



## Olga Dudar


Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine


 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1715-480X>

 [o.dudar@kubg.edu.ua](mailto:o.dudar@kubg.edu.ua)

## Svitlana Savchenko

Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7123-9014>

 [s.savchenko@kubg.edu.ua](mailto:s.savchenko@kubg.edu.ua)

# THE YOUTH OF THE NADDNIPRY- ANSHCHYNA DURING THE REVOLUTION OF 1905–1907 (AS PER THE WRITTEN MATERIALS OF A. GRINCHENKO'S AND M. LIVYTSKA'S EGO-DOCUMENTS)

MŁODZIEŻ NADDNIEPRZAŃSKA W OKRESIE REWOLUCJI  
1905–1907 (WEDŁUG MATERIAŁÓW PISANYCH EGODOKUMENTÓW  
A. GRINCZENKI I M. LIWICKIEJ)

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**Abstract:**

Representatives of the younger generation have always been active participants in revolutionary events in Ukraine – both during the rule of the Russian Empire and during the period of Ukraine's independence. Ego-documents are documents that contain important details that characterize the activity, motivation, and characteristics of young people's activities: letters, diary entries, and memories. By comparing their content with the descriptions of important events of 1905–1907, it is possible to determine the peculiarities of the participation of young people in attempts to organize the population of certain regions for struggle, as was the case in the city of Lubny in the Poltava region. Written materials related to Anastasia Grinchenko's and Maria Livytska's public activities demonstrate the embodiment of revolutionary ideas in behavioral practices of the young generation of political figures of the Naddnipyryanshchyna region.

**Keywords:**

ego-documents, revolution 1905–1907, Lubny self-defense, youth

**Abstrakt:**

Przedstawiciele młodszego pokolenia zawsze byli aktywnymi uczestnikami wydarzeń rewolucyjnych na Ukrainie – zarówno w okresie rządów Imperium Rosyjskiego, jak i w okresie niepodległości Ukrainy. Egodokumenty to dokumenty, które zawierają ważne szczegóły charakteryzujące aktywność, motywację i charakterystykę działań młodych ludzi:

listy, wpisy do pamiętników, wspomnienia. Zestawiając ich treść z opisami ważnych wydarzeń z lat 1905–1907, można określić specyfikę udziału młodzieży w próbach zorganizowania do walki ludności niektórych regionów, jak to miało miejsce w mieście Łubnie w regionie Połtawskim. Materiały pisane dotyczące działalności publicznej Anastazji Grinchenko i Marii Liwickiej pokazują wcielenie idei rewolucyjnych w praktyki behawioralne młodego pokolenia działaczy politycznych regionu Naddnieprzańszczyzny.

**Słowa kluczowe:** egodokumenty, rewolucja 1905–1907, samoobrona Łubnego, młodzież

## Introduction

The issue of youth participation in political processes during important events in the history of Ukraine is studied by researchers of various fields: historians, political scientists, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists. This topic remains relevant in the first half of the 90s of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. In particular, it is connected with the active participation of the young generation in the Granite Revolution, the Orange Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity, and the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The period of the revolution of 1905–1907 is traditionally studied in the context of the development of the Ukrainian national movement, but the analysis of aspects of the participation of students and schoolchildren is almost not represented in monographs, mostly authors publish articles on certain narrow issues.

The number of publications that reveal the drama of the fate of young activists is gradually increasing, but they are mostly devoted to the negative consequences of Russia's imperial policy. For example, Marina Kruglyak analyzes in her publications the aggravation of students' spiritual crisis after the defeat of the revolution of 1905–1907, which led to an increase in suicides among young people; characterizes the life and material situation of young people (Kruhliak, 2015; Kruhliak, 2011). The authors also outline the regional specifics of the events of the first democratic revolution in the Russian Empire (Tokalenko, 2018). It is worth mentioning that most researchers characterize 1905–1907 as a period of severe trials. Jewish pogroms, spontaneous

peasant uprisings, terrorist acts, fights, and skirmishes with the police attested to such a level of public dissatisfaction with the political situation in the country that prompted all strata of the population to take decisive action.

Did young activists attempt to counteract the chaos of the revolutionary time? What was the experience of self-organization and cooperation with the local population? An example could be the public and partially publicized ego-documents of participants in the events of 1905–1907. The study of the correspondence between Anastasia Grinchenko, the daughter of famous public figures Boris and Maria Grinchenko, and her parents, is ongoing at Kyiv University named after Boris Grinchenko (Klimenko, 2013, p. 166). The recollections of another participant in the stormy events, Maria Livytska, clarify and supplement the materials of the Grinchenko family's ego-documents (Livitska, 1972). Maria was married to Andrii Livytsky (one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, and a famous politician during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921). The Livytskyi's couple and Anastasia Grinchenko are united by participation in the events surrounding the so-called "The Republic of Lubny", as well as by work in the public self-defense of Lubny (a town in the Poltava region).

In the research, the authors use the concept of "ego-documents", which was introduced in historiography by a Professor at the University of Amsterdam J. Presser in 1958. The researcher defined a special type of historical sources – documents of personal origin, namely: autobiographies, memoirs, letters, diaries, descriptions of travels, and other similar materials (Greyerz von

K, 2010, p. 277). Ego-documents were not often used in Ukrainian studies of the revolution of 1905–1907. Researcher Olga Kolyastruk notes that they are neglected in traditional historiography due to their subjectivity, they are offered as additional illustrative materials. However the history “from below” helps to form comprehensive ideas about a certain period of the past (Kolyastruk, 2008, p. 145). Exactly such sources make it possible to consciously understand the historical events that happened, to feel a special atmosphere, the so-called “spirit of the era” through the personal perception and attitude of a historical individual. Therefore, the authors of the article propose to use the method of ego-documents’ deconstruction for exploration of the period 1905–1907 and, based on them, reproduce the attempt of young people to organize revolutionary activities and a safe environment in Lubny.

It is worth noting that existing publications and ego-documents that have already been made public do not make it possible to create a clear chronological description of events, since publications of that time and available historical studies form only a general impression about the behavior practice of youth. Ego-documents demonstrate in a new way such details that characterize the participation of young people and their vision of the mission in the events of 1905–1907 in the Poltava Region.

## “The Republic of Lubny”

The revolutionary youth movement in the Russian Empire was studied in general by the American and Israeli researcher Anna Heifman. She cites the following data: children and youth under the age of 21 accounted for 22% of all SR terrorists (Geifman, 1993, p. 240). Behavioral practices characterized by extreme violence were very popular. These conclusions are supported by Sergey Busko, who studied the activities of youth in the Belarusian provinces and he notes that during

the revolutionary demonstrations of 1905–1907, the image of a student brandishing a revolver and shouting revolutionary slogans aroused the sympathy of ordinary people (Busko, 2019, p. 134). As for the situation in the Naddnipryanshchyna, there is a lack of comprehensive studies in modern historiography. The reason is the limited source base.

For example, the formation and activity of the “Shulyavska Republic” are characterized in the historical studies of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. In November 1905, the Kyiv City Council of Workers’ Deputies was forced to start illegal activities. Its participants chose the factory district of Shulyavka as their place of stay (hence the name – “Shulyavka Republic”). The center of the “republic” was the polytechnic institute and students and teachers massively supported the workers’ protests. The activities of the “Shulyavska Republic” were quickly crushed by the tsarist troops (Kyiv Polytechnic Institute: an outline of history, 1995, p. 102).

The situation was different in Lubny. During the revolutionary events of 1905, a coalition committee was created in the town with the participation of representatives of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party and other socialist parties. The newly created organization had a significant impact on the life of Lubny and its surroundings in 1905–1907 (Klimenko, Bezzub, 2022, p. 67). The committee was unable to develop its activities powerfully due to the defeat of the first democratic revolution in the Russian Empire but organized Self-Defense (Lubensk Public Self-Defense) – a combat group led by Andriy Livytskyi. This public organization counteracted Jewish pogroms and also contributed to the publication of the newspaper “Khliborob” in the city in November–December 1905. 57 town residents and visiting activists were accused of serious crimes. A show trial was held over them. The so-called “Lubensky trial” took place in Kyiv: the main defendants appeared before the military district court: Andriy Livytskyi, his wife Maria,

Volodymyr Shemet, Mykola Sakharov, and others. They were defended by well-known lawyers M. Mikhnovskyi and A. Margolin (Klimenko, Bezzub, 2022, p. 68). Later, the harsh verdict of the judges was canceled by the appeals court, and all the accused were acquitted.

## Revolutionary activities of youth (on the materials of the ego-documents of Anastasia Grinchenko and Maria Livytska)

The peculiarities of the Ukrainian activists' young generations' participation in revolutionary events are presented in detail in the ego-documents of Anastasia Grinchenko, whom researchers described as a bright representative of Ukrainian social democracy, the one who represented the most dynamic force in Ukraine at that time (Klimenko, 2015, p. 249). Anastasia's parents, Borys and Maria Hrynchenko belonged to the first generation of Ukrainian intelligentsia who were deeply interested in politics. So, Borys Grinchenko had been close to the founders of the first political organization of sub-Russian Ukraine – Bratstvo Tarasivtsiv. The members of this society promoted the idea of Ukraine's independence. In 1900, Borys Grinchenko became one of the founders Revolutionary Ukrainian Party – the first political party of the Naddnipryanshchyna. Taking into account the active political position of her father and the close communication of the Grinchenko family with the national elite, Anastasia was familiar with the specialty of Ukrainian political life at that period. But over time, under the influence of political trends and her immediate environment, primarily her beloved man, the girl became delighted by socialist ideas.

In the spring of 1905, despite her parents' protests, Anastasia stopped studying at Lviv University and returned to Kyiv. Her conviction

about the priority of social and political work in Russia was stronger than her desire to get a higher education. She thoroughly justifies her position, so her parents had to accept her choice. Anastasia Grinchenko (this is demonstrated by her correspondence) took an active part in party work, taking into account the experience of social activities in Galicia. Soon, the Kyiv party branch sends a 20-year-old girl to Poltava.

This period of activity of Anastasia Grinchenko preceded her work in Lubny, which made it possible to learn more about regional peculiarities. Later, Anastasia was sent to intensify work with workers who supported or sympathized with the events of the revolution. Despite her young age, Anastasia belonged to a special category of party workers who were exclusively engaged in party affairs. Such activists usually did not work anywhere and were mostly in an illegal position. Most often, they were responsible for the organization of local party branches and their management; sometimes they organized illegal publishing, as well as informed the central party branch about the state of affairs.

Such activists followed strict rules of conspiracy, so there is little information about the specifics of their party activity. In memoirs and documents, they were called anonymously or by pseudonyms, sometimes only by names without a name. So, Anastasia Grinchenko was written about as Natalka, Olya, and Kaminska, but probably this is not all her pseudo (Klimenko, 2015, p. 251).

Thanks to her efforts, an organization of city workers was created in Poltava, agitation work was intensified, and an underground printing house was active (Naumov, 2003, p. 157). Nastya's letters to her parents described the events of that time, namely: the formation and rise of the political movement in the Poltava Region. "... Poltava is currently under heightened security, and because of this, police, gendarmes, Cossacks, and soldiers are at every step. I have never seen anything like this anywhere...". "...I already have

gotten acquainted with Poltava, both with the city and the local people. It's a terrible province, but there are a lot of nice things. The railway strike continues. By the way, mommy, there are two depots in Poltava, besides there are many railway workshops here," Anastasia Grinchenko notes in her letter to her parents (Klimenko, 2015, p. 251). The railway workers were the most interesting target for the agitators: in general, they were educated, received a higher salary, they had credibility among the other workers.

On May 1–2, 1905, illegal may-day meetings were held outside the city. Also, more than 2,000 railway workers went on strike on the city streets on May 2 and 4. Anastasia, despite her social status and age, quickly found a common ground with the workers and gained their affection. Thanks to her efforts, a city party organization was created in Poltava. Her comrade L. Rybalka (L. Yurkevich) recalls in his memoirs about Anastasia's activities: "...She led groups of workers, teaching them political economy, was one of the best agitators at the "stock exchange" and gave speeches at "massovki" (public meetings). Such a method as campaigning on the "stock exchange" – Anastasia mastered it as best as possible. This method was more or less safe because it did not attract the police's attention. The agitator "worked" among the workers who gathered on a crowded street or boulevards after their working hours or in the bypassers' crowd. Anastasia has been thoroughly prepared for "such a job" (Rybalka, 1908, p. 5).

According to her mother, Maria Grinchenko, Anastasia did not limit herself to using only the party brochures, but she studied fundamental works as well. The girl considered it necessary to speak to the working-class representatives in a simple manner, but convincingly. She tried to touch upon important political topics, to give comprehensible answers to the most pressing social issues. Borys and Maria Hrinchenko understood all the dangers of their daughter's party work, they were very worried about her health,

living conditions, and everyday life, so they asked her to return home. To their concern, Anastasia usually replied that she was doing very well, so there was no need for her parents to worry. The girl characterizes her activities in an extremely restrained way: "...You ask whether I will stay for a long time. Please, understand that I will stay as long as possible because I have a lot of work, and secondly, this is the kind of job which I would like to have twice as intense as I have now... I feel like I was born to it..." (Klimenko, 2015, p. 251). The young woman works at the limit of her opportunities, sincerely cherishing the hope to solve many social problems. In her letter to her parents, she writes: "That night, despite the fact that I was terribly tired because I had a lot of work during the day, there was no way I could fall asleep. I do not understand what kind of strange feeling I have and what is happening to me. It ended with the fact that I lit the lamp and started reading, so I barely made it to the morning. I had urgent work for which I had to prepare quickly..." (IP НБЮБ, F. III, D. 365686, F. 1).

The great amount of work did not scare her, but made her happy and useful, involved in changing the world for the better: "...I feel very good, as only a person who has finally firmly set up her path and who is sure that she will never leave it... It seems to me that I would like nothing more than to follow my way as I am doing now. I feel good, thanks to the Poltava air..." (Klimenko, 2015, p. 252).

"Poltava air" was filled not only with work and support but also with love. After all, she worked together and lived with the love of her life, common-law husband Mykola Sakharov. Even their first letters of this period were full of romance: "...Finally, I almost arranged everything in a new house. Apple trees are blooming and just climbing their branches in the window. The air is luxurious. The windows in the house overlook the garden, and the gate from the garden opens into an open field. There is a forest two verst (about 2 km) away. And what the air in Poltava! I'm just

breathing, breathing, breathing. Soon I will see a friend” (Klimenko, 2015, p. 252).

In the letter dated May 22, 1905, Anastasia’s first organized mass rally, where 32 persons took part, is described. The events of July 1905, convince us of the girl’s courage and to certain extent adventurousness. She and her assistants intercept the agitator Anton Makarenko (pseudonym Antos), who was traveling from Kyiv to Kharkiv for political work. Anastasia and her friends, as she wrote later, “stole him from the train” to work in Poltava. The Central Committee eventually had to agree to this. The lack of personnel forced Anastasia Grinchenko to turn to the Central Committee with a request to strengthen their cell. In letters to Pavel Lastivets, who was preparing in Lviv for propaganda work in Poltava, Nastya notes: “Pavel, leave immediately, there is no money, we have a student exchange, which there is no one to deal with except you. Come immediately. Bring “Labour”, a complete set of “Peasant”, and all our party pamphlets” (Klimenko, 2015, p. 251).

Anastasia was highly valued among her colleagues. “Aunt Nastya”, as she was called, completely charmed the local workers. All those who she invited to join the party subsequently became politically active, a remarkable achievement given the very limited resources for campaigning (Naumov, 2003, p. 158). After the arrest, Anastasia stopped her duties in Poltava and stayed in Lubny together with M. Sakharov.

During 1903–1904, the “Free Community” was organized and conducted its work in Lubny. When the revolutionary work intensified, it became necessary to increase the number of members of the Free Community and provide it with real help. Anastasia Grinchenko and Mykola Sakharov, a factory worker from Kyiv, Avksentiy Lola joined the Community. In the middle of 1905, the Lubny Free Community became the leader of the revolutionary liberation movement in the West part of the Poltava region. And its members Andrii Livytskyi and Mykola Sakharov provided leadership of the Coalition Committee,

which included representatives of Russian and Jewish socialist parties. The youth had united in two circles and were working fruitfully, despite the previous negative experience in Poltava.

It is known that Anastasia helped Maria Livytskaya to organize several campaign events. On this occasion, Maria recalled: “Nastya helped me translate the so-called massivkas... These massivkas looked like this: in the precinct, most inhabited by workers, they hurriedly gathered a small group of people on the streets and in a short, concise speech explained to them that the party was competing and clarified general political questions” (Livytskaya, 1972, p. 170).

In October 1905, the general path of railway workers spread to the entire Russian Empire. In all cities, workers supported this strike. Anastasia described the events in Lubny in a letter to her parents: “...Don’t worry. I would have come earlier, not waiting for the end, but the fact is that I lived all the time cut off by a railway strike from the whole world at a time when the whole of Russia was boiling. Now I want to experience something significant, at least in the unfortunate Lubny” (Klimenko, 2015, p. 251). In response, the parents expressed concern about their daughter’s position and were interested in her health. At the same time, they brought some good news to Anastasia in connection with the liberties proclaimed by Tsar Nicholas II, she received amnesty in the previous case and can legally live at home. In every letter, the daughter reassured her parents, because she understood their anxiety: “...Amnesty was a gift for me. Don’t worry – I’m perfectly fine and in a safe place” (IP НБVB, F. III, D. 365693, F. 1).

All workers from Lubny went on strike and demanded that the largest institutions of the town join the strike: the District Court, the post office, and schools. The citizens of Lubny became worried because they were afraid of unnecessary excesses. Therefore, the town council, headed by Gavriil Vzyatkov, convened an emergency meeting. Its participants decided to create

a Committee for the Defense of the City from chaos. This committee included six government representatives and six private citizens, including Andriy Livytskyi. The composition of the committee was approved by the Poltava governor. However, due to the rapid development of revolutionary events, the City Protection Committee turned into a Revolutionary Coalition Committee with the Committee representatives of Ukrainian parties, the Bund, the party of socialist revolutionaries, and even representatives of the Jewish social-democratic party Poalei-Zion entered. The city was divided into several districts, which were guarded by separate departments of the Committee.

Maria Livytska wrote in her memoirs about the events in Lubny: “It seemed that the entire population went out into the streets from their homes, gathered in rallies which lasted for whole days without a break, and sometimes even at night” (Livytskaya, 1972, p. 184). Organized rallies took place in the large shop of the steam mill. Active workers, peasants, and high school youth came there. Anastasia Grinchenko, as part of the delegation at the audience with the city authorities, won the right to hold a legal meeting.

In her memoirs, Maria Grinchenko described this rally and Anastasia’s participation in it. “...The rally was huge. She also made a speech there” (Zagirnia, 1999, p. 91). The revolutionary fervor did not lose strength for two months, despite the alarming rumors about the suppression of the uprising in Moscow, about the beginnings of reaction, about the fact that the reactionary part of society intensified counter-revolutionary measures. Jewish pogroms took place in cities and towns. The committee had to organize such security measures that would counter the monarchist reaction. The main staff was chosen, which had to manage the defense of the city. Andriy Livytsky became the head of the staff. The first meeting of the main headquarters took place in the residence of the lawyer Pavlo Horlenko. The chiefs of the defense departments were given weapons and

assigned to the districts of the city. Anastasia Grinchenko herself emphasizes the legality of the formation of self-defense units in her letter to her parents: “The Poltava governor allowed the people’s militia the day before yesterday, so we are legalized now”. Then Anastasia reports on the success of the headquarters: “... there is a pogrom going on in Lubny right now: the hooligans are trying with all their might to start it, but the self-defense is so well organized that so far everything has been limited to a few broken windows and one seriously wounded person from self-defense. I have to stay here until the end because, first of all, I am a sister of mercy here, and secondly, I have never been among such visitors, because whenever something happens in Kyiv, I leave as bad luck would have it. The war has been going on for five days already, for five days we live like in camps” (Klimenko, 2015, p. 252).

There are preserved archival materials in which an unknown witness described the events in Lubny. In his small note, he mentions the courage of Anastasia Grinchenko. The anonymous author described how the youth of different national groups organized themselves together with the peasants from the nearby villages. Each squad included several people, a leader, and his assistant. Anastasia was the assistant manager of the Pyryatyn district (her initials are indicated in the note). This detachment was stationed in Kaganov’s mill. The premises were too small, so the members of the detachment slept among the dust and dirt on the boiler, they put dirty bags under their heads. Anastasia endured all everyday difficulties on an equal footing with men and inspired less determined persons with her courage. A vivid addition to the mentioned events is in Maria Grinchenko’s memoirs where she recalled: “...Once a part of the militia went somewhere because they were informed that the hooligans had rioted. Part of the militia remained at the mill, and only Nastya herself from the “superiors”. And someone comes running and says that hooligans are killing militiamen, that her husband

has already been killed... The news turned out to be false. And having already seen their close ones alive and well, Nastya felt like all her strength was running out” (Zagirnia, 1999, p. 93).

This information is confirmed by the testimony of Maria Livytska, who was happy that the supporters of the revolution achieved notable successes: thanks to the egis of all revolutionary parties, Volodymyr Shemet was elected to the First State Duma. And when rumors began to spread in Lubny about the strengthening of reactionary sentiments, the first information about Jewish pogroms appeared. As a result, everyone panicked in Lubny (Livytskaya, 1972, p. 184).

But the members of the Self-Defense Force maintained a determined attitude. It is also worth noting the negative attitude of young activists towards excessive violence. Maria Livytska describes the story of the murder of a local official by a representative of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Activists condemned these actions, as they considered the murdered person to be harmless and did not understand why it was necessary to provoke the local police to take brutal measures. The immediate task of the Coalition Committee was to organize the defense of the city against riots that could arise as a result of the criminal agitation of the Black Hundreds (reactionary monarchists). The Livytsky couple obtained some weapons in Kyiv (but Maria does not describe the details) (Livytskaya, 1972, p. 187). According to Maria Livytska, in general, the Committee and the Headquarters fulfilled their tasks: the planned pogrom was avoided. But the political spring has passed. The governor abolished the Defense Committee. A hundred Don Cossacks arrived in the city to establish “order”. The wave of arrests began.

Why was the Luben Republic unable to keep its gains? Several factors influenced this situation, but the party split in the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party played the most important role. It was the activists from Lubny who joined the “Soyuz”, whose members opposed the political

autonomy of Ukraine. “Spilka” sought to create a centralized proletarian party for all of Russia. (Naumov, 2003). Its activists worked with the figures of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, maneuvering between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks with the Jewish Bund. A. Grinchenko also left the RUP and joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party.

## Conclusions

Foreign and Ukrainian researchers note the high level of involvement of young people in the revolutionary struggles of 1905–1907. Some issues (the number of participants, changes in their political preferences, and their preference for the use of forceful methods of struggle) require more detailed research. An important source of new information can be the ego-documents of the participants in the struggle in the Naddniproshchyna.

The growth of the active participation of young people was one of the constituent elements of the process of forming a new system of the worldview of the society of that time, and the sharp mass rejection of the former moral and ethical principles emphasized the inconsistency of socio-political and economic modernization in Russia and became an indicator of the depth of the conflict between the state and the authorities and the population of the empire.

The ego-documents of Anastasia Grinchenko and Maria Livytska illustrate the important features of the participation of young people in the events of the revolution of 1905–1907. The activists sacrificed the opportunities to obtain a higher education, everyday comfort, and health (after being imprisoned in 1905, Anastasia fell ill for tuberculosis). There was also, in particular in Lubny, the risk of a violent confrontation with the organizers of Jewish pogroms. However, the atmosphere of struggle, significant successes in campaigning, and propaganda work fascinated the youth. Therefore, next to the negative



consequences of the revolution's defeat, it is worth talking about active citizenship, the important experience of the political and agitational activity, the organization of practical events, and cooperation between supporters of different political views, which is worth studying in more detail.

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