Creating the Revolutionary Heroines
The Case of Female Terrorists of the PSR (Russia, Beginning of the 20th Century)

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Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at Stockholm University to be publicly defended on Friday 26 January 2018 at 10.00 in Södertörns högskola, rum MA 624, Alfred Nobels allé 7.

Abstract
Representing revolutionary terrorists as heroes and martyrs was a typical feature of the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground at the beginning of the 20th century. This mythology described Underground Russia, the world of the revolutionaries, as an ideal country inhabited by ideal people. The purpose of that epos was to represent the revolutionary struggle, and individual revolutionaries in such a way that they would gain sympathy from the wider public and become role models for other revolutionary fighters. Sympathetic representations of women who committed political violence seem to be especially shocking in the context of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, since female violent behavior contradicted the existing gender order.

Employing theoretical perspectives of Critical Discourse Analysis, gender history and intersectionality, the dissertation analyzes the way narratives about the individual life paths of female terrorists of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (the PSR), the biggest socialist party in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, were constructed in their revolutionary auto/biographies. It analyzes how the lives of women from different social and ethnic origins, of different ages, with different life paths, who happened to be united only by their participation in the political terrorism of the PSR, were recounted with the help of narratives used in the Russian revolutionary underground.

The research findings demonstrate that the accounts of the lives of female PSR terrorists were constructed with the help of the dominant narrative that was formed as a conversion story. Within the framework of that narrative, the lives of individual women were adapted to the dominant discourse of heroicism and martyrdom, and at the same time were contextualized within the dominant discourse on “good” femininity that existed in the Russian society, and even within the discourse on Jews as perpetual “Others” in the Russian empire in case of Jewish women. Social and ethnic backgrounds as well as individual circumstances of the terrorist women, however, transformed the dominant narrative, and thus created diversity of representations. The discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life accepted by Bolsheviks influenced the discursive practice employed in revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists written during the early Soviet period.

Keywords: Russia, terrorism, women, gender, intersectionality, mythology, autobiography, biography, revolutionary underground, narrative, discourse.

Stockholm 2017
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:diva-149245

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Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation took time, and I know that this work would never have been completed without all the help that I received from different people and organizations during these years.

First of all, I would like to thank the organizations that provided financial support to me while I was working on the dissertation. The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies financed this project 2007-2012. I acknowledge also the financial support that I received from the Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation, which awarded me a scholarship in 2015. I am also very grateful to the History Department of the School of Historical and Contemporary Studies at Södertörn University for giving me financial support in 2017 so that I could finish the dissertation.

Besides financial support, I received lots of good advice, comments and personal encouragement from four amazing people who were my supervisors.

I started writing the dissertation under the supervision of Helene Carlbäck and Ulla Manns. Helene, thank you for always being there for me, for thoroughly reading my texts, helping me with all the practicalities and giving good advice on the way. Ulla, from you I’ve learned all the essentials that a gender historian is expected to know, and I thank you for generously sharing your knowledge with me.

I finished my dissertation under the supervision of Håkan Blomqvist and Eva Blomberg. Håkan, thank you for all the conversations we had that helped me to understand myself better and to be able to finish the dissertation. Thanks for all the practical help that you provided during this last year, when I was preparing for the defence. Eva, thank you for all the comments and remarks that helped me make my text better, and even for the cheerful and encouraging words that I often heard from you in the corridors of Södertörn.

Besides my supervisors, a lot of valuable comments were given to me by my opponent at the final seminar, Anke Hilbrenner (University of
Cologne), whom I thank from the bottom of my heart. I am also very grateful to my third reader, Hossein Sheiban (Stockholm University), whose thorough comments helped me make the final changes in the manuscript and finally send it into print.

My dissertation would never be written without the pleasant and stimulating environment at the History Department at Södertörn University and the higher seminars there, where many people read and commented on my texts. I particularly thank Martin Andersson, Christine Bladh, Ragnar Björk, Per Bolin, Christina Douglas, Heiko Droste, Monica Einarsson, Lars Ekdahl, David Gaunt, Yulia Gradskova, Norbert Götz, Anne Hedén, Madeleine Hurd, Josef Hägglund, Patrik Höglund, Karin Jonsson, Peter Josephsson, Anna Kharkina, Andrej Kotljarchuk, Rahel Kuflu, Julia Malitska, Marco Nase, Maria Nyman, Ann-Judith Rabenschlag, Anna Rosengren, Michal Salmonik, Robert Sandberg, Örjan Simonson, Erik Sjöberg, Kekke Stadin, Ylva Waldemarsson, Steffen Welther, Martin Wottle, Yulia Yurchuk, Francesco Zavatti, Kjell Östberg.

I am grateful to all the people from outside History at Södertörn who took interest in my research and helped me with insightful comments on my dissertation and pleasant company in different social situations: Henriette Cederlöf, Florence Frölig, Irina Gordeeva (RGGU, Russia), Anu-Maj Köll, Dace Lagerborg, Adomas Lapinskas, Beatriz Lindqvist, Irina Sandomirskaja, Liudmila Voronova, and Nikolay Zakharov.

While writing my Ph.D., I was happy to receive administrative help from the highly competent staff of both CBEES/BEEGS and the School of Historical and Contemporary Studies. My special thanks go to Lena Arvidson, Eleonora Bru, Nina Cajhamre, Sara Collmar, Mari Gerdin, Lisa Gäll, Lena Hansson, Ann Mellqvist, Ewa Rogström, Lisa Stålnecke, Kaisa Vallas.

During my research trips to Moscow, a group of wonderful people helped me to have a good time when I was not sitting in libraries and archives.

First of all, I’d like to thank my Mom for always hosting me, being eager to discuss both my work and history in general during our endless conversations, and always being there for me. Спасибо, мама!
My friends Julia Eganova, Anna Golubkova, Anastasia Isurina, and Inna Zhukova have always helped me to forget about work, the hardships of life and just to have fun. Thanks a lot! It is much appreciated.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my family — my husband and my son.

Reza, you are the love of my life and the most wonderful person I’ve ever met. I thank you for being with me in my darkest moments and helping me get back the joy of life. I thank you for all the important advice you gave me about my dissertation and about working in the Swedish academic world in general.

Vadim, you are a miracle and the sunlight of my life. I am very grateful that you exist and am very proud of you. Thank you for waiting patiently for the publication of Mommy’s book.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of the Problem

These lines of my modest essay I want to devote to the memory of those terrible, senselessly brutal tortures, which the glorious Russian Revolution’s heroine Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova had to endure in 1906.

The name of this holy girl thundered across Russia at that time, and the glory of her as the greatest martyr of the tsar’s tyranny, swept across the world.¹

This is how A. Sarychev starts his biography of Maria Spiridonova (1884 – 1941), a member of the Tambov Committee of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (the PSR), who volunteered to assassinate the notorious provincial government councillor G.N. Luzhenovsky for ordering brutal police suppression of a peasant uprising. Having fatally wounded her target, Spiridonova was arrested, mistreated and allegedly raped by government agents.² Interestingly enough, in the above men-

¹ "Настоящие строки моего скромного очерка хочу я посвятить воспоминанию о тех страшных, бессмысленно жестоких пытках, какие пришлось в 1906 году на долю главной героини русской революции Марии Александровны Спиридоновой. Имя этой святой девушки прогремело в то время по всей России, и слава о ней, как величайшей мученице царского произвола, пронеслась по всему миру." (Sarychev M. (1917), 'Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova,' in Russkie zhenschiny, Ryazan: Gubernskaya tipografiya, 13).
tioned account, Sarychev pays particular attention to Spiridonova’s sufferings at the hands of the police, but does not draw attention to the fact that she had assassinated a human being. Spiridonova is dubbed a revolutionary heroine and martyr, a representation very far from the way contemporary political terrorists are introduced in media reports.

Sympathetic representations of a woman who committed political violence seem to be especially shocking in the context of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, since violent behaviour contradicted the existing gender order. Women were considered to be peaceful by nature, and their participation in violence was seen as a sign of deviation. However, Spiridonova was not the only female terrorist in Russia at that time who was constructed as a heroine in the works of her sympathizers.

Representing political terrorists as heroes and martyrs was a typical feature of the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground. In it, Underground Russia, the world of the revolutionaries, was described as an ideal country inhabited by ideal people. The purpose of that epos was to represent the revolutionary fight, and individual revolutionaries in such a way that they would gain sympathy from the wider public and become role models for other revolutionary fighters. Such representations were constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom, which was employed in the writings about revolutionary terrorists created within the revolutionary underground. These writings represented revolutionary terrorists in similar terms, thus, creating almost identical representations that later became a part of the revolutionary mythology; in its turn, this was the starting point for the representations constructed in new texts about revolutionary heroes and heroines.

The discourse of heroism and martyrdom in connection to the political sphere existed not only in Russia, but was a general European phenomenon that had its roots in the French Revolution and was quite common.

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4 Mogilner, Marina (1999), Mifologiya podpolnogo cheloveka: Radikalnyi mikrokosm v Rossii nachala XX veka kak predmet semioticheskogo analiza, Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 7, 9.
in the texts about revolutionaries and terrorists written by their sympathizers in the 19th and 20th centuries. The concept “martyrdom” has its origins in the Christian tradition and has been used to denote people who are ready to give up their lives for their faith. The concept “hero,” in its turn, traditionally meant “half-god,” and since medieval and early modern times, it has been closely linked with Christian ideas. In the era of the French Revolution, both concepts were secularized and used to denote people who were ready to fight and die for their political convictions. However, even these secularized portrayals were shaped in accordance with the Christian pattern. As a result, portrayals of European revolutionaries and terrorists in the texts written by their sympathizers normally represent them in the way Christian saints are portrayed in hagiographical writings.

Even contemporary supporters and sympathizers of political terrorists see them as heroes and martyrs who sacrifice themselves for others. This means that research on the representation of political terrorists by their sympathizers in the past can help understand contemporary representations of political terrorists created by the sponsoring organizations, as well as the influence that these representations can have on the people who are exposed to them. In contemporary terrorism studies, very little has been written on this topic because it is particularly difficult for

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6 Schraut & Weinhauer 2014, 27.
most scholars to access and read relevant source material created by terrorist organizations. In this respect, the case of the Russian terrorists gives an opportunity to pursue a detailed analysis of the representations created by their fellow party members and sympathizers, since much relevant material can be found. The patterns and models of representation found there can help us analyse and understand representation techniques used by contemporary terrorist organizations, which they use in their efforts to construct attractive images of political terrorists in order to convince people to join their ranks. In this way, research on representations of Russian terrorists by their sympathizers can even contribute to the research field of contemporary terrorism studies.

The gender aspect of representations of political terrorists, especially as it pertains to women, is considered to be an important issue both by historians and specialists in contemporary terrorism studies. Researchers of contemporary terrorism have shown that gendering of female violence influences the tactical considerations and decisions of terrorist groups, as well as the behaviour of terrorist women. As a result, the research that understands and highlights the gaps between the stereotypical female terrorist and the reality of her motives can help anti- and counterterrorism organizations.

The representation of Spiridonova quoted at the beginning of this chapter could be used in an account about a male terrorist as well. However, since she was a woman, particular differences in the way she is constructed from men can be observed in Sarychev’s account:

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9 Such little attention to the discourses of the sympathizers can be explained by the fact that the majority of works about contemporary terrorism are dedicated to Islamic terrorism. (See more about this tendency in in Schraut & Weinheuer 2014, 9; Eriksson, Mia (2016), Berättelser om Breivik. Affektiva läsningsar om våld och terrorism, Göteborg; Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 73). However, most Western scholars cannot read Arabic texts produced by the terrorist organizations in the original. As a result, due to Western political interests, as Claudia Brunner has pointed out, “some Arab voices are translated and others are not,” a situation that significantly limits the opportunities for studying non-Western discourses on political terrorism in general (see Brunner, Claudia (2005), ‘Female Suicide Bombers – Male Suicide Bombing? Looking for Gender in Reporting the Suicide Bombings of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,’ in Global Society, No. 19:1, 39).

Despite her modesty and her youth, she was very active and energetic. Her soul was unusually sensitive. The slightest human suffering elicited in it unusually vivid emotions. She was ready to go through all sorts of torments, endure any deprivation, only to help those people whose sufferings she saw.\textsuperscript{11}

Besides connecting Spiridonova’s personality to the existing ideal of “good” femininity, Sarychev also connects her motivations first of all to the emotional sphere, thus confirming the stereotypical idea that existed at that time that female political activism was first of all rooted in the emotional sphere and not based on women’s political convictions.\textsuperscript{12} Such a representation could never appear in an account about a male terrorist.

The heroic representation constructed in Sarychev’s work, however, conceived the real woman named Maria Spiridonova, who was born in a Russian middle-class family of a non-hereditary noble, studied in a gymnasium, but could not finish it due to the changed economic conditions of her birth family after her father’s death, and took up office work in order to support herself and her family.\textsuperscript{13} These circumstances of

\textsuperscript{11} “Несмотря на свою скромность, на свою юность, она была очень подвижной и энергичной. Душа её была необыкновенно чуткой. Малейшее страдание всякого человека вызывало в ней необыкновенно живое переживание. Она готова была пойти на какие угодно муки, переносить любое лишение, лишь бы только помочь тем людям, чьи страдания она видела” (Sarychev 1917, 17).


Spiridonova’s early life as well as some particularities of her revolutionary fight and life after that made her different from other women who participated in political terrorism at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite these particularities of Spiridonova’s individual history, the accounts about her written in the revolutionary underground had striking similarities to the accounts about terrorist women whose life circumstances were different, since the individual lives of the terrorist women were adapted to the discursive practices of the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground.

1.2 Aim

The aim of the dissertation is to analyse the way narratives about the individual life paths of female terrorists were constructed in revolutionary auto/biographies created at the beginning of the 20th century.

1.3 Research Questions

The central question of the research has been divided into the following smaller questions:

1. What was the dominant narrative about the revolutionary lives of female terrorists constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom?

2. In which way did different historical contexts in which the autobiographical and biographical accounts by/about Russian female terrorists were created (pre-revolutionary Russia, early Soviet Russia) influence the way the life paths of these women were represented?

3. How did the existing gender order influence the construction of the narratives about female terrorists’ lives within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom?

4. How did female terrorists’ individual life circumstances and power position in the Russian society influence the construction of the narratives about their lives within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom?
5. What role does participation in political violence play in narratives of the life paths of female terrorists compared to similar narratives about other revolutionary women in Russia?

6. Are there any generic connections between the revolutionary auto/biographies of Russian female terrorists and the auto/biographies of female terrorists in other historical and geographical contexts?

1.4 Previous Research

In recent years, gendered representations of Russian female terrorists in texts written by their sympathizers have been studied in different historical works. However, the question about the way the lives of these women were portrayed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom has not yet drawn much scholarly attention. According to Marina Mogilner, the revolutionary martyr-hero was a person who had a particular type of biography. Although many historians have mentioned the special way of how revolutionary lives were constructed within the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground, none of them have studied that question in detail, and none of them has written about the special features of revolutionary autobiographies and biographies of female terrorists in pre-revolutionary Russia.

Previous research on the way the life paths of the Russian political terrorists were constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom is not at all abundant, and it consists of a few works that touch upon different aspects of the question. Some findings from the research on the construction of revolutionary lives and the research on the way the life paths of political terrorists from other historical and geographical contexts were constructed can yield some ideas about how accounts of this kind were written, and thus can be seen as useful for the dissertation.

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14 See, for example, Boniece 2010a, 127-162; Petrusenko, Nadezda (2014), ‘A Female Agent of Political Violence in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: Gendered Representations of Maria Spiridonova,’ in Kaleidoscope: Journal of History of Culture, Science and Medicine, 9, 232-249; Hilbrenner 2016.

15 Mogilner 1999, 49.
1.4.1 Research on Construction of Revolutionary Lives

No one has yet written a comprehensive work about how revolutionary lives have been constructed in written works created by the revolutionaries themselves and by their sympathizers.

The first scholar who touched upon the question in the case of Russia is Katerina Clark (1981 [2000]), who connects her research on Soviet novels to the pre-revolutionary mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground, and identifies the features that were typical for the texts about positive heroes created within both of these traditions. Clark shows that the positive hero passed different stages during his lifetime on his way from a state of relative “spontaneity” to a higher degree of “consciousness,” understood to be growing political awareness. Besides that, Clark identifies three types of symbolic patterns typically present in these texts that have to do with the life path of the main character: (1) the particular political movement in which the hero is participating directly or indirectly identified with a “family”; (2) a relatively naïve person is brought to see the light by some emissary of the new enlightenment (the topic of “disciple” and “mentor”); (3) some kind of martyrdom. Clark connects the last of these three patterns to the religious nature of the texts about revolutionary heroes that she defines as “secular hagiography.”

Features of the accounts of the revolutionary lives created within the Russian revolutionary underground charted by Clark have even been identified by the authors of works on revolutionary autobiographies and biographies of members of different political groups, both in pre-revolutionary Russia and in other historical and geographical contexts. These scholars have shown that such accounts were usually formed as stories of conversion to revolutionary ideals and growing political consciousness that included particular symbolic patterns that were always present in these accounts (slightly different in various cases that were studied by these scholars), and highlighted connections between these

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17 Clark 2000[1981], 16-17.
18 Clark 2000[1981], 49.
revolutionary narratives and religious texts about the saints who sacrifice themselves for their beliefs.20

Authors of works on revolutionary autobiographies and biographies of the members of different political groups have also paid attention to different features of these writings that are not discussed by Clark. In the rest of this section, I will present the main findings that were discovered in this kind of research.

The question that is often raised in studies on revolutionary autobiographies is censorship and self-censorship. Beth Holmgren (1994) notes the fact that revolutionary autobiographies by Bolshevik women went through significant self-censorship, since the authors tried to simplify and schematize their life stories in order to make them fit into the ge-

eneric male model of a committed revolutionary by, for example, representing their family roles as subordinate to revolutionary work. Hilde Hoogenboom, in her article on populist autobiographies from the 1920s (1996), as well as Boris Kolonitsky, in his research on representations of Alexander Kerensky, a member of the PSR and one of the prime ministers of the Provisional Government in 1917 (2017), also discuss the question of self-censorship of authors of revolutionary auto/biographies, but do it in terms of the choices made by them when they decided which events should be included in their writings and which ones should be excluded. Hoogenboom also pays attention to external factors that could have influenced the authors’ self-censorship; by reading each other’s memoirs, the populists focused their memory and chose information that would fit the models that existed in others’ writings. Self-censorship in connection to Soviet female autobiographies is also discussed in Marianne Liljeström’s works, where she writes both about which women were allowed to speak in the Soviet Union and about self-censorship of female writers (1999, 2004). In her book on Jewish revolutionary identity, Inna Shtakser (2014) devotes attention to other types of self-censorship employed in revolutionary autobiographies written by people who applied for membership in the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles (Oschestvo byvshikh politikatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev). That self-censorship had to do with the political expectations that existed during the early Soviet period and the authors’ attempts to be recognized as legitimate revolutionaries.

By mentioning the special features of autobiographies written by female Bolsheviks, Holmgren (1994) shows that particular differences existed between revolutionary autobiographies written by men and by

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21 Holmgren 2004, 129.
22 Populists (Narodniki) in Russia of the 19th century were a social movement of Russian intelligentsia, who believed in the peasants’ revolution and were famous for their “going to the people” in order to agitate the masses.
women. This topic has also been touched upon by scholars who have written about revolutionary autobiographies created by the members of other political groups. Hoogenboom (1996) notes the differences that existed in the way men and women chose to construct their autobiographies based on differences in their childhood experiences. According to Hoogenboom, since women felt themselves oppressed within their birth families and their access to education was limited, their autobiographies focussed childhood memories and educational level much more than autobiographies written by men. Women’s attitude toward education is represented as crucial for their life writing even by Susan K. Morrissey (1998), who writes about autobiographies of pre-revolutionary female and male radical students. Liljeström (2004), on her part, building on Holmgren’s claim that “heroic revolutionary women” constructed in Soviet female autobiographies were written into a male norm of values and behaviour, discusses the way their femininity was represented in these accounts. Liljeström shows that the authors of these works constructed themselves as “unusual but normal Soviet women.”

Differences between the construction of male and female revolutionary lives have also been observed in research on revolutionary biographies. Elizabeth Jones Hemenway, in her article on memorial literature about female Bolsheviks (2006), discusses special features of such writings about women that had their main function in asserting the importance of women’s revolutionary activities and situating them in a traditional gender structure as “mothers” and “sisters.” On the other hand, male revolutionaries were represented differently, as members of the revolutionary brotherhood, in similar accounts.

Scholars have observed not only differences in autobiographical and biographical accounts authored by men and women, but also between accounts authored by people from different social classes. Jeffrey Brooks, in his article on the construction of revolutionary lives in Pravda in the 1920s (1992), notes how the experience of being educated was treated in biographies of people of modest social origin. According to Brooks, education was represented there as linked with escape from

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27 Holmgren 2004, 129.
28 Hoogenboom 1996, 81
30 Liljeström 2004, 12.
31 Jones Hemenway 2006, 78.
one’s social class. Hoogenboom (1996) notes the fact that both men and women of lower social origin who had to struggle for their education wrote in their autobiographies in more detail about their education than did men of higher social origin, who took the opportunity to be educated for granted. Likewise, in his article on Russian female autobiographies, Yuri Slezkine (2000) devotes attention to the differences between memoirs written by upper- and middle-class female revolutionaries on the one hand and working-class female revolutionaries on the other. According to him, unlike women with more privileged backgrounds, working-class memoirists mention reading as the first breakthrough in their conversion narratives, which leads to understanding and consequent political radicalization. In her article on the memorial literature of female Bolsheviks, Jones Hemenway makes a similar point by showing that modes of reaching political consciousness in these narratives depended on the women’s social position and level of education. Shtakser (2014) discusses the style of writing that characterized revolutionary autobiographies of people from different social classes who wanted to join the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles. According to Shtakser, applicants who were poor and uneducated did not follow the standard of writing such kinds of autobiographies and included unnecessary details in their stories, while the better educated tended to write shorter, more standard accounts.

Differences between revolutionary autobiographies written by people with diverse political affiliations have also been highlighted in previous research on the topic. Hoogenboom (1996) shows that populists and Bolsheviks depicted the early influences that led to their political radicalization in different ways: while the populists showed the growth of their feelings toward common people, the Bolsheviks made it clear that they were the common people themselves. A similar tendency was observed even by Kristine Byron in her article on the memoirs of Dolores Ibarruri, a Spanish communist (2004), who, according to Byron, also tried to construct herself as one of the common people.

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33 Hoogenboom 1996, 89.  
34 Slezkine 2000, 23.  
35 Jones Hemenway 2006, 80-81.  
36 Shtakser 2014, 18.  
37 Hoogenboom 1996, 81.  
38 Byron 2004, 143.
Differences in the contents of life stories of revolutionaries with different ethnic origins have not yet attracted much scholarly attention. Hoogenboom (1996) briefly discusses the representation of the experience of awakening of consciousness and political radicalization in the autobiographies of Mikhail Morenius and Fanni Morenius-Muratova, populist siblings from an orthodox Jewish family. However, Hoogenboom pays more attention to gendered differences in their life writing and does not compare the siblings’ narratives to similar accounts by populists born in ethnically Russian families. Shtakser (2014), on her part, provides detailed analysis of the revolutionary autobiographies written by Jewish workers from the Pale of Settlement during the early Soviet period. However, she does not compare them to similar writings by workers of Russian origin.

In his research on representations of Alexander Kerensky in 1917, Kolonitsky pays attention to particular differences in his biographies and autobiographies. While the authors of revolutionary biographies tried to adapt Kerensky’s life path to the standard of writing a revolutionary biography by, for example, highlighting his early political engagement with the PSR, Kerensky himself did not always follow the rules and write about the obligatory events of revolutionary life if they did not actually take place.

Besides writing about the general features of representations of the revolutionary life path, some scholars dedicate their research to specific themes and symbolic patterns that often appear in revolutionary auto/biographies. In her book on suicide in imperial Russia, Morrissey (2006) touches upon the narrative of “heroic suicide.” According to Morrissey, suicides committed by imprisoned revolutionaries were represented in revolutionary biographies as heroic deeds that symbolized the revolutionary struggle within the prison walls. Morrissey explains such attention to prison suicides by the fact that the resort to suicide deprived the autocrat of his power of the life and death over his subjects, and thus could be seen as part of the revolutionary life path.

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39 Hoogenboom 1996, 89.
41 Kolonitsky 2017, 50-52.
43 Morrissey 2006, 277.
In her book on Eastern Siberian exile at the beginning of the 20th century (2016), Sarah Badcock devotes some attention to how revolutionary lives were constructed in political prisoners’ memoirs. According to Badcock, accounts of the lives of female political prisoners who were incarcerated in the Maltsev Prison (and the female terrorists among them) were constructed with special emphasis on the women’s communal lifestyle, their devotion to self-improvement through education and refusal to compromise with the authorities.44

To sum up, previous research on how the life paths of revolutionary heroes were represented within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom shows particular similarities between autobiographical and biographical accounts written in accordance with this discursive practice. Scholars have noted that these types of works were written as tales of conversion, were characterized by particular themes and symbolic patterns that were often present there, and were very much influenced by religious writings on the lives of saints. The constructed nature of these accounts has been studied by the scholars interested in questions of censorship and self-censorship. Researchers have also paid attention to the differences in narratives written about men and women, people of different social backgrounds, and those who belonged to different political groups. Despite the existence of special research on the revolutionary autobiographies of Jewish revolutionaries, differences in the narratives about the lives of revolutionaries of different ethnic origins have not yet been studied. Differences in how biographical and autobiographical accounts of the same person were written have been briefly touched upon only by Kolonitsky in his work on Kerensky; other scholars mostly analyse only one group of sources, and as a result do not compare the two. Another feature of the research which is quite important for the dissertation is that all the accounts that are dedicated to how revolutionary lives were constructed in autobiographical and biographical texts are devoted to writings created during the Soviet period, which means that the features of the revolutionary autobiographies and biographies created before the revolution have not yet been studied. Although revolutionary autobiographies and biographies created before and after the revolution were a part of the same subculture of the revolutionary underground, it is possible that some differences could be observed if the texts created during the different historical periods were compared.

1.4.2 Research on Construction of the Lives of Political Terrorists

Research on the way the lives of political terrorists have been constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom is a topic that has not been studied much in contemporary terrorism studies, likely because most scholars experience particular difficulties accessing and reading the source material created by the sympathizers of contemporary political terrorists. The research that exists is not systematic: I could find the relevant conclusions in works on different terrorist groups operating in different parts of the world. However, it is possible to see clear connections between these works and the results of research on the construction of revolutionary lives.

The features identified in research on the construction of revolutionary lives that were presented earlier are also present in research on the autobiographies and biographies of members of different terrorist groups. Luisa Passerini, in her article on life stories of female Italian political terrorists (1992), as well as Clare Bielby in her article on autobiographies of left-wing German terrorists (2014), identify as one of the typical features of these writings their structure of a conversion narrative. Passerini (1992) and Sarah Colvin, in her article about representations of Ulrike Meinhof in her biographies (2009), pay attention to questions of self-censorship and censorship by the authors of these accounts that had its purpose in writing a particular kind of narrative. In the case of autobiographies by female Italian terrorists, self-censorship is connected to the authors' desire to construct their life stories as a Bildungsroman. In the case of Meinhof's biographies, it was connected to the conscious choice by the biographers of episodes from Meinhof's childhood that would help them construct her as "a stern but compassionate angel-saint." Differences between how the lives of female and male terrorists have been written about are highlighted by Passerini (1992),

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45 See footnote 10, where I explain that feature of contemporary terrorism studies.
48 Colvin, Sarah (2009), 'Witch, Amazon, or Joan of Arc? Ulrike Meinhof's Defenders, or How to Legitimize a Violent Woman,' in Colvin, Sarah & Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (2009), Women and Death 2: Warlike Women in the German Literary and Cultural Imagination Since 1500, Rochester; New York: Camden House, 252.
Amina Riad Zarrugh, in her research on framing of suicide bombers in biographies published on the websites of non-secular militant organizations such as Hamas and Palestine Islamic Jihad (2011), and in the above-mentioned article by Bielby (2014). As did Holmgren and Liljeström in the case of Russian revolutionary autobiographies, Passerini identifies in her material women’s attempts to mimic a male model.\textsuperscript{49} Zarrugh’s findings about female biographies are reminiscent of the results of Hoogenboom and Morrissey: emphasis is put on female terrorists’ educational backgrounds. In addition, Zarrugh shows that women’s accomplishments as well as their piety were also in focus in these autobiographies, while the central aspects of similar writings about men are their contributions to the political organizations with which they are affiliated.\textsuperscript{50} As for Bielby’s article, according to her, in the case of male autobiographies the process of going “underground” is represented as more gradual and even organic in comparison to female autobiographies. In narratives written by women, this episode is described as a conventional “coming of age” narrative.\textsuperscript{51} Thus, it is possible to conclude that the results of previous research on autobiographies and biographies of political terrorists confirm and further develop the conclusions of research on revolutionary autobiographies and biographies.

Moreover, scholars who write about the construction of lives of political terrorists pay attention to how participation in political violence, the activity that distinguishes political terrorists, is represented there. Passerini (1992) shows that facts of participation in political terrorism are usually absent from autobiographical accounts constructed by Italian female terrorists, who were the focus of her research.\textsuperscript{52} Graham Dawson (2014) observes a similar tendency even in the autobiography of a male terrorist. While analysing the memoirs of Michael Stone, a member of the Ulster Defence Association,\textsuperscript{53} he shows how different episodes from

\textsuperscript{49} Passerini 1992, 166.
\textsuperscript{50} Zarrugh, Amina Riad (2011), ‘Revenge of the virtuous women’: framing of gender and violence by Palestinian militant organizations, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{51} Bielby 2014, 231-232.
\textsuperscript{52} Passerini 1992, 197.
\textsuperscript{53} The Ulster Defence Association is the largest Ulster loyalist paramilitary group in Northern Ireland, founded to combat Irish republicanism and particularly the Irish Republican Army (IRA).
Stone’s past (like episodes that portray his domestically oriented masculinity) become relevant for the narrative in order to challenge the dominant discourse and to distract attention from his violent past.54

Research on biographies of political terrorists, however, shows that the authors of these works deal with questions of political violence differently. Colvin (2009) demonstrates that the authors of apologetic biographies of Meinhof did not silence her violent activism, but tried to legitimize it by equating her with Joan of Arc and Rosa Luxemburg, women who connote militancy and martyrdom.55

Thus, it is possible to conclude that despite striking similarities between how autobiographies and biographies of political terrorists and revolutionaries have been written, particular differences that existed between these kinds of writings were connected to participation in political violence, which was typical only for the terrorists. These differences were identified even between the ways the terrorists themselves and their biographers dealt with the issue of political violence: while the terrorists tended to leave it unsaid in their accounts, the biographers tended to legitimize it.

1.4.3 Research on the Construction of Revolutionary Lives of Russian Terrorists

Research on the construction of revolutionary lives of Russian terrorists, although it consists of very few works, shows particular similarities both to research on the construction of revolutionary lives in general as well as to research on the construction of lives of political terrorists in contemporary terrorism studies.

As do the authors of works on the construction of revolutionary lives, authors of similar research on Russian terrorists note the religious roots of writings about their lives. In his article on Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s *Underground Russia*, Peter Scotto (2009) compares the “profiles” (biographical sketches written by Stepnyak-Kravchinsky) of members of the People’s Will to *Paterikon*, a record of incidents from the lives of saints connected with a particular monastic community. In

55 Colvin 2009, 253-257.
this way, Scotto shows that in his work, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky used a religious form that he filled with revolutionary content.\textsuperscript{56} Morrissey (2012) also notes religious language and Christian symbolism used in biographies of political terrorists from the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{57}

The questions of censorship and self-censorship have also been discussed in the literature on the construction of lives of Russian terrorists. Scotto (2009) demonstrates that Stepnyak-Kravchinsky consciously chose events from the lives of members of the People’s Will that helped him represent them in a heroic revolutionary light.\textsuperscript{58} Sally A. Boniece, in her article on Maria Spiridonova’s myth (2010), shows that in order to tell her story to the wider public in Russia, Spiridonova herself, as well as her comrades in the PSR, were conforming to existing mythology of the revolutionary subculture.\textsuperscript{59} Boniece shows that they managed to withhold potentially damaging personal information about Spiridonova (like her love affair with a married man) because it could have lessened her appeal in the eyes of Russian society.\textsuperscript{60}

Similarly to scholars of the construction of revolutionary lives, authors of works on Russian terrorists pay attention to the differences between narratives by/about women and men. Very much in line with the findings of Hoogenboom (1996) from autobiographies of populist women, who highlighted family oppression as decisive for their political radicalization, Anke Hilbrenner, in her article on Sofia Perovskaya (2016), demonstrates that in their accounts of Perovskaya’s life, her sympathizers used the story of her birth family in order to explain the revolutionary choice that Perovskaya made. The story about Perovskaya’s birth family, a despotic father who abused her mother, was, according to Hilbrenner, used as proof of Perovskaya’s sympathy for the oppressed, which made it possible to connect her political activism to Perovskaya’s early life.\textsuperscript{61}


\textsuperscript{57} Morrissey, Susan K. (2012), ‘The “Apparel of Innocence”: Toward a Moral Economy of Terrorism in Late Imperial Russia,’ \textit{The Journal of Modern History}, 84(3), 638-639.

\textsuperscript{58} Scotto 2010, 112.

\textsuperscript{59} Boniece 2010a, 128.

\textsuperscript{60} Boniece 2010a, 130.

\textsuperscript{61} Hilbrenner 2016.
Besides these similarities between how revolutionary lives were described and similar writings on the lives of Russian terrorists, previous research on the topic shows that some of the issues that were present in revolutionary autobiographies and biographies had a different meaning in the writings by/about political terrorists.

As well as the lives of revolutionaries, the lives of political terrorists were constructed by themselves and their biographers as conversion narratives. However, since the purpose of their political activism was participation in political violence, that narrative, as has been shown by scholars, had a particular form. Morrissey (2012) writes that the life of a political terrorist was represented as the individual’s journey toward the ultimate self-sacrifice of terrorism.\(^6^2\) Hilbrenner (2016) makes similar conclusions in her analysis of Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s version of Perovskaya’s life.\(^6^3\) In other words, compared to the autobiographies and biographies of ordinary revolutionaries, in the case of a political terrorist the question of martyrdom becomes dominant in defining the purpose of the revolutionary’s life.

Even “heroic suicide,” which is discussed in Morrissey’s book (2006) as one of the typical narratives in revolutionary biographies, has a different meaning in the biography of a political terrorist. According to Morrissey, in this case “heroic suicide” implies not only taking one’s own life as a protest in prison; the eagerness of Russian terrorists to sacrifice their lives for the cause was also a form of “heroic suicide.”\(^6^4\)

As well as in the case of other political terrorists, explanations for participation in political violence have been also touched upon in works on Russian terrorists. In her article on coherent mythology about the purity of motives and characters of political terrorists in Russia, Morrissey (2012) writes about how terrorists and their biographers justified their violent actions. According to the author, these narratives emphasized the role of state violence combined with the sensibility of the future terrorist to the tremendous sufferings of the people.\(^6^5\) Morrissey uses as examples biographies of terrorists of the PSR Ivan Kaliaev (1877-1905) and Zinaida Konoplyannikova in order to show how their life stories were constructed in accordance with the above-mentioned narrative structures, as the stories of idealists who were oppressed by the regime.

\(^6^2\) Morrissey 2012, 622f.
\(^6^3\) Hilbrenner 2016.
\(^6^5\) Morrissey 2012, 622.
and thus forced to turn to political violence because of that experience of oppression.\textsuperscript{66} The author also mentions that in both cases, episodes where terrorists firmly refused to participate in attacks when it was obvious that they would take innocent lives were highlighted in the biographies in order to attest to their nobility of character and the high moral purpose of their missions.\textsuperscript{67}

To sum up, the research on how the lives of Russian terrorists were constructed shows clearly that despite particular similarities with revolutionary autobiographies and biographies, these works had their specific features that mainly had to do with the individuals’ participation in political violence. At the same time, the findings of the research on autobiographies and biographies of political terrorists who operated in other historical and geographical contexts are slightly different from the results of research on the similar works about the lives of Russian terrorists. Although the research on the issue deals with autobiographical and biographical texts created both before and after the revolution, none of the scholars has made a systematic comparison between the way the revolutionary lives of political terrorists were constructed in different historical and geographical contexts. Since no one has yet written a comprehensive work on the construction of the lives of Russian political terrorists from the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century within the mythology of the revolutionary underground, it is quite clear that such a work is needed in order to systematize the existing knowledge on the topic and connect the fields of history and contemporary terrorism studies. I am not intending to cover the entire field charted here in the dissertation; my purpose is only to write a systematic account of how the lives of Russian female terrorists from the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century were constructed in written accounts created within the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground.

\textsuperscript{66} Morrissey 2012, 622, 637-638.
\textsuperscript{67} Morrissey 2012, 623, 638.
1.5 Choice of the Case: The Female Terrorists of the PSR

It is a well-known fact that political terrorism in different forms was practiced at the beginning of the 20th century by almost all socialist parties and anarchist groups that existed in Russia. However, it seems that the majority of documents where the life paths of individual female terrorists were presented by themselves or by their comrades were dedicated to women who were active in the ranks of the PSR, the biggest socialist party of pre-revolutionary Russia. While searching material on the topic, I managed to find sources connected to women’s terrorist activism in the ranks of the maximalist group that left the PSR in 1904, the Bolshevik Party and different anarchist groups. That material in general resembles sources connected to terrorist women of the PSR, since all these documents can be seen as part of the same discourse of heroism and martyrdom that existed in the writings of the Russian revolutionary underground. However, the sources connected to the political groups mentioned above are not as many as the sources on women of the PSR, and the result of such research based on the materials of all of the above-mentioned political groups would be uneven, since representations of women of the PSR would dominate it. That is why it seems reasonable to limit this research to the analysis of representations of terrorist women of the PSR.

Even when it comes to women who were active in different terrorist units of the PSR, I need to limit my research to focus only on certain individuals, since not all of the women who participated in the party’s terrorist ranks wrote about their lives, inspired their comrades and sympathizers to write about them, or even to mention them in memoirs. Thus, I will limit my research only to terrorist women of the PSR whose

68 See more about it in Geifman, Anna (1993), Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; Budnitsky, Oleg (2000), Terrorism v rossiiskom osvoboditel’nom dvizhenii: ideologiya, etika, psikhologiya (vtoraya polovina XIX – nachalo XX v.). Moscow: ROSSPEN.

69 See for example texts written by and about Natalia Klimova (1885-1918), one of the leaders of the maximalists, reprinted in Kan, Grigorii (2012), Natalia Klimova: Zhizn i borba, (Sankt-Petersburg: Izdatelstvo im. N.I. Novikova), 217-374; information about female members of the terrorist groups of the Bolsheviks can be found, for example, in the source material reprinted in Budnitsky, Oleg (ed.) (1996), Istoriya terrorizma v Rossii v dokumentakh, biografiakh, issledovaniyakh, Rostov-na-Donu: Feniks, 379-424; information about female members of anarchist groups can be found, for example, in Anisimov, Sergei (1932), ‘Sud i rasprava nad anarkhistami-kommunistami,’ in Katorga i sylka, No. 10(95), 129-176.
life stories were written about entirely or in part at the beginning of the 20th century.

1.6 Theories and Concepts

In this dissertation, I am going to use three theoretical approaches: Norman Fairclough’s ideas about text and discourse developed within his methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Joan Wallach Scott’s theorizing about gender history; and intersectionality. In addition, I will use the concepts of representation, terrorism and auto/biography, which are essential for the dissertation.

1.6.1 CDA on Discourse and Text

In the centre of the dissertation are the discourse of heroism and martyrdom that was developed in the Russian revolutionary underground and the texts produced within that discourse. The dissertation, thus, requires conceptualization of discourse and text within a theoretical framework. Fairclough, one of the leading theorists in CDA and the founder of his own direction within that field, has written at length about text and discourse in his works. As mentioned above, Fairclough defines CDA as a methodology, which means that it can be used both as a theory and a method. In this section, I will introduce only the theoretical premises of CDA and the way they will be used in the dissertation. How CDA will be used as one of the methods of the dissertation will be introduced in section 1.8.2.

Fairclough sees discourse as both a linguistic and social phenomenon. As a linguistic phenomenon, discourse is for him language as social practice determined by social structures. Discourse as a social phenomenon for Fairclough is a practice of signifying a domain of knowledge or experience from a particular perspective. Societies, according to him, do not have a singular discourse; different institutions

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and domains within them sustain a variety of coexisting, contrasting and often competing discursive practices.\textsuperscript{72} These discursive practices constitute \textit{order of discourse}, or interdiscourse, which is the totality of the discursive practices of a given society, institution or social domain.\textsuperscript{73} The existing \textit{orders of discourse} are ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole.\textsuperscript{74}

Fairclough defines \textit{text} as the written or spoken language produced in a \textit{discursive event}. Every text simultaneously represents reality, enacts social relations and represents social identities.\textsuperscript{75} A \textit{discursive event}, according to Fairclough, is an instance of language use, which can be analysed as \textit{text, discursive practice, and social practice}.\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{Discursive practice} refers to production and interpretation of text. The production process shapes and leaves “traces” in the text, while the interpretive process operates upon “cues” in the text.\textsuperscript{77} In other words, it is impossible to understand the contents of a given text without knowing how it was produced and how it could be interpreted by the receiver.

Processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of \textit{social practice}. The analysis of a \textit{discursive event} as a \textit{social practice} may refer to different levels of social organization – the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal “context of culture.”\textsuperscript{78} In other words, \textit{text} is also always a product of different societal contexts that were activated in the course of its production, which therefore cannot be neglected in the process of understanding and interpreting the text.

One of the central concepts of Fairclough’s theory is \textit{interdiscursivity}, which refers to the heterogeneity of the text constituted from a configuration of text types or discourse conventions.\textsuperscript{79} According to Fairclough, each text depends upon the society in which it was produced and its history, since they determine the resources that are available to the producer of the text within the order of discourse. Texts selectively

\textsuperscript{72} Fairclough 1993, 134-135.
\textsuperscript{73} Fairclough 1993, 135; Fairclough 2013, 14.
\textsuperscript{74} Fairclough 2013, 14.
\textsuperscript{75} Fairclough 1992a, 8-9; Fairclough 2013, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{76} Fairclough 1992a, 3-4; Fairclough 1993, 138.
\textsuperscript{77} Fairclough 1992a, 4; Fairclough 1993, 136; Fairclough 2013, 20.
\textsuperscript{78} Fairclough 1992a, 4; Fairclough 1993, 136-137.
\textsuperscript{79} Fairclough 1992a, 10; Fairclough 1993, 137.
draw upon orders of discourse – the particular configurations of conventionalized practices, which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances. Fairclough admits that categorization of types of discursive practice is difficult and controversial, and he names in different works genres, discourses, narratives, styles and activity types among them. Among these types of discursive practice for the purposes of the dissertation, genre and narrative are particularly significant. Fairclough defines genre as a socially ratified type of linguistic activity with specified positions for subjects. Narrative, according to him, is a socially ratified story type.

In this dissertation, I am going to study only one of the discourses of pre-revolutionary Russia, the discourse of the revolutionary underground, the Bolshevik version of which became the dominant one in Soviet Russia. I consider the revolutionary auto/biographies to be a separate genre ratified in the revolutionary underground. The life stories of revolutionary men and women were told in these documents in accordance with a specific narrative of a heroic life. Each of the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR that will be studied in the dissertation will be approached as a separate discursive event, consisting not only of the text itself, but also of text production and interpretation, as well as different social practices that influenced the text. In each case, I will try to determine which discursive practices were employed by the author of the text and how their use influenced the representations produced in the text.

Critics of CDA often complain about a lack of attention to the social context in this kind of research. It is explained by the difficulty of deciding which contexts are relevant. The critics of CDA advocate for solving the problem by restricting the relevant contexts to the ones that the text producers are oriented toward. In the present dissertation, the most obvious context, the subculture of the revolutionary underground, will be introduced in detail in a separate chapter. At the same time, I will take into account that the producers of revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR were people who were also part

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80 Fairclough 1992a, 10; Fairclough 1992b, 194-195.
81 Fairclough 1992a, 10; Fairclough 1992b, 195; Fairclough 1993, 135.
of Russian society in general and different social groups and institutions that the society consisted of. I will include contextual information of that kind in the empirical chapters of the dissertation, where I will need it in order to interpret the text of the sources.

1.6.2 Gender History

The researchers of contemporary terrorism have shown that women who commit violence are often identified not as “terrorists” like their male counterparts, but as women terrorists. In other words, they are portrayed in a highly gendered manner, which means that the gender order prevalent in the society where the portrayals of female terrorists are created is essential for understanding and interpreting such portrayals. In the focus of the dissertation are the portrayals of female terrorists of the PSR created in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, which means that the central question of the dissertation is a historical one and can be studied as a part of gender history. Gender history is a direction of historical research which focusses on the “study of social relations of the sexes” in the past. The most prominent scholar who has theorized about the possibilities of using the category of gender in historical writing is Joan Wallach Scott, whose ideas are used as one of the theoretical approaches of the dissertation.

Scott’s ideas about gender as a historical concept and gender history in general have been transformed and developed in her works written during the last thirty years. In this dissertation, I use the latest version of Scott’s ideas presented in her book The Fantasy of Feminist History. The author offers there a new approach to gender history inspired by psychoanalytic theories that, according to her, could help address “the difficulties associated with establishing the boundaries and meanings of

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84 See for example Sjoberg, Laura, & Gentry, Caron E. (2008), ‘Reduced to bad sex: Narratives of violent women from the bible to the war on terror,’ International Relations, 22(1), 7.
87 Scott 2011.
sexed identities.”\(^88\) However, the ground for this new type of theorizing was laid in Scott’s earlier works that I touch upon when necessary in order to explain my understanding of the book’s theoretical premises.

The central issues connected to *gender history* are the categories of “men” and “women,” which, according to Scott, are not fixed, but, on the contrary, are transparent and mutable. It implies that the meaning of being a “woman” or “man” is in constant change, since there is “no essence of womanhood (or of manhood) to provide a stable subject for our histories; there are only successive iterations of a word that does not have a fixed referent and so does not always mean the same thing.”\(^89\) The same is true for *gender*, since the relationship between male and female is not predictable as well and always has a different meaning. In other words, Scott approaches categories like “men” and “women,” as well as the concept of *gender*, as historical, showing that they are subjects of change in the course of time.

Scott defines *gender* in her latest book as “the history of the articulations of the masculine/feminine, male/female distinction, whether in terms of bodies, roles, or psychological traits.”\(^90\) Scott highlights that her approach does not assume the prior existence of the masculine/feminine, male/female distinction, which was implied by some critics of her earlier works.\(^91\) Scott claims that, on the contrary, she seeks to examine “the complicated, contradictory, and ambivalent way it has emerged in different social and political discourses.”\(^92\) In this definition of *gender*, Scott goes beyond defining gender as entirely a social phenomenon, as she did in some of her previous works, and suggests that it is impossible to define gender without taking into account the psychoanalytic concept of *fantasy*. According to her, the normative discourses on masculinity and femininity do not necessarily determine the way subjects identify themselves:

> Fantasy disrupts these kinds of correlations, refusing the certainty of disciplined history’s categories. In their place, there is the elusive pursuit of language, not only as the con-

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\(^88\) Scott 2008, 1428.
\(^89\) Scott 2011, 11.
\(^90\) Scott 2011, 21.
\(^91\) For this sort of critique see for example Boydston, Jeanne (2008), ‘Gender as a question of historical analysis’, *Gender & History*, 20(3), 563.
\(^92\) Scott 2011, 21.
scious expression of ideas, but as the revelation of unconscious processes. We have to ask how, under what conditions, and with what fantasies the identities of men and women ... are articulated and recognized. The categories then will no longer precede the analysis but emerge in the course of it.93

Thus, masculinities and femininities, as well as gender, are historical phenomena for Scott that have different meanings in different contexts. The ideas about the importance of the context were developed in her earlier works. In her article of 2008, Scott specifies that by context she means not only historical (i.e., temporal) context, but also a geographical, political and ideological framework.94 According to Scott, the context would help treat gender as “a historical phenomenon, produced, reproduced, and transformed in different situations and over time.”95

In the centre of Scott’s ideas on gender history is rethinking and rewriting of the existing history with a focus on the analysis of the language of gender in different historical contexts.96 For finding gender in history, Scott highlights the importance of textuality, “the ways arguments are structured and presented as well as to what is literally said.” According to the author, “the meaning is conveyed through implicit or explicit contrast, through internal differentiation,” which means that positive definitions always rest on the negation or repression of something represented as antithetical to it.97 In other words, Scott claims that finding gender in history requires searching for articulations of male and female distinctions in historical sources.

The focal point of the dissertation is the construction of narratives about terrorist women within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom. Taking as a starting point the findings of scholars of contemporary terrorism studies that female terrorists are normally represented in a highly gendered fashion, unlike their male counterparts, I assume that texts by/about them include different linguistic means, as well as explicit and

93 Scott 2011, 21.
94 Scott 2008, 1423.
95 Scott 1999a, 6.
97 Scott 1999a, 7.
implicit contrasts to the male ideal that serve to feminize the representations of these women. The way they were constructed in these texts was determined by historical, geographical and political contexts, namely by the way femininity was understood in pre-revolutionary and early Soviet Russia both in society in general and among the revolutionaries. At the same time, representations of female terrorists were coloured by the fantasy of individual authors, whose understanding of femininity was not necessarily identical to the normative discourses that existed in society in general and the revolutionary underground in particular.

1.6.3 Intersectionality

“The Russian female terrorists” were not at all a homogeneous group, but, on the contrary, to use Benedict Anderson’s terminology, an “imagined community”98 of women who were different in their ethnicity, social background, age, educational level, etc. As has been shown in the overview of previous research on the topic, scholars have already paid attention to the fact that the way the life stories of individual terrorist women were told within the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground depended very much on these women’s social characteristics that distinguished them from other women labelled “female terrorists.” For this reason, intersectionality seems to be a useful analytical tool for the dissertation.

The concept that intersectionality denotes has been used in feminist work for a long while.99 However, for the first time the term intersectionality appeared in the works by American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in order to describe interactions of race and gender as they shape the lives and social practices of black women.100 Since then, the

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98 Benedict Anderson calls “nation” the “imagined political community,” meaning that it is “imagined” “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (see Anderson, Benedict (1991[1983]), Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London; New York: Verso, 6).


concept has been developed quite intensively by feminist scholars, and it is used nowadays both by scholars interested in the experiences of those underprivileged\textsuperscript{101} and in other instances as well, since intersectionality can be seen as a generalized theory of identity.\textsuperscript{102}

Theorizing about the intersectional approach is mostly done by social scientists. Although feminist historians eagerly use intersectionality in their works,\textsuperscript{103} I have not found many theoretical works about \textit{intersectionality} in history. A pioneering work in that field is an article by Swedish historian Helena Tolvhed, where she underlines the relevance of the historical perspective and historical studies to advances in intersectional research, both theoretical and methodological.

Tolvhed defines \textit{intersectionality} as an approach that considers socially and culturally constructed categories, with the point of departure in grounds for oppression like gender, class, race/ethnicity or sexual preferences to be intertwined and mutually constructing.\textsuperscript{104} The categories mentioned by Tolvhed in her definition are only a few among the endless number of differentiation categories that are identified by other scholars who work with \textit{intersectionality}.\textsuperscript{105}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Tolvhed, Helena (2010), ‘Intersektionalitet och historievetenskap,’ in \textit{Scandia}, 76(1), 59-72.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} See for example a large number of these categories in the definition of intersectionality offered by Nina Lykke (Lykke, Nina (2010), \textit{Feminist Studies: A guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing}, (New York, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group), 50).
\end{itemize}
scholars, there are critical voices that express doubt about the possibilities of researching all the differentiation categories that exist. This issue has been further discussed as one of the main weaknesses of intersectionality in many feminist works on it, because it is not clear which categories of differentiation are more important than others.\(^\text{106}\) Tolvhed, as a historian, specifies that it is information in the historical material and the central question of the research that determine which categories are considered to be important for the analysis.\(^\text{107}\) Since I am working with historical material, I have to use in my analysis only the categories of differentiation that influenced the way the lives of female terrorists were constructed in revolutionary auto/biographies. Since current research seeks to identify how these categories influenced the way these women’s life paths were portrayed in these works, there is no need to exclude any of the categories present in the sources from the analysis.

Tolvhed introduces the categories of differentiation as historical since, according to her, the categories have been defined in various ways in different historical contexts. Even the processes of identification and categorization can be historicized if they are approached as changeable and intertwined in historically (politically, socially and culturally) specific ways.\(^\text{108}\) In other words, intersectional history, according to Tolvhed, is the history of changes that the categories and their interweaving underwent in the course of time.

According to Tolvhed, by using the intersectional approach historians can analyse norms and discursive statements from different kinds of texts.\(^\text{109}\) Tolvhed, however, does not write about the way cultural representations can be approached using an intersectional perspective, a


\(^{107}\) Tolvhed 2010, 69. The authors working with intersectionality in other disciplines have responded to that critique in the same way. See for example Yuval-Davis, Nira (2006), ‘Intersectionality and Feminist Politics,’ in European Journal of Women’s Studies, 13 (3), 203; Shields 2008, 304.

\(^{108}\) Tolvhed 2010, 60, 66.

\(^{109}\) Tolvhed 2010, 67.
topic that, as a matter of fact, has not been discussed by many scholars. American feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins has written about intersectional analysis of cultural representations in her book about the situation of black women in the United States. However, Collins admits that intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation are global phenomena. Thus, the ideas about intersectionality that she offers can be applied to different cases in different contexts.

According to Collins, intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality need powerful ideological justifications for their existence, which are exercised with the help of controlling stereotypical images. Collins distinguishes four domains of power that help reproduce these controlling images, the structural (social institutions), disciplinary (organizational practices), hegemonic (ideology and culture), and interpersonal domains (everyday social interactions):

- each domain serves a particular purpose. The structural domain organizes oppression, whereas the disciplinary domain manages it. The hegemonic domain justifies oppression, and the interpersonal domain influences everyday lived experience and the individual consciousness that ensues.

However, according to Collins, besides the above-mentioned domains of power, there are so-called oppositional institutions in society (Afro-American institutions in Collins’s book) that also perpetuate these controlling images. However, since they do not subscribe totally to stereotypical images reproduced in the domains of power, they become complex sites where dominant ideologies are simultaneously resisted and reproduced.

To use Collins’s terminology, the Russian revolutionary underground can be seen as the oppositional institution in pre-revolutionary Russia which resisted the dominant ideas about female participation in political

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111 See Collins 2000 [1990], 231.
112 Collins 2000 [1990], 69.
113 Collins 2000 [1990], 276.
114 Collins 2000 [1990], 86.
terrorism as a sign of deviation and offered its own understanding of that phenomenon in terms of revolutionary heroism and martyrdom. At the same time, however, since terrorist women had different power positions in Russian society, the way their life paths were constructed in the texts was influenced by stereotypical images of the groups that they belonged to that existed in Russian society at that time. As a result, different kinds of experiences, behaviours and intentions were ascribed to different women because of their backgrounds. It is thus possible to assume that the dominant ideologies of pre-revolutionary Russian society were partly reproduced in the texts created in the revolutionary underground.

Following Jasbir K. Puar, who disallows the concept of intersectionality as too focused on the categories of differentiation, Tolvhed advocates for putting in the centre of the research analytical concepts that collect normative in- and exclusion processes, the way Collins used in one of her works family as a superior example of intersectionality, or as Tolvhed herself used in her dissertation body and nation as intersectional nodes.  

In my dissertation, I use the concept of the revolutionary heroine as the intersectional node, where the categories of differentiation of Russian female terrorists were used in order to create their portrayals and life paths in that role. Such an approach helps to understand how differences between the life paths of various women were contextualized within the same discourse of heroism and martyrdom that defined these women in the imagination of the Russian revolutionary underground.

1.6.4 Representation

The concept of representation is actively used in the works of feminist historians, who offer a great range of definitions for it. However, none of the authors whose works are used in the theoretical background for this dissertation has provided a definition of the concept. That is why I have turned to the works of Richard Dyer, a British scholar of film studies, the author of a solid definition of representation. Since Dyer has written at length on representations of race, sexuality and gender, thus taking into account gender and intersectional perspectives, his ideas on

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115 Tolvhed 2010, 65.
the nature of representation fit into the theoretical framework of my dissertation.

Dyer’s starting point is that one apprehends reality only through representations of it, through texts, discourse, and images, since there is no such thing as unmediated access to reality. This does not mean, however, that we do not see reality at all; according to Dyer, representations are created in tension with the reality to which these representations refer and which they affect. Dyer defines representation in the following way:

representations are presentations, always and necessarily entailing the use of the codes and conventions of the available cultural forms of presentation. Such forms restrict and shape what can be said by and/or about any aspect of reality in a given place in a given society at a given time, but if that seems like a limitation on saying, it is also what makes saying possible at all.

Cultural forms, according to Dyer, do not have single determinate meanings; people make sense of them in different ways, according to the cultural (and sub-cultural) codes available to them. Dyer’s definition of representation corresponds to the idea of importance of social and cultural context, which is present in all the theories used in the dissertation. Dyer, thus, defines representations as phenomena shaped by their environment.

Dyer also considers representations to be important for the formation of identities on both individual and group levels:

How a group is represented, presented over again in cultural forms, how an image of a member of a group is taken as representative of that group, how that group is represented in the sense of spoken for and on behalf of (whether they represent, speak for themselves or not), these all have to do with how members of groups see themselves and others like themselves, how they see their place in society, their right to the rights a society claims to ensure its citizens. Equally re-presentation, representativeness, representing have to do

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117 Dyer 1993, 2.
also with how others see members of a group and their place and rights, others who have the power to affect that place and those rights.118

As applied in the case of female terrorists of the PSR, this means that autobiographies and biographies of these women that represented them as revolutionary heroines were an essential part of the process of creation of the ideal revolutionary type, which was accepted both within the PSR and the revolutionary underground, and which became the point of reference for future representations of revolutionary femininity that were created in the early Soviet state. That is why it is important to investigate the question posed in the dissertation in order to get a better understanding of these processes.

1.6.5 Terrorism

The terms terrorist and terrorism emerged with the French Revolution and were occasionally used by the Jacobins in a positive sense. After the ninth of Thermidor, however, the terms quickly became pejoratives.119 The scholars who work with terrorism from a historical perspective have admitted terminological problems with the use of the word. The reason for this is, as Sylvia Schraut points out in her article, the fact that “in the 19th and 20th century what we call terrorism today, was called revolt, upheaval or assassination, anarchism, nihilism or simply political violence.”120 Nowadays, the label terrorism/terrorist has a negative meaning and aims to delegitimize social movements, political groups, and individuals.121 Members of organizations that are considered to be terrorist normally call themselves “freedom fighters” or “revolutionaries,” while the word “terrorist” is normally applied to them only by those who oppose their activities.

With this context in mind, it is reasonable to ask whether it is correct to use the terms terrorism and terrorist in a work about Russian revolutionaries at the beginning of the 20th century. Beside the fact that the terms are actively used by historians who work in this research field, at the beginning of the 20th century the terrorists themselves eagerly used

118 Dyer 1993, 1.
120 Schraut 2014, 60-61.
121 Schraut & Weinhauer 2014, 7.
For them, the term *terrorism* had a different meaning than it has today. Terrorism as conceptualized by the PSR was used as a heroic label, since “terrorism” meant righteous violence in the cause of political change, employed against a corrupt autocracy on behalf of oppressed and helpless people. Moreover, political terrorism exercised by socialists was seen as a noble activity by the greater part of Russian society. In current media usage, “terror” and “terrorism” are used interchangeably. Russian revolutionaries most commonly used the Russian word *terror* when referring to the actual use of systematic violence to eliminate and intimidate counterrevolutionaries, but they also used euphemisms such as “disorganization” and “partisan warfare.”

This, however, does not imply that they considered the words *terrorism* and *terrorist* pejorative in any way.

Contemporary terrorism studies offer a great range of definitions of terrorism. However, as has been pointed out by historians, most of them cannot be used in historical research. The definitions that are normally used in historical works have their starting point in Mark Juergensmeyer’s definition of *terrorism* as “performance violence,” since terrorists communicate with multiple audiences, both sympathetic and antagonistic, through actions, images, and symbols. Historian of the Russian revolutionary underground Lynn Ellen Patyk builds on this definition by claiming that terrorism differs from instrumental violence

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122 For example, Maria Shkolnik, who was active in different terrorist units of the PSR, called herself a *terrorist* in the title of the second version of her memoirs (see Shkolnik, Maria (1927), ‘Zhizn byvshej terroristki,’ reprinted in Budnitsky O. (1996) (ed.), *Zhenschiny-terroristki v Rossii: Beskorystnye ubiysy*, Rostov-n-Donu: Fenix, 237-324).

123 Boniece 2010a, 125.

124 See more about it in Geifman 1993, 18; Budnitsky 2000, 176; Boniece 2010a, 128.


126 Patyk 2009, 759f.

127 See more about it in Budnitsky 1994-1995; Schraut 2014, 60.

in its form (it is “repeated”) and its goals (communicative and affective).\textsuperscript{129} Since the terrorist’s deed serves to communicate to and influence multiple audiences, the aspect of memory is important; without it, the initial violent action and its repetition could not be meaningfully linked. Terrorism’s affect (anxiety) as its lever of political and social influence is possible only if the original act is remembered, if its repetition is anticipated, and if successive acts recall – implicitly by means of imitation and explicitly by means of representation – their predecessors.\textsuperscript{130}

This definition offered in Patyk’s article on Russian terrorism in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century seems to be useful for the aims of the dissertation. Terrorist attacks committed by members of Russian terrorist units in general and their female members in particular were repetitive actions that had communicative and affective goals. In the focus of my research is the performative side of terrorism and its memory aspect, since I am going to analyse the way the PSR represented the life paths of its female terrorists to wider audiences, and in this way tried to control the way these women would be remembered.

1.6.6 Autobiographies, Biographies and Auto/biographies

The dissertation deals with the way the lives of female terrorists of the PSR were constructed, and the material that I use are the accounts of these women’s lives. Texts that deal with the life stories of individual people traditionally are divided into two groups, autobiographies and biographies. In the dissertation, I am using both types of documents.

Olga Demidova defines autobiography as a description of one’s own life, based on the work of memory and focused on psychological experiences, thoughts and feelings of the author.\textsuperscript{131} According to many scholars, not only purely autobiographical accounts have autobiographical character. Memoirs, diaries and letters can also be autobiographical, since all these sources can include information about the author’s

\textsuperscript{129} Patyk 2009, 759; Patyk, Lynn (2010), ‘Dressed to Kill and Die: Russian Revolutionary Terrorism, Gender, and Dress,’ in \textit{Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas}, 58:2, 193.

\textsuperscript{130} Patyk 2009, 759.

personal life story. Marianne Liljeström, Arja Rosenholm and Irina Slavkina refer to “some current theories” that argue that any text, even a restaurant bill, can be approached as autobiographical. In other words, any text created by a person that deals with her/his life story or parts of it can thus be seen as autobiographical. While searching for material for the dissertation, I found a number of memoirs, court speeches and letters where the terrorist women told the stories of their lives or parts of these stories with the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life as their starting point. I approach such texts as autobiographies in the dissertation, and thus do not limit my work only to the analysis of purely autobiographical accounts.

As for biographical accounts, this is how “biography” is defined by Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn:

> *Biography* studies the particular life stories of individuals. It pays attention not only to material events in the life of a person, but also to his inner characteristics, searching for the motives of someone’s actions, his psychology and mentality.

This definition shows that autobiographical and biographical accounts as genres have common features: both of them are oriented toward individuals’ life stories or parts of them, both pay particular attention to people’s individual experiences and perceptions of the events. It is also possible to assume that, just as any text created by a person can be seen as autobiographical, any text written about a person can be considered biographical. It means that not only purely biographical texts can be

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133 Liljeström, Rosenholm & Slavkina 2000, 8.

seen as “biographies.” While searching for source material for the dissertation, I found out that biographies of individual female terrorists could be found not only in the articles and brochures explicitly dedicated to telling the life stories of these women, but also in memoirs or even biographies of other people where some attention was given to the life stories of female terrorists (or parts of these life stories).

Thus, in this dissertation I use quite broad definitions of “autobiography” and “biography” in order to be able to include in the analysis different kinds of works about the lives of female terrorists of the PSR.

It is quite common among contemporary scholars, however, to unify autobiographies and biographies as parts of one meta-genre, which is called “auto/biography.” The term “auto/biography” was coined by feminist scholar Liz Stanley, who uses it to encompass all the ways of writing a life. According to Stanley, despite the differences that exist between these two genres, they are both ideological accounts of “lives.” Both autobiographies and biographies “are by nature artful enterprises which select, shape and produce a very unnatural product, for no life is lived quite so much under a single spotlight as the conventional form of written auto/biographies suggests.” In other words, Stanley unifies autobiographies and biographies within one and the same meta-genre mostly because of the ideological and political nature of both of these types of writing a life.

The autobiographies and biographies that were written within the Russian revolutionary underground at the beginning of the 20th century, the source material of the dissertation, have the “auto/biographical” features identified by Stanley. Catriona Kelly defines Russian revolutionary autobiographies as “biographies in the first person”: although they are written in the first person, they offer official histories of achievement, “records of exceptionality” that render an individual story in a manner that draws heavily upon formula, which thus is striking in its impersonal character. All these documents were part of the same dis-

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course of heroism and martyrdom employed within the Russian revolutionary underground, and as a result, the lives of terrorist women were constructed as directed toward their revolutionary engagement and consequent martyrdom. Because of discursive similarities that characterize representations of revolutionaries in both autobiographies and biographies, it seems unnecessary to analyse the representations constructed in these types of sources separately. In the dissertation, I use the concept “auto/biography” to refer to the texts where the life stories of Russian revolutionaries were told by themselves or their contemporaries, distinguishing between autobiographical and biographical accounts only when it is necessary for understanding eventual variations in how female terrorists represented their lives and in how their biographers did it.

The concept “auto/biography” is especially relevant as a definition for a particular type of sources used in the dissertation, the memoirs written by female revolutionaries incarcerated in Maltsev Prison for women. Although the authors of these works are individual female socialists and anarchists, they do not write about their own lives in prison, but describe instead the life of the whole commune of political prisoners, using the pronoun “we.” On one hand, these works can be seen as autobiographies of the prison commune written by some of its members; on the other hand, the memoirists sometimes write about individual revolutionary women, thus, including in their autobiographical writings even biographical accounts.

1.7 Sources

In this section I intend, first, to explain the principles I have used for choosing relevant source material for the dissertation and, second, to characterize the sources that were chosen. I group the source material used in the dissertation with the starting point in the collective authors who created such materials before and after the revolution: the PSR, the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles, the liberals and the Bolsheviks. Since the revolutionary auto/biographies are very standardized in their contents, the backgrounds of individual authors generally are of no importance; the political affiliation of the author determines the type of narrative that is constructed. Any eventual differences in how the life paths of female terrorists were represented in the works by

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137 I discuss this issue in more detail in section 1.7.3.
different authors are discussed in the empirical chapters of the dissertation, while in the following sections I only introduce the materials and discuss the necessity of a critical attitude toward them.

1.7.1 About Choosing the Sources

The materials that fit the broad definitions of “autobiographies” and “biographies” that I use in the dissertation are quite many. That is why I have had to choose from all the possible source material the autobiographies and biographies that were the most characteristic for the genre of revolutionary auto/biography written at the beginning of the 20th century. In the following paragraphs, I explain the principles that I have used to make such choice.

While searching for the sources for the dissertation, I was primarily interested in published materials, since these kinds of documents went through some kind of revolutionary censorship, and thus must be more adapted to the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life that existed in the Russian revolutionary underground. At the same time, my archival studies showed that similar kinds of documents, revolutionary auto/biographies constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom, were present even among unpublished materials. Such materials are used in the dissertation in order to complete and sometimes problematize the results of analysis of published revolutionary auto/biographies.

The majority of texts by and about female terrorists of the PSR that were written before the revolution were published illegally by the party. It implies particular difficulties in localizing all the sources that exist, since it is possible to assume that many such texts were published and distributed in the regions where terrorist women committed their attacks, and thus can be found only in local archives and libraries in Russia. The same problem exists even in the case of source material created after the revolution. The Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles, the organization that published much materials on revolutionary activism in Russia during early Soviet times, had local branches that left their own huge legacy of publications mostly in local libraries and archives.138 Due to the practical impossibility of investigating all these

local institutions to find all relevant sources for the dissertation that exist, I use only materials that are available in the archives and libraries of Moscow, where much material on the topic is stored, namely the State Archive of Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, GARF), the Russian State Library (Rossiiskaya Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka), and the State Historical Public Library (Gosudarstvennaya Publitchnaya Istoricheskaya Biblioteka). I have also found electronic versions of some of the auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR that are not available in the above-listed institutions. Since these documents are dedicated to some of the central female personalities of the PSR terrorist organizations, and thus can help identify important features of the way the auto/biographies of the terrorist women of the PSR represented their life path, they are also used in the dissertation.

1.7.2 Materials of the PSR

Since the female terrorists discussed in the dissertation were members of the PSR, the most important materials about their revolutionary lives were created by party members, the terrorist women themselves (autobiographical sources) and their comrades (biographical sources), both before and after the revolutions of 1917, in Russia and abroad.

As for the period before 1917, party publications about the revolutionary lives of female PSR terrorists can be found in books and brochures dedicated to individual women or PSR terrorists in general and in party periodicals.

The PSR published in Russia brochures about Fruma Frumkina, Maria Spiridonova and Zinaida Konoplyannikova. These brochures include not only the women’s biographies, but also their private letters, court speeches, speeches made by their liberal attorneys during their trials, etc.139 These publications, thus, provide both autobiographical and biographical material connected to terrorist women. Naturally, the biographical accounts in these cases are influenced by the women’s own versions of their life stories, told in their autobiographical documents. However, I use both autobiographical and biographical accounts from

139 See Frumkina, Fruma (1904-1905), Biograficheskie dannye i otchet o protsesse, [Peterburg]; M-in S.P. (1906), ‘Delo M.A. Spiridonovoi’, reprinted in Gusev K.V. (1992), Eserovskaya bogoroditsa, Moscow: Luch, 5-56; Vladimirov V. (1906a), Maria Spiridonova, Moscow; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova, B.m., 1906; Pamyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina. 11 iulya-13 iulya 1907 g., b.m., b.g.
these brochures in order to be able to discuss the eventual differences between them.

Maria Shkolnik, the only female terrorist from the PSR who managed to escape from Maltsev Prison in Siberia and emigrated to avoid prosecution by the Russian authorities, published a book of memoirs, under the name Marie Sukloff in the United States in 1915, about her way into the revolution and political activism.\textsuperscript{140} Although Shkolnik tells her life story to a foreign audience, she uses the same language and the same symbolism that was characteristic of the Russian materials about revolutionary heroes and heroines. The reason for these similarities is that the perception of Russian revolutionary terrorists abroad was dominated by the opinions of Russian socialists based in Europe, and represented Russian terrorists as fighters against tsarist despotism, and thus martyrs and heroes.\textsuperscript{141} As a result, in order to make her story acceptable to foreign audiences, Shkolnik only needed to tell it in the same way such stories would have been told to Russian sympathizers of political terrorists.

Besides looking for books and brochures by/about female PSR terrorists, I was also interested in pre-revolutionary publications in SR newspapers and journals. I went through the contents of the journal \textit{Byloe}, published by the PSR legally in Russia for a few years after the revolution of 1905 and dedicated to the history of revolutionary struggle. Among these materials, I found Frumkina’s letters to the famous social-ist Vladimir Burtsev (1862-1942), where the author, on the request of her correspondent, wrote the whole story of her life, thus producing an autobiographical text. In other materials of the journal, I could find brief

\textsuperscript{140} See Sukloff, Marie (1915), \textit{The Life–Story of a Russian Exile}, New York: The Century CO.
references to some of the female terrorists of the PSR that had biographical character and are used in the dissertation as well.

I found some autobiographical and biographical materials on female terrorists that appeared in pre-revolutionary newspapers and journals published by the PSR among the materials available at the website “Partiya Sotsialistov-Revolyutsionerov. Istoriya.” First of all, I found there biographical accounts from 1910 about Aleksandra Sevastianova (written by “Irina,” which was the nickname of Ksenia Zilberberg (1882-1955), a member of the Combat Organization who worked together with Sevastianova) and Maria Fedorova (written by Yakovlev); both were published in Znamya truda, the official newspaper of the PSR in 1907-1914. Second, I also found there materials from lesser-known underground newspapers and journals: Lidiya Ezerskaya’s obituary, published in Lensky krai in 1915, and a short article on Fruma Frumkina published in Narodovolets in 1903. Coming from periodicals that were closely connected to the PSR and its view on revolutionary heroism, these publications show fine examples of writing of revolutionary life that existed in the revolutionary underground, and thus are suitable for the purposes of the dissertation.

One of the relevant sources created before 1917 is a sketch of Ekaterina Izmailovich’s revolutionary biography, which is stored in Boris Savinkov’s collection (fund 5831) in GARF. The document is not signed, but its author mentions that he accompanied Izmailovich to the office of her target Admiral Grigory Chukhnin, where Izmailovich committed her unsuccessful assassination attempt. According to Philip Desind, the person who took Izmailovich to the place of assassination was her fellow SR Vladimir Vnorovsky (1879-?), which leads to the conclusion that Vnorovsky was the author of the sketch.142 There is no date on the sketch, and I have no information on whether it was later published. However, Vnorovsky writes about the Combat Organization of the PSR in the present tense, which shows that the sketch was written while the terrorist unit was still operating in Russia.143 It shows, thus, that the document was written before the revolution and before the terrorist campaign of the PSR came to the end.

Directly after the revolutions of 1917, although the PSR was not the party that came to power, its political struggle was considered a part of

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142 Desind, Philip (1990), Jewish and Russian Revolutionaries Exiled to Siberia 1901-1917, Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 119.
143 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l.6.
the revolutionary movement, and as a result, new interest in the life stories of former terrorists emerged. It was only in 1917-1919 that a few versions of Spiridonova’s and Konoplyannikova’s life stories were published in different brochures. The majority of these works were of a purely biographical character and did not include as many texts created by the women themselves as the pre-revolutionary works about them. However, biographies of both women in Geroi russkoj revolyutsii were primarily based on the texts of their court speeches, where Spiridonova and Konoplyannikova explained their terrorist attacks.

Besides these brochures, I was not able to find any other works written by the former SR specifically dedicated to female terrorists prior to the establishment of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles. Only in the book by SR Alexander Pribylev (1857-1936) about a female agent provocateur, Zinaida Zhuchenko (1872-?), is there an interesting biographical piece on Frumkina, who, according to Pribylev, was revealed to the police by Zhuchenko. The narrative about the life story of Frumkina is different here from her other biographies, which makes the book especially interesting for the dissertation, since it can show how the writing of a revolutionary life was developing and changing during the Soviet time.

In the early Soviet period, the journal Byloe was revived, and it published some of the materials connected to terrorism of the PSR. The most important source there that is used in the dissertation are the memoirs of the leader of the Combat Organization of the PSR, Boris Savinkov (1879-1925). Savinkov provides biographies of almost all the women who worked together with him in the Combat Organization, using as his sources not only memory, but also publications about them that appeared in pre-revolutionary newspapers and journals. The memoirs were republished a few times after that; in this dissertation I have chosen to use the Russian publication from 2002, which reproduces the original publication from Byloe.

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During the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, former members of the PSR and other socialists mostly published the works connected to female terrorists of the PSR in the volumes of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles.\footnote{The publications of the the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles used in the dissertation are introduced in the next section.} After the mid-1930s, party members could only publish such works abroad. I use three such publications in the dissertation. Isaak Steinberg (1888-1957), a Left SR and friend of Spiridonova, published a book in English in 1935 about her life and deeds in order to draw international attention to Spiridonova’s sufferings under the Soviet regime. The book, partly based on pre-revolutionary articles about Spiridonova’s case by liberal journalist V.E. Vladimirov, pays particular attention to her past as a political terrorist, and in addition provides quite detailed biographical accounts of Alexandra and Ekaterina Izmailovich.\footnote{Steinberg, I. (1935), \textit{Spiridonova Revolutionary Terrorist}, London: Methuen & Co LTD.} PSR member Vladimir Zenzinov (1880-1953), in his memoirs of 1953, provides his readers with a detailed biography of Maria Benevskaya.\footnote{Zenzinov, Vladimir (1953), \textit{Perezhitoe}, New York: Izdatelstvo imeni Chekhova, 311-316.} A unique document is also Paul H. Avrich’s interview with Klara Klebanova (1888-?) from 1973. Klebanova was a member of the maximalist group who had been a member of the PSR at the beginning of her revolutionary career. In the interview, while telling her life story, Klebanova spoke about some of her comrades, including Ekaterina Izmailovich, whose life path Klebanova described in detail.\footnote{Avrich, Paul H., & Klebanova, Klara (1973), ‘The Last Maximalist: An Interview with Klara Klebanova,’ \textit{The Russian Review}, 32(4), 413-420.} Although Zenzinov’s and Klebanova’s texts were created long after most of the auto/biographies of terrorist women had been published, the biographical accounts that they provide follow the discursive practice of writing revolutionary biographies in the Russian revolutionary underground. Eventual differences in how these accounts construct revolutionary lives from earlier revolutionary biographies help identify the changes that the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life underwent in emigration.

Another revolutionary biography created by a member of the PSR in emigration is the sketch of Sevastianova’s life signed by Ksenia Pamfilova-Zilberberg, which was found in Boris Savinkov’s collection in GARF. The document is entitled “materials for the biography,” and was
written in Rome in February, 1919.\textsuperscript{150} I have no information whether the sketch was later published somewhere abroad. This sketch is a more detailed and partly changed version of the obituary that Zilberberg published in \textit{Znamya truda} in May-June 1910 and signed “Irina.” The sketch is used in the dissertation in order to highlight the differences between it and the article published by Zilberberg earlier, which help identify the changes in the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life in emigration after the revolutions of 1917.

A special autobiographical document created by a PSR member and used in the dissertation is an unpublished sketch of Revekka Fialka’s autobiography, which was written in the 1950s. The document is available at the website of “Memorial” without any indication of its source. This autobiography has been previously used in historical research, so I do not see a problem using it in this dissertation despite a lack of clarity in its origin.\textsuperscript{151} In her autobiography, Fialka retells her whole life story in brief in the style that was typical for autobiographies submitted to different Soviet organizations. Although the document is brief and formal in its character, it is written in accordance with the discursive practice of writing a heroic revolutionary life, and thus can be relevant for the dissertation.

Maria Spiridonova’s “Last Testament,” written in the late 1930s, was published abroad in 1995.\textsuperscript{152} Since the document partly deals with Spiridonova’s reminiscences about her participation in political terrorism, it is also used in the dissertation.

In the course of my archival studies, I found personal letters written by female terrorists of the PSR to each other and to their comrades while they were in prison, exile or emigration. These documents are of a very personal character and do not have the typical characteristics of revolutionary auto/biographies. However, in some of them I was able to find representations of female terrorists of the PSR that could easily appear

\textsuperscript{150} GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 41.
\textsuperscript{151} Fialkas autobiography downloaded from the website of “Memorial” (Fialka R., ‘Avtobiografiya (chernovik, nachalo 1950-h),’ available at http://www.memo.ru/ner-czinsk/, accessed 2015-03-30) was used as a primary source by American historian Sally A. Boniece in her article about the Shesterka of terrorist women (see Boniece, Sally A. (2010b), ‘The” Shesterka” of 1905-06: Terrorist Heroines of Revolutionary Russia,’ \textit{Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas}, 172-191).
in their revolutionary biographies. I use these representations only to confirm or question the results of the analysis of other sources.

1.7.3 The Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles

Systematic publishing of auto/biographies of revolutionaries, including female terrorists of the PSR, became a part of the work conducted by the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles, established in Moscow in March, 1921. This organization, which, according to Konstantin Morozov, had the ambition of becoming the keeper of revolutionary traditions, was active in producing books and brochures dedicated to the revolutionary fight in Russia, and former members of the PSR eagerly published their memoirs and biographies of their comrades in the Society’s volumes. Publications of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles written by revolutionaries with a non-Bolshevik past were characterized by the old revolutionary self-representation rhetoric, thus being the direct continuation of the pre-revolutionary discursive practice of writing revolutionary lives. It is, however, important to remember that since the Bolsheviks considered the independent character of the Society a potential danger, its publishing activities were not independent of the ruling party; in the course of its development, the Society would come under the control of the Bolshevik party. Besides, the publications of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles were often criticized for their anti-communism in reviews written by Bolsheviks, and the Society made efforts to respond

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155 See more about it in Shtakser 2014, 154, 159.

to that critique by changing the contents of its publications.\textsuperscript{157} While working with materials from different volumes published by the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles, I keep in mind the influence of the Bolshevik party and see whether it in some way changed how the lives of female terrorists of the PSR were represented in these publications from earlier works about them.

Among the books published by the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles I use the memoirs of female terrorists of the PSR Praskovia Ivanovskaya and Maria Shkolnik, as well as a volume \textit{Na zheneskoi katorge} (At the Female Hard-Labour Prison), which was dedicated to the life of female political prisoners in Siberia, due to these books’ direct relevance for the dissertation. In the following paragraphs, I briefly introduce these volumes.

Ivanovskaya’s memoirs of her work in the Combat Organization of the PSR and a new version of Shkolnik’s memoirs, this time under her real name and in Russian, were published by the Society as separate books.\textsuperscript{158} In her memoirs, Ivanovskaya wrote not only about her own activities in the field of political terrorism, but also submitted biographical portrayals of the other female members of the Combat Organization. Moreover, the publication was endorsed by a former populist and PSR member, Nikolay Tyutchev (1856-1924), who wrote a biography of Ivanovskaya in his introduction.\textsuperscript{159} As for Shkolnik’s memoirs, many historians note that the version published in Soviet Russia was reworked in order to fit the dominant Bolshevik narrative and to show Shkolnik’s revolutionary activism in the context of her later turn to Bolshevism.\textsuperscript{160} Because of that, in the course of analysis I primarily pay attention to the first version of Shkolnik’s memoirs, published in the United States, as the version that was written in keeping with the discursive practice of members of the PSR. However, the Russian variant is also used in order to highlight and interpret the eventual differences

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\textsuperscript{160} For scholarly opinion on Shkolnik’s memoirs see for example Gorodnitsky, R.A. (1998), \textit{Boevaya organizatsiya partii sotsialistov-revolutsionerov v 1901-1911 gg.}, Moscow: ROSSPEN, 118.
from the original version of the memoirs, which could help show the transformation that the standard of writing a revolutionary life underwent after the revolution.

The volume *Na zhenskoi katorge* was first published in 1930, and included memoirs written by female revolutionaries imprisoned in Maltsev Prison, as well as obituaries dedicated to the deceased former political prisoners. Among the documents published in the volume, only those written by female terrorists of the PSR themselves and those that introduce biographical information about terrorist women are used in the dissertation. The obituaries of Sarra Dantsig and Lidiya Ezerskaya, written by people who were close to them in prison and exile, are constructed as typical revolutionary auto/biographies. In addition to the revolutionary auto/biographies dedicated to individual women, most memoirs included in the volume can be also seen as an example of heroisation of the revolutionaries’ lives. The majority of memoirs included in *Na zhenskoi katorge* have the character of collective biographies. The authors of these works, Irina Kakhovskaya, Antonina Pirogova, Fanya Radzilovskaya and Lidiya Orestova, rarely write about their personal experiences and rarely write about personal experiences of individual women incarcerated together with them. Instead, they introduce the commune that the women organized in prison as the main subject of the memoirs. All the actions and decisions are represented there as collective; however, it is also possible to see how individual female terrorists were introduced by the authors as acting similarly to the rest of the commune or choosing their own mode of action. Not all memoirs included in the volume, however, were written as collective biographies. Shkolnik’s reminiscences about her escape from Siberia, which were also published in *Na zhenskoi katorge*, had an autobiographical character, since the author mainly focused not on the commune of female political prisoners, but on her own mode of action in connection with her escape from prison. The memoirs of Paulina Metter, an anarchist communist from a working-class background, are quite different from the other memoirs included in the volume, since the author contrasts her own experience as a person from another social class with the experience of the commune. In chapter 6 of the disserta-

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161 A similar conclusion was drawn by Badcock in the course of her work with political prisoners’ memoirs (Badcock 2016, 47).
tion, where the materials from this volume are used, I discuss the differences between the narratives constructed in various memoirs in more detail.

In 1932, a new edition of the volume *Na zhenskoi katorge* was published, which included memoirs by Anastasia Bitsenko that were not a part of the first edition. These memoirs can be defined as an alternative to the collective biographies written by Kakhovskaya, Pirogova, Radzilovskaya and Orestova, coloured by Bitsenko’s new political affiliation with the Bolshevik party. Since Bitsenko was one of the leading female PSR terrorists, the second edition of the volume seems to be more useful for the purposes of the dissertation.

From 1923 to 1931, the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles published its official journal, *Katorga i ssylka*, where many autobiographies and biographies of terrorist women of the PSR were printed. According to Badcock, the memoirs that were published in the journal need to be read critically, since Bolsheviks dominated the editorial board and the published memoirs were edited to follow a Bolshevik rubric.\(^{162}\) I keep that Bolshevik influence in mind while working with the materials from *Katorga i ssylka*.

Female terrorists of the PSR whose life stories were introduced in *Katorga i ssylka* were mostly assassins who had not received enough attention from pre-revolutionary authors (Alexandra Sevastianova, Sofiya Khrenkova, Evstoliya Rogozinnikova, Lidiya Sture, and Lidiya Rudneva). Even the life story of Serafima Klitchoglu, a female leader of a terrorist group, which operated in St. Petersburg at the same time as Savinkov’s Combat Organization, appeared in the journal, as well as biographies of Sofia Khrenkova, who, despite her organizing role in a local terrorist unit of the PSR, was more famous for her self-immolation in prison. Anastasia Bitsenko, Alexandra Izmailovich, Valentina Popova, and Maria Spiridonova published their memoirs in *Katorga i ssylka*. Besides that, while looking through all the volumes of the journal, I found many articles written by former members of the PSR where biographical information about former female terrorists is available. All these texts construct the women’s lives or parts of their lives in accordance with the discursive practice of the Russian revolutionary underground, and thus are used in the dissertation.

\(^{162}\) Badcock 2016, 21.
I was also able to find a unique document for this dissertation in the collection of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles (fund 533) in GARF. It is the text of an oral presentation made by Revekka Fialka during a meeting of the Literary Commission of the Nerchinsk Fraternity (Literaturnaya Komissiya Nerchinskogo Zemlyachestva) on December 19, 1934. The presentation is dedicated to Fialka’s arrival in Akatui Prison in Siberia and includes, besides autobiographical details, much information about the other women incarcerated together with her. According to Diane P. Koenker, “evenings of reminiscences” were often held among the revolutionaries who were not used to writing their stories, and thus were more comfortable retelling them. According to her fellow prisoners from Maltsev, Fialka was a person who was not used to writing as well. Thus, the written reproduction of her oral presentation is the only document that provides an opportunity to analyse Fialka’s version of the collective biography of the incarcerated female terrorists. Other than that, I have not been able to locate any oral presentations by/about other female terrorists of the PSR. In her research on female Italian left-wing terrorists, Passerini shows that written autobiographies of former terrorists were quite different from their oral accounts of their lives. Thus, by using the text of Fialka’s oral presentation in the dissertation, I am able to ascertain whether the standard of writing revolutionary life was different from the standard of telling it in the case of female terrorists of the PSR.

1.7.4 Liberal Authors

It has been established by historians that Russian liberals sympathized with the terrorists from the revolutionary underground, and as did the socialists, represented them in their works as martyrs and heroes. In order to see how the discourse of heroism and martyrdom was used in

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163 According to Shtakser, such meetings, where recollections of different events from the history of revolutionary struggle were presented by the members of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles, were held regularly (Shtakser 2014, 159).

164 See Koenker 2004, 375.


the works of liberal authors, I even included in this work the biographies of female terrorists of the PSR written by them.

Including representations created by liberals in the dissertation seems to be especially important, since liberal authors were the first biographers of the most famous female terrorist of the PSR, Maria Spiridonova. The liberal journalist V.E. Vladimirov wrote a series of articles about Spiridonova’s case for the newspaper *Rus*. Although Vladimirov’s articles were criticized by Spiridonova’s closest associates, the information provided in them was a starting point not only for Vladimirov’s later book about Spiridonova’s case, but also for almost all her biographies written before and after the revolution. Vladimirov’s articles were dedicated to different periods of Spiridonova’s life, with special focus on what happened after she was arrested, since Vladimirov’s first objective was to write about her as a victim of atrocities of the regime. Vladimirov’s articles were reprinted in 1996 by V.M. Lavrov in a volume of documents connected to Spiridonova’s life and political activism. Due to the practical difficulties of accessing the original publications by Vladimirov, I use Lavrov’s publication when I need to refer to the articles from *Rus*.

Jaakoff Prelooker (1860-1935), a Russian intellectual with liberal views who lived in Britain, published in 1908 a book in English about Russian revolutionaries in which revolutionary biographies of Spiridonova and Konoplyannikova were included. Although Prelooker clearly disassociated himself from Socialism, as the members of the PSR had done, he constructed heroic portrayals of terrorist women very much in line with the representations of their lives within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom. The reason for these similarities is that, as mentioned

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168 See for example Nechetnyi St. (1907), ‘Spekulyatsiya na chuzhih ranakh,’ in *Kollektivist*; *Shornik stater*, Moscow: Svobodnaya rech, 99-104.

169 Different parts of Vladimirov’s articles are reproduced in the following publications about Spiridonova: Vladimirov 1906a; M-in 1906; Steinberg 1935.


above, Russian revolutionary terrorists were seen in Europe as fighters against tsarist despotism, and thus martyrs and heroes.

Another document that I identify as “liberal” in its character are memoirs written by the wife of Anna Rasputina’s attorney, Lyubov Leontieva, stored in the archives of the Leningrad section of the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles. Leontieva’s memoirs are quite different in their character from publications typical for the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles. The author gives vivid portrayals of the two central female participants of the trial, Rasputina and Lidiya Sture very much in keeping with the pre-revolutionary tradition of writing a revolutionary life. At the same time, however, not being a part of the revolutionary underground, Leontieva gives a more liberal representation of the women’s modes of behaviour and motivation, primarily representing them as victims of the regime and not as fighters against it, as the other liberal authors did.

1.7.5 Bolshevik Authors

Some publications by/about former PSR terrorists after 1917 not authorized by the Society of Former Political Prisoners and Exiles were supervised by the Bolshevik party. The interest that some Bolsheviks took in individual members of the PSR can be explained by the fact that, despite the opposition of the PSR to the Bolshevik regime, both parties had a common past of fighting the regime prior to 1917. As a result, individual members of the PSR were still seen by individual members of the Bolshevik party as revolutionary heroes who, however, chose the wrong political affiliation.

Typical in this respect is the book about Lidiya Ezerskaya published by G. Lelevich in 1922. The book includes Ezerskaya’s biography, different documents connected to her trial, as well as private letters. Lelevich introduces Ezerskaya from the Bolshevik position, as a revolutionary heroine, whose assassination attempt against Kleigels was a “feat.” However, that “feat,” according to the author, was connected neither to

173 Tsentrалныя Государственныя Архивы Санкт-Петербурга (TsGA SPb) (Central State Archive of St. Petersburg), Collection 506 – Leningradskoe oblastnoe otdelenie Vsesoyuznogo obschestva politikatorzhan i sylnoposelemtsev, 1924-1935gg. (TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 2-13).
174 See more about the cultural similarities between these two parties in Morozov 2005, 75-76.
the struggle for Socialism nor to the class struggle.\textsuperscript{175} Despite representing Ezerskaya’s activism as different from the political fight of the Bolsheviks, Lelevich does introduce her as a revolutionary heroine:

Ezerskaya was certainly a sincere, persistent, self-sacrificing revolutionary. And in front of her grave, the grave of a heroic fighter against tsarism, we reverently uncover our heads. For we honour the memory of all fighters against all exploitation, of all consistent revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{176}

I have included this book in the source material of the dissertation since it represents Ezerskaya’s life path very much in keeping with how it was represented by members of the PSR, and in keeping with how the lives of revolutionary heroes and heroines were represented within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom. In the course of analysis, however, I keep the political affiliation of the author in mind and discuss the eventual differences of Lelevich’s representation of Ezerskaya’s life path from similar works by members of the PSR.

Bolsheviks took a special interest in the life story of another terrorist of the PSR, Praskovia Ivanovskaya, because prior to her membership in that party, Ivanovskaya was a member of the People’s Will. The People’s Will was considered to be a predecessor of the Bolshevik party, and thus its members were seen in early Soviet Russia as exemplary models of self-sacrifice and revolutionary heroism.\textsuperscript{177} On the wave of that interest, Ivanovskaya’s autobiographical account was published in \textit{Granat Encyclopedia}\textsuperscript{178} together with the autobiographies of forty-four other populists. The volume was edited by Vera Figner (1852-1942),

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\item \textsuperscript{175} Lelevich G. (1922), \textit{Li\u{d}i\u{y}a Ezerskaya i pokushenie na mogilevskogo gubernatora Klingenberga 29-go oktyabrya 1905-go goda}, Gomel: Gomgazeta, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{176} “Езерская безусловно являлась искренней, стойкой, самоотверженной революционеркой. И перед её могилой, - могилой героического бойца с царизмом, мы благоговейно обнажаем головы. Ибо мы чтим память всех бойцов со всякой эксплуатацией, всех последовательных революционеров.” (Lelevich 1922, 27).
\item \textsuperscript{177} Hilbrenner, Anke & Schenk, Frithjof Benjamin (2010), ‘Introduction: Modern times? Terrorism in Late Tsarist Russia,’ \textit{Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas}, (H. 2), 162; Goodwin 2010, 229-230.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
herself a former member of both the People’s Will and the PSR, and all the autobiographies published there were written in accordance with the discursive practice that existed prior to the Bolsheviks’ rule.\footnote{See more about Figner’s editorial work and differences between the autobiographies of the populists and Bolsheviks published in Granat in Hoogenboom 1996, 78-93.} Ivanovskaya’s text can thus be seen as an example of the revolutionary biography written within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom.

1.8 Method

In my dissertation, I use a combination of two methods, CDA and content analysis, in order to answer my research questions.\footnote{The combination of methods is inspired by the method used by Eva Blomberg in Vill ni se en stjärna? Kön, kropp och kläder i Filmjournalet 1919-1953, Nordic Academic Press, 41-43.} I see the necessity of such a combination since both methods can complement each other’s limitations. CDA alone cannot provide the opportunity to discover the occurrence of different themes in the source material, which is the purpose of content analysis. Conversely, content analysis is often criticized for being purely descriptive and unable to establish causal relationships among variables.\footnote{Bordens, Kenneth S. & Bruce B. Abbott (2002 [1988]), Research Design and Methods: A Process Approach, Fifth Edition, Bosto etc.: McGraw Hill, 208.} I hope to overcome that limitation by using the method of discourse analysis. Below, I present how I use these methods in the dissertation.

1.8.1 Content Analysis

I went through the material in order to identify the themes that regularly occur in the parts of the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR dedicated to the different periods of the women’s lives. I also went through the previous research on the revolutionary auto/biographies in order to see whether the themes identified there are present in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR. At the beginning of each chapter of the dissertation, I identify the set of themes that appears in the material used in the chapter. In the course of analysis and interpretation of the texts of the sources, the identified themes are used as a starting point. In other words, the internal division of the chapters is done on the basis of the central themes of the writings about female terrorists within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom.

1.8.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough offers a three-dimensional framework of analysis for exploring discursive events. According to him, CDA implies analysis of: 1) the linguistic features of the text; 2) the processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice) and 3) the wider social practice to which the discursive event belongs (social practice). Fairclough highlights the importance of analytical separation of text and discursive practice. According to him, analysis of discursive practice focuses on how authors of texts draw on already existing discourses and genres to create a text, as well as on how receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of the texts. Conversely, text analysis concentrates on formal features like vocabulary, grammar, syntax and sentence coherence, from which discourses and genres are realized linguistically. As for analysis of the broader social practice, Fairclough defines it as considerations of whether the discursive practice reproduces or, instead, restructures the existing order of discourse and of what consequences this has for broader social practice. The main aim of CDA is to explore the links between language use and social practice.

In my dissertation, I analyse every revolutionary auto/biography in accordance with the guidelines charted in Fairclough’s works. I pay special attention to the broader social context in which the revolutionary auto/biographies were created in order to be able to interpret them. I

184 Fairclough 1992a, 73.
185 Fairclough 1993, 136-137.
also analyse the discursive practice used in each individual text: how the author(s) used already existing discursive constructions (ideal revolutionary hero, ideal revolutionary heroine, “good” femininity) to construct the lives of female terrorists of the PSR as the lives of revolutionary martyr-heroines. As a result, I see each revolutionary auto/biography as part of wider social practice and see whether its discursive practice reproduces or restructures the general pattern of writing a heroic revolutionary life (i.e., the order of discourse relevant for the research). As for the linguistic features of the texts analysed in the dissertation, I do not devote as much attention to this because this dissertation is a historical work and not a linguistic one. However, in some cases I pay attention to the linguistic features of the texts when they help me answer historical questions posed in the dissertation.

I have found it difficult to analyse the reception of all the discursive events that I analyse since in many cases, the material that can give such information was not available to me. Such analysis is conducted only when possible. In the main, however, my work is focused on the communicative events themselves and their place in the order of discourse.

1.9 Structure of the Research

The dissertation consists of seven chapters.

*Chapter one, the introduction*, deals with the definition of the central problem of the dissertation; previous research on the topic; the aim of the research; the research questions; theories, concepts and methods used in the dissertation; source material used; the structure of the dissertation.

In order to be able to contextualize the source material within the broader social context, I have included in the dissertation two chapters that deal with the historical background and subculture of the revolutionary underground that influenced the way revolutionary lives were written. In these chapters, I mainly use previous research on the topics covered there.

*Chapter two, historical background*, introduces the history of terrorism in pre-revolutionary Russia with special attention to female participation in it. Biographical notes on the terrorist women whose life stories are discussed in the dissertation are provided in that chapter as well.
Chapter three deals with the subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground. In this chapter, I focus on the general features of that subculture, as well as on its specific features that are central to the dissertation; namely, on the phenomenon of the “revolutionary family,” the ethics of the revolutionaries as well as on the characters of the (male) revolutionary hero and the (female) revolutionary heroine created within the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground.

The empirical chapters of the dissertation are dedicated to how the life paths of female terrorists of the PSR were represented in accounts written within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom. In these works, women were shown through several stages in the course of their lives: awakening of consciousness, political activism, and their life far from the centre of political fight, in prison and exile. In the empirical chapters, I analyse representations of each of these periods separately, due to the differences in the narratives employed in the construction of these periods of women’s lives.

Chapter four is dedicated to how the “awakening of consciousness” of the future female terrorists is represented in their auto/biographies. The authors of these accounts write about the women’s birth families, official education, self-education, professional lives, historical events that they witnessed, religion and private life as important to explain their “awakening.” Narratives of all the above mentioned issues in the auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR are discussed in the chapter.

Chapter five deals with the representation of female terrorists’ activism in the Russian revolutionary underground. The central themes in the narratives of that period of the women’s lives are their roles in the so-called “revolutionary family,” their revolutionary activism prior to participating in political terrorism, participation in political terrorism, and self-sacrifice. All these themes are discussed in the chapter.

Chapter six is dedicated to the representations of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile. Representations of women’s changed roles in “the

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186 Yuri Slezkine and Elizabeth Jones Hemenway have identified in their works on biographical accounts of female Bolsheviks’ awakening and political activism as the stages that were present in autobiographical and biographical accounts by/about these women (Slezkine 2000, 22-24; Jones Hemenway 2006, 79-80).
revolutionary family,” activities in the revolutionary commune, and political activism, the central themes in the narratives of that period of the women’s lives, are discussed in the chapter.

Chapter seven includes the conclusions of the dissertation. The answers to the research questions are given, and suggestions for further research on the topic are provided there.
CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the dissertation is dedicated to how the lives of female terrorists of the PSR were represented within the discourses of Russian revolutionary underground, not to the questions connected to actual female participation in terrorism in Russia, I find it impossible to cover the topic without giving some basic information about the history of terrorism and female participation in it, as well as the fates of female terrorists after the end of their participation in political violence. I also provide in this chapter brief biographical notes on the female terrorists of the PSR, who are introduced through their own writings and the writings about them by other authors in the empirical chapters of the dissertation.

2.1 History of Terrorism in pre-revolutionary Russia

In the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the Russian Empire was facing serious problems because of systematic political terror. Terrorism was, however, not a typically Russian problem at that time, because the developing mass media society in all European countries created the conditions in which acts of political violence and the reasons for committing them could become known to different audiences quite quickly. Because of this, political violence as a means of propaganda was seen by some as an efficient way to communicate to and influence different social groups.\(^{187}\) In Europe, terrorism was at that time employed “by militant actors who either had close ties to the labour movement or to radical intellectual milieus.”\(^{188}\) In the case of Russia, however, it is clear that terrorism was first of all connected to the political activities of the radical intelligentsia.

In the 19th century, political terrorism in Russia was employed by the radical socialist organization \textit{Narodnaya Volya} (the People’s Will); in


\(^{188}\) Schraut & Weinhauser 2014, 14.
the 20th century, it was mostly associated with the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (the PSR) and anarchists.\textsuperscript{189} Anna Geifman characterizes this period, especially the beginning of the 20th century, as a time when political murder had become systematic and escalation of political violence became enormous.\textsuperscript{190}

The political situation in Russia in the mid19th and the beginning of the 20th century was one of the reasons why political terrorism came to be seen by many as the most efficient means of political struggle. While the countries of Western Europe were moving toward constitutional or even republican forms of government, the Russian monarchy remained uncompromisingly absolutist; while in Western Europe, large sections of populations were drawn into participation in the government, in Russia they were kept rigidly out of it.\textsuperscript{191} However, some parts of Russian society, especially the ones that had acquired economic power in the process of industrialization, which started in the second half of the 19th century, had the ambition of taking part in political decisions as well. Supporting and financing political radicalism was for some of these people a way of struggling for political changes in the country.

In addition, a new generation of students entered Russian universities in the 1860s. These young people were called raznotschintsy (people of different ranks), those who after having obtained education left the underprivileged estates that they belonged to, but did not join any other estates. What differentiated them were their ideas about the upper classes’ “debt to the people.” Many of them had absorbed the new and fashionable trends of “materialism” coming from German philosophy. They thought of themselves as properly trained and morally capable of leading Russia into the modern world, and were quite disappointed by their


\textsuperscript{190} See Geifman, Anna (2010), Death Orders: The Vanguard of Modern Terrorism in Revolutionary Russia, Praeger, 3, 13.

inability to do it in practice. These strongly motivated educated young people became the driving force of Russian revolutionary radicalism. In the 1860s, the Nihilist movement developed in Russia, which united free-thinking individuals toward the destruction of institutions and laws as artificial and corrupt. The Nihilists questioned both traditional and cultural values and argued against the authority of the church and the monarchy, which deeply shocked the Russian establishment. Their willingness to change the situation in the country and inability to do it legally created a situation when some young people started seeing political terrorism as the only powerful means to resist tyranny.

The first terrorist attacks took place in Russia in the 1860s. On April 4, 1866, former student Dmitry Karakozov (1840-1866) tried to shoot Emperor Alexander II, but failed. Karakozov was captured and executed. On January 24, 1878, Vera Zasulich (1849-1919), the impoverished daughter of a nobleman, became the first woman in Russia to undertake a political assassination attempt on her own: she shot and injured St. Petersburg’s governor, F.F. Trepov. On March 31, 1878, she was acquitted by a jury. Such a verdict was the result of public sympathy for Zasulich; a political prisoner had been subjected to corporal punishment on Trepov’s order, and Zasulich’s attempt on the governor’s life was considered to be an adequate answer to his actions. The terrorist act was thus considered to be an acceptable means of protecting civil and personal rights.

194 Geifman 1993, 3; Budnitsky 1996b, 3.
The People’s Will, which Geifman defines as “the first modern terrorist organization,” was founded in 1879; its purpose was to effect political and social change by means of political terrorism. This organization chose its targets on the basis of individual responsibility and attacked influential representatives of the autocratic regime, whom the revolutionaries held responsible for reactionary policies. On March 1, 1881, members of the People’s Will committed the most famous assassination in its history: they threw a bomb at the carriage of Tsar Alexander II and fatally wounded the monarch. The organizers of the attack were arrested and executed soon after.

After the People’s Will was defeated, all attempts of Russian revolutionaries to undertake terrorist activities during the rest of the 19th century failed. But the authorities’ refusal to give political rights to citizens together with the radicalization of society showed that political terrorism could become relevant again.

A new wave of political terrorism in Russia started at the beginning of the 20th century. On February 14, 1901 an expelled student, Petr Karpovich (1874-1917), mortally wounded Minister of Education N.P. Bogolepov. It was the reaction to the cruel actions against the participants in students’ protests; many were expelled from Moscow University, where Bogolepov was a rector, and sent to the Army as soldiers. As in the case of Zasulich, Karpovich’s attack was a result of his own initiative and not sanctioned by any political party.

Since Karpovich’s attack was approved by liberals and socialists, political terrorism as a political strategy was revived by the PSR. The party was founded in 1901, when a number of autonomous neo-populist groups in Russia and abroad united into a single organization. The PSR was seen as the heir to the People’s Will, but unlike its famous predecessor, it did not proclaim political terrorism as its main activity; rather, it founded the Combat Organization (Boevaya Organizatsiya) as an au-

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196 See more about the People’s Will in Von Borcke 1982.
tonomous terrorist wing. The Central Committee of the PSR only selected the targets of attacks and financed the Combat Organization.\textsuperscript{201} The party considered political terrorism to be a means of agitation and propaganda, which could radicalize the masses and popularize the revolutionary cause. Aside from that, terrorism was seen as protection of the revolutionary movement; the leadership of the PSR expected the threat of immediate terrorist retaliation to force the government to curtail its repressive measures against the revolutionaries, and that the terrorist attacks would justify themselves as acts of self-defence. At the same time, assassinations of the most prominent representatives of the regime were expected to bring fear and disorganization into the ranks of the government.\textsuperscript{202}

According to some scholars, however, the most frequent acts of terror conducted by the PSR had more to do with revenge for what the revolutionaries considered to be past crimes against the people than with the theoretical justification of terror by the party leadership.\textsuperscript{203} Most attacks were directed against government officials, who, according to the terrorists, were guilty of repressions against common people. The very essence of political terrorism was that it executed the unofficial sentences of public opinion.\textsuperscript{204} In addition, the party practiced so-called “prison terror,” attacks on the most notorious representatives of prison administration famous for their cruel treatment of political prisoners.\textsuperscript{205}

Leaders of the PSR were deeply divided regarding the merit of terrorist attacks, and the Central Committee of the party changed its attitude toward political terrorism on several occasions. For example, after the October Manifesto of 1905, which was the government’s response to

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{203}Geifman 1993, 47; Morrissey 2012, 620.
\item \textsuperscript{205}Morozov 1998, 330.
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\end{footnotesize}
the escalating revolution and in which it pledged to grant basic civil rights, the Central Committee of the PSR called a truce, which was repudiated at the First Congress of the party in January 1906, despite protests from the members of terrorist units that operated in different parts of Russia. Another temporary suspension followed during the first session of the State Duma (April-June 1906).206

During the revolution of 1905-1907, large-scale terrorism flourished despite the above-mentioned attempts to stop it. It was estimated that 51 terrorist attacks on behalf of the PSR were committed in 1905, 78 in 1906, 62 in 1907 and 3 in 1908.207 The Combat Organization, which was responsible for the “central terror,” had collapsed by the beginning of 1907. Now, terrorist groups connected to local PSR committees, so-called combat units (boevye druzhiny) and flying combat detachments (letuchie boevye otryady) as well as isolated individuals, committed terrorist attacks. The most famous of these local terrorist groups was the Northern Flying Combat Detachment (Severnyi boevoi letuchy otryad), which operated in St. Petersburg and was responsible for some of the most spectacular political assassinations committed on behalf of the PSR.208 Another terrorist group of the PSR that operated in the capital at the same time was Lev Zilberberg’s (1880-1907) combat unit, known as the Combat Detachment of the Central Committee (Boevoi otryad pri Tsentralnom Komitete), which was originally intended to serve as a replacement for the Combat Organization.209

The authorities’ reaction to terrorist activity was fierce. Many members of terrorist organizations were executed; others were convicted to serve long terms in the katorga (hard labour prisons in Siberia). Many terrorists recalled being severely mistreated by the police after their arrest. Normally, information about that reached their comrades who were still free, as in the case of Maria Spiridonova, which I briefly presented in the introduction. Such cases made terrorists more eager to kill representatives of the authorities, especially those responsible for their comrades’ suffering. The authorities, in their turn, answered to these acts of vengeance by conducting even more oppressions. Violence seemed to

209 Geifman 1993, 64; Gorodnitsky 1998, 133.
be the only possible reaction for both sides of the conflict, neither of which wanted to compromise. 210

The terrorists, however, were considered to be heroes not only by their fellow revolutionaries, but also by many people in the country. 211 Since the terrorists killed those representatives of the regime who were deemed “executioners” of the common people, they were seen as the people’s defenders and avengers who did the righteous thing, since their targets were not punished by the law for their cruelty. Since terrorists sacrificed their lives and freedom for their deeds, they were seen as martyrs in the eyes of common people. As a result, for example, pictures of Spiridonova and another female terrorist from the PSR, Maria Fedorova, were found by the authorities among the icons in some peasant houses 212

Individual violence began to decline steadily only as part of the general weakening of the revolutionary storm and all its mass manifestations late in 1907. This process was attributed not only to the repressive measures of the government, but also to the growing exhaustion and disappointment of the intelligentsia and common people. There was a gradual realization that concessions could no longer be obtained by violent actions. 213 Moreover, the information that the leader of the Combat Organization, Evno Azef (1869-1918), was an undercover police agent largely discredited terrorist tactics in the eyes of many former advocates of political terrorism. 214 The prestige of the PSR was further damaged by the subsequent unmasking of several other government agents in leading party circles. 215

However, some steadfast advocates of political terrorism in the ranks of the PSR continued using violence as a revolutionary tool. These isolated acts could not be compared to earlier terrorist operations; after 1908, relatively infrequent combat ventures were conducted primarily in the periphery and had little influence on the country’s political life,

215 Geifman 1993, 236.
because the internal situation after the revolution of 1905-1907 was relatively stable.\footnote{Geifman 1993, 236-237.}

2.2 Female Participation in Political Terrorism of the PSR

One of the most interesting features of political terrorism in Russia was that many terrorists were women both in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century: out of 29 members of the original \textit{People’s Will’s} Executive Committee, ten were women;\footnote{Budnitsky 1996b, 4.} among 91 members of the Combat Organization of the PSR between 1901 and 1911, nineteen were female.\footnote{Gorodnitsky 1998, 235.} The names of Sofia Perovskaya, Vera Zasulich, Maria Spiridonova, and many others were known to the broad public because of their terrorist attacks and trials. In this part of the chapter, I discuss the reasons why significant numbers of women in Russia chose to participate in political terrorism and describe the position that they acquired in the terrorist units. In the course of writing about different tasks that women performed in terrorist organizations, I also provide biographical details of female PSR terrorists who did not participate in terrorist attacks directly and whose names appear in the empirical chapters of the dissertation.

According to Richard Stites, among the politically active women in the 19th and early 20th century in Russia, the great majority had noble origins or came from better-off families.\footnote{Stites 1990[1978], 3.} With respect to female terrorists active at the beginning of the 20th century, compared to the earlier period there were more representatives of the middle class, workers and former peasants among them.\footnote{Stites 1990[1978], 270.} According to Amy Knight, among 40 female members of underground terrorist organizations of the PSR whose social background she reconstructed, 15 came from gentry or merchant families, four from raznutschintsy, 11 from the petit-bourgeoisie, one was a priest’s daughter, 9 were born in peasant families. As for the ethnicity of female terrorists of the PSR, the same research

\footnotetext[216]{Geifman 1993, 236-237.}
\footnotetext[217]{Budnitsky 1996b, 4.}
\footnotetext[218]{Gorodnitsky 1998, 235.}
\footnotetext[219]{Stites 1990[1978], 3.}
\footnotetext[220]{Stites 1990[1978], 270.}
shows that 22 were Russian, 13 were Jewish, 4 were Ukrainian; the ethnicity of the rest was not identified by Knight. 221

Contemporary historians, however, do not consider these data the most important for identifying the social position of the majority of female terrorists, because in many cases this position did not depend on women’s social origins. Many future terrorists obtained professional education and were teachers or medical workers, thus they belonged to the intelligentsia regardless of the social position of their parents. 222

This is buttressed by the fact that *Pamyatnaya knizhka sotsialista-revolyutsionera* (Memory Book of a Socialist Revolutionary), 223 where basic information about the PSR and its political activities was presented, introduced 20 out of 27 women who took part in terrorist activities of the PSR 1902-1911 as representatives of the intelligentsia. 224

The Russian government in the late 19th and early 20th century considered institutions of higher learning for women “a veritable sewer of anarchist disease” and saw women who were educated there as revolutionaries. 225 Although an education was not necessarily a path to political radicalism, many future terrorists, both men and women, became radicalized in the course of their studies. The reason was that during that period, the student milieu was where young people became acquainted with radical political ideas. 226

Women who did not participate in political movements during their studies were radicalized after that, while performing their professional work. To be a woman from the intelligentsia, i.e. an educated woman, was not easy in pre-revolutionary Russia. Having obtained education, a woman had difficulty finding good opportunities to apply her intellectual talents or professional skills. The only types of employment available to her were in the fields of education or medicine. 227 This led great

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221 Knight, Amy (1979), 'Female terrorists in the Russian socialist revolutionary party,' in *The Russian Review*, 38:2, 145.
222 Knight 1979, 144; Budnitsky 1996b, 8.
223 *Pamyatnaya knizhka sotsialista-revolyutsionera* was published by the PSR in 1911 and 1914 in order to introduce the political program and activities of the party to the new generation of its members who joined the PSR after the revolution of 1905-07 (see more about it in Morozov 2005, 41).
225 Stites 1978, 44.
numbers of educated women to frustration and disappointment in society and in the opportunities to employ their intellectual skills. Moreover, in the areas where they were able to find employment, women often came face to face with the poverty and injustice of tsarist society and were led to bitter disillusionment. As a result, many women became politically active.

The situation of women from Jewish families was slightly different from that of Russian women. Getting education was not easy for them, since the government established a quota on the number of Jewish students in educational institutions. Moreover, many traditional Jewish parents opposed their daughters becoming educated; young Jewish women were in general subjected to greater family restrictions compared to Russian women of the same age. Thus, for many of them, participation in the revolutionary underground was the only opportunity to obtain personal autonomy and even a position of leadership.

The particular reasons why women joined the terrorist units are more difficult to identify: many women intellectuals found their place in feminist and liberal organizations, where they conducted more peaceful political activities than those who became political terrorists. Knight and Geifman suggest that the reasons for participation in terrorism (for both women and men) could lie in psychological deviation and suicidal tendencies of particular individuals. However, other historians recommend approaching such claims with caution. Roman Gorodnitsky shows in his research on the Combat Organization that none of its members suffered from mental illnesses before or during their participation in terrorism. Three of these people became mentally ill later, which was the result of imprisonment. For this reason, Oleg Budnitsky questions in his works the claims of other scholars that individual psychological problems were the reason to join the terrorist organizations, and he suggests that they were rather the result of dangerous life in the revolutionary underground. John Keep, in his turn, claims that psychological

228 Knight 1979, 144-145; Budnitsky 1996b, 8.
230 See about these women in Sites 1990[1978].
231 See Knight 1979, 150-151; Geifman 1993, 155-156; Geifman 2010, 90-96.
232 Gorodnitsky 1998, 236.
233 Budnitsky 1996b, 14-17; Budnitsky 2000, 162-164.
problems that were identified in the case of some terrorists were individual cases that cannot be generalized, since not all revolutionaries who participated in political violence had medical records of that kind.\footnote{Keep 2006, 22.}

Regardless of the reasons why they joined the terrorist units, women participated in political terrorism side by side with men starting in the 1870s.\footnote{Yukina 2007, 140-141.} Even in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the names of female terrorists became known to the broader public. Sofia Perovskaya (1853-1881), daughter of a governor-general of St. Petersburg, was one of ten female members of the People’s Will’s Executive Committee. Perovskaya personally conducted the preparations and execution of Alexander II’s assassination and was hanged together with male leaders of the organization. Perovskaya was the first woman in Russia executed for a political crime.\footnote{Broido 1977, 75; Stites 1990[1978], 148; Budnitsky 1996b, 4; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 35; Yukina 2007, 140-141.} Gesya Gelfman (1852-1882) was a female member of the People’s Will who became widely known as a victim of the autocracy. Gelfman’s death sentence was postponed due to her pregnancy, a verdict that caused indignation both in Russia and abroad and led to the reduction of her sentence to life imprisonment. Gelfman, however, died in prison soon after her baby was born.\footnote{Stites 1990[1978], 148; Budnitsky 1996b, 4; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 30.}

In the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it was rare for a woman to participate in a terrorist attack directly; by the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, many acts of political terrorism were conducted by women.\footnote{Budnitsky 1996b, 7.} Female leadership, as in the case of Perovskaya, was, however, quite unusual at that time. The only well-known exceptions are Serafima Klitchoglu, Esfir (Ester) Lapina, and Sophia Khrenkova, who are briefly introduced in the following paragraphs.

Serafima Georgievna Klitchoglu (Mezhova) (1876-1928) was a daughter of a civil servant, who graduated from the Bestuzhev courses for women and the Medical Institute. Klitchoglu started her revolutionary career in 1893 in the ranks of the People’s Will and later was active in setting up the PSR. Klitchoglu was in charge of her own terrorist group, which was preparing an attempt on Russian Interior Minister Vyacheslav Pleve in St. Petersburg in 1903-1904, at the same time that...
Savinkov’s Combat Organization was stalking the same target. In 1904-1906, Klitchouglu was arrested several times and exiled. She left the revolutionary movement only after the death of her husband and dedicated the rest of her life to bringing up her children.\(^{239}\)

Ester Leya Mendeleevna Lapina (1876-1909), known to her comrades as Bela or Tatyana Lapina, was the daughter of a Jewish merchant. She joined the PSR in 1902 and became a member of the Combat Organization in 1905. Together with the leader of the Combat Organization, Savinkov, she founded a small terrorist unit in Helsingfors, which was expected to commit secondary terrorist attacks and to serve as a school for future terrorists. The group was soon disbanded, and Lapina committed suicide in 1909 because she was wrongly suspected of knowing about Azef’s betrayal and being an agent provocateur herself.\(^{240}\)

Sophia Germanovna Khrenkova (?)-1908 organized a PSR group in Yaroslavl in 1905, where she was exiled after her arrest in Moscow. She was also the organizer of the local combat unit, which she supplied with weapons. Khrenkova worked in the local library, where she organized meetings of local PSR members. During the revolution of 1905, Khrenkova actively participated in political demonstrations in Yaroslavl. During one of them, on December 9, 1905, Khrenkova fatally injured a Cossack. She escaped to St. Petersburg, but was arrested in January 1906 and transferred back to Yaroslavl. In 1908, she immolated herself in prison.\(^{241}\)

In the revolutionary movement, women’s tasks were mostly confined to routine work, including maintaining safe houses, smuggling illegal literature and weapons, establishing and running printing presses. Women were seen as particularly useful in clandestine activities like smuggling because of their sex; the police often assumed that women


did not have a developed political consciousness, and thus did not suspect them of participation in political activism. The terrorist units of the PSR were not an exception; women mostly worked there as chemists who prepared explosives, safe house keepers, and couriers. According to Robert H. McNeal, women were eagerly admitted to terrorist groups because as fictitious wives, they could help establish a reputable cover for terrorists. Female PSR terrorists Maria Benevskaya, Dora Brilliant, Rashel Lurie and Valentina Popova were chemists in Savinkov’s Combat Organization; Praskovia Ivanovskaya posed as a servant in the Combat Organization’s safe house; Sarra Dantsig and Revekka Fialka were arrested for keeping explosives. In the following paragraphs, I introduce biographical information about the above-mentioned women.

Maria Arkadievna Benevskaya (1882-1942) was born in Irkutsk to a family of a high-ranking military officer. After graduating gymnasium, she studied medicine in Germany, Switzerland and St. Petersburg. In 1904, Benevskaya joined the Combat Organization, where she prepared bombs for terrorist attacks. In 1906, she went to Moscow to help make bombs for the assassination of Governor-General F.V. Dubasov. While Benevskaya was unloading a bomb, it exploded, blowing off her left hand and several fingers of her right hand. Benevskaya was arrested at the hospital where she was treated after the accident and sentenced to ten years of katorga on October 30, 1906. Benevskaya served her sentence in Mal’tsev Prison of Nerchinsk katorga in Siberia and was sent to settlement in 1909. Benevskaya never resumed her political activism.

Dora Vulfovna Brilliant (1880-1906) was the daughter of a prosperous Jewish merchant in Kherson educated as a midwife. After an exile to Poltava for participating in a student demonstration, she joined the PSR in 1902 and became a member of the Combat Organization in 1904. Brilliant participated in the plots to kill Pleve and Grand Duke Sergei.

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243 Hyman 1995, 79.
posing as Savinkov’s fictitious wife and preparing the bombs. After her arrest in 1905 and imprisonment in Peter-Paul Fortress, she broke down mentally and died two years later.246

Rashel Vulfovna Lurie (1884-1908) joined the PSR in 1904 after a spell in the General Jewish Labour Bund, a Jewish socialist party. Later, Lurie became a member of the Combat Organization, where she worked with explosives. She left the terrorist unit, went abroad and committed suicide on January 1, 1908.247

Valentina Pavlovna Popova-Kolosova (1880-1937) was born in Krasnoyarsk in a middle-class family that had connections with the revolutionary underground. In 1896, she graduated gymnasium and moved to St. Petersburg to study at P.F. Lesgraf’s courses for women. In 1900, Popova joined a revolutionary organization inspired by the People’s Will; one year later, she became a member of the PSR. For participating in a political demonstration on March 4, 1901, Popova was expelled from the courses and sent to Krasnoyarsk for one year. She returned to St. Petersburg illegally and distributed revolutionary literature on behalf of the PSR. In 1905, Popova joined the Combat Organization of the PSR, where she worked with explosives. In 1906, Popova was a member of Lev Zilberberg’s terrorist group, where she not only prepared explosives, but also participated in surveillance. In 1907, she emigrated from Russia, but returned in 1916 because of World War I. During the Soviet era Popova, as a former member of the PSR, was arrested and incarcerated on numerous occasions. In 1937, she was executed after being accused of conducting underground political activities on behalf of the PSR.248

Praskovia Semenovna Ivanovskaya-Voloshenko (1853-1935) was the daughter of a village priest in Tula province trained as a teacher at Alar chin courses for women. She started her revolutionary career in the People’s Will: together with Nikolay Kibalchich (1853-1881), she was the “hostess” of a safe apartment in St. Petersburg; Ivanovskaya also worked in the printing houses of the People’s Will. In 1883, she was arrested and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to hard

246 Knight 1979, 148-150; Budnitsky 1996a, 627; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 131.
247 Knight 1979, 150; Budnitsky 1996a, 629; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 136.
labour for life. Ivanovskaya was first imprisoned in Kara and then in Akatui Prison, both part of Nerchinsk katorga. In 1898, she was released and exiled to the Barguzin region and in 1902 transferred to Chita. A year later, Ivanovskaya escaped and joined the Combat Organization of the PSR. As a member of this unit, Ivanovskaya posed as a maid in a conspiratorial apartment. She was arrested, but later released thanks to the October manifesto 1905, which amnestied some political prisoners. After that, Ivanovskaya never resumed her political activism.249

Sarra Naumovna Dantsig (1873-1918) was born in Kletsk, in the Minsk region, to a poor family. She graduated gymnasium and in 1899 moved to St. Petersburg, where she was educated as a midwife and masseuse. Later, Dantsig entered the Lesgraf’s higher courses for women. She started her political activism in 1902, when she was exiled to Arkhangelsk or Vologda.250 After returning to St. Petersburg, Dantsig joined the PSR and started working for the Combat Organization in 1905. In 1906, she was arrested and in 1907 sentenced to nine years of hard labour. Dantsig was sent to Maltsev Prison for women and later was transferred with the other female prisoners to Akatui Prison. In 1917, she was amnestied along with other political prisoners. During her years in prison and exile, Dantsig’s health was ruined, and she died in 1918.251

Revekka Moiseevna Fialka (1888-1975) was born in Minsk province and grew up in Kishinev, where her father was employed as Hebrew teacher. In 1903, she graduated from a vocational school, qualified as an apprentice-seamstress and began working in a sewing shop. A year later, Fialka was actively working on behalf of the PSR. In January 1905, along with 45 other members of the PSR, Fialka was detained by Kishinev police for staging an anti-governmental demonstration. Released two days later, she was sent to Odessa to pose as the “wife” in a conspiratorial household. There, Fialka assisted in a bomb-making operation, and she was arrested in June 1905. Fialka was tried and sentenced to ten years of katorga in Siberia. She served her sentence in Nerchinsk and was released to live in eastern Siberia in 1910. Fialka

250 The author of the only biography of Dantsig, Elizaveta Zvereva, writes that she had no information about the exact place where Dantsig was exiled (see Zvereva E.P. (1932), ‘S.N. Dantsig,’ in Konstantinov M.M. (ed.) (1932), Na zhenskoi katorge, Sbornik statei, Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vsesoyuznogo obschestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev, 222.
251 Zvereva 1932, 221-224.
did not renew her political affiliation with the PSR after 1917. Under the Bolsheviks, she worked in different organizations and did not oppose to the regime.252

The routine work of the above mentioned women for the sake of revolution is frequently praised in memoirs left by their comrades.253 However, it is well known that many of them wanted to participate in terrorist attacks directly. Brilliant and Lurie were among those who wanted to commit a political assassination themselves, but did not have the opportunity because Savinkov was reluctant to allow women to participate in terrorist attacks of the Combat Organization directly.254 Another female member of the Combat Organization who wanted to commit a terrorist attack, but did not have the opportunity prior to the change of political affiliation was Tatiana Leontieva.

Tatiana Aleksandrovna Leontieva (1883-1922) was the daughter of a general and vice-governor. She studied in a boarding school in Switzerland and in 1903 started medical studies at the University of Lausanne, where she came in contact with the PSR. In St. Petersburg in 1904, Leontieva joined the Combat Organization. Thanks to her connections in high society, she remained in a “legal” position, obtaining information about the activities of government officials and was eventually expected to assassinate Tsar Nicholas II. Leontieva was arrested the same year, but soon released because of signs of mental illness that she began to show in prison. Leontieva moved abroad and joined the maximalists, a more radical wing of the PSR, which withdrew from the party by that time. The maximalists helped her organize a political assassination in Switzerland on September 1, 1906. Leontieva was sure that she had shot Russian Home Minister P.N. Durnovo, but the man assassinated was a French civilian, who slightly resembled Durnovo.255 Leontieva was

252 Politicheskaya katorga i sylka 1934, 663; Budnitsky 1996a, 632; Boniece 2010b, 177-178, 188.
253 See for example in Savinkov 1917, 5-396; Ivanovskaya 1929; Popova, Valentina (1927), "Dinamitnye Masterskie 1906-1907 gg. i Provokator Azef," in Katorga i sylka, No. 4, 53-66; No. 5, 47-64; No. 7, 54-67.
254 Knight 1979, 149-150; Budnitsky 1996b, 11.
255 See more about Leontieva’s trial in Switzerland in a half-popular biography of hers by Jacques Baynac (The Story of Tatiana, Detroit: Black & Red).
tried and sentenced to imprisonment, but was soon transferred to a mental institution, where she spent the rest of her life and died of tuberculosis.256

The leadership of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment seems to have been more eager to give its female members an opportunity to participate directly in political terrorism. Besides the female assassins in that unit, who are introduced in the next section, it is worth mentioning Anna Rasputina and Lidiya Sture, who were executed together with some of their comrades in 1908. The members of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment used Kazansky Cathedral in St. Petersburg to exchange information and explosives while preparing the assassinations of Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolaevich, uncle of the tsar, and Minister of Justice I.G. Shcheglovitov. Police surveillance discovered the terrorist network there and on February 7, 1908, the day when the assassinations were to be committed, nine members of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment were arrested. A week later, they were tried. Seven of the terrorists, including Rasputina and Sture, were sentenced to be hanged and executed soon after.257

Anna Mikhailovna Rasputina (1876-1908) was born in a family with revolutionary traditions: her father was exiled for political activism. She graduated a gymnasium in Moscow and the Bestuzhev courses for women. Rasputina started her revolutionary activism in 1894, when she joined the People’s Will and participated in organizing a printing house. In summer 1896, the printing house was discovered by the police, and Rasputina had to hide herself in Cherepovets, where she was arrested in December the same year. In 1898, she was exiled to eastern Siberia for five years. Rasputina joined the Northern Flying Combat Detachment in 1906.258

Lidiya Avgustovna (Petrovna) Sture (1884/5?-1908) was born in a noble family in the town of Proskurov, in Podolia province. In 1902, she began her studies in the higher courses in St. Petersburg; she joined the

257 Geifman 1993, 64.
PSR after a peaceful demonstration of workers was shot on the Tsar’s order on January 9, 1905. In summer 1905, Sture was arrested for possession of illegal literature, but was amnestied two months later. In 1907, she was admitted to the Northern Flying Combat Detachment. Sture was the only one of the members of the unit who tried to shoot at the police while they were being arrested in February 1908.259

The execution of Rasputina and Sture was not the first case when female members of PSR terrorist units were put to death although they were unable to assassinate anyone. Anastasia Mamaeva (19 years old at the time of her execution) and Anna Venediktova (24 years old) were both students of Bestuzhev courses who were arrested together with three other terrorists while they were trying to deliver bombs to Kronstadt on October 2, 1905. The unit where Mamaeva and Venediktova were members wanted to blow up the military court in order to liberate socialists who could be sentenced to death. Mamaeva and Venediktova were executed together with the other two terrorists, who had been arrested on October 16, 1906.260

2.3 Female Political Assassins

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the 20th century many female members of terrorist groups in Russia participated in political assassinations directly. That was very different from political terrorism in Russia in the 19th century, when assassins, with rare exceptions, were men. In this section, I write about the political assassinations that female PSR members whose auto/biographies are analysed in the dissertation committed or tried to commit. Information about assassinations and assassination attempts are complemented with brief biographical notes about the terrorist women engaged in these actions.

On May 27, 1903 Fruma Mordukhovna Frumkina (1873-1907), a midwife born in a well-to-do Jewish family in Borisov, Minsk province, a former Bund member, tried to cut the throat of General V.D. Novitsky, head of the Kiev gendarmerie notorious for his repressions of revolutionaries. At the time of the assassination attempt, Frumkina was under arrest for participating in organizing an underground printing house in

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259 Zhukovsky-Zhuk I. (1925), 'Pamyati Lidii Petrovny Sture,' in Katorga i ssylka, No. 6 (19), 250-254; Budnitsky 1996a, 632.
Kiev. The attempt was not organized by the PSR, but was undertaken on Frumkina’s own initiative. On June 14, 1903, she was sentenced for this attempt to eleven-and-a-half years of hard labour in Gorny Zerentui. In June 1906, Frumkina was released on an amnesty and was sent to live in the Zabaikalsk region, but escaped on her way there. In January 1907, she arrived in Moscow and was recruited by a regional terrorist group to assassinate Moscow governor A.A. Reinbot. On February 28, 1907, Frumkina was arrested near Reinbot’s box in the Bolshoi Theatre while carrying a Browning revolver with poisoned bullets and accused of an attempt on his life. On April 30, 1907, while in Moscow Butyrki prison, Frumkina made an unsuccessful attempt to kill Bagretsov, the prison warden. She motivated that attempt by citing Bagretsov’s cruel treatment of political prisoners. Frumkina was tried and executed on July 11, 1907.

The first terrorist attack organized by a terrorist group of the PSR and executed by a woman happened on October 29, 1905. On that day, Lidiya Pavlovna Ezerskaya (1866-1915), a noble woman born in a wealthy family who worked as a dentist in St. Petersburg and Moscow, injured the governor of Mogilev province, N.M. Klingenberg, who, according to the socialists, organized anti-Jewish pogroms. Ezerskaya had started her political career in the ranks of the PSR a few years earlier: her dental office was a general post box and local base for the underground network of the PSR. In 1904, Ezerskaya was arrested as a member of the terrorist group of Serafima Klitchoglu and sentenced to

262 Knight 1979, 153; Koshel 1995, 291; Budnitsky 1996a, 622.
263 Koshel 1995, 291; Budnitsky 1996a, 622.
264 Knight 1979, 153; Budnitsky 1996a, 622.
one year and three months of prison. She was amnestied after the Manifesto of October 17, 1905. Ezerskaya went abroad, where she was trained to be a terrorist and volunteered to assassinate Klingenberg. For this assassination attempt, Ezerskaya was sentenced to 13 years and six months of katorga in Siberia on March 7, 1906. She spent her prison term in Nerchinsk katorga. In 1910, she was released because of health problems and sent to live first, in Kabansk, in the Zabaikal region, and then in Yakutsk province, where she died of advanced asthma.

On November 22, 1905, Anastasiya Alekseevna Bitsenko (1875-1938), a teacher born in a peasant family, assassinated former Minister of War General V.V. Sakharov, who had brutally suppressed agrarian mutinies in the Saratov region. Bitsenko joined the PSR in 1902 and was a member of its committees in Smolensk (1902-1903), St. Petersburg (1903-1904) and Moscow (1905). She prepared the assassination of Sakharov together with Boris Mischenko-Vnorovsky (1881-1906) of the temporarily disbanded Combat Organization after the Central Committee of the PSR banned terrorism. Bitsenko was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted and she was sent to katorga for life in Siberia. As did Ezerskaya, Bitsenko spent her prison term in Nerchinsk katorga. In 1917, after she was released from Siberia, Bitsenko returned to Moscow and fought for the Soviets in the streets of the city during the October Revolution. She joined the Left SR party and was elected to its Central Committee. Bitsenko participated in negotiations with Germany at Brest-Litovsk in 1918. She did not take part in the Left SR uprising on July 6, 1918, and joined the Bolsheviks in November 1918. Bitsenko worked in different Soviet and party or-

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268 Budnitsky 1996a, 622.
269 Budnitsky 1996a, 622; Boniece 2010b, 180, 188; Badcock 2016, 88.
271 Maxwell 1990, 200; Budnitsky 1996b, 27; Leontiev 1996a, 68; Boniece 2010b, 180.
272 Boniece 2010b, 181.
273 Maxwell 1990, 200; Budnitsky 1996b, 27; Leontiev 1996a, 68; Boniece 2010b, 181.
274 Leontiev 1996a, 68.
275 Budnitsky 1996b, 27; Boniece 2010b, 188.
ganizations until she was arrested in February 1938 and accused of participating in a terrorist organization of the PSR. On June 16, 1938, Bitsenko was sentenced to death and executed on the same day.276

On January 1, 1906, Maria Markovna Shkolnik (1882-1955), daughter of a Jewish colonist farmer, tried, with her longtime companion Aron Shpaizman, to assassinate the governor of Chernigov, A.A. Khvostov, on behalf of the Flying Combat Detachment of the PSR. Prior to her involvement in terrorist activities of the PSR, Shkolnik was a member of the Bund, and then a Social Democrat.277 As a PSR member, Shkolnik was arrested in February 1902 during a police search of her apartment and incarcerated in Kishinev prison.278 She was sentenced to exile in Siberia; however, in February 1905, Shkolnik escaped and moved abroad, where she entered the Combat Organization with the help of Shpaizman.279 Shkolnik participated in the preparation of attempts on St. Petersburg governor D.F. Trepov and Kiev governor general N. V. Kleygels; however, in both cases the attacks were cancelled.280 Shkolnik was sentenced to death for her attempt on Khvostov, but the penalty was commuted to katorga for life. As were Ezerskaya and Bitsenko, Shkolnik was sent to Nerchinsk katorga in Siberia to serve her sentence. In 1910, she was transferred from Maltsev Prison, a part of Nerchinsk katorga, to the hospital of Irkutsk Prison castle for an operation and in July, 1911, managed to escape from there and move abroad.281 In 1917, Shkolnik returned to Russia, but re-emigrated soon after and came back only in 1924, after the end of the Civil War. Shkolnik joined the Bolshevik party in 1927. From 1947 until her death, Shkolnik was a merit pensioner.282

On January 14, 1906, Alexandra Adolfovna Izmailovich (1878-1941), a noble daughter of a distinguished military officer from Minsk, and her co-conspirator Ivan Pulikhov made a failed attempt to assassinate Minsk governor P.G. Kurov and police chief D.D. Norov. Both terrorists were sentenced to death, but Izmailovich’s sentence was commuted

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276 Budnitsky 1996b, 27.
278 Kan 2012, 337.
279 Boniece 2010b, 182; Kan 2012, 337.
280 Budnitsky 1996a, 623; Kan 2012, 337.
281 Boniece 2010b, 188; Kan 2012, 338.
to 20 years of hard labour. Izmailovich joined the PSR along with her younger sister Ekaterina in 1901, when the party was still forming, and was an active member of it until she was arrested. Izmailovich served her sentence in Nerchinsk katorga in Siberia. In 1917, after she was released from prison, Izmailovich moved to Chernigov province, where she worked on behalf of the PSR. While in St. Petersburg, Izmailovich took active part in the October Revolution, and in November 1917, she was elected to the Central Committee of the Left SR party then being formed. Izmailovich did not participate in the Left SR uprising against the Bolsheviks in July 1918; she was arrested, but soon released. After that, Izmailovich began to openly criticize the Bolsheviks and their policies; she was often arrested and exiled during her life under the Soviet regime. In 1937, Izmailovich, along with her co-habitants, former terrorists Maria Spiridonova and Irina Kakhovskaya as well as Spiridonova’s husband Ilya Maiorov, was accused of participation in a terrorist organization of the PSR and sentenced to ten years in prison. She was executed together with Spiridonova and other prisoners in autumn 1941, near Orel, shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, as Nazi forces were approaching the town.

On January 16, 1906, Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova (1884-1941), daughter of a minor, non-hereditary Tambov noble, fatally wounded provincial government councillor G.N. Luzhenovsky, who had ordered brutal police suppression of a peasant uprising. Following the assassination attempt and after her arrest, Spiridonova was subjected to physical and allegedly sexual abuse at the hands of Cossack officer P.F. Avramov and assistant police superintendent T.S. Zhdanov. These facts became public knowledge when the liberal newspaper Rus published Spiridonova’s letter from Tambov prison on February 12, 1906, with detailed descriptions of the assassination and her suffering after arrest. The letter caused a public outcry against the violent treatment of women and provoked a storm of sympathy, both in Russia and...

284 Budnitsky 1996b, 24; Leontiev 1996b, 225; Boniece 2010b, 184.
286 Budnitsky 1996b, 24; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 133, 156; Boniece 2010b, 188.
287 Budnitsky 1996b, 25.
289 Erofeev 1996d, 584; Boniece 2010a, 136.
abroad. Spiridonova was mythologized from then on as a ‘martyrheroine’ who had willingly sacrificed herself to help suffering peasants. Spiridonova was tried for her terrorist act and condemned to death, but her sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. She served eleven years of her sentence in Siberia. Following the February Revolution, Spiridonova was released from custody in an amnesty from the Provisional Government on March 3, 1917. She went to the capital, where she became deeply involved in the leadership of the Petrograd SR organization, then already dominated by Left SRs. During the struggle over the signing and ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, Spiridonova, then a member of the Left SR Central Committee, was one of only a few prominent members of the party to support it. However, in 1918 she went from cooperating with Bolsheviks to the opposition. Spiridonova masterminded the murder of the German ambassador, V. Mirbach, in Moscow. As part of the Left SR rebellion, she was involved in the arrest of the head of the Cheka, Feliks Dzerzhinsky, on July 6, 1918. The rebellion was defeated on July 7, 1918, and Spiridonova’s political activism ended with imprisonment in a Kremlin cell. She was tried in secrecy and sentenced to a year in prison, but was amnestied the following day. Spiridonova faced a new life of imprisonment, alternating with treatments in sanatoriums and hospitals and exile in Kaluga province (1923-25), Samarkand (1925-28), Tashkent (1928-30) and Ufa (1930-37). In 1937, she was rearrested and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. Spiridonova was executed together with other prisoners in Medvedevsky Forest outside Orel.

290 Erofeev 1996d, 584; Rabinowitch 1997, 182; Zhukova 2001, 82.
291 Rabinowitch 1997, 182.
292 Erofeev 1996d, 584; Zhukova 2001, 82.
294 Rabinowitch 1997, 183.
296 Rabinowitch 1997, 184.
On September 11, 1941, shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, as Nazi forces were approaching the town.299

On January 27, 1906, Ekaterina Adolfovna Izmailovich (1881-1906), Alexandra Izmailovich’s younger sister, a member of the Flying Combat Detachment, injured the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral G.P. Chukhnin, in Sevastopol for his brutal suppression of a sailors’ mutiny in November 1905.300 Prior to her participation in political terrorism, Izmailovich was an active member of the PSR who was arrested twice in Moscow while studying in 1903-1904 and finally exiled to Minsk in March, 1905.301 Arrested by the Minsk police in mid-December, Izmailovich escaped from prison on January 2, 1906 and fled the city for Sevastopol in order to assassinate Chukhnin. Izmailovich was shot to death on the spot of her unsuccessful assassination attack without a trial.302

On August 12, 1906, Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova (1879-1906), a village teacher who was born to the family of a soldier, assassinated in New Peterhof General G.A. Min, the head of the Semenovsk regiment, who quelled with great loss of life the Moscow uprising of December 1905.303 Konoplyannikova became a professional revolutionary in 1903, after she was sacked from her teaching job, and joined the PSR, where she first worked as an agitator. In April 1903, she was arrested. In December 1904, after she was released from prison, Konoplyannikova moved abroad, where she was trained to become a terrorist.304 In 1905, Konoplyannikova returned to Russia and became the head of a bomb laboratory. In summer 1906, having spent some time in prison, Konoplyannikova joined the Northern Flying Combat Detachment. For the assassination of Min, Konoplyannikova was sentenced on August 26, 1906 to death by hanging and executed three days

300 Desind 1990, 119; Budnitsky 1996a, 624; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 133; Boniece 2010b, 184-185.
301 Budnitsky 1996a, 624; Boniece 2010b, 184-185.
302 Desind 1990, 113-115, 121; Budnitsky 1996a, 624; Boniece 2010b, 184-185.
304 Erofeev 1996a, 266.
later. Konoplyannikova became the second woman in Russia after Sofia Perovskaya to be executed for a political crime.\textsuperscript{305}

On October 15, 1907, Evstoliya Pavlovna Rogozinnikova (1886-1907), a music student from St. Petersburg and member of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment, assassinated the head of the Central Prison Administration, A.M. Maksimovsky, but was unable to blow up his headquarters as planned. Prior to her direct participation in political terrorism, Rogozinnikova worked preparing terrorist attacks and was arrested in December 1906. While in prison, she faked mental illness and was transferred to a mental institution. Rogozinnikova managed to escape and join the Northern Flying Combat Detachment. The day after Maximovsky’s assassination, Rogozinnikova was tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. She was hanged early in the morning of October 18, 1907.\textsuperscript{306}

On November 21, 1907, Aleksandra Antonovna Sevastianova (1873-1907), a paramedic born to a peasant family and member of the Central Flying Combat Detachment of the PSR, threw a bomb at the carriage of Moscow general-governor S.K. Gershelman, but failed to assassinate her target.\textsuperscript{307} Sevastianova was active in the PSR from the period of the party’s formation. In 1901, she was arrested at the illegal PSR printing house, and after a short incarceration was sent to exile in Siberia. A year after escaping abroad in 1904, she joined the PSR Combat Committee, which was created to prepare the masses for a military uprising. After returning to Russia, Sevastianova was soon arrested, but then released following the Manifest of 1905. Sevastianova worked in different bomb laboratories of the Combat Organization. When the organization ceased to exist, Sevastianova joined the Central Flying Combat Detachment and participated in the attack on Gershelman.\textsuperscript{308} Sevastianova was arrested on the spot and executed on December 7.\textsuperscript{309}

On April 23, 1908, Maria Matveevna Fedorova (1876?-1908), the daughter of a peasant who worked as a village teacher, made an unsuccessful attempt on Voronezh governor M.M. Bibikov, who had brutally

\textsuperscript{305} Erofeev 1996a, 266; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 135.
\textsuperscript{306} Stites 1990[1978], 272; Budnitsky 1996a, 624; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 137; Geifman 2010, 89.
\textsuperscript{308} Erofeev 1996c, 550.
\textsuperscript{309} Budnitsky 1996a, 624-625; Erofeev 1996c, 550.
put down peasant uprisings. Although the governor remained safe, Fedorova, who was badly injured by the bomb that she threw, was executed on June 14 the same year.\textsuperscript{310} She was the last female revolutionary executed before 1917.\textsuperscript{311} One of Fedorova’s letters from prison was edited and published with an account of her execution and a picture as “Letter to the Peasants,” where the assassination attempt was explained by her eagerness to protect the common people from the regime, which Bibikov represented.\textsuperscript{312} As did Spiridonova, Fedorova became a symbol of revolutionary self-sacrifice for the future of the peasants.\textsuperscript{313}

On April 15, 1911 Lidiya Ivanovna Rudneva (1880-1912), an employee of zemstvo\textsuperscript{314} from Tula and a member of the local flying combat detachment, injured Vologda prison inspector A.V. Efimov, who had brutally suppressed a mutiny in the local prison. Prior to her participation in political terrorism, Rudneva was arrested for her political activism, simulated mental illness and had herself released from prison. Rudneva initiated the creating of a flying combat detachment to fight with the local prison administration. Having committed her attack on Efimov, Rudneva managed to escape from the site. She emigrated and died in Paris; according to some sources, she committed suicide.\textsuperscript{315}

2.4 Female Terrorists in Siberia

Women’s careers in the ranks of political terrorism of the PSR generally ended when they were arrested and executed or sentenced to long prison terms. Biographical notes on women who were not executed demonstrate that most of those who did not emigrate ended up in the prisons of Nerchinsk katorga, a penal district that sprawled for 200 miles, encompassed seven factories and twenty mines, and included several katorga prisons.\textsuperscript{316} The most famous terrorist heroines of the PSR, Maria Spiridonova, Anastasia Bitsenko, Alexandra Izmailovich, Lidiya

\begin{footnotes}
\item[310] Budnitsky 1996a, 625; Morozov 1998, 353; Kvasov 2011, 89-104.
\item[311] Kvasov 2011, 102.
\item[313] Kvasov 2011, 103.
\item[314] Zemstva were elected representative bodies set up in 1864, during the “great reforms” of Alexander II, to carry out administrative functions in localities (Service 1997, 6).
\item[315] Budnitsky 1996a, 625; Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 137.
\item[316] See more about Nerchinsk katorga in Badcock 2016, 2.
\end{footnotes}
Ezerskaya, Maria Shkolnik and Revekka Fialka, were sent there together by rail in summer 1906. They are often referred to, both by their contemporaries and by historians, as the Shesterka (the Six). In the Siberian katorga, they were soon joined by female revolutionary activists from other political parties. In pre-revolutionary Russia, sentences of hard labour were always followed by terms of exile in eastern Siberia, which was the case even for female terrorists whose prison terms ended before 1917. In this section, I write about the common destiny of female PSR terrorists sentenced to hard labour in Siberia and those who were later exiled.

The women of the Shesterka were first gathered in Butyrki prison in Moscow, where they were sent from provincial prisons after their trials in order to be transferred to Siberia to serve their time. On June 21, 1906, they were sent by train to Siberia, where they would live together as prisoners in Nerchinsk katorga and in exile.

The train which carried the women of the Shesterka was met by crowds at every station stop across Russia and Siberia. At first, they were greeted only by small delegations of PSR party workers who usually met the trains going east, since almost all of them at that time were carrying political prisoners to Siberia. The news that Spiridonova and Bitsenko, the women who had committed the most spectacular political assassinations of that time, were in the prison car was sent ahead by telegraph along the train’s route because many people were interested in meeting them. As a result, hundreds and sometimes thousands of people gathered to greet the female terrorists as beloved heroines. However, the women of the Shesterka differed in their attitude toward such attention. Bitsenko considered it distasteful, since she thought that people should be honouring the cause and not the individuals. Spiridonova, on the contrary, used the attention that she received in order to propagate for the PSR. Spiridonova’s attitude was neither understood nor

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318 Maxwell 1990, 197-198; Boniece 2010b, 172.
approved by her companions in the beginning; they looked at her actions as vanity and treated her with hostility. However, that attitude changed later.\textsuperscript{321}

Political prisoners of both sexes normally organized their own communities at the places where significant numbers of them were incarcerated in order to protect themselves and improve their living conditions through negotiations with the prison administration.\textsuperscript{322} Such a community of predominantly male political prisoners even existed at Akatui Prison of Nerchinsk \textit{katorga}, where the women of the \textit{Shesterka} were placed after their arrival in Siberia. \textit{Katorga} means “hard labour imprisonment,” but in 1906-1911, a lack of labour was characteristic of Russian \textit{katorga} prisons because of the changes in the political situation of the country after 1905 and the economic conditions of these prisons, where the workshops were insufficient and town settlements near prisons were large.\textsuperscript{323} In summer and fall 1906, the rules of prison life were so loosely enforced at Akatui that political prisoners, who were idle for much of their time, as well as political prisoners incarcerated in other institutions, transformed the prison into a university, where they could study and teach.\textsuperscript{324}

The lenient regime at Akatui ended when the prison administration changed in December 1906.\textsuperscript{325} In February 1907, female political prisoners, who by that time amounted to about seventy, were transferred from Akatui to Maltsev Prison, another one in Nerchinsk \textit{katorga}.\textsuperscript{326} In 1911, the female political prisoners were returned to Akatui, which had been turned into a female prison by that time.\textsuperscript{327} After that, they were kept separate from men until the February Revolution of 1917 released them.

\textsuperscript{321} Maxwell 1990, 202-203, 204-205.
\textsuperscript{322} For information on such a community, \textit{Kollektiv} (the Collective) in Aleksandrovsk \textit{katorga} prison see Badcock 2016, 40-41. For the information on the community of female political prisoner in Riga prison see Pirogova, Antonina (1932), ‘Na zhenskoi katorge,’ in Konstantinov M.M. (ed.) (1932), \textit{Na zhenskoi katorge, Sbornik statei}, Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vsesoyuznogo obschestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev, 192-193.
\textsuperscript{323} Maxwell 1990, 213; Maksimova 2009, 118; Badcock 2016, 41.
\textsuperscript{325} Maxwell 1990, 211.
\textsuperscript{326} Stites 1990[1978], 273; Maxwell 1990, 211.
\textsuperscript{327} Maxwell 1990, 218-219.
In Maltsev Prison, the revolutionary women organized a commune of their own, where they could continue their studies and share money, household duties, etc. While male political prisoners in Siberia were suffering the harsh regime that the prison administration imposed on them after the women were transferred, the female prison was leading a relatively calm and routine life. The letters that Spiridonova sent from Maltsev Prison to Egor Sozonov (1879-1910), a male terrorist hero from the PSR, reveal the efforts that she and other female political prisoners undertook to persuade their comrades to engage in hunger strikes and other means of protest over prison cruelties suffered by male political prisoners. However, ideological disarray in the prison, where most women questioned their own and others' political motivations, was such at the time that these efforts failed.

Some terrorists finished their prison terms before 1917 and were sent to live in different areas of eastern Siberia. In prison, they had already prepared themselves for their new life in exile by learning practical skills, like agrarian work and different areas of medicine. Exiled political prisoners often formed their own communities where they could be in contact with each other; this served as a safety net for them. These communities were keen on getting information from central Russia and received a good range of magazines and newspapers. Most memoirs elaborate on the comradely harmony that existed in these communities of exiles; however, a number of accounts also describe contestation and hostility. Despite being far from the centre of political activism, exiles did not cease their political engagement; there were various reports of attempts to conduct political propaganda among the local population and facilitate escapes of political prisoners who were still incarcerated.

The short biographies of the female PSR terrorists presented in the current chapter earlier show that after the February Revolution released them from Siberian prisons, their lives went in different directions. Some of them continued their political activism in the ranks of the Left SR party, a radical wing of the PSR, which became a separate political

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330 These tendencies are described by memoirists (see Pirogova 1932, 199-200; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 31). On similar tendencies in Alexandrovsk katorga prison see Badcock 2016, 45.
331 See more about communities of exiles in Badcock 2016, 82-83, 88.
party by the end of 1917. Others soon joined the Bolsheviks, while the rest never resumed political activism. None of these women continued participating in political terrorism. However, in the eyes of their comrades, they remained the terrorist heroines of the PSR, whose lives and deeds were seen in the context of their past glory.

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CHAPTER 3. SUBCULTURE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UNDERGROUND

3.1 General Features

The Russian revolutionary underground that existed during the second half of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century developed its own subculture.333 Recent interest in cultural history has resulted in a number of scholarly works dedicated to different aspects of that subculture.334 Konstantin Morozov, however, is probably, the only scholar who has addressed that subculture as a phenomenon in general and not concentrated only on some of its features.335

Morozov uses the concept “subculture of the Russian revolutionary” to define the phenomenon instead of the concept “subculture of the revolutionary underground,” which can be found in the works by other scholars who, however, do not conceptualize the phenomenon.336 Morozov justifies using the concept “subculture of the Russian revolutionary” by the fact that it is broader and more precise, since life in the

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333 This subculture can be seen as a part of Russian political culture (see more on definition of political culture and phenomenon of political culture in Russia in Kolonitsky, Boris (2012), Simvoli vlasti i borba za vlast. K izucheniyu politicheskoi kultury rossiiskoi revolyutsii 1917 goda, izd. 2-e, Sankt-Peterburg: Liki Rossii, 6-13).
334 See for example Mogilner 1999 on literary tradition of the revolutionary underground, Shtakser 2014 on subculture of the revolutionary youth in the Jewish Pale of settlement.
revolutionary underground was just a part of the revolutionaries’ lives: they spent time not only doing underground work, but were in prison, exile, katorga and emigration; moreover, they led “legal” lives as well. In other words, Morozov makes it clear that for him, the cultural norms developed by the revolutionary community influenced their lives as a whole. I agree with this reasoning, but find the concept “subculture of the Russian revolutionary” too oriented to individuals who were part of the revolutionary community. In the focus of my dissertation are texts created within the Russian revolutionary underground, not individuals. This is the reason why Morozov’s concept does not fit into my dissertation. A concept oriented toward the revolutionary community as a whole, such as “subculture of the revolutionary underground,” is a more appropriate definition of the phenomenon that Morozov addresses. Although I agree that the concept “subculture of the revolutionary underground” is not ideal and has particular limitations, I leave theoretical discussions of it to other scholars; I use this concept in my dissertation to address the phenomenon that determined the content and form of the revolutionary auto/biographies that I analyse. Although I do not use the concept suggested by Morozov, I do use the findings of his works in this chapter in order to introduce typical features of the above-mentioned subculture.

According to Morozov, the subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground was formed between the 1850s and 1860s, and it was violently exterminated along with its bearers in the Soviet Union by the Bolsheviks by the late 1930s (it continued to exist for some time in emigration). The Bolsheviks, who came to power in 1917, were also part of the subculture of the revolutionary underground, and they were interested in establishing themselves as the only lawful bearers and heirs of the revolutionary tradition. In practice, however, their mentality and behavioural norms were transformed by the totalitarianism that characterized the Bolshevik state.

The subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground was originally formed by young intellectuals, mostly gymnasium and university students, who came from different estates of Russian society and

337 Morozov 2012b, 151-152.
338 For example, this culture was no longer an underground culture after the Bolsheviks came to power.
339 Morozov 2005, 26; Morozov 2007, 319; Morozov 2012a, 137; Morozov 2012b, 153.
340 Morozov 2005, 4-5.
brought their cultural legacy into the revolutionary underground. In other words, the subculture of the revolutionary underground was founded at the crossroads of influences of different subcultures and was a symbiosis of these influences, although some influences prevailed over others.\textsuperscript{341} The people who were active in the Russian revolutionary underground were expected to lead a particular kind of lifestyle, read the same books, spend their free time in similar ways and behave in accordance with the ethical norms that existed among the revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{342}

Morozov tends to see the subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground as a phenomenon that changed over time and sometimes had different characteristics in the context of various underground organizations. He identifies generational cultural differences between, for example, populists of the 1870s and PSR members, and even differences within one and the same generation with respect to various political parties and movements that existed at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{343} Previous research on political terrorism in Russia shows that cultural differences existed even between the Central Committee of the PSR and the Combat Organization.\textsuperscript{344} Even central and local terrorist units connected to the party, as demonstrated by historians, were quite different in their understanding of the cultural norms, values and behavioural codes that existed in the revolutionary underground.\textsuperscript{345}

The subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground is therefore quite a broad concept. In this chapter, I limit myself to only the three aspects of that subculture that are particularly important for the purposes of the dissertation, namely, to the phenomenon of the “revolutionary family,” ethics that existed among the revolutionaries, and the

\textsuperscript{341} Morozov 2005, 39; Morozov 2007, 330; Morozov 2012b, 159.
\textsuperscript{342} Morozov 2005, 38; Morozov 2007, 326; Morozov 2012a, 145; Morozov 2012b, 158-159; Shtakser 2014, 7.
\textsuperscript{343} Morozov 2005, 27-28; Morozov 2007, 319-320; Morozov 2012a, 138; Morozov 2012b, 154.
mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground with special attention to the revolutionary hero and revolutionary heroine.

3.2 Revolutionary family

“Revolutionary family” is a phenomenon that can be seen as one of the dominants of the subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground, which manifested itself both in how the revolutionaries chose to live their lives and in how they constructed themselves and each other in their texts. Previous research on underground revolutionary communities in different parts of the world during various historical periods show that the “revolutionary family” was not a typically Russian phenomenon, but a characteristic feature of such communities in general.346

The revolutionary environment was considered a family for revolutionaries based not on blood ties, but on comradeship. The revolutionary family was supposed to supplant revolutionaries’ natural families, since when people joined the revolutionary underground, their relationship with their birth families was mostly severed.347 It existed everywhere revolutionaries found themselves, but was especially important for them when they were in prison, exile or emigration. The reason was that revolutionaries were forced to break the ties that they had had when they were free. As a result, they began to see communities of fellow revolutionaries, who were with them for a long time far from the centre of political struggle, as their surrogate families.348 ‘The family feeling became even stronger when members of the revolutionaries’ birth families became members of the revolutionary family themselves or helped the revolutionary community in some way.349

346 The concept of revolutionary family was also identified by Donatella della Porta in her analysis of biographies of Italian and German militants (see della Porta, Donatella (1992), ‘Political Socialization in Left-Wing Underground Organizations: Biographies of Italian and German Militants,’ in della Porta, Donatella (ed.) (1992), Social Movements and Violence. Participation in Underground Organizations, Greenwich; London: Jai Press Inc., 266) as well as by Håkan Blomqvist in the course of his research on the Bund in Sweden (personal communication).
348 See for example Maxwell 1990, 36, 116.
349 Evans Clements 1997, 82-83; Turton 2011, 123; Shtakser 2014, 127.
Although the revolutionaries opposed the patriarchal structures of Russian society, the structure of the revolutionary family was reminiscent of the structure of the typical family in pre-revolutionary Russia. The father was the head of the family, while the other family members played subordinate roles. Hierarchies of power existed even among the other family members: the mother was higher than the children, elder children were higher than younger children, etc. Memoirists define some members of the revolutionary family as “father,” “mother,” “sisters” and “brothers,” which demonstrates the existence of an internal hierarchy in the revolutionary family. According to Shtakser, in the context of the Jewish Bund, the presence of siblings in the party led to the traditional family norm of older siblings passing on experience to their younger siblings becoming a norm of the revolutionary family. The sources connected to the PSR show that such norms even existed in their revolutionary family.

Relationships between male and female members of the revolutionary family are also reminiscent of the way relationships between men and women were organized in regular families. In their memoirs, radical men described revolutionary women as self-denying, modest and proper, thus representing them as moral beings, very much in line with the conservative view of the ideal wife of that time. The main difference with marriage was that revolutionary men did not see radical women as sexed beings, but approached them as comrades and revolutionary “sisters.” The reason for this attitude was that the radical intelligentsia in Russia proclaimed equality of the sexes, and from this standpoint regarded men and women as equal partners in the common struggle against autocracy. However, despite this proclaimed equality, as well as wives of noble people, radical women came to play the

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351 Shtakser 2014, 127.
354 Wood 1997, 48; Shtakser 2014, 7, 49.
role of inspirers of male revolutionaries and the objects of their tutelage.\footnote{Wood 1997, 21.}

The embodiment of the revolutionary family was life in communes practiced by many socialists not only in Russia, but also in other parts of the world.\footnote{See more on findings about communal life in utopian studies and studies on intentional communities in Willimott, Andy (2017), \textit{Living the Revolution. Urban Communes and Soviet Socialism, 1917-1932}, Oxford University Press, 18-19.} “Collectivism” (\textit{kollektivism}),\footnote{See more about it in Broido 1977, 67-68, 71, 101-102; Rindlisbacher, Stephan (2011), ‘Literature, the Radical Milieu, and Terrorist Action in Nineteenth-Century Russia: The Case of Vera Figner and Vera Zasulich,’ in Austenfeld, Thomas et al. (2011), \textit{Terrorism and Narrative Practice}, Lit Verlag, 106-107.} the most obvious feature of commune life, was popularized by Nikolay Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) in his revolutionary novel \textit{What is to be done?} of 1863, which became the source of inspiration for future generations of revolutionaries. Even in the 1870s, revolutionaries, both men and women, lived in shared flats that they called “communes.” These were seen first of all as “schools of practical socialism,” where members shared home duties, money, food, and books, and tried to lead simple lives like common people. In addition, studies and discussions of socialist thought organized for members served as a basis for the codes of revolutionary ethics that were elaborated within these communes.\footnote{Andy Willimott, in his comprehensive study of urban communes in Soviet Russia 1917-1922, gives the historical background of communal life in the Russian revolutionary underground: he writes only about communes of the 1870s (see Willimott 2017, 25-48).}

However, at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, such communes were not very widespread among the active revolutionaries. None of the scholars who have written about the revolutionary underground at that time has stated that communal life among the revolutionaries was the norm.\footnote{Shtakser 2014, 65; Sukloff 1915, 49.} Shtakser discusses communal way of life among Jewish socialists, information that is confirmed by Maria Shkolnik’s memoirs: Shkolnik lived “in a sort of commune” together with other revolutionaries at the beginning of her career in the revolutionary underground.\footnote{Shtakser 2014, 65; Sukloff 1915, 49.} At the same time, Paulina (Pavla) Metter (1883-?), an anarcho-communist who was incarcerated in Maltsev Prison along with female PSR terrorists, writes in her memoirs that her knowledge of communal life before
her arrival at Maltsev Prison was derived mostly from Petr Kropotkin’s works and that it was not a common way of life outside prison.360

As for PSR terrorist groups, their members, such as members of the Combat Organization, could share a household when they were preparing a terrorist attack or working with explosives. However, this communal living was more a temporary solution than a way of life; such terrorist households ceased to exist as soon as the planned attack was committed or if the members of the household suspected that they were being followed by the police.361

Since members of terrorist units were more likely to live together than regular members of the PSR, this family feeling was especially strong among them. For example, the Combat Organization was seen by its members as a kind of “brotherhood” and “family,” where no decision was taken without approval of all members of the unit.362 Scholars name two reasons for such close relations among the terrorists of the Combat Organization. First, the head of the group, who was the only person responsible for recruiting new members,363 always preferred to admit people that he could trust.364 People trusted by the leader were trusted by the rest of the group because of the love and respect that they felt for him,365 which made relationships within the Combat Organization closer. Second, the head of the unit was seen by its rank-and-file members as a symbolic father figure, who enjoyed love and respect within the group.366 Memoirists note that various leaders of the Combat Organization behaved in a fatherly manner toward rank-and-file terrorists.

361 See more about mutual households of members of the Combat Organization in Knight 1979, 149. Savinkov and Ivanovskaya have described the Combat Organization’s mutual households in their memoirs (see Savinkov 1917, 5-396; Ivanovskaya 1929, 46-50).
364 Savinkov, for example, was very eager to admit members of his family and childhood friends.
For example, Ksenia Zilberberg writes that Evno Azef took care of all members of his organization. Both Azef and Grigory Gershuni (1870-1908), the first leader of the Combat Organization, are described by former terrorists as especially attentive and hearty with those who were on their way to commit an attack.

Principles of the revolutionary family already manifested themselves in prison in the second half of the 19th century. According to Barbara Alpern Engel, such ties were especially strong among female prisoners: she quotes Ekaterina Breshkovskaya’s opinion that the women who were tried at the trial of the 193 were less likely to become ill, go mad or die in prison than the men, since they took better care of each other.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when many revolutionaries ended up in Siberian prisons, it was common for political prisoners to organize their own communes. In 1906, when revolutionary men and women were kept together in Akatui Prison, they considered themselves to be part of the same commune. They had common activities that included studies, political discussions, and general meetings where they debated and made decisions about the important questions of their life in prison.

At the beginning of 1907, after Gershuni, who was imprisoned in Akatui, escaped and the administration decided to restrict the prison regime, female political prisoners were transferred to Maltsev Prison. There, revolutionary women organized a commune of their own, with members of the PSR and anarchists in the majority. According to Stites, personal behaviour in the commune was conducted according to a cult of exalted moral integrity. The women shared all duties, food, books, and parcels from home and observed the strictest conventions of socialism. They spent their free time studying in order to become “critically

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367 Gorodnitsky 1998, 177.
368 Gorodnitsky 1996, 53; Praisman 2001, 64.
369 A large-scale trial in 1877-78 of revolutionary populists accused of propaganda.
372 See more about it in Maxwell 1990, 211; Myasnikov 2007.
373 In 1911, female political prisoners were returned to Akatui, which had been converted into a female prison by that time (see more about it in Maxwell 1990, 218).
375 Knight 1979, 157.
thinking persons."376 In their conversations, the women examined fundamental philosophical problems, which led them to question each other’s motives and political beliefs.377 The result was exhaustive self-analysis: every step, every simple and natural act was subjected to intense examination.378

In such prison communities, the starosta (leader of the community) was a very important person. A starosta was expected to be tough enough to fight for fellow prisoners’ rights with the prison administration and, at the same time, to be able to compromise with the authorities when it was necessary. That is why starostas normally enjoyed huge respect and authority among political prisoners.379 Since no one but the starosta could communicate directly with the prison administration and make decisions for the whole community,380 it can be assumed that a starosta was seen as a parental figure in these prison communities. All the memoirists who were imprisoned in Akatui remember very warmly and with great respect Gershuni, the starosta of the community prior to his escape. Many of them described Gershuni directly as a fatherly figure.381

The revolutionary family was important even for political activists who were exiled after serving their prison terms. Since many were sent to the same regions of eastern Siberia, political exiles kept in contacts not only to have an opportunity to enjoy the company of people with similar world views, but also to help each other when it was needed. For example, such communities provided subsidized canteens, where exiles could get cheap meals and discuss the current situation in the country, as well as read magazines and newspapers that the community received. In addition, such communities could give loans and grants, provide medical and occupational assistance, and help political exiles find cheap accommodations. 382

378 Halle 1933, 74; Knight 1979, 158.
380 Morozov 2012b, 172.
381 See for example Spiridonova, Maria (1925), ‘Iz zhizni na Nerchinskoi katorge,’ in Katogra i ssylka, No. 2 (15), 168-171; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 61.
382 See more about it in Badcock 2016, 82-83.
The concept of the revolutionary family seems to have existed even among socialist political exiles during the Soviet era. A well-known case is the group of former members of the Left SR party that comprised Maria Spiridonova, her friends from Maltsev Prison Alexandra Izmailovich and Irina Kakhovskaya (1887-1960), a maximalist before the Revolution, as well as Spiridonova’s husband Ilya Maiorov (1890-1941) and his relatives. The abovementioned had lived together since 1925, when they were exiled by the Soviet regime, until they all were arrested by the Bolsheviks in 1937. In her “Last Testament,” written in 1937 in a Soviet prison, Spiridonova claims that the members of that commune took care of all former members of the Left SR party who came to the towns where she and her co-habitants lived. These people were most likely to stay at Spiridonova’s place while they were still unemployed, and they could always expect material help from members of her household if it was needed. Alexander Rabinowitch dubs Spiridonova the matriarch of the commune, which implies that she was a parental figure for that group of former revolutionaries.383 In other words, political exiles of the Soviet era tried to follow the basic principles of the revolutionary family in their communication with each other even after their political activism had ended.

3.3 Ethics

Concepts of right and wrong, or ethics, was an important part of the subculture of the revolutionary underground. The behavioural norms that existed in the revolutionary underground were regulated by the opinion of the revolutionary community, which distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and ensured that everyone followed these norms. Special attention was given to the norms of behaviour of a revolutionary after arrest: during interrogation, in prison, and during trial.384 Such control was important, since it was connected to survival of the revolutionary subculture in the hostile environment of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Although the bearers of the subculture of the revolutionary underground came from different classes of the Russian society, many of these young people were of noble background. That was likely the reason why the culture of nobility, with its well-developed honour codes, very much

384 Morozov 2012b, 167.
influenced the ethical norms of the revolutionary underground.\textsuperscript{385} It is no wonder that much attention was devoted to the means of protecting honour and dignity of revolutionaries accused by their comrades of misbehaving. It led to the establishment of “party justice,” where legal norms as well as mechanisms and structures of investigation and trial existed in order to provide such protection.\textsuperscript{386}

The key issue controlled and defined by all these means of revolutionary justice was betrayal, which in the subculture of the revolutionary underground was interpreted quite broadly. The most obvious betrayal and worst crime that could be committed by a revolutionary against comrades was secret cooperation with the police. This issue became especially important during the revolutionary years of 1905-1907, when people suspected of cooperation with the police were tried by their former comrades, and some were even executed without a trial.\textsuperscript{387}

Sincere testimonials during interrogations that gave police an opportunity to arrest and accuse other revolutionaries, cooperation with the court, and support of the prosecution during a trial of comrades were also considered betrayal and could not be justified.\textsuperscript{388} That is why in their letters from prison, Russian revolutionaries often gave detailed explanations of what they had said during interrogations.\textsuperscript{389} In this way, arrested revolutionaries showed their comrades that their behaviour after arrest followed the ethical norms of the revolutionary underground and could not be equated with cooperation with the regime.

A revolutionary’s courtroom behaviour during trial was strictly regulated by the ethical norms of the revolutionary underground as well. During political trials, the courtroom was turned into a site of political resistance, so that the individual’s behaviour during trial was seen as a
continuation of the political struggle with the regime. Following these unwritten rules, the political prisoners used their trials as a tribune to promote the ideas of the organizations that they belonged to and to explain their deeds in the context of those ideas.

In the revolutionary environment, applications for clemency as well as applications for reduction of sentence were not acceptable. As a rule, regardless of the reasons behind the application, a revolutionary who applied for clemency became in the eyes of comrades a “half-renegade,” and thus could not continue his revolutionary activities. In general, even any suspicion that someone had applied for a pardon was enough to ruin his reputation. Morozov and Morozova connect such a harsh attitude to the desire of the revolutionary environment to have firm principles that would not be undermined by self-approval and self-pity. At the beginning of the 20th century, this harsh position dominated a softer approach, which also existed in revolutionary circles that the situation of a particular individual should be taken into account before s/he was condemned for making such an application. That is why revolutionaries trying to influence the court during a trial was quite unusual at that time.

Even behaviour during an execution, which was often the verdict at trials of political terrorists, was regulated by the ethics of the revolutionary underground. Different types of documents show that during trials and executions, most revolutionaries behaved courageously. Such descriptions even appear in the works of memoirists who belonged to the pro-government camp. By promoting their comrades’ courageous
behaviour during executions, socialist and liberal authors of accounts of them transformed the meaning of these executions. While the regime saw executions as an example of the state’s sovereign power, representations of personal resistance, dignity, and moral fortitude of executed revolutionaries transformed them into a spectacle of illegitimate violence of the regime.  

In order to avoid being arrested and prosecuted, some revolutionaries chose to emigrate. Attitudes to this behaviour was different in the revolutionary underground at different stages of its existence. In the 1870s and 1880s, emigration was equal to desertion. In the 1890s, any revolutionary who did not want to be seen as a coward would return to Russia on request. At the beginning of the 20th century, however, attitudes toward emigration were quite lenient compared to the previous period. As a result, some revolutionaries chose to emigrate in order to avoid prosecutions by the secret police, since in emigration they could be more useful for the cause than in prison.

Another important issue highly regulated by the ethical norms that existed in the revolutionary underground was behaviour in prison, where many active revolutionaries and terrorists ended up for long periods. Forms of self-organization of the prison community, as well as organization of political prisoners’ everyday life and prison resistance, were elaborated in detail by several generations of revolutionaries. According to Morozov, such close attention to behavioural norms in prison was determined by the eagerness of political prisoners to keep their revolutionary identity, which distinguished them from criminals, who were

was hanged for the murder of the commander of the Semenov Regiment, General Min, who had in December 1905 suppressed the uprising in Moscow, is still clearly preserved in my memory. She approached the scaffold, reciting the lines of Pushkin... The heroism of this youth, it must be admitted, attracted sympathy to them in society” (“Они в этом отношении не были исключением: все террористы умирали с большим мужеством и достоинством. Особенно женщины. В моей памяти до сих пор отчётливо сохранился рассказ о том, как умерла Зинаида Коноплянникова, повешенная за убийство командира Семеновского полка генерала Мина, который в декабре 1905 года подавил восстание в Москве. Она взошла на эшафот, декламируя строки Пушкина... Героизм этой молодежи, надо признать, привлекал к ней симпатии в обществе”). (Gerasimov, Alexander (1985), Na lezvii s terroristami, Paris:YMCA-Press, 123).

396 Morrissey 2012, 624.
kept in prisons with them. Political prisoners were supposed to behave differently from criminals in their everyday life: they were expected not to play cards, steal, whore, drink alcohol, or ask for clemency. The same principles applied in the prisons during the pre-revolutionary period were also implemented by socialists imprisoned by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s and 1930s.399

Prison was seen as a site of resistance by the revolutionaries, where they had to continue their struggle against the regime. However, that struggle was to be conducted in new conditions, where the revolutionaries were no longer free, and their opponents had total power over them. For this reason, revolutionaries had to use different methods from those that they used while they were still free.400

The fight that the revolutionaries undertook in prison was connected to the political regime in force in each such institution and was seen as an inevitable compromise of two hostile forces, the revolutionaries and prison administration. Struggle against the political regime was directed toward two aspects: first, it was a fight for decent living conditions and, second, it was also protection of revolutionaries’ human dignity. Prisoners had concrete requirements, like decent food and right to read books, magazines and newspapers, something that could help them keep physical and mental health intact in prison conditions. As for issues connected to protecting the dignity of political prisoners, the revolutionaries undertook this struggle to force the prison administration to accept the rules of behaviour in prison and at katorga that were elaborated in the subculture of the revolutionary underground. In accordance with these rules, political prisoners were expected to treat prison administration, representatives of the regime, in a special way: not to let prison administration speak to them familiarly, not to take off their hats and stand when representatives of the prison administration came, not to sing hymns in the tsar’s honour, and to protest if any of them was beaten. Besides, no one except the starosta could communicate and negotiate with the prison administration directly.401

Escapes from prison were seen as a form of political struggle mainly because their main purpose was to return the most prominent revolutionaries to political activism. However, preparations for such escapes

399 Morozov 2012b, 170, 172.
400 Morozov 2012b, 170.
401 Morozov 2005, 514; Morozov 2012b, 170, 172.
normally required significant financial backing. As a result, those who actually did escape from prison and exile to go abroad were mostly from wealthier backgrounds.\textsuperscript{402} From the very beginning of their imprisonment in Siberia, female PSR terrorists planned escapes.\textsuperscript{403} In practice, however, it was too difficult to escape from Siberian hard labour prisons, especially after 1906. Shkolnik remained the only woman who was successful, largely because she was transferred to a prison hospital in Irkutsk, where she had more opportunities to get help from revolutionaries outside the prison. Shkolnik was not the offspring of a well-to-do family, so her escape was financed by funds sent by other revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{404}

The behaviour of political prisoners described above could lead to different forms of repression by prison administration. Political prisoners were expected to protest these repressions in ways that were considered acceptable within revolutionary ethics. First, socialists could appeal to public opinion both in Russia and abroad: they made all their suffering as well as their protests widely known, which forced the authorities to make prison regimes more bearable and to satisfy the requirements of the protesters. Political prisoners could also protest and write to different organizations about violations of laws and abuses against them.\textsuperscript{405} They could go on hunger strikes, individually and in groups, in order to draw attention to their requirements. It is important to remember that political prisoners who were in prison for longer periods of time were physically weakened, which meant that hunger could harm them much more than a healthy person, and it was difficult for them to recover afterward in prison conditions. For this reason, political prisoners seriously discussed all pros and cons of such strikes beforehand. Hunger strikes of Russian revolutionaries became very famous in Europe and other parts of the world, and were known as the “Russian method” by different political protesters.\textsuperscript{406} Another means of protest was obstruction, a form of collective protest that could be communicated through loud singing, door knocking, and making noise by slamming metal dishes against doors, bars, walls or by bleating loudly one after another. Suicide and self-immolation were the most extreme forms of fighting for revolutionary dignity in prison. In some cases, prison terror, i.e.,

\textsuperscript{402} Badcock 2016, 136.
\textsuperscript{403} Stites 1990[1978], 273.
\textsuperscript{404} Maxwell 1990, 218; Badcock 2016, 136.
\textsuperscript{405} Morozov 2012b, 172.
\textsuperscript{406} See more about it in Grant 2011.
assassination attempts on the most hated representatives of various levels of prison administration, were undertaken by incarcerated revolutionaries and their comrades outside prison. According to Morozov, this form of political terrorism played an important role in attenuating the regime in prisons and *katorga* in 1905-1906. Finally, in some cases, political prisoners started armed uprisings.407

3.4 Mythology

The subculture of the Russian revolutionary underground created a particular mythology, within which a specific discursive practice of representing revolutionaries and constructing their lives was established. In this dissertation, I follow Peter Heehs in defining myth as "a set of propositions, often stated in narrative form, that is accepted uncritically by a culture or speech-community and that serves to found or affirm its self-conception."408 The mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground described Underground Russia, the world of the revolutionaries, as an ideal country inhabited by ideal people.409 The purpose of that epos was to represent the revolutionary fight and individual revolutionaries in such a way that they would gain sympathy from the broader public and would become role models for other revolutionary fighters. Such representations were constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom, which was employed in writings about revolutionary terrorists created within the revolutionary underground.

The mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground existed both as an oral and a written tradition. According to Mogilner, the written tradition originated in the literary texts created by revolutionary authors.410 Many scholars identify *Underground Russia* (first published in Italian in 1882411), a book by Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky (1851-1895), a revolutionary terrorist himself, as the key text for the creation of the revolutionary mythology, where the canons of representing a revolutionary hero were established.412 In addition, it is worth mentioning

407 Morozov 2012b, 173.
408 Heehs, Peter (1994), 'Myth, History and Theory,' in *History and Theory* 33, no. 1, 3.
410 Mogilner 1999, 7.
412 See for example Mogilner 1999, 7-8, 41-46, 54; Morrissey 2012, 611f.
that even after the publication of Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s book, real revolutionaries who obtained the heroic status by their political activism were used as models for shaping the mythology of the revolutionary underground.⁴¹³ These real-life revolutionary heroes tried to live their lives as the characters of Chernyshevsky and Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, and thus were influenced by the key texts of the revolutionary underground in their lives and activism.⁴¹⁴ Different kinds of auto/biographical writings by/about revolutionaries did not seek to represent them as the real people that they were, but tried to recreate them as ideal revolutionary heroes in accordance with the discursive practice established in Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s works and further developed in the revolutionary tradition. As a result, the revolutionaries who inspired these writings were idealized and transformed into mythological characters who lacked individuality and were the embodiment of collective heroism. Similarities between the heroes introduced in these kinds of stories and their real life prototypes were of a superficial character; personality, ideological differences, personal qualities were superfluous in these representations.⁴¹⁵

In order to achieve such results, many texts that comprised the underground mythology were censored by the authors and their comrades.⁴¹⁶ Aleksandr Spiridovich (1873-1952), a police officer who wrote several volumes on the history of revolutionary parties in Russia, even claimed that most letters written before an execution were the results of collective writing by PSR members, not works of individual terrorists, as was announced in party propaganda.⁴¹⁷ Some cases of forgery are known from the years when the Combat Organization was headed by Gershuni, who himself authored some terrorists’ final letters later used for propaganda. One such letter was dictated by Gershuni word for word to terrorist Foma Kachura, who after arrest cooperated with the police and repented his crime. However, the PSR chose to silence Kachura’s renegade behaviour and exalted him as a hero in its publications.⁴¹⁸ In this

⁴¹³ According to A.A. Kiselev, young revolutionaries were eager to meet older revolutionaries, who were considered to be revolutionary heroes, in order to get to know about the behavioral norms, moral values and personal characteristics that were considered desirable in the revolutionary underground (Kiselev 2015).
⁴¹⁴ See more about this mutual influence of real life and revolutionary fiction in Mogilner 1999, 30-31.
⁴¹⁵ Mogilner 1999, 45, 55.
⁴¹⁶ See more about censure and self-censure of the socialists in Morozov 2012b, 151.
⁴¹⁷ See more about it in Stepanov, Sergei (2014), 'Kult smerti,' in Rossiiskaya istoriya, No. 1, 156.
way, heroic myths about individual revolutionary terrorists were created.

Significant differences existed in how male and female revolutionaries were constructed in these kinds of texts. Researchers of the European tradition of casting political terrorists as martyrs and heroes have demonstrated that existing gender norms played an important role in creating such constructions. In the eyes of conservatives and enemies of the terrorists, both women and men were people who had transgressed their sex roles because of their participation in terrorist attacks. They would feminize male terrorists and masculinize female terrorists. Although sympathizers did not see terrorists as deviants, they also constructed them in a gendered fashion by following the gender implications of the concepts of heroes and martyrs. The idea of revolutionaries as people who transgressed their sex roles even existed in the Russian revolutionary tradition, which makes it possible to claim that their representations had a basis similar to those of European terrorists. In this part of the chapter, I focus on the way the ideal people, the revolutionaries of both sexes, the hero and heroine of Underground Russia, were represented in the mythology of the Russian revolutionary underground.

3.4.1 The Revolutionary Hero

According to Schraut, in their traditional Christian sense the concepts of hero and martyr are both superhuman and predominantly male. I interpret this statement in the following way: male heroes and martyrs were considered to be the existing standard of heroism and martyrdom; female heroines and martyrs were defined in relation to them. It is no wonder that even in the political sphere, the hero was first of all a male figure and a standard of the revolutionary ideal. In Europe, the discursive practice of representing the male terrorist hero was established at the beginning of the 19th century when texts about Carl Ludwig Sand (1795-1820), a university student who assassinated the conservative author August von Kotzebue in Mannheim and is considered to be the

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419 Schraut 2014, 63-64, 66; Schraut & Weinhauer 2014, 21-22.
420 Representations of masculine women and feminine men as undivided human beings was a topic in the writings of the Russian populist writer Gleb Uspensky (see more about this issue in Mondry, Henrietta (2004), ‘With Short Cropped Hair: Gleb Uspensky’s Struggle against Biological Gender Determinism,’ The Russian Review, 63(3), 479-492).
421 Schraut 2014, 64.
founding father of modern terrorism, were published by his sympathizers. These authors constructed Sand in the image of the Christian martyr as a sensible man who suffered too much under political pressure. He was represented as a man who was strong-minded, but sexless.  

The male revolutionary hero was the central figure in the key works of the Russian revolutionary underground, which, according to Aileen Kelly, were Chernyshevsky’s *What is to be done?* of 1863, Sergei Nechaev’s (1847-1882) *Catechism of a Revolutionary* of 1869, and the above-mentioned literary works of Stepanyak-Kravchinsky written in the 1880s. Unlike the hero impersonated by Sand, this revolutionary hero was not necessarily a terrorist.

*What is to be done?* was the first literary work in Russia to introduce the ideal of a professional revolutionary, the revolutionary hero, embodied in the character of Rakhmetov. Although Rakhmetov appears in the novel very briefly, Chernyshevsky pays particular attention to him and dedicates a whole chapter to the introduction of this “extraordinary man.” Chernyshevsky characterizes Rakhmetov as a person marked by a strong will, which gave him the opportunity to develop both physically and intellectually.

Both Irina Paperno and Marcia A. Morris see similarities in how Chernyshevsky describes Rakhmetov’s life path to how the lives of Orthodox Christian saints were related in hagiographical writings. Rakhmetov was born into a well-to-do family, but chose to distribute his inheritance among the poor and embark on a period of solitary wandering, which resulted in extremely rigorous ascetic practices. He disciplined his body, denied himself love, restricted his diet to the food of the poor, read only “original” books, and slept on nails to prepare himself for the worst. In other words, the revolutionary hero from

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425 “особенный человек” (Chernyshevsky, Nikolay Gavrilovich (1985 [1863]), *Chto delat’ Iz rasskazov o novykh lyudyakh*, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 227).
426 Chernyshevsky 1985 [1863], 232-234.
Chernyshevsky’s book is an ascetic hero who denies the material world and focuses his attention on the spiritual.

Particular attention in the book is given to Rakhmetov’s reading practices. According to Chernyshevsky, he reads in order to extract the fundamental paradigms of all branches of human knowledge. However, he does not restrict himself to the established canon; instead, he must discover and extract originality from books he reads on his own. This feature of Rakhmetov shows that in Chernyshevsky’s vision, the revolutionary hero was a person who was constantly developing intellectually.

What is to be done? includes no killing clause for the extraordinary man. Rakhmetov is not represented as a political terrorist; he is merely an ideal revolutionary who has dedicated his whole life to the cause.

The ideal revolutionary, however, is represented as a political terrorist in *Catechism of a Revolutionary* by Sergei Nechaev, a Russian nihilist and revolutionary. *Catechism* is a compilation of guiding principles for the conduct of a professional radical, which had its purpose in the creation of a totally revolutionary personality and justified any means in the service of revolution. Geifman comes to the conclusion that, according to Nechaev, the ideal member of a conspiratorial cell was expected to be an instrument of the revolution and existed solely for its purposes. He also “must be ready to kill pitilessly” for the cause. As did Chernyshevsky, who portrayed the revolutionary hero through the male character of Rakhmetov, Nechaev makes it clear that the revolutionary hero of his work is also a man, since women are introduced by him as a separate category of people.

In his works, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky developed the ideal of a revolutionary hero that had been introduced by Chernyshevsky and Nechaev.

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430 Verhoeven 2009, 63.
431 Verhoeven 2009, 62.
433 Geifman 2010, 75.
However, while the previous authors mostly described their idea of the character, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky was influenced by real revolutionaries, the members of the People’s Will who organized and executed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. That generation of revolutionaries gave personal examples of purity, austerity, and self-sacrifice, the features that became in Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s works, as well as in all later writings about the revolutionary hero, typical for this ideal character.\(^{435}\)

Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s *Underground Russia* can be characterized as a hagiography of the People’s Will, written with the purpose of creating public opinion loyal to the ideals of the revolutionary underground.\(^{436}\) The book includes an account of the revolutionary movement in Russia in general and individual portrayals (“profiles”) of eight members of the People’s Will (five men and three women).

Since the people who inspired Stepnyak-Kravchinsky to write his book were members of a terrorist organization, the revolutionary hero in his work is a terrorist. Stepnyak-Kravchinsky pays particular attention to “the Terrorist’s formidable, intensely masculine body,” which is “the reification of his will.”\(^{437}\) Although in his profiles, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky introduces both male and female revolutionary terrorists, his way of introducing the revolutionary hero shows that in his interpretation, it is primarily a male character.

Mogilner notes that Stepnyak-Kravchinsky was the first author to represent the revolutionary hero as a suffering individual: the characters of *Underground Russia*, as well as the characters of his novel *The Career of A Nihilist* of 1889 (later published in Russia as *Andrey Kozhukhov*), are represented as people who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause.\(^{438}\) In his account of the revolutionary movement in Russia, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky introduces the Terrorist as a character who combines within himself “the two sublimities of human grandeur: the martyr and the hero.”\(^{439}\) Thus, it is possible to conclude that Stepnyak-Kravchinsky


\(^{437}\) Patyk 2009, 766.

\(^{438}\) Mogilner 1999, 42.

\(^{439}\) Quoted in Scotto 2010, 110.
was the first author in Russia to write about political terrorism in the manner used by sympathizers of political terrorists in Europe.

As for profiles of the members of the People’s Will that were included in the book, Peter Scotto does not see them as biographical. According to him, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky did not intend to tell the entire life story of each of these individuals, but rather wanted to evoke the salient features of each of them as revolutionary activists with a focus on incidents and episodes from their revolutionary life. An example of how Stepnyak-Kravchinsky describes a male revolutionary hero is his representation of Yakov Stefanovich (1854-1915), a leading member of the People’s Will:

He is a man of action exclusively; but yet not of immediate action like those whose hands itch to be at work. He knows how to wait. He is a man of far-reaching plans; he is the finest type of organizer whom I have ever known. His clear and eminently practical mind, his firm and cautious character, his knowledge of men … render him particularly adapted for this highly difficult office… (...) He greatly loves and venerates his father and often speaks of him, relating with special pleasure anecdotes of him and quoting passages from his letters, which show his rude intelligence and his honest and upright heart.440

The description above, on the one hand, represents Stefanovich as a revolutionary hero who is very much in keeping with portrayals created by earlier authors: energetic, intelligent, but also firm, capable of being a leader, patient. At the same time, while Rakhmetov and especially Nechaev’s revolutionary hero are represented as people who have no personal feelings and interests, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky gives a more personal touch to his portrayal of Stefanovich by mentioning his special relationship with his father. In this way, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky shows that a real-life revolutionary hero also has a human side. Scotto characterizes this kind of introduction as an encomium to the hero meant to encapsulate his chief virtues (or failings, in some cases), and he claims that with variations suitable to his subject, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky repeats this pattern in each of his profiles. The effect of this is that the

440 Quoted in Scotto 2010, 112.
book reads like a collection of saints’ legends, which implies that Step- 
nyak-Kravchinsky used a religious form in his representation of revo-

tu tional terrorists.

As for Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s fiction, especially The Career of a Ni-

hilist, he was the first author who represented the revolutionary hero as 
an abstract character. This implies that the author tried to avoid psycho-

logical explanations of his characters’ actions and did not portray his 
revolutionary heroes in the banal situations of everyday life. In 1892, 
Vera Zasulich praised Stepnyak-Kravchinsky for this abstract way of 
representing the revolutionary hero: according to her, he was the first 
author who showed that the real hero of Underground Russia was “the 
revolutionary spirit” in human form. In later literary and auto/biogra-

phical works created in Underground Russia, it has become a tradition not 
to create psychological portrayals of revolutionary heroes and not to 
represent them in everyday situations in order not to undermine their 
heroic status.

After Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, authors who wrote about Russian terror-

ist s, very much in keeping with him, showed them as selfless idealists, 
freedom fighters, heroes and martyrs. The main character of the texts 
created in Underground Russia was a terrorist, who is psychologically 
whole, rigorously virtuous (even ascetic), and internally consistent, 
able, energetic, physically strong, resolute, courageous and decisive, 
whose identity derived from complete revolutionary dedication. Simul-
taneously, the revolutionary hero possessed more “human” features, 
such as goodness and kindness. It is possible to assume that by men-
tioning these kinds of qualities, the authors sought to justify the violent 
activities that their characters participated in; since the terrorists were 
good and kind people, the violence that they were engaged in must have 
served a good cause.

The supposed moral purity of terrorists was symbolically enacted in 
their willingness to die. Even violence acquired an aura of innocence, 
becoming the means to cleanse and purify the world, since the terrorists 
killed the most hated representatives of the regime and thus tried to 
make the world a better place. A terrorist had no personal motives

\[441\] Scotto 2010, 112.
\[442\] Mogilner 1999, 43-45.
\[443\] Von Borcke 1982, 49; Geifman 1993, 7, 175; Geifman 2010, 77.
\[444\] Mogilner 1999, 37, 54; Morrissey 2006, 277, 286.
\[445\] Morrissey 2012, 611.
for participation in political violence, and the only meaning ascribed to an act of terror was a meta-narrative of political struggle.\textsuperscript{446} Furthermore, according to Mogilner, the revolutionary hero loved the people and sacrificed his life for them by participating in underground revolutionary activities.\textsuperscript{447} 

In general, the revolutionary terrorist was represented in these works as an avenger on behalf of the oppressed “people,” and the narrative of revolutionary justice likened the terrorist act to judicial punishment.\textsuperscript{448} In order to show that the government official assassinated by the Hero deserved to die, the author of the account would construct his target as Anti-Hero, who, unlike the revolutionary hero, is cruel and mean, and, thus morally dead even before the act of assassination. In this situation the terrorist, although he commits an assassination, is represented as morally pure, since he assassinates someone who is already dead. In this way, the Hero is represented as innocent, which makes the idea that he is a murderer impossible.\textsuperscript{449} 

Special attention was paid to different sacrifices made by the revolutionary hero. First, he is traditionally a young person, which means that by sacrificing his young life, the hero offers more than the life of the government official that he assassinated is worth, because the representative of the regime has had his chance to live, while the revolutionary hero dies young. The revolutionary hero also sacrifices his right to love, start a family and have children. Love of the people is the only kind of love in his life, and all the sacrifices that the revolutionary hero makes are for this kind of love. The revolutionary hero is represented as a suffering person, as a saint, who cannot be judged by the earthly court.\textsuperscript{450} 

Memoirs of PSR members show that ideas about the revolutionary hero, the professional revolutionary in the revolutionary underground, influenced even the ideal of the professional revolutionary in the party. This is how Viktor Chernov (1873-1952), a leader of the PSR, characterized a professional revolutionary:

\textsuperscript{446} Beer 2007, 28. 
\textsuperscript{447} Mogilner 1999, 47. 
\textsuperscript{448} Morrissey 2012, 625. 
\textsuperscript{449} Mogilner 1999, 37-38, 54. 
\textsuperscript{450} Mogilner 1999, 53, 54.
A wand[ering] apostle of socialism, a knight, punishing violators. A splendid example of his kind. The prison is his university. Interrogations are his gymnasium final exam. Conspiracy is his routine. Competition in agility and elusiveness with the police is his sport. Prison breaks are episodes. Passport, dynamite, cryptographic equipment are his professional training. Propaganda and agitation are his life.

After the revolution of 1905-1907, the period that Mogilner defines as “the end of the heroic epoch,” the character of the revolutionary hero underwent a particular transformation in works of fiction created in the revolutionary underground. Literary revolutionary heroes began to reflect on their right to kill; they were represented by various authors as regular people who had their daily routines, and whose heroic status did not change the fact that they were just people. At the same time, the auto/biographical accounts dedicated to real revolutionaries were visually unaffected by changes in the literature: the authors of these accounts still represented the revolutionary hero as an ideal human being who sacrificed his life for the common people.

3.4.2 The Revolutionary Heroine

The French revolution gave the world Charlotte Corday (1768-1793), the founding mother of modern terrorism, who assassinated Jean-Paul Marat, a tyrant who, in her opinion, betrayed the ideals of the revolution. Russian revolutionary terrorists, Zasulich and Spiridonova, were compared to Corday by their contemporaries, which shows that


452 See more about it in Mogilner 1999, 91-101.

453 Mogilner illustrates this tendency with the example of two works written by Boris Savinkov in 1909. On the one hand, his novel The Pale Horse represents the revolutionary terrorists as reflecting and non-heroic individuals. On the other hand, in his memoirs, Savinkov represents the people who worked together with him in the Combat Organization and inspired some characters of the above-mentioned novel as revolutionary heroes and heroines (see Mogilner 1999, 106).

454 Schraut & Weinharder 2014, 19.

455 Schraut 2014, 64-65.
Corday had become a symbolic figure by the time women took up the revolutionary fight in Russia. Moreover, the way Corday was portrayed by her sympathetic contemporaries very much influenced how the following generations of female terrorists, including the Russian ones, were portrayed by their sympathizers. Corday was celebrated as a female hero, holy woman, even priest or angel of assassination. However, none of her sympathizers portrayed Corday as the real-life woman that she was: Corday was represented either as a (sexless) angel or a pale virgin.

The reason for such a one-sided portrayal lies in the fact that as well as her antagonists who saw Corday as a deviant woman, her sympathizers had problems with overcoming gendered stereotypes when portraying a female assassin. The reason for it was the general belief that a “real” woman could not be a political assassin. On account of the development of the bourgeois gender model, which meant that women should not participate in newly acquired political rights, even sympathizers had problems describing and celebrating female violence in terms of heroism and martyrdom. This is why even sympathizers of Corday and later female terrorists needed special gendered explanations that their female comrades were good and real women despite their terrorist/anarchist acts and inclinations.

While applying the concepts of “martyr” and “hero” to female revolutionaries, their sympathizers used highly feminized understandings of them. Unlike a male Christian martyr who suffers exclusively for his faith, a female Christian martyr also fights for her family and in defence of her virginity. This Christian understanding of female martyrdom influenced how sympathizers of female terrorists represented them: they were constructed either as apolitical virgins or sexless women. A hero in ancient Greek tradition was always a supernatural man, who possessed the qualities of a warrior that in the 19th century were considered typically male. As a result, it was particularly difficult to describe a female hero, since a hero could be portrayed only in a male fashion. Thus, sympathizers of terrorism had to mix male attributes of a hero with female attributes of a female martyr in order to portray female terrorists.

457 Schraut 2014, 64.
458 Schraut 2014, 63; Schraut & Weinhuauer 2014, 24, 28.
459 Schraut 2014, 63-64; Schraut & Weinhuauer 2014, 28-29.
Similar tendencies can even be observed in the Russian context, although not much research has been done on Russian revolutionary heroines. Engel claims that Chernyshevsky, the first in Russia to introduce a revolutionary hero in his novel, created a model for both men and women to follow. However, it is difficult to see Vera Pavlovna, the main female character of What is to be done?, as a revolutionary heroine, since she is not involved in any revolutionary activities. As Morris puts it, Vera Pavlovna is only one of many decent people who marvel at men like Rakhmetov, but can never aspire to their heights. Chernyshevsky, however, makes it clear that “the extraordinary man” is not the only one of his kind; he writes about eight examples of this breed, including two women. Chernyshevsky represents women as a minority among revolutionary heroes; that is likely why he does not portray a revolutionary heroine in his book.

An ideal revolutionary heroine is not found in Nechaev’s Catechism of a Revolutionary either. Nechaev proposes to divide society into six categories, and all women, regardless of their political convictions, are included in the sixth (last) category. Anna Hillyar and Jane McDermid interpret this classification of women as a clear sign that in Nechaev’s opinion, women were inferior to men. That is likely why Nechaev calls revolutionary women comrades and “our precious treasure whose help is indispensable for us” without further elaborating on their qualities.

Nechaev’s representation of revolutionary women reminds one of the female ideal that existed in Russia in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. According to the views on femininity that existed in Russian society at that time, a “good” woman was a good wife to her husband and a good mother to her children who lived her life for her family. From a view of woman as educator of future citizens arose the idea that a woman is naturally a moral being, morally higher than a man, and who because of it should infuse men with modesty and propriety. At the same time, a woman was seen as subordinated to

460 Engel 2004, 74.
461 Morris 1993, 139.
463 Nechaev 1869, 52-53.
465 “драгоценнейшее сокровище наше, без помощи которых нам обойтись невозможно” (Nechaev 1869, 53).
466 Stites 1990[1978], 16; Pushkareva 1997, 164; Kelly 2001a, 3; Kelly 2001b, xxxiii-xxxiv; Engel 2004, 24; Yukina 2007, 100; Clements 2012, 83.
men because as a naturally pure being, she was in need of protection from the dangers of the outside world that her man could provide. Such an image was often evoked in the portrayals of the female revolutionary terrorists created by their comrades.

Stepnyak-Kravchinsky was the author who actually created detailed representations of female members of the People’s Will in his *Underground Russia*, having chosen for his profiles Gesya Gelfman, Vera Zasulich and Sofiya Perovskaya. The occupations and positions of these women within the People’s Will were quite different, and Stepnyak-Kravchinsky makes it clear: he defines Gelfman as one of the “modest workers” of the revolution; Zasulich is introduced as the first female political assassin in Russia; Perovskaya, for her part, is presented first and foremost as the organizer of the assassination of Alexander II, i.e., a terrorist leader. By choosing these women for his “profiles,” Stepnyak-Kravchinsky shows that regardless of the role that she plays in the revolutionary organization, any woman can be seen as a revolutionary heroine.

Stepnyak-Kravchinsky writes quite briefly about Gelfman, with whom he was not personally acquainted, but introduces Zasulich and Perovskaya in more detail. All these women are constructed in accordance with the above-mentioned European way of writing about female terrorists, as people who had features of heroes and martyrs, but at the same time were “natural” women in accordance with the female ideal that existed in Russia at that time. According to Patyk, in his representation of Perovskaya, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky focused on her femininity in order to counterbalance the chauvinistic press that constructed Perovskaya as an unnatural woman because of her participation in political terrorism. He demonstrates that Perovskaya possessed feminine (but not sexual) charms and was capable of fulfilling her womanly duties, since she was fond of children and showed herself to be an excellent schoolteacher and nurse, two professions considered typically female.

In the cases of both Zasulich and Perovskaya, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky pays particular attention to how they dressed in order to show their revolutionary character. He highlights Zasulich’s inattention to her dress

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469 Patyk 2009, 775.
as indicative of a loftiness of soul that had no truck with the frivolity of fashion or appearances, and her extreme modesty. Perovskaya is also represented as extremely modest and without feminine vanity. Whereas Zasulich’s modesty manifests itself through her careless dressing, Perovskaya’s modesty manifests itself by her punctiliousness. This exacting attention to detail and propriety, typical of women with regard to dress, is also shown as a sign of Perovskaya’s ability to master the logistics of regicide. Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, as well as European sympathizers of female terrorists, seems to have been perturbed by how the masculine qualities that enabled Perovskaya to orchestrate the regicide are in conflict with his womanly ideal.470

As did conservatives who saw female participation in political terrorism stemming from women’s illogical emotionality, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky sought to explain their political activism by their emotional condition rather than by their rational political convictions. He celebrated Zasulich mostly as an “angel of vengeance,” not as a politically motivated actor. Perovskaya’s action, however, could not be explained only by her emotions, since she masterminded the plot against Alexander II and showed herself to be a person who could think rationally and logically. In order to find reasons for her political attitude, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, as well as other authors, looked into Perovskaya’s life, focusing on her family history, where her assumedly brutal aristocratic father abused her mother the way the autocracy oppressed the common people. Such analogies helped represent Perovskaya as driven towards political terrorism by her emotions.471

According to Mogilner, after Stepnyak-Kravchinsky female revolutionaries were most often represented as young, frail girls created for a pure and bright life, but who sacrificed everything for the revolution.472 In the case of revolutionary heroines, sacrificing the right to love, start a family and have children, as both men and women did, were especially highlighted; by joining the revolutionary underground, the heroine renounced the female realm of domesticity and the “natural” female roles of wife and mother that were at the core of women’s identity at that time. As in the case of the male hero, love of the common people was the only kind of love left in her life.473

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471 Hilbrenner 2016.
472 Mogilner 1999, 50.
473 Mogilner 1999, 54; Patyk 2010, 196.
Features that the revolutionary heroine possessed were somewhat similar to features of the revolutionary hero: she was of pure soul, modest, ready to sacrifice herself for the cause.\footnote{Stites 1990[1978], 16; Mogilner 1999, 50; Engel 2004, 83-84; Grant 2011, 122; Badcock 2016, 54.} The issue of self-sacrifice in the case of the revolutionary heroine was, however, represented as more exalted and intense than similar activities undertaken by their male comrades. The reason was a general belief in women’s endless dedication to the cause, which stemmed from the general idea about women as more emotional compared to men, endowed with a sentimental and compassionate nature.\footnote{Stites 1978, 59; Engel 1983, 154-155; Wood 1997, 22; Mondry 2004, 484; Hilbrenner 2016.}

One feature that typically appeared in accounts of revolutionary heroines, but was not at all part of the typical narrative of the male hero, was beauty.\footnote{Mogilner 1999, 50. References to spiritual beauty can be found in narratives about some male terrorists, but most often it is ascribed to women.} However, since the revolutionary heroine, like the male hero, led an ascetic life, abandoning feminine adornment and fashion, the beauty mentioned in these accounts was not physical and erotic, but spiritual.\footnote{Stites 1978, 59-60; Engel 2004, 84-85; Yukina 2007, 144, 145; Patyk 2010, 195.} This tendency of seeing revolutionary heroines as spiritually beautiful people led to exalted religious worshipping of them: Vera Figner, Ekaterina Breshkovskaya, Sofiya Perovskaya and Maria Spiridonova were compared to Holy Virgins and were worshiped by their contemporaries as such.\footnote{Mogilner 1999, 50-51; Mondry 2004, 483, 490.}

Another feature of the revolutionary heroine was identified by Jaakoff Prelooker, a Russian emigrant, who compared Russian revolutionary women to British suffragettes, who were inspired by “Russian” methods of political struggle. According to Prelooker, a Russian revolutionary heroine was characterized by her eagerness to acquire knowledge that had previously been denied to Russian women.\footnote{Slatter 1984, 57.} The importance of acquiring knowledge differentiates revolutionary heroines not only from suffragettes, but also from the revolutionary hero; in the case of men, that tendency was not normally highlighted as much, unless the man in question was a member of a social group that was in some way limited in its opportunities to get higher education.
In one of her books, Mogilner differentiates between representations of a revolutionary heroine of Russian origin and one of Jewish origin. In this way, she implies that aside from gender differences, the different ethnic backgrounds of revolutionary heroes could also have influenced how they were represented in their auto/biographies. According to Mogilner, the image of the Jewish female revolutionary was created in memoirs and in fiction at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. The elements of that image similar to the Russian revolutionary heroine’s were her eagerness to sacrifice herself, an attractive appearance, and also spiritual beauty.480 These similarities can be explained by the fact that the female ideal for both Russian and Jewish women was based on the European middle-class ideal.481 However, according to Mogilner, the Jewish revolutionary heroine was also characterized by her piety and suffering for the cause of her people, the Jews, something that was different from representations of female terrorists of Russian origin.482 Although, as noted in the previous chapter, women of different ethnic backgrounds, not only Russian and Jewish, joined terrorist ranks, neither Mogilner nor any other scholar has written about some “typical” features that were used to represent these women. It seems that only in the case of Jewish women was a particular heroic type constructed, connected to the general tendency to represent Jews as “the Others” in the context of the Russian Empire.483

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481 About the Jews’ adaptation to bourgeois middle-class culture see Hyman, Paula (2002), ‘Gender and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identities,’ in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 8, No. 2/3, 155.
482 Mogilner 1997, 53.
483 See more about the othering of Jews in Hyman 2002, 155.
“Awakening” in auto/biographies of revolutionary heroes and heroines refers to a story of raising of consciousness, which has been identified as the master plot of different narratives of the life stories of revolutionary fighters. Clark defines the concept of “consciousness” in narratives of the revolutionary lives as political awareness and complete self-control that guide individuals in all their actions.

In general, the story of reaching an awakening in revolutionary auto/biographies starts in the childhood and youth of the revolutionary hero/heroine, when her/his personality develops under the influence of different factors. In her analysis of autobiographies of Soviet women, Liljeström identifies the development of political consciousness as the process represented as continuing during the entire lifetime of the revolutionary heroine. The heroine carries out ever more demanding tasks assigned by the party, and her growing consciousness is signified in this way. In this chapter, however, I limit myself to the parts of the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists that depict the emergence and beginning of development of the future revolutionary heroine’s political consciousness, her childhood and youth. Narratives of the period when the future terrorists started their political activism are analysed in the next chapter.

Since auto/biographies of revolutionary heroes and heroines were created to tell the stories of ideal people, the revolutionaries, the authors of such accounts carefully chose events and facts from the past of real people whose life stories they told in order to represent their life paths in accordance with the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life.

Common topics that appear in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists used to show the growth of their consciousness are: background information about their birth families, formal education that they received, self-education that they undertook, their professional life, married life if the woman in question was married prior to her participation in political terrorism. In her article on populists’ autobiographies, Hoogenboom identifies different historical events that influenced political radicalization, as well as the influence of religion, as topics that the authors of these autobiographies touched upon in order to describe the populists’ revolutionary conversion.487 These topics are not commonly used in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, but I have included them since they are highlighted as crucial in the stories of the awakening of consciousness of some of these women. In this chapter, I show how the above-mentioned topics were used in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists to construct the early lives of these women in accordance with the discourse of heroism and martyrdom.

4.1 Birth Family

In her article on populists’ autobiographies, Hoogenboom notes that information about childhood and birth family was present in texts written by women, but most often absent from texts written by men. The reason, according to Hoogenboom, was that in the case of women, the development of their revolutionary consciousness could be connected to injustice and oppression experienced in their birth families.488 In the second half of the 19th century, the family was considered by feminists and revolutionaries alike to be the first experience of injustice and oppression for women. The patriarchal family was seen as a symbol of the tsarist regime, where the father represented the autocratic monarch.489 Thus, injustice that future revolutionary heroines experienced in their birth families was also considered relevant for their political radicalization.

In auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, however, stories are seldom found of despotic fathers who tyrannized their families and tried

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487 Hoogenboom 1996, 80.
488 See more about it in Hoogenboom 1996, 81. See more about the phenomenon of family oppression in the case of radical women from the 19th century in Engel 1983, 62-85, 191.
489 See more about it in Stites 1990[1978], 8; Hilbrenner 2016.
to prevent their daughters from getting education, which were common in narratives of upper-class female revolutionaries of the 19th century. Only Iosif Zhukovsky-Zhuk, in his biography of Lidiya Sture, who was born in a noble family, mentions that Sture had to convince her father, first, to let her move to a new gymnasium, and second, to begin her studies at the Bestuzhev courses for women. Although Zhukovsky-Zhuk shows that Sture’s father had a difference of opinion with her about educational issues, the situation is described as much less dramatic compared to similar narratives of the 19th century, since the father, according to Zhukovsky-Zhuk’s narrative, accedes easily to his daughter’s requests.

In auto/biographies of Jewish female revolutionaries active in the 19th century, the narrative of parents who tried to prevent their daughters from getting an education was present as well. The same story is told even in some auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists born in Jewish families. In both versions of Maria Shkolnik’s memoirs and in the biographical account of Dora Brilliant included in Praskovia Ivanovskaya’s memoirs, the future terrorists are represented as fighting their families in order to get an education. In both cases, it was not a despotic father who was the main obstacle to the future terrorists’ path to education, but a religious mother. Previous research on Jewish women at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century have shown that at that time, the mother in a Jewish family was considered the primary transmitter of Jewish culture and religion. Secular education was seen by some orthodox Jews as the opposite of Judaism and thus unacceptable. As a result, the mother was responsible for the religious upbringing of her children and often posed an obstacle on the path of both daughters and sons who wanted secular education.

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490 According to Toby W. Clyman & Judith Vowles, the theme of parents opposing their daughters’ desire for education is a common theme even in early 20th century female autobiographies (Clyman, Toby W. & Judith Vowles (1996), ‘Introduction,’ in Clyman, Toby W. & Judith Vowles (eds.) (1996), *Russia Through Women’s Eyes. Autobiographies from Tsarist Russia*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 43). However, the material in this dissertation shows that it is not always the case.

491 Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 250, 251.

492 Hoogenboom briefly touches upon that feature in her article on revolutionary autobiographies of populists (see Hoogenboom 1996, 89). Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky writes about such an event in his account of Gesya Gelfman (see Stepnyak-Kravchinsky 1893, 428).

493 Sukloff 1915, 34; Ivanovskaya 1929, 65; Shkolnik 1927, 252.

research on Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement shows that it was a common narrative in their revolutionary autobiographies. The Jewish families of Shkolnik and Brilliant were thus represented as backward in their dependence on traditions. In general, most of the population of pre-revolutionary Russia saw Jews as “Orientals,” eternal outsiders in relation to the rest of society. Members of the revolutionary underground seem to have shared this opinion, and they represented female terrorists born in Jewish families as oppressed in their homes. At the same time, by showing that neither Shkolnik nor Brilliant simply resigned themselves to family oppression, their revolutionary auto/biographies show them as people who fought backwardness from their early years, and thus possessed features of future revolutionaries even then.

Not all Jewish women, however, were represented as oppressed by their traditional families. Fruma Frumkina, who left a number of autobiographical texts with information about her early life, does not mention any oppression in her middle-class Jewish family. In fact, Frumkina does not mention her family at all, which demonstrates that she did not consider her birth family to be important to explain her political radicalization. Her biographers, however, obviously had a different opinion about that issue, since they managed to connect the material conditions of Frumkina’s birth family and her political radicalization, which Frumkina herself did not; this issue is discussed in the following paragraph.

In auto/biographies of female terrorists from the early 20th century, women’s birth families are mentioned more often with respect to the material conditions in which future terrorists were raised. This idea was explicitly expressed in Vera Figner’s biographical account of Frumkina. Figner introduces Frumkina as the offspring of a well-off family and writes the following to explain her social and political engagement: “These were not personal failures, not personal sufferings that put Frumkina on the revolutionary path. She did not belong to the poor

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495 Shtakser 2014, 45.
496 See more on view on Jews as Orientals in Hyman 2002, 155.
497 See Frumkina 1904-1905; ‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’, reprinted in Byloe, 1908, № 8, 11-21; Frumkina, Fruma (1907), ‘Iz moei zhizni,’ in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina, 11 iulya-13 iulya 1907 g., b.m., b.g., 92-94.
498 On Figner’s authorship of that biography of Frumkina see Figner, Vera Nikolaevna (1929), ‘Posle Shlisselburga,’ in Figner, Vera Nikolaevna (1933), Izbrannye proizvedeniya v trekh tomakh, Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vsesoyuznogo obschestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev, t. 3, 209-211.
by birth and life. Only public motives were the leitmotifs of her life.⁴⁹⁹ In this way, Figner shows that the driving force behind Frumkina’s political activism was her social engagement and political beliefs, not poverty of her birth family or personal problems. This reminds one of the conclusions made by Luisa Passerini in her research on Italian female left-wing terrorist autobiographies: the subjects of her research eagerly elaborated on their happy childhoods in order to show that they became political terrorists not because of personal deprivation, but due to their political convictions.⁵⁰⁰ Similar ideas must be the reason why biographers of Maria Spiridonova, Lidiya Ezerskaya and Lidiya Sture, all of them descendants of noble parents, pay particular attention to the prosperity of their birth families.⁵⁰¹ In this way, they show that social and political engagement of these women was not based on any personal reasons as well, but was purely altruistic.

A willingness to represent herself as driven exclusively by social and political convictions must be why Zinaida Konoplyannikova, who was born to a peasant woman and a former soldier, chose not to connect the poverty of her birth family to her political radicalization. In her court speech, where Konoplyannikova told the story of her life, she admits that she was raised in poverty. However, Konoplyannikova does not claim that the material conditions of her birth family led at all to the awakening of her political consciousness.⁵⁰² Konoplyannikova’s biographers, who wrote about her early life before and after the revolution of 1917 and based their accounts partly on Konoplyannikova’s speech, merely mention her social origin without elaborating on the poverty of

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⁴⁹⁹ “Не личные неудачи, не личные страдания поставили Фрумкину на революционный путь. Она не принадлежала к беднякам по рождению и жизни. Только общественные мотивы были лейтмотивами её жизни” (Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina, 10).
⁵⁰¹ Vladimirov 1906b, 41; M-in 1906, 6; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 2; Lelevich 1922, 11, 12; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 250; Orestova L.P., (1932), ‘Lidiya Pavlovna Ezerskaya,’ in Konstantinov M.M. (ed.) (1932), Na zhenskoi katorge, Sbornik statei, Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vsesoyuznogo obschestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev, 226.
⁵⁰² Konoplyannikova speaks about the poverty of people in her Livonian village, where she started her professional career of a teacher, and compares it to the poverty of her own birth family without making any connections to her political awakening (see Konoplyannikova’s court speech reprinted in ’Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 22).
her birth family, which shows that they chose to follow Konoplyannikova’s own narrative in this question.\textsuperscript{503}

The case of Konoplyannikova, however, seems to be an exception, since the auto/biographies of Aleksandra Sevastianova, Maria Fedorova and Maria Shkolnik, women who came from poor families, pay particular attention to the material conditions in which the future terrorists were raised and connect them to the women’s political radicalization. Here is how this connection is made in the biographical work about Fedorova written by Yakovlev in 1910:

\begin{quote}
Nurtured by the grey village since her childhood, she absorbed insults and hardships of the peasantry with her mother's milk. She grew up among the peasants, she suffered with them and loved them, dark, aggrieved, cheated, loved them for what they really were, with their good and bad attributes.\textsuperscript{504}
\end{quote}

Likewise, in two of her biographical articles on Sevastianova, written in 1910 and 1919, Ksenia Zilberberg elaborates on the difficult material conditions of Sevastianova’s birth family and connects them to the fact that the heroine of her accounts learned to understand and sympathize with the common people because she was living among them, and because she was one of them.\textsuperscript{505} In all these cases, personal experiences of poverty were represented as the way for future revolutionary terrorists to develop love for the common people, which would later change their lives and turn them into revolutionaries. The explanations given by both Fedorova’s and Sevastianova’s biographers show their experience of awakening of consciousness as irrational, since it is represented as based on the emotional experience of love and not in any way connected to their political beliefs. This confirms the idea introduced in the

\textsuperscript{503} See Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 12; Khiriakov 1919, 65. Jaakoff Prelooker and the author of Konoplyannikova’s biography from 1917 use her court speech in order to tell their readers about Konoplyannikova’s background (see Prelooker 1908, 286; Konoplyannikova’s court speech reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 21).

\textsuperscript{504} "Серой деревней вскормленная, она с детства, с молоком матери впитала в себя обиды и невзгоды крестьянства. Среди крестьян выросла, страдала с ними и полюбила их, тёмных, обиженных, обманутых, полюбила такими, какие они есть в действительности, с их достоинствами и недостатками" (Yakovlev (1910), 'Pamyati Marii Matveevny Fedorovoi,' in Znamya truda, No. 28-29, 06-06/1910).

\textsuperscript{505} Pamfilova-Zilberberg K.K. (1910), 'O "Lize" – A. Sevastianovoi,' in Znamya truda, No. 28-29, 06-06/1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 4.
article by Schraut and Weinhuemer on terrorists in Europe in the 19th century, namely that even socialist authors had difficulties in approaching female terrorists without seeing their activities through existing gendered stereotypes. Seeing emotions as the driving force behind women’s political activism was, according to the same authors, typical at that time.

Shkolnik is the only one among the terrorist women of modest social origins who wrote memoirs, and thus had a chance to describe her experience of poverty in her own words. Unlike Fedorova’s and Sevastianova’s biographers, Shkolnik does not claim that her personal experience of poverty taught her to love the common people. Instead, Shkolnik explains that the poverty of her birth family helped her for the first time in her life to pay attention to social injustice: the former priest, who did not even live in their village, owned an immense pasture there, while her parents had a very small pasture. In this way, Shkolnik describes her awakening in rational terms by giving a particular example of how she began to see class differences. Compared to the authors who wrote about Fedorova and Sevastianova, Shkolnik does not feminize her experience of awakening of consciousness by relating it to the irrational sphere of emotions. Thus, her representation is less gendered than representations of other female terrorists that they themselves did not create.

Scholars of Communist revolutionary auto/biographies have demonstrated that men and women of a working-class background are typically represented in these auto/biographies as radicalized by their own experiences of poverty, which helped the authors to construct them as representatives of the common people. The above-mentioned auto/biographies of Sevastianova, Fedorova and Shkolnik are written similarly to these accounts of Communists, since the women’s background was working-class and thus fitted perfectly into Bolshevik ideals. Interestingly, the biography of Sarra Dantsig written by Elizaveta Zvereva in 1932, does not include such detailed explanations of the connections between Dantsig’s poverty and her political radicalization, as in the above-mentioned auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Zvereva merely mentions that Dantsig was born in poverty without any

508 Sukloff 1915, 10–11; Shkolnik 1927, 240.
further explanation. This shows that by 1932, the poverty of the birth family of the future revolutionary heroine was considered to be a sign of her future radicalization that did not require further explanation.

According to Anna Hillyar and Jane McDermid, in memoirs written after 1930, even female revolutionaries whose background was not working-class tended to stress the financial hardship that their families underwent in order to make their life stories more politically acceptable and similar to the life stories of revolutionaries of working-class backgrounds. Moreover, Kolonitsky, in his book on representations of Kerensky, connects attention in revolutionary auto/biographies to material hardships of the future revolutionary hero to the authors’ attempts to create an ascetic image, which was important to such portrayals. This statement seems to hold true even for Praskovia Ivanovskaya’s autobiography written for the encyclopaedia Granat in 1925 on the order of the Bolsheviks. Ivanovskaya, who was born in the family of a village priest, makes it clear that she spent her childhood “in the harsh conditions of poverty and neglect.” In this way, Ivanovskaya shows that she experienced poverty in the same way the common people did, and was also one of the oppressed in pre-revolutionary Russia. In addition, Ivanovskaya writes that due to the difficult situation of her family, she was used to being free, and as a result learned to love and appreciate her freedom. Thus, Ivanovskaya shows that the poor material conditions of her birth family formed her freedom-loving revolutionary personality and were thus highly relevant for her future political radicalization.

Interestingly, even Ezerskaya and Spiridonova, who were born to noble families, were represented in biographies written in the 1930s as people who had experienced poverty. Although Orestova mentions the wealth of Ezerskaya’s birth family, she also writes that the future terrorist had

510 Zvereva 1932, 221.
511 Hillyar & McDermid 2000, 16.
512 Kolonitsky 2017, 54.
513 “в суровых условиях бедности и заброшенности” (Ivanovskaya, Praskovia Semionovna (1925), 'Ivanovskaya Praskovia Semenovna,' reprinted in Deyateli SSSR i revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya Rossii. Entsiklopedichesky Slovar Granat (1989), Moscow: Sovetskaya entsiklopedia, 90).
514 Ivanovskaya 1925, 90.
a personal experience of poverty from the time when she left her husband and began to work for a living.\textsuperscript{515} Unlike earlier authors, who elaborated on the prosperity of her birth family, Steinberg, the author of Spiridonova’s biography published in London in 1935, portrays the material conditions of her family as modest. Steinberg writes that Spiridonova’s family lived in “a simple, average well-to-do house in the small town of Tambov.”\textsuperscript{516} Hence, even Steinberg constructs Spiridonova’s early life in accordance with the principles of the Bolshevik standard of writing revolutionary auto/biographies as characterized by simplicity, which is reminiscent of the ascetic revolutionary ideal.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that material conditions of the birth families of female terrorists were often connected to the women’s political radicalization. In the cases of women of upper- and middle-class backgrounds, the prosperity of their birth families was a proof that the woman’s future political radicalization had nothing to do with personal motivations, but was based exclusively on her political convictions. After the Bolsheviks came to power and made the poverty narrative into an obligatory part of revolutionary auto/biographies, auto/biographies of female terrorists of a higher social origin began to manifest different signs of material hardships that their families suffered. In the case of women with modest social origins, the poverty that they grew up in was represented by their biographers as evidence of the sincerity of their love for the common people. Shkolnik, the only female terrorist who wrote about that issue in her autobiography, however, represented the poverty of her family as an awakening in a less gendered and more rational fashion.

It has been established by the researchers of the revolutionary movement in Russia that many revolutionaries became acquainted with revolutionary ideas in their birth families through siblings and relatives who were politically active.\textsuperscript{517} Moreover, in her research on the autobiographies of Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement, Shtakser has observed that the authors of such works eagerly wrote about their siblings, who were also members of revolutionary organizations.\textsuperscript{518} Thus, it is reasonable to assume that birth families must be

\textsuperscript{515} Orestova 1932, 226.
\textsuperscript{516} Steinberg 1935, 14.
\textsuperscript{517} See for example Turton 2011, 125; Shtakser 2014, 52.
\textsuperscript{518} Shtakser 2014, 126.
mentioned in revolutionary auto/biographies in connection to the influence that family members had on the radicalization of future revolutionaries. As for female PSR terrorists, previous research has shown that Spiridonova’s older sisters Evgenia and Yulia were affiliated with the Tambov SR committee and that Alexandra Izmailovich became involved in PSR activities through her younger sister Ekaterina. However, Spiridonova’s sisters are hardly present in biographical works about her. Steinberg, who wrote Alexandra Izmailovich’s biography in his book about Spiridonova, does not mention the role of Ekaterina in Alexandra’s conversion to the cause either. The influence of family members on awakening and political radicalization of future terrorists is mentioned directly only in the auto/biographies of Sevastianova and Ivanovskaya.

In her account of Sevastianova from 1919, Zilberberg writes about the influence that her older brothers had on the political radicalization of the future terrorist. Zilberberg writes that one of Sevastianova’s brothers talked to her about the hardships of poor people’s lives, while the second one was expelled from the university for participation in the student movement; upon arriving home, he gave his sister an opportunity to listen to “new words” and “fiery speeches.” In other words, Zilberberg represents Sevastianova’s awakening as provoked by members of her birth family. This issue, however, is not touched upon in Zilberberg’s earlier article about Sevastianova’s life from 1910.

In her autobiography of 1925, Ivanovskaya mentions her brother Vasily among the people who influenced her political radicalization; she names him as the one who, first, took part in organizing the study circle where she was active during her school years, and second, introduced her to the radical youth who frequented his apartment in Moscow, where Ivanovskaya spent some time after finishing school. The role

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519 See more about it in Boniece 2010b, 176, 184.
520 Vladimirov is the only one of Spiridonova’s biographers who mentions her sister Yulia as someone who was arrested for helping Spiridonova send letters from prison to her fellow members of the PSR (see Vladimirov 1906b, 26). Later, Vladimirov mentions that Spiridonova’s other sister, Evgenia, was also under arrest because of Spiridonova’s case, though without specifying the exact reasons for that arrest (Vladimirov 1906b, 36).
521 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 3.
522 “Раздались новые слова, горячие речи” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 5).
523 Ivanovskaya 1925, 91.
of her brother in Ivanovskaya’s political radicalization is also mentioned by her biographer Nikolay Tyutchev.\footnote{Tyutchev 1929, 3-4.}

Many auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, however, do not mention the revolutionary influence of family members on them, unlike the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of Sevastianova and Ivanovskaya. The reason for such neglect of the influences of family members on future terrorists might be the authors’ wish not to show the revolutionary heroines as influenced by others in making political decisions, but to introduce them as people who made such decisions on their own, with their political convictions and not personal relationships as the starting point.

### 4.2 Formal Education

In her book about radical students at the turn of the century, Morrissey describes the “typical” experience of formal education at that time as a negative attitude toward the repressive gymnasium, high hopes placed on the university, and disappointment in “official” science, which led future revolutionaries to discover student subcultures and turn to self-education. That is, however, the story of the male revolutionary hero; Morrissey makes it clear that women’s experiences of education were different, since they had a more personal attitude toward it because of their limited opportunities in that area.\footnote{Morrissey 1998, 32, 38, 43. The same tendencies were even discovered by Shtakser in her analysis of the autobiographies of Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement (Shtakser 2014, 61).}

Toby Clyman and Judith Vowle, who have written specifically about the autobiographies of Russian women, claim that a young woman’s attitude toward gymnasium in pre-revolutionary Russia depended on her attitude toward the dominant feminine ideal, which was always in the focus of studies in girls’ schools. Hence, women who wished to expand their boundaries beyond marriage and motherhood (future radicals among them) normally had a negative attitude toward boarding schools and gymnasia, since these establishments symbolized everything oppressive to women in pre-revolutionary Russian society.\footnote{Clyman & Vowles 1996, 34.} Clyman’s and Vowles’s conclusions, thus, show that women were not different from men in their attitude toward gymnasium. As for higher education, according to Marie
Marmo Mullaney, revolutionary women saw it as a means to help discover the social and political evils of the system in which they lived.\textsuperscript{527} It implies that their attitude toward higher education was different from men’s, as suggested by Morrissey. In this part of the chapter, I see how the experiences of formal education are introduced in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists.

Very much in line with the findings of previous research, Spiridonova, Ezerskaya, and Sture are represented by their biographers in the accounts written both before and after the revolution as dissatisfied with their gymnasia. The same idea is also present in Ivanovskaya’s autobiography from 1925. In all such cases, schools are criticized for their atmosphere, which in different accounts is characterized as “soulless,” “deathly,” and “stifling.” This atmosphere, according to revolutionary auto/biographies, oppressed future female terrorists, who were lively and freedom-loving children.\textsuperscript{528} In her autobiography, Ivanovskaya, whose path to high-school education was more complicated than that of the rest of the above-mentioned women, writes not only about the school atmosphere that she did not like, but also about “a very scanty range of courses.” This statement contrasts with Ivanovskaya’s initial enthusiasm about her studies there.\textsuperscript{529} Thus, Ivanovskaya shows that the school was oppressive not only for her freedom-loving nature, but also for her intellectual ambitions that were not satisfied. In this way, as did other terrorist women of the PSR, Ivanovskaya had an opportunity to represent her gymnasium experience in terms of the dissatisfaction that signalled her rebellious character at such a young age.

In the case of Konoplyannikova, however, her experience of the educational system is represented quite differently. Neither Konoplyannikova’s autobiographical court speech nor any of her biographies written before and after the revolution contain information about her negative attitude toward the vocational school where she studied. The author of the book about Konoplyannikova from 1906 only wonders how, with her thirst for truth, she could have finished it.\textsuperscript{530} Thus, Konoplyannikova’s biographer implies that the existing system of education was supposed to be oppressive for the character of the future revolutionary.

\textsuperscript{527} Mullaney, Marie Marmo (1983), \textit{Revolutionary Women. Gender and the Socielist Revolutionary Role}, New York: Praeger, 249.
\textsuperscript{528} See Vladimirov 1906b, 45-47; M-in 1906, 7; Lelevich 1922, 12; Ivanovskaya 1925, 90; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 250.
\textsuperscript{529} Ivanovskaya 1925, 90.
\textsuperscript{530} Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 17.
But in the absence of any evidence that Konoplyannikova’s attitude toward school was similar to the one expressed by the above-mentioned female terrorists, the author of the work does not develop this issue.

A. Khiriakov, in Konoplyannikova’s biography from 1919, however, writes explicitly that her school experience was only positive:

At ten years old, she finished elementary school and then enrolled in a six-grade vocational school organized by the Establishment of Empress Maria. This school, apparently, left her with good memories. She was likely to have felt that she had received a boost in her spiritual development there, and considered herself obliged to this establishment. At least, when during the most successful operations of “the Combat Organization” someone suggested raiding the Establishment of Empress Maria, Zinaida refused to participate in it, saying that she had received her upbringing in the school of that establishment. 531

In this quote, Khiriakov makes clear that Konoplyannikova did not feel at all oppressed while studying; on the contrary, she developed intellectually. The difference in Konoplyannikova’s attitude toward school and that of other female terrorists can be explained by the fact that the other women were born to educated parents and belonged to more privileged social classes than her. Their access to education was easier, which is why their attitude was more critical than Konoplyannikova’s, who likely was grateful for the very opportunity to study.

In the cases of Sevastianova and Dantsig, who were also born in poor families and for whom education was not a given, authors of their biographical accounts do not elaborate on their attitude toward their schools at all, but merely mention where Sevastianova and Dantsig studied. 532 None of these women left any positive or negative memories

531 “10-ти лет она окончила начальную школу и потом поступила в 6-классное ремесленное училище ведомства императрицы Марии. Об этом училище у неё сохранились, видимо, хорошие воспоминания. Она чувствовала, вероятно, что там получила толчок в своём духовном развитии, и считала себя как бы обязанной по отношению к этому ведомству. По крайней мере, когда, в период самой успешной деятельности “Боевой организации,” кто-то предложил набег на ведомство императрицы Марии, Зинаида отказалась участвовать в этом деле, заявив, что получила в школе этого ведомства своё воспитание” (Khiriakov 1919, 65).

532 See for example GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 4-5, 7-9; Zvereva 1932, 221.
of their schools, the way Konoplyannikova did. Since the authors of Sevastianova’s and Dantsig’s biographies could not introduce their experience in “typical” terms of dissatisfaction, they preferred not to write about the subject at all.

To sum up, female PSR terrorists born in well-off families, as well as revolutionary men of their generation, were represented in revolutionary auto/biographies as negative about their schools. The women’s first experience of formal education is introduced in these works as their first experience of being oppressed by the regime. School in these accounts was represented as a microcosm of the authoritarian state, where there was no place for freedom-loving children. By constructing future revolutionaries in this way, the authors of the auto/biographies represent them as people who had revolutionary characters from childhood. However, none of Konoplyannikova’s biographers managed to fit her experience into the above-mentioned narrative. As a woman born in a poor, uneducated family, she was not represented as oppressed by school rules; on the contrary, she was introduced as a person whose education was a privilege that helped her develop intellectually. Although the other women with social backgrounds similar to Konoplyannikova’s were not directly represented as having been oppressed by or having benefited from their schools in their auto/biographies, it is possible that the absence of such information in their cases was a sign that their experience could not be placed in the narrative present in the auto/biographies of the women of a more privileged social origin. Their experience of being oppressed by the state was thus considered to have taken place in other circumstances.

Since the main characters of the auto/biographies under study are future revolutionaries, they are generally not represented as simply coping with the conditions of their gymnasia. Often, the authors of the accounts of female terrorists relate that they fought with school authorities. For example, Spiridonova and Sture were introduced by their biographers, who wrote about their lives both before and after 1917, as lively and freedom-loving individuals who could not bear the formal and soulless regime in their schools. As a result, they were represented as having the reputation of mischief-makers among the teachers, who did not like Spiridonova’s and Sture’s disregard for the rules. Even Konoplyannikova, who, as noted, did not have problems with school, is introduced

533 Vladimirov 1906b, 45-46; M-in 1906, 7-9; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 2; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251.
by her biographers as someone who was not afraid to confront a teacher who lied.\textsuperscript{534} Thus, the women are represented as people who battled the oppressive regime in their gymnasia, and thus from an early age displayed features of revolutionary warriors. In his account of Spiridonova’s life, Prelooker goes farther than the authors who introduce her and other female terrorists as rebels in their schools. According to him, Spiridonova was arrested at the age of fifteen for participating in the meetings of the Society for the Protection of School Children.\textsuperscript{535} In this manner, Prelooker shows that Spiridonova’s fight with the school authorities was a politically motivated action connected to the protection of human rights. Thus, he represents Spiridonova as someone influenced by liberal ideas at school. None of the socialist authors writes about Spiridonova’s participation in the above organization, most likely in order not to distract from her socialist views.

Scholars who have written about how the lives of revolutionary women in Russia were constructed by their supporters do not identify the struggle against school authorities as a narrative often present in such works. However, approaching the issue in a transnational perspective, it can be seen that struggle against school authorities is a common narrative in accounts of the childhood of future revolutionary terrorists. For example, Colvin writes that such an episode was part of Ulrike Meinhof’s apologetic biography authored by her foster mother Renate Riemek. By describing Meinhof’s rebellion against a teacher, Riemek, according to Colvin, manages to construct her as a “stern, but compassionate angel-saint.”\textsuperscript{536} This representation is reminiscent of how female PSR terrorists were constructed in revolutionary auto/biographies.

It is worth mentioning that most female PSR terrorists represented as fighting with the school authorities are ethnic Russian women from privileged social backgrounds. It was they who had the easiest access to education compared to women from other ethnical and social backgrounds, and thus they could afford to fight for better conditions.

In her research about autobiographies of populists, Hoogenboom writes that when women and men from lower social classes described their education, they demonstrated that their desire for education was radical in itself, since the social order prevented them from being schooled.\textsuperscript{537}

\textsuperscript{534} Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 17; Khiriakov 1919, 66.
\textsuperscript{535} Prelooker 1908, 292.
\textsuperscript{536} Colvin 2009, 252.
\textsuperscript{537} Hoogenboom 1996, 81.
This statement holds true even for auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. The authors of these accounts represent the process of obtaining education as a struggle in the cases of Brilliant and Sevastianova, who were born respectively in a middle-class Jewish and a poor Russian family.

Brilliant is represented by Ivanovskaya as a person who persistently had to fight with her family in order to have the opportunity for the education that she wanted.\(^{538}\) Besides Brilliant’s fight with “backward” Jewish traditions, her struggle for education was also symbolic of her fight against the oppression of the regime. According to Shtakser, the education quota was seen by Jewish revolutionaries as the main symbol of oppression, and thus fighting for education was seen in their revolutionary auto/biographies as part of a political struggle.\(^{539}\) It seems that this holds true even for Ivanovskaya’s version of Brilliant’s life.

In the case of Sevastianova, Zilberberg writes that her poor and uneducated parents wanted to “wrest from life” education for their children.\(^{540}\) In this case, Sevastianova’s entire family is represented as fighting with the existing social order for their right for education and a consequent change in their oppressed situation. Thus, Sevastianova is represented as someone who grew up with the ideas of change and in opposition to the existing social order, which could help Zilberberg explain her future revolutionary activism.

Attitudes toward higher education are seldom present in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. However, the experience of higher education is always noted in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists when appropriate.\(^{541}\) Zvereva, in the biography of Dantsig, even explains why Dantsig did not have any higher education: “In 1899, it was not easy to enter an institution of higher learning, especially for a Jewess.”\(^{542}\) Such attention to higher education in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists shows that, according to the

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\(^{538}\) Ivanovskaya 1929, 65.

\(^{539}\) Shtakser 2014, 65.

\(^{540}\) “вырвать у жизни” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 2).

\(^{541}\) See for example X 1910; Savinkov 1917, 195 (about Brilliant); Lelevich 1922, 13; G.S. (1928), “Pamyati S.G. Klitchoglu-Mezhovoi,” in Katorga i sylka, No. 10 (47), 156; Orestova 1932, 226; Steinberg 1935, 14 (Steinberg is the only author who claims that Spiridonova entered a course of training in nursing).

\(^{542}\) “В 1899 году нелегко было поступить в высшее учебное заведение, особенно еврейке” (Zvereva 1932, 222).
standard of writing a revolutionary life, a revolutionary heroine was expected to be highly educated. The reason must be connected to the view that higher education was important for future revolutionary heroes and heroines, since it helped them develop their world view, which prepared them for understanding the revolutionary ideas and consequent political activism. Moreover, the experience of higher education was often connected to the beginning of female terrorists’ political activism. Biographers of Sture, Ekaterina Izmailovich and Dantsig mention their higher and professional education primarily in order to devote attention to the women’s participation in the student movement. In other words, higher education is generally represented in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists as an important experience for the women’s awakening of consciousness and political radicalization.

Disappointment in formal education received at institutions of higher learning is not a common topic in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Only in his biographical account of Sture does Zhukovsky-Zhuk mention that she began to feel “spiritual and mental dissatisfaction” while studying at Bestuzhev women’s courses in St. Petersburg. The reason for this dissatisfaction was, though, not directly disappointment in official science, but the appearance of new intellectual ambitions and interests that came from Sture’s acquaintances with radical youth.

In some cases, women’s desire to receive professional education was represented as closely connected to their social engagement. The authors of biographies of Frumkina, Fedorova, Sevastianova, and Dantsig, who were educated respectively as a midwife, teacher and paramedics, make clear that they all received their education because they wanted to work among common people in order to help change their difficult situation. Thus, authors of accounts of future terrorists show that their desire to study was a sign of social engagement and awakening of consciousness; the future terrorists’ interest in getting professional education was represented as a sign of revolutionary character.

543 See more about it in Mullaney 1983, 249; Kolonitsky 2017, 50.
544 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l. 3-ob.; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251; Zvereva 1932, 222.
545 “духовная и умственная неудовлетворённость” (Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251).
546 Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251.
547 Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina, 10-11; Yakovlev 1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 7-8; Zvereva 1932, 221.
4.3 Self-Education

As it was mentioned earlier, future revolutionaries turned to self-education when they found that knowledge they received in the course of their formal studies was not sufficient for understanding the current situation in Russia. Self-education could be conducted by revolutionaries on their own, in study circles or under the guidance of an experienced revolutionary, a “mentor.” In this section, I discuss how self-education was represented in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists as an awakening experience.

Almost all the auto/biographies of female terrorists contain information that the women were studying on their own or in study circles. As for the contents of these self-studies, the authors of these works show that in some cases, the future terrorists studied in order to extend their general education; sometimes they did it in order to obtain knowledge of a more radical or revolutionary character not offered in the course of formal studies at all.

Self-studies meant to extend general knowledge are not present in all the auto/biographies of female terrorists of the PSR. The authors of the pre-revolutionary biographies of Spiridonova, for example, highlighted that after she was not admitted to women’s courses due to her reputation as a rebel at gymnasium, she dedicated her time to self-studies and managed to become a well-educated woman on her own. Likewise, the authors of the works about Konoplyannikova, Sevastianova and Ezerskaya note that these women read widely on their own. Attention to the future terrorists’ self-education of general character in these cases can be explained by the fact that all three women received only professional education, oriented strictly toward their future occupations. Thus, by mentioning the future terrorists’ self-studies, the authors show that they were well read, and thus able to understand revolutionary ideas and develop their political beliefs on the basis of these ideas equally well as future revolutionaries who received higher education. In addition, in such cases the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies also represented women as people interested in obtaining knowledge, a feature considered especially important for revolutionary women.

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548 See more about it in Hoogenboom 1996, 88; Morrissey 1998, 32.
549 Vladimirov 1906b, 42; M-in 1906, 6-7.
550 Khiriakov 1919, 66; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 8; Lelevich 1922, 12.
Another type of self-studies mentioned more often in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists are studies conducted in study circles. In general, the authors of such accounts explain that, although these studies were at least in part oriented toward receiving general knowledge as well, their purpose was to obtain the kind of knowledge that was not available at institutions of higher learning. Moreover, the education that was acquired inside these circles normally helped people create revolutionary identity: a clear understanding of social and cultural issues that these studies were supposed to give was seen as the basis for future political activism. The authors of such accounts seldom go into details of how studies in circles were organized; they merely mention the woman’s participation in them in order to show that she had completed her unofficial revolutionary education, and thus could be seen as a person with strong political beliefs ready for her future underground activities.

More or less detailed descriptions of participation in her first study circle are available only in the memoirs of Shkolnik, for whom it was the first experience of education at all. Born in a poor family in the Pale of Settlement, very much like other Jewish revolutionaries of a similar social background, Shkolnik was obviously much more focused on the educational opportunities that the self-education circle offered her than were other female terrorists of the PSR. Shkolnik writes in detail about meeting local girls who gathered not only to read forbidden literature, but to learn history and geography as well. In addition, Shkolnik writes that Hannah, daughter of the local rabbi and leader of the circle, taught her to read and write. Shkolnik writes so much about the circle, the way it functioned, and the knowledge that she received there because her experience was unique compared to many other terrorist

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551 See for example Vladimirov 1906b, 42; M-in 1906, 9, 11; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 13; Ivanovskaya 1925, 90, 91; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 252; Ivanovskaya 1929, 65; Tyutchev 1929, 3-4.

552 Shtakser 2014, 33.

553 According to Shtakser, for non-Jewish revolutionaries self-education circles were a secondary part of the revolutionary experience, while for the Jewish revolutionaries from a background similar to Shkolnik’s, it was seen as a means of gaining respectable status both within the Jewish community and the revolutionary underground (Shtakser 2014, 9).

554 Sukloff 1915, 24-26. The study circle that Shkolnik attended was quite typical for the Pale of Settlement. According to Shtakser, the center of education in such circles was literacy, general education and the ability to read and understand basic works in the social sciences in order to be able to understand how society worked (Shtakser 2014, 32).
women who received some formal education before participating in study circles. Besides, particular attention given by Shkolnik to her studies in the circle can be explained by a conclusion of Shtakser’s, who claims that such studies were extremely important for the identity of revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement, who were proud to mention it in their autobiographical texts years later. In her story about the secret study circle that Shkolnik attended later in Odessa, she does not go into detail. Similar to authors of other revolutionary auto/biographical texts, she merely mentions the fact of her participation. Since the experience of a study circle was no longer new for her, Shkolnik did not consider it necessary to write about it in detail, so she chose to construct her experience similarly to other female terrorists.

The experience of self-studies was seen as something that united all revolutionaries, and thus, in general, the authors of auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists briefly mentioned that experience without going into detail. Exceptional attention to self-studies was given only in the auto/biographies of women who did not receive higher education or, as in Shkolnik’s case, had no education at all beside their studies in circles. More detailed information about self-studies was used in these accounts to show that the woman in question was educated enough to understand revolutionary ideas prior to her radicalization.

Hoogenboom notes that in their autobiographies, some populist women included long lists of literature that they had read. According to her, the presence of these lists was directly connected to the gender (women had to include such lists in their autobiographies in order to be taken seriously as revolutionaries) and class (revolutionaries who stemmed from rich families and for whom education was easily affordable had no need to prove themselves to be educated) of each author. As for auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, long lists of literature are not very common there since, unlike the previous generation of female revolutionaries, they had easier access to education and thus did not feel the need to prove their knowledge. Usually, when such lists are included in women’s auto/biographies, they seem to have a different function from those of the populists discussed by Hoogenboom.

555 Shtakser 2014, 32.
556 Sukloff 1915, 46-47.
A list of literature consisting solely of scholarly works on different subjects is present only in the pre-revolutionary biography of Konoplyannikova.558 Thus, very much in line with the tendency identified in the autobiographies of female populists, the author of her biography includes this list to introduce Konoplyannikova as an educated person. Her lower-class background and the fact that she received only specialized professional education was a good reason to provide evidence that Konoplyannikova managed to reach the educational level similar to that of other female terrorists on her own.

Khiriakov’s biography of Konoplyannikova of 1919 includes a similar reading list, to which the author also adds works of Nikolay Mikhailovsky (1842-1904), a theorist of the populists.559 Such an addition shows that Khiriakov wanted to show Konoplyannikova not only as a well-read and educated person, but also as a person familiar with revolutionary works that were considered important reading by Russian radicals.

The reading lists available in the auto/biographies of other female PSR terrorists written both before and after the revolution include only revolutionary works. It shows that familiarity with revolutionary literature was considered to be an important feature of the future revolutionary terrorist, and the lists of literature that included works of radical authors were intended to prove that it was the case for these women. Such confirmation of political enlightenment is, however, available only in the cases of Konoplyannikova and Sevastianova, who came from poor Russian families, Shkolnik, who beside her poor origin also lacked any formal education, and Frumkina, who was educated as a midwife, a profession that, according to some scholars, had a low status in pre-revolutionary Russia.560 Moreover, both Shkolnik and Frumkina were Jewish and thus hindered by the law in their access to education. In other words, lists of revolutionary readings were included only in the auto/biographies of women for whom access to formal education was not easy in Russia at the turn of the century, and whose educational level was not as high as that of most female terrorists of the PSR. Ivanovskaya’s autobiography also includes such a list of literature, since she belonged to the generation of populist women that Hoogenboom writes about in her article; thus, it is possible to conclude that she included a list of her

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558 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 13.
559 Khiriakov 1919, 66.
560 See more about it in Clyman & Vowles 1996, 36.
revolutionary readings in her text in order to be taken seriously as a revolutionary, like other women of her generation.

Especially remarkable is the case of Shkolnik, who could not name complicated works as examples of her revolutionary reading. However, in her memoirs, Shkolnik also finds it important to prove her familiarity with underground literature: she mentions the “forbidden” book “Four Brothers,” a revolutionary fairy tale, which was her first experience of reading such literature.\(^{561}\) In this way, Shkolnik shows that she was not different from other, more educated, revolutionary women and had read forbidden books as well.

The absence of similar narratives in the auto/biographies of women of privileged backgrounds and a higher educational level from the generation of political terrorists of the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century demonstrates that proof of an awakening of consciousness through reading revolutionary literature was not considered necessary in their case. These women’s power position in pre-revolutionary Russian society and their educational level were seen as guarantees of their familiarity with different readings, including revolutionary ones.

A different connection between reading revolutionary books and future political activism is given in Frumkina’s letter to Vladimir Burtsev of March 2, 1907, which was written in prison three days after she was arrested for an assassination attempt. This is how Frumkina describes George Kennan’s\(^{562}\) book on Russian revolutionaries exiled to Siberia and Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s _Andrei Kozhukhov_:

> While reading Kennan and similar books about the death and agony of Russian revolutionaries, such excruciating pain for them rose in me that only the thought of revenge and of the brightest direct combat of violators could calm me somewhat. When I read in Stepnyak’s book how at the

\(^{561}\) This is how Shkolnik describes the contents of the book: “It tells the story of four brothers who were born and lived in a forest. They decide to travel, and start out in different directions. When they return, they recount the many acts of cruelty they have seen and met within the world, and discuss measures to bring about justice and equality” (Sukloff 1915, 25). The same passage is also available in Shkolnik 1927, 246.

\(^{562}\) George Kennan (1845-1924) was an American reporter and explorer who sympathized with Russian revolutionaries and wrote a book in 1891 about their life in Siberian exile (see more about him in Hundley, Helen (2000), _George Kennan and the Russian Empire: How America’s Conscience Became an Enemy of Tsarism_, No. 277, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars).
sight of his comrades (before their execution), Andrei Ko-
zhukhov was totally moved by one feeling, one desire - to
be on the scaffold with them - I experienced the same thing
and realized then once and for all that there is no greater
happiness, nothing more honourable – in the world.563

Frumkina represents her reading experience here as the story of her ac-
ceptance of the terrorist struggle. According to her, books about revo-
lutionaries encouraged her to participate in political violence in order to
take revenge for the suffering of previous generations of revolutionary
fighters. Frumkina explains her decision in terms of the emotions that
she experienced, and thus represents her decision in a feminizing way.
At the same time, the explanations that Frumkina offers are formulated
in accordance with how theorists of the PSR reasoned about political
terrorism as self-sacrifice of the revolutionary, who was to offer his/her
own life for the right to assassinate. Thus, Frumkina shows that she also
had theoretical considerations when she made her decisions, although
she was initially driven exclusively by emotions.

Frumkina’s explanations about how revolutionary readings influenced
her were, however, unique; no other revolutionary auto/biography rep-
resents the reading experience of a future terrorist as leading to political
violence. Why Frumkina was the only one comfortable writing about
her violent urges might be that she wrote the words quoted above in a
private letter, which was initially not meant to be published. In her au-
tobiography, written before her execution, Frumkina does not write
about Kennan and Stepnyak-Kravchinsky at all. Instead, she briefly
writes about her interest in populist literature and as her favourite author
mentions particularly Gleb Uspensky (1843-1902), who was very pop-
ular with radical intelligentsia for numerous stories and sketches of
peasant life, which was otherwise totally unfamiliar to Russian intellec-
tuals.564 Frumkina’s biographer Figner not only writes about Uspensky,

563 “При чтении Кеннана и т.п. книг о гибели и муках русских революционеров,
во мне поднималась такая мучительная боль за них, что только мысль о мести и
о самой яркой непосредственной борьбе с насильниками – могла меня
несколько успоконить. Когда я читала книгу Степняка, как Андрей Кожухов при
виде товарищей (перед их казнь), весь был охвачен одним чувством, одним
желанием – быть на эшафоте вместе с ними – я то же самое переживала и поняла
tогда раз навсегда, что большого счастья, более почётного – нет на свете”
(‘Писма Ф. Фрумкиной’ 1908, 19).
564 Frumkina 1907, 93. See more on Uspensky and the significance of his works for
the radical intelligentsia in Mondry 2004, 479-480.
but connects Frumkina’s interest in his works to her political radicalization. Figner, however, does not mention Frumkina’s wish to participate in political terrorism, but claims that Uspensky’s books taught her to love the common people, a statement that would work in any revolutionary auto/biography at that time.\textsuperscript{565} Thus, like Frumkina herself, Figner connects her reading experience to the emotional sphere. However, Figner represents this emotional connection in keeping with the general idea of the “good” woman, who is driven by love; this is quite different from the explanations in Frumkina’s letter, where she writes about hatred of the regime as an outcome of her reading, a feeling that would hardly characterize a “good” woman.

In her biographical works on Sevastianova, Zilberberg also names Uspensky as the favourite author of the future terrorist, who, according to Zilberberg, could not part with Uspensky’s books because, in Sevastianova’s opinion, Uspensky wrote the truth about common people’s lives.\textsuperscript{566} Although Zilberberg does not explicitly elaborate on Sevastianova’s love for the common people in this case, she does, however, show that her interest in Uspensky’s works was connected to that feeling, which the author identifies as one of Sevastianova’s driving forces.\textsuperscript{567}

All these examples demonstrate that in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists created for publication, the authors tended to represent women’s experience of revolutionary reading in feminizing gendered terms.

A long list of revolutionary works that she read is also present in Ivanovskaya’s autobiography. She, however, represents the influence that this kind of reading had on her in quite rational terms. Ivanovskaya writes directly that good ideas from the books changed her mind.\textsuperscript{568} Thus, Ivanovskaya shows that the list of literature in her case was included in the autobiography to prove that she had read the “obligatory” revolutionary works, and thus managed to accumulate the ideas that made a revolutionary out of her.

In sum, future female terrorists’ reading revolutionary literature was introduced as an emotional experience in pre-revolutionary auto/biographies that, according to the authors, led the women toward political

\textsuperscript{565} Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina, 10.
\textsuperscript{566} Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 33-34.
\textsuperscript{567} See Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 4.
\textsuperscript{568} Ivanovskaya 1925, 90.
radicalism. Accounts that were intended for publication normally connected these emotional experiences to the development of love for the common people, while Frumkina’s autobiographical private letter connected her revolutionary reading to the urge to commit a political assassination and her wish to take revenge. At the same time, the autobiographies include more rational explanations than do biographies: Frumkina explains her wish to assassinate in terms of the political program of the PSR, whereas Ivanovskaya does not connect her reading experience to the emotional sphere at all. Ivanovskaya highlights that these were only the revolutionary ideas that she received from illegal books.

In her memoirs, Shkolnik represents her reading in terms of political struggle, which reminds one of how women of a lower-class background discussed their right to formal education: “My mother beat me; she burned the books which I read by stealth - she was illiterate and considered reading a waste of time - but I bravely bore the persecution of my mother and elder sister, and nothing could kill my desire to learn about that life.”569 Such a vivid description of Shkolnik’s struggle for knowledge and the obstacles in her way was intended to show her determination to study and develop her political consciousness, and thus, prove that she was in the process of her awakening. In addition, illiterate and oppressive members of her family represented here as the main hindrance on Shkolnik’s path toward political awakening symbolize the supposed backwardness of the Jewish community.570 The personal struggle to achieve the status of an educated person, according to Shtakser, provided Jewish revolutionaries with an enhanced feeling of self-worth. This is why, like other revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement, Shkolnik did not represent herself as a passive recipient of education, but showed that she had to take risks in order to get an education.571 Simultaneously, Shkolnik constructs herself here as a fighter against the existing order even before she began her political activism. According to Shtakser, the education quota was seen by Jewish revolutionaries as the main symbol of oppression, and thus fighting for education was seen as part of a political struggle.572

569 Sukloff 1915, 34. The same passage is also present in Shkolnik 1927, 252.
570 Shtakser shows in her book that such representations of traditional Jewish families as backward and hindering future revolutionaries’ political development were quite common in autobiographies written by both male and female revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement (Shtakser 2014, 45).
571 See on the meaning of education for Jewish revolutionaries in Shtakser 2014, 39.
572 Shtakser 2014, 65.
Self-education in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists is sometimes represented as a process that was taking places under the guidance of a more politically enlightened person. It reminds one of a symbolic pattern often present in texts about revolutionary heroes and heroines in which a relatively naïve person (“disciple”) is made to see the light by an emissary of the new enlightenment (“mentor”).

In pre-revolutionary biographies of female PSR terrorists, the mentor of the future revolutionary heroine is most often a mysterious, almost invisible male character. For example, Vladimirov connects Spiridonova’s political awakening to her contact with an exiled male revolutionary who gave her illegal literature. Vladimirov gives neither the name nor the political affiliation of Spiridonova’s mentor. In the same manner, the author of the pre-revolutionary biography of Konoplyannikova mentions a sectarian whom she met when she was still studying. The sectarian presumably converted her to Tolstoianism, a utopian religious trend that emerged under the influence of Leo Tolstoy’s (1828-1910) religious and philosophical doctrine, and he held long conversations with Konoplyannikova. No further information about this mysterious male figure is provided in the text. Interestingly, in both cases the mentor disappears from later accounts of the women’s lives. Shtakser has observed a similar tendency in autobiographies of Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement: older revolutionaries who bring young people into the revolutionary subculture normally disappear from autobiographical narratives directly after the young people have joined the movement. Shtakser connects this disappearance to the youthful character of the revolutionary subculture, where there was no place for older people. As a result, authors of revolutionary autobiographies represented themselves as part of that youthful subculture and omitted their mentors from their narratives. In the case of female PSR

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574 Vladimirov 1906b, 46.
575 The author of the biography that contains information about this sectarian writes later that Konoplyannikova was accused of Tolstoianism while working at school (see Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 14).
577 In the case of Spiridonova, the mysterious mentor figure might have been inspired by her mentor and fiancé Vladimir Volsky. However, Spiridonova herself and her biographers tried to avoid mentioning him in their texts because Volsky was married, and Spiridonova’s involvement with him could have ruined her image of a revolutionary heroine (see more about it in Boniece 2010a, 146).
578 Shtakser 2014, 70.
terrorists, such explanations, however, do not seem plausible because, first, the authors of Spiridonova’s and Konoplyannikova’s biographies did not represent these mentors as older people, and second, none of these women had ever mentioned mentors in their own autobiographical texts. It seems that in their case, the mysterious figure of the mentor was included in their biographical accounts in order to show that the women reached awakening under the guidance of experienced revolutionaries, and thus were to be taken seriously in their revolutionary roles.

After 1917, biographers of terrorist women did not write much about mentors. Only in her work about Sevastianova from 1919 does Zilberberg write about her older brothers, who shared their political ideals with Sevastianova when she was still living with her birth family. In this case, the mentors are no longer mysterious figures, but the people that Sevastianova grew up with. However, unlike the authors of the biographies of Spiridonova and Konoplyannikova, Zilberberg does not elaborate much on the role that Sevastianova’s brothers played in her political radicalization. This is evidence that after the revolution, the narrative about the mentor was no longer considered necessary in the revolutionary biography of a female PSR terrorist.

As for autobiographical works written by female terrorists of the PSR, the women who mention mentors in their texts write about these people quite enthusiastically. For example, Shkolnik connects the beginning of her revolutionary education to the influence of Hannah, a “free-thinking” daughter of the local rabbi: Hannah taught her to read and write, and later introduced her to “forbidden” books and underground political activities on behalf of the Bund.

In her autobiography, Ivanovskaya represents the influence of a few mentors as crucial for her political radicalization. First, she makes it clear that she was sent to school only because of the influence that former Decembrist Mikhail Bodisko (1803-1867), who happened to move to her native village, had on her father. Thus, Ivanovskaya shows that the very opportunity of her intellectual awakening was connected to the influence of a former revolutionary; thus, she constructed

579 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 3-5.
580 Sukloff 1915, 23-33; Shkolnik 1927, 245-247.
581 Member of the oppositional secret societies of nobility that organized an uprising on December 14, 1825.
582 Ivanovskaya 1925, 90.
herself (as her generation of revolutionaries was normally constructed in different revolutionary works) as an heir to the first revolutionary wave in Russia. Second, Ivanovskaya, as noted above, writes about the revolutionary influence of her older brother Vasily, who, first, took part in organizing the study circle where Ivanovskaya was active during her school years, and second, introduced her to the radical youth that frequented his apartment in Moscow, where Ivanovskaya spent some time after she finished school. Among the people she met there, Ivanovskaya writes particularly about an “unusual girl,” Maria Subbotina, who had just returned from “the people,” and who influenced Ivanovskaya’s decision to begin her radical activities. Ivanovskaya writes explicitly that Subbotina’s influence was crucial for her radicalization, and thus, like Shkolnik, makes it clear that she was inspired by a woman in her political activism. Interestingly, in Ivanovskaya’s biography by Tyutchev, only her older brother is introduced as Ivanovskaya’s mentor. The influence of Subbotina is not mentioned at all.

In general, thus, mentors are not present in many accounts of female PSR terrorists; in pre-revolutionary accounts they are mostly invisible; after 1917 mentors are present only in the accounts of women from earlier generation of revolutionaries (Ivanovskaya) and poor families (Sevastianova and Shkolnik), the ones for whom knowledge and education were not a given, which made it necessary to prove their level of revolutionary knowledge. Most female terrorists of the PSR, however, are represented as gaining the necessary knowledge from other sources.

It is remarkable that female mentors appear only in autobiographical accounts written by the female terrorists, while the biographers of these women write exclusively about male mentors. It shows that, according to the women’s biographers, if a revolutionary heroine reached revolutionary consciousness under the guidance of another revolutionary, it was male guidance that led her toward political activism. Such attention to male mentorship of female disciples is a direct reference to the relationship between the sexes accepted in Russian upper- and middle-class society at that time, where the man was expected to be a tutor of his

583 Maria Dmitrievna Subbotina (1854-1878) was a member of the Fritchi circle, who in 1876 joined the populist group of the separatists, was tried in the trial of the fifty and sentenced to exile (Shilov A.A. & Karnaukhova M.G. (1932), Deyateli revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii. Bio- bibliografiachesky slovar. Tom 2. Vyp. 4., Moscow: Vsesoyuznoe obschestvo politicheskikh katorzhan o ssylno-poselentsev, 1678).
584 Ivanovskaya 1925, 91.
585 Tyutchev 1929, 3-4.
wife. However, the women themselves tended to write about female influence when such was the case, and thus they adapted the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life to the actual events of their lives and avoided representing their experiences through the gendered stereotypes that existed in society.

4.4 Professional Life

Some terrorist women had experience of professional life before they dedicated their lives to the cause of revolution. Authors of their auto/biographies enthusiastically mention the future terrorists’ professional experience in order to explain their political radicalization. Most often, this occurred in revolutionary auto/biographies of middle-class women who worked among poor people, and thus had an opportunity to see their sufferings at close range in the course of their work. For example, Frumkina, who was born in a well-off family, wrote in her autobiography of 1907 that her first direct acquaintance with the situation of poor people happened while she was working as a midwife among workers in Lodz. Similar explanations for Frumkina’s political radicalization are given as well in her biography authored by Figner.

Interestingly, seeing others’ suffering is represented as an awakening experience even in the case of educated women from lower classes who, as noted above, had personal experience of poverty. In Sevastianova’s biography of 1919, her work among the common people is represented by Zilberberg as equally important for Sevastianova’s political awakening as for Frumkina, who was not born in poverty. Thus, Zilberberg shows that Sevastianova was driven primarily by her altruism when she decided to become politically active, since it was the suffering of others and not her own birth family that influenced her decision.

The situation with Konoplyannikova is, however, totally different. As noted above, neither she nor any of her biographers represented the poverty of Konoplyannikova’s birth family as important for her political radicalization. At the same time, Konoplyannikova introduced in the court speech her work as a village teacher as crucial for her awakening, since it gave her an opportunity to see oppression at close range.

586 See more about it in Yukina 2007, 72.
587 Frumkina 1907, 93; Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina, 10-11.
588 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 7.
Konoplyannikova spoke about her work in two different villages, in Li-fland, Estonia, and in an ethnic Russian region. However, her experience of seeing poverty and oppression is represented as awakening only with respect to her work in the Estonian village, where she also noted the results of the policy of Russification conducted by the authorities. Konoplyannikova’s biographers, who wrote their works before and after 1917, do not mention poverty as awakening for Konoplyannikova, but highlight exclusively Russification as the issue that stimulated her social and political engagement. In this way, both Konoplyannikova and her biographers make it clear that the driving force of her activism was the suffering of others that Konoplyannikova could personally relate to, but suffering of common people of other ethnic backgrounds, which she, an ethnic Russian, did not undergo herself. This shows that Konoplyannikova and her biographers wanted to avoid representing her as having strong personal reasons for becoming politically active, but instead to introduce her activism as motivated exclusively by her social engagement.

It is also interesting to note that Konoplyannikova, despite her social origin, writes about her experience of awakening similarly to the middle-class Frumkina, who became aware of the situation in the country only after she had worked among the common people. According to Budnitsky, the social status of women like Konoplyannikova was higher than at their birth since they were now educated, and thus belonged to the intelligentsia. In this case, it is also clear that Konoplyannikova and her biographers represent her experience of awakening as the experience of a middle-class woman, and thus construct her experience of education as escape from her social class, a phenomenon that was observed by Brooks in his analysis of revolutionary biographies of people born in lower-class families. Thus, education gave Konoplyannikova an opportunity to avoid representing her experience as that of a peasant and to make it resemble the experiences of women from higher social classes. This tendency shows that at least in the eyes of Konoplyannikova and her biographers, the revolutionary heroine was supposed to be an altruistic woman from a privileged social

589 See Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 21-22.
591 Budnitsky 1996b, 8.
group and not a person from a poor family who had her own experience of suffering.

Working among poor people gave future terrorists an opportunity to help them, which, according to their auto/biographies, the women eagerly did. Konoplyannikova, Fedorova and Khrenkova, who, according to these accounts, worked as village teachers, dedicated their time to conducting enlightening work among the peasants.\(^593\) According to Zilberberg’s biography of 1919, Sevastianova, a paramedic, tried to give moral support to poor sick people.\(^594\) Her efforts, however, according to the author, showed Sevastianova that she could not change people’s lives for the better on her own, the realization that led her to political radicalization.\(^595\) In this way, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies represent the above-mentioned women not only as socially engaged, but also as individuals who wanted to help the common people in practice, work that they later continued in the ranks of the PSR.

Political radicalization of women who worked as village teachers is normally explained by persecution by the authorities, who reacted to the future terrorists’ enlightening initiatives and in the end sacked them.\(^596\) This is how, for example, Konoplyannikova, in her court speech, described her working conditions: “The conditions there were as follows: the gendarme lived in front of the school, the constable lived behind the school, the priest lived at a nearby mountain and the acolyte next to him, and all four wrote denunciations of me.”\(^597\) Persecution by agents of the state are represented in the revolutionary auto/biographies of terrorist women as ideological oppression coming from the structures of an authoritarian state. In this way, even before their political radicalization, the women are represented as staying in opposition to the regime, a representation meant to explain their future activism.

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\(^{593}\) Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 22-23; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 14; Yakovlev 1910; Khiriakov 1919, 68; Ivanov S. (1924), ‘S.G. Khrenkova,’ in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 238.

\(^{594}\) GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 7, 9-10.

\(^{595}\) GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 10.

\(^{596}\) Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 13-14; Yakovlev 1910; Khiriakov 1919, 68; Ivanov 1924, 238.

\(^{597}\) “Условия здесь были таковы: перед школой жил жандарм, позади школы урядник, на соседней горе поп, рядом с ним псаломщик, и все четверо писали на меня доносы” (Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in’Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 22).
The future revolutionaries were also represented as people who used their workplaces to conduct a political struggle against the regime. Konoplyannikova, in her court speech as well as in all her later biographies, describes her professional life as a constant fight with local authorities, who did not approve of her teaching methods and enlightening work with peasants. Zilberberg, in her 1919 account, mentions Sevastianova’s attempts to protest rules at her workplace that she considered unacceptable to her patients. Shkolnik, on her part, actively participated in a strike organized by the Bund in the tailor workshop where she was employed at that time, which resulted in her losing work. Shkolnik is not the only revolutionary from the Pale of Settlement who wrote at length in her autobiographical text about participation in a strike; according to Shtakser, such activism prior to participation in the revolutionary underground in the autobiographies of Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement was considered to be an expression of self-respect and a sign of activist identity essential for a future revolutionary. Shkolnik wrote about her participation in the strike very much like other Jewish revolutionaries, starting with the hardships that she endured at her workplace, but instead highlighting her consequent participation in the strike, which was a sign of her self-assertion. That is why although Shkolnik was sacked from the tailor shop because of her participation in the strike, she does not display any regrets about it in the memoirs:

This circumstance created quite an impression on the working-men, who regarded me as a sufferer. When I think of it now and to what it subsequently led, I am deeply grateful to fate, although it is true that, from that time, I became a source of worry and torture to our family.

Shkolnik shows here that she was considered to be a victim when she was sacked and probably felt like one as well. However, in her memoirs, she writes about her feelings from 1915, when she already knew that her future political activism would make a recognized revolutionary

598 Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 22-23; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 12-13, 18-19; Khiriakov 1919, 68.
599 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 9.
600 Sukloff 1915, 21-22; Shkolnik 1927, 244-245.
601 Shtakser 2014, 73, 156.
602 Sukloff 1915, 21-22; Shkolnik 1927, 244-245. See Shtakser 2014, 66 on similar writing by the Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale of Settlement.
603 Sukloff 1915, 22-23. The same passage is also present in Shkolnik 1927, 245.
PSR heroine out of her. Thus, Shkolnik represents the loss of work as the first step of her political activism, without which she would never have become a model revolutionary in the eyes of her comrades.

It was not usual at the beginning of the 20th century for upper-class women to have the experience of professional life. Ezerskaya, however, was one of the few upper-class women who worked before she became politically active. That experience of Ezerskaya’s is discussed enthusiastically by the authors of her revolutionary biographies. The social position of Ezerskaya, who was a married upper-class woman from an aristocratic family, must be why her professional life is represented differently from that of other female terrorists. Ezerskaya’s biographer Lelevich particularly stresses that despite her privileged social origin, Ezerskaya was always interested in working, a fact that puzzled her aristocratic friends.604 Another biographer of Ezerskaya, Orestova, directly connects Ezerskaya’s professional training as a dentist to her wish to earn her own money.605 Thus, in both cases, Ezerskaya’s working experience is represented as differentiating her from other upper-class women, which helped the biographers to construct Ezerskaya as an unusual woman who did not belong to the social class she was born in, and whose wish to leave her social environment was the natural outcome of this. The authors of revolutionary auto/biographies from the 19th century have shown that disappointment in the upper class was represented there as an essential experience for political radicalization at that time.606 That is why it is possible to conclude that Ezerskaya’s professional life and her path to it are included in her revolutionary biographies as a sign of her disappointment in the upper class, and thus as an awakening experience. Due to her social origin, which was similar to the social origin of most populist women, Ezerskaya’s political radicalization was constructed as a disappointment in her social class, as it was constructed even in the case of populists. However, similar explanations do not appear in works about other terrorist women of the PSR, since their social backgrounds were different from those of revolutionaries of the earlier generation.

604 Lelevich 1922, 12.
605 Orestova 1932, 226.
606 See for example Hoogenboom 1996, 85.
4.5 Historical Events

In her article on Russian female autobiographies, Sheila Fitzpatrick has identified a tendency for women to structure their narratives around the public events that they witnessed during their lifetime.607 Even Hoogenboom writes that political awakening of future populists was often represented in their autobiographies as the result of influence of particular historical events on them.608 However, references to historical events are rarely present in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. The only historical event is cited in some of these works as an awakening experience is the Revolution of 1905 in Russia.

Pre-revolutionary auto/biographies normally do not mention the events of 1905 in connection with the women’s awakening of consciousness. However, the authors of the biographies of Lidiya Sture, Lidiya Rudneva and Maria Spiridonova, all written in the late 1920s or 1930s, pay particular attention to the strong impression that the revolution of 1905 made on them. All these accounts clearly show January 9, the so-called “Bloody Sunday,” the day when a peaceful workers’ manifestation was fired upon by order of the tsar, as crucial for the women’s radicalization and decision to join the revolutionary underground.609 None of the earlier biographers of Spiridonova, the only one above-mentioned woman whose life story was written both before and after the revolution, however, connects her radicalization to 1905 (nor mention the revolution at all). This demonstrates that the revolution of 1905 became an important narrative in revolutionary auto/biographies only in the late 1920s. Such attention to the events of 1905 in the revolutionary auto/biographies written during the early Soviet period must be connected to the increasing research on the revolutionary movement in Russia at that time, where the events of 1905 were seen as an important step on the way to the revolutions of 1917.610 By connecting the beginning of female terrorists’ political activism to the events of 1905, their biographers tried to write their struggle into the revolutionary history of Russia in order to show that, as were Bolshevik heroes and heroines, they were also a

607 Fitzpatrick 2000, 4.
608 Hoogenboom 1996, 80.
609 Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251; E.N. (1927), ’Pokushenie na tyuremnogo inspektora Efimova (Vologda – 1911 g.),’ in Katorga i ssylka, No. 2(31), 141; Steinberg 1935, 14.
part of the revolutionary movement in Russia. This narrative was obviously considered important for the revolutionary auto/biographies since even the maximalist Irina Kakhovskaya, in her autobiographical account from 1959, describes “Bloody Sunday” as the historical event that made a revolutionary out of her. 611

The events of the revolution of 1905, however, are not represented as radicalizing in the cases of other female terrorists. They are mentioned as an experience of radicalization only in the biographies of the above-mentioned women, who had particular social backgrounds. Sture and Kakhovskaya were both offspring of aristocratic, upper-class families. Spiridonova came from the family of a non-hereditary noble and worked in the noble assembly. Although the exact social background of Rudneva is not known, according to her biographer E.N., before becoming a political activist Rudneva worked in *zemstvo*, which also implies a privileged position in pre-revolutionary Russian society. In other words, due to the circumstances of their early lives, these women did not have contact with the common people, and they learned about the hardships that the unprivileged population of Russia underwent only because of the publicity that “Bloody Sunday” received. Hoogenboom has shown that in autobiographies of populist women from upper-class families, the authors tend to show different evidence of their direct contacts with representatives of the oppressed classes in order to explain the populists’ future social and political engagement. 612 Evidence of this kind is unusual in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. However, references to the events of 1905 in the revolutionary auto/biographies of terrorist women from an upper-class background seem to have taken the place of references to direct contact with the common people in auto/biographies of populists.

4.6 Religion

According to Barbara Alpern Engel and Donna Oliver, for Russian female radicals in the 19th century participation in political terrorism was

611 This is how Kakhovskaya describes her impressions from January 9, 1905: “…the Tsar and the people - I still did believe in it this morning... And that’s how it is in reality. Here it is - unity ... Yes, it did open my eyes.” (“…царь и народ - я ведь сегодня утром ещё верила в это... А вот как оно бывает в действительности. Вот оно - единение... Да, и у меня раскрылись глаза”). (See Kakhovskaya, Irina (1959), ‘Gorky 9 yanvarya 1905 goda,’ in *Novy mir*, No. 3, 219-220).

612 See more about it in Hoogenboom 1996, 86.
These scholars write that revolutionary women wanted to emulate Christ by sacrificing their lives for the cause of revolution.\textsuperscript{613} Piety, according to Mogilner, was one of the characteristics of the Jewish revolutionary heroine in the literature of the revolutionary underground at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{614} Although the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists had features of religious writings, only one of these women, Maria Benevskaya, was represented by her biographers as pious. The authors make a direct connection between Benevskaya’s religious beliefs and her political awakening.

The authors of Benevskaya’s biographies, Savinkov, who wrote about her before the revolution, and Vladimir Zenzinov,\textsuperscript{615} who wrote his memoirs in the 1950s in emigration, do not mention the books Benevskaya read, the life experiences she had or the people who influenced her. According to Savinkov, Benevskaya quoted the Bible in order to explain her reasons for participating in terrorism: she wanted to sacrifice her soul, her most precious possession, for the sake of the common people.\textsuperscript{616} Zenzinov also explains Benevskaya’s participation in terrorism by her wish to sacrifice herself.\textsuperscript{617} In general, Benevskaya is described by many of her contemporaries as the only female terrorist of her generation who was a believer and never parted with the Bible.\textsuperscript{618} This unusual impression that Benevskaya made, unlike other terrorist women, must be the reason why her biographers paid particular attention to her piety and represented it as the main source of her awakening of consciousness.

While Savinkov only writes about Benevskaya’s piety with admiration, Zenzinov also admits that in revolutionary circles, her piety was considered funny by many.\textsuperscript{619} Thus, political radicalism stemming from piety was not seen as an acceptable narrative in revolutionary auto/biographies from the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{620} It is no wonder that in

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{613} See more about it in Engel 1983, 141-142, 154, 199; Oliver 2010, 75.
\textsuperscript{614} Mogilner 1997, 53.
\textsuperscript{615} Vladimir Mikhailovich Zenzinov (1880-1953) was a member of the PSR and the Combat Organization of the party.
\textsuperscript{616} Savinkov 1917, 206.
\textsuperscript{617} Zenzinov 1953, 312.
\textsuperscript{618} See for example Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 35.
\textsuperscript{619} Zenzinov 1953, 312.
\textsuperscript{620} Anastasia Bitsenko, for example, introduces Benevskaya’s piety as an “original” feature of hers, which the author, however, does not sympathize with (see Bitsenko, Anastasia (1923), “V Maltevskoi zhenskoi katorzhnoi turyme 1907-1910 gg.” (K
\end{footnotesize}
her memoirs, written in the Soviet Union, Valentina Popova, also a member of Savinkov’s Combat Organization, downplays Benevskaya’s religious interests. Popova does not mention that Benevskaya was pious, but merely wonders how a former follower of Tolstoians could become a political terrorist. Popova compares Benevskaya’s path from Tolstoianism to political terrorism to the similar path taken by a member of a maximalist terrorist group, Natalia Klimova (1885-1918), who was also a Tolstoian prior to her participation in political violence. The above-mentioned case of Konoplyannikova, who, according to her biographers, was also a follower of Tolstoy, demonstrates that being a Tolstoian before participating in political terrorism was a common experience for some terrorist women. Thus, by mentioning Tolstoianism and not Benevskaya’s religious beliefs, Popova constructs her as similar to other female terrorists, and in this way avoids representing Benevskaya as different from other recognized revolutionary heroines.

4.7 Private Life

Some women who joined terrorist ranks at the beginning of the 20th century were married or involved with men before they made such decisions. According to Shtakser, the attitude toward marriage in the revolutionary movement was complicated, since the fact of being married made someone unlikely to engage in self-sacrifice. Simultaneously, however, there seems to have been a measure of approval for a relationship with a fellow comrade. As for revolutionary auto/biographies, it has been discovered by previous researchers that the private life of revolutionary heroes and heroines was rarely mentioned there, since revolutionary lives were expected to be dedicated only to public activities. Information about one’s private life would only appear when the revolutionary’s personal connections could shed light on her/his political

622 Shtakser 2014, 50-51.
623 See more about it in Shulman 1975, xv; Liljestörn 2000, 94; Liljestørm 2004, 59. According to Kolonitsky, some of the biographer’s of Kerensky, however, paid attention to the fact of his marriage (Kolonitsky 2017, 50).
activism. Information about the private lives of female PSR terrorists does not appear in their autobiographies at all, which confirms the conclusions of previous researchers that revolutionary women tended to omit this side of their lives in order to adapt their narratives to the generic male model. For the purpose of writing about the women’s political awakening, the authors of their biographies, however, sometimes discuss their private lives.

The information about female terrorists’ private lives becomes more salient in works created after the revolution. For example, Ezerskaya’s married status is only briefly mentioned in her obituary of 1915: its author merely notes that Ezerskaya left her family and moved to St. Petersburg. However, the authors of Ezerskaya’s biographies written after 1917 are more eager to write about the nature of her marriage and the reasons for her leaving her family to become a revolutionary. Lelevich describes Ezerskaya’s married life as empty and genteel, which was disappointing for a woman who hoped to find an intellectual mentor in her husband, a former political activist. The feeling of general dissatisfaction with her life is represented by Lelevich as the main reason behind Ezerskaya’s decision to leave her family. Orestova does not write negatively about Ezerskaya’s marriage, but mentions that she could not bear to live in the “philistine environment” of the upper class any longer, and left her family to earn her own living. Thus, in the latter two cases, the authors show that Ezerskaya’s married life was a hindrance on the path of her intellectual, professional and political development. The authors make it clear that Ezerskaya could start a new life of professional and political activism only after she had left her family, which demonstrates that Ezerskaya was not free to make such decisions while she was still married.

Although S. Ivanov, the author of Sofiya Khrenkova’s biography of 1924, does not discuss the nature of her marriage, he mentions that

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624 See Clark 2000[1981], 182-183; Shtakser 2014, 153. According to Katy Turton, however, memoirs of both male and female revolutionaries often directly and openly discuss their family lives (Turton 2011, 124).
626 X (1915), ‘Pamyati Lidii Pavlovny Ezerskoi,’ in Lensky krai, Yakutsk, No. 26, 4/10/1915.
627 Lelevich 1922, 12-13.
628 Orestova 1932, 226.
Khrenkova began enlightening work with peasants, which later developed into political commitment, only after her husband’s death.629 Thus, Ivanov, shows that Khrenkova’s marriage was also a hindrance to her political development since she was not politically active before her husband’s death, although “her soul craved for social activism.”630 Hence, it is possible to conclude that most often, the private and family lives of female PSR terrorists were mentioned in their biographical accounts as a hindrance. This is reminiscent of Brooks’s conclusion, in his research on revolutionary auto/biographies of the Bolsheviks in Pravda, that families of revolutionaries were rarely mentioned in these documents, but were represented exclusively as a burden, especially for women.631 Since the private lives of female terrorists were not mentioned in revolutionary biographies before the revolution, it can be concluded that after 1917, biographical works about them were influenced by the discursive practice of writing revolutionary lives that existed among the Bolsheviks.

4.9 Summary: Class-Bound Narratives

The manner in which the awakening of consciousness of female PSR terrorists is represented in their auto/biographies provides an opportunity to draw conclusions about the typical narrative of that kind. The discursive differences between narratives of the early lives of female PSR terrorists and similar narratives about the previous generation of revolutionaries can help us to, recognize the influence of revolutionary auto/biographies created by Bolsheviks on the discursive practice of writing revolutionary lives of female PSR terrorists as well as to analyse the way the intersections of gender, class and ethnicity influenced how individual women were represented in these works.

The typical narrative of female terrorists’ early lives prior to their political radicalization tells the stories of these women from two points of departure. On one hand, these are stories of future revolutionary heroines who enthusiastically struggled in different situations of injustice and oppression, and thus proved that they possessed the essential features of the revolutionary even before their political radicalization, a

629 Ivanov 1924, 238-239.
630 "душа её жаждала общественной деятельности" (Ivanov 1924, 238-239).
631 Brooks 1992, 35.
phenomenon that Clark calls “embryonic consciousness.” On the other hand, these are stories of women’s political enlightenment, their path toward accepting revolutionary ideas. A clear class perspective seems to be typical of these narratives, since the above-mentioned experiences of women from different social classes were represented in diverse ways, which is reminiscent of the findings of Jones Hemenway from her work on revolutionary biographies of Bolshevik women.

Almost all future female terrorists are represented as having experienced oppression in different situations of their lives, which they, the future revolutionaries, successfully fought. However, women from different social classes and ethnic groups did not face identical oppression. Those born to Russian upper- and middle-class families are represented as being oppressed by the regime at gymnasia where they studied, while none of the women from Russian peasant and working-class or Jewish families are represented as experiencing this type of oppression. The first experience of women from unprivileged families fighting oppression are normally connected to their struggle for education because of their social position in pre-revolutionary Russia. Like some female terrorists of a middle-class background, they are represented as fighting oppression in their working lives. Oppression in the birth family, which, according to Hoogenboom, was a typical feature of the revolutionary auto/biographies of female populists, was not that common in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Aside from Lidiya Sture, born in an upper-class Russian family, only Jewish women were represented as oppressed in their birth families, which shows that the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life was slightly different at the beginning of the 20th century.

As for the political enlightenment of female PSR terrorists, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies show that this also took place differently with women of different class backgrounds. Women from poor working-class and peasant families are normally represented as realizing the situation of the oppressed because of their own experience of poverty, obtaining the necessary knowledge for future political radicalization during their formal studies and self-education, encountering others’ misery while working among them. Political enlightenment of middle-class women also came through formal education and self-studies. However, in their case, concern about the lot of the poor came only

633 Jones Hemenway 2006, 80-81.
634 See Hoogenboom 1996, 81.
from their experience of working among them. In the case of upper-class women, whose lives were generally very far from the common people, it was more difficult to explain how they became acquainted with the situation of poor people and became radicalized. In those few cases where an attempt was made to explain, the events of the revolution of 1905 or religion were represented as an awakening experience. The narrative about the path to revolution through religion, which, according to Engel and Oliver, was common in autobiographies of populists, appeared only in the accounts of Maria Benevskaya. Altruistic motives for political radicalization was what united the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists of different social and ethnic origins: although some women obviously had personal reasons to become radicalized, the authors of their auto/biographies tended to show them as driven first and foremost by altruism.

Although many themes present in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists also appear in autobiographical accounts of the previous generation of revolutionaries studied by Hoogenboom, it is possible to claim that the standard of writing a revolutionary life was different for these two generations. These differences are generally connected to the changes in the situation of women in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. For example, while female populists were represented as radicalized within their birth families because of oppression experienced there, in the case of female PSR terrorists such experience was common only in accounts of Jewish women, and it otherwise appeared only in the revolutionary biography of Sture. Birth families were usually introduced in accounts of female PSR terrorists only to show the material conditions where the future revolutionary was raised, which could explain the woman’s radicalization. The lists of literature that often appeared in autobiographies of female populists as proof of a woman’s political enlightenment, in the case of female PSR terrorists they appear only in works about women of a lower educational level or about educated ones who came from social or ethnic groups hindered in getting an education. For other women, access to education had become easier by the beginning of the 20th century, and evidence of their knowledge was no longer necessary in revolutionary auto/biographies. Likewise, attention to historical events that radicalized future revolutionaries and the role of religious influence in the centre of the narratives of populist women appear very rarely, and only in the auto/biographies of female

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Engel 1983, 141-142; Oliver 2010, 75.
PSR terrorists who were born in upper-class families, i.e., had a background similar to that of most female revolutionaries of the previous generation. Thus, changes in the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life show that the narrative was adapted to the backgrounds of the new generation of revolutionary women, who were characterized by greater variation than the generation of the populists.

The discursive practice of writing the revolutionary auto/biographies of the Bolsheviks identified by historians influenced how the lives of female PSR terrorists were constructed in texts written during the Soviet era. The revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists adapt narratives not present in such works before the revolution, but identified as common in works about the revolutionary lives of Bolsheviks. The authors of the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists from upper- and middle-class families no longer strive to represent them as people without material problems whose participation in the revolutionary fight was altruistic. Like Bolshevik heroes and heroines, these women were represented as having experiences of material hardships similar to the common people, which shows that they suffered as well, and thus were true advocates of the people’s interests. Moreover, the private lives of women who were married prior to their political radicalization, which were not part of the pre-revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists before 1917, became visible in works written in the early Soviet era. Changes in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists in the Soviet era show that the authors of these works wanted to construct women’s lives within the Bolshevik discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life, which became the dominant one. In this way, they could show that female PSR terrorists were revolutionary heroines similar to Bolshevik women, and thus were a part of the revolutionary process that resulted in the construction of the Soviet state.

Representations of female terrorists in the works of liberal authors, however, were not adapted by later socialist biographers of female terrorists. For example, Prelooker is the only author who paid attention to Spiridonova’s social engagement during her young years that could be interpreted as inspired by liberal ideas. In this way he likely, wanted to construct her, a political assassin, as more attractive to the liberal public of the West. However, such attention to the assumed liberalism of Spiridonova could distract from the socialist ideas that were represented by Spiridonova’s socialist biographers as her driving force, and thus undermine the representation of her as a revolutionary heroine of the PSR.
The material in this chapter does not give many opportunities to compare how the early lives of male and female PSR terrorists were constructed in revolutionary auto/biographies. It is possible, however, to claim that one of the differences that did exist was connected to the women’s attitude toward education. Unlike revolutionary men, who were represented in revolutionary auto/biographies as disappointed by formal education and interested in student subcultures because of that disappointment, terrorist women were often represented as engaged in higher and professional education that prepared them for future political activism.

Female PSR terrorists were often represented by their biographers in feminizing gendered terms in different narratives about their lives. For example, their awakening of consciousness was often introduced as the result of their love for the common people, i.e., positive emotions that characterized “good” femininity. Thus, authors of revolutionary biographies showed that female terrorists were not deviant women, as conservative authors claimed, but were capable of feeling as regular “good” women. However, such representations denied women’s political agency in cases when such attention given to emotions was not balanced by equally detailed accounts of their political considerations. Interestingly, autobiographical texts written by terrorist women lack such emotional representations; the women explain their political radicalization as based on reason instead, and thus highlight their political agency. This demonstrates that female terrorists sought to represent themselves similarly to male revolutionaries in their political engagement and, to use Holmgren’s and Liljeström’s words, constructed themselves in accordance with a generic male model of an ideal revolutionary.

The latter case illustrates the differences between autobiographies and biographies of female PSR terrorists. The autobiographies seem to be less adjusted to the discursive practice of writing a female revolutionary life than the biographies, since instead of using narratives typical for revolutionary biographies, women, often give their own explanations that do not fit the existing discursive practice. For example, Frumkina, in her autobiographical texts does not mention family oppression typical of narratives of Jewish women and writes openly about her urge to commit an assassination, something not seen as acceptable in revolutionary biographies. This reminds one of Kolonitsky’s findings from his

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637 On Holmgren’s and Liljeström’s ideas see Holmgren 1994, 129; Liljeström 1999, 124; Liljeström 2004, 12.
research on representations of Kerensky,\textsuperscript{638} which shows that both female and male revolutionaries created autobiographical texts less adapted to the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life than revolutionary biographies written about them by other people.

At the same time, autobiographies of female terrorists from underprivileged estates include narratives that portray women’s attempts to construct their lives as similar to those of other female terrorists. For example, Zinaida Konoplyannikova, who was born in a poor family, chose to construct her awakening of consciousness in her autobiographical court speech as the experience of a middle-class woman; she does not connect the poverty of her birth family to her political awakening, as biographers of other women from poor families did, but insists instead that the realization of the common people’s situation came to her in the course of her work among Estonian peasants oppressed by the policy of Russification. Budnitsky names Konoplyannikova as one of the terrorist women who changed their social position thanks to their professional education, which made them representatives of the intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{639} The findings of this chapter show that Konoplyannikova did not only change her social position, but also wanted to portray herself as an altruistic representative of the radical intelligentsia who participated in political activism without any personal reasons.

In the same manner, even Maria Shkolnik, who was the only female terrorist discussed in this chapter who was illiterate and had no experience of formal education, constructs herself similarly to terrorist women from underprivileged estates who did receive education. She writes about her fight for self-education, the way terrorist women of lower social origins were represented in revolutionary auto/biographies fighting for the right to formal education. As the auto/biographies of educated women from underprivileged estates include lists of their scholarly and revolutionary readings, Shkolnik writes about the revolutionary fairy tale that she read since, unlike other terrorist women, she could not name more complicated books.

Future participation in political violence is not part of the accounts of female terrorists’ early lives: the women are constructed as rebels and potential political activists, but not as future assassins. The only exception here is the letter of Frumkina, in which she directly connects her experience of reading revolutionary literature to her wish to participate

\textsuperscript{638} Kolonitsky 2017, 51-52.
\textsuperscript{639} Budnitsky 1996b, 8.
in political terrorism. However, since she is the only person who mentions her future participation in political violence and does so in a private letter not intended for publication, and where she obviously did not censor herself to make her narrative fit the existing discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life, it can be concluded that violent tendencies or a wish to assassinate tyrants and oppressors were not meant to be part of a narrative of the early life of a future female terrorist. The authors of revolutionary auto/biographies preferred to represent female terrorists as “good” women to show that they were not deviant.
CHAPTER 5. ACTIVISM

Political activism in the revolutionary underground was represented in their auto/biographies as the most important phase of the lives of revolutionary heroes and heroines. It was the period when they left their birth families behind and became members of the revolutionary family, which defined the rest of their lives. In her research on Soviet autobiographies of “the remarkable revolutionary women,” Liljeström identifies a master plot of these writings, which usually depicts a positive heroine who proceeds through different stages of her activism that indicate her growing consciousness. The growing consciousness, according to Liljeström, is signified by the party’s trust, which is expressed in more demanding tasks that the heroine is continually assigned.640 A similar master plot is also present in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists written before and after 1917. At first, the authors of these accounts normally write about the heroine’s life and activism in the revolutionary underground prior to her participation in political terrorism; then they describe her terrorist activities, a task considered among the most dangerous and important in the PSR,641 and the highlight of her revolutionary career; finally, revolutionary auto/biographies depict the act of self-sacrifice that any heroine performs by suffering the consequences of her participation in political violence. How all these topics were represented in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists is discussed in this chapter.

The end of the heroine’s political activism is depicted differently by authors who wrote about it before and after 1917. Pre-revolutionary auto/biographies normally end when the heroine is executed or incarcerated after her trial. Auto/biographies written after 1917, when former terrorists left prison and sometimes resumed their political activism, show that these women’s political careers did not end with their imprisonment. Since participation in political terrorism is the focal point of all

641 See more about it in Radkey, Oliver (1958), The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism, New York; Knight 1979, 146; Hildermeier 1982, 81; Perrie 1982, 63, 65; Geifman 1993, 48; Budnietsky 2000, 158.
the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, I limit this chapter to analysis of representations of the periods of women’s lives that begin with their “peaceful” activism in the revolutionary underground, and end when they cease to be active political terrorists after being executed or sentenced to long prison terms, which prevented them from continuing their revolutionary careers.

In this chapter, I analyse how authors of auto/biographical accounts of female PSR terrorists represent their place in the revolutionary family as mothers and sisters of their fellow revolutionaries, women’s activism in the revolutionary underground before their direct or indirect participation in political violence, and their participation in political terrorism and self-sacrifice in accordance with the discursive practice of representing a revolutionary life.

5.1 Mothers and Sisters

Once a person entered the revolutionary underground, s/he became a member of the “revolutionary family,” a concept which Katerina Clark introduces as one of the common symbolic patterns that appear in accounts of Russian revolutionaries. According to historians, the revolutionary family was a “brotherhood,” where the place of women was ambiguous and limited only to caring for their comrades in motherly or sisterly fashion. Thus, women were seen first and foremost as mothers and sisters of male revolutionaries in the context of the revolutionary family. Such representations are not available in autobiographical texts, but exist only in biographies of female PSR terrorists.

Female terrorists who were older than most of their comrades were defined as mothers in biographical accounts. Praskovia Ivanovskaya, a member of the Combat Organization who was much older than her co-workers (she was in her early fifties when she joined the unit), was constructed as a mother figure in Boris Savinkov’s memoirs. Savinkov mentions Ivanovskaya’s “kind motherly eyes” and writes the following about her:

All members of the organization were like her own children. She loved everyone equally, with a smooth and quiet, warm love. She did not say kind words, did not comfort or

642 Clark 2000[1981], 49.
encourage, and did not predict success or failure, but everyone who was beside her felt the inexhaustible light of great and tender love.\footnote{Savinkov 1917, 40.}

Savinkov’s representation of Ivanovskaya as a mother figure was not based on her actual behaviour toward other members of the Combat Organization: he writes bluntly that Ivanovskaya did not behave toward others in a motherly fashion. However, Savinkov chooses to create a feminizing description of Ivanovskaya in the motherly role without any clear explanation for it.

Savinkov’s representation of Ivanovskaya as a motherly figure can be explained with the help of a letter that Egor Sozonov, one of the members of the Combat Organization, wrote to her. Sozonov writes of his wish to be worthy of calling himself Ivanovskaya’s son. This wish, however, is not connected to her actual behaviour toward Sozonov or the relationship that they developed while working together; on the contrary, Sozonov writes about misunderstandings they had in the past that are even mentioned in Ivanovskaya’s memoirs.\footnote{Sozonov’s letter to Ivanovskaya, reprinted in Ivanovskaya 1929, 51.} Sozonov writes instead of his respect to Ivanovskaya as a mother figure because of her past in the ranks of the People’s Will.\footnote{See Savinkov 1917, 37, 40.} In other words, Ivanovskaya is defined as a “mother” by Sozonov due to her symbolic position as the only representative of the People’s Will, the revolutionary group of the older generation considered the predecessor of the PSR, among members of the Combat Organization. The same reason for constructing Ivanovskaya as a “mother” of the terrorist unit must also be behind the above-mentioned representation by Savinkov: as does Sozonov, he pays attention to Ivanovskaya’s revolutionary past, but does not make the connection between her participation in the People’s Will and the motherly role directly.\footnote{Ivanovskaya 1929, 45.} Despite the attention that both Savinkov and Sozonov devote to Ivanovskaya’s motherly role in the Combat Organization and her glorious past in the People’s Will, neither of them implies

\footnote{“Все члены организации были как бы её родными детьми. Она любила всех одинаково, ровной и тихой, теплой любовью. Она не говорила ласковых слов, не утешала, не ободряла, не загадывала об успехе и неудаче, но каждый, кто был около неё, чувствовал этот неиссякаемый свет большой и нежной любви” (Savinkov 1917, 40).}
that such a role gave Ivanovskaya a position of power within the revolutionary family. In this way, they show that the role of mother was purely symbolic in her case.

Alexandra Sevastianova, who was the oldest of the members of the Combat Organization in a bomb laboratory in Terijoki, Finland, is represented in the motherly role by Ksenia Zilberberg in her account of 1919. Zilberberg particularly shows Sevastianova’s motherly attitude toward Rashel Lurie, a younger comrade: “Sasha was especially fond of her, more than of the rest of them, painfully and sensitively.”648 This special attitude, according to Zilberberg, was expressed by how Sevastianova selflessly comforted Lurie when the latter was in despair.649 Although Zilberberg does not define Sevastianova as a motherly figure directly, the way she represents Sevastianova’s attitude toward Lurie, the nature of the feelings that she describes, resembles the attitude of a mother toward her child. Similarly, even Lyubov Leontieva, the wife of Anna Rasputina’s attorney, writes in her memoirs of 1934 about the motherly attitude of her husband’s client toward seventeen-year-old Vera Yanchevskaya (1890-?), Rasputina’s fellow member in the Northern Flying Combat Detachment:

A kind smile lit up Rasputina’s pale face and she began to beg Alexander Alexandrovich650 to secure Yanchevskaya’s exclusion from the process. She is just a child and was arrested by accident. We did not induct her into all the work. There is a lot in this case that she does not know.651

Later, Leontieva describes Rasputina’s behaviour toward her co-defendants during the trial as quite motherly. According to Leontieva, Rasputina looked at them “with love” in order to give support.652 M.V. Mikhailova and V.I. Shulyatikov connect Leontieva’s calling Rasputina’s behaviour motherly to her actual motherhood: Rasputina was the

648 “Саша её особенно любила, больше всех других, болезненно и чутко” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24).
649 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24.
650 Alexander Leontiev, Anna Rasputina’s attorney during the trial.
651 “Добрая улыбка осветила бледное лицо Распутиной и она начала умолять Александра Александровича добиться исключения вовсе из процесса Янчевской. Она совсем ребёнок и попала случайно. Мы не посвящали её во всю работу. Она много в этом деле совершенно не знает” (TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 8).
652 TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 9.
only member of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment who had children. Moreover, Rasputina was among the oldest members of the terrorist group tried together with her. Thus, it can be assumed that, like Ivanovskaya and Sevastianova, who were the oldest members of their terrorist units, Rasputina was represented as a mother not only due to her actual motherhood, but also because of her relatively advanced age.

The examples of Sevastianova and Rasputina show a particular difference from Ivanovskaya’s: while the latter was represented as a mother only because of advanced age and past in the predecessor organization of the PSR, the authors of biographies of Sevastianova and Rasputina give examples of their motherly behaviour toward their comrades. The reason for such feminizing representation in their case, which differs from the way Ivanovskaya was represented as a symbolic mother, must be connected to their actual relationship to motherhood, which was known to the authors of their biographies. Zilberberg, in both of her accounts, quotes Sevastianova’s words about the impossibility of combining revolutionary activism and motherhood, a principle that Sevastianova lived by, since she chose to dedicate her life to political activism and not to start a family. As for Rasputina, she had to leave her children behind to become a member of a terrorist unit, a fact that must have been known to Leontieva, who knew Rasputina well even before her husband became Rasputina’s attorney. Thus, authors of the ac-

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653 Mikhailova & Shulyatikov 2010.
654 At the time of the trial, which took place on February 7, 1908, Anna Rasputina was 33, Lidia Sture was 24, Lev Sinegub was 21, Alexandr Smirnov was 22, Vera Yanchevskaya was 17, Afanasy Nikolaev was 33, Koptylev was 23, Vsevolod Lebedintsev was 26, Sergei Baranov was 22; the age of Kazanskaya (Elizaveta Lebedeva) was not known (see Ivich, M. (1914), ‘Statistika terroristichestkikh aktov,’ in Pamyatnaya knizhka sotsialista-revolyutsionera, vyp. 2, 20; Zilbershtein Ya. (1928), ‘V.V. Lebedintsev,’ in Katorga i ssylka, No. 2 (39), 146-147).

655 According to Mikhailova and Shulyatikov, Leontieva’s portrayal of Rasputina as a motherly figure was also strongly influenced by the portrayal of Tanya, a character of Leonid Andreev’s Rasskaz o semi poveshennykh (The Seven who were Hanged) from 1908, who was based on Rasputina (Mikhailova & Shulyatikov 2010). As was Rasputina in Leontieva’s memoirs, Tanya is represented there as a motherly figure who looks with loving eyes at her fellow terrorists during the trial and shows eagerness to sacrifice herself for her comrades (Andreev, Leonid (1909), Rasskaz o semi poveshennykh, Moscow, 15). This case confirms Mogilner’s ideas about the mutual influence that revolutionary fiction and revolutionary auto/biographies had on each other (see more about it in Mogilner 1999, 30-31).

656 Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 32.
657 TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 6.
counts of Sevastianova and Rasputina created feminizing representations of both women in the motherly role in order to show that despite their actual attitude toward motherhood, which could have been seen as controversial by their contemporaries, both women possessed “natural” motherly instincts that determined their behaviour toward younger members of their terrorist groups. This is reminiscent of the findings of Jones Hemenway: Bolshevik women were also represented as marginal in the lives of their biological children, but their biographers tended to highlight their role as mothers to fellow revolutionaries and the Russian masses.\footnote{Jones Hemenway 2006, 85.}

It shows that Sevastianova and Rasputina were represented in the motherly role similarly to how female Bolsheviks with children were represented by their biographers. The revolutionary biographies of female PSR terrorists written during the early Soviet period thus followed in this respect the discursive practice of Bolshevik revolutionary auto/biographies. It is worth noting that even in these cases, the role of mother was not represented by authors of revolutionary biographies as a position of power within the revolutionary family.

The role of sister becomes relevant when younger terrorist women are introduced in the context of the revolutionary family. None of the authors who have written about female PSR terrorists has defined these women directly as “sisters,” but the way they describe the relationships of the individual women with their peers can help to understand how revolutionary “sisters” were constructed. Interestingly, the main function of a revolutionary “sister,” identified by Jones Hemenway as taking care of revolutionary brothers, is not present in revolutionary biographies of female terrorists. In the context of the revolutionary family, young female terrorists Maria Benevskaya, Evstoliya Rogozinnikova and Sevastianova (in the accounts of her early years in the revolutionary underground) are praised by their biographers for their ability to cheer the comrades and make their hard life in the revolutionary underground easier. M. Semenova, for example, quotes the warm words of Vsevolod Lebedintsev (1881-1908), a member of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment, about Rogozinnikova, who, according to him, always tried to cheer her comrades.\footnote{Semionova M. (1909), ‘V.V. Lebedintsev,’ in Byloe, No. 11-12, 10.} Savinkov writes in his memoirs that Benevskaya, although she did little as a political terrorist, was useful for the Combat Organization since she “brought a stream of light pleasure” into the group by her kindness and love for her comrades.\footnote{“внесла струю светлой радости” (Savinkov 1917, 205-206).} Similarly,
in her account of 1919, Zilberberg writes about Sevastianova’s attempts to be calm and cheerful in any circumstances in order not to pass her bad mood to her comrades.661 These examples show that in the context of the revolutionary family, younger women were represented as valuable thanks to their ability to create a pleasant atmosphere and not for their accomplishments in revolutionary work. This provides evidence that the aspect of power and authority was missing even when terrorist women were represented in the role of “sister” in the revolutionary family.

According to Jones Hemenway, revolutionary women were “mothers” and “sisters” not only to their fellow revolutionaries, but also to the common people whom they tried to enlighten and save from their destiny.662 Many female PSR terrorists are represented in revolutionary auto/biographies written before and after the revolution as enlightening the common people through political propaganda before participating in political terrorism.663 Such behaviour reminds one of a mother, whose main function in both pre-revolutionary and early Soviet society was to enlighten her children in order to help their socialization.664 Zhukovsky-Zhuk also writes in his account of 1925 about Lidiya Sture’s wish to protect workers, victims of the events of January 9, 1905.665 The role of protector is also associated with the role of a mother who shields her children from the dangers of the outside world. In all the above cases, women who were constructed in motherly roles toward the common people were represented in a position of power, as mentors. Thus, the role of mother, which was not represented as empowering within terrorist organizations, was represented as such in relation to the common people.

The role of sister to the common people is represented by Maria Spiridonova’s pre-revolutionary biographers, V.E. Vladimirov and S.P. M-

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661 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 11-12.
662 Jones Hemenway 2006, 80.
663 See for example Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 19; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l. 4 (about Ekaterina Izmailovich); Sukloff 1915, 50-51; Khiriakov 1919, 68; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 13; Ivanov 1924, 238-239; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 253; Shkolnik 1927, 259-260; Fialka, ‘Avtobiografiya’.
665 Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251.
in, as similar to how other women were represented as mothers to the Russian masses. Both authors write that Spiridonova undertook her assassination attempt on G. Luzhenovsky because she wanted to avenge her “blood brothers.” Even Maximilian Voloshin, in his poem Chaïke (“Seagull”) of 1906, which was dedicated to Spiridonova, writes that she sacrificed herself “for little brothers,” again meaning the common people. In all these instances, Spiridonova, a very young woman then, is represented as an elder sister to the common people, whom she wanted to avenge. Thus, the authors construct her in a power position toward them. Even in this case, the role of sister, not represented as empowering for female terrorists within the revolutionary organizations, is represented as such in relation to the common people.

It often happened that members of the revolutionaries’ birth families were also active in the revolutionary underground, and thus were also seen as members of the revolutionary family. When a female PSR terrorist had relatives among the members of the revolutionary family, that was often mentioned in her autobiography: the authors who wrote about Alexandra or Ekaterina Izmailovich before and after 1917 often mentioned that they were sisters; Sergei Mitskevich, in a footnote to A. Viktorova-Valters’ article of 1924, introduces Ivanovskaya as “one of the big revolutionary family of Ivanovskys,” obviously referring to her numerous siblings active in the revolutionary underground as well. Ivanovskaya’s biographer Nikolay Tyutchev specifically mentions her brother Vasily as one of the central figures of revolutionary propaganda in the 1870s. Particular attention to the presence of members of the women’s birth families in the revolutionary underground must be connected to ideas about family relationships and their importance for women dominant in Russian society at the beginning of the 20th century. According to historians, revolutionary women’s relationships with their parents were often severed because of their political

666 “братья по крови” (Vladimirov 1906b, 44; M-in 1907, 11).
667 “за меньших братьев” (Voloshin, Maksimilian (1906), ‘Chaïke,’ reprinted in Vladimirov 1906, Maria Spiridonova, 9).
668 See more about it in Shtakser 2014, 52, 69.
669 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l. 2-2 ob.; Steinberg 1935, 103; Avrich & Klebanova 1973, 414-415.
670 “одна из многочисленного революционного семейства Ивановских” (Viktorova-Valters A. (1924), ‘Iz zhizni revolyutsonnoi molodezhi 2-i poloviny 1870-h godov,’ in Katorga i ssylka, No. 4 (11), 74).
671 Tyutchev 1929, 4.
672 See more about it in Atkinson, Dorothy (1978), ‘Society and Sexes in the Russian Past,’ in Atkinson, D.; Dallin, A. & Warshofsky Lapidus G., Women in Russia,
activism\textsuperscript{673} Thus, by showing that female PSR terrorists were still in contact with their siblings and other members of their birth families who shared their political views, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies softened the fact that the woman in question had left her birth family behind in order to become a member of the revolutionary family. Thus, the authors constructed female terrorists in accordance with the ideal of a “good” woman that existed in Russian society at that time, although they participated in non-feminine political and violent activities.

Thus, the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists reveal that the “revolutionary family” offered them a place similar to that which women had in traditional Russian families: even there, they were seen as mothers and sisters who played supportive roles to men. The main difference from the traditional family was that women were seen as comrades, and thus could not be defined as wives to male activists in the framework of the revolutionary family. The motherly and sisterly roles were not represented as empowering for revolutionary women. Only outside of the revolutionary organization, in their relations with the common people, were female terrorists represented in position of power, playing a role similar to that which the mother of the family play to her children: the role of educator and protector. By using the traditional family as a model in their representation of the revolutionary family, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies had the opportunity to construct female terrorists in accordance with dominant gender norms, thus conveying the idea that they were “natural” “good” women.

As noted at the beginning of this section, terrorist women did not construct themselves as “mothers” and “sisters” in the revolutionary family, which demonstrates that they did not limit their roles in the movement to performing traditional female duties. Moreover, representations created by their biographers seem to be stable: all women, regardless of their individual categories of identity, are similarly represented as “mothers” and “sisters” in accounts written during different periods. A particular similarity between how female terrorists and female Bolsheviks were constructed in these roles shows that these types of stable

\textsuperscript{673} See Shulman 1975, xiii; Clark 2000[1981], 49; Clements 1997, 82-83; Jones Hemenway 2006, 80; Shtakser 2014, 53.
representation were typical for the Russian revolutionary underground at the beginning of the 20th century

5.2 Revolutionary Activism Prior to Participation in Political Terrorism

Before participating in political terrorism, all members of PSR terrorist units had some experience of conducting “peaceful” work in the revolutionary underground on behalf of the PSR and other revolutionary organizations. Although this “peaceful” work was not considered central for the political activism of future terrorists, in many cases authors of their auto/biographies pay close attention to the period of women’s lives that preceded their membership in terrorist units. Most often, this is intended to confirm future terrorists’ revolutionary reputation or their devotion to the PSR, issues discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Revolutionary Reputation

In order to become a member of a terrorist unit, a member of the PSR was expected to have a revolutionary reputation, since terrorist leaders were generally cautious about admitting new members.674 Mogilner and Slezkine identify signs of revolutionary experience in texts of the revolutionary underground: membership in secret societies, illegal publishing activities, participation in mass events, sentences to prison, escapes, etc.675 According to Kolonitsky, by including such episodes in revolutionary auto/biographies, authors could prove the revolutionary reputation of the person in question.676 Naturally, these events are present in many revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. However, particular differences can be discerned in how these events were represented before and after 1917.

Many revolutionary auto/biographies written before the Revolution do not include any information about women’s revolutionary reputation; they focus only on attempted or successful terrorist attacks.677 After

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674 See for example Gaucher, Roland (1968), The Terrorists from Tsarist Russia to the O.A.S., London: Secker & Warburg, 97; Gorodnitsky 1996, 55; Gorodnitsky 1998, 92.
675 See Mogilner 1999, 49; Slezkine 2000, 22.
676 Kolonitsky 2017, 52-55.
677 See for example ‘Delo F. Frumkinoi,’ in Narodovolets, 1903, No. 4; Vladimirov 1906a; Vladimirov 1906b; Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina...; Prelooker 1908;
1917, however, such accounts are unusual; narratives of women’s political activism written during the early Soviet period normally include information about both “peaceful” revolutionary work and participation in political violence. This signifies a change in the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life, which can be traced in revolutionary auto/biographies of Spiridonova, Sevastianova and Ezerskaya. The revolutionary auto/biographies of these women written before 1917 do not include any information about their political activism prior to participation in political terrorism. However, similar accounts of these women written after the Revolution provide more-or-less detailed narratives of their political activism prior to participation in terrorist units.678 In other words, the revolutionary reputation of female terrorists established prior to participation in terrorism became more important for the representation of the revolutionary heroine after 1917. The reason behind such a change must be related to the attitude toward political terrorism that became dominant after the Bolsheviks took power. Before the Bolshevik revolution, most of the population of the country saw terrorists as heroes and martyrs for the people’s cause.679 Thus, auto/biographies dedicated exclusively to women’s deeds in the field of political terrorism were the best propaganda tools for popularizing their image among the population. Marxists, however, have often noted that terrorist methods invariably failed to weaken the autocratic state. Moreover, after 1918, the PSR was compromised by its history of opposition to the Bolsheviks.680 Thus, when the Bolshevik vision of political terrorism and the PSR became dominant after they took power, it became more reasonable to represent political activism of terrorists similarly to how such activism was introduced in revolutionary auto/biographies of Bolsheviks. By showing that PSR terrorists not only participated in political assassinations, but also conducted “peaceful” revolutionary work similar to what members of the Bolshevik party conducted, authors of their

Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; X 1915; Geroi russkoi revolyutsii (1917), Petrograd, # 3; Sarychev 1917. Among revolutionary auto/biographies written before 1917, only the following ones had information about a female terrorist’s activism prior to her participation in political terrorism: Frumkina 1904-1905, 3; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l. 4.

678 For pre-revolutionary narratives see Spiridonova 1906; Vladimirov 1906a; Vladimirov 1906b; Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; X 1915; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 3; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407; Lelevich 1922; Orestova 1932; Steinberg 1935.


auto/biographies could popularize the image of political terrorists and legitimize their place in the history of revolutionary struggle in Russia.

Thus, it can be concluded that female PSR terrorists were represented primarily as political terrorists before the Revolution and primarily as revolutionaries after it. This change in representation took place because the authors of their revolutionary auto/biographies attempted to follow the Bolshevik discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life in order to make the lives and deeds of these women more acceptable in a new historical situation.

5.2.2 Devotion to the PSR

According to researchers of revolutionary auto/biographies of both male and female Bolsheviks, the concept of “devotion” had always been important in this type of accounts.\(^{681}\) Although the PSR was not as centralized and sanctified for its members as the Bolshevik party,\(^{682}\) auto/biographies of female terrorists show that even their authors found it important to highlight women’s devotion to the party.\(^{683}\) Most often, they did this by indicating the period when the woman in question joined the PSR and why or by elaborating on her dedicated attitude toward the “peaceful” work that she conducted in the ranks of the party.

In his research on Bolshevik revolutionary auto/biographies published in \textit{Pravda} in the 1920s, Brooks writes that information about the year when a particular individual joined the party was closely linked in these works to the notion of devotion to it.\(^{684}\) In other words, the earlier someone joined the Bolshevik party, the more devoted to it s/he was considered to be. Authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists often indicate the period when a woman became a party member.\(^{685}\) However, special attention to this issue is given only in the biographies of Sevastianova and Klitchoglu, written respectively by Boris

\(^{681}\) Brooks 1992, 34; Liljeström 2000, 83; Jones Hemenway 2006, 84.

\(^{682}\) See more about it in Morozov 2005, 50-51.

\(^{683}\) Such devotion was highlighted even in revolutionary biographies of famous male members of the PSR (see for example the case of Kerensky in Kolonitsky 2017, 51-52).

\(^{684}\) Brooks 1992, 38.

\(^{685}\) See for example Konoplyannkova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 23; Anastasia Mamaeva’s letter, reprinted in Gusev 1992, 29; Frunkina 1907, 93; Savinkov 1917, 195, 330; Sukloff 1915, 51; Maria Aleksandrovnna Spiridonova 1917, 3; Lelevich 1922, 13; Ivanov 1924, 238-239; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 252; Ivanovskaya 1929, 65-66; Zvereva 1932, 222; Orestova 1932, 227.
Gorinson and G.S. in the 1920s. Influenced by the Bolshevik tendency to pay attention to the exact years when a revolutionary hero had joined the party, the biographers stress that both women joined the PSR at the beginning of its existence. For this reason, Gorinson writes directly that Sevastianova became a party member in 1901, and G.S. defines Klitchoglu as one of the founders of the PSR. In this way, they stress that the women’s membership in the ranks of the PSR had a long history, which helped them to represent Sevastianova and Klitchoglu as sincerely devoted to the party.

However, since in the early Soviet period, the PSR was seen as a competitor and enemy of the Bolsheviks, such attention to the year when a future terrorist joined was not an issue that the authors of the revolutionary auto/biographies written after the 1920s wanted to discuss in detail. For example, in her autobiography, written in the 1950s, Revekka Fialka eagerly elaborates on her revolutionary activism before participating in political terrorism, but avoids plainly stating that she was working on behalf of the PSR. Instead of writing about the year when she joined the party, Fialka writes that in 1904, she drew closer to the life of the “underground organization” without specifying which organization she meant. Fialka mentions the PSR explicitly only when she discusses the beginning of her participation in political terrorism. Fialka’s reluctance to specify that her early political activism was connected to the PSR shows that she did not want to represent herself as someone devoted to the party. She chose instead to represent herself primarily as a political activist devoted to the cause of revolution. Thus, Fialka made her life story acceptable for the dominant Bolshevik narrative: she managed to represent herself as a devoted revolutionary, not as a devoted member of the PSR and terrorist.

Beside when female terrorists joined the PSR, some revolutionary auto/biographies also provide explanations of why they chose the party as their political affiliation. These can be seen as evidence of the women’s devotion to the PSR. Most often, the Social Democratic party is represented in these accounts as the main alternative to the PSR. Mamaeva’s, Fedorova’s, and Sture’s auto/biographies explain the women’s choice by their familiarity with the political programmes of

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686 See Gorinson 1924, 236; G.S. 1928, 156-157.
687 According to Fialka’s biography from Politicheskaya katorga i ssylka from 1934, Fialka’s activities from 1904-05 were conducted on behalf of the PSR (p. 663).
688 Fialka, ‘Avtobiografiya’.
both parties and preference for the ideas of the PSR. This explanation is especially interesting for the biography of Sture, the only one among them written after 1917, in the context of the early Soviet state. By highlighting Sture’s devotion to the PSR and rejection of Bolshevism, her biographer Zhukovsky-Zhuk chose not to adapt his narrative to Bolshevik discursive practice and in this respect followed the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life that had existed in the PSR before the Revolution. Shkolnik, in the first version of her memoirs of 1915, as well as the biographers of Sevastianova and Spiridonova, who wrote their accounts after 1917 in emigration, give more detailed explanations of the women’s turn toward the PSR. In all these cases, the terrorist women are represented as rejecting Marxism because of its focus on workers and lack of attention to the peasants’ needs, as well as for its dogmatic character. Thus, all these revolutionary auto/biographies show the women’s turn to the PSR as a politically motivated decision, which was based on their knowledge not only of the contents of the party program, but also of possible alternatives. Such motives behind the women’s decision to join the PSR was the best proof of their devotion to the party.

Some female terrorists are represented in their revolutionary auto/biographies as people who became PSR members primarily because political terrorism was a part of the party program. Such claims are made in Frunkina’s letter to Burtsev, Figner’s biography of Frunkina, Savinkov’s reminiscences about Dora Brilliant and Steinberg’s biography of Spiridonova. While in Spiridonova’s biography, such a statement was balanced by Steinberg’s assurance that the agrarian program of the PSR was as important to Spiridonova as political terrorism, Frunkina’s and Brilliant’s auto/biographies do not refer to the women’s interest in other parts of the programme besides terrorism. In the case of Brilliant, Savinkov even writes explicitly that she was not much interested in the program after having worked for a local committee of the PSR. Thus, it is possible, to conclude that political terrorism and not the PSR was represented in auto/biographies of Frunkina and Brilliant as the object

690 Suklof 1915, 51; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 8-9; Steinberg 1935, 15. In the version of the memoirs that was published in Soviet Russia, Shkolnik gives a different explanation for her change of political affiliation.
691 ’Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 19; Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 9, 11; Savinkov 1917, 39-40; Steinberg 1935, 16.
692 Savinkov 1917, 39-40.
of their devotion. Hence, the women were constructed in these works first as political terrorists and only secondarily as members of the PSR.

However, it appears that representations of female PSR terrorists as devoted primarily to political terrorism were not considered totally acceptable for the genre of revolutionary auto/biography. When it was difficult to represent a particular woman as a true devotee of the PSR, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies showed instead that she was devoted to broad concepts such as “socialism” and “revolution.” In Frumkina’s court speeches and the autobiography that she wrote before execution, documents that, unlike her above-mentioned letter were intended for the public, Frumkina does not elaborate much on her devotion to political terrorism. Instead, she represents the ideals of socialism as the main object of her devotion.693 Similar ideas are even present in Frumkina’s biographies published before and after 1917 by Figner and Ekaterina Roizman.694 In his memoirs, Savinkov even tries to downplay Brilliant’s devotion to political terrorism by writing that the object of her devotion was actually revolution.695

Both Frumkina and Brilliant, who were represented in some of the above-mentioned revolutionary auto/biographies as primarily devoted to the idea of political terrorism, came from Jewish middle-class families. The ethnic Russian upper-class Spiridonova, who, Steinberg writes, was also devoted to political terrorism, was also interested in other parts of PSR program; thus, she was constructed primarily as a Socialist Revolutionary and not as a terrorist. Such a difference in representations can be explained by the findings of Golda Akhiezer about a propensity for political radicalism and revolutionary violence among Jews because of their traumatic experience of pogroms and lack of control over their own destiny.696 Although the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of Frumkina and Brilliant do not write directly about the women’s attitude to the Jewish question or their experiences of anti-Semitism, they represent them differently from that of ethnic Russian female terrorists.

693 Frumkina’s speech from June 14, 1904, reprinted in Frumkina 1904-1905, 12; Frumkina 1907, 93.
694 Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 11; Roizman E. (1926), 'Vospominaniya o Frume Frumkinoi,' in Katorga i sylka, No. 7-8, 304.
695 Savinkov 1917, 34-35.
Interestingly, Shkolnik, who was born to a poor Jewish family, does not state that the opportunity to participate in political violence was what mainly attracted her to the PSR. As a matter of fact, when she discusses her decision to join the party, she does not mention political terrorism at all; however, similar to Steinberg in his biography of Spiridonova, she does discuss her interest in the agrarian program of the PSR, which she explains by her peasant background. Thus, Shkolnik represents her class identity of a peasant as the decisive factor in choosing her political affiliation. In this instance, she does not mention her ethnicity at all, and thus does not construct herself as “the Other,” the way Jewish female terrorists from middle-class families were represented in their auto/biographies. That Frumkina and Brilliant were represented differently from Shkolnik can be explained by Shtakser’s findings that revolutionaries of a working-class background from the Pale of Settlement were politicized because of their class rather than because of their ethnicity. Working-class Jews suffered discrimination by Jewish owners of the enterprises where they worked, while their first experience of ethnic discrimination normally happened after they started their political activism. Because of their middle-class background, Frumkina and Brilliant did not experience class discrimination, and thus were constructed in their auto/biographies as reacting to ethnic discrimination.

In the later version of her memoirs, published in Russia in the late 1920s, Shkolnik explains her turn toward the PSR differently from the explanations given in revolutionary auto/biographies of other terrorist women: “Work in the Odessa Social Democrat organization of that time did not meet my revolutionary mood. By that time, the Socialist-Revolutionaries were very active in Odessa, and under the influence of their literature, I turned to them.” In this case, Shkolnik connects her choice primarily to her “revolutionary mood” without explaining further the meaning she puts into that expression. Although she briefly mentions the influence of PSR literature, her choice is represented here as based on emotions and is only vaguely connected to Shkolnik’s political convictions. As a result, Shkolnik’s devotion to the PSR does not seem very convincing here. The representation that Shkolnik creates here must be the result of her turn toward Bolshevism by the time the

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697 Sukloff 1915, 51.
698 Shtakser 2014, 72.
699 "Работа в Одесской с.-д. организации того времени не соответствовала моему революционному настроению. К тому времени с.-р. развили большую активность в Одессе, и я под влиянием их литературы перешла к ним" (Shkolnik 1927, 260).
new version of her memoirs was published. Thus, she could hardly be eager to elaborate on her devotion to a political party considered hostile to the Bolsheviks when the memoirs were written.

The authors of some revolutionary auto/biographies show that female terrorists joined the PSR because of the influence of the most respected members of the party on them. In her autobiography, written before her execution, Frumkina names Grigory Gershuni as her favourite teacher.700 Ivanovskaya, in her account of Brilliant, mentions Gershuni as well as Petr Nikolaev701 and Ekaterina Breshkovskaya as the people who influenced Brilliant in her decision to become a PSR member: “These acquaintances reinforce her Socialist-Revolutionary beliefs once and for all, create an indestructible devotion to them, and determine the character of all her subsequent revolutionary activities.”702 Thus, in the cases of both Frumkina and Brilliant, the influence of party leaders is represented as decisive for PSR membership. These representations are reminiscent of the symbolic pattern “mentor-disciple” discussed in the previous chapter. It is remarkable that such a pattern emerges only in the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists born in middle-class Jewish homes. Thus, the authors of these works considered it necessary to include such narratives in accounts of this particular group of women, who, as noted above, did not have any particular reasons from their backgrounds to join the PSR. As a result, their devotion to party ideals could be proved only by the authority of the people who introduced them to the PSR. The absence of similar narratives in the auto/biographies of female terrorists of Russian origin again shows that the authors of these accounts perceived Jewish female terrorists as “Others” in relation to Russian ones, and considered that their devotion to the party needed extra confirmation by reference to the women’s famous mentors.

Another way of verifying female terrorists’ devotion to the PSR in their revolutionary auto/biographies were references to their dedicated attitude toward “peaceful” work that they conducted before participating in political terrorism. For example, Konoplyannikova’s biographers highlight her work on behalf of the PSR, and note that she was often

700 Frumkina 1907, 93.
701 Nikolaev Petr Fedorovich (1845-1910) was a Russian revolutionary, who was a member of Karakozov circle and other revolutionary organizations in the 19th century.
702 “Эти знакомства окончательно укрепляют её в эсеровских убеждениях, создают несокрушимую до смерти преданность им и определяют характер всей последующей её революционной деятельности” (Ivanovskaya 1929, 65-66).
exhausted at the end of the day. According to Kolonitsky, such descriptions in revolutionary biographies were expressions of an extreme form of ascetism, when the revolutionary was consciously sacrificing her own health for the cause of the revolution. Such a victory over one’s own body was seen as evidence of exceptional psychological and spiritual qualities. Thus, in the course of everyday revolutionary work, Konoplyannikova was represented as an exceptional human being who was ready to sacrifice herself for the cause of the revolution.

At the beginning of the 20th century, women in revolutionary organizations most often performed everyday organizational, secretarial and housekeeping duties. By highlighting that future female terrorists eagerly performed their part of revolutionary work despite its monotonous character, authors of auto/biographical accounts of them showed their devotion to the party. Mamaeva characterizes her part in “peaceful” PSR work in her last letter as “very modest,” since she was only typing on a mimeograph, distributing literature in workers’ neighbourhoods, etc. In his article on Fedorova of 1910 Yakovlev describes her work in the party printing house as “difficult, responsible, but unattractive.” In both cases, routinized everyday work that future terrorists performed was not represented as very exciting for revolutionary women. However, Yakovlev makes it clear that Fedorova was chosen for such work because of her modesty and devotion to the cause. The authors of the biographical works on Sevastianova and Sture written after 1917 also praise them for their willingness to do all types of work assigned by the party, which in Sevastianova’s case is also directly connected to her modesty. References to female terrorists’ modesty and devotion to the PSR, expressed in their willingness to perform monotonous everyday work on behalf of revolutionary organizations, had their roots in Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s “profile” of Gesya Gelfman in Underground Russia, who was praised there as a “modest worker” of the revolution. Gelfman’s heroism was exactly her ability and eagerness to stay in the shadows and conduct everyday work that made more visible, “heroic” activities of the People’s Will possible.

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703 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 15, 19; Khiriakov 1919, 68. 
704 Kolonitsky 2017, 199. 
705 See for example Turton 2011, 124; Boniece 2017, 2. 
707 Yakovlev 1910. 
708 Yakovlev 1910. 
709 Gorinson 1924, 237; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 252. 
710 Stepnyak-Kravchinsky 1893, 427.
Gelfman, as well as the above-mentioned female terrorists from the PSR, were constructed in these cases in accordance with the existing ideal of the “good” woman who was to be modest.⁷¹¹ Such representations of women who conducted everyday work on behalf of revolutionary organizations was not specific for the PSR. According to Jones Hemenway, even Bolshevik women were praised in revolutionary biographies for their willingness to conduct their “nearly invisible” revolutionary tasks, since their behaviour corresponded to the ideal of female modesty.⁷¹² In other words, representations similar to the one created by Stepnyak-Kravchinsky in his “profile” of Gelfman became dominant at the beginning of the 20th century, since most revolutionary women performed such jobs.

5.3 Participation in Political Terrorism

Participation in political terrorism was, of course, the central narrative of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Similar narratives did not exist in accounts of revolutionaries whose activities were not connected to political violence, which implies that the most unique features of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists must be present in narratives about their participation in political terrorism. The authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists paid particular attention to why these women decided to join terrorist units of the PSR instead of doing more “peaceful” work for the sake of revolution. In addition, significant attention is paid there to the roles that individual women played in terrorist organizations and to their attitudes toward these roles. The authors of these auto/biographies also discussed assassinations that some of the women committed or attempted.

5.3.1 Reasons to Become a Terrorist

Female members of the PSR joined terrorist units of the party for various reasons. Most often, their decisions were explained in revolutionary auto/biographies in terms of the PSR programme as the women’s wish to take revenge for the atrocities of the regime against common people

⁷¹¹ See more about it in Stites 1990[1978], 16; Pushkareva 1997, 164; Kelly 2001a, 3; Kelly 2001b, xxxiii-xxxiv; Engel 2004, 24; Yukina 2007, 100; Clements 2012, 83.
⁷¹² Jones Hemenway 2006, 84.
and fellow revolutionaries, and to sacrifice themselves for the cause.\textsuperscript{713} Self-sacrifice as the noblest part of any political assassination was, of course, also mentioned in most works about female PSR terrorists. In many cases, women’s participation in terrorism is primarily connected to their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of revolution.\textsuperscript{714} Such explanations seem to be the ones that authors of revolutionary auto/biographies preferred to use, since they did not want to represent terrorist women as acting out of personal reasons that could undermine their devotion to the revolutionary cause.\textsuperscript{715} These explanations were not unique for works about female PSR terrorists: since they repeated the ideas of the PSR leadership about the purpose and essence of political terrorism, they were also used in works on terrorist men.\textsuperscript{716} However, revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists were characterized by the presence of feminizing gendered representations and personal reasons to become political terrorists, narratives that are

\textsuperscript{713} See for example ‘Delo F. Frumkinoi,’ in \textit{Narodovolets}, 1903, No. 4; Frumkina’s testimony from May 27, 1903, reprinted in Frumkina 1904-1905, 7; Spiridonova 1906, 13; Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 16; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 4, 20; Frumkina’s speech from June 25, 1907, reprinted in \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…}, 40-42; \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…}, 6, 11, 15, 50; Prelooker 1908, 292; Yakovlev 1910; Sukloff 1915, 123; ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 9; Sarychev 1917, 17-18; ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 19; Khiriakov 1919, 71; Pribylev, A.V., Zinaida Zhuchenko, Petrograd, b.g., 15-16; Yadov (1923), ‘Butyrki (iz vospominanii katorzhanina za 1906-1912 gg.),’ in \textit{Katorga i ssylka}, No. 6, 163, E.N. 1927, 135-136, 141; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 254; Nikonov S.A. (1928), ‘Kak proizoshlo pervoe pokushenie na adm, Chukhnina?,’ in \textit{Katorga i ssylka}, No. 6 (43), 79-80; Orestova 1932, 227; Fridberg A. (1929), ‘E. Rogozinnikova,’ in \textit{Katorga i ssylka}, No. 1 (50), 172-173; TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 2-3; Steinberg 1935, 17.

\textsuperscript{714} See for example N. Teslenko’s defense speech at Spiridonova’s trial, reprinted in Vladimir 1906a, 112; Kossovsky’s speech at Frumkina’s trial, reprinted in \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…}, 52; \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…}, 11; ‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 19; Savinkov 1917, 39-40, 79, 148; \textit{Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova} 1917, 3; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 252; Roizman 1926, 302-303, 304; Ivanovskaya 1929, 63; Tyutchev’s footnote in Ivanovskaya 1929, 121; Steinberg 1935, 17.

\textsuperscript{715} Very characteristic in connection to it is Frumkina’s statement when she was tried for the assassination attempt on Bagretsov, warden where she was incarcerated. Frumkina highlights that the attempt was not a personal matter: ‘The attempt at Bagretsov was only an episode of the general prison struggle, he did not do anything to me personally’ (“Покушение на Багрецова лишь эпизод общей тюремной борьбы, мне лично он ничего не сделал”) (See Frumkina’s speech from May 16, 1907, reprinted in \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…}, 18).

\textsuperscript{716} See for example Morrissey’s analysis of Ivan Kaliaev’s revolutionary biographies (Morrissey 2012, 620-621)
not part of male revolutionary auto/biographies. I analyse these representations in the current section.

Self-sacrifice, as noted above, was often represented as the main reason for women to participate in political violence. Such explanations were essential in the cases of female terrorists, since violence was considered unacceptable for “good” women, while the willingness to sacrifice themselves for others (most often, their families) was an essential feature of “good” femininity. As a result, authors of revolutionary biographies of Brilliant, Lurie, Sevastianova and Benevskaya highlight that these women became political terrorists in order to sacrifice themselves and not to kill. Such portrayals showed that the women in question, on the one hand, were familiar with the ideas of the PSR about self-sacrifice of the terrorist as expiation for political assassination, and on the other hand, represented them in accordance with the ideal of “good” femininity. Thus, the authors of their revolutionary biographies portrayed the women primarily as revolutionary martyrs, not as revolutionary fighters. According to Schraut and Weinhauer, even in the European context, the role of martyr was considered more appropriate for female terrorists than that of a fighter. In this way, the authors of the above-mentioned revolutionary biographies highlighted that female terrorists sacrificed themselves for the cause and downplayed their participation in political assassinations.

Self-sacrifice is, however, not a common theme in autobiographies written by female terrorists. Only in their court speeches, which were supposed to be acts of agitation for the PSR, and thus were based on party ideology, did Spiridonova, Konoplyannikova and Frumkina mention their readiness to be executed for their terrorist deeds. Otherwise, while speaking and writing about why they decided to become political terrorists, the women themselves tended to focus on their wish to fight the regime and avenge the suffering of the common people, not on their

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717 See more about it in Yukina 2007, 98.
718 Savinkov 1917, 39-40, 216; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 11, 14; Zenzinov 1953, 312.
719 See more about the difficulties of representing a female hero in Schraut 2014, 63-64; Schraut & Weinhauer 2014, 28-29.
720 See for example Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ’Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 16; Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ’Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 24; Frumkina’s court speech from May 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 17.
wish to sacrifice themselves. Shkolnik even writes in her memoirs that the idea of self-sacrifice was not at all her driving force when she decided to become a political terrorist. According to Shkolnik, she first began thinking about self-sacrifice as an outcome of her participation in political terrorism shortly before the first assassination attempt that she was planning. In other words, unlike their biographers, terrorist women did not want to introduce themselves only in the acceptable female role of a revolutionary martyr, but preferred to construct themselves in the role of revolutionary fighter, a more controversial one for their sex. This paradox is vividly present in texts by Ivanovskaya. While discussing her own life, Ivanovskaya writes that her decision to participate in the Combat Organization was connected to her wish to fight the regime. In other words, Ivanovskaya constructs herself as a revolutionary fighter. Conversely, in her memoirs, Ivanovskaya represents Brilliant as a person who saw participation in political terrorism as an act of self-sacrifice above all. Thus, Ivanovskaya constructs Brilliant as a “good” woman, ready to sacrifice herself for others without paying attention to her participation, albeit indirect, in political violence.

Some explanations of why particular women decided to participate in political violence are based on gendered assumptions about female political activism as stemming from a stereotype of women’s stronger emotionality compared to men. Interestingly, such emotional explanations are present exclusively in the auto/biographies of the women who participated in political terrorism as assassins. Most often, emotions voiced in these cases are female terrorists’ feelings of love for victims of the regime and their indignation at the suffering of these victims. This is how, for example, Spiridonova explained her decision

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721 See for example Spiridonova 1906, 13; Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 13-16; Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 20-21; ‘Pisma Frumkinoi,’ reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 65; ‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 21; Ivanovskaya 1925, 95. According to S. Ivanov, even Khrenkova focussed her court speech on her wish to fight the regime (Ivanov 1924, 238-239).

722 Sukloff 1915, 127.

723 See Ivanovskaya 1925, 95; Ivanovskaya 1929, 63.


725 See for example Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 15-16; Vladimirov 1906b, 44-45; M-in 1906, 11; Nikolay Teslenko’s defense speech, reprinted in Vladimirov 1906a, 112; Frumkina’s court speech from May 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 26; Frumkina’s court speech from June 25, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 41; Yakovlev 1910; Pribylev, 15-16; Steinberg 1935, 17.
to assassinate Luzhenovsky in her court speech: “I ... undertook the execution of the sentence, because my heart was so torn with pain, it was so shameful and hard to live upon hearing what was going on in the villages.”726 Thus, Spiridonova demonstrates that she had decided to commit a political assassination because of her feelings about the suffering of victims of her target. Simultaneously, Spiridonova elaborates on her political beliefs and uses them as well to explain her participation in political violence.727 In this way, she creates a balanced representation of her motivation, where an equally important place is given to her emotions and political beliefs.

Such balance is, however, quite unusual in revolutionary biographies of female PSR terrorists. The authors of biographical accounts of Frumkina, Spiridonova, and Sture written before and after 1917 make a direct connection between the women’s ability to sympathize with the sufferings of common people and their “pure souls.”728 Thus, they claim that terrorist women turned to violence because of their good nature. However, the authors of these biographical accounts do not go farther than that and do not write much about the female terrorists’ political beliefs, unlike Spiridonova in her speech. As a result, by elaborating only on the women’s emotions and not paying much attention to their political convictions, the biographers of female PSR terrorists deny their political agency in making the decision to join a terrorist unit and represent the women as driven exclusively by their emotions.

Positive feelings of love and compassion typical for representations of “good” femininity are, however, not the only ones used in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists to explain the women’s decision to participate in political violence. In her account of Frumkina, for example, Figner also notes her hatred for the regime as a driving force behind Frumkina’s decision to become a political terrorist:

In this, as well as in everything else, Frumkina’s personality is characterized by duality: on the one hand - a broad, loving heart full of delicate femininity, pity and compassion for the

726 "Я ... взялась за выполнение приговора, потому что сердце так рвалось от боли, так стыдно и тяжко было жить, слыша, что происходит в деревнях" (Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 15-16).
727 Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 12, 15.
728 M.I. Kossovsky’s speech, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 52; Sarychev 1917, 17-18; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 251; Roizman 1926, 303.
people ... on the other hand, she is an indomitable fighter and a terrorist, full of hatred and anger.729

Figner introduces Frumkina as divided between the “natural” female feeling of love and the feeling of hatred that the atrocities of the regime provoked in her, an issue also present in an earlier work about Frumkina, as well as in Shkolnik’s memoirs and Zilberberg’s 1919 biography of Sevastianova.730 Hatred for oppressors in these cases is represented as the reverse side of feelings of love that the women felt for the victims of oppression. The negative feeling of hatred is, thus, represented as emerging because of the women’s ability to love. However, hatred was mentioned in fewer cases than in the numerous revolutionary auto/biographies that praise female terrorists for their ability to feel love and compassion. Thus, it can be concluded that authors of revolutionary auto/biographies preferred not to write about hatred, but rather to elaborate on the positive feeling of love in order to prove that terrorist women were “natural” and “good.” Too much attention to hatred could undermine such claims.

Autobiographical texts provide more personal and less generalized explanations of why women decided to participate in political violence. An especially large number of such reasons are included in Konoplyannikova’s court speech of 1906.

First, in that speech, Konoplyannikova connected her participation in political violence to her humble social background. Konoplyannikova proudly called herself a “native of the people” and claimed that she had a right to fight “with arms for our new future right” because of her background.731 Thus, Konoplyannikova constructs herself as a representative of the common people participating in political terrorism on behalf of everyone who suffered from oppression by the regime. Although Konoplyannikova was not the only female PSR terrorist from a poor family, she was the only one who referred to her social origin in order

729 “В этом, как и во всём, личность Фрумкиной отличается двойственностью: с одной стороны - это широкое любвеобильное сердце, полное нежной женственности, жалости и сострадания к людям... с другой, она неукротимый боец и террорист, полный ненависти и гнева” (Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 9).
731 “выходец из народа”; “с оружием в руках за наше новое грядущее право” (Reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 21).
to explain and substantiate her right to actively participate in political violence.

Second, Konoplyannikova mentions her being imprisoned and persecuted by the regime because of her “peaceful” activities on behalf of the PSR as a reason why she became a terrorist.\textsuperscript{732} Thus, Konoplyannikova shows that her participation in political terrorism was a result of her negative experience with the regime, a reason that could be seen as personal. However, Konoplyannikova is not the only one who makes such an explicit connection. Shkolnik’s memoirs, as well as revolutionary biographies of Konoplyannikova and Rudneva, also make it clear that these women turned to political violence because of persecution by the regime. In all these cases, however, the authors show that turning to political terrorism after persecution by the authorities was quite common in the revolutionary underground at that time. Shkolnik writes that her insights into the impossibility of fighting the regime “peacefully” were based not only on her own experience of incarceration, but also on similar experiences of her comrades.\textsuperscript{733} The authors of biographical accounts of Konoplyannikova and Rudneva written after 1917 claim that Tsarist prisons in pre-revolutionary Russia were the best school for revolutionaries, where they had an opportunity to rethink their strategies and tactics.\textsuperscript{734} In this way, they represent Konoplyannikova’s and Rudneva’s turn toward political terrorism as part of a general tendency, which implies that their participation in political violence was not based on personal reasons.

At the end of her speech, Konoplyannikova showed that her turn toward political violence was a natural outcome of the situation in the country and not only of her personal situation:

I clearly saw that the history of the Russian people - is one bloody chronicle. I clearly saw that the autocratic and bureaucratic superstructures are held only by the violence of the authorities, because of the constantly practiced white, but bloody terror by those in power. And I came by my very

\textsuperscript{732} ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 23.
\textsuperscript{733} Sukloff 1915, 125.
\textsuperscript{734} Khiriakov 1919, 68; E.N. 1927, 141.
life to the following conviction: nothing new can be created without destruction of the old ... I became a terrorist.735

In keeping with the PSR programme, Konoplyannikova represents her participation in political terrorism as a reaction to violence by governmental structures directed at the whole population of Russia. In keeping with Morrissey’s findings, Konoplyannikova pronounces the Russian authorities guilty of her turn toward political terrorism and shows that it was the only way to act in such circumstances.

Participation in political violence is represented as a personal matter in Frumkina’s last autobiography, where she connects her wish to become a terrorist to her personality:

Always self-contained, I have always put myself below others; I have never had the courage to teach others, and that is why I was not engaged in propaganda. But attacking enemy has always fascinated me, and my worst enemy is still – Russian autocracy.736

Frumkina represents herself here as a modest person unsure of her abilities as an agitator, a common task performed by revolutionary women. In this way, Frumkina shows that she possessed what was considered a desirable female feature both in Russian society in general and in the revolutionary underground in particular. However, Frumkina shows that because of feminine modesty, she was not able to become a “modest worker” of the revolution, the type of female activist praised by both Stepnyak-Kravchinsky and her contemporaries. Since her femininity prevented her from performing peaceful propaganda work, Frumkina concludes that political terrorism was the only kind of political activism that matched her personality and revolutionary interests. The reasoning in the above quote seems to be a conscious attempt undertaken by

735 “Я ясно видела, что история русского народа - это одна кровавая летопись. Я ясно видела, что самодержавные и бюрократические надстройки держатся только благодаря насилию со стороны власти, благодаря постоянно практикуемому бёлому, но кровавому террору со стороны у кормила правления стоящих. И я самой жизнью пришла к следующему убеждению: ничего нельзя создать нового, не разрушив старого... Я стала террористкой” (Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 23).

736 ”Всегда замкнутая в себе, я себя ставила ниже всех; никогда у меня не хватало смелости учитить других, и потому я не занималась агитацией. Но наступление на врага меня всегда увлекало, а мой злейший враг всё-таки - русское самодержавие” (Frumkina 1907, 92-93).
Frumkina to construct herself simultaneously as both a “natural” woman and a devoted terrorist warrior.

In her private letters, which she had not intended to be published, however, Frumkina, explains her decision to become a political terrorist only by her emotional attitude toward political violence as a means of revolutionary struggle. In her book about Frumkina, Figner quotes “a lost letter,” where Frumkina defines political terrorism as “the happiness and curse” of her life, without further explaining such a highly emotional attitude.\footnote{737} In her letter to Burtsev, Frumkina elaborates on her wish to participate in political terrorism in the following way:

> I must tell you that I think that every revolutionary work is very important and necessary, but I am personally strongly attracted and have always been attracted to the implementation of an act of terrorism. I thought and still think only about this, yearned and am yearning only for it and cannot control myself. I tried to take up something else in Kiev, but it was disconcerting, and I finally came to the conclusion that there is no need to force myself: I need to go where feeling, belief, conscience lead me.\footnote{738}

Frumkina’s private letters quoted above are not as adapted to the existing ideal of femininity as her last autobiography is. She openly writes there about eagerness to commit political assassination, which could be seen as opposed to the existing female ideal and as irrational, since Frumkina did not provide any other reasons for her participation in political violence in her letters other than her wish to assassinate. A similar irrational devotion to the idea of political terrorism connected to a strong desire to commit a political assassination and frustration by the inability to do it is mentioned by both Savinkov and Ivanovskaya in their accounts of Brilliant.\footnote{739} In his memoirs, Savinkov introduces in the same manner another female member of the Combat organization,

\footnote{737} “Террор - счастье и проклятье моей жизни” (Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina…, 9).
\footnote{738} "Надо вам сказать, что я считаю очень важным и нужным всякую революционную работу, но меня лично сильно влечёт и влекло всегда к выполнению террористического акта. Думала и думаю только об этом, рвась и рвусь только к этому и совладать с собою не могу. Пыталась я взяться в Киеве за что-нибудь другое, но было мало толку, и я, в конце концов, пришла к такому заключению, что незачем насиловать себя: надо идти туда, куда зовёт чувство, убеждение, совесть” (‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 20).
\footnote{739} Savinkov 1917, 39, 48; Ivanovskaya 1929, 64, 82.
All three women, Frumkina, Brilliant and Lurie, were born in Jewish families, which invites the conclusion that female terrorists of Jewish origin were seen by authors of revolutionary auto/biographies as irrationally attracted to violence. Such representations are not at all part of revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists born to Russian families. These differences in the representation of Russian and Jewish terrorist women can be explained by the different position of Jews in Russian society at that time. According to historians, ethnic humiliation was a powerful experience for many Jews and led to their radicalization. According to Mogilner, concern for the Jewish people in the Russian Empire was typically used in portrayals of Jewish revolutionary heroines created in literary works of the revolutionary underground. Although revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists from Jewish families never represent these women as victims of anti-Semitism or as particularly concerned with the Jewish question, authors of these works clearly show their awareness of the ethnicity of the women they write about by mentioning it directly. This awareness proves that the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of Jewish female terrorists must also have been aware of the difference in their situation from that of Russian women and their wish to change the situation of their people. Thus, without voicing these issues in their accounts, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists represent them as irrationally attracted to violence and different in their attitude from Russian women.

Such representations also remind one of the demonizing representations of female terrorists of Jewish background in the works of conservative authors. However, in order not to show female terrorists of Jewish origin as unnaturally violent women, the authors of their revolutionary biographies constructed them as peaceful by nature. In his memoirs, Savinkov writes that both Brilliant and Lurie were unable to kill despite their clearly voiced wish to do so. Savinkov explicitly explains this paradox by a “feminine feature” that both possessed: according to him,

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740 Savinkov 1917, 216.
741 See more about it in Akhiezer 2013, 567-568, 571; Shtakser 2014, 107.
742 Mogilner 1997, 53.
743 Frumkina, for example, voiced that wish in her court speech from June 14, 1904 (reprinted in Frumkina 1904-1905, 14).
745 “женственная черта” (Savinkov 1917, 216).
they wanted to participate in terrorism in order to sacrifice their lives, but not to kill. Even Roizman writes in 1926 of Frumkina’s peaceful character, thus also constructing her in accordance with accepted ideas of proper femininity. All these representations show that female PSR terrorists were feminine women who participated in political violence out of political necessity and not because of some “unnatural” urges.

5.3.2 Ambitions and Opportunities

Members of PSR terrorist units could perform different kinds of revolutionary work: they could be leaders, assassins, and “modest workers” of revolution as well, responsible for routinized everyday activities. In chapter 3, it was noted that Stepanak-Kravchinsky, in *Underground Russia*, showed that women who performed any of these three duties could be seen as revolutionary heroines by their comrades. Heroic representations of women who performed different kinds of revolutionary work can even be found in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. In reality, however, not many of these women were terrorist leaders or assassins. Most female members of PSR terrorist units did routinized everyday work connected to preparing explosives, keeping safe apartments, surveillance, etc., and thus, like Gesya Gelfman, were seen as “modest workers” of the revolution. In this section I show how the work of a few female leaders and numerous “modest workers” of the revolution was represented in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Representations of female assassins are discussed in the next section.

The Leaders

Female leadership in PSR terrorist units was quite unusual. Moreover, in her article about Spiridonova as a female politician in early Soviet Russia, Boniece writes that female leadership in general was seen as a step far from the model of appropriate female revolutionary behaviour and was judged harshly, especially by other women. This must be one reason behind the small number of accounts of the female terrorist leaders. Among female PSR terrorists whose auto/biographies are included in the source material of the dissertation, only three women had the experience of leading a terrorist unit: Esfir Lapina (known to her co-

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746 Savinkov 1917, 39-40.
747 See Roizman 1926, 304.
748 Boniece 2017, 2.
workers as Bela), Serafima Klitchoglu, and Sofia Khrenkova. None of these women left any autobiographical texts. Interestingly, despite their high position in the ranks of PSR terrorists, detailed biographical accounts of their political careers in the PSR were written only after 1917.

Lapina the terrorist leader was first introduced in Savinkov’s memoirs; he mentioned that she helped him organize a terrorist group for executing minor terrorist attacks, the Central Flying Combat Detachment. Thus, Savinkov represents Lapina not as a terrorist leader, but more as his assistant and deputy in the above-mentioned terrorist unit.\(^\text{749}\) Savinkov does not write about Lapina leading the unit; he merely mentions that she was its head and the organizer of the assassination attempt on General Vladimir von Launits, head of St. Petersburg, which, however, was cancelled.\(^\text{750}\) Although Savinkov’s portrayal of Lapina is not directly negative, he does not seem to be keen on elaborating on her as a terrorist leader.

A more detailed and directly negative representation of Lapina as a terrorist leader, very much in keeping with Boniece’s findings, is provided in Popova’s memoirs of 1927. Popova worked as a technician in the Combat Organization of the PSR and provided Lapina’s terrorist unit with explosives. In the course of her work, Popova often met the leader of the Central Flying Combat Detachment. Popova does not write about the positive sides of Lapina’s leadership at all, but instead stresses that Lapina organized all the failed attempts on von Launits and was herself aware that her group’s work was not well organized.\(^\text{751}\) In other words, Popova represents Lapina as a failed terrorist leader. Even in her description of Lapina’s appearance, Popova represents her as very different from the ideal type of female leader, Perovskaya, introduced by Stepanyak-Kravchinsky:

> “Bela” usually booked meetings with me somewhere in a cafe or in the reading room of Cherkesov, which had seen within its walls even terrorists of the People’s Will. The meetings with her were difficult. Nervous, with an unnaturally thin face and feverishly burning eyes, she spoke in a sort of deaf whisper, quickly and excitedly. Her fancy dress

\(^\text{749}\) Historian N. Erofeev, however, writes that Lapina was the organizer of the Central Flying Combat Detachment, without mentioning Savinkov’s role in it (Erofeev 1996b, 301).

\(^\text{750}\) Savinkov 1917, 296-297.

\(^\text{751}\) Popova 1927, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 5 (34), 57.
did not fit her well and attracted attention, and the surrounding people unwittingly began to look back at us.”

Popova’s description of Lapina as nervous and unnecessarily fancily dressed is a direct contrast to how Stepnyak-Kravchinsky represented Perovskaya: calm, calculating, and modestly and precisely dressed. Thus, Popova clearly demonstrates that Lapina was not worthy of the responsible role she played in the revolutionary underground. Her fancy dress could be interpreted by contemporaries as the opposite of the revolutionary ascetic ideal, and her nervous behaviour could be interpreted as a negative expression of extreme female emotionality. In other words, Popova’s portrayal of Lapina shows the female terrorist leader as the opposite of revolutionary and female ideals. Popova even contrasts Lapina to Rosa Rabinovich, another member of Bela’s terrorist group, who also sometimes came to meetings: “Rosa Rabinovich was like a total contrast to her, - it was easier with her, without tension. Modestly dressed, calm, she behaved extremely tactfully and did not stand out from the surrounding crowd.” This description of Rabinovich more closely resembles how Stepnyak-Kravchinsky portrayed Perovskaya in _Underground Russia_. Thus, Popova shows that Rabinovich was worthier than Lapina to be the group’s leader.

Klitchoglu was the female leader of a terrorist group that operated in St. Petersburg at the same time as Savinkov’s Combat Organization. Authors of biographical accounts of her do not often mention this. Historian M.I. Leonov claims that Savinkov did not mention this terrorist group and its leader in his memoirs because of his wish to represent himself as the leader of the only heroic terrorist unit operating in Russia at that time. The first biographical account of Klitchoglu was written by G.S. in 1928, in which her organizational skills are mentioned in the context of her “peaceful” activism. Klitchoglu’s leadership in the field

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752 “Свидание «Бэла» назначала мне обычно где-нибудь в кафе или в читальне Черкесова, видавшей в своих стенах ещё террористов-народовольцев. Свидания с ней были тяжелы. Нервная, с неестественно худым лицом, лихорадочно горящими глазами, она говорила каким-то глухим шёпотом, быстро и возбуждённо. Нарядный костюм мало подходил к ней, бросался в глаза, и окружающая публика невольно начинала оглядываться на нас.” (Popova 1927, in _Katorga i ssylka_, No. 5 (34), 56).

753 “Как бы полным контрастом ей являлась Роза Рабинович, - с ней чувствовалось проще, без напряжённости. Скромно одетая, спокойная, она держалась с большим тактом и ничем не выделялась из окружающей толпы.” (Popova 1927, in _Katorga i ssylka_, No. 5 (34), 56).

754 Leonov 2008, 4.
of political terrorism is not mentioned at all. According to G.S., Klitchoglu only “participated in organizing Pleve’s assassination.”

It was only in 1930 that M. Chernavsky admitted in his memoirs that Klitchoglu had been a leader of a PSR terrorist unit. As did G.S., Chernavsky elaborates on Klitchoglu’s “peaceful” organizational work, but also notes her contribution to the party’s terrorist activities:

Not satisfied with this complex, responsible work, S.G. is in late December and early January also engaged in a terrorist enterprise. On the party’s agenda at that time was the removal of Pleve. S.G. actively conducts preparatory work. Her attention is focused on off-duty trips by the minister. She manages to establish a connection with a flower shop where Pleve had bought bouquets. How solid this connection was, I do not know. I did not participate closely in the affairs of S.G.

Chernavsky shows here that Klitchoglu organized and coordinated preparations for the assassination attempt on Pleve, and thus represents her as a terrorist leader. At the same time, Chernavsky distances himself from Klitchoglu and expresses doubts about the quality of her leadership when he writes that he did not know whether the connection with the flower shop that she established was solid. In other words, although Chernavsky’s representation of Klitchoglu as a terrorist leader is generally positive, even here, female leadership in the field of political terrorism is questioned by the author.

Leadership of a terrorist unit is not at all central to revolutionary auto/biographies of Khrenkova. Ivanov, the author of the only more

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755 “принимала участие в организации убийства Плеве” (G.S. 1928, 157).
756 “Serafima Georgievna,” Klitchoglu’s first name and patronymic.
757 “Не довольствуясь этой сложной ответственной работой, С.Г. в конце декабря и начале января увлечена еще террористическим предприятием. В порядке дня партии в это время стояло устранение Плеве. С.Г. деятельно ведёт подготовительную работу. Её внимание сосредоточено на внеслужебных поездах министра. Ей удаётся установить связь с цветочным магазином, где Плеве брал букеты. Насколько солидна была эта связь, я не знаю. Близкого участия в делах С.Г. я не принимал” (Chernavsky M. (1930), "V Boevoi organizatsii," in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7 (68), 8).
758 Even historians who wrote about Khrenkova do not write that she was a leader of a terrorist unit in their works (see for example Marasanova, Albegova & Shamatonova 2013, 62-63, 65).
or less detailed account on her life, mentions very briefly that Khrenkova was wanted by the secret police as the organizer of a PSR combat detachment. However, Ivanov does not mention Khrenkova’s work for that terrorist unit. As did other biographers of Khrenkova, Ivanov briefly touches upon her organizational skills in the field of “peaceful” work, but at the heart of the biographical accounts of Khrenkova is always her self-immolation in prison. In other words, even in the case of Khrenkova, her leadership in the field of political terrorism is silenced and neglected by the biographers.

To sum up, revolutionary biographies of female PSR terrorists do not devote much space to female leadership in party terrorist units. While Lapina’s leadership was neglected by Savinkov and ridiculed by Popova, Klitchoglu’s and Khrenkova’s leadership was recognized by their biographers only in the context of their “peaceful” activism. These women’s leading position in PSR terrorist groups was rarely touched upon. In other words, none of the female terrorist leaders from the PSR were represented similarly to Perovskaya in Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s Underground Russia. This demonstrates that a leadership position was not considered proper revolutionary work for women in the PSR, and as a result, revolutionary biographies tended to avoid mentioning the leadership of these women when it was the case.

The “Modest Workers” of the Revolution

All the women who participated in PSR terrorist organizations performed routinized everyday work on behalf of their units at some stage of their political activism. Authors of revolutionary auto/biographies often mention that period of women’s revolutionary lives as proof of

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759 Ivanov 1924, 239.
761 Such an attitude toward female leadership in the field of political terrorism was not, however, dominant in the revolutionary underground. Natalia Klimova and Nadezhda Terentieva (1881-1964), members of the terrorist group of the maximalists, were directly compared to Perovskaya by their male comrades (see Zhukovsky-Zhuk I. (1929), ‘V zaschitu Mortimera,’ in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1(50), 40). In the case of Klimova, such a comparison was connected to particular similarities between her life and Perovskaya’s: both women were partners of the male leaders of the terrorist units where they worked, and both women took the organization in their hands after their men were arrested (see more about it in Kan 2012, 60).
their devotion to the cause and readiness to work for it.\textsuperscript{762} It often happened that the authors of biographies of female terrorists highlighted that experience and praised the women for their ability to be “modest workers” similar to Gelfman in Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s book.

Sevastianova was most often praised by her biographers as the “modest worker” of the revolution, probably because she had to wait some years before she had an opportunity to commit a terrorist attack. Zilberberg, in both of her biographical accounts of Sevastianova, praised her for the ability to perform everyday work of the terrorist units quietly and almost invisibly, a quality also admired by Savinkov in his portrayal of Ivanovskaya.\textsuperscript{763} According to Jones Hemenway, even Bolshevik women were praised by their biographers for their “nearly invisible” activities, since these activities were seen as proof that the woman in question had managed to embrace the ideal of modesty.\textsuperscript{764} Thus, female terrorists as well as Bolshevik women were praised for revolutionary work that demanded desirable female features of them. Sevastianova’s willingness to do any kind of work for the terrorist organization is praised by Gorinson as follows: “This quality of hers had to be appreciated the most because, thanks to it, Sevastianova, as few others like her, served as the connecting link which soldered the party into one whole, unbreakable chain.”\textsuperscript{765} A similar representation is even found in Ivanovskaya’s reminiscences about Tatyana Leontieva.\textsuperscript{766} In other words, the authors of the above-mentioned accounts draw attention to the importance that the women’s abilities to perform routinized everyday work had for the organization and the party, and thus recognized their “modest” contribution to the cause of revolution as vital.

Both Zilberberg and Gorinson also praise the special talents that Sevastianova developed in the course of her underground work. Zilberberg, in her account of 1919, mentions, for example, that Sevastianova was good in surveillance work, while in his article of 1924, Gorinson praises

\textsuperscript{762} See for example Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 19-20; Khiriakov 1919, 68-69; Popova 1927, in Katorga i sylka, No. 4 (33), 55, 58-59; Ivanovskaya 1929, 65-66; Zvereva 1932, 222.

\textsuperscript{763} See Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1915; Savinkov 1917, 40; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24.

\textsuperscript{764} Jones Hemenway 2006, 84.

\textsuperscript{765} “Это её качество должно было быть более всего ценимо, ибо, благодаря ему, Севастьянова, а равно немногие, ей подобные, служила тем связующим звеном, которое спаивало партию в одну цельную, неразрывную цепь” (Gorinson 1924, 237).

\textsuperscript{766} Ivanovskaya 1929, 120.
Sevastianova for her ability to disguise herself while working undercover, which helped Sevastianova and her comrades not be exposed by the police.\textsuperscript{767} In this way, the authors show that even “modest” work required talents, and they praise Sevastianova’s contribution to the cause of political terrorism even more.

In fact, modesty was not the only way routinized everyday work in PSR terrorist organizations was described by the biographers of female terrorists. It happened that women’s duties were represented in terms of revolutionary courage and self-sacrifice, just like the activities of political terrorists who committed assassinations were normally constructed in revolutionary auto/biographies.

Sevastianova’s everyday work for terrorist organizations was often described by her biographers in heroic terms. For example, Zilberberg characterizes Sevastianova’s undercover work as a servant in a safe house as a “slow feat of everyday.”\textsuperscript{768} Zilberberg, Gorinson and Popova also highlight episodes from Sevastianova’s life as a servant in safe apartments, where she behaved herself courageously during arrests, being ready to shoot the police and liberate her comrades.\textsuperscript{769} Thus, the authors show that although Sevastianova was not yet a political assassin, her everyday work for the sake of the terrorist organization was full of dangers and heroism, as were the activities of her comrades who assassinated government officials.

Representations of routinized everyday work in terms of self-sacrifice most often were connected to health issues that some terrorist women experienced because of the tasks that they performed. Both Zilberberg, in her account of 1919, and Popova in her memoirs elaborate on Sevastianova’s bad health, which, according to Popova, made her undercover work as a servant even harder.\textsuperscript{770} Similarly, in his presentation of Ivanovskaya, Savinkov mentions that she could perform her work for the Combat Organization well “in spite of her old age and her illnesses.”\textsuperscript{771} Such representations appeared not only in biographical accounts, but also in the works authored by female terrorists themselves.

\textsuperscript{767} GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 36; Gorinson 1924, 236-237.
\textsuperscript{768} "медленный подвиг каждого дня" (Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1915).
\textsuperscript{769} GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 20-21; Gorinson 1924, 237; Popova 1927, in Katorga i syylya, No. 4 (33), 58-59.
\textsuperscript{770} GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 3, 15; Popova 1927, in Katorga i syylya, No. 4 (33), 59.
\textsuperscript{771} “несмотря на старость своих лет и на свои болезни” (Savinkov 1917, 40).
For example, Popova, who did not feel well around explosives, often describes in her memoirs how she performed her duties despite being nauseous and weak.\(^{772}\) Likewise, in her memoirs, Ivanovskaya mentions that surveillance work that she conducted on behalf of the Combat Organization was too difficult for her, and that by the end of the day she had pain in her legs.\(^{773}\) In all the above-mentioned cases, female terrorists are represented as extremely devoted to the organizations they worked for and to the cause of revolution. At the same time, these representations are reminiscent of the ascetic revolutionary ideal, where the highest grade of asceticism was the ability to overcome the limits of one’s own body and be able to work for the cause of revolution.\(^{774}\)

Especially powerful representations of courage and self-sacrifice not connected to direct participation in political assassinations can be found in accounts of the injuries that Maria Benevskaya suffered after a bomb accidentally exploded in her hands. Savinkov, Popova and Zenzinov give detailed accounts of Benevskaya’s injuries from the explosion, and they stress that she was covered with blood after the accident. At the same time, the authors show that Benevskaya behaved courageously in that situation, since she managed to clean the room on her own and to get rid of the bombs before she took herself to hospital.\(^{775}\) Thus, Benevskaya’s biographers demonstrate that she sacrificed herself for the cause of revolution and managed to show heroism in that situation, although she had never committed a political assassination.

Although revolutionary auto/biographies glorified routinized everyday work that female terrorists performed for their organization, historians have noted that educated women were often dissatisfied with the work that they were offered in the revolutionary underground.\(^{776}\) Even the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists include opinions of women who openly expressed their dissatisfaction with routinized work. Frumkina, Brilliant and Lurie, according to accounts of their lives, offered their services as political assassins to the leaders of terrorist organizations on numerous occasions and openly complained

\(^{772}\) Popova 1927, in *Katorda i ssylka*, No. 4 (33), 62; No. 5 (34), 61-62.

\(^{773}\) Ivanovskaya 1929, 60.

\(^{774}\) See more about it in Kolonitsky 2017, 199.

\(^{775}\) Savinkov 1917, 220-224; Popova 1927, in *Katorda i ssylka*, No. 4 (33), 64-65; Zenzinov 1953, 314.

\(^{776}\) See more about it in Shtakser 2014, 122.
about the inability to participate in a terrorist attack directly. Even Sevastianova, who was represented as an example of patience by her biographers, waited for her turn to commit a political assassination. Thus, revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, show that many of these women did not settle for being “modest workers” of the revolution, but wanted to change their position in the terrorist units and commit assassinations. The authors of the auto/biographies show that women coped with this situation differently.

Sevastianova dealt with her inability to participate in terrorism directly, according to Zilberberg, by quietly waiting for her turn to commit a political assassination and conducted the work assigned to her in the meantime without complaints. In Zilberberg’s words:

In front of Sasha, people passed before the attack, before death and murder. She did not demand her turn. Silently she waited, as for supreme happiness, as for redemption. She had strength, like few others, to take on and carry without bending the long and difficult feat of every day. And, perhaps, conscious of this strength, Sasha dutifully carried her burden of patience and waiting. Always, in all the moments of her life, she was ready to meet face to face with the enemy; she lived with the thought of his death and relentless preparations for that death. Like every terrorist, she wanted to strike with her hand, but she did not think about herself, about her satisfaction or severity: she thought only of the success of the cause.

777 Frumkina’s testimony from May 27, 1903, reprinted in Frumkina 1904-1905, 7; ‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 19-20; S.R. (1909), ‘Moi otnosheniya k Azefu,’ in Byloe, No. 9-10, 189-190; Savinkov 1917, 39, 48, 216; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24; Popova 1927, in Katorga i sylka, No. 4 (33), 61; Ivanovskaya 1929, 64, 82.

778 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24; Gorinson 1924, 237.

779 “Перед Сашей проходили люди накануне выступления, накануне смерти, и убийства. Она не требовала своей очереди. Молча, ждала, как высшего счастья, как искупления. У неё были силы, как у немногих, взять на себя и нести не стибаясь долгий и тяжкий подвиг каждого дня. И, может быть, сознавая в себе эту силу, Саша так покорно несла своё бремя терпения и ожидания. Всегда, во все минуты своей жизни, она готова была встретиться лицом к лицу с врагом; она жила мыслью о его смерти и неустанным подготовлением этой смерти. Как каждому террористу ей хотелось своей рукой нанести удар, но она не считалась с собою, с своим удовлетворением или тяжестью: думала лишь об успехе дела.” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 24).
Thus, Zilberberg represents Sevastianova’s patience as a sign of her inner strength, an essential quality of the revolutionary hero. Even Ivanovskaya, in her portrayal of Tatyana Leontieva, connects her patience and ability to wait to Leontieva’s inner strength. Ivanovskaya quotes “Pavel,”780 who claimed that “even men of calm temperament” did not possess such qualities.781 In other words, both women are represented as people who possessed the essential features of a male revolutionary hero while performing the female role of “modest worker” of the revolution. Moreover, in the above quote, Zilberberg connects Sevastianova’s patience to her ability to understand the actual needs of the organization that she could value above her own wishes. This feature was already considered essential for a revolutionary hero in Nechaev’s Catechism. As a result, female patience was represented in revolutionary biographies as a feature that could make a woman into the embodiment of the male heroic ideal.

At the same time, autobiographies of female terrorists who were not satisfied with the supporting roles that they had to play in terrorist organizations, do not include representations of the women as patiently waiting for an opportunity to commit a political assassination. However, knowing that patience was considered to be a desirable female feature in the revolutionary underground, the women tried to find different explanations for their unwillingness to wait that corresponded to the existing revolutionary ideal. For example, Frumkina explains her wish to participate in political violence in her testimony of May 27, 1903 by her wish not to be idle:

I attach great importance to the acts of terrorism and have long yearned to execute one of the tsar’s slaughterers, but until my recent arrest, for various reasons, I did not manage to apply my beliefs in practice. During the search, knowing that I would have to stay in jail for a long time with nothing to do, I decided to take advantage of my arrest and execute General Novitsky during interrogation.782

780 “Pavel” was a nickname of Maximilian Shveitzer (1881-1905), a member of Savinkov’s Combat Organization who became a leader of his own terrorist unit in 1904. 781 “даже мужчины спокойного темперамента” (Ivanovskaya 1929, 120). 782 “Я придаю террористическим актам большое значение и давно рвалась казнить одного из царских палачей, но до последнего ареста я, по разным причинам, не успела применить к делу своих убеждений. Во время обыска я, зная, что мне придётся пробыть в тюрьме довольно долго без всякого дела,
Thus, Frumkina represents her wish to commit a political assassination here as a way to be useful to the cause of revolution and avoid the unnecessary idleness that imprisonment implied. Similarly, even Lurie’s and Brilliant’s biographers explain their complaints about their inability to participate in terrorist attacks directly by the women’s unwillingness to be idle. Idleness, according to these women’s biographies, was routinized everyday revolutionary work that did not require much effort from female terrorists.783 In all these cases, although the women’s behaviour did not correspond to the ideal of “modest worker” of the revolution, they are represented as hard-working individuals who always wanted to be useful to the cause. Such a desire was seen as a positive feature of a revolutionary hero and was much praised in revolutionary auto/biographies.

The auto/biographies of female terrorists who were not satisfied with performing everyday revolutionary work often explained their attitude by the women’s inability to perform other kinds of revolutionary work than terrorism. For example, Frumkina, in her letter to Burtsev and in her last autobiography, as well as Ivanovskaya in her reminiscences about Brilliant, write that both women actively participated in “peaceful” PSR activities, but such work did not satisfy them.784 Thus, the auto/biographies made it clear that the women performed all revolutionary duties they were assigned, which implies that they behaved in accordance with the existing ideal of modesty. Frumkina’s and Brilliant’s complaints in this context were represented as their wish to be more useful to the party by performing revolutionary work that really interested them.

Female PSR terrorists, both those represented as patiently performing their everyday revolutionary work without complaining about it and those represented as openly dissatisfied with their situation, were of different ethnic backgrounds. Both Sevastianova and Leontieva, who were praised for their patience, were ethnically Russian, while Frumkina, Brilliant and Lurie, who were represented as voicing their dissatisfaction, were Jewish. Thus, even in this case, revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists represented attitudes toward political violence of Russian and Jewish female terrorists differently.

783 Popova 1927, in Katortsa i ssylka, No. 4 (33), 61; Ivanovskaya 1929, 121.
784 'Pisma F. Frumkinoi' 1908, 20; Frumkina 1907, 92-93; Ivanovskaya 1929, 63.
Frumkina was the only female member of a terrorist unit who did not just complain about her options in the organization, but who actually tried to commit assassinations on her own, without approval from the PSR. Such an act did not fit the ideal of modesty discussed above, so it is interesting to see how Frumkina’s actions were explained in her auto/biographies. In her testimony of May 27, 1903, the text of which was propagated by the party in brochures, Frumkina introduced herself as a member of the PSR who, in accordance with the principles of the party, believed that political terrorism was the only means of punishing the most hated representatives of the regime, which would lead to the downfall of the autocracy. In this way, she constructed her actions in accordance with PSR tactics, and thus represented herself as a revolutionary heroine of the party although she acted on her own. Frumkina’s initiative was praised even by the PSR, which characterized her as a “daring skirmisher” in the brochure about Frumkina’s assassination attempt on Novitsky. This reaction is not surprising, since the PSR eagerly took credit for political assassinations committed on its behalf when these assassinations could contribute to the image of the party as the champion of the oppressed. Other revolutionary groups praised Frumkina as well: the journal Narodovolets, published by Russian socialists in London, wrote that Frumkina understood political questions better than the PSR Kiev committee, which could not stop the anti-revolutionary activities of her target, Novitsky, by “peaceful” means. By praising Frumkina’s individual initiative, the authors of these accounts showed that a revolutionary heroine did not have to be modest and patient when she felt that she could contribute to the revolutionary fight.

Having attempted another assassination in 1907 that was not organized by the PSR, Frumkina, in her court speech of June 16, compared her actions to Vera Zasulich’s assassination attempt on Fyodor Trepov, who, like Frumkina’s target Bagretsov, was cruel to a political prisoner. By this comparison Frumkina constructed herself as the “angel

785 Frumkina’s testimony, reprinted in Frumkina 1904-1905, 7.
786 “отважный застрельщик” (Frumkina 1904-1905, 16).
787 For example, Petr Karpovich (1874-1917), who assassinated Minister N.P. Bogolepov on February 14, 1901, was not formally a member of the PSR, but was praised as a hero of the party (see more about it in Budnitsky 1996b, 5).
788 ‘Дело Ф. Фрумкиной,’ in Narodovolets, 1903, No. 4. Even Anastasia Bitsenko, in her work of 1923, praises Frumkina’s actions and directly criticises the lack of initiative by PSR leadership (Bitsenko 1923, 207).
789 Frumkina’s court speech from June 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 26.
of vengeance” from Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s book, who did not have a political party behind her and acted in accordance with her conscience. Even Roizman, the author of Frumkina’s biography of 1926, describes her attempt on the head of the Moscow transit prison Metsner790 similarly to Stepnyak-Kravchinsky and other revolutionary authors who wrote about the assassination by Zasulich, although Frumkina’s own version of the events was quite different. Frumkina told the story of that assassination attempt in her letter to Burtsev, where she explained that she wanted to kill Metsner because of his unpleasant way of addressing her, which offended Frumkina’s human and revolutionary honour.791 According to Roizman, however, Metsner was cruel toward an imprisoned student, and Frumkina’s assassination attempt was an act of revenge for that.792 Although Roizman does not compare her to Zasulich explicitly, she describes the reasons behind Frumkina’s attack as identical to the reasons behind the attack by Zasulich. By changing the story of Frumkina’s attempt on Metsner, Roizman avoided representing her as driven by personal reasons. Moreover, trying to make Frumkina’s attempt fit the story of the famous assassination attempt by Zasulich, Roizman shows her eagerness to praise Frumkina’s initiative and represent her in accordance with the existing revolutionary tradition as the “angel of vengeance” in order to explain her lack of modesty.

However, not all Frumkina’s biographers shared this opinion of a revolutionary heroine’s right to act on her own, like Zasulich. In her book on Frumkina, Figner focuses not on the assassination attempts that she committed, but instead highlights Frumkina’s talent as a public speaker, claiming that her greatest contribution to the cause of revolution was not participation in political terrorism, but the propaganda speeches that Frumkina made in court.793 A similar opinion is also present in Pribylev’s work: he characterized Frumkina’s attack on Novitsky as “cock-amamie,” but praises her for the speeches that she made in court.794 Thus, the authors show that they did not consider Frumkina to be an “angel of vengeance” like Zasulich, but preferred to represent her as an agitator instead.

790 Roizman mistakenly calls him Metus in her article. Frumkina’s letter to Burtsev, however, shows that the assassination attempt was directed at Metsner (see ‘Pisma F. Frumkinoi’ 1908, 20-21).
792 Roizman 1926, 302-303.
793 Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 10.
794 “вздорный” (Pribylev, 15).
Examples of other PSR female terrorists who committed political assassinations without formal party permission show that an “angel of vengeance” similar to Zasulich was not a desirable female role in the revolutionary underground at the beginning of the 20th century. None of Ezerskaya’s biographers, other than Orestova mentions that the assassination of Klingenberg was committed without permission of PSR leadership. Thus, most of her biographers preferred to represent Ezerskaya as acting on orders of the party to avoid showing her as impatient. Even biographers of Leontieva, who had left the terrorist ranks of the PSR because of her inability to participate in party activities and who committed an ambiguous terrorist attack in Switzerland, stress that the assassination committed by her was not her own enterprise, but was organized by the maximalists, the political group that Leontieva had joined. In this way Savinkov and Ivanovskaya represented Leontieva as obediently following the instructions of her new party when committing political violence. Her actions were represented, not as a result of impatience and lack of modesty, but as her wish to work for the cause of revolution.

All these examples demonstrate that, according to most authors of revolutionary biographies, the revolutionary heroine was not expected to commit political assassinations on her own, but to behave in accordance with the ideal of modesty and wait for orders from the party. Frumkina’s case was represented differently by some authors mostly because Frumkina herself, as well as authors who wrote about her immediately after her first attack, praised Frumkina’s initiative and represented it in the framework of the PSR program. Otherwise, a revolutionary heroine of the PSR was not expected to follow Zasulich’s example and act on her own.

The negative attitude to female terrorists’ initiative in committing political assassinations can be explained by the attitude that some leaders of PSR terrorist units had toward women’s direct participation in political violence. Savinkov, for example, according to his own memoirs

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795 Orestova 1932, 227.
796 According to Savinkov, Leontieva, who developed mental illness while in prison, misinterpreted his letter, in which he advised her to rest after being released. Leontieva understood it as a rejection of her services and joined the maximalist group (Savinkov 1917, 141).
797 Savinkov 1917, 141-142; Ivanovskaya 1929, 180.
and Ivanovskaya’s reminiscences did not want to send women to commit political assassinations as long as he had men able to do it.  

While the attitude of leaders of terrorist units that prevented female PSR terrorists from performing revolutionary work that interested them was not criticised in revolutionary auto/biographies, similar influences of other men were not represented as acceptable there. For example, according to Savinkov, Aron Shpaizman, Shkolnik’s long-time co-worker in different revolutionary underground organizations and, according to some scholars, even her fiancé, prevented Shkolnik from doing surveillance work during their preparations for the assassination of Kleigels in Kiev, and in general was against her direct participation in terrorist attacks. Savinkov explains Shkolnik’s later participation in the assassination attempt on Chernigov Governor Khvostov by Shpaizman’s change of mind. Likewise, Alexandra Fridberg writes that Rogozinnikova’s fiancé Matvey Mizerov, who supported her participation in revolutionary activities, was against her decision to join the Northern Flying Combat Detachment. Thus, instead of writing about the paternalistic attitude of terrorist leaders toward women and their activities in the revolutionary underground, the authors of revolutionary biographies preferred to represent the women’s private lives as a hindrance to their political activism. This corresponds to the findings of previous research and the tendency noted in Chapter 4 that the private lives of female PSR terrorists appeared in their revolutionary biographies to be only a hindrance.

Autobiographical accounts by terrorist women, however, do not show their private lives as hindering their activism in political terrorism. In her memoirs, Shkolnik does not mention Shpaizman’s influence on any of her decisions and activities in the Combat Organization, and explains the aborting of Kleigels’ assassination by changes in the target’s behaviour. Moreover, Shkolnik introduces Shpaizman as merely a friend, and thus excludes her private life from her revolutionary autobiography.

798 Savinkov 1917, 48-49. According to Ivanovskaya, Savinkov explained in a conversation with Shveitser his reluctance to send women to commit terrorist attacks by the fact that his mother would never forgive him for letting women do male obligations (Ivanovskaya 1929, 82).
799 See for example Boniece 2010b, 182-183; Kan 2012, 337. In her memoirs Shkolnik, however, introduces Shpaizman simply as her co-worker and friend.
800 Savinkov 1917, 148-149.
801 Savinkov 1917, 151.
802 Fridberg 1929, 170.
803 Sukloff 1915, 128-129.
which corresponds to the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life.804 This demonstrates that while writing about herself, Shkolnik created a more empowering image than did Savinkov and did not represent her private life as in any way influencing her political decisions.

5.3.3 Assassinations

Assassinations committed or attempted by female PSR terrorists who had an opportunity to participate directly in political violence are represented by authors of revolutionary auto/biographies as the highlight of their revolutionary careers. They represent these assassinations in accordance with the vision of PSR leadership, as the killing of the most despised representatives of the regime, righteous heroic deeds that led to self-sacrifice of the terrorists who performed them.

To make political assassinations look heroic and to construct the assassins as revolutionary heroes and heroines, their auto/biographies tried to dehumanize the targets and construct them as anti-heroes, as the embodiment of the ruthless authoritarian regime.805 For this reason, the authors of these works paid particular attention to “crimes” committed by the government officials whom female terrorists attacked and in this way represented terrorist targets as responsible for their own assassinations.806 In this context, female PSR terrorists who committed assassinations were constructed as noble avengers who terminated oppressors of the common people, and not as common criminals.

804 This tendency is mentioned in Liljeström 2000, 94; Liljeström 2004, 59.
806 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 20; Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 13-16; Konoplyannikova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 20-21; Frumkina’s testimony in 1903, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 84; Frumkina’s court speech June 14, 1904, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 86-88;
Revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists made clear that female assassins were familiar with the “crimes” committed by their future targets, and thus made politically conscious decisions to assassinate the government officials whom they considered to be responsible for the suffering of the common people. The revolutionary auto/biographies of Ekaterina Izmailovich and Maria Shkolnik stress that both women read extensively about the brutalities committed on the orders of their future targets before they attempted to assassinate them.807 Spiridonova mentioned in her court speech that she met people who were abused in the course of raids ordered by her future target Luzhenovsky, information enthusiastically repeated by her later biographers.808

According to the revolutionary auto/biographies of Zinaida Konoplyannikova and Lidiya Rudneva, in addition to obtaining information about their future targets’ “crimes,” both women wanted to see Min and Efimov respectively before deciding to assassinate them. In both cases, the appearance of the future target was represented as a decisive factor for the female terrorists’ conviction of the need to assassinate them. According to Konoplyannikova’s biographers, in her eyes Min looked like a “merciless terminator,”809 which implies that during the personal encounter, Konoplyannikova could see the evil nature of her future target. Rudneva, in her diary, describes her future target Efimov during their encounter on the street as inhuman:

He had such a face that was impossible to doubt - it was bureaucratically bloated, rigid. Lobster-like bulging, dull eyes, and he somehow looked around with them - suddenly everything became so vividly and painfully clear how everything happened there... 810

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807 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l.4-4ob.; Sukloff 1915, 140.
808 Spiridonova’s court speech, reprinted in ‘Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 16; Vserossiisky Soyuz ravnopraviya zhenschin (1906), ‘Predisloviye,’ in Vladimirov 1906a, 11; Prelooker 1908, 298-299; Steinberg 1935, 17.
Rudneva’s last remark refers to the events in Vologda prison, where an uprising was brutally suppressed on Efimov’s order. By representing her target as inhuman, Rudneva explains why Efimov could give his inhuman orders and why it was right to assassinate him. In other words, both Konoplyannikova and Rudneva were represented as people who were not able to kill government officials only because of their reputation in the revolutionary underground, but wanted to form their own opinion of their future targets. Because of their wish to see their targets before assassinating them, both Konoplyannikova and Rudneva are constructed as people who did not see taking other people’s lives as an easy task and were cautious while making their decisions. Such representations imply that they were not deviant women who participated in political violence because of their “unnatural” inclinations, the way conservatives represented them, but decent individuals who turned to violence against their nature and out of necessity.

The revolutionary auto/biographies often note how female PSR terrorists behaved while committing political assassinations. Frumkina, Spiridonova, Konoplyannikova and Rogozinnikova were represented there as calm before and in the course of committing the assassinations. Sarychev, in his account of Spiridonova, even describes her actions during the assassination as executed with “dead earnest.” On the one hand, such descriptions show that the female terrorists were sure of their deeds and did not show any emotion because they had no doubts. On the other hand, their emotionless behaviour in the course of political assassinations shows that the women did not behave in a typically feminine fashion, where, according to existing stereotypes of women and femininity, emotional reactions prevailed. It shows that the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies wanted to portray female PSR terrorists as acting like revolutionary fighters, supposedly “typical” male behaviour that was difficult to feminize. It is especially interesting that calmness at the moment of assassination was mostly highlighted in the cases of women whose mental stability was questioned by their opponents: among the above-mentioned women, only Konoplyannikova’s mental stability was never questioned. Thus, biographers showed that the

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811 Frumkina 1904-1905, 6; Spiridonova 1906, 10; Frumkina’s letter to military court from May 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 36; Khiriakov 1919, 74; Fridberg 1929, 171, 172-173; TsGA Spb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 3.
812 “твёрдая решимость” (Sarychev 1917, 18).
women in question committed political assassinations not because of their mental problems, since they were able to control their emotions in the most critical moments, but because of their political convictions.

Despite the central place of assassinations committed by female PSR terrorists in their revolutionary careers, the moment of assassination, successful or not, is as a rule described in revolutionary biographies very briefly, which is reminiscent of Passerini’s conclusions in her research on Italian female left-wing terrorists. 814 Most often, the authors of these works merely mention that the woman in question committed or attempted to commit a political assassination of a particular government official without going into details. 815 In some cases, the authors of revolutionary biographies of female PSR terrorists do not mention the act of assassination at all. For example, Vladimir Vnorovsky, who accompanied Ekaterina Izmailovich to the spot of her assassination attempt, does not discuss the attempt at all, but elaborates instead on Izmailovich’s personality and events of her life before she left to kill Chukhnin. 816 This manner of discussing assassinations committed by female PSR terrorists demonstrates that the authors of their revolutionary biographies were quite reluctant to elaborate on these women as agents of political violence, since a woman who had committed an assassination could be hardly seen as “good” woman by her contemporaries. 817

Similar short accounts of assassinations or assassination attempts can also be found in some autobiographical texts authored by female PSR terrorists. For example, in her letter to Burtsev, rather than discussing her attempt on Novitsky, Frumkina recommends that her correspondent read a newspaper article about it. 818 Most autobiographical texts by female terrorists, however, often include more detailed accounts of their actions in the course of assassinations. The most famous account of this kind is Spiridonova’s letter from the Tambov prison, where she gives detailed information on how she shot Luzhenovsky, how many times

814 Passerini 1992, 197.
815 See for example Prelooker 1908, 285; Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1915; X 1915; ‘Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917, 8; Savinkov 1917, 141, 151, 330; ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 19; Pribylov 1919, 15, 17; Gorinson 1924, 237; Roizman 1926, 302-303; Popova 1927, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 6 (35), 61; Ivanovskaya 1929, 150, 180; Orestova 1932, 227; Figner 1933, 209-210.
816 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369.
817 Anke Hilbrenner makes similar conclusions in her article about representations of Sofia Perovskaya (see Hilbrenner 2016).
she shot at him and what injuries her target received. Spiridonova’s later biographers eagerly included that account in their own works. In all these cases, however, such detailed, but emotionless accounts of Spiridonova’s actions in the course of the assassination were followed by even more detailed and highly emotional accounts of brutal mistreatment that Spiridonova was subjected to after she was arrested at the railway station and interrogated. Thus, the violence committed by Spiridonova in the course of the assassination was represented in her auto/biographies as less significant than the violence of government agents directed at her.

Violence is even represented similarly in the auto/biographies of Frumkina, Konoplyannikova, Fedorova, Sevastianova, Shkolnik, and Ekaterina Izmailovich. The authors of these works give detailed and emotionless accounts of how the women attempted to assassinate their targets, but elaborate at length on the injuries that the female terrorists themselves received in the course of the attack. Such representations are especially characteristic for the revolutionary auto/biographies of women who did not succeed in assassinating their targets; the authors of such works normally contrast the misery of the female terrorists with the future successes of their targets. Characteristic in this respect is how Yadov describes Frumkina’s attempt on Bagretsov in 1907: “Comrade Frumkina called on Bagretsov for some reason and there, in his office, surrounded by enemies, she shot at him and wounded his hand. She was hanged, but he … received a promotion and was transferred to Vladimir ...”

Spiridonova’s account about the assassination of Luzhenovsky, where she insisted on being calm and described the course of events in an unruffled manner, inspired some of her biographers to introduce her as an executioner. The author of the foreword to Vladimirov’s book, instead of describing in detail the assassination committed by Spiridonova as

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819 See Spiridonova 1906, 10.
820 Vladimir 1906b, 48; M-in 1906, 11; Prelooker 1908, 294; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 3; Steinberg 1935, 17-18.
821 Spiridonova 1906, 10-13; Vladimir 1906b, 49-51, 53-55; M-in 1906, 5-6; Prelooker 1908, 294; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 3; Steinberg 1935, 18-20.
822 Frumkina 1904-1905, 6; Yakovlev 1910; Sukloff 1915, 146; Khiriakov 1919, 73-74; Yadov 1923, 163; Ivanovskaya 1925, 113-114; Nikonov 1928, 81; Figner 1933, 209-210; Klebanova 1973, 417.
823 “Тов. Фрумкина вызывалась зачем-то к Багрецову и там, в конторе, окруженная врагами, она стреляла в него и ранила руку. Она была повешена, а он … получил повышение и был переведён во Владимир…” (Yadov 1923, 163).
other biographers did, writes briefly that she “executed Luzhenovsky” and elaborates instead on her suffering after she was arrested. 824 Sarychev as well writes that by assassinating Luzhenovsky, Spiridonova “executed a sentence.” In his account, he creates a feminizing representation of Spiridonova as an executioner: “her maiden hand did not flinch, directing the revolver at the chest of the tyrant of the people.” 825 Sarychev does not provide more details about the assassination committed by Spiridonova. In both cases, by representing Spiridonova as an “executioner” of the sentence against the tyrant, the authors legitimize her violence in the eyes of society as a rightful action. Legitimization of violence by female political terrorists in biographies written by their sympathizers as a means of dealing with female violence has been identified even by researchers on more recent terrorists. 826 The feminizing representation constructed by Sarychev even reveals his attempts to represent Spiridonova as a “natural” woman despite her unfeminine activities. The above-mentioned attempts of Spiridonova’s biographers to represent her as merely an executioner and not elaborate on the violence she committed show that they were not comfortable with describing the revolutionary heroine as an agent of political violence.

The most unusual representation of political assassination is constructed in Rudneva’s diary. Unlike Spiridonova and some other women, she does not elaborate on being calm and certain; on the contrary, she describes her doubts and gives an emotional account of the assassination attempt:

Went in, looked into his face and again it became clear. Stood close, fired almost at point-blank range. He flinched and at once half sank half pressed himself together, covering his head with his hands. Fired another shot, but did not hear it and forgot it, because at that moment saw on his head (as it seemed to me) an open wound and a thick dark lump emerging from it. I remembered throughout that people were sitting in front of me, but for some reason thought that more was needed - made two more shots; saw that there was nothing more on his head (and I was waiting, had to [shoot

824 Vserossiisky Soyuz ravnopraviya zhenschin (1906), 'Predislovie,’ in Vladimirov 1906a, 11-12.
825 “её девичья рука не дрогнула, направляя револьвер в грудь народного тирана” (Sarychev 1917, 18).
826 See for example Colvin 2009, 253-257.
— N.P.] in the head, I thought he was in armour), but did not realize that I had merely missed.827

Rudneva’s account is quite different from Spiridonova’s, since she shows quite clearly that although she was sure that her target deserved death, she was not at all calm in the course of the attempt. The reactions of her targets are also described as the reactions of ordinary human beings under fire and not as the reactions of a monster or coward. In her description of the moment of the assassination, Rudneva did not attempt to objectify her target. She distances herself from the assassination by avoiding personal pronouns in the description of her actions. A more personal and human character of that account must be derived from the very personal nature of the source – a diary that was not meant to be published.

Female terrorists’ readiness to sacrifice themselves in the course of assassination was highlighted in many revolutionary auto/biographies, most likely because, according to Morrissey, the terrorists’ willingness to die in the course of assassination symbolized their moral purity.828 Biographers of Konoplyannikova, Fedorova, Sevastianova and Rogozinnikova mention that the women were equipped with bombs when they went to commit assassinations. Although only Fedorova and Sevastianova used the bombs and were badly injured because of it, even the revolutionary biographies of Sevastianova and Rogozinnikova noted the women’s equipment and the possible consequences to them of an explosion.829 Female terrorists’ determination not to save themselves is discussed separately in revolutionary auto/biographies. According to Konoplyannikova’s biographers, she was advised to throw herself on the ground after the explosion in order to survive, advice that she indignantly rejected.830 Even Konoplyannikova’s decision to use a

827 “Зашла, заглянула в лицо и опять стало ясно. Стояла близко, стреляла почти в упор. Он вздрогнул и сразу не то осел, не то прижался, закрывая голову руками. Сделал ещё выстрел, но его сама не слышала и забыла, потому что в это мгновение увидела на голове (так мне показалось) незакрывающуюся рану и выползший из неё густой темный комок. Помнила я всё время, что сидят впереди люди, но почему-то считала, что нужно ещё – сделала ещё 2 выстрела; видела, что на голове больше ничего не появляется (а я ждала, надо было в голову, я думала – он в панцире), но не сообразила, что это я не попадаю просто” (E.N. 1927, 140).

828 Morrissey 2012, 611.

829 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 20-21; Yakovlev 1910; Khiriakov 1919, 72; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40; Fridberg 1929, 154, 174.

830 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 20-21; Khiriakov 1919, 72.
revolver instead of a bomb to kill Min is interpreted by her biographers as an act of self-sacrifice. According to them, after throwing a bomb she could easily have escaped if she wanted, whereas shooting with a revolver did not give her such an opportunity. Although Spiridonova was not equipped with a bomb when she went to assassinate Lu-zhenovsky, in her letter she mentions her attempt to commit suicide immediately after shooting her target. Spiridonova also writes of her later request to a Cossack who began to beat her at the scene to shoot her to death, a narrative even found in later biographies.

The moral purity of female terrorists with respect to their successful or attempted assassinations was also constructed through other narratives than those of their readiness to sacrifice themselves. One of these narratives was a terrorist’s refusal to take innocent lives in the course of assassination. According to Morrissey, this narrative originated in the accounts of the assassination of Grand Prince Sergei, committed by Ivan Kaliaev, who on one occasion chose not to throw a bomb at his target’s carriage because of the presence of the Grand Prince’s wife and two children. Similar narratives are often present even in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. For example, Konoplyannikova’s biographers make a point of noting that, like Kaliaev, she aborted her mission because of the presence of children at the planned assassination site. In addition, Konoplyannikova’s biographers also stress that when she managed to commit the assassination on another occasion, she chose to shoot at Min and not to throw a bomb in order not to kill the target’s wife and daughter, who were accompanying him at that moment. Shkolnik, in her memoirs, writes explicitly that her target Kleigels, as well as Kaliaev’s target Grand Prince Sergei, always travelled with their wives and children, and that her mission was aborted since it was not terrorist policy to shed “innocent blood.” Thus, a narrative that originated in revolutionary biographies of a male PSR terrorist was even used in accounts of female terrorists. Attempts to avoid innocent victims in the course of terrorist attacks were also

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831 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 21; Khiriakov 1919, 73.
832 Spiridonova 1906, 10-11. For similar descriptions in the biographical works see Vladimirov 1906b, 48-49; M-in 1906, 13; Prelooker 1908, 294; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 3; ‘Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova’ 1917.10; Steinberg 1935, 18.
833 Morrissey 2012, 607, 637.
834 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 21; ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 19; Khiriakov 1919, 73.
835 Sukloff 1915, 129.
attributed to Rudneva and Rogozinnikova in their revolutionary auto/biographies. According to Fridberg, Rogozinnikova even deliberately missed Maximovsky’s courier when she shot in his direction in order to be able to leave the scene of the assassination.836

In some instances, the moral purity of female terrorists was also confirmed in their auto/biographies by statements that committing assassinations was not an easy task. For example, Shkolnik writes in her memoirs that it took her a long time to prepare for the role of political assassin. In order to be able to kill she had to isolate herself from the world and focus on her future target Trepov and his “crimes.”837 In her words: “This isolation and constant dwelling on one thought have a very peculiar effect upon one. The whole universe no longer existed for me. Trepov’s photograph represented to me a symbol of all of Russia’s ills, and his death the only cure for them.”838

A sign of moral purity of a terrorist were references to the difficult emotions experienced after an assassination. However, in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, such a narrative was present only in Rudneva’s case. In her diary entry following the assassination attempt on Efimov, Rudneva writes that she was terrified by the fact that she had actually killed her target:

I was calm for myself, I did not care; I only ceased to understand everything - for the sake of what, why, and continually repeated to myself: “I killed, killed...” trying to understand and overcome the fear of it. (…) All night and day, and again at night tormented by the memory, even wanted to groan.839

This reminds one of Savinkov’s reminiscences about Brilliant, who, according to him, burst into tears when she learned that the attack on Grand Prince Sergei, committed with the help of a bomb that Brilliant had prepared, had succeeded. Savinkov’s description of Brilliant’s reaction is reminiscent of Rudneva’s above-quoted words: “We killed

836 E.N. 1927, 140-141; Fridberg 1929, 172.
837 This assassination attempt was later called off. See more about it in Savinkov 1917, 143; Sukloff 1915, 127.
838 Sukloff 1915, 127.
839 ”За себя была спокойна, всё равно было; только перестала понимать всё – ради чего, почему, и про себя непрерывно повторяла: «убила, убила…», стараясь понять и преодолеть ужас этого. (…) Всю ночь и день и опять ночь мучило воспоминание хотелось стонать даже” (E.N. 1928, 140).
him... I killed him... I...” 840 Interestingly, PSR members found Savinkov’s story not “true to life,” since it seemed doubtful to them that a revolutionary terrorist could be sorry for the success of a terrorist attack in which she took part.841 The reaction to Savinkov’s portrayal of Brilliant shows that members of the revolutionary underground did not accept the revolutionary heroine as a person who would have strong emotions about participating in a political assassination. Such an attitude must be why similar representations are not available in any other biographical works, not even in women’s autobiographies that were written after 1917: revolutionary heroines were not allowed to show human emotions toward their targets and regret their participation in political terrorism.

The way female PSR terrorists were constructed in the context of assassinations that they committed or attempted shows that authors of their revolutionary auto/biographies tried hard to construct them as revolutionary fighters. In order to do so, they did not include any feminizing descriptions in their accounts and tried to avoid showing the women experiencing any human emotions in connection to the assassination.

Feminization of women’s participation in political terrorism, however, sometimes occurred in the revolutionary auto/biographies indirectly. For example, Konoplyannikova and Shkolnik were constructed as motherly figures before their participation in political assassinations: in both cases, there were episodes with children that helped the authors create such representations. Konoplyannikova’s biographers are eager to relate her first attempt to commit a terrorist attack, when she decided to abort the mission because of the presence of small children. The authors write that Konoplyannikova befriended these children, who lived nearby while she was preparing the assassination.842 Thus, Konoplyannikova is represented as a motherly figure who put the interests of children above her mission. Shkolnik, in her memoirs, also mentions meeting children the night before her assassination attempt. According to Shkolnik, she invited the children who came to wish her Happy New Year to her place because of an “irresistible desire” to spend what would likely be the last hours of her life in their company.843

840 “Это мы его убили... Я его убила... Я...” (Savinkov 1917, 106).
841 See for example Gorbunov M. (1928), ‘Savinkov kak memuarist,’ in Katorga i ssylka, 4 (41), 172.
842 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 21; ‘Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova’ 1917, 19; Khiriakov 1919, 73.
843 Sukloff 1915, 141-142.
sacrificed her right to have a family for the cause, shows herself as willing to enjoy such an experience before sacrificing her life for revolution. Thus, both women are represented as “natural” women whose motherly instincts did not disappear because of their participation in political violence.

5.4 Self-sacrifice

Participation in political terrorism, according to PSR ideologists, always included self-sacrifice of the terrorist. Self-sacrifice was, however, understood in terrorists’ auto/biographies not only as death for the cause, but also as all the hardships that they underwent after arrest at the hands of the authorities and their participation in their trials, where the terrorists refused to defend themselves, agitated for their cause and received harsh sentences. In this section, I show how the above-mentioned themes were represented in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists.

5.4.1 At the Hands of the Authorities

According to Clark, descriptions of suffering of revolutionaries at the hands of the regime were quite common in biographical accounts of Bolsheviks, especially in the 1930s.844 Similar descriptions also appear in auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. According to these works, when they fell into the hands of the authorities, terrorist women could be abused physically and sometimes sexually, and they did not receive necessary medical help if they were injured in the course of their terrorist attacks or arrests.

All the above-mentioned forms of suffering at the hands of the regime are present only in auto/biographies of Spiridonova, who was considered the embodiment of revolutionary martyrdom by her sympathizers.845 According to these works, having shot her target Luzhenovsky, Spiridonova was subjected to a brutal beating at the site of the assassination and was later badly mistreated and allegedly even raped by government agents Zhdanov and Avramov during interrogation.846 In her

844 Clark 2000[1981], 177.
845 See more about Spiridonova as the embodiment of martyrdom in Boniece 2010a.
846 See Spiridonova 1906, 10-13; Vladimirov 1906a, 81-86, 91, 92; Vladimirov 1906b, 49-51, 53-55; M-in 1906, 5-6; Prelooker 1908, 294-296, 299; Maria Aleksandrovna
letter from prison, Spiridonova gives a detailed account of all the torture that she underwent, information considered by her comrades so outrageous and discrediting to the regime that they chose to publish the letter, which in turn became a source of inspiration for all future biographies of Spiridonova. Although she was not the only female terrorist subjected to physical violence after arrest, only in Spiridonova’s revolutionary biographies is it possible to find detailed information about the tortures she suffered. In some of her texts, Frumkina mentions physical violence that she was subjected to in detention, but these descriptions are generally no longer than one sentence. 847 Alexandra Izmailovich writes a single sentence in her memoirs of the mistreatment she underwent after arrest, which reminds one of the tortures that Spiridonova was subjected to: “Beatings, being undressed down to my shirt by a dozen cruel, impudent policemen, their bullying and spitting in my face under the approving looks of bailiffs and police officers…” 848 Although they were not treated better than Spiridonova, neither Frumkina nor Izmailovich chose to write detailed accounts of it. Izmailovich’s and Frumkina’s biographers do not mention at all that the women were subjected to violence from the regime after they were arrested. Revolutionary auto/biographies of other terrorist women than Izmailovich, Frumkina and Spiridonova do not include any similar narratives. This demonstrates that bad treatment at the hands of the police was not a necessary element of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. This corresponds to the opinion in Grant’s article that Russian terrorists did not see self-sacrifice in symbolic terms of martyrdom, but rather as a necessary means to a principled end. 849 As a result, elaborating on the martyrdom of female terrorists was not a common practice in their revolutionary auto/biographies. Individual women briefly mentioned these facts in their autobiographies in order to highlight their devotion to the cause. The case of Spiridonova, whose suffering at the

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847 Frumkina’s court speech from May 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 23; Frumkina’s letter from May 16, 1907, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 36; Frumkina’s letter # 3, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 67; Frumkina’s letter # 8, reprinted in Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 73.

848 “Побои, раздевание до рубашки десятком городовых, жестоких и наглых, их издевательства, плевки в лицо под одобрительные замечания приставов и околоточных…” (Izmailovich 1923, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7, 142).

849 Grant 2011, 122.
hands of the authorities was discussed at length in both her own texts and those of her biographers, seems in this context to be an exception. Boniece explains how Spiridonova’s case was evaluated by her sympathizers according to the power position that Spiridonova had in Russian society (she was a good-looking young upper-class woman), which gave her biographers an opportunity to create a myth that would appeal to many.850 Martyrdom at the hands of the authorities avoided in the cases of other terrorist women was an important narrative of Spiridonova’s myth.

Spiridonova was also the only female terrorist at the beginning of the 20th century who indirectly claimed that she was raped by government agents after arrest.851 This alleged rape became a major issue in texts by liberal authors who wrote about Spiridonova before the Revolution.852 The reason for such attention must be related to the general idea of revolutionary heroine as pure virgin.853 Sexual violence was seen in this context not only as a violation of Spiridonova as an innocent and pure person, but also as a violation of a revolutionary heroine of Underground Russia. Moreover, Spiridonova was not the only female revolutionary rumoured to have been raped by representatives of the regime after arrest. The most famous such case was that of Maria Vetrova (1870-1897), a political activist who committed suicide by burning herself alive in solitary confinement. According to the rumours spread in the revolutionary underground, the reason for her suicide was sexual violence from one of the guards. Vetrova’s life story became widely known and popular among radical students, since it included all the elements of female martyrdom.854 By writing about rape in Spiridonova’s case, liberal authors of her biographies wanted to draw as much attention to her case as Vetrova’s received. The rape was, however, later denied by Spiridonova herself, and her PSR comrades sharply criticised liberal authors who elaborated on that issue.855 As a result, Spiridonova’s later biographers avoid mentioning the assumed rape and

850 Boniece 2010a, 135-136.
852 Vladimirov 1906a, 81-84, 91, 92; Vladimirov 1906b, 31-35; M-in 1906, 5-6; Prelooker 1908, 295.
853 See more about it in Mogilner 1999, 50-51.
855 See more about Spiridonova’s reaction in Boniece 2010a, 143. For the reaction of the PSR to the works of the liberal biographers of Spiridonova see for example Nechetny 1907, 102.

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elaborate only on how she was mistreated after arrest. Hints of sexual violence are also found in autobiographical texts by Frumkina, who mentioned that while being imprisoned for her assassination attempt on Novitsky, she was undressed and subjected to humiliating body searches. In her case, only two biographers, Pribylev, who briefly mentioned Frumkina’s moral and physical suffering in prison, and Roizman, who mentioned the body searches she was subjected to, noted Frumkina’s experience at the hands of the authorities. This shows that while female terrorists themselves could mention sexual violence in their autobiographies, their fellow socialists did not consider such accounts appropriate. The reason must be linked to the tendency to construct revolutionary heroines as sexless women. Sexual violence, however, highlighted the women’s sex, and thus was not appropriate in a revolutionary auto/biography.

In his account of Spiridonova’s case, Vladimirov also writes at length about the poor conditions and total lack of medical help that Spiridonova, who was badly injured after arrest, suffered in detention. Similarly, even Yakovlev, in his account of Fedorova, writes that, although she was badly injured in the course of the assassination attempt on Bibikov, Fedorova did not receive any medical help in detention. Yakovlev explains this by the local authorities’ wish to use Fedorova’s helplessness to press her for information. Although other female terrorists were also injured during assassinations and arrests and left without medical help afterwards, authors of their auto/biographies do not elaborate on the women’s misery. This again demonstrates a reluctance of the part of authors of revolutionary auto/biographies to construct victimizing representations of female terrorists.

All the above-mentioned cases show that suffering at the hands of the authorities were elaborated only in auto/biographies of Spiridonova, whereas in similar accounts of other terrorist women, such descriptions appeared sporadically and were not at all developed by the authors.

856 See more about Spiridonova’s reaction to Vladimirov’s articles in Boniece 2010a, 143.
857 Frumkina 1904-1905, 3-5.
858 Pribylev, 15; Roizman 1926, 302-303.
859 See more about it in Schraut 2014, 66.
861 Yakovlev 1910.
862 See for example about the cases of Alexandra Sevastianova and Alexandra Izmailovich in GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40; Izmailovich 1923, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7, 142.
Negative reactions by socialists to works about Spiridonova written by liberals, where she was cast primarily as a victim of the brutalities of the regime and not as a PSR heroine, show that they did not consider detailed descriptions of the suffering undergone by terrorists after arrest to be an important part of a revolutionary auto/biography. This attitude must be behind the absence of accounts similar to those of Spiridonova’s sufferings in auto/biographies of other terrorist women. Spiridonova’s case was the exception, since she was the first to describe her experience in order to show her devotion to the party, and her earliest biographers were liberals, who were interested in elaborating on Spiridonova’s suffering.

5.4.2 Behaviour during the Trial

Trials of Russian revolutionaries were considered to be part of their political fight: political prisoners were expected to turn their trials into a tribune to promote their political ideals. Since revolutionaries’ behaviour during a political trial was a continuation of their political activism, it is no wonder that authors of auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists devoted so much attention to how women behaved there.

The auto/biographies of most female terrorists show that these women enthusiastically used their trials to agitate for the PSR. Accounts published before and soon after the revolutions of 1917 often include the full texts of their speeches in court, since this was the easiest way to show how the woman in question spoke about her political ideals during her trial. Accounts that do not include full texts of court speeches generally mention that the woman in question gave a speech during her trial, thus showing that she managed to use her presence in the courtroom for propaganda reasons as she was expected to. Spiridonova,

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863 Geifman 1993, 52; Morozov 2011, 452; Morozov 2012b, 149; Morrissey 2012, 620.
865 See for example Prelooker 1908, 296; Yakovlev 1910; Sukloff 1915, 155-156; Lelevich 1922, 17; Izmailovich 1923, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7, 172; Ivanov 1924, 238-239.
Frumkina and Fedorova were even praised by their biographers as excellent public speakers who managed to impress not only their sympathizers, but also the judges who tried them.866

Female terrorists’ eagerness to speak at their trials is sometimes stressed in these accounts by descriptions of various hindrances that they had to overcome in order to present their political ideals. For example, both Vladimirov and Prelooker note that Spiridonova coughed and spat blood while speaking during trial.867 Likewise, Yakovlev writes that a badly injured Fedorova was carried to the courtroom, where she gave her speech from a stretcher.868 Thus, both women were represented as ready to suffer in order not to miss an opportunity to speak during their trials. They were constructed as ascetic individuals very much in keeping with the tradition of representing revolutionary heroes and heroines that already existed in the revolutionary underground.

The importance for a revolutionary heroine of speaking during a trial is particularly highlighted in auto/biographical accounts of Frumkina. In her letter to Burtsev, she claims that she tried to perpetrate an assassination while in prison only in order to be tried, so that she could speak in court about the situation in Russian prisons.869 Dmitri Merezhkovsky, in his article on Frumkina’s assassination attempt on Bagretsov, also claims that the purpose of that attempt was to have an opportunity to speak in court.870 Frumkina is, however, the only female terrorist represented in her revolutionary auto/biographies as ready to assassinate in order to have an opportunity to speak in court.

Interestingly, not all Russian revolutionaries at the beginning of the 20th century chose to speak about their political convictions during their trials in order to propagate the values and ideals of their parties. Among female PSR terrorists, Mamaeva, Sevastianova and Rogozinnikova, according to their auto/biographies, chose to remain silent during their trials. In her letter to her comrades of October 1906, before her execution, Mamaeva explains her silence as follows: “I boycotted the court and always refused to answer the chairman’s questions. I could not do

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866 Vladimirov 1906b, 93; Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 6, 8, 10; Pribylev, 17-18; Yakovlev 1910; Steinberg 1935, 35.
867 Vladimirov 1906a, 93; Prelooker 1908, 297.
868 Yakovlev 1910.
869 'Pisma Frumkinoi’ 1908, 20-21.
870 Merezhkovsky, Dmitry (1908), 'Bes ili Bog?,' in Merezhkovsky, Dmitry (1991), V tikhom omute, Moscow: Sovetsky pisatel, 104.
otherwise: I considered it humiliating to take part in such a comedy.”

That Mamaeva finds it necessary to explain her behaviour shows that her silence during her trial was quite different from the behaviour that was expected of her by the PSR. Mamaeva represents her different action as a form of protest against the trial, and thus as another way of fighting the regime in the courtroom. Such an explanation seems to have been acceptable to the party, since both Zilberberg, in her account of Sevastianova of 1919, and Fridberg, in her biography of Rogozinnikova of 1929, represent them as silent during the trials, where both women chose not to give any explanation for their participation in political violence. Thus, in accounts of some female terrorists, silence during trial was represented as a form of political struggle with the regime in court. However, since only a few women were represented as behaving in such fashion, it can be concluded that speaking in court was considered more acceptable behaviour for a revolutionary heroine of the PSR.

Although Konoplyannikova, unlike the above-mentioned PSR female terrorists, chose to speak during her trial, she is also represented as fighting the regime by refusing to follow procedure. Her biographers pay particular attention to Konoplyannikova’s refusal to stand up in court, which she explained to the judges by her contempt and lack of respect for those who tried her. Thus, Konoplyannikova’s biographers show that even her behaviour in court explicitly undermined the authority of the autocracy.

In addition to using the courtroom as a site of political resistance, terrorists were also expected to confirm their devotion to the cause by sacrificing themselves: they were expected not to defend themselves in the course of their trials and not to petition for clemency afterwards. The auto/biographies of Konoplyannikova, Frumkina, Fedorova, Sevastianova, Ezerskaya, Shkolnik, Raspitina and Sture stress that these women behaved in accordance with these expectations, and thus showed in public their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the

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871 "Суд я бойкотировала и всё время отказывалась давать ответы на вопросы председателя. Иначе я не могла: я считала унизительным принимать участие в подобной комедии” (Mamaeva’s letter, reprinted in Gusev 1992, 29).
872 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40; Fridberg 1929, 175-176.
873 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 21; Prelooker 1908, 285; Khiriakov 1919, 74.
Yakovlev even mentions Fedorova’s indignation at her attorney’s attempts to save her: “she called on him to stop speaking, and in her last speech spoke of her life and everything that led her to attempt the assassination.” Khrenkova, Shkolnik and Rasputina, who were tried along with other members of their terrorist groups, are even represented as trying to save their comrades by taking guilt only upon themselves. Thus, these female terrorists were represented as people who, in accordance with PSR ideology, were ready to suffer the harshest consequences of the assassinations that they committed and sacrifice themselves for the cause.

The brochure about Frumkina’s trial of 1904 includes her ideas about the impression that a revolutionary, especially a terrorist, was expected to make during her trial: “my position obliged me to meet all that awaited me with honour, with dignity; I wanted to come to the court cheerful, happy...” The expectations described by Frumkina must have been widely accepted in the revolutionary underground, since they correspond to descriptions in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists during their trials.

Female PSR terrorists were often represented as defending their revolutionary honour during their trials, which often led to harsher sentences for them. For example, Frumkina’s biographer Figner, in the account of her last trial, relates Frumkina’s strong reaction to the suspicion of the court that she was mentally ill. Figner quotes Frumkina’s own words:

"For a terrorist," she says, “there is no greater humiliation than a declaration that all his activities were the product of a mental disorder, a creation of his sick imagination. (...)"It seems to me," she continues, "that I made them understand

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875 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 11; Frumkina 1907, 94; Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 8; Yakovlev 1910; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40; Lelevich 1922, 17, 20; Sukloff 1915, 156-157; TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 9.
876 "она крикнула ему, чтобы он замолчал и в последнем своём слове рассказала свою жизнь и высказала всё, что её заставило пойти на покушение" (Yakovlev 1910).
877 Sukloff 1915, 156; Ivanov 1924, 238-239; TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 8.
878 "моё положение обязывало меня с честью, с достоинством встретить всё, что меня ожидает; я хотела прийти на суд бодрой, весёлой..." (Frumkina 1904-1905, 4).
and feel that it is better to sign my death warrant than to send me to the hospital.”

Thus, Figner shows that for Frumkina, it was more important to defend her revolutionary honour by insisting on the political motivations of her assassination attempts than to save her own life by pleading insanity. Likewise, even Fedorova is represented by her biographer as deeply insulted by the words of her attorney that she did not volunteer to commit the assassination, but participated in it because the lot fell on her. Although in both cases, doubts about their revolutionary devotion in court could have led to more lenient sentences, Frumkina and Fedorova are represented by their biographers as openly rejecting suggestions that could cast a shadow on their revolutionary honour. Thus, revolutionary auto/biographies show that revolutionary honour was so important to these women that they preferred to sacrifice themselves rather than betray their revolutionary identity.

Cheerful behaviour during trial is quite a common theme in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. Spiridonova, Konoplyannikova, Sture, Leontieva, Shkolnik and Rasputina are represented in these texts as cheerful and calm during their trials. Spiridonova and Konoplyannikova are even described by their biographers as hearing their death sentences with smiles on their faces. Shkolnik and Izmailovich describe in their memoirs their mood at the moment when they received their death sentences as calm and cheerful. Thus, most of these women were represented as behaving in accordance with the party’s expectations. Only Lyubov Leontieva, in her account of the trial

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879 ""Для террориста - говорит она - нет большего унижения, как признание, что вся его деятельность была плодом душевного расстройства, созданием его больной фантазии."(…) "Мне кажется, - говорит она далее, - я заставила их понять и почувствовать, что лучше подписать мне смертный приговор, чем отдать в больницу.” (Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina..., 7-8).
880 Yakovlev 1910.
881 Vladimir 1906a, 90-92; Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 5, 11; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 5-6; Khiriakov 1919, 74; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 254; Ivanovskaya 1929, 151, 180; Sukloff 1915, 157; Steinberg 1935, 35, 39; TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 7-8, 9.
882 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova. 1906, 11; Steinberg 1935, 39. Spiridonova’s death sentence was later commuted to hard labor for life (see Erofeev 1996d, 584; Boniece 2010b, 172).
883 Sukloff 1915, 157; Izmailovich 1923, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7, 173. Both women’s death sentences were commuted to hard labor for life (see Leontiev 1996b, 225; Boniece 2010b, 183, 187).
of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment, describes Sture’s reaction to the death sentence in a different way:

The condemned bravely, silently listened to the verdict, and only Sture could not come to terms with the violent loss of life and cried out in her young, clear voice: "I'm young, I want to live." A rolling echo picked up her words, and abrupt shouts of "I want to live" could long be heard under the prison arches, as if it were the scream of a person dying during severe torture. 884

Sture’s co-defendants are represented as calm and ready to die for the cause in accordance with the above-mentioned expectations of the revolutionary underground, and thus are constructed by Leontieva as typical revolutionary heroes and heroines. However, Sture’s different behaviour is not represented as renegade. Leontieva, who was not a PSR member and thus did not feel obliged to promote party ideology, wanted to elicit sympathy for Sture by highlighting her youth and representing her first and foremost as a victim of the regime. Leontieva’s husband, the attorney of Sture’s co-defendant Rasputina, was a liberal, which means that Leontieva’s own views were influenced by the opinion of Leontiev, who could observe Sture closely. The liberal circles, as it was mentioned earlier, tended to represent the terrorist women as victims of the regime. Moreover, Leontieva wrote her account in 1934, so the representations she constructed were influenced by the Bolshevik standard of writing a revolutionary life, where, according to Clark, revolutionaries’ suffering at the hands of the regime were discussed at length. 885 By quoting Sture’s words, which would not have appeared in a revolutionary auto/biography written by a socialist, Leontieva made clear that the harsh sentence that Sture received caused her to suffer, and thus represented Sture as a person who suffered from the regime for her political beliefs.

884 "Осуждённые мужественно, молча выслушали приговор и только одна Стуре не могла примириться с насильственным отнятием жизни и вскрикнула своим молодым звонким голосом: "я молода, я жить хочу." Её слова подхватило раскатистое эхо и под сводами тюрьмы долго слышалось отрывистое "я жить хочу" точно вопль умирающего в тяжёлых пытках" (TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 10).

885 Clark 2000[1981], 177.
Another female PSR terrorist who was not represented as cheerful during her trial was Sevastianova. In her account of 1919, Zilberberg describes Sevastianova’s behaviour in court as follows: “Unknown to everyone,886 austere, silent, like an icon lamp in front of an image of martyrs, she burned out in these last days.”887 The representation of Sevastianova constructed by Zilberberg reminds one of how Orthodox Christian saints were represented in spiritual texts, and is quite different from the above-mentioned representations of other female terrorists. Zilberberg shows Sevastianova not as a revolutionary who eagerly accepted her destiny, but as a saint who was above human trials who had become a martyr even before her execution. Similar elements of the Orthodox saint can be also observed in how Vladimirov describes Spiridonova on her way to her trial: “She was pale; only her cheeks burned with unnaturally red spots, and dark circles under her eyes gave her a somewhat inspired, mysterious appearance. Her big eyes seemed to look from somewhere in the depth, from a black abyss, and from there burned with a beautiful, unearthly fire.”888 Although Vladimirov does not directly compare Spiridonova to an Orthodox saint, his references to her pale complexion and the unearthly look in her eyes remind one of how saints are normally represented on Orthodox Christian icons. Even Figner constructs Frumkina as a Christian saint when she describes her at the moment of her court speech: according to the author, the normally unattractive Frumkina was glowing with “unearthly beauty.”889 Such saintly representations are created only in the cases of women who were executed, like Sevastianova and Frumkina, or were expected to be executed, like Spiridonova. Thus, authors of revolutionary biographies constructed the women similarly to Christian martyrs. Such Christian rhetoric was, however, unusual in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, since, as noted above, most women were represented as cheerful during their trials. The reason for the rare occasions on which female terrorists were compared to Christian saints must be the focus of Christian representations on martyrdom and self-

886 According to Zilberberg, Sevastianova did not state her name after she was arrested, and thus was tried as “unknown woman” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40).
887 “Никому неведомая, строгая, тихая, как лампада пред образом Страстотерпца, догорала она в эти последние дни” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 40).
888 “Она была бледна; только щёки неестественно горели красными пятнами, да тёмные круги под глазами придавали ей что-то ожизненное, загадочное. Большие глаза, казалось, смотрели откуда-то из глубины, из чёрной пропасти, и оттуда горели прекрасным, неземным огнём” (Vladimirov 1906а, 90).
889 Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagina...., 7.
sacrifice of these women that overshadowed representations of their revolutionary heroism, which, as noted, was essential for the representations of female PSR terrorists.

5.4.3 Heroic Death

The end of a story about revolutionary heroes’ activism was normally constructed in terms of heroic death, depicting the premature and tragic end of their lives.\textsuperscript{890} The authors of revolutionary biographies noted particularly the circumstances of the heroes’ deaths because a heroic death for the revolutionary cause was considered the best propaganda tool available to the revolutionary underground: it was the best evidence of revolutionary devotion and self-sacrifice.\textsuperscript{891} Heroic death in the biographies of female PSR terrorists was most often connected to their executions. However, even suicides and death from disease were sometimes constructed as heroic as well.

The most efficient death for the revolutionary hero for the purposes of propaganda was dying on the gallows. It is no wonder that the authors of auto/biographical accounts of female PSR terrorists who were executed or expected to be executed always mentioned that the women were happy to die this way.\textsuperscript{892} In their autobiographical texts, female terrorists who were sentenced to death eagerly shared the feelings they experienced while waiting for execution. The author of the first and most famous document of this kind was a member of the maximalist terrorist group, Nataliya Klimova, whose “Letter before Execution” was published in the liberal magazine \textit{Obrazovanie} in 1908 and received much attention from Russian society.\textsuperscript{893} Klimova was not the first revolutionary terrorist in Russia to write such a letter, but her letter was different from earlier documents of this kind. Instead of writing about her political beliefs and her reasons for participating in political

\textsuperscript{890} See more about it in Clark 2000[1981], 64; Jones Hemenway 2006, 80.

\textsuperscript{891} Engel 1983, 142.

\textsuperscript{892} See for example Spiridonova’s unpublished letters, reprinted in Vladimirov 1906a, 117, 118; Frumkina’s letter No. 14, reprinted in \textit{Pamiyati Frumkinoi i Berdyagnina...}, 80; Pribylev, 18; Izmailovich 1923, in \textit{Katorga i ssylka}, No. 7, 173; Sukloff 1915, 157; Steinberg 1935, 39.

terrorism Klimova chose to describe the feeling of happiness and the
discovery of the joy of life that, according to the letter, she attained only
while she was awaiting execution. Klimova’s letter, probably be-
cause of the attention that it attracted in Russian society, seems to have
become a standard narrative for describing the experiences and feelings
of female terrorists awaiting execution. At least three female members
of PSR terrorist units who were sentenced to death, Alexandra Iz-
mailovich, Shkolnik and Rogozinnikova, describe their experience of
waiting for death in similar terms as Klimova. Elaborating on their
happiness to die for their political beliefs, these women showed that
they had no regrets about participation in political violence and that they
were happy to die for the cause, in accordance with PSR ideology.

Authors of biographies of female terrorists who were sentenced to death
pay particular attention to the women’s calm and courageous behaviour
during the execution. They eagerly provide details that prove the ter-
rorists’ readiness and eagerness to die for the cause. Frumkina, Fedo-
rova and Rogozinnikova are described by their biographers as smiling
during their executions. According to Konoplyannikova’s and Frum-
kina’s biographers, the women themselves tightened the ropes around
their necks and pushed away the chairs underneath their feet. Frum-
kina’s biographer Yadov explains such an act by Frumkina’s determi-
nation not to let the executioner touch her. Thus, in addition to rep-
resenting female terrorists as happy to die for their political beliefs, such
representations also show that the women managed to preserve their
revolutionary honour even during execution. None of the biographers
provides any victimizing descriptions of the women, and thus they fo-
cus exclusively on the heroic side of their deaths. Thus, all the above-
mentioned representations, are constructed from the point of departure
of PSR ideology, namely that terrorists should be happy to give their
lives as expiation for the lives they take.

894 Morrissey 2006, 292.
895 Rogozinnikova’s experience was described in a letter that she sent to her comrades
before the execution in 1907 (reprinted in Fridberg 1929, 177). Shkolnik and Iz-
mailovich described that experience in their memoirs (Sukloff 1915, 157-158; Iz-
mailovich 1923, reprinted in Katorga i sylka, No. 7, 175-177).
896 Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 12; Prelooker 1908, 290-291; Ya-
kovlev 1910; Pamfilova-Zilberber 1915; Khiriakov 1919, 74; Pribylev, 19; Yadov
1923, 163-164; Zhukovsky-Zhuk 1925, 254; Fridberg 1929, 176; TsGA SPb, f. 506,
op. 1, d. 625, l. 12.
897 Yakovlev 1910; Pribylev, 19; Fridberg 1929, 176.
898 Prelooker 1908, 291; Khiriakov 1919, 74; Yadov 1923, 164.
Not all female terrorists were executed after trial. Ekaterina Izmailovich, for example, was shot to death on the spot of her unsuccessful assassination attempt on Admiral Chukhnin. The first author to write about Izmailovich’s death was Vnorovsky, who organized the assassination together with her. However, he does not seem eager to elaborate on Izmailovich’s death: Vnorovsky does not write about the exact circumstances of her death, and in the draft of his article, the words “heroic death” are crossed out and replaced with the words “heroic courage.”

Thus, Vnorovsky did not want to create a victimizing representation of Izmailovich, so he focussed on her heroism instead. The circumstances of Izmailovich’s death are barely mentioned in accounts by her sister Alexandra and by Ivanovskaya. Both authors chose not to represent Izmailovich as a victim of the regime as well. S.A. Nikonov, author of a 1928 account of Ekaterina Izmailovich, however, pays more attention to the circumstances of her execution and describes them as follows:

The adjutant … took from the guard four sailors with rifles, brought Izmailovich to the backyard, put her against the wall near cesspools and ordered the sailors to kill her. When they wanted to bind her to a pole with a light bulb that stood there, she asked them not to tie her, and not to torture. (…)

They say that before her death, Izmailovich managed to shout to the sailors that she was dying for them, that she came to take revenge on their bloody oppressor. The sailors passed her last words to their comrades in this form: "Comrades, I have done my duty, shoot me, but do not torture me!"

Although Izmailovich’s execution was quite different from the executions of other female PSR terrorists, Nikonov shows that her behaviour before the execution was not different from the behaviour of women

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899 "героическая смерть”; "геройское мужество” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 369, l. 6).
900 Izmailovich 1923, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7, 155; Ivanovskaya, Praskovia (1925), ‘Pokushenie na Chukhnina,” in Katorga i ssylka, No. 3 (16), 113-114.
901 "Адъютант … взял из караула четырёх матросов с винтовками, вывел Измайлович на чёрный двор, поставил её у стены около помойной ямы и велел матросам убить её. Когда её хотели привязать к стоявшему здесь столбу с электрической лампочкой, она просила не привязывать её и не мучить. (...) Говорят, перед смертью Измайлович успела крикнуть матросам, что она умирает за них, что она явилась мстить их кровавому усмирителю. Матросы передавали её последние слова своим товарищам в таком виде: «Товарищи, я исполнила свой долг, стреляйте в меня, но не мучьте!» (Nikonov 1928, 81).
who were tried and executed afterwards. Nikonov shows that, like other female PSR terrorists, Izmailovich managed to explain her actions and condemn her target’s “crimes,” although she did not have an opportunity to speak in court. Nikonov also shows that Izmailovich managed to keep her revolutionary honour and not allow the guards to tie her up, just as other female terrorists did not let the executioners touch them. Thus, the author constructed Izmailovich’s death in accordance with the standard of writing a heroic death established by that time in revolutionary biographies. On the other hand, Nikonov adds to his representation the brutality of the execution, mentioning that Izmailovich was executed near “cesspools” and was about to be tied up. Thus, Nikonov’s representation of Izmailovich during the execution is different from the representations of earlier authors: she is constructed not only as a revolutionary heroine, but also as a victim of the regime. This is how Nikonov adapts his narrative to the standard of writing a revolutionary life accepted among the Bolsheviks, where the suffering of revolutionaries at the hands of the regime was always important. \(^{902}\)

Nikonov was, however, not the only author who represented Izmailovich as a victim of the regime. M. Gorbunov and Klara Klebanova, in their accounts of Izmailovich’s death, also victimized her by elaborating on the cruelty of her killing. According to Gorbunov, “Izmailovich was not actually shot, but beaten to death ... so that her body represented a bag filled with pounded bones.” \(^{903}\) Klebanova, on her part, claims in an interview from 1973 that Izmailovich was cut to pieces with Chukhnin’s sword. \(^{904}\) Both authors elaborate only on the brutality of Izmailovich’s execution and do not mention her heroic behaviour during it, unlike Nikonov. As a result, they construct Izmailovich’s death only as martyrdom, and do not pay much attention to her revolutionary heroism.

The story of Izmailovich’s execution as an illegal act undertaken at the site of the assassination inspired some authors to write about Sevastianova’s execution in the same manner. Due to the absence of any reliable information on the circumstances of that execution, E.K., in an article of 1926, and Figner, in her memoirs, claim that Sevastianova was shot at the scene of her assassination attempt on Gershelman, in

\(^{902}\) Clark 2000[1981], 177.

\(^{903}\) “Измайлович была не расстреляна, собственно, а забита на смерть... так что труп её представлял мешок, наполненный толчёными костями” (quoted in Nikonov 1928, 82-83).

\(^{904}\) Avrich & Klebanova 1973, 417.
some nearby barn. As did the authors of the accounts of Izmailovich’s death written after the 1920s, the authors of revolutionary biographies of Sevastianova represent her as a victim of the regime and do not write about her heroic behaviour during the execution. The cases of Izmailovich and Sevastianova show that the Bolshevik discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life in the 1920s already influenced how biographies of female PSR terrorists were written.

In all the above-mentioned cases, female PSR terrorists were represented as dying with dignity and without complaining about their tragic fate. Only one author, Lyubov Leontieva, in her account of the trial of seven members of the Northern Flying Combat Detachment, represents Sture as behaving differently not only from other female terrorists, but also from the comrades who were executed together with her. Leontieva makes it clear that all seven terrorists executed on February 17, 1908 died calmly and courageously, including Sture. She, however, did not want to die:

Sture detained her father and attorneys, she did not want to be left alone, she could not part with them, and continued arguing for the injustice and unreasonableness of the death penalty.

She said, "Hundreds and thousands of others will come in my place and finish what we started. The downfall of the autocracy is inevitable." 

On the one hand, Leontieva represents Sture as a person who did not give up her political beliefs until the end, like other revolutionary heroes and heroines of the PSR. On the other hand, the author shows that Sture, still a very young woman, was hanging on to her life. Thus, Leontieva constructed Sture as a revolutionary heroine and victim of the regime at the same time. Like Leontieva’s above-mentioned representation of Sture’s behaviour during trial, this representation is quite different from how socialists normally constructed female terrorists. This too shows

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905 E.K. (1926), 'Mesto kazni A.A. Sevastianovoi,' in Katorga i ssylka, No. 7-8, 163; Figner 1933, 217.
906 “Стуре задерживала отца и защитников, не хотела оставаться одна, не могла рассстаться и всё время доказывала всю несправедливость и нецелесообразность казни.
Она говорила "на моё место явятся сотни и тысячи других, которые окончат начатое дело. Гибель самодержавия неизбежна"” (TsGA SPb, f. 506, op. 1, d. 625, l. 11-12).
that Leontieva’s text was influenced by the liberal view of female terrorists and the Bolshevik narrative of suffering by revolutionaries under the autocratic regime.

According to revolutionary biographies, death at the hands of representatives of the regime was not the only way to die heroically. When revolutionaries committed suicide in prison, the authors of their biographical accounts, according to Morrissey, tended to see such actions as a part of their revolutionary struggle in the microcosm of prison, and hence a heroic death or a heroic suicide. 907 Morrissey traces the tradition of “heroic” suicide in the Russian revolutionary underground to the death in 1897 of Vetrova, who set herself on fire with kerosene from a lamp in order to protest prison conditions. The underground brochure issued on the first anniversary of Vetrova’s memorial told the story of a despotic government extinguishing the life of an idealistic and hardworking young woman who had suffered for the truth. 908 By 1905, the tradition of heroic suicide was well established within the master plot of Russian political radicalism: suicides committed by revolutionaries in prison were understood not in the context of an individual life, but as public events of political significance. Suicide was seen in such cases as the result of violence against the individual and an act of individual resistance to violence. 909

Among female PSR terrorists who committed suicide, Sofia Khrenkova was the only one whose death resembled Vetrova’s suicide. Khrenkova also set herself on fire with kerosene from a lamp while she was in solitary confinement. It is no wonder that Khrenkova’s biographers K. Prokopovich and S. Ivanov construct her suicide as a heroic one. The authors explain Khrenkova’s decision to take her own life by the harsh sentence that she received, the betrayal by one of her comrades and the cruel environment of the prison where she was held. 910 Both Prokopovich and Ivanov make it clear that Khrenkova’s mental condition, which led her to suicide, was a natural result of the atrocities that she was subjected to. Thus, the story of her suicide was told as the narrative of an

907 Morrissey 2006, 276.
908 Morrissey 1998, 178-179. Maria Subbotina, who was tried during the Trial of the Fifty, also unsuccessfully attempted suicide in 1875 by burning herself alive because of the harsh conditions in prison (see more about it in Engel 1983, 152). However, her case did not obtain a similar status to Vetrova’s suicide, perhaps because Subbotina did not die and was not rumoured to have been raped.
910 Prokopovich 1923, 287; Ivanov 1924, 238.
individual’s resistance to the violence of the regime, which made it into the story of a heroic death.

Suicide committed in prison by a revolutionary terrorist, however, was not always represented as a heroic deed. According to Shtakser, suicide was seen in the revolutionary underground as a politically passive reaction, which could never be better than fighting back. This view was obviously behind Frumkina’s, Spiridonova’s and Fedorova’s decisions not to kill themselves despite all their suffering during their incarcerations. According to their auto/biographies, all these women changed their minds because they understood that suffering the consequences of the assassinations that they committed or attempted would be seen by society as more heroic than suicide. Thus, the women were represented in these cases as revolutionary heroines who wanted to actively fight the regime until the end.

Esfir Lapina (Bela) and Rashel Lurie also chose to take their own lives. The circumstances of their suicides were quite different from Vetrova’s and Khrenkova’s: both women killed themselves in emigration, when their careers in political terrorism were over and they were far from the Russian authoritarian regime. Lapina’s suicide was her answer to the suspicions of some PSR members that she was a police agent. The reasons for Lurie’s suicide were not clear to her comrades, since none of her biographers could give a convincing explanation for it. However, despite the differences of Lapina’s and Lurie’s suicides from the heroic ones committed in prison, their biographers tried to represent even them as heroic. The authors of accounts of both women show the betrayal of Azef, who turned out to be a police agent, as the main reason for the women’s premature deaths. Shtakser shows that any suicide conducted as a moral protest against injustice could be seen as a political act in the revolutionary underground. Lapina’s suicide could in this context be seen as her moral protest against injustice in the revolutionary community. By mentioning that the main reason for her suicide was betrayal by Azef and not the suspicions of her comrades, her biographers showed that Lapina chose to kill herself because of the actions of an agent of the regime, which could equate her suicide to those committed by revolutionaries in prison. Likewise, S.R. attributes Lurie’s suicide to

911 Shtakser 2014, 113.
912 Frumkina 1904-1905, 4; Spiridonova’s letters reprinted in Vladimirov 1906a, 119-120; Yakovlev 1910.
913 See more about it in Erofeev 1996b, 301.
914 Shtakser 2014, 112.
Azef’s purposeful neglecting of her revolutionary potential, which led to her forced idleness in the terrorist organization.\textsuperscript{915} Thus, even Lurie’s suicide was represented as a moral protest against the actions of a police agent. A group of socialist authors, however, later argued against such an explanation of Lurie’s suicide, since according to them, people close to Lurie never mentioned any connections between her suicide and Azef’s neglect. As a result, no other biographer of Lurie repeated S.R.’s “heroic” version of her death.\textsuperscript{916}

Some female terrorists died prematurely from diseases that emerged or developed in prison and exile, as well as because of the risks and constraints that they experienced in the course of their activism in the revolutionary underground. In some cases, such deaths are also introduced as heroic by the women’s biographers. For example, Ivanovskaya writes that Brilliant became mentally ill in prison because of her participation in a hunger strike, which totally exhausted her. Mental illness, according to Ivanovskaya, led to Brilliant’s premature death in 1906.\textsuperscript{917} Participation in hunger strikes was a form of political struggle in prison with the regime.\textsuperscript{918} According to Ivanovskaya, it implies that Brilliant’s death was a direct result of her participation in the revolutionary struggle. Most of Ezerskaya’s revolutionary biographies connect her premature death of tuberculosis in 1914 to the cold climate of Yakutsk.\textsuperscript{919} Yakutsk was, however, not her first destination after prison: first, she was sent to a settlement where the climate was better.\textsuperscript{920} Lelevich writes that Ezerskaya was sent to Yakutsk because of suspicions by the authorities that she participated in organizing escapes of other political prisoners.\textsuperscript{921} In other words, Ezerskaya’s death in the cold climate of Yakutsk is represented here as the result of her political activism, and thus as a heroic action.

\textsuperscript{915} S.R. (1909), ‘Moi otnosheniya k Azefu,’ in Byloe, No. 9-10, 189-190.
\textsuperscript{916} Ritina I., Mikhail Ivanovich, L. A-va, P-sky (1909), in Byloe, No. 11-12, 184. For other accounts of Lurie’s suicide see Savinkov 1917, 330; Popova 1927, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 6 (35), 61.
\textsuperscript{917} Ivanovskaya 1929, 66.
\textsuperscript{918} See more about it in Morozov 2012b, 173.
\textsuperscript{919} X 1915; Lelevich 1922, 27; Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 2 (15), 179.
\textsuperscript{920} According to Lelevich, she was first sent to Barguzin (Lelevich 1922, 26). Orestova names Verkhoudinsk as the place of Ezerskaya’s first settlement (Orestova 1932, 228).
\textsuperscript{921} Lelevich 1922, 27.
Death as a result of suicide or chronic illness was thus seen as heroic only in those cases where it could considered a result of women’s political activism for the cause. Representations by biographers of terrorist women in these cases do not include any victimizing elements. This demonstrates that the authors of revolutionary biographies wanted to represent the women first and foremost as revolutionary heroines and not as martyrs for the cause.

5.5 Summary: Transgender Narratives

The typical narrative of female terrorists’ political activism has two central themes: representations of women as members of the revolutionary family and their political activism (which includes such stages as activism in the revolutionary underground before participating in political violence, participation in political terrorism and self-sacrifice). A clear gender perspective seems to be a typical feature of these narratives, since the experiences of women were in most cases represented as special and different from those of terrorist men. How the gender of terrorist women is constructed in these accounts is different in narratives of various stages of their political activism. On the one hand, the authors of these accounts strive to portray female terrorists at different stages of their political activism similarly to (male) revolutionary heroes. However, the heroes’ typically male mode of behaviour sometimes seems controversial in the case of women, and as a result, the authors of their revolutionary auto/biographies feminize the representations of female terrorists. The central theme of the accounts of female terrorists’ political activism is thus connected to the difficulty of portraying a female hero, previously identified by Sylvia Schraut. Schraut and Weinhaber claim that the authors of accounts of female terrorists feminize them with the help of the attributes of a female martyr. However, the source material used in this chapter shows that female PSR terrorists were seldom represented as martyrs in revolutionary auto/biographies. It was the ideal of the “natural,” “good” woman that existed in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century that was stressed when the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies wanted to feminize female terrorists. This interplay between heroic “male” representations and representations of female goodness are at the centre of

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922 Schraut 2014, 64.
narratives of female terrorists’ political activism. Thus, women are represented there as transgender individuals with both male and female features.

“Natural” female goodness is the central topic of narratives of female terrorists as members of the “revolutionary family.” Women were represented by their comrades in a gendered manner, either as “mothers” (in accounts of older women’s lives) or “sisters” (in accounts of younger women’s lives) of their revolutionary “brothers” (men). These roles of mother and sister did not imply any position of power in the revolutionary family and were represented as similar to the roles that Russian women at that time played in traditional families. Thus, women’s experience in the revolutionary family was represented differently from the analogous experience of revolutionary men, who, like men in traditional families, had a position of power there.

Narratives of female terrorists’ political activism before they participated in political violence, on the one hand, show that the women acted as male revolutionary heroes when they decided to join the PSR, since their political convictions were the main reason behind that decision. At the same time, the representations of women’s work in the revolutionary underground showed that their experiences were different from men’s: they were mostly praised for the ability to conduct routinized everyday work and thus show themselves to be modest individuals, in accordance with the existing ideal of “good” femininity. Behaving like a man while choosing a political affiliation, the revolutionary heroine was expected to remain a “good” woman while conducting revolutionary work.

Modesty and the ability to conduct routinized everyday work without complaining was also praised in accounts of women’s work in terrorist organizations. Thus, revolutionary auto/biographies represented female terrorists as “good” women even when writing about women’s indirect participation in political violence. Women’s routinized activities were represented as essential for the terrorist organizations and were often described in terms of heroism and martyrdom, similarly to direct participation in political assassinations.

Since the position of leadership in terrorist organizations was in no way compatible with female modesty, female leaders were not represented as “good” women in revolutionary biographies. Authors preferred to silence the female leadership and in some cases even question and rid-
icule it. No female terrorist leaders from the beginning of the 20th century were represented similarly to a terrorist heroine of the 19th century, Sofia Perovskaya, in Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s *Underground Russia*. This demonstrates that the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists did not see the position of leadership as appropriate for a revolutionary woman.

While discussing future female terrorists’ decisions to participate in political violence, the authors of their revolutionary auto/biographies constructed them as similar to male revolutionary heroes when they explained their decisions in terms of the PSR program. At the same time, however, the women’s decisions were often introduced as stemming from strong emotions (mostly the positive feelings of love), an explanation that does not appear as often in narratives of male terrorists. By representing women as partly motivated by their emotions in making a political decision, revolutionary auto/biographies introduce them in accordance with the stereotype of women being driven by emotions. By showing that female terrorists were driven by the positive emotion of love, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies show that women decided to participate in political violence because of their “good” femininity.

The interplay between heroic male representations and representations of female goodness disappears from the narratives of political assassinations that female terrorists committed and the narratives of their subsequent self-sacrifice. The women are generally represented as behaving how both female and male terrorists were expected to behave in custody, during trial and execution. The authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists often underline that the women were calm while committing assassinations and in this way show that they acted as revolutionary (male) heroes, without showing emotions, not as “typical” women. This way of describing female terrorists in the course of perpetrating an assassination must be related to the difficulty of writing about a “good” woman acting as an agent of political violence, tendency previously observed by Schraut. Gendered representations in the context of participation in political violence appear only in the cases of Konoplyannikova and Shkolnik, who are constructed as motherly figures with respect to the children they met shortly before their participation in political assassinations. Despite these feminizing representations, in the descriptions of the assassinations that

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924 See more about it in Hilbrenner 2016.
Konoplyannikova and Shkolnik committed, the authors of their revolutionary auto/biographies, as well as those of other women, represent them as acting like male heroes.

Accounts of female terrorists’ self-sacrifice are no different from accounts of the self-sacrifice of male terrorists. Most often, the women are represented there heroically. Victimizing representations typically associated with femininity rarely appear in these narratives and most often in works by liberal authors, who were even less comfortable representing women as agents of political violence than socialists were. In three cases, female terrorists were represented as Christian martyrs in accounts of their trials. However, in most cases the authors of their revolutionary biographies preferred to construct female terrorists as revolutionary heroines behaving in accordance with the ethics of the revolutionary underground. This is particularly distinct from Schraut’s above-mentioned findings that terrorist women were often feminized through representations that resembled female Christian martyrs.

Thus, the ideal of female goodness becomes less relevant after a female member of a PSR terrorist unit has participated in a political assassination. By taking part in political violence, women transgressed their sex role by engaging in a “typically” male action, and thus are represented in revolutionary auto/biographies as identical to their male counterparts. They are represented as revolutionary heroes whose actual sex is no longer important for the construction of the narrative.

Feminizing representations of female PSR terrorists as members of the revolutionary family and at different stages of their political activism most often appear in biographical works about them. Although in their autobiographies, women at times also employ gendered explanations for their behaviour and choices, in many cases their own accounts are particularly different from the biographical works. While biographers of terrorist women often connect their decision to participate in political terrorism to their wish to sacrifice themselves for the cause, a wish that at that time was considered more legitimate for a woman than her wish to fight the regime, such explanations are absent from autobiographical texts. Thus, female terrorists preferred to construct themselves primarily as revolutionary fighters, while their biographers stressed their martyrdom when writing about the period before the women committed or attempted assassinations. Even hints from their biographers about the influence of the women’s partners on their participation in political vi-
olence are not present in the autobiographies written by female terrorists. The women tended to represent themselves as more agentic than their biographers did.

Representations of the political activism of female terrorists in revolutionary auto/biographies are often inspired by the representations of revolutionary heroines of the past. Most often, authors of their biographies construct them as Gesya Gelfman, a member of the People’s Will, was introduced by Stepnyak-Kravchinsky in *Underground Russia*. Like Gelfman, who was represented there as a “modest worker” of the revolution contributing to the cause by her everyday work for the People’s Will, terrorist women of the PSR were expected to show their modesty by performing routinized everyday work without complaints. Although the women themselves sometimes wrote about their modesty, they did not always represent themselves as similar to Gelfman. Another revolutionary heroine from Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s book, Vera Zasulich, was actualized in some representations of Fruma Frumkina. Frumkina herself, as well as her biographer Ekaterina Roizman, tried to represent Frumkina’s initiative in committing political assassinations without waiting for the party’s permission as similar to Zasulich’s, “the angel of vengeance.” However, such a representation is marginal not only among auto/biographies of female terrorists in general, but also among works on Frumkina’s life. As for the third revolutionary heroine from Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s book, Sofia Perovskaya, the female leader of the terrorists, no woman among those few female PSR terrorists who led their own units was represented in the same fashion as she. This demonstrates that at the beginning of the 20th century, a revolutionary heroine was typically expected to embody the ideal of the “modest worker” of the revolution before directly participating in political violence.

The ideal of the “modest worker” of the revolution was represented as dominant not only in biographies of female PSR terrorists, but also in biographies of female Bolsheviks, which explains some similarities between these groups of sources. However, in the course of analysis, particular differences between revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists and Bolshevik women have also been encountered. First, although both groups of women were represented as “mothers” and “sisters” in the revolutionary family, female terrorists were represented as “sisters” differently from female Bolsheviks: their main function was not considered to be caring of their comrades, but cheering them up. Second, a particular difference between these groups of sources was an
attitude toward the suffering of revolutionaries at the hands of the regime. While such narratives were a prominent theme in Bolshevik revolutionary auto/biographies written in the 1930s, they are rare in the auto/biographies of female terrorists. Victimizing images of terrorist women were not part of these works at all. Only some revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists written in Soviet Russia after the 1920s manifest such features.

Beside the influences that accounts of revolutionary heroines of the People’s Will and revolutionary auto/biographies of Bolsheviks had on how the lives of female PSR terrorists were constructed, it has also become clear that the authors of these works were inspired by narratives by other contemporary revolutionary auto/biographies. Susan K. Morrissey has shown that the narrative of Ivan Kaliaev’s refusal to commit a political assassination to avoid harming innocents was even used in revolutionary biographies of Zinaida Konoplyannikova.925 It was discovered in the current chapter that a similar narrative was used in other revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, as, for example, in the memoirs of Maria Shkolnik. In addition, it was revealed that even Natalia Klimova’s pre-execution letter influenced the autobiographies of women sentenced to death. All of them chose to describe their love of life while they waited for their executions, as Klimova did it. All these examples demonstrate that the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists changed over time and employed not only revolutionary narratives used in the past, but also the most popular narratives from revolutionary auto/biographies of the women’s contemporaries.

The auto/biographies of female terrorists evince a particular difference in the representation of political activism of women of Russian and Jewish backgrounds respectively. Only in auto/biographies of Jewish women are outstanding members of the PSR listed as mentors, whereas no mentors are mentioned in revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists born to Russian families. This way of proving the revolutionary devotion of Jewish women is derived from a view at the time of Jews being more conservative than Russians.926 As a result, the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies considered it important to show that Jewish women were influenced in their political radicalization by people who could help them obtain the best possible understanding of the

925 Morrissey 2012, 637-638.
926 See more about it in Hyman 1995, 135-136; Hyman 2002, 155.
PSR programme, and thus become sincerely devoted to the party. The middle-class Jewish women Frumkina, Brilliant and Lurie were also represented as irrationally devoted to the idea of political terrorism, while the Russian women, according to their auto/biographies, had rational explanations based on the programme of the PSR for their choice to participate in political violence. Frumkina, Brilliant and Lurie were also represented as openly complaining about a lack of opportunities to participate directly in political violence and even trying to commit acts of terrorism on their own, while their Russian counterparts were represented as patiently waiting for the party’s orders. Thus, Jewish women from middle-class families were constructed as “Others,” unlike Russian women, because of the strong emotions represented as their driving force for participation in political violence. While Russian women were constructed as revolutionaries who used political violence only as a means of political struggle, Jewish women were represented as devoted terrorists who became revolutionaries only to be able to take part in political violence.

Among female terrorists from Jewish families only Shkolnik, who was born in a peasant family, was represented as more balanced than middle-class Jewish women in her attitude toward political violence. As did Russian women, in her autobiography she explained her joining the PSR by her interest in the party’s agrarian program, not by her special interest in political terrorism. Shkolnik made it clear that her interest in the PSR stemmed from her social class and not from her ethnicity, which confirms the findings of Inna Shtakser that in revolutionary auto/biographies, working-class Jews were represented as politically radicalized because of class and not ethnicity.927 As a result, Shkolnik represented her attitude toward political violence similarly to how that of Russian working-class women was represented in their revolutionary auto/biographies.

The revolutionary underground was seen as a prototype of a socialist society, where class differences disappeared. As a result, the class aspect so prominent in narratives about female terrorists’ awakening of consciousness is hardly present in accounts of women’s political activism. Zinaida Konoplyannikova is the only female terrorist who connected her participation in political violence to her modest social origin. Thus, she contextualized her participation in political terrorism as class struggle and legitimized it that way. Differences in the representation

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927 Shtakser 2014, 72.
of Russian and Jewish female terrorists show, however, that the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies did not consider it as important to represent ethnic equality as a prominent feature of the Russian revolutionary underground. Such an attitude demonstrates that anti-Semitic governmental discourse influenced how revolutionary auto/biographies of the female terrorists were written.

There are particular differences in the auto/biographies written before and after 1917, i.e., in pre-revolutionary and in early Soviet Russia. First, while pre-revolutionary accounts primarily represented women as political terrorists due to the popularity of those tactics then, accounts written in Soviet Russia primarily represented them as revolutionaries, since the general attitude toward political terrorism became mostly negative under the Bolsheviks. Second, in accounts written after the Revolution, some women’s devotion to the PSR was not represented as their driving force because the attitude toward the party changed after 1918. As a result, women were represented as devoted to more abstract concepts, such as “revolution” and “socialism,” which could help write them into the history of revolutionary struggle written by the Bolsheviks.

Women’s participation in political violence has influenced how their revolutionary auto/biographies were written. First, topics not present in the auto/biographies of revolutionaries who did not participate in political terrorism, such as reasons for participation in political violence, activism in terrorist organizations, and assassinations, were the most important parts of the narratives on political activism of female terrorists. As for devotion, some terrorist women were constructed as devoted not primarily to the PSR or revolution, but to the idea of political terrorism; thus, unlike other revolutionary women, they were represented primarily as terrorists, not as revolutionaries. Some female terrorists were represented as transgressing the ideal of the “modest worker” of the revolution because of their wish to be active in political terrorism and commit assassinations. This transgression is not present in accounts of other revolutionary women, whose involvement in the performance of primarily low-status tasks is rarely problematized in their auto/biographies. Thus, female terrorists were represented as more rebellious than other revolutionary women because of their attempts to perform revolutionary work that seemed to be more interesting to them. Finally, the women’s participation in political violence influenced how they were represented during and after their direct participation in terrorism. Feminizing representations disappear from accounts of their lives at the
moment they commit political assassinations. From then on, the women are constructed similarly to the male revolutionary heroes because they have transgressed their sex role, and thus become similar to revolutionary men in their heroism.
CHAPTER 6. FAR AND AWAY

After arrest and trial, PSR terrorists who were not executed found themselves far from the centre of the political fight, in Siberian *katorga* and later in exile. There, they were no longer useful for the cause of political terrorism, since they had no opportunities to assassinate important government officials. Such reasoning must have been behind the reluctance of many authors of pre-1917 revolutionary auto/biographies to elaborate on the former terrorists’ life in prison and exile.928 Even the detention that some of the terrorists were subjected to in the course of their political activism were rarely discussed in any detail in revolutionary auto/biographies written at that time, since the authors of these works represented women’s time in prison as a break in their political activism.929

However, after the Revolution, when the prisons were opened and revolutionary heroes and heroines still alive were released, some of them wrote memoirs of their lives in Siberian prisons and exile. Most such accounts that mention female PSR terrorists are dedicated to Maltsev Prison, where the most prominent terrorist heroines, the so-called *Shesterka*, ended up. Because of the insignificant number of sources that discuss the lives of female PSR terrorists in other prisons, my focus in this chapter is primarily on representations of the women who were incarcerated in Maltsev.

After the 1917 revolutions some terrorist women returned to political activism (for example, Maria Spiridonova and Alexandra Izmailovich were active in the Left SR party; Anastasia Bitsenko and Maria Shkolnik joined the Bolsheviks). None of them, however, returned to

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928 For example, Savinkov, in his memoirs, explicitly calls Maria Shkolnik’s sentence of twenty years of *katorga* the end of her revolutionary career (see Savinkov 1917, 151).

929 See for an example of such representations Zinaida Vasilievna Konoplyannikova 1906, 15, 19; Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910.
direct participation in political terrorism. The focus of the dissertation are revolutionary auto/biographies of the women glorified as heroines primarily because of their participation in political terrorism. For this reason, I do not consider narratives of women’s later political activism that had nothing to do with PSR terrorism in this dissertation and do not include them in this chapter.

Accounts of female terrorists’ life in prison and exile normally touch upon the following topics: women’s life in prison communes of revolutionaries, organization of the revolutionary family in prison and exile; their everyday life, a topic that never appeared in accounts of female terrorists’ political activism, but was a prominent part of accounts of prison life; and their political activism. The main objective of these accounts was to show that revolutionary heroines followed the norms of behaviour in prison established in the revolutionary underground, and thus lived up to their heroic status.

The subjects identified above were present in almost all accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile. However, sources on this period of female terrorists’ lives are different from sources on women’s political activism. For this reason, I begin this chapter with an introduction of the source material and discussion of its influence on the representations of female PSR terrorists as revolutionary heroines.

6.1 On Sources and their Authors

In this chapter, I use the following groups of sources: revolutionary auto/biographies of individual female PSR terrorists, memoirs written as collective auto/biographies of the Maltsev Prison commune by former terrorists and other revolutionary women; and letters by terrorist women written from prison. I explain the function of these private letters in section 1.7.2. In this section, I show the main differences between narratives constructed in the revolutionary auto/biographies of individual female terrorists and the collective auto/biographies of Maltsev Prison in order to explain differences in the representations of female PSR terrorists constructed in these sources.

930 Spiridonova masterminded the assassination of German ambassador V. Mirbach in 1918, but she did not participate in the assassination herself. Some historians even doubt that Spiridonova had anything to do with it (see Felshtinsky 1985, 178-179; Lutz 1991, 333-334).
As noted above, the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists did not write much about their lives in prison and exile. At most, they retold episodes from the women’s lives there to demonstrate that female terrorists behaved heroically, in accordance with the behavioural code of the revolutionary underground. Most such accounts touched upon women’s lives in jails; their lives during long-term incarceration and in exile are represented sporadically in these sources. More or less detailed accounts of life in prison dedicated not only to heroic events, but also to the course of everyday life can be found only in the memoirs by Shkolnik and Ivanovskaya; the former described how she lived as a member of the Maltsev commune, and latter gave a detailed account of the commune in a jail in St. Petersburg, where Ivanovskaya was incarcerated after being arrested as a member of the Combat Organization. A typical feature of this group of sources is the authors’ intention to construct heroic representations of revolutionaries, and as a result, extremely positive representations of individuals and revolutionary communes, in accordance with the discursive practice established in the revolutionary underground.

The collective auto/biographies of the Maltsev Prison commune are not as influenced by the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life as the first group of sources. Like revolutionary auto/biographies of individual terrorist women, these sources had their purpose in representing revolutionary heroism of female political prisoners. However, various authors of collective auto/biographies had different understandings of who could be seen as a revolutionary heroine and what behaviour could be seen as heroic. These differences were rooted in the political and social backgrounds of the authors of the memoirs, which influenced how they represented the revolutionary commune and its individual members, including female PSR terrorists.

The first account of the Maltsev commune was published by Anastasia Bitsenko, a female terrorist heroine of the PSR, in Katorga i ssylka

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931 See for example Frumkina 1904-1905, 3-5; Frumkina 1907, 94; Pamfilova-Zilberberg 1910; X 1915; Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 6; Grigorovich 1925, 112; Lelevich 1922, 22-27; Ivanov 1924, 238-239; Roizman 1926, 302-303; G.S. 1928, 156-157; Orestova 1932, 225-233; 'Pobeg Marii Shkolnik,' in Katorga i ssylka, 1921, No. 2, 48-58; Shkolnik M.M. (1932), 'Moi pobeg,' in Konstantinov M.M. (ed.) (1932), Na zhenskoi katorge. Sbornik statei, Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vsesoyuznogo obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssylno-poselentsev, 137-149; Zvereva 1932, 223-224; Fialka, ‘Avtobiografiya’.

932 A similar conclusion was drawn by Badcock in the course of her work with political prisoners’ memoirs (Badcock 2016, 47).
(1923). By the time of publication, Bitsenko had left the PSR for the Bolshevik party, and because of her new political affiliation her account, written one year after the mass PSR trial, was quite critical. In other words, Bitsenko wanted to represent herself as a devoted Bolshevik by reproaching her former comrades. In 1922, a year before Bitsenko’s memoirs were published, the above-mentioned PSR trial took place in Moscow, where, according to Morozov, members of the Bolshevik party and PSR members attempted to explain to each other which of them were the real revolutionaries and which were not. Bitsenko’s publication in *Katorga i ssylka* had the same purpose, to show that she behaved as a real revolutionary heroine when she was incarcerated in Maltsev Prison, while some of her companions did not always live up to the revolutionary ideal.

In years to come, other revolutionary women who had been incarcerated in Maltsev Prison published their own accounts of the Maltsev commune in *Katorga i ssylka*. Unlike Bitsenko, none of the authors of these memoirs was a Bolshevik at the time when their accounts were published: Alexandra Izmailovich, Maria Spiridonova and Irina Kakhovskaya were former members of the Left SR party, which was in opposition to the Bolsheviks during the last years of its existence; Antonina Pirogova (1888-?) and Lidiya Orestova (1885-?) were PSR members when they were incarcerated in Maltsev Prison, but had no political affiliation during the early Soviet period; Fanny Radzilovskaya (1886-?) was a Bolshevik before the Revolution, but did not have any political affiliation when she wrote her memoirs. In other words, since none of these memoirists was a member of the Bolshevik party, they saw the accusations voiced by Bitsenko as a discreditation of their...
own and their comrades’ heroic status. They wrote their accounts in or-
der to protect their revolutionary honour. Although none of the mem-
iorists referred directly to Bitsenko’s account, all of them paid particu-
lar attention to her main critical points and presented their own versions
of the events. In their interpretation, the female prison commune as well
as its individual members lived up to their revolutionary ideal as much
as possible in prison conditions.

These memoirs along with other materials about Maltsev Prison were
published in 1930 in a volume Na zhenskoi katorge, edited by Vera
Figner. Among the memoirs not previously published in Katorga i
sylka, those by Paulina Metter (1883-?), a former anarcho-communist
of a working-class Jewish background are particularly different from
the rest. At the time when she published her memoirs, Metter, like other
authors, was not affiliated with any political party.938 However, her
memoirs, as well as Bitsenko’s, are critical of the Maltsev commune
and its members. Metter contrasts her experience of a person from the
working class with the experiences of most revolutionary women of the
Maltsev commune, who came from the upper and middle classes, and
notes a particular difference in the situation of women from different
social classes.939 Insisting on her working-class background as most im-
portant for her revolutionary identity, Metter constructs herself as a rev-
olutionary heroine similar to a Bolshevik revolutionary heroine, one of
the people.940 Thus, her account, challenges the revolutionary heroism
of the upper- and middle-class women she was incarcerated with.

In 1932, the second edition of Na zhenskoi katorge was published by a
new editor, M.M. Konstantinov. In this edition, a new version of
Bitsenko’s memoirs from 1923 was included. Although even this ver-
sion challenged the heroic status of the commune and its members,
many of the earlier critical points disappeared from Bitsenko’s account.
However, these memoirs were still different from other materials in the
volume.

938 See more about Metter in Politicheskaya katogia i sylka 1934, 400-401.
939 Metter’s account can be seen as a typical representation of educated elites by rep-
resentatives of the working class at that time. See more about it in Shkliarevsky, Gen-
nady (2000), ‘Constructing the “Other”: Representations of the Educated Elite by Au-
thors From the Lower Classes in Late Imperial Russia,’ Jahrbücher für Geschichte
Osteuropas, (H. 4), 511-527.
940 See more about the Bolsheviks’ attempts to represent themselves as “the people”
in Hoogenboom 1996, 81.
Thus, it can be concluded that there is no single heroic narrative in the accounts of female terrorists’ life in prison and exile. The first and most common narrative in auto/biographies of individual women as well as most memoirs of the Maltsev commune is the heroic one that corresponds to the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life that existed in the revolutionary underground. The second narrative, introduced by Bitsenko, challenges that heroic narrative from the Bolshevik point of view; its point of departure is a different revolutionary ideal. The third narrative, represented by Metter’s memoirs, challenges the heroic narrative of the Maltsev commune from a class perspective. In the following sections of this chapter, I show how these competing narratives formed the representations of female PSR terrorists.

6.2 In the Commune: Relationships

Communes of political prisoners were a form of organization of the revolutionary family in prison conditions that supported every member of the commune. The first female terrorists sentenced to Nerchinsk katorga in Siberia were placed together with revolutionary men in Akatui Prison, where they became part of the prison commune organized by the men. At the beginning of 1907, the women were transferred to Maltsev Prison, where they organized a commune of their own, without men.941 In this section, I show how female PSR terrorists were represented in the context of the revolutionary family in accounts of their lives in prison and exile: whether they were still represented as revolutionary “mothers” and “sisters” and whether they were represented as having a position of power in the revolutionary commune.

6.2.1 “Mothers” and “Sisters” Re-Defined

Accounts of female terrorists’ lives in Akatui Prison in a commune with revolutionary men provide much information about how the commune was organized, but very little is written about women’s position there. Spiridonova is probably the only author who touches upon this issue and describes her own position within the revolutionary family of Akatui Prison. How she represents her position in relation to her male comrades differs significantly from the representations of terrorist

941 See more about it in Maxwell 1990, 210-220.
women in the context of the revolutionary family in accounts of their political activism.

Spiridonova defines herself and Izmailovich as “elder sisters” in relation to a male revolutionary terrorist, Petro Sidorchuk (1884-1911), who was incarcerated in Akatui at the same time as them, although he was older than Spiridonova. According to the author, Sidorchuk respected, loved and “wholeheartedly obeyed” her and Izmailovich.942 Thus, Spiridonova shows herself and Izmailovich in a position of power in relation to Sidorchuk because of his behaviour around them. Although Spiridonova defines herself and Izmailovich as Sidorchuk’s elder “sisters,” she does not include in her account stories of her cheering up their little “brother,” which typically appeared in biographies of revolutionary “sisters” in narratives of their political activism. Spiridonova represents the role of sister differently from how it was represented in the biographies of female terrorists dedicated to their political activism, showing it as a position of power.

According to Spiridonova, Sidorchuk was not the only male political prisoner who recognized her authority. She writes about her relationship with another imprisoned PSR member, Semen Farashyants (1882-?), who, according to Spiridonova, “blindly accepted her authority” when they first met at Akatui.943 Although Spiridonova does not use the word “sister” in this case, she represents her relationship with Farashyants as similar to her relationship with Sidorchuk, as a relationship of an elder “sister,” in a position of authority, with her younger revolutionary “brother.”

In Spiridonova’s memoirs, particular attention is paid to her relationship with Egor Sozonov, an iconic male terrorist hero of the PSR. That relationship continued even after Spiridonova and the other female revolutionaries had left Akatui: she regularly exchanged letters with Sozonov until his death in 1910. In Spiridonova’s words:

> With him, every dispute was an exciting and interesting friendly quest for the best solution to the problem. He helped me personally more than once to extricate myself from a number of theoretical doubts of objective and sub-

942 "беззаветно подчинялся" (Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (14), 193).

943 Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (14), 201.
jective character, from unresolved and insoluble gnoseological problems of coordination of thinking and being, subject and object, to completely personal grubleil.\footnote{944} \footnote{945} In addition, Spiridonova notes that much space in the correspondence with Sozonov was devoted to discussing revolutionary tactics in prison.\footnote{946} Thus, Spiridonova represents her relationship with Sozonov as mainly based on mutual intellectual and political interests. She constructs them as equal parts of that intellectual relationship, where Sozonov is represented only as slightly superior, as an elder “brother.” Similar relationships between female PSR terrorists and revolutionary men are not part of revolutionary auto/biographies dedicated to women’s political activism. Spiridonova portrays herself as a revolutionary “sister” who is a member of the revolutionary brotherhood, equal to revolutionary men.

Authors of accounts of female revolutionaries’ lives in the all-female Maltsev Prison rarely use the words “mothers” and “sisters” to define each other’s roles in the commune, where there were no men. However, actions similar to those associated with revolutionary “mothers” and “sisters” in accounts of female terrorists’ political activism are sometimes mentioned even in these works.

As noted in the previous chapter, older women who took care of their comrades were defined as revolutionary “mothers” in accounts of female terrorists’ political activism. It is no wonder that Irina Kakhovskaya represents Sarra Dantsig, a woman in her thirties who was older than most female political prisoners,\footnote{947} who had a medical education and took care of sick comrades, as a motherly figure: “Still very

\footnote{944} “Grubleil” is the German word for “reflections” that Spiridonova uses in her account, which is otherwise written in Russian.
\footnote{945} “С ним вский спор был захватывающе интересным и дружным исканием сообща наилучшего решения вопроса. Лично мне он не один раз помогал выпутываться из ряда теоретических сомнений и объективного и субъективного характера, начиная с неразрешённой и неразрешимой гносеологической проблемы о координировании мышления и бытия, объекта и субъекта, и кончая совершенно личными grumbleil” (Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 3 (16), 122).
\footnote{946} Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 3 (16), 124.
\footnote{947} According to the statistical data collected by Radzilovskaya and Orestova, at the time of their arrest most political prisoners in Maltsev Prison were 21-30 years old (see Radzilovskaya F. & Orestova L. (1932), ‘Statisticheskie svedeniya o Nerchinskoj katorge (s 1906 po 1917 god),’ in Konstantinov, M.M. (1932) (ed.), Na zhenskoj katorge. Shornik vospominany, Moscow: Izdatelstvo VOPiS, 260).
young, it was due to her restraint, her staidness, that she looked older than she was, and, perhaps even because her attitude to the comrades was always coloured by maternal unselfishness. Even Spiridonova, in a letter to Sozonov, constructs Vera Shtolterfort (1883/4-1919), a former member of a PSR terrorist unit, in the motherly role because she, as Spiridonova puts it, took care of Austra Tiavajs (1888-?), an imprisoned anarcho-communist, as if the latter was her own child. Thus, both Dantsig and Shtolterfort are represented in accordance with the feminine ideal of a mother willing to sacrifice her interests for the family, as revolutionary “mothers” were constructed in biographical accounts of female terrorists’ political activism. As in these accounts, the motherly role lacks any power dimensions here.

The revolutionary women in Maltsev Prison were generally represented as eagerly taking care of their sick comrades. Female PSR terrorists were no exception here. However, none of the authors who have written about it represents the caretakers as mothers similar to how Kakhovskaya and Spiridonova construct Dantsig and Shtolterfort respectively. Among the former PSR terrorists who took care of their sick comrades, the memoirists particularly distinguish Dantsig, Benevskaya and Ezerskaya. They explain the women’s active participation in care-taking by their previous training in different medical professions, which made them useful to their sick comrades. In these accounts, the former terrorists are not at all represented in the feminizing role of the revolutionary “mother,” but are merely introduced as performing medical duties because of the absence of good medical care in prison.

As for the idea of revolutionary “sister” as a person who cheers up her comrades, such representations are present in some accounts of Maltsev prison. For example, Radzilovskaya’s and Orestova’s description of

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948 “Совсем молодая ещё, она, благодаря сдержанности, степенности, казалась старше, чем была, а, может быть, ещё и потому, что её отношения к товарищам бывали всегда окрашены материнским бескорыстием” (Kakhovskaya 1932, 93).
950 See more about Tiavajs in Politicheskaya katorga i ssylka 1934, 635.
951 GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 552, l. 52.
952 For the information about how the revolutionary women in Maltsev Prison took care of each other see Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 26; Metter 1932, 125.
953 Sukloff 1915, 180; Kakhovskaya 1932, 93; Zvereva 1932, 224; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 26; Metter 1932, 125, 128-129; Orestova 1932, 226; Pirogova 1932, 200.
Benevskaya in their memoirs reminds one of how Boris Savinkov constructed her as a revolutionary “sister” in his reminiscences about the Combat Organization: “Very attractive in communication, beautiful, with radiant blue eyes, blond curls, ringing cheerful laughter, she attracted many by her personality…”954 Radzilovskaya and Orestova construct a feminizing representation of Benevskaya as someone who was easy and pleasant to deal with, which was important for morale in the revolutionary commune. Orestova and Zvereva, in their biographies of Ezerskaya and Dantsig, also portray them as people who could create a pleasant atmosphere around themselves thanks to their good character.955 These authors, however, do not elaborate on the former terrorists’ feminine features in this context, and thus create more gender-neutral portrayals of them as revolutionary “sisters” than in the biographical accounts of female terrorists’ political activism.

Most often when the authors of accounts of the Maltsev commune write about relationships within the commune, they represent them similarly to how Spiridonova described her relationship with Sozonov, as friendship based on mutual intellectual and political interests.956 Former PSR terrorists Dantsig, Shkolnik and Fialka are directly defined in the auto/biographical accounts of their time in prison communes as people who valued their friendship with their fellow political prisoners.957 Thus, female PSR terrorists are represented as no different from other revolutionary women incarcerated in Maltsev Prison in their devotion to friendship with other revolutionaries. This focus on friendship and not family feeling among revolutionaries is, however, different from the accounts of female terrorists’ political activism. The memoirists represented revolutionary women, including female terrorists, not as members of the family, but rather as a circle of friends.

This myth of comradely harmony present in most memoirs of female prisoners from Maltsev Prison is quite different from similar accounts of relationships in all-male revolutionary communities at the same time. Badcock, for example, shows that contestation and hostility among male exiles from the Tutursky colony are prominent features of their

954 “Очень привлекательная в общении, красивая, с лучистыми синими глазами, белокурыми кудрями, звонким жизнерадостным смехом, она привлекала многих своей личностью…” (Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 35).
955 Orestova 1932, 225, 226; Zvereva 1932, 223.
956 See Kakhovskaya 1932, 87-88; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 36.
957 Sukloff 1915, 193, 209-210, 250, 251; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 50; Zvereva 1932, 223.
memoirs. Bitsenko and Metter are the only memoirists from Maltsev Prison who in their accounts questioned overall friendship in the prison commune and particularly wrote about female PSR terrorists in this context.

In her account of 1923, Bitsenko writes that revolutionary women lived in Maltsev Prison merely as good neighbours and directly characterizes the terrorist heroines of the Shesterka as unfriendly. Thus, Bitsenko questions the harmonious atmosphere in the Maltsev commune and represents PSR terrorist heroines among those responsible for it. Bitsenko implies that the women of the Shesterka did not always behave as imprisoned revolutionaries were expected to, which distorts the heroic representations of established revolutionary heroines. She also distinguishes herself from her former fellow PSR members and shows that she was different from them, which was particularly important after the trial of the Left SRs in 1922. Thus, Bitsenko questions the existence of a revolutionary commune unified on the basis of a family feeling or friendship and shows the revolutionary underground as divided. She, however, does not include the same narrative in the 1932 version of her memoirs, which evinces her wish not to distort the myth of friendship that by that time was established in most memoirs of life in Maltsev Prison.

The changes in Bitsenko’s narrative can be connected to the memoirs of Metter, who also questions friendship in the Maltsev commune and indirectly represents Bitsenko, an educated woman, among those who were unable to create the atmosphere of friendship in the commune. According to Metter, friendship of educated revolutionary women with members of the commune from a working class background was insincere and artificial. Metter writes particularly about Maria Shkolnik, who had close personal relationships with educated revolutionary women, but could not share their intellectual interests because of her modest background and lack of education. Metter writes here about the women of the Shesterka since Shkolnik was one of them and established close relationships with the other members of the group. Thus, in this case, educated female PSR terrorists are represented as unable to have

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958 Badcock 2016, 83. Shtakser writes that even semi-idyllic relationships in the revolutionary underground depicted in later autobiographies can be questioned, thanks to letters written by revolutionaries during their activism, since they show all the petty squabbles that broke out there, as in any human community (see Shtakser 2014, 86).

959 "недружная шестёрка" (Bitsenko 1923, 193).

960 Metter 1932, 122-123.
a sincere friendship with Shkolnik because of her low social origin, while Shkolnik, a woman of modest social origin, is represented as sincerely trying to be friends with them. Unlike Bitsenko, however, Metter, does not question mutual friendships of educated women of the Shesterka; she represents them as a group united by their interest in "thick" books\textsuperscript{961}, and thus shows their relationship as based on common intellectual and political interests, as most memoirists represented it. In her interpretation, female terrorists were unable to overcome existing class differences, and as a result, did not behave in accordance with the principles of equality that existed in the revolutionary underground.\textsuperscript{962}

To sum up, despite some variation in the narratives constructed by different memoirists, what unites them is the absence of feminizing representations of female PSR terrorists as revolutionary "mothers" and "sisters." Most often, the predominantly female authors of the accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile create more gender-neutral representations of these women in the context of the prison commune, which demonstrates that revolutionary auto/biographies written by women were different from similar works authored by men.

6.2.2 A Female Terrorist as a Leader?

While describing the revolutionary family at Akatui in 1906, the female terrorists represent Grigory Gershuni, former leader of the Combat Organization, as a leader of the commune who had a strong influence on his fellow political prisoners. They explain Gershuni’s dominant position in the Akatui commune by his ability to communicate with different kinds of people, his extensive knowledge and the educational work that he conducted in the entire prison.\textsuperscript{963} Thus, Gershuni was constructed as a father figure, a mentor who influenced both men and women. Such a representation of Gershuni was not questioned by any memoirists because of the tendency to mythologe Gershuni, which became especially prominent in texts written by PSR members after his

\textsuperscript{961} Metter 1932, 122.

\textsuperscript{962} In her analysis of political prisoners’ memoirs, Badcock noticed that even male prisoners did not form a coherent group, but were divided into multiple subgroups based on their political affiliations, regional or ethnic identities, or occupation (Badcock 2016, 47).

\textsuperscript{963} Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssyylka, No. 1 (8), 172; Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssyylka, No. 2 (15), 168-171; Shkolnik 1927, 304-305; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 61.
premature death in 1908. Gershuni was standardized as the ideal leader of the revolutionary family in the prison commune. As is shown in this section, features attributed by memoirists to Gershuni were also mentioned in portrayals of some female PSR terrorists incarcerated in Maltsev Prison. Moreover, it was shown in the previous section that Spiridonova represented herself and Izmailovich in a position of power in the Akatui commune. For this reason, it is interesting to see whether female PSR terrorists were represented as having a position of power even in Maltsev Prison and if any were constructed as leader of the commune, as Gershuni was constructed in accounts of Akatui.

The question of leadership in the Maltsev commune was touched upon by many memoirists. Interestingly, even this question was interpreted differently by different memoirists in the absence of an established discursive practice of discussing the issue. According to Kakhovskaya, the female commune in Maltsev Prison was a union of equal individuals. She claims that there was no leader in the commune. In her memoirs, Kakhovskaya does not distinguish female PSR terrorists as different in their power position from other members of the commune. Bitsenko, however, writes that female political prisoners saw the women of the Shesterka as “elders” exactly because of their heroic status as political terrorists and because they were the founders of the commune. Bitsenko also makes it clear that the authority of the former terrorists was questioned by some of their companions because of the rules that the members of the Shesterka established regarding relationships between political prisoners and the prison administration. However, Bitsenko also explains that complaints about these rules came only from so-called “accidental revolutionaries,” i.e., those who ended up in Siberia because of participation in political activism, but who were not truly devoted to the cause of revolution. In this way, she shows that the members of the Shesterka had the position of authority among genuine members of the revolutionary family, and thus could be seen as leaders in the commune that they had created. In her account, Paulina Metter writes that the position of leadership in the commune belonged to women of the intelligentsia, without distinguishing any leader in particular. On the other hand, she specifically writes that Shkolnik was not one of the leaders since she could not find her place among the educated.

964 On mythologization of Gershuni see Geifman 1993, 52.
965 Kakhovskaya 1932, 87.
966 Bitsenko 1932, 100.
967 Bitsenko 1932, 101.
women. In her interpretation, only female revolutionaries who had acquired education before their imprisonment were leaders of the commune. Thus, Metter does not relate participation in political terrorism to leadership in the commune.

None of the authors of memoirs of Maltsev Prison, however, introduces individual revolutionary women (and female terrorists among them) as leaders of the commune similar in their power and influence to Gershuni. Even women who were elected to the positions of power as starostas of the commune were represented as people whose authority was questioned by their comrades. Bitsenko, who was elected a political starosta with the main duty to communicate with the prison administration on behalf of the commune, writes at length of complaints that she heard from various members of the commune. Another position, economic starosta, which implied responsibility for managing money and buying foodstuffs for the commune, was at different times occupied by the following PSR members connected to political terrorism: Olga Pollyak (1878-?), Fialka, Benevkaya, Elizaveta Zvereva

968 Metter 1932, 122-123.
969 The different interpretations of the above-mentioned authors about leadership in the commune seem to depend on their social backgrounds and place in the commune. Kakhovskaya, who was raised in an upper-class family and did not want to be associated with her privileged estate, wanted to see the Maltsev commune as a union of equal members based on socialist ideals. Metter, who was illiterate when she entered the commune, and according to her account, felt herself aloof and lonely among educated revolutionary women (Metter 1932, 122), considered that category of women who kept together because of their intellectual interests to be the leaders. Bitsenko, who was herself a member of the Shesterka, as well as Spiridonova in her account of Akatui Prison, considered herself and the other members of the group to have the position of power in the commune. Such variation of opinions shows that in the absence of a standard according to which the authors of revolutionary auto/biographies were expected to write about women’s position in the prison commune, memoirists chose to introduce their own opinions on the matter.
970 Starosta is a Russian word, which means “praepostor,” a person with position of leadership in a group of people.
971 Bitsenko 1932, 100-101.
972 Both editions of the biographical reference book Politicheskaya katorga i sylka include only Sofiya Pollyak, who served her term in Maltsev Prison (see Politicheskaya katorga i sylka. Biografichesky spravochnik 1929, 437; Politicheskaya katorga i sylka 1934, 506-507). The list of women imprisoned in Nerchinsk also includes Sofiya Pollyak (see Konstantinov 1932 (ed.), 265). It is possible that ”Olga” was Pollyak’s underground nickname, which Radzilovskaya and Orestova chose to use in their account, just as they refer to Anna Pigit with her underground nickname, ”Dina” (see Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 38). Metter also writes about Olga Pollyak (Metter 1932, 125). Pollyak was a PSR member who stored and transported explosives, and later worked in a bomb laboratory.
(1872-?),973 and Zinaida Bronshtein (1884-?).974 However, different authors show that their formal position of power, based on the responsibilities that the women bore, did not automatically lead to acceptance of their authority by their comrades. According to memoirs of Maltsev Prison, economic *starostas* were constantly questioned by the political prisoners who did not agree with the measures that they undertook in their formal positions of power.975 Thus, despite their official position of power in the commune, female PSR terrorists who were elected *starostas* are not represented in the revolutionary auto/biographies as accepted by all members of the commune as leaders.

Memoirs of life in Maltsev Prison introduce some terrorist women as respected by their peers for the same things, according to the memoirists, that made Gershuni into the leader of the commune of Akatui: an ability to approach different kinds of people and eagerness to share their knowledge. For example, biographers of Ezerskaya write about her talent for attracting and organizing people around her, both in prison and in exile. They especially highlight her intelligence and knowledge that attracted many.976 Spiridonova even introduces Ezerskaya as a mentor to the younger generation of revolutionaries:

> Already elderly, stout, very cheerful, always conspicuous, reading with someone, teaching someone, always with a joke and interesting conversation on her lips...

> (...) In Yakutsk, she was the same cheerful and excellent companion for all, as well as for us, intelligent and interesting to talk to, in many ways an indispensable assistant to young people...977

973 Elizaveta Zvereva was a PSR member sentenced to *katoga* for her work in a party bomb laboratory (see more about Zvereva in Politicheskaya katorga i ssylka 1934, 234).
974 Zinaida Bronshtein was a PSR member sentenced to *katoga* for armed resistance during an arrest at a bomb laboratory (see more about Bronshtein in Politicheskaya katorga i ssylka 1934, 84).
975 Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 24-25; Bitsenko 1932, 100.
976 X 1915; Orestova 1932, 226, 228, 230.
977 “Уже пожилая, полная, очень бодрая, всегда заметная, с кем-нибудь читающая, кому-нибудь преподающая, всегда с шуткой и интересным разговором на устах... (...) В Якутске она была тем же бодрым и прекрасным товарищем для всех, как и у нас, умным и интересным собеседником, а для молодёжи незаменимым во многом помощником...” (Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 2 (15), 179).
No female PSR terrorists were represented as a mentor figure in accounts of their political activism in the way that Spiridonova introduces Ezerskaya. Moreover, the characteristics given to Ezerskaya in memoirs of Maltsev Prison are reminiscent of how Gershuni was represented by memoirists as the leader of the revolutionary commune in Akatui Prison. However, none of the memoirists introduced Ezerskaya as an unquestionable leader like Gershuni.

Another person represented by memoirists as a potential leader was Benevskaya. Radzilovskaya and Orestova describe her as capable of influencing other female prisoners with the ideas of mysticism, search for God and non-resistance that distinguished her worldview. According to the authors, “she attracted many by her personality, and imperceptibly, some fell under the influence of her worldview, especially since the ideas that she embodied infiltrated from the outside then as well.” 978 Radzilovskaya and Orestova, however, do not represent Benevskaya as leader of the commune, but show that she was popular with only some of its members. Moreover, similar representations of Benevskaya are not present in other memoirs of Maltsev Prison. In the accounts written by Bitsenko, Benevskaya is not represented as a potential leader at all. Bitsenko creates a very ironic portrayal of Benevskaya, whose ideology she calls the “limit of originality” and questions her devotion to both Christianity and political terrorism.979 This case, as well, shows that in the absence of any established discursive practice of writing about life in prison and exile, authors of memoirs of Maltsev Prison eagerly included in their accounts their own opinion on different subjects, which led to a great variation of narratives of some issues.

Although both Ezerskaya and Benevskaya were represented as possessing the same qualities introduced as the cornerstones of Gershuni’s influence on his comrades, none of them was constructed as a recognized leader of the commune, the way Gershuni was portrayed in accounts of Akatui. Ezerskaya was only represented as a mentor to young revolutionaries; Benevskaya was only represented as a mentor to revolutionaries who revised their ideological beliefs in prison. This demon-

978 "она привлекала многих своей личностью, и незаметно некоторые подпадали под влияние её мировоззрения, тем более, что идеи, которые она воплощала, просачивались тогда с воли” (Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 35).
979 "предел своеобразия" (Bitsenko 1923, 195). Bitsenko even expressed a similar opinion about Beevskaya and her ideology in her revised memoirs (Bitsenko 1932, 105).
strates that, as in accounts of female terrorists’ political activism, a narrative of the female leader was not one that often appeared in the auto/biographical accounts of female PSR terrorists.

6.3 In the Commune: Everyday Life

In the 19th century, communes were seen by revolutionaries as “schools of practical socialism,” where the members shared all property and work and lived simple lives as common Russian people.980 Similar ideas were even behind the commune organized by revolutionary women in Maltsev Prison, the revolutionary heroines were praised for their ability to live simple lives in accordance with the principles of socialism. Imprisoned revolutionary women dedicated all their free time to studies. Educating themselves and others for the future revolutionary fight during enforced idleness in prison was also seen as a sign of the devoted revolutionary, and thus was constructed in terms of revolutionary heroism. In addition, while in prison members of the revolutionary commune lived side by side with the common people, political prisoners of a low social origin, who were not members of any political parties, and criminal prisoners. In this part of the chapter, I show how female PSR terrorists were represented within the commune as performing everyday work and studying/teaching, as well as how their relationship with the “people” whom they met in prison were constructed there.

6.3.1 Heroism of Everyday Life

The life path of revolutionary heroes and heroines was expected to be one filled with revolutionary battles and heroic events, but nothing heroic happens in everyday life. As a result, everyday life was not part of the revolutionary auto/biographies dedicated to revolutionary heroes’ and heroines’ political activism.981 Everyday life, however, became a part of the accounts of female revolutionaries’ lives in Maltsev Prison. All memoirists share the opinion that nothing extraordinary happened during their incarceration, since the women were far from the centre of the revolutionary fight, and their struggle with the prison administration

981 See more about the contradictions between the heroic narrative and descriptions of everyday life in works about the revolutionary underground in Mogilner 1999, 98.
was not as dramatic as what was taking place in male prisons. As a result, memoirists tried to find heroism of individuals and the whole commune in the everyday situations that they described.

In her introductory chapter to *Na zhenskoi katorge*, Vera Figner, who had her own experience of long-time incarceration, writes about living together with other political prisoners as a challenge, since individuals had to subordinate their own needs to the rules established in the commune. The rules of communal life were based on the principles of socialism, the driving force in revolutionary women’s political activism. Thus, obeying the rules of the commune was considered proof of an individual’s devotion to socialism and ability to live in accordance with its principles. Thus, it was seen as an expression of heroic revolutionary behaviour in everyday prison life.

Figner shows that imprisoned PSR members (and former terrorists among them) met the challenge of obeying the rules of the commune: according to her, only anarchists disobeyed the rules in jails. In Maltsev Prison, according to Figner, all political prisoners, including female PSR terrorists, manifested behaviour that was expected of imprisoned revolutionary heroines.

However, memoirists who were incarcerated in Maltsev Prison, show that such complete devotion to the rules of the commune was not always the case. Bitsenko, Kakhovskaya, and Radzilovskaya and Orestova write that some members of the commune protested the established rules and were even eager to live independently. Bitsenko connects the wishes of some prisoners to live outside the commune to the general mood of denial of authorities and principles that spread in Maltsev Prison after 1907. Bitsenko’s attitude to their mood was extremely negative, since she saw it as a proof of “terrible signs of an emerging decay of the revolutionary as a fighter for socialism.” Bitsenko implies that

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982 See for example Bitsenko 1923, 192; Bitsenko 1932, 96; Kakhovskaya 1932, 80; Pirogova 1932, 179; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 44-45.
984 Figner 1932, 5-6.
985 Bitsenko 1923, 198-199; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 25, 36; Bitsenko 1932, 100-101.
986 “жуткие признаки зарождающегося разложения революционера, как борца за социализм”(Bitsenko 1923, 193; Bitsenko 1932, 104). See more about the mood of denial of the revolutionary authorities in Maltsev Prison in Knight 1979, 158; Maxwell 1990, 216.
revolutionary heroines sincerely devoted to the ideas of socialism could not be among those who wanted to leave the commune. Bitsenko does not give the names of women who wanted to be independent, but Radzilovskaya and Orestova name in their memoirs Bronshtein, a PSR member who worked in the field of political terrorism, as the only person who actually left the commune for a short time.\footnote{According to the authors, Polina Shakerman, an anarchist communist, was the person who had intentions similar to Bronshtein’s, but did not actually leave the commune (Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 25).} The authors, however, express more tolerance for ideological quests going on in the commune and do not represent Bronshtein’s decision as a betrayal of her revolutionary identity. Radzilovskaya and Orestova make it clear that Bronshtein soon returned to the commune, thus showing that in the end, she proved her ability to live in accordance with the ideals of socialism. The accounts of Figner, as well as Radzilovskaya and Orestova, show their wish to represent the members of the commune, including the female terrorists, as devoted to the ideals of socialism to the end, while the account by Bitsenko, who was now seeing her former comrades as political opponents, represents them as doubting socialism, and thus not behaving as revolutionary heroines were expected to.

The life that revolutionary women led in the commune of Maltsev Prison could hardly be compared to the heroic deeds that they undertook prior to their imprisonment. Memoirists write at length about household duties that revolutionary women performed while they were in Siberia, as well as about other types of work that they engaged in during the First World War.\footnote{Bitsenko 1923, 193; Kakhovskaya 1932, 86; Bitsenko 1932, 114-116; Pirogova 1932, 190, 198; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 36-39.} Kakhovskaya represents these household activities as an interesting and unusual experience for imprisoned revolutionary women, including former PSR terrorists: “We diligently washed, scraped, bleached, organized grandiose laundries that made us dead tired because of lack of experience, kept watch with pleasure...”\footnote{“Мы усердно мыли, скоблили, белили, устраивали грандиозные стирки, от которых с непривычки уставали до смерти, с увлечением дежурили...” (Kakhovskaya 1932, 86)} In the same vein, even Radzilovskaya and Orestova write that revolutionary women felt themselves “heroines of the day” after a long day of doing laundry.\footnote{“мы чувствовали себя героинями дня” (Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 38).} Thus, the memoirists represent revolutionary women as eagerly performing household duties and entirely capable of living like common people. Female terrorists are not distinguished in this case.
from other revolutionary women, and thus are represented as eagerly living their lives like common people.

In both cases, the authors represent members of the prison commune as people who were not used to housework. This implies that the narratives that they constructed represented only experiences of revolutionary women of upper- and middle-class backgrounds, as they themselves were. These memoirists also created vivid portrayals of former terrorists of an upper-class background performing housework the way ordinary Russian women did. Here is how, for example, Kakhovskaya describes Alexandra Izmailovich, an aristocratic general’s daughter, taking care of criminal prisoners’ children, who also lived in Maltsev Prison: “In the summer, from early morning to evening roll call, A.I., tanned as a boot, with close-cropped hair, in some prehistoric, thick knee-long skirt, fumbled in scorching heat with her bare, tanned team.” Izmailovich is constructed here as the opposite of the upper-class woman who she was by birth. Her suntan did not fit the ideal of pale beauty that existed at that time. Instead, it resembled the appearance of a peasant woman tanned after working in the fields. Izmailovich’s cropped hair was symbolic of her radical revolutionary identity and was the opposite of the ideal upper-class beauty as well. Thus, Izmailovich was constructed as a woman who left the social class of oppressors that she belonged to by birth. As mentioned above, leaving the upper class was essential for the revolutionary identity of women from the privileged estates. Moreover, Kakhovskaya constructs Izmailovich in this case as a diligent working woman, a female ideal that was dominant in early Soviet Russia, where Kakhovskaya’s memoirs were written. Thus, this portrayal of Izmailovich is even

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991 Kakhovskaya was born in an upper-class family (Leontiev 1996c, 245). Lidiya Orestova was the daughter of a priest (see more about Orestova in Politicheskaya katorga i sylka 1934, 460). Fanny Radzilovskaya was born in a merchant family (see more about Radzilovskaya in Politicheskaya katorga i sylka 1934, 527). Thus, Orestova and Radzilovskaya can be seen as representatives of the middle class.

992 Aleksandra Izmailovich.

993 “Летом с раннего утра до вечерней поверки А.И., загорелая, как сапог, стриженная, в какой-то доисторической толстой юбке по колено, возилась на самом пекле со своей голой загорелой командой” (Kakhovskaya 1932, 92).

994 See more about the beauty ideal in Yukina 2007, 134.

995 See more about the symbolism of cropped hair in Mondry 2004, 490; Yukina 2007, 134, 139.

996 Hoogenboom 1996, 85.

997 On the ideal of diligent working woman in Soviet Russia see Gradskova, Yulia (1999), ‘Sovetsky totalitarizm i “osvobozhdenie zhenschiny”’ k problem identichnosti
adapted to the Bolshevik standard of representing the revolutionary heroines in accordance with the working-class ideal.998

A similar fascination with revolutionary women’s abilities to perform household duties, however, is absent in the accounts of memoirists born in working-class families. For example, Maria Shkolnik and Revekka Fialka, both offspring of poor Jewish parents, do not write about that side of their lives at all in their memoirs of Maltsev Prison. Unlike her upper-class companions, Bitsenko, who was born in a peasant family, writes about her unwillingness to perform the household duties assigned to her. Bitsenko defines herself as a “pitiful slave of the household” when she was forced to cook instead of reading a book.999 Unlike upper-class women, Bitsenko does not represent performance of household duties as a heroic act. Instead, she chooses to highlight her higher level of education, which distinguished her from other young women from peasant families, and her personality of the intellectual who prefers to read instead of performing household duties. Being one of the common people by birth, Bitsenko did not see any need to construct herself as a diligent worker; on the contrary, she felt a need to confirm her educational level, which was not a self-evident characteristic in her case. All these examples show that female terrorists from the working class did not consider performing household duties a form of heroism, and that heroism of everyday life was only part of the narratives created by upper- and middle-class women about female revolutionaries with a background similar to theirs.

6.3.2 Education

Political prisoners considered studies during incarceration to be a sign of devotion to revolutionary ideals. Historian Margaret Maxwell quotes Spiridonova’s opinion that only truly dedicated revolutionaries found ways to expand their knowledge and revolutionary skills by teaching and studying in prison.1000 The reason for this attitude toward studies was that they were seen as preparation for the future revolutionary fight that imprisoned revolutionaries hoped to participate in after serving their terms, and thus were considered to be extremely important for

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998 See more about the construction of the female Bolsheviks in Jones Hemenway 2006.
999 “жалкий раб общежития” (Bitsenko 1932, 103).
1000 Maxwell 1990, 217.
their development as revolutionaries. It is no wonder that memoirs of different prisons in pre-revolutionary Russia often include narratives on studies of political prisoners. In her memoirs, Praskovia Ivanovskaya mentions the regular studies of her fellow cellmates in a St. Petersburg jail. Pirogova mentions studies of art history that women in Riga prison engaged in. According to memoirists from Maltsev Prison, the women dedicated all their free time to reading and studying in order to improve their educational level. Studies in prison could be conducted individually, when reading books, or collectively, when participating in study circles, where political prisoners with a higher level of education were expected to share their knowledge with others. Women with a lower level of education were expected to improve themselves in these study circles.

The individual studies of revolutionary women were rarely described in the memoirs of Maltsev Prison. Only Bitsenko, in her account of 1932, mentions specifically that she read the history of philosophy by Kuno Fischer. Thus, she evinces that she used her time in prison to improve her educational level, as was expected of a devoted revolutionary. Most often, however, instead of writing about individual studies of revolutionary women, memoirists elaborate on the library that the prisoners collected. The library is represented in these accounts as a common intellectual treasure which any member of the commune could use. According to Pirogova’s memoirs as well as Radzilovskaya’s and Orestova’s account, the library consisted of a few hundreds volumes that included scholarly, scientific, and fiction books, in both Russian and foreign languages. Such eagerness to write about the quantity and quality of the books that imprisoned female revolutionaries had access to is reminiscent of Hoogenboom’s conclusion that Russian revolutionaries equated possession of the right kind of books with knowledge. In addition, numerous descriptions of the reading habits of members of the Maltsev commune found in the same memoirs imply

1001 Kakhovskaya 1932, 84; Pirogova 1932, 199. On the importance of studies in the revolutionary underground see Shtakser 2014, 32-33.
1002 Ivanovskaya 1929, 160.
1003 Pirogova 1932, 193.
1004 See for example Pirogova 1932, 181; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 29; Metter 1932, 122; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 61; Fialka, ’Avtobiografiya’.
1005 Bitsenko 1932, 115.
1006 Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 30-31; Pirogova 1932, 180.
that all the revolutionary women truly read the volumes that the commune possessed.

According to historian N.F. Vasilieva, even male political prisoners incarcerated at the Novotroitsk mines in Siberia represented themselves in memoirs written in early Soviet times as eagerly reading after a long day of work despite fatigue. These men, however, mostly mention reading fiction.\textsuperscript{1008} Thus, women were different, since according to Radzilovskaya and Orestova, works of fiction were only occasionally read by female prisoners.\textsuperscript{1009} Like other memoirists, they name mostly scientific and scholarly books as examples of the reading in the commune.\textsuperscript{1010} In other words, while revolutionary men did not feel obliged to show their knowledge by naming scholarly literature that they had read, the women considered it important to highlight that their reading was intended to provide knowledge, not entertainment. This too reminds one of the tendency identified by Hoogenboom for revolutionary women, but not men, to provide long lists of scholarly books that they had read in order to prove their high level of education.\textsuperscript{1011}

Particular attention in many of the accounts is devoted to the origin of the books that the library of the Maltsev commune contained. Pirogova as well as Radzilovskaya and Orestova write that most of the books were brought to Maltsev Prison by the members of the \textit{Shesterka}.\textsuperscript{1012} Radzilovskaya and Orestova also write that many books, especially those in foreign languages, were sent to Benevskaya by her family.\textsuperscript{1013} Thus, the memoirists show that most books came from PSR terrorist heroines, representing these women as the providers of knowledge to other members of the commune. This is how female PSR terrorists were constructed by memoirists as intellectual leaders of the Maltsev commune.

The intellectual leadership of the female terrorists was further confirmed by the memoirists who listed some of the women as leaders of different study circles, where they eagerly shared their knowledge with their less educated comrades as revolutionary heroines were expected to do. According to Fialka, Bitsenko lectured to the whole Akatui Prison

\textsuperscript{1008} Vasilieva 2008, 552.
\textsuperscript{1009} Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 31.
\textsuperscript{1010} See for example Bitsenko 1923, 194, 198, 202-203; Bitsenko 1932, 105, 107, 111-112; Kakhovskaya 1932, 81-84; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 30-31.
\textsuperscript{1011} Hoogenboom 1996, 88.
\textsuperscript{1012} Pirogova 1932, 180; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 31.
\textsuperscript{1013} Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 31.
on the peasant movement, land issue and political economy while the women of the Shesterka were incarcerated there together with men.1014 Different memoirists mention that Benevskaya taught natural history, Izmailovich headed a study circle in literature, Ezerskaya and Shtolterfort taught French, Bronshtein led a philosophical circle, and Dantsig a massage circle in the Maltsev commune.1015

Memoirists who represented the women from the Maltsev commune as eagerly studying and teaching were among the best educated members of the commune. Metter’s memoirs, however, portray studies there in a different light and distort the harmonious picture of overall studies painted by other memoirists. According to her, women of lower social origin with less education than most PSR political prisoners were lonely and aloof in the commune. In particular, Metter writes that despite her close personal relationship with PSR terrorist heroines, Shkolnik, the offspring of a poor Jewish family with no formal education, was unable to understand the “thick” books being read by them.1016 Thus, Metter’s memoirs confirm the statements of other memoirists on the importance of books in the commune, but at the same time limit that importance only to educated women who were capable of understanding them.

Even the study circles are represented by Metter differently from other memoirists. According to her, not all educated revolutionary women shared their knowledge with their less educated comrades.1017 Metter does not name the women who, according to her, did not want to share their knowledge with others. Furthermore, Radzilovskaya and Orestova include in their narrative an episode that confirms Metter’s portrayal. They write about the former members of PSR terrorist units, Bronshtein and Shtolterfort, who hid Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s Notes from Underground, since they thought that not everyone was capable of understanding the book, and thus not everyone was worthy of reading it.1018

1014 GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 61.
1015 Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (14), 203; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 29-30; Zvereva 1932, 223; Orestova 1932, 226, 231. Historian V.N. Maksimova, in her article about the participation of exiled revolutionary women in the educational system of Siberia, writes that Ezerskaya was a popular private French teacher even when she was exiled in Yakutsk (see Maksimova V.N. (2011a), 'Ssylnye revolyutsionerki v sfere obrazovaniya Vostochnoi Sibiri (1907-1917 gg.),' in Problemy socialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya Sibiri, No. 3 (5), 63).
1016 Metter 1932, 122.
1017 Metter 1932, 124.
1018 Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 27.
Thus, Radzilovskaya and Orestova show that some female PSR terrorists did not always follow the unwritten rules of the commune. The authors, however, represent this event as an exception to the rule and do not evaluate or condemn Bronshtein’s and Shtolterfort’s actions. Thus, they avoid highlighting the former terrorists’ failure to behave as revolutionary heroines were expected to and show that such action was not acceptable in the commune.

Metter’s critical attitude toward educated women of the intelligentsia confirms the findings of historians about the existence of a rift between the intelligentsia and working class in the revolutionary underground, which resulted in working-class revolutionaries being suspicious of representatives of the intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{1019} However, other memoirists of modest social origin with a lower level of education do not write critically of studies in the commune. In her memoirs, unlike her upper- and middle-class companions, Shkolnik does not mention studies at all. Instead, she elaborates on time passing slowly while she “circled aimlessly … small prison yard.”\textsuperscript{1020} This demonstrates that Shkolnik did not try to upgrade her level of education while in prison, but did not want to represent herself as different in this respect from her more educated comrade, so she chose not to mention educational activities in the Maltsev commune at all.

Another female terrorist of the Shesterka from a working-class background, Fialka, writes in her autobiography about the studies in Maltsev Prison similarly to other authors: “In prison, all studied and helped others to study. We tried as much as possible to keep up with life and with those who were free.”\textsuperscript{1021} In one of her letters to Sozonov, Spiridonova describes Fialka as follows: “She has not studied for almost a year. Absolutely cannot concentrate. Has completely lost interest in books. Some kind of apathy. Hangs out in the yard, along the corridor, talks, jokes and is bored to death.”\textsuperscript{1022} On the one hand, this description reminds one of how Metter describes the inability of women with a lower

\textsuperscript{1019} See more about it in Shtakser 2014, 12, 30-33, 114-116. On the representation of the intelligentsia by authors of working-class origin see Shkliarevsky, Gennady (2000), “Constructing the "Other": Representations of the Educated Elite by Authors From the Lower Classes in Late Imperial Russia,” Jahrbrücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, (H. 4), 511-527.
\textsuperscript{1020} Sukloff 1915, 189, 191.
\textsuperscript{1021} “В тюрьме все учились и помогали другим учиться. Старайлись как только это возможно не отстать от жизни, от воли” (Fialka, ‘Avtobiografiya’).
\textsuperscript{1022} “Она почти целый год не занимается. Совершенно не может сосредоточиться. Совершенно потеряла интерес к книгам. Апатия какая-то.
level of education to study because of their difficulties in understanding the “thick” books and not having help with it. On the other hand, the way Spiridonova described Fialka’s mode of behaviour reminds one of how Shkolnik describes her own time in prison. In other words, like other working-class women, Fialka was not able to find pleasure in reading and discussing the “thick” books that women of the intelligentsia were so fond of. However, she does not mention it in her autobiography in order not to undermine her own image of a devoted revolutionary, as well as the image of the Maltsev commune as an intellectual community based on overall friendship and mutual help.

Spiridonova’s letter to Sozonov proves that women of the intelligentsia in the Maltsev commune were aware of the situation of their less educated comrades, but chose not to mention it in their memoirs. Even in her account of life in Akatui Prison, Spiridonova observes that the experience of prison was borne best by the intelligentsia, who took imprisonment as an opportunity to study and read. According to her, however, the inactivity affected working-class prisoners negatively: it distorted and disfigured their entire understanding of life. The observations provided by Spiridonova in this case referred to male workers in Akatui Prison. However, she does not make similar observations when she discusses those female companions in Maltsev Prison who were less educated than her and other intellectuals. This shows that Spiridonova did not want to undermine the revolutionary identity of female terrorists from working-class backgrounds, who for different reasons did not study during their incarceration.

Thus, the sources provide evidence that female PSR terrorists from a working-class background did not participate in studying as they were expected to, and so they did not behave as revolutionary heroines were expected to behave in prison. However, most memoirs of women’s life in Maltsev Prison omit these facts in order not to undermine their images of respected revolutionary heroines. Moreover, most memoirists chose not to state that uneducated women from working-class backgrounds had a different position in the commune from educated upper- and middle-class women in order not to highlight the inability of female revolutionaries from the privileged estates to overcome class differences in the commune.

Болтается по двору, по коридору, разговаривает, шутит и смертельно скучает” (GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 552, l. 19-ob.)

1023 Spiridonova 1925, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (14), 188-189.
6.3.3 Meeting the “People”

It has been seen in the previous chapter that female PSR terrorists were often represented as “mothers” and “elder sisters” in their relationship with the common people, whom they enlightened and protected from the atrocities of the authorities in the course of their political activism. In prison, “the people,” in the eyes of political prisoners, were represented by two groups: on the one hand, the representatives of the lower classes, who were not members of any political parties, but were arrested for political reasons; on the other hand, the criminal prisoners. In their accounts of life in Maltsev Prison, revolutionary women do not define themselves as “mothers” and “sisters” of the criminals since, as observed by Badcock, imprisoned revolutionaries attempted to distinguish themselves from ordinary political prisoners in their memoirs. However, the authors of these memoirs make it clear that revolutionary women made an effort to enlighten and help both groups of “the people” that they met in prison.

Female PSR terrorists are often represented as people who made the effort to enlighten other prisoners. For example, in her memoirs, Spiridonova mentions Izmailovich’s educational work with a large group of soldiers, sailors and workers in Akatui Prison. According to Kakhovskaya as well as Radzilovskaya and Orestova, when the female revolutionaries were later sent to Maltsev Prison, they tried to teach criminals the basics of literacy, but this was soon forbidden by the prison administration. According to the memoirists, the revolutionary women continued taking care of the criminal prisoners even after they were prohibited from educating them; they provided medical and material help as well as writing letters for illiterate criminal women. Some female PSR terrorists are visible in accounts of the work with

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1024 Badcock 2016, 47. Interestingly, Holmgren also identifies such a tendency in the memoirs of political prisoners from the Stalin era: they judge criminals according to implicit intelligentsia criteria of cultural literacy, altruism, industry, and sexual modesty. They often represent themselves as educators, spokespersons, and moral exemplars for the non-elite (see more about it in Holmgren 1994, 134-135).

1025 Spiridonova 1925, in *Katorga i issylka*, No. 1 (14), 203.

1026 Kakhovskaya 1932, 91; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 39-43. Although none of the memoirists writes about it explicitly, it is possible to assume that educational work with criminals was forbidden because, as historian Dmitry Myasnikov states, the attempts of political prisoners to enlighten criminals often was intended to agitate and attract them to the political parties (Myasnikov, Dmitry (2007), 'Kulturno-prosvetitelskaya deyatelnost politicheskikh zaklyuchennykh v Akatuiskoi tyurme Nerchinskoi katorgi,' in *Vestnik IRGTU*, No. 1, s. 184-186).

1027 Kakhovskaya 1932, 91; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 39-43.
criminals in Maltsev Prison. According to Radzilovskaya and Orestova, it was Benevskaya who wrote letters for criminal women most often, despite her crippled hands. Izmailovich is mentioned by a few authors as the one who took care of and educated the children of criminal women. Thus, former terrorists are represented in these accounts as eagerly and successfully taking care of the “people”, thus proving their devotion to the people’s cause. It is reminiscent of how female PSR terrorists were represented as “mothers” of the common people, whom they enlightened and protected from the authorities, although in accounts of the women’s lives in prison, they are not defined as such. Thus, the memoirists showed that despite being incarcerated, the revolutionary women and female terrorists among them continued working for the cause of the revolution as they had while they were still free. By mentioning Benevskaya’s crippled hands, the memoirists even show that her active participation in working with criminals was a form of self-sacrifice, which went hand in hand with revolutionary heroism.

This idealistic picture of female political prisoners’ work with the “people,” however, is questioned in both of Bitsenko’s accounts. In her memoirs of 1923, she writes that living side by side with common people imprisoned for political crimes in Akatui demonstrated to her and Shkolnik, among others, their inability to approach this group:

It turned out that it was not enough to be a teacher, a propagandist, a good comrade, willing to share one’s own knowledge. We had to possess something else besides that.

It is necessary to have some other qualities, to be able to accept each comrade such as he is in his everyday environment, with all his demands, large and small.

In this case, Bitsenko represents PSR members, including female terrorists, as a political group that was far from the masses and could not understand their needs. Similar accusations were often directed by Bolsheviks at Bitsenko’s former party. Thus, Bitsenko undermines the

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1028 Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 41.
1029 Kakhovskaya 1932, 91-92; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 41-42.
1030 “Оказалось, мало быть учителем, пропагандистом, хорошим товарищем, охотно делящимся своими знаниями. Надо было сверх этого еще чем-то обладать. Надо иметь еще какие-то данные, быть способным принять каждого товарища со всем его содержанием, таки, как он есть в будничной обстановке, со всеми его запросами, большими и маленькими” (Bitsenko 1923, 203).
1031 See for example Morozov 2005, 5.
heroic status of female PSR terrorists from the standpoint of Bolshevism and shows that the Socialist-Revolutionaries were not capable of approaching the common people since they were not common people themselves.

In her account of 1932, Bitsenko states that charitable work with criminal prisoners conducted by members of the Maltsev commune was based on individual efforts by some members of the commune, whereas others refused to help. Among those who conducted charitable work, Bitsenko lists her fellow PSR terrorists: “Maroussya” (Benevskaya or Spiridonova), “Sanya”\textsuperscript{1032} (Izmailovich), and “Nastya”\textsuperscript{1033} (Bitsenko).\textsuperscript{1034} In other words, Bitsenko shows that although revolutionary women helped criminals, it was not the commune, but individuals who performed this work. Although she represents some former PSR terrorists as behaving the way revolutionary heroines were expected to, she shows that the commune as a whole did not live up to the revolutionary ideal. Hence, by mentioning only some PSR terrorist heroines Bitsenko demonstrates that other terrorist women did not help the common people.

6.4 Political Activism in Prison and Exile

Revolutionary heroes and heroines were expected to continue their political activism even in prison and exile, when they were far from the centre of political struggle. Revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists show that women made different efforts in order to be revolutionary activists in these new conditions. During their incarceration and exile, they were represented as agitating for the revolutionary cause, thus demonstrating that they tried to recruit new sympathizers to the movement. In prison, they were represented as making an effort to negotiate the conditions of their imprisonment (the prison regime) with the prison administration and protecting their revolutionary honour when it was necessary. One form of political activism in prison and exile was escape, which occupies a special place in sources used in this section of the chapter because Shkolnik, a PSR terrorist heroine, managed to escape from Siberian *katorga*. Memoirs of revolutionary

\textsuperscript{1032} Nickname for ”Alexandra.”

\textsuperscript{1033} Nickname for ”Anastasia.”

\textsuperscript{1034} Bitsenko 1932, 115.
women’s life in prison show that many of them had periods of ideological doubt and re-assessment of their political beliefs. Finally, revolutionary heroes and heroines were expected to continue being politically active even in exile, a theme that is also present in the source material. In the following sections, I show how female PSR terrorists were represented in all the above-mentioned situations of political activism in auto/biographical texts.

6.4.1 Propaganda

The memoirs of political prisoners incarcerated before 1917 often include accounts of their successes in propaganda work, the memoirs of Maltsev Prison being no exception. Interestingly, the authors write almost nothing about agitating the criminals incarcerated with them, but write at length about successful agitation of prison guards. Figner writes that the female political prisoners in Maltsev Prison managed to agitate the soldiers who guarded the prison and become friends with them.1035 Pirogova even claims that after the imprisoned female revolutionaries were transferred to Akatui in 1911, they managed to influence the prison warden, A.M. Egorov, and even prepared a mass escape where he was expected to play an important role.1036

The PSR terrorist women, especially the members of the Shesterka, were also represented as successful in agitating prison guards. Shkolnik and Izmailovich claim that the women of the Shesterka managed to become friends with the soldiers who escorted them during their train trip to Siberia.1037 Izmailovich notably lists herself and Spiridonova as those who most talked to the guards.1038 She represents her and Spiridonova’s relationship with these guards as a relationship between revolutionaries and common people: “We were interested in every one of those grey rustics, and each of the soldiers partly affected by culture. We often went into their compartment and talked for hours.”1039 This representation reminds one of how female PSR terrorists were constructed as revolutionary “mothers” of the common people in accounts of their politi-

1035 Figner 1932, 11.
1036 Pirogova 1932, 183-184.
1037 Sukloff 1915, 171; Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 164-166.
1038 Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 165.
1039 "Нам с ней был интересен каждый из тех серых мужичков, и каждый из этих затронутых частью культурой солдат. Часто мы с ней ходили к ним в отделение и часами разговаривали" (Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 165).
cal activism. Thus, Izmailovich showed herself and Spiridonova as conducting propaganda work during their incarceration similarly to how propaganda was conducted by political activists who were free. In this way, she managed to represent them as still important to the cause, and thus behaving as revolutionary heroines were expected to.

Propaganda work undertaken by the members of the Shesterka during their train trip to Siberia was not limited to prison guards. At every station where their train stopped, the women were greeted by crowds. The members of the group, and especially Spiridonova, exploited this attention to hold political rallies and make revolutionary speeches in front of crowds.\textsuperscript{1040} This interpretation of events is found in memoirs by Shkolnik and Fialka, who represent that propaganda work as a collective action of the Shesterka, where Spiridonova and Bitsenko, who committed the most spectacular political assassinations, participated more than the other women.\textsuperscript{1041} Thus, they show that propaganda work was not questioned by anyone in the group.

In her memoirs, however, Izmailovich relates a more complicated version of the Shesterka’s trip to Siberia with respect to individual attitudes toward propaganda. According to her, at first only Spiridonova was eager to talk to the crowds, who paid her much more attention than other terrorist women because of her fame. Izmailovich shows that the other women of the Shesterka, especially Bitsenko, were suspicious of Spiridonova’s behaviour, which they took for vanity.\textsuperscript{1042} As noted in the previous chapters, the revolutionary women were praised by their comrades for their modesty, so vanity was not a quality appreciated in a revolutionary heroine. Thus, Izmailovich shows that Spiridonova’s individual propaganda work was initially seen by her companions as contradictory to the ideal character of a revolutionary heroine.

However, Izmailovich seeks in her account to legitimize Spiridonova’s behaviour and does so by comparing Spiridonova’s attitude to fame to that of Bitsenko, a revolutionary heroine who initially chose not to speak to the crowds. Izmailovich shows that Bitsenko thought that it was the cause and not the individual who was to be honoured, and as a result tried to avoid her fame. To explain Bitsenko’s attitude, Izmailovich provides the following description of her behaviour toward

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1040] See more about it in Maxwell 1990, 202-209; Maksimova 2009, 117; Boniece 2010b, 172-173.
\item[1041] Sukloff 1915, 172; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 55 ob.
\item[1042] Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 167.
\end{footnotes}
her fellow prisoners who were curious about her while she was still in jail:

She was angry because of their "absurd curiosity," their "bothering." In addition, she had a constant fear of "raising a person above the cause." At first, she kept silent and turned her back on them, and then she stopped going for walks during walking hours for transient prisoners, and once even reprehended someone. 1043

Such a negative attitude to personal fame was not new in the Russian revolutionary tradition. According to Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, Vera Zasulich, the revolutionary heroine of the previous generation of Russian revolutionaries, tried to avoid excessive attention to her personality as well. 1044 In other words, Izmailovich represents Bitsenko’s behaviour and attitude toward her individual fame in accordance with the Russian revolutionary tradition, and thus legitimizes it.

According to Izmailovich, Spiridonova’s behaviour was considered by Bitsenko to be unworthy of a revolutionary heroine. Spiridonova’s letter, where she described the assassination that she committed and the brutal treatment that she received after the arrest, and her behaviour on the way to Siberia made Bitsenko suspect that Spiridonova was consciously popularizing herself. 1045 However, Izmailovich, who had become Spiridonova’s close friend in prison, explains Spiridonova’s actions in terms of heroism and martyrdom. According to her, Spiridonova’s driving force was her love for the common people and the revolutionary cause. In addition, according to Izmailovich, talking to crowds at every station was not an easy task to Spiridonova due to her poor health:

This love, because of its efficiency, demanded that Maroussya not hide from the crowds, but go to them, to stand reverentially and full of loving glances. She was not supposed to hide from these glances, she was not to turn

1043 “Её сердило их "нелепое любопытство," их "надоедливость." Кроме того, в ней чувствовалась постоянная боязнь "выдвинуть личность впереди дела." Сначала она отмаличивалась и показывала им спину, потом перестала выходить на прогулки в часы прогулок пересыльных, а раз даже и отчитала кого-то” (Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 150).
1044 Stepnyak-Kravchinsky 1893, 430.
1045 Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 167.
away from cruel, insensitive questions. And Maroussya endured it all. She took on her suffering and carried ardent faith in a brighter future to them.\textsuperscript{1046}

In other words, Izmailovich shows that Spiridonova’s actions were not vanity, but an attempt to use every opportunity to agitate for the cause. She constructs Spiridonova’s attitude toward fame as a form of self-sacrifice for the cause, which required her to think of the cause, not her own comfort. Since self-sacrifice was accepted in the Russian revolutionary underground as an essential characteristic of revolutionary heroes and heroines, Spiridonova’s behaviour obviously fit perfectly into the existing ideal.

Thus, Izmailovich’s memoirs challenge the traditional view of a revolutionary woman as modest. Although she does not criticise Bitsenko, whom she represents as a supporter of revolutionary modesty, she shows that a more active position, like the one that Spiridonova undertook, could also be seen as appropriate behaviour for a revolutionary heroine.

6.4.2 Protection of Revolutionary Honour

Revolutionary identity and revolutionary honour were extremely important for political prisoners, since that distinguished them from common criminals. Protection of revolutionary honour implied the ability to negotiate with the prison administration for decent conditions of imprisonment (the prison regime) or fighting them when it was necessary.\textsuperscript{1047} The auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists include many episodes that represent these women as protecting their revolutionary honour on their own or as part of a prison community.

The first accounts of the revolutionary struggle that female PSR terrorists led in prison appeared in the revolutionary auto/biographies of women who experienced being in jail. Frunkina and Ivanovskaya write about the acts of obstruction practiced as a protest in the jails where

\textsuperscript{1046} "эта любовь, в силу своей действенности, требовала от Маруси не прятаться от толпы, а идти к ним, вынести все взгляды благоговейные и полные любви. Она не должна была закрываться перед всеми этими взглядами, не должна была отворачиваться от нечутких жестоких вопросов. И Маруся всё выносила. Она брала муку на себя и им несла горячую веру в светлое будущее" (Izmailovich 1924, in \textit{Katorga i ssylka}, No. 1 (8), 168).

\textsuperscript{1047} See more about it in Morozov 2012b, 170.
they were incarcerated. Both women represent these acts of protest as collective actions of political prisoners in which they participated. They use the pronoun “we” in order to describe their actions, and thus represent themselves as part of the revolutionary community without mentioning their individual roles in the protests. Shkolnik, who also participated in a protest while in detention, does note her individual actions during a protest. Shkolnik writes that she threw a log at the governor, who was visiting the prison. In all these cases, the women show themselves as protesting together with the entire revolutionary community, and thus behaving as political prisoners were expected to behave.

Female terrorists who experienced solitary confinements or incarceration with common criminals, where they did not have the revolutionary commune behind them, are represented in their auto/biographies as protecting their revolutionary honour on their own. Frumkina describes a hunger strike that she undertook in a fortress, where she was held after the assassination attempt, to protest the humiliating body searches that she was subjected to. Frumkina explains that she was on strike for ten days and afterwards did not completely recover. In other words, Frumkina shows that she defended her revolutionary honour without taking into consideration her health, and thus, acted in accordance with the ethics of the revolutionary underground.

Biographers of Lidiya Ezerskaya discuss at length the struggle that she waged while in the Mogilev jail together with criminals. According to Lelevich and Orestova, Ezerskaya slapped the prison warden, Dubyago, after he insulted her, and later protested against prison conditions by a hunger strike. By mentioning that Ezerskaya’s first reaction to the insult from Dubyago was slapping him, Lelevich and Orestova employ a narrative from the accounts of Nadezhda Sigida (1862-1889), a recognized martyr-heroine of the People’s Will. During her incarceration in Kara katorga prison, Sigida slapped the warden to protest the cruel treatment of political prisoners. For her action, Sigida suffered corporal punishment and died soon after. Although, Ezerskaya did not suffer

1049 Sukloff 1915, 72-75.
1050 Frumkina 1904-1905, 4-5.
1051 Lelevich 1922, 22; Orestova 1932, 228.
as much after her slap of Dubyago, the authors of her revolutionary biographies managed to contextualize her actions within the Russian revolutionary tradition and represent them as a fight of the revolutionary heroine for her honour. Both authors also quote a characteristic that Dubyago attributed to Ezerskaya in one of the official documents sent to Moscow, where she was kept prior to her transfer to Siberia: “Inclined to escape, daring, intrusive and insistent in illegal demands, she is the instigator of all unrest among the inmates.”1053 Thus, the biographers demonstrate that although imprisoned without a revolutionary community behind her, Ezerskaya managed to employ a wide range of means to wage the revolutionary fight, which helped her protect her revolutionary honour in the face of the prison administration.

Even female revolutionaries imprisoned in Maltsev are represented in memoirs as protecting their revolutionary honour. Bitsenko and Pirogova describe some actions undertaken by female political prisoners against the prison administration, including their refusal to stand in front of its representatives and even demonstratively sitting down when the administrators entered their cells.1054 According to Bitsenko, the members of the Shesterka, the first women transferred from Akatui Prison to Maltsev in 1907, immediately succeeded in negotiating with the administration for a prison regime that did not damage their revolutionary honour: they insisted on not wearing prison gowns and not leaving their books and belongings in the prison office, which was accepted by the prison administration in the end.1055 In their memoirs, former terrorists Bitsenko, Spiridonova, Izmailovich and Fialka describe their life in Siberia as a constant struggle with the prison administration for revolutionary honour, which they understand as the right to have books and pens, exchange letters, not answer to shouts and not obey commands.1056 Thus, female PSR terrorists were represented in these accounts as people who did not only win their first fight in their new prison and create better conditions for future generations of political prisoners, but continued their struggle during their entire time in prison.

1053 "Склонна к побегу, дерзка, в незаконных требованиях назойлива и настойчива, служит подстрекательницей ко всем беспорядкам среди содержащихся" (Lelevich 1922, 24; Orestova 1932, 228).
1054 Bitsenko 1932, 101-102; Pirogova 1932, 186.
1055 Bitsenko 1932, 100.
1056 Izmailovich 1924, in Katorga i ssylka, No. 1 (8), 173; Bitsenko 1932, 98-100; Fialka, ’Avtobiografiya’.
The efforts of individual female PSR terrorists to protect their own and their comrades’ revolutionary honour are also seen in accounts of the Maltsev commune. Bitsenko devotes particular attention to her own participation in the struggle for honour in prison, since she was elected a political *starosta* by her comrades, and thus was the only person who could communicate directly with the prison administration. For example, Bitsenko relates her attempts to correct the crude language of the guards directed at both her fellow political prisoners and criminal women. Spiridonova writes in her memoirs of Ezerskaya’s wish to commit suicide in order to protest the forceful transfer of Spiridonova and Shkolnik, who were both gravely ill, from Akatui Prison in early 1907. Dantsig’s biographer Zvereva writes about her success in hiding a parcel with “forbidden” contents during a search in her cell, which was considered a heroic action by her comrades. In sum, PSR terrorist women were represented as collectively and individually acting as political prisoners were expected to in accordance with the rules established in the revolutionary underground.

However, in her account from 1923, Bitsenko also writes that in one way or another, every member of the commune had broken the revolutionary code in her relationship with the prison administration. She does not explain more precisely what events and individuals she meant, but makes it clear that no one appealed for pardon or betrayed her comrades. Thus, on one hand, Bitsenko undermines the heroism of the entire commune; on the other hand, she makes it clear that the most important rules of revolutionary behaviour in prison were not broken by anyone. Bitsenko does not distinguish female PSR terrorists in this instance, and thus shows that their behaviour was no different from the behaviour of other revolutionary women.

In her memoirs of 1932, Bitsenko states that some actions undertaken by former PSR terrorists were criticised by the women. Bitsenko mentions, for example, that the women of the *Shesterka* were criticised for how they dealt with the prison administration. Bitsenko quotes the criticisms:

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1057 Bitsenko 1932, 96.
1058 Spiridonova 1925, in *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 2 (15), 179.
1059 Zvereva 1932, 223.
1060 Bitsenko 1923, 201.
They were not able to establish their relations with the authorities in order not to have to stand while meeting the administration. On this basis, and not only on this one, however, there was disappointment in the "elders," who turned out to be so sinful, boring, small, not as great as they seemed from afar.\textsuperscript{1061}

Thus, Bitsenko relates that PSR terrorist heroines disappointed some of their comrades by not being heroic enough in their prison struggle. As one of the people under fire here, Bitsenko finds it important to explain the position of the \textit{Shesterka} on that question. According to her, the cautious position of the terrorist heroines was caused by their wish to save their energy for the future revolutionary struggle and not to waste it by fighting the prison administration in vain.\textsuperscript{1062} This is how she explains the assumed lack of heroism, by considerations of the future of the movement, and justifies the behaviour of the revolutionary heroines by showing that the cause was more important to them than everyday problems they experienced in prison.

Many accounts of the revolutionary women’s lives in Maltsev Prison touch upon two episodes related to the defence of their revolutionary honour. The first of these episodes was the forceful transfer of Spiridonova and Shkolnik from Akatui Prison to Maltsev in February 1907, when the women chose not to protest violent actions of the prison administration. The second was the inactivity of the female commune in 1910, when male prisoners in Zerentui Prison were subjected to cruel oppression. Both of these episodes could be seen as the women’s unwillingness to defend themselves, and thus as behaviour that did not follow the rules of behaviour in prison considered acceptable in the revolutionary underground. As a result, the memoirists tried to explain the inactivity of the revolutionary women and represent it as an acceptable mode of action. In the rest of this section I show how the actions of individuals and the entire commune were explained in different accounts of the above-mentioned events.

In February 1907, when the revolutionary women were transferred from Akatui Prison to Maltsev, both Spiridonova and Shkolnik were ill and

\textsuperscript{1061} "Не сумели себя поставить перед начальством так, чтобы не приходилось стоя встречать начальство. На этой почве, и не только на этой, впрочем, были разочарования в "старших," оказавшихся вблизи столь грешными, неинтересными, маленькими, а вовсе не теми большими, какими издали казались" (Bitsenko 1932, 100).

\textsuperscript{1062} Bitsenko 1932, 100.
risked not surviving the long trip in the Siberian cold. The prison administration decided to transfer the other members of the *Shesterka* to Maltsev and leave Spiridonova and Shkolnik in Akatui until they recovered. Later, the warden changed his mind and tried to force both women to go to Maltsev in the middle of the night. That episode is described in detail in the memoirs of Shkolnik, Spiridonova and Fialka. All three authors write that the male prisoners intended to protest the transfer, and that it was Spiridonova who convinced them not to do it. Thus the most famous PSR terrorist heroine was represented in this case as unwilling to fight for her revolutionary honour, and she even prevented others from doing it. The memoirists explain Spiridonova’s decision by her wish to save her comrades’ lives, since the warden had promised to use violence if the men protested. In other words, she is represented as more concerned with saving the lives of revolutionaries for the future than wasting them on a struggle with the prison administration. Moreover, both Shkolnik and Spiridonova explain that in that situation, the fight would not have succeeded. They represent themselves as totally defenceless alone with the prison administration, since their female companions had left for Maltsev Prison by that time, and Spiridonova and Shkolnik were separated from the revolutionary men by the prison walls. Shkolnik, who was the first to write about it, also includes in her account a victimizing representation of herself and Spiridonova in that situation, casting themselves as lonely, scared women among hostile, cruel men. Thus, she legitimizes her and Spiridonova’s unwillingness to protest by their femininity. However, Spiridonova and Fialka, who wrote their accounts later, do not have similar descriptions, which shows that female PSR terrorists normally did not use feminizing representations to explain their actions.

In order to show that in fact, Spiridonova and Shkolnik were revolutionary heroines, all three memoirists explain that even in such a difficult situation, Spiridonova and Shkolnik managed to protect their revolutionary honour. They note the intention of the warden to be present while they were changing for the trip, and show that the former terrorists, despite their defenceless position, managed to make him leave the room. The memoirists also show that the women insisted on bringing the imprisoned revolutionary terrorists Sozonov and Karpovich to their

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1063 Sukloff 1915, 179-184; Spiridonova 1925, in *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 2 (15), 178; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 64-64 ob.
1064 Sukloff 1915, 179; Spiridonova 1925, in *Katorga i ssylka*, No. 2 (15), 178.
1065 Sukloff 1915, 180-181.
cell, despite the initial protest of the prison administration, in order to explain their decision and to convince the men not to protest.\textsuperscript{1066} Thus, despite their decision not to engage in a fight with the prison administration, and despite their obedience, which could have been interpreted by their comrades as cowardice, the women are represented here as acting in accordance with the ethics of the revolutionary community, since they managed to protect their revolutionary honour and succeeded in negotiating their conditions with the prison administration.

Almost all the memoirists who have written about female revolutionaries’ lives in Siberia comment on the time when female political prisoners from Maltsev Prison did not react to the atrocities going on in the Zerentui male prison, where on November 27, 1910, six male political prisoners attempted suicide to protest the cruel treatment of political prisoners by the prison administration. Sozonov was the only one who succeeded, which attracted public attention to the issue. The first memoirist who touched upon the question was Bitsenko, in her account of 1923, where she writes about the concern of the women about the situation in the male prison, as well as discussions about possible protests that did not lead anywhere. Bitsenko connects this lack of action to ideological doubts being experienced by many members of the commune at that time, which as noted above, she saw as a betrayal of revolutionary identity. Bitsenko writes as follows on her attitude toward revolutionary women’s reluctance to act:

\begin{quote}
In order not to cast an unfair shadow on the Maltsev women with respect to the questions about the protest, I shall only state a reservation here: I have no doubt that most would not have saved their lives … But still, they were silent.

Obviously, no matter how tormented they were by what happened in the men's prison, in the final analysis, there was not enough incentive to protest by their own deaths…\textsuperscript{1067}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1066} Sukloff 1915, 182-183; Spiridonova 1925, in \textit{Katorda i ssylka}, No. 2 (15), 178; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 64-64 ob.

\textsuperscript{1067} “Чтобы не бросать напрасной тени на мальцевитянок, в связи с вопросами о протесте, я должна только здесь оговориться: для меня несомненно, что большинству жизни своей было не жаль… А всё же молчали. Очевидно, как ни мучились тем, что происходило в мужских тюрьмах, всё же, в конце концов, не было достаточно повелительного стимула к выражению протеста смертью своей...” (Bitsenko 1923, 208).
Thus, Bitsenko demonstrates that even if many revolutionary women were ready to die to defend the revolutionary honour of their male comrades, they did not take that step. Although she does not directly accuse the prison commune, she clearly states that in her opinion, the women, including female PSR terrorists, did not behave as revolutionary heroines were expected to, and thus broke the revolutionary code of behaviour.

It is no wonder that every memoirist who has written about the Maltsev commune since Bitsenko touches upon this question and explains why the revolutionary women did not protest. Almost all the memoirists who published in Na zhenskoi katorge make it clear that the members of the Maltsev commune were concerned about the situation in the male prison and were ready to commit collective suicide. According to them, they did not try to kill themselves only because it did not seem necessary and efficient after Sozonov’s suicide, and would only lead to unnecessary victims among the female revolutionaries.1068 Thus, the lack of action and protest was again explained by the female revolutionaries’ intention to save their lives for the future fight, and thus as an acceptable action according to revolutionary ethics. Interestingly, even Bitsenko, in her account of 1932 does not repeat her accusations against the commune, and like the other memoirists, notes the revolutionary women’s readiness to die, and the inefficiency of such an act after Sozonov’s suicide.1069 This demonstrates that, like other memoirists, Bitsenko did not want to undermine the representation of the revolutionary commune and its individual members as heroic in this case.

The only memoirist in Na zhenskoi katorge who presents a slightly different version of the events is Metter. Like the other women, she writes about the concerns that the female prisoners in the Maltsev commune had over the situation of the revolutionary men, and even writes that they obtained poison in order to be able to commit collective suicide.1070 Metter, however, does not explain why this planned act of protest was not undertaken. Without accusing her former companions of being cowards, however, she does not represent them as revolutionary heroines either; thus, she undermines the reputation of the female political prisoners, including the PSR terrorists.

1068 Kakhovskaya 1932, 94; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 53.
1069 Bitsenko 1932, 103.
1070 Metter 1932, 136.
6.4.3 Escapes

Escapes from prison were considered by the revolutionaries to be a form of struggle against the atrocities of the prison administration. However, female memoirists from Maltsev Prison who describe escapes explain their necessity in other terms. According to Shkolnik and Fialka, everyone wanted to escape from Akatui Prison in 1906 in order to be able to continue the revolutionary fight. However, the only female PSR terrorist who actually managed to escape was Shkolnik, who was transferred from Maltsev Prison to the Irkutsk hospital for surgery. Her escape was successful because it was easier to deceive guards and get help from free revolutionaries in Irkutsk than in Maltsev. Since despite many attempts, successful escapes were rare, most of the accounts that touch upon these attempts are dedicated to explaining the reasons behind their failures.

According to the revolutionary auto/biographies of the members of the Shesterka, all of them tried to escape from different jails where they were held after arrest. Ezerskaya’s biographer Lelevich writes that her comrades organized an escape for her from the Mogilev jail, but Ezerskaya refused to leave another person instead of herself in the cell, as had been planned. According to Fialka, all the members of the Shesterka intended to escape when they were on a train to Siberia, but did not because Spiridonova was very ill, often delusional, and the rest were afraid that her condition would ruin their plans. In her account of female terrorists’ life in Akatui Prison, Fialka mentions another plan, when she and Spiridonova chose not to escape in order not to let down the warden, who sympathized with the incarcerated revolutionaries. Radzilovskaya and Orestova mention an escape plan for Spiridonova in 1910, which failed because of a lack of help from the PSR. Even Zvereva, in her biographical account of Dantsig, mentions an escape plan, which was not implemented since Dantsig donated all her escape money to another political prisoner. Thus, in all these cases, the women are represented as actively trying to free themselves in order to continue their revolutionary fight. Most often, their failure to escape is

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1071 See more about it in Shaidurova 2007.
1072 Sukloff 1915, 174-175; GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 59 ob.
1073 Lelevich 1922, 22.
1074 GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 56.
1075 GARF, f. 533, op. 1, d. 1095, l. 60.
1076 Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 43-44.
1077 Zvereva 1932, 224.
explained by their consideration for others. Thus, female PSR terrorists were represented in accordance with the existing female ideal as willing to sacrifice their own good for others. Similar considerations are named by Radzilovskaya as the reason behind many prisoners’ negative attitude toward the escape planned for Spiridonova. According to the author, the escape could have harmed the community of political prisoners because of repressions by the prison administration that would follow.1078 Thus, Radzilovskaya, shows that the well-being of the prison community was considered even more important than liberating the most popular female PSR terrorist. The women’s unsuccessful escapes were not represented in revolutionary auto/biographies as failures, since they did not endanger other revolutionaries, and thus maintained the stability of the revolutionary commune.

Shkolnik described her escape, the only successful one from Maltsev Prison, in several autobiographical accounts as well as in an anonymous biographical work published in *Katorga i ssylka* in 1921. Although they describe the course of the escape similarly, and although both represent Shkolnik as very innovative, and thus responsible for the success,1079 the accounts created by Shkolnik herself are slightly different from that of her biographer. Both Shkolnik and her biographer mention that several plans of escape were prepared for her. The biographer writes that Shkolnik chose one of these plans over the others because of her wish to avoid unnecessary victims.1080 Shkolnik herself does not mention such concern in any of her accounts of the escape. Thus, her biographer found it important to represent a woman who participated in political terrorism as with a genuine concern for human lives. Thus, he constructs her as a “natural,” “good” woman, whose participation in political violence was merely a result of political necessity. Shkolnik herself does not include the episode in her accounts, and thus shows that she was not concerned about highlighting her “natural” femininity in this case.

1080 ‘Pobeg Marii Shkolnik’ 1921, 49.
As for Shkolnik’s own narratives of the escape, in addition to giving details of its preparations and execution, she writes several times that she could not stop thinking about her friends from prison when she was finally free. Shkolnik writes about her wish to return and liberate all of them. In this way, she demonstrates that the purpose of her escape was the continuation of the revolutionary struggle, which, as noted above, was represented in the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists as the main reason for escapes. Thus, Shkolnik constructs this episode of her life as heroic. In addition, as in above-mentioned accounts of unsuccessful escapes, Shkolnik’s auto/biographies show her to be concerned first and foremost about her companions from Maltsev Prison.

Thus, accounts of both successful and unsuccessful escapes written from the perspective of female terrorists themselves, represent them above all as concerned about the fellow revolutionaries that they had to leave behind. The needs of the revolutionary community are represented there as more important than freeing of individual revolutionary heroines.

6.4.4 Ideological Doubts

It was essential for revolutionary heroes and heroines to continue being true to their revolutionary ideals, and thus maintain their revolutionary identity, even when they were located far from the centre of political struggle. It is no wonder that biographers of female PSR terrorists who wrote soon after 1917 eagerly confirmed that the women remained true to their revolutionary ideals even after a long period of incarceration. Spiridonova’s biographers, for example, highlight the fact that eleven years in Siberia did not break her revolutionary spirit, and that she returned to political activism on behalf of the PSR as soon as she was released from prison in 1917. Lelevich’s biography of Ezerskaya also shows that she did not lose her revolutionary beliefs in prison. To demonstrate this, the author quotes a letter written by Ezerskaya during her incarceration, where she expresses the hope that the “shameful dictatorship will fall very soon, no doubt.”

However, during their life in Siberian hard labour prisons, many revolutionary women started questioning their political beliefs and motives.

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1081 Sukloff 1915, 250, 251; Shkolnik 1932, 149.
1082 Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova 1917, 6; Grigorovich 1925, 112.
1083 “позорная диктатура падёт очень скоро несомненно” (Lelevich 1922, 22-23).
under the influence of ideas from revolutionaries who were still free. The women questioned the necessity of political violence and revolution, and they discussed the possibility of building a future society through self-improvement of the human being, which led some of them to search for God. Attitudes toward these quests are quite different in accounts written by different memoirists. The first author who took up the issue was Bitsenko, in her work of 1923. Her attitude toward these ideological doubts was highly negative, since she saw them as a sign of betrayal of the revolutionary identity. Bitsenko expresses a similar opinion as well in the account published in *Na zhenskoi katorge* in 1932. Other memoirists who took up this issue, Kakhovskaya as well as Radzilovskaya and Orestova, represent these ideological doubts and quests as a natural result of women’s self-education and spiritual growth. Thus, they display tolerance to revolutionaries who re-assessed their ideological ideals in prison, and do not see their quests as a betrayal of revolutionary identity. Since the revolutionaries were expected to improve their educational level in prison, these memoirists represent ideological doubts as a result of revolutionary behaviour.

None of the memoirists names revolutionary women who started questioning their political beliefs in prison. Bitsenko, however, makes it clear in both of her accounts that one of the members of the *Shesterka*, expressed her doubts upon arrival at *katorga*. Thus, she introduces one of the PSR terrorist heroines as someone who betrayed her revolutionary identity. Bitsenko undermines the heroic status of the mem-

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1085 See more about it in Knight 1979, 158; Maxwell 1990, 213-215.
1086 Bitsenko 1923, 193.
1087 Bitsenko 1932, 104.
1088 Kakhovskaya 1932, 85-86; Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 34.
1089 Bitsenko 1923, 193; Bitsenko 1932, 104.
1090 In this case, Bitsenko likely means Shkolnik. Morozov quotes in one of his works a letter to Chernov of August 1911 by Lyubov Azef, the wife of the famous agent provocateur, who was also close to PSR terrorist members. In this letter, she wrote the following about Shkolnik: “I heard in the winter that she experienced the death of her faith in recent years, and that she left. Is this true? As if she’s busy right now with religious experiences” (“Я слыхала зимою, что за последние годы она почувствовала умирание веры и она отошла. Неужели это верно? Будто она занята сейчас религиозными переживаниями”). (Quoted in Morozov 1999).
bers of the *Shesterka*, since she does not mention which one of her comrades doubted her political beliefs, and she represents herself as someone who never betrayed her revolutionary identity.

Bitsenko and Kakhovskaya also write that under the influence of ideological doubts that spread among members of the commune after 1907, a number of women also began to doubt the nature of mutual help and support within the revolutionary family.\textsuperscript{1091} Bitsenko describes their reasoning as follows: “- Is it will, or necessity, or a sense of false shame, or a wish to look better than you really are, ”to seem virtuous,” that makes you help others with something…”\textsuperscript{1092} According to Kakhovskaya, the false motivations behind acts of kindness were considered “hypocritical philanthropy” that humiliated the people to whom it was directed.\textsuperscript{1093} Nor do any memoirists name the revolutionary women responsible for such reasoning. Thus, the memoirists show that the members of the Maltsev commune did not only doubt their ideological beliefs, but also the foundations of life in the commune. As noted above, Bitsenko represented such doubts as a betrayal of the revolutionary identity, while other memoirists had a more neutral attitude even to those who either considered leaving the commune or actually did.

In this context, Radzilovskaya and Orestova make it clear that Be nevskaya, a former member of the Combat Organization, was always beyond such doubts about hypocrisy. According to the authors, Be nevskaya managed to take care of the others “easily and happily, so that it was easy to accept everything from her.”\textsuperscript{1094} A similar opinion of Be nevskaya’s willingness to help others is also expressed in one of Spiridonova’s letters to Sozonov: ”Beautiful and attractive are her ungrudging attitude to people and her freedom in actions. She does not hurt others by it… She would always distress herself, sacrifice herself, etc.; in truth, she is a freer human [being] than many of us.”\textsuperscript{1095} Thus, Be-

\textsuperscript{1091} Bitsenko 1923, 198-199; Kakhovskaya 1932, 85; Bitsenko 1932, 109.
\textsuperscript{1092} “- По желанию, или по необходимости, или из чувства ложного стыда, или чтоб казаться лучше, чем ты есть на самом деле, ”казаться добродетельным,” ты помогаешь в чём-нибудь другим …” (Bitsenko 1923, 198).
\textsuperscript{1093} Kakhovskaya 1932, 85.
\textsuperscript{1094} “легко и радостно, так что от неё всё легко принималось” (Radzilovskaya & Orestova 1932, 35).
\textsuperscript{1095} “Красиво и притягивающее к ней укладывается её широта к людям и её свобода в поступках. Она ею не ранит других… Вечно себя стеснит, пожертвует
nevskaya is represented in accounts of the Maltsev commune as someone who followed the rules of living together sincerely, and thus was beyond accusations of hypocrisy. She was represented as someone who behaved in accordance with the rules accepted in the revolutionary underground and was not judged by those who doubted the rules because of that.

6.4.5 Political Activism in Exile

After their time in prison and penal servitude, revolutionary heroes and heroines were expected to undertake revolutionary activities again. In practice, this was difficult, since most of those who managed to leave prison before the Revolution were sent to settlements in distant corners of the country. However, even under these circumstances, authors of works about female PSR terrorists make it clear that the women managed to behave as revolutionary heroines were expected to.

First of all, many auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists relate that the women escaped from exile. Most of these works name as the main reason for escape the women’s unwillingness to be away from the centre of the revolutionary struggle and their desire to be active in the fight against the regime. However, accounts that touch upon this issue are mostly dedicated to the period before the future terrorists began participating in political violence. Accounts of the exile that followed women’s long prison terms after their participation in political terrorism represent their political activism there differently.

One way of being politically active was assisting comrades who were still in prison. Ezerskaya, Dantsig and Fialka are represented in their auto/biographies as actively helping those still in prison and even organizing their escape. In Ezerskaya’s case, her political activities in exile were represented as leading to further persecutions, which resulted in her being settled in Yakutsk, where the poor climate led to her premature death from tuberculosis. Thus, Ezerskaya was represented as

собой и пр., по правоте она более свободный человек, чем многие из наших” (ГАРФ, ф. 5831, оп. 1, д. 552, л. 73 об.).

1096 Frumkina 1907, 94; Sukloff 1915, 109-122; Pribylev 1919, 14; GARF, f. 5831, op. 1, d. 407, l. 12-13; Ivanov 1924, 238-239; Ivanovskaya 1925, 95; Roizman 1926, 305; Г.С. 1928, 157; Ivanovskaya 1929, 7.

1097 Lelevich 1922, 26-27; Orestova 1932, 229; Zvereva 1932, 224; Fialka, ‘Avtobiografiya.’

1098 Lelevich 1922, 26-27; Orestova 1932, 229.
having sacrificed her life for the cause of revolution in the course of her political activism.

According to Bolshevik author Vladimir Vilensky-Sibiryakov and Orestova, Ezerskaya’s political activism did not cease even in Yakutsk, since she managed to organize local PSR members. Although Vilensky-Sibiryakov specifies that Ezerskaya did not go any farther than creating a PSR salon, even he shows that she continued to follow her revolutionary ideals until the end. Orestova illustrates Ezerskaya’s continued rebellion against the authorities with the story of her first visit to the local police station with a bouquet of red flowers, which was correctly interpreted by the authorities as a symbol of revolution. Thus, Ezerskaya was represented as politically active and true to her revolutionary ideals even when located far from the revolutionary fight.

Narratives of female terrorists’ political activism in exile are quite similar to each other, and do not show the same discursive differences identified in the analysis of narratives of female terrorists’ life in prison. The main reason is the absence of memoirs by female revolutionaries of different political affiliations and social backgrounds, similar to those about the Maltsev commune, where different perspectives were present.

6.5 Summary: Contesting Narratives

Narratives of the lives of female PSR terrorists in prison and exile constructed within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom had their point of departure in norms of revolutionary behaviour in prison and exile considered acceptable in the Russian revolutionary underground. However, sources on that period of the women’s lives include not only revolutionary autobiographies, where individual female terrorists were represented as revolutionary heroines, but also memoirs of Maltsev Prison by revolutionaries of different political affiliations, who in the early Soviet state had different ideas of revolutionary heroism. As a result, the authors of the sources construct contesting narratives in which female terrorists are not represented uniformly. Individual terrorist women are visible only in autobiographies dedicated specifically to

1099 See more about Vilensky-Sibiryakov and his political affiliation in Politicheskaya katorga i sylka 1934, 110.
1100 Vilensky (Sibiryakov) Vl. (1923), 'Poslednee pokolenie Yakutskoi sylki,' in Katorga i sylka, No. 7, 134.
1101 Orestova 1932, 229.
them. In collective auto/biographies of the Maltsev commune, in the centre of the narrative is the prison commune as a whole. Individual women are visible in these accounts only if they exemplify a mode of behaviour typical for members of the commune, or if for some reason, the authors of the accounts wanted to represent them as behaving differently from the majority.

The most typical narrative about female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile can be found in revolutionary auto/biographies of individual women and in most memoirs of the Maltsev commune. These sources represented them as living in the prison communes in an atmosphere of friendship based on mutual intellectual and political interests and equality of its members. The revolutionary women were represented as living in accordance with the principles of socialism, which implied working as common people and spending all free time educating themselves and others. Female terrorists, like other revolutionary women, were represented as taking care of the common people whom they met in prison and agitating them for the revolutionary cause, just as they had done while they were free. The women were represented as participating in political protests organized by the communes of imprisoned revolutionaries and protecting their revolutionary honour on their own even when they did not have a commune of political prisoners behind them. They were represented even as capable of negotiating their living conditions with the prison administration. In cases where female PSR terrorists did not appear to fight the prison administration, their lack of action was normally explained by their wish to save their lives, as well as the lives of their comrades, for the future revolution. The women were represented as actively trying to escape from prison and exile in order to be able to continue their revolutionary fight. Their failures to escape were explained only by the women’s considerations for others. Thus, female PSR terrorists were represented as politically engaged and active even when they were far from the centre of the revolutionary fight. In this way, authors of revolutionary auto/biographies and memoirs of Maltsev Prison made it clear that while in prison and exile, female PSR terrorists maintained their revolutionary identity and remained politically active just as they had while they were free. In this way, they challenged the idea present in revolutionary auto/biographies written before 1917 that the political careers of female terrorists ended when they were sent to prison and exile.
Female terrorists, especially the members of the Shesterka, i.e., the most celebrated PSR terrorist heroines, were often presented in these narratives as exemplifying the behaviour characteristic for the members of the commune. Moreover, those members of the Shesterka who wrote memoirs of their lives in Maltsev Prison represent themselves as founders of the female commune and people who enjoyed authority among both revolutionary men and women. The women of the Shesterka and other PSR female terrorists are also represented as intellectual mentors of the commune in Maltsev, since they brought books to the prison library and led various study groups. The women of the Shesterka represent themselves as actively agitating people not only in prison, but also on their train trip to Siberia, when they had a chance to speak about their revolutionary ideals before large crowds. At the same time, like other members of the commune, the women represent themselves as avoiding conflicts with the prison administration that they could not win, since they considered the political fight in prison less important than their future revolutionary activism.

Since memoirs of Maltsev Prison that construct the women’s lives there in accordance with the discourse of heroism and martyrdom appeared later than more critical accounts of the revolutionary women’s lives there, this demonstrates that individual women, including female PSR terrorists, could behave differently from the norms accepted in the revolutionary underground. They admitted, for example, that Zinaida Bronshtein tried to leave the commune, that she and Vera Shtolterfort refused to share their knowledge with less educated women, and that some revolutionary women had doubts about their ideological beliefs. However, the memoirists who tried to represent the life of the prison commune within the framework of the discourse of heroism and martyrdom did not show these events as major deviations from the revolutionary ideal. Thus, they made the controversial behaviour of some women appear to be exceptions that emerged in the course of prison life, but did not undermine anyone’s heroic status. In other cases, however, as, for example, differences in the position in the commune of women of upper- and middle-class backgrounds from that of working-class women, the memoirists, preferred to gloss over deviations previously voiced by others in order not to undermine the reputations of individual and groups of revolutionary women.

Bolshevik discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life influenced the accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile much more than accounts of the other periods of women’s lives. The most obvious
influence is the existence of narratives by Anastasia Bitsenko and Paulina Metter that challenged the above-mentioned dominant heroic narrative. In their narratives, Bitsenko and Metter question some aspects of the dominant narrative, and Bolshevik ideas are their point of departure.

Bitsenko’s narrative departs from the idea that the ideological quests of some members of the Maltsev commune were a sign that they betrayed their revolutionary identity. By mentioning that among those who started doubting their revolutionary beliefs was a member of the Shesterka, Bitsenko directly questions the heroic behaviour of female PSR terrorists. These ideological doubts serve in Bitsenko’s narrative as an explanation for the lack of heroism of the commune when it was expected to react to events in the male prison and for breaking the rules in the relationship with the prison administration established by the commune. Bitsenko distinguishes herself from other PSR members, including the other women of the Shesterka, who, in her opinion, were not always true to their revolutionary beliefs, and thus shows that her critical points came from someone who never betrayed her revolutionary identity, a real revolutionary heroine. As a Bolshevik, Bitsenko also criticises the revolutionary women’s work with criminal prisoners, the representatives of the common people in prison, since they, the revolutionary intelligentsia, could not approach them. Thus, Bitsenko represents those PSR members who, in her opinion, were most involved in these activities, as far from the people’s interests, and thus unable to approach them.

Metter’s narrative was inspired by the Bolshevik view on dominance of the class structure, since her point of departure is that life in Maltsev Prison was different for women from different social classes. In her interpretation, female PSR terrorists, as well as other revolutionary women, had different experiences in the Maltsev commune because of their various social backgrounds. The women of the intelligentsia were represented by Metter as the leaders of the commune, unable to have sincerely friendly relations with less educated, working-class women. Metter particularly emphasized this when she discussed Maria Shkolnik’s position among her educated friends; she showed that the terrorist heroines from the Shesterka were not different from the other women in this respect. According to Metter, the uneducated, working-class women could not study as their more educated companions did because they lacked knowledge and help, and thus were not able to upgrade their level of education as they were expected to.
Besides the alternative narratives created by some memoirists under the influence of Bolshevik ideas, the Bolshevik way of writing a revolutionary life influenced how memoirists from upper- and middle-class backgrounds wrote about participation in housework. Descriptions of everyday life were not at all part of the narratives of female terrorists’ political activism. However, in accounts of the women’s life in prison and exile, they held a special place, since they helped represent the female terrorists in accordance with the ideal of diligent working woman, the female ideal in the early Soviet state. Thus, female PSR terrorists were constructed similarly to Bolshevik heroines and contextualized within the dominant heroic narrative. As noted in the previous chapter, hard work for the revolutionary cause was part of the narrative of revolutionary heroines’ political activism in revolutionary auto/biographies. However, in these accounts, the narrative of hard work was not as prominent as in accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison, which were all written in the early Soviet state. Since pre-revolutionary accounts of revolutionaries’ lives in prison and exile were few, and there was no established standard of writing about that part of their lives, the authors of these accounts resorted to Bolshevik discursive practice in order to make the heroic lives of female PSR terrorists acceptable in the early Soviet era.

The discursive practice of representing revolutionary heroines established in revolutionary auto/biographies of the previous generation of revolutionaries can be also observed in narratives about of lives of female PSR terrorists. On the one hand, the authors use this discursive practice to show the heroism of the new generation of female revolutionaries as the continuation of the heroism of the earlier generation. The biographers of Lidiya Ezerskaya did this in their accounts of her fight in the Mogilev jail, where her behaviour is described in similar terms to that of Nadezhda Sigida, the established martyr heroine of the People’s Will. On the other hand, in her memoirs, Alexandra Izmailovich challenges the existing standard of modesty of the revolutionary heroine introduced by Sergei Stepanyak-Kravchinsky in his “profiles” of Gesya Gelfman and Vera Zasulich. Izmailovich represents Bitsenko as similar to Zasulich in her modest attitude toward personal fame, but, shows that it was not the only possible type of behaviour in that situation. In her opinion, Spiridonova’s attempts to use her fame for propaganda reasons, which implied a lack of modesty, was acceptable behaviour for a revolutionary heroine. Izmailovich framed Spiridonova’s way of dealing with her fame within the discourse of heroism.
and martyrdom, and thus showed that contemporary revolutionary heroines could differ in some respect from acknowledged revolutionary heroines of the past.

The ethnicity of individual female PSR terrorists is not visible in accounts of the women’s lives in prison and exile: I was not able to identify any representations that distinguished Russian and Jewish women. However, the social class that terrorist women belonged to is a prominent feature of these accounts, the result of the influence of Bolshevik discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life. The authors of most collective biographies of revolutionary women in Maltsev Prison were born in upper- and middle-class families and represented the life of the revolutionary commune and its individual members, including female PSR terrorists, from the viewpoint of their social class. Performing housework was a new experience for them and was prominent in their accounts. They also noted the studies that their free time was devoted to. However, a memoirist from a working-class background, including the former terrorists, write a different narrative of their life in the Maltsev commune. Although most of them tried to adapt their narratives to those created by their upper- and middle-class companions, their alternative view is still visible in the texts. In their writings, performing household duties is not represented as a virtue and connected to life in accordance with the principles of socialism; most often, these memoirists do not mention that side of their life at all. Shkolnik chose not to use her time in prison to upgrade her level of education and, as a result, did not write about the studies of revolutionary women in Maltsev Prison at all. Unlike her upper-class companions, Bitsenko, born into a peasant family, but educated as a teacher, represents housework not as a way of living in accordance with the principles of socialism, but as a burden. Instead of constructing herself as a diligent worker, Bitsenko highlights her identity as an intellectual by writing that she preferred to read a book than cook for the commune.

Since most accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile were written by female authors, the women are represented rarely there as sexed beings. First, none of the memoirists represents revolutionary women as revolutionary “mothers” and “sisters” whose place in the revolutionary family was similar to what the women had in ordinary Russian families of that time. Although in some instances, the authors construct feminizing representations of female terrorists as revolutionary “mothers” and “sisters” that are similar to how they were represented in accounts by predominantly male authors, most often this is not the
Female authors of accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile construct more gender-neutral representations of them in the revolutionary community. Some women even represent themselves and other female terrorists as having a position of power. However, since none of the memoirists represents a single member of the commune as a leader similar in her authority to Grigory Gershuni, a model male leader, it can be concluded that even in these accounts, the idea of female leadership was not popular.

The narratives of women’s lives in the Maltsev commune seem similar to the narratives of male revolutionary communities analysed by Badcock. Unlike revolutionary auto/biographies dedicated to individual female terrorists, these works present a complex picture of internal relationships, very far from the harmonious descriptions of the revolutionary underground present in the accounts of political activism.

Autobiographical and biographical materials on Maria Shkolnik’s escape from Siberian hard labour evince some differences in how these accounts were constructed. While Shkolnik’s anonymous biographer tried to represent her as a “natural” woman, who despite her previous participation in political terrorism tried to avoid unnecessary victims, Shkolnik herself did not include this episode in any of her accounts. Instead, she represented herself as a devoted member of the prison commune who valued her friendship with the other revolutionary women above all. Thus, Shkolnik was more interested in highlighting her loyalty to the other revolutionaries, which confirms the narrative of an atmosphere of friendship as the most prominent feature of the commune, according to most memoirists. This issue, however, was not present in the account of Shkolnik’s escape written by her biographer.

The female terrorists’ earlier participation in political violence does not play a role in the narratives of their lives in prison and exile. They are represented similarly to other revolutionary women as members of the revolutionary commune. Only Shkolnik’s biographer included in his narrative references to her “natural” femininity and willingness to save other people’s lives, which was intended to show that her participation in political violence was not a result of Shkolnik’s cruel nature, as it was claimed by conservatives, but just a means of revolutionary struggle. In other cases, political terrorism is not mentioned at all. Such little attention to political violence in accounts of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile confirms the conclusions of the previous chapter of the
dissertation that after 1917: female PSR terrorists were primarily represented as revolutionaries and not terrorists in revolutionary auto/biographies because of the negative attitude toward political terrorism in the Soviet state.

The representation of female PSR terrorists in accounts of the revolutionary women’s lives in Maltsev Prison is, thus, dual. On the one hand, the women are constructed as heroic individuals who behaved in accordance with the ethics and behavioural codes that existed in the revolutionary underground. On the other hand, these accounts show the former terrorists as regular individuals behind the heroic façade built around them in the revolutionary auto/biographies. These regular individuals did not always behave heroically and live up to the expectations placed on them in the revolutionary underground. As a result, the narratives of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile sometimes undermined the heroic status of some of the women. This resembles the conclusions of Marina Mogilner about a tendency in representations of the revolutionary hero in works of fiction written after the revolution of 1905. According to Mogilner, the mythological revolutionary hero and the real person who was the source of inspiration for that heroic portrayal were both present in these texts, which led to the symbolic death of the revolutionary hero as a mythological figure. Similarly, it is possible to claim that the existence of contesting narratives of female terrorists’ lives in prison and exile led to the decay of the heroic PSR mythology of female terrorists, which disappeared together with the last participants of the party terrorist units.

1102 See more about it in Mogilner 1999, 98.
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

No comprehensive work (in the Russian or transnational context) has yet been written about the construction of revolutionary lives within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom. One can hope that such research will be written in future. This dissertation is an attempt to shed light on the way the lives of a particular group of revolutionary women – female PSR terrorists who operated in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century – were constructed within that discourse. During my research, I analysed how the lives of individuals from different social and ethnic origins, of different ages, with different life paths, who happened to be united only by their participation in the political terrorism of the PSR, were recounted with the help of narratives employed in the discourse of heroism and martyrdom in the Russian revolutionary underground. I was interested to see how the unique, and different was constructed in these accounts as typical and characteristic for the mythical revolutionary heroine.

The results of the dissertation demonstrate that the accounts of the lives of female PSR terrorists were constructed with the help of the dominant narrative that was formed as a conversion story. Within the framework of that narrative, the lives of individual women were adapted to the dominant discourse of heroism and martyrdom, and at the same time were contextualized within the dominant discourse on “good” femininity that existed in the society where the texts were written. Social and ethnic backgrounds as well as individual circumstances of the terrorist women, however, have transformed the dominant narrative, and thus created diversity of representations.

7.1 Reconstruction of the Dominant Narrative

According to the accounts created within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom, as well as to previous research on the revolutionary auto/biographies, the typical life story of a female PSR terrorist, was a story of
conversion. The woman’s life prior to her political radicalization was constructed around two aspects: her struggle in the situations of injustice and oppression that she encountered and her journey toward political enlightenment and acceptance of revolutionary ideas. On the one hand, the heroine’s life in the revolutionary underground was constructed as her participation in the revolutionary family as a “mother” or “sister” to her revolutionary brothers. On the other hand, her revolutionary career normally started with “peaceful” activities on behalf of the PSR or another political party; she would later accept political terrorism as a means of political struggle and direct or indirect participation in political violence. In the course of her political activism, a revolutionary heroine was always represented as acting in accordance with the ethical norms that existed in the Russian revolutionary underground. The heroine’s activism led her toward a final self-sacrifice, which could have been a heroic death or long-term imprisonment in Siberia. Narratives of the heroine’s imprisonment appeared only during the Soviet era, and they represented the revolutionary heroine as continuing her political fight under new conditions by negotiating an acceptable prison regime and fighting for her revolutionary honour when necessary. She again behaved in different situations in accordance with the behavioural norms existing in the revolutionary underground. The heroine was represented as a devoted member of the revolutionary commune, who obeyed its rules, lived under the conditions of practical socialism, worked as a common woman and dedicated her free time to educating herself and others. Narratives of that period of a heroine’s life are diverse because of the influence of Bolshevik ideas on the PSR and social origin of some memoirists that influenced their perspective. After prison, in exile, the heroine continued her revolutionary work by assisting her imprisoned comrades in their attempts to escape and by working on behalf of the PSR even in the distant corner of Russia where she had been exiled.

However, this dominant narrative was not stable. The orders of discourse of pre-revolutionary and Soviet periods as well as discursive

practices of authors from different political groups influenced its construction and representations of individual female terrorists as revolutionary heroines.

7.2 Discursive Constraints

By the time the accounts of female terrorists’ lives were written, the Russian revolutionary underground had produced many works on the revolutionary heroes and heroines of the previous generation. Even accounts of the same generation of revolutionaries included particular narratives that attracted public attention to some terrorists, and thus became part of the discursive practice of writing a revolutionary life. The analysis undertaken in the dissertation shows that the existing discursive practice influenced how the lives of female PSR terrorists were represented within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom.

The names and modes of behaviour of the heroines of the People’s Will, as they were constructed in works written in the revolutionary underground, are often actualized in texts about female PSR terrorists. The ideal of the “modest worker” of the revolution embodied by the representation of Gesya Gelfman in Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s *Underground Russia* is the accepted way of representing female terrorists’ political activism before they commit an assassination. Most often, the women are constructed as obediently conducting everyday work on behalf of revolutionary and terrorist organizations, although some accounts report that not all of them were happy about this state of affairs. Another revolutionary heroine of Stepnyak-Kravchinsky’s, Vera Zasulich, “the angel of vengeance,” who assassinated Fyodor Trepov without the guidance of a political party, was actualized by Fruma Frumkina and her biographer Ekaterina Roizman in order to explain Frumkina’s assassination attempts not organized by the PSR. The martyr of the People’s Will, Nadezhda Sigida, was actualized in the descriptions of Lidiya Ezerskaya’s prison struggle. Even the famous heroic narratives of the behaviour of terrorist heroes and heroines active at the same time as female PSR terrorists, Ivan Kaliaev, a male PSR member, and Natalia Klimova, a female member of the maximalist terrorist group, were used in revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists. All this demonstrates that female terrorists’ behaviour in different situations was represented with the help of the discursive practice created in the Russian revolutionary underground, which helped the authors explain
their modes of action and represent them as heroic and worthy of being revolutionary heroines.

Discursive constraints can also be observed in how accounts of the lives of female PSR terrorists resemble similar accounts of female Bolsheviks after the Bolsheviks had come to power.

While pre-revolutionary accounts of female PSR terrorists primarily represented the women as political terrorists, due to the popularity of political terrorism at that time, accounts written in the context of early Soviet Russia primarily represent the women as revolutionaries, since the attitude toward political terrorism became negative under the Bolsheviks. Moreover, in accounts written after the Revolution, some women’s devotion to the PSR was not represented as their driving force, since the attitude toward the party changed after the July uprising of the Left SRs in 1918. This reveals that different attitudes toward the PSR and its activities in the revolutionary underground and in the Soviet state respectively influenced how revolutionary auto/biographies were written.

Both female terrorists and female Bolsheviks were represented as “mothers” and “sisters” in the revolutionary family. As in accounts of Bolshevik heroes and heroines, some of the auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists from upper- and middle-class families devote particular attention to the material hardships of their birth families in order to show that they suffered under the old regime as the common people did. As did authors of revolutionary auto/biographies of Bolsheviks, the authors of accounts of female PSR terrorists show their private lives as a hindrance for the woman’s radicalization and political activism. The sufferings of the revolutionaries at the hands of the regime, which were common in accounts of Bolsheviks written in the 1930s, are present even in some accounts of female terrorists. By using typical narratives from the revolutionary auto/biographies of Bolsheviks, the authors of accounts of the lives of female PSR terrorists tried to make their life stories into an acceptable part of the narrative of the revolutionary fight created by the Bolsheviks. Bolshevik influence also made possible the existence of contesting narratives of the female terrorists’ lives in Maltsev Prison. Memoirists influenced by Bolshevik ideas challenged the heroic narrative created in the works of women who continued to promote the heroic narrative of the PSR.
7.3 Discursive Differences: Socialists and Liberals

The revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists analysed here were written by different groups of authors: by socialists and by liberals, who had different ideologies as their point of departure, and thus approached the political struggle of female terrorists differently. Although representations constructed in these works were in many respects quite similar, in the course of analysis I was able to identify some differences in how the women and their life paths were represented in the works of different authors.

The members of the PSR introduced their terrorist heroines first and foremost as revolutionary fighters who struggled for their socialist ideals, and only secondarily as martyrs. The representations created in works by liberal authors, however, accentuate the women’s martyrdom more by focussing on the sufferings that they underwent after they were arrested. The heroic socialistic struggle of Spiridonova, Rasputina, Sture and the other women whose biographies were written by liberal authors was not at all the focus of these accounts.

The focus of the revolutionary auto/biographies of female terrorists written by socialists was their devotion to the revolutionary ideals of the PSR. The ideals of the PSR are, however, absent from the revolutionary autobiographies of terrorist women written by liberals: these authors normally represent female terrorists more generally as freedom fighters without special attention to their political affiliation. In his account of Spiridonova, for example, Jaakoff Prelooker, even represents the beginning of her social engagement as stemming from liberal ideas about human rights. In this way, he makes his representation of a political terrorist attractive even for those liberals who did not support political violence. Such representation is, however, exceptional, since no other liberal author tried to make similar connections.

7.4 Gender Constraints

As observed by previous researchers, portraying female terrorists as heroines is connected to the difficulty of portraying a female hero. On the one hand, women are represented as acting at different stages of their political activism like (male) revolutionary heroes. However, the

1104 Schraut 2014, 64.
heroes’ typically male mode of behaviour is sometimes controversial in the case of women, and, as a result, authors of their auto/biographies feminize female terrorists. Schraut and Weinbauer connect this feminization to the ideal of a female Christian martyr. However, the case of female PSR terrorists shows that all their actions were represented departing from the ideal of the “natural,” “good” woman that existed in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century.

“Natural” female goodness is the central topic of the narratives of female terrorists as members of the “revolutionary family.” Women were represented by their comrades in a gendered manner, either as “mothers” (in accounts of older women’s lives) or “sisters” (in accounts of younger women’s lives) of their revolutionary sons/brothers (men). These roles of mother and sister did not imply any position of power in the revolutionary family, and were represented as similar to the roles that Russian women played in traditional families at that time. Women were mostly praised for their ability to perform routine, everyday work in revolutionary and terrorist organizations, and thus show themselves as modest individuals, in accordance with the existing ideal of “good” femininity. This tendency is even present in the accounts of women who were not satisfied with their roles in terrorist organizations and who wanted to commit political assassinations. Women’s ambitions that did not fit the ideal of female modesty were normally explained by their hard-working nature and wish to be more useful to terrorist organizations.

Feminizing explanations were especially important in discussing women’s decisions to participate in political violence. They were introduced as stemming from strong emotions (mostly the positive feelings of love), which is not present in narratives of male terrorists. By representing women as partly motivated by their emotions in making political decisions, authors of these accounts introduce female terrorists in accordance with the stereotype of that time of women been driven by emotions. By showing that female terrorists were driven by the positive emotion of love, the authors demonstrate that women decided to participate in political violence because of their “good” femininity.

The ideal of female goodness, however, disappears from stories about the revolutionary heroine’s activism after her decision to participate in a political assassination. By taking part in political violence, women

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transgress their gender by engaging in a “typically” male mode of action, and thus are represented in revolutionary auto/biographies as identical in behaviour to their male counterparts. They are represented as revolutionary heroes whose actual sex is no longer important for the construction of the narrative.

Feminizing representations of female PSR terrorists most often appear in biographical works about them. Although women sometimes also employ gendered explanations for their behaviour and choices in their autobiographies, in some cases their own accounts are very different from the biographical works. While the biographers of terrorist women often connect their decisions to participate in political terrorism to their wish to sacrifice themselves for the cause, a wish that was at that time considered more legitimate for a woman than her wish to fight the regime, such explanations are absent from autobiographical texts. Thus, female terrorists preferred to construct themselves as revolutionary fighters, while their biographers noted to their martyrdom when writing about the period before the women committed assassinations.

The ideal of diligent working woman becomes relevant for presenting female terrorists in accounts of the 1930s of their lives at katorga. This female ideal was dominant in Soviet Russia, and the authors of the accounts of terrorist women use that ideal to represent them in order to contextualize their modes of behaviour within the ideal of “good” femininity that became dominant at that time in the Soviet state.

7.5 The Revolutionary Heroine as an Intersectional Node

Although the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists were written within the discourse of heroism and martyrdom, and different events of the women’s lives were adapted to the dominant narrative, the social characteristics of the women have influenced how their life stories were told.

A class perspective is present in the narratives of female terrorists’ lives prior to their political activism, since the early experiences of women of different social origins were different with respect to the kind of oppressions that they experienced and the circumstances of their political awakening. However, this perspective is otherwise rare in the accounts of women’s political activism in the revolutionary underground. Class differences reappear in the accounts of female terrorists’ life in Siberian
Although authors of these accounts from an upper- and middle-class background do not discuss this issue, memoirists of a working-class background show that women of that social origin lived their lives in the commune differently from others; they felt themselves alone, did not study and did not consider performing physical work as something heroic.

Representations of female terrorists from a Jewish background also differed from those of Russian women, who were a majority and thus seen as a norm. The lives of Jewish female terrorists prior to their participation in political terrorism were constructed differently from those of Russian origin primarily because Jewish families were thought to be more conservative than Russian ones. Jewish women were constructed as having their first experience of oppression from their birth families. They were also introduced as people who needed a mentor to get acquainted with revolutionary ideas. Both narratives were absent from the revolutionary auto/biographies of Russian women. Marina Mogilner, in her book of 1997, writes about the existence of the Jewish revolutionary heroine, who was different from the revolutionary heroine with Russian origin because of her concern for the situation of the Jewish population in the Russian Empire. However, none of the female terrorists of Jewish background was represented in the revolutionary auto/biographies as especially concerned with the Jewish question; like other female terrorists, they were represented as concerned with the common people in general. As for representations of the women’s political activism, only Jewish middle-class women, Fruma Frumkina, Dora Brilliant and Rashel Lurie were represented in these works as irrationally devoted to the idea of political terrorism, while Russian women, according to these accounts, had rational explanations for their choices based on the PSR program. Among female terrorists from Jewish families, only Shkolnik, born to working-class parents, as well as the Russian women, explained her membership in the PSR by her interest in the party program, not by her special interest in political terrorism. Jewish women from the middle class, who did not have reasons for their political radicalization connected to their social origin, were constructed as primarily interested in political violence.

That female terrorists of Jewish background were represented in the revolutionary auto/biographies differently from Russian women

1106 See more about it in Mogilner 1997, 53.
demonstrates that just as the dominant pro-government discourse approached Jews as “the Other” in relation to Russians, the authors of these works constructed female terrorists of Jewish origin as “the Other.” This finding confirms Patricia Hill Collins’s idea that representations created within oppositional institutions simultaneously resist and reproduce stereotypical images created in the domains of power. As a result, on the one hand, terrorist women born in Jewish families were represented as revolutionary heroines with all their progressive features, as were Russian women, but, on the other hand, as perpetual others in relation to them.

Analysis of the narratives of lives of female PSR terrorists shows that individuals sometimes appear in these accounts behind accurately constructed ideal images. This happens, however, only in the accounts of female terrorists’ awakening of consciousness and life after participation in political terrorism. The narratives of female terrorists’ political activism represent the most standardized constructions of individual women as ideal revolutionary heroines with mythical features. In the narratives about women’s awakening, the different circumstances of their lives connected to their diverse social classes, ethnicities, generational groups, etc., reveal different individuals behind the façade of ideal revolutionary heroine constructed in these works, as individuals moving toward their revolutionary future. In the memoirs of female terrorists’ lives in Maltsev Prison, their personalities become even more prominent. Because of the absence of the established discursive practice of writing about the revolutionaries’ lives in prison, the authors of these memoirs create quite human portrayals of female terrorists that show them as real-life individuals who did not always live up to the ideal constructed in the revolutionary underground.

7.6 The Revolutionary Heroine as an Agent of Political Violence

The auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists are different from similar works about other revolutionary women, since they include the narrative of female participation in political violence, a topic considered controversial at the beginning of the 20th century. This controversy is

1107 Hill Collins 2000 [1990], 86.
clearly present in auto/biographical accounts dedicated to terrorist women.

Information about female terrorists’ awakening and life after participation in political violence do not include any references to their violent activities. Even in the accounts of female terrorists’ political activism, their biographers do not elaborate much on the assassinations or assassination attempts that the women committed, and in some cases they do not even mention them at all. This confirms the conclusions of Luisa Passerini in her research on Italian female left-wing terrorists about the reluctance of terrorists to elaborate on their direct participation in political violence.\textsuperscript{1108} When the violence of female terrorists was mentioned, the authors of revolutionary biographies tried to legitimize it, which was also identified by Sarah Colvin as a strategy used by Ulrike Meinhof’s biographers in writing about her participation in political terrorism.\textsuperscript{1109} In the case of female PSR terrorists, the violence was legitimized by detailed accounts of the “crimes” committed by the targets of these assassinations and by detailed accounts of the sufferings that the terrorists were subjected to after arrest. The women are most often represented as calm and determined in the course of the assassination, which equates their behaviour with that of male political assassins.

However, descriptions of political violence in the auto/biographical accounts of female terrorists of middle-class Jewish background is different. Only Fruma Frumkina among the terrorist women writes about her awakening as directly connected to her future wish to participate in political terrorism. Like other women of the same socio-ethnic background, she is represented as primarily attracted to the PSR by its use of political terrorism as a means of revolutionary struggle. Among female terrorists, only Jewish middle-class women are represented as openly dissatisfied with their passive position in terrorist organizations and eager to participate in political violence to the point of committing political assassinations without formal party permission. Thus, the above-mentioned group of women was represented as “the Other” with respect to female terrorists from a Russian background, which reproduces the dominant discourse on the Jewish people that existed in the Russian Empire at that time.

\textsuperscript{1108} Passerini 1992, 197.
\textsuperscript{1109} Colvin 2009, 250.
7.7 The Revolutionary Heroine of the PSR in the Context of International Terrorism

In many overviews of the history of international terrorism, terrorism in pre-revolutionary Russia is seen as the birthplace of the traditions continuing in contemporary international terrorism. I see the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists as an important stage in the development of texts about political terrorists that represented them as heroes and martyrs. In the section of the “Introduction” dedicated to previous research on the topic, I have written at length on the striking similarities in the findings of researchers who analyse revolutionary auto/biographies to those of researchers who work with auto/biographical accounts of the lives of contemporary terrorists written by their sympathizers. The revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, as noted in the empirical chapters of the dissertation, are very similar to the last group of documents.

Like the life stories of contemporary terrorists, the revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists are constructed as conversion narratives, and are the result of censorship by the authors, who tried to make their narratives fit the discursive practice of writing the heroic life and to create a positive image of the terrorist in question. Special features identified as typical for revolutionary auto/biographies of female PSR terrorists, namely, the women’s attempts to mimic male models in their autobiographical writings, the accounts of their happy childhoods that were proof of their political convictions and altruism, the emphasis on the women’s educational backgrounds, the stories about their struggle for justice even before their political radicalization, the ways of dealing with female violence by silencing or legitimizing it, have been identified by scholars of contemporary female terrorists. This demonstrates that the results of the dissertation can be used in future research on contemporary terrorism just as the results of scholars from other research fields were useful in the present dissertation.

While I found a limited number of works on contemporary terrorists’ early lives and activism, the accounts of their lives after participation in political terrorism have been touched upon only by two scholars.

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1110 See for example Geifman 2010, 3-4.
1111 Passerini touches upon the issue very briefly (Passerini 1992, 193-194). Graham Dawson’s article on Michael Stone’s memoirs is the only work where the topic is discussed in more or less detail (see Dawson 2014, 167-172).
The findings of the dissertation about the construction of lives of female PSR terrorists in prison and exile can be used for similar research in other historical and geographical contexts.
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“Memorial”: http://www.memo.ru/


Vladimir Shulyatikov’s Google Album Archive: https://get.google.com/albumarchive/105886027558885815466
Sammanfattning på svenska

Att framställa revolutionära terrorister som hjältar och martyrer var ett typiskt inslag i den ryska revolutionära mytologin i början av 1900-talet. Denna mytologi beskrev det "Underjordiska Ryssland", revolutionärernas värld, som ett idealiskt land bebott av idealiska människor. Syftet var att framställa den revolutionära kampen och enskilda revolutionärer på ett sådant sätt att de skulle få sympati från den bredare allmänheten och bli förebilder för andra revolutionära kämpar. Positiva representationer av kvinnor som begått politiskt våld verkar ha varit särskilt chockerande i ryska sammanhang i början av 1900-talet, då kvinnligt våldsutövande stod i motsats till den befintliga gensusordningen.

Med hjälp av teoretiska perspektiv från kritisk diskursanalys, genushistoria och intersektionalitet analyserar avhandlingen på vilket sätt narrativ om det Socialistrevolutionära partiets kvinnliga terroristers levnadsbanor konstruerades i deras revolutionära självbiografier och biografier. Det handlar om kvinnor av olika sociala och etniska ursprung, olika åldrar och med olika livsstilar som förenades genom deltagandet i politisk terrorism. Arbetet analyserar hur deras liv berättades med hjälp av narrativ som användes generellt i den ryska revolutionära mytologin.

Forskningsresultaten visar att berättelserna om kvinnliga terroristers liv byggdes med hjälp av ett dominerande narrativ i form av en omvändlingshistoria. Inom ramen för denna anpassades de enskilda kvinnornas liv till den revolutionära diskursen av heroism och martyrskap. Samtidigt kontextualiserades deras biografier inom ramarna för det ryska samhällets dominerande diskurs om "god" kvinnlighet och – i judiska kvinnors fall - även inom diskursen om judar som eviga "andra" i det ryska imperiet. Den sociala och etniska bakgrunden samt de enskilda förhållandena för kvinnliga terrorister inverkade dock på det dominerande narrativet genom att skapa en mångfald av representationer.
Under den tidiga sovjetperioden påverkades den diskursiva praktiken att skriva ett revolutionärt liv av vad bolsjevikerna godtog, vilket framträder i senare biografier av de kvinnliga terroristerna som en gång hade tillhört det Socialistrevolutionära partiet.
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