, and her

colleagues focused on the army, Nadiya was even allowed to enter the territory previously closed to women: «*Women were forbidden to enter the barracks, of course, but this is a revolution!*». Working as a nurse earlier allowed her to use her authority – thanks to her performance, the regiment, that were part of the Russian Army, ceased to hesitate and clearly chose to be the part of the Ukrainian Army (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 66).

Another platform where Nadiya was able to prove herself – the Uman district «Peasant Union» in which Surovtsova got a high position, noting that happened despite the fact that she was the only representative of the intellectual class, and the only woman among the candidates for the position. She was elected as the deputy head of the Peasant Union. «*I tried to object, but the candidacy was voted on, I was elected unanimously, and the hall also greeted me with a loud shout of «Glory!» I still remember that night, the presidium on the dais where we sat, and the dark hall of men. There were no women then*» (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 68). The author paid special attention to such things – after all, women undoubtedly received many new opportunities against the background of colossal social changes, but their presence at such events was rather an exception.

Subsequently, during the era of the Ukrainian Central Rada, Surovtsova first became a clerk in the general secretariat of internal affairs, and then Nadiya was offered the position of head of the General Department of the General Secretariat (Ministry) of international affairs. Her knowledge of several languages helped her, and she had many people under her command (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 75).

But in the society of that time, there was still a prejudiced attitude towards such professional successes of women, which was evidenced by the following. With the Hetman coup, at a meeting with Alfons von Mumm, a diplomat and ambassador of Germany in Ukraine, to his remark that a young lady was engaged in such tiring state affairs, Nadiya replied that *she «was not a young lady, but a government official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such a – then (rather high) class»* (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 79).

One cannot ignore the fact of Surovtsova's constant desire to improve her knowledge and obtain a new education. With the opening of courses at the Consular Academy, which only accepted people with a higher education, Surovtsova immediately took advantage of the

opportunity. According to her memoirs, there were only two women there, including her. Having successfully passed the exams, Nadiya had the right to hold diplomatic posts. «*For the women of that time, it was news... a lot of international law cases were done in our country, so to speak, by touch, and now I compared it with international norms, and I was happy that we are a «real state»*» (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 82). Taking on such matters makes Surovtsova not just a woman who uses the career opportunities provided by the revolution, but a full-fledged participant in the important state-building period of our country.

She did not ignore other women from the government, mentioning O. Lototska and S. Volska, and noting that including her, all three knew foreign languages. Thus, based on these data, it is possible to find additional information about the female part of the workforce that surrounded Nadiya. Many of them held administrative positions. For example, from her memoirs, we learn that S. Volska who worked as a referent in the Central Rada, was an active figure in the Ukrainian women's movement during the 20th and 30th of the twentieth century (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 84).

According to the Ukrainian National Republic's Directory, Surovtsova was abroad on a diplomatic mission. At the same time, Nadiya entered the University of Vienna in 1919 and became the first Ukrainian woman to receive a doctor of philosophy degree. Also, Nadiya Surovtsova joined the Women's Union, which included other public figures – Milena Rudnytska, Olena Zaliznyak. Together they engaged in propaganda of the Ukrainian issue abroad (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 105). Therefore, Nadiya's personal professional achievements were organically intertwined with her desire to be useful to her homeland. As we can see, the political field indeed became more accessible to Ukrainian women, and the creation of the state became a catalyst for constant professional self-improvement (Onishchenko, 2016).

In order to better understand the common and different possibilities of professional realization of a woman of that time, we suggest taking into account the experience of Nadiya Surovtsova's contemporary, Sofia Rusova. Sofia Rusova is one of eleven women in the first Parliament of the Central Rada (Onishchenko, 2016). The activist herself recalled this: «*I joined the members of the Central Council, and worked more in educational affairs*» (Rusova, 1937, p. 204). Subsequently, she was elected as the head of the Department of



preschool and extracurricular education in the government (Rusova, 1937, p. 205). She considered her activities beneficial for the state not only in the high-quality performance of professional duties. In her opinion, educational work should have served to solve national and political problems in favor of the same goal: the liberation of the people (Rusova, 1945, p. 13).

Sofia Rusova subsequently independently went beyond her professional activities, organizing a meeting under the leadership of the women's committee in Kamianets-Podilsky with the aim of organizing a public hospital for the Ukrainian military in 1920. Continuing to work under the leadership of the Bolshevik authorities, she participated in the teachers Congress organized by the Bolshevik school authorities in Kamianets-Podilsky, where she advocated the preservation of the National School (Rusova, 1945, p. 245).

From her personal memories, we can learn a rather revealing moment. Sofia Rusova recalled how in 1918, after the Hetmanate, representatives of the Ukrainian National Republic restored power again, and the city was prepared for the meeting of the Chief Otaman Symon Petliura. *«Of the women, there were only me and Ms. Zalevska, as a representative of the female students. I congratulated Petliura on behalf of women and said that although women cannot participate in the defense of their native land in the ranks of soldiers, they are wholeheartedly happy to work to reduce the physical suffering of the heroes. Petliura told me: «No, ladies, women can do something more. I remind you how you yourself caused a political coup with your sincere speech»»* (Rusova, 1945, p. 224). In this mention, we can observe both Rusova's desire to protect her homeland at the male level, and respect on the part of the Otaman. It should be noted that Sofia Rusova took part in the meeting of the Ukrainian National Union, an entity opposed to the Hetman's government.

So, we observe the multifaceted activity of Ukrainian woman as a full-fledged citizen who, in addition to everything else, had her own opinion on the political events that took place. She was able to choose the direction of development of her state that was more expedient in her opinion, and even made impact on the public with her speech.

In addition, writing about the meeting of the Ukrainian National Union, Sofia Rusova noted that *«there were not many of us, I was the only one of the women»* (Rusova, 1945, p. 212). A certain conclusion

can be drawn from this phrase, written as a statement of fact. It should be recalled that Nadiya Surovtsova often wrote similar things, so the absence of women at such events, or their minimal number, in fact caught the eye of the women present, who assessed their position as a unique one (Surovtsova, 1996, p. 68).

As you can understand from Rusova's memoirs and the assessment of her contemporaries, another of her successful fields of activity was making speeches. In particular, on September 20, 1917, she gave a speech at the opening of the first All – Ukrainian Congress «Prosvita» (next to M. Hrushevsky and S. Petliura), and later-at the Congress of the International Union of suffragists, where she drew the attention of women to the situation of women under the Bolshevik occupation (Sabadyn, 2010; Dzhus, 2016, p. 53).

On the international stage, Rusova noted, that with the coming to power of the Bolsheviks, the position of women, despite the Bolshevik promises, on the contrary, worsened. She noted that women mostly had no qualifications and performed hard, poorly paid work. Sofia Rusova emphasized that even in such conditions, Ukrainian women fought, on an equal basis with men, for the existence of their own state (Sabadyn, 2010).

Sofia Rusova actively enriched science with works devoted not only to pedagogy. It summarized the achievements of the Ukrainian women's movement in the collection (Rusova, 1945). Having analyzed the fate of women-forerunners of state events, Sofia Rusova added to this her own reflections on the role of women in the development of society.

*«But cultural life, which further required the extension of this appointment, imposed new duties on women, more diverse work: as a teacher, hostess, citizen. These three tasks challenged the woman outside the walls of her family home, and sometimes even outside the borders of her homeland. Gradually improving in those three tasks, a woman who grew up before our eyes is freed from age-old slavery, becomes economically independent, an independent worker; from an unconscious submissive slave to any political order of her homeland, Ukrainian woman became a citizen who consciously referred to the just and unfair order of people's life; she became an energetic fighter for the best fate of her people» (Rusova, 1945, p. 11).*

Sofia Rusova emphasized that women eventually won a place of Honor in the field of science, art, literature, but also showed themselves to be selfless political figures and became organizers of the social life of Ukraine (Rusova, 1945, p. 13).

She proved this by her own example. Another success in the professional field of Sofia Rusova in those days was the creation of county and provincial courses in pedagogy and Ukrainian Studies for teachers; the organization of Prosvit and kindergartens in cities and villages of Ukraine; Sofia was also vice-rector of the Froebel Institute during 1917–1918 (Dzhus, 2016, p. 51).

In her memoirs, Sofia Rusova emphasized the understanding that state work in complicated political conditions was difficult and new not only for women, but also for men. Given the lack of necessary political experience, lack of funds, the constant threat of a military invasion by the Bolsheviks, and the lack of a certain specialized education among many members of the government, success and achievements became even more valuable (Rusova, 1945, p. 219–220).

Summing up the success of this figure, it is appropriate to add the following opinion: «*The liberation of women was an act of feminism, as well as a natural manifestation of the political and human social revolution, which was the act of the liberation of serfs*» (Lyakhotska, 2009).

Thus, the achievements of women who participated in political processes at that time showed that they were full-fledged subjects of revolutionary events.

What do we observe in common in the memories of those women? Of course, as already mentioned above, this is something that everyone noticed - at many gatherings, only the author of the memoirs is present from the women's side, maybe a few more of her colleagues. It means that not everyone took advantage of the new opportunities, given the prejudices of society. Both Nadiya Surovtsova and Sofiya Rusova actually worked selflessly for the sake of building the state, sometimes even despite despair in the successful implementation of this attempt. Each of them constantly sought to improve their professional level, to obtain additional education, so that work for the benefit of their state was more effective and productive.

**Conclusions.** Indeed the Ukrainian revolution opened up many opportunities for women. They had the opportunity to participate in the

most important social and political process of that time – an attempt to build an independent state. Along the way, they got an education, were realized in their profession, influenced on society with their performances and works, demonstrated high-quality performance in work duties and in state-building tasks. With their initiative and self-sacrifice, they prepared the ground for the future generation of strong-willed women who manifested themselves in the socio-political field despite the further repressive policy of the Bolsheviks, and for those who were realized abroad, not forgetting their roots, and drawing attention to the situation of Ukraine. The Ukrainian revolution required a nationwide effort, and women quickly became part of this process. Despite some subjectivity of the memories of the participants of the events of that time, the analysis of the memoirs of public figures Nadia Surovtseva and Sofya Rusova gives us a chance to look at those events through the eyes of women, and to assess the difficulties they faced on their professional path. It also helps to comprehend how women of that time understood the importance of state-building processes, and what opportunities they saw for themselves in that national goal.

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