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Ukrainian Collaboration During the Holocaust

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Candidate for the degree

Bachelor of Arts

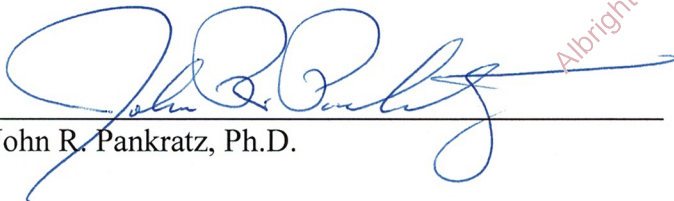
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College Honors

Departmental Distinction in History



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Ukrainian Collaboration with the Nazis during the Holocaust

Mark Duffy

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Honors Thesis

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Table of Contents

Maps of Ukraine.....	2
Introduction and Thesis.....	3
Historiography.....	4
History of Ukraine's Relationship with Jews.....	10
Relations between Ukraine and Soviet Union.....	12
Development of Ukrainian Nationalism.....	14
The Association of Jews with the Soviet Union.....	16
Nazi Ideology and Propaganda against Jews of Eastern Europe.....	17
Operation Barbarossa.....	21
Remembering Collaboration in Ukraine.....	30
Conclusion.....	35
Bibliography.....	36



Map of Ukraine



INTRODUCTION AND THESIS

The Holocaust in the countries comprising the Soviet Union occurred between 1941 and 1944 and was due to the genocidal policies of Nazi Germany. The Nazi regime carried out its genocide of European Jews in a systematic manner. As part of its doctrine of *Lebensraum* (“living space”), it sought to clear vast areas of Eastern Europe for possible colonization by ethnic Germans. The Soviet Union experienced much of this destruction, notably in Ukraine. There, over 900,000 Jews died during World War II.¹ Though the primary blame for the mass murder lies squarely at the foot of World War II Germany, the German government could not have eliminated this many people without the collaboration of the local populations. This thesis seeks to investigate how average Ukrainians, and not just government officials, collaborated with the Germans to execute the Holocaust in their region of the USSR. Many Ukrainians disliked Jews for a myriad of reasons. The two biggest grounds were antisemitism and nationalism; however, economic security and personal welfare were contributing factors for many. Although the Nazis viewed all Slavs as sub-human, they were still able to capitalize on the emotional antisemitism of the Ukrainians to further the goals of Germany’s eliminationist antisemitism. Regardless of the reasons for the collaboration, the end results are the deaths of almost one million Jews and the destruction of the Jewish culture in Ukraine.

To situate better the purpose of this investigation, a historiographic section will review the general historical understanding of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, before moving on to examine the relationship between Ukrainians and Jews and Communists prior to the genocidal

¹ Ingmar Oldberg, “Both Victim and Perpetrator: Ukraine’s Problematic Relationship to the Holocaust,” *Baltic Worlds*, August 1, 2011, <http://baltic-worlds.com/Ukraine%E2%80%99s-problematic-relationship-to-the-holocaust/>.

years. It will in turn examine the role of propaganda and the immediate impact of the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, before surveying the motivations of the perpetrators in relation to each other. In so doing, the thesis shows a paradox, namely that the Nazis did not hesitate to rely on other victims to persecute their primary "racial" targets, the Jews."

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Many scholars have addressed the issue of Ukrainian collaboration with the Nazis and have enumerated several reasons for it. These theories include antisemitism, nationalism, personal gain, and the association of Jews with Communists. The issue of Ukrainian collaboration is not easily answered for several reasons. After World War II, Soviet authorities minimized the Holocaust. The entire issue of antisemitism was not raised in any Soviet war trial; instead, the official policy cited the suffering of all the Soviet nations and the heroic victory of the Soviet Union.² The second problem encountered in examining the Holocaust in the East was the inaccessibility of Soviet archives, compelling the use of reliance completely on German documents.³

Some experts like Raoul Hilberg and Leni Yahil approach the matter through general surveys of the Holocaust. *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders* by Raul Hilberg and *The Holocaust* by Leni Yahil are comprehensive examinations of the Holocaust in Europe; however, they lack a

² Tanja Penter, "Collaboration on Trial: New Source Material on Soviet Postwar Trials Against Collaborators," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Winter 2005): 785.

³ "The Holocaust in Ukraine," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed, October 27, 2016 <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/ukraine>.

large quantity of information about the Holocaust in Ukraine. The data that they did contain about Ukraine was useful. They explain some reasons that caused Ukrainians to persecute Jews.

Hilberg explains that Ukrainians were burdens to them, saying that the Jewish people consumed their scarce food while Ukrainians starved. Further, Ukrainians perceived Jews as a different people whose problems were not Ukrainian concerns. Therefore, they refused to help Jews and even actively reported them to authorities so Germans could capture them. Food continued to be a problem for Ukrainians even after Nazis annihilated all Jews in the area. Ukrainians who sheltered Jews were endangered along with the Jews. If the Nazis discovered them, they would shoot the entire Ukrainian family.⁴ Germans committed this practice in all areas of occupation.

Leni Yahil notes that by November 1941 Germans had killed 80,000 Jews in Ukraine. This includes 34,000 slaughtered by the Nazis in Babi Yar.⁵ The Ukrainian people collaborated with the Nazis to accomplish these killings.

Einsatzgruppe C played on the disappointment and frustration of Ukrainians to encourage them to conduct pogroms against Jews in Lviv. The town had the third largest Jewish community in Poland. Its citizens charged local Jews with the commission of atrocities against Ukrainians during the Russian occupation. They arrested Jews on these charges and executed many in the forests outside the city and in the prisons. Those who were not killed were forced to clean the prisons cells stained with the blood of dead Jews. The Ukrainians killed thousands of Jews in these pogroms. The Jews who were rounded up for forced labor never returned. During this

⁴ Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators Victims Bystanders* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), 200-201.

⁵ Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945*, trans. Ina Friedman and Haya Galai (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 256-257.

persecution, looting of Jewish homes and businesses occurred throughout the city.⁶ Thus, the Ukrainians and Poles benefitted economically from the pogroms.

The citizens in Rovno, as in other parts of Ukraine, perceived Germans as liberators from Soviet oppression. When this perception was proved false, they replaced their disillusionment with violence against Jews. Widespread killing of Jews began in Rovno in the beginning of November 1941. The police, not the Einsatzgruppe, conducted the operations and spared only the skilled Jewish workers. During the period of November 6 to November 7 1941, at least 17,500 Jews in the area were executed.⁷

While such books are good sources for the Holocaust in general, they are of limited use in a more focused survey. These works support my thesis, however, that Ukrainians actively engaged in the hunt, identification, and persecution of Jews during the Holocaust.

Andrzej Zbikowski documents that the Ukrainian populations in the eastern territories of Poland had higher incidences of anti-Jewish pogroms than those locales composed of other ethnic groups. It is unknown whether the Germans even influenced the initiation of the pogroms because in some instances, such as that of the town of Kolomyja, violence against Jews erupted immediately following the Soviets' evacuation in summer 1941. The hostilities against Jews did not change after the establishment of Jewish ghettos or the later exterminations.⁸ Thus,

⁶Yahil, 261.

⁷ Yahil, 265.

⁸Andrzej Zbikowski, "Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Occupied Poland," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, ed. Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S. Gurock (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1993), 177-179.

antisemitism was clearly the prevalent reason for these Ukrainians' violence and collaboration against the Jews.

Yehuda Merin and Jack Nusan Porter also believe that the Ukrainian people actively and passively collaborated with Nazis because they were antisemitic. The Jewish family-camps in the forests of Volyn, Ukraine, were subject to antisemitism. Ukrainian peasants helped the Germans find the hiding places of Jews. The Nazis played on the Ukrainians' feelings by promulgating anti-Jewish propaganda that Jews were closely linked to Communist Russians and Poles.⁹ Ukrainians hated Russia and Poland because the countries had taken over their land. Therefore, they also disliked Jews due to their association with the Soviets and bolshevism. Jeffrey Burds agrees that the Holocaust in the East was presented as a war of liberation from Stalinism and from Soviet-“Jewish-Bolshevism.”¹⁰

Some scholars contend that nationalism, not inherent antisemitism, played a large role in the Ukrainian Holocaust. Timothy Snyder states that Ukrainians collaborated with Germans for this reason. He uses the Lviv incident to illustrate this point. After 2,500 prisoners were found dead in a NKVD prison, the Nazis presented them to the populace as victims of Jewish secret policemen even though some of the victims were Poles and Jews, and the secret policemen were probably Russians and Ukrainians. The pogroms united Germans and Ukrainians against Jews, and the Nazis recruited Ukrainians into the local police forces to take prominent roles in the killing of Jews. Ukrainians gained prestige from their collaboration.¹¹

⁹ Yehuda Merin and Jack Nusan Porter, “Three Jewish Family-Camps in the Forests of Volyn, Ukraine during the Holocaust,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1984): 83-92.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Burds, *Holocaust in Rovno: The Massacre at Sosenki Forest, November 1941* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 7.

¹¹ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 195-196.

In another article, Snyder suggests that collaboration between Ukrainians and Nazis occurred for economic, social, or political reasons. Ukrainians obtained jobs, political prestige, and military training by joining the Germans. Ukrainian men avoided deportation to Germany for forced labor by joining the German army or police.¹² The Nazis regarded the East Ukrainians as *Untermenschen*, or sub-human people, but reluctantly accepted West Ukrainians into Waffen SS.¹³ Burds posits further that besides nationalist sentiment, opportunism was also a clear factor affecting decisions to join the collaborationist police. The political economy of the genocide motivated some perpetrators. For many, the Holocaust was an economic crime. The local population received the Jews' homes, contents, personal belongings, money, and valuables. There were also other benefits to collaboration. Some collaborators received documents that allowed them to walk around at night, to ride in German railroad cars, and to obtain passes for free entrances to Germany and its protectorates.¹⁴ Therefore, some Ukrainians helped Nazis for their own benefit and safety.

Martin Dean states that Jewish property served as an incentive for crimes against Jews. Ukrainians looted the homes of Jews who were removed from their residences. Dean also believes that Ukrainians helped Nazis for their own salvation. For example, some local governments passed orders that anyone who hid Jews would be shot and any Jews found hiding

¹² Timothy Snyder, "The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry, 1921-1945," in *The Shoah in Ukraine*, ed. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 95.

¹³ John A. Armstrong, "Collaboration in World War II: The Integral Nationalist Variant in Eastern Europe," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (September 1968): 403.

¹⁴ Burds, 59-63.

were to be turned over to the police. He further suggests that power corrupted some Ukrainians to the point that they just enjoyed killing others.¹⁵

John-Paul Himka examined the Lviv Pogrom of July 1, 1941 in which Ukrainians and Ukrainian nationalists joined with Germans to arrest and execute Jews, the second largest population in Lviv in 1939. The Ukrainians took advantage of the leaders' antisemitism to rob and kill Jews after the Nazis had blamed Jews for collaborating with the communists. He agreed with other scholars that it was a combination of antisemitism, nationalism, and economic gain that drove the Ukrainians to commit the atrocious acts against the Jewish population.¹⁶

Christoph Mick also believes that traditional local antisemitism and antisemitic stereotypes, German antisemitic propaganda, grievances for injuries suffered under the Soviet occupation and terrible hatred came together to incite the Lviv pogroms.¹⁷

Based on these authors' conclusions, Ukrainians collaborated with the Nazis for a myriad of reasons. The two biggest grounds were probably antisemitism and nationalism; however, economic security and personal welfare were contributing factors for many. In all probability, each collaborator possessed a combination of different motives for aiding the Nazis. Regardless of the reasons, the end results for the victims were the same.

¹⁵ Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 96-97.

¹⁶ John-Paul Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol.53, No. 2/4 (June-September-December 2011): 209-243.

¹⁷ Christoph Mick, "Incompatible Experiences: Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews in Lviv under Soviet and German Occupation, 1939-44," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 2011): 361.

HISTORY OF UKRAINE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JEWS

Ukraine has had a long and conflicted history with Jews. Jews have lived in Ukraine for over one thousand years, beginning with the Jews of Khazaria.¹⁸ The Khazars were an ancient nomadic Turkic people who settled around the Ukraine and the Crimea. Jews, fleeing Christian persecution settled in the kingdom because the Khazars allowed them to practice their own religion. The Jews of Khazaria may have been some of the founders of the Jewish communities in Poland and Eastern Europe.

Jews later moved to Ukraine from the western provinces of Poland for the economic opportunities created by Poland's expanding influence, especially in the sixteenth century during the consolidation of Poland-Lithuania over the region. Between twenty and thirty thousand Jews lived in sixty communities, mostly cities, by the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁹ Ukraine was the center of Jewish life in Poland-Lithuania. During this period, Jews were primarily employed as collectors of customs, duties, and taxes. These functions prompted tensions with the Ukrainian population. Ukrainians were Catholic, as the majority of Europe was before the Protestant Reformation, and Catholics were not allowed to engage in usury. Jews could perform these activities and were prohibited from engaging in several types of other occupations. As Jews prospered, antisemitism flourished. For example, Ukrainian Cossacks blamed Jewish people for the plight of the poor. In 1648, the Cossacks rebelled against the Poles and Jews, killing tens of thousands of Jews during 1648 to 1649. Jews, however, continued to migrate to Ukraine in the

¹⁸ Petro Mirchuk, *My Meetings and Discussions in Israel (Are Ukrainians "traditionally anti-Semites")?*, (New York: Ukrainian Survivors of the Holocaust (1982), 5.

¹⁹ Rachel Rosen, "Ukraine," *The Virtual Jewish World*, accessed January 7, 2017, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/vjw/ukraine.html>.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries despite this persecution which continued to the interwar period.²⁰

During the period between the World Wars, relations between Jews and Ukrainians fluctuated from sporadic cooperation to tension and mutual suspicion. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I and the establishment of new political and territorial regions in Europe, a power struggle began in Eastern Galicia between Poles and Ukrainians. Both sides expected the support of Jews. The recently established Western Ukrainian People's Republic fought against the Poles who tried to annex Eastern Galicia to their new country. The Jews decided to remain neutral during this struggle.

During the existence of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, the government officially recognized the Jewish national councils and granted some basic rights to Jews as a national minority. Jews served in the country's army and several places had their own police units. After the Polish conquest of the country, relations between Jews and Ukrainians worsened. Poles were hostile to Jews due to their neutrality and accused them of cooperation with the Ukrainians. Polish hostility against Jews was so strong that Polish soldiers and the local Polish population executed a pogrom in Lviv on November 22, 1918, in which at least one hundred Jews were killed.

Poland's denial of national rights to minorities led to the creation of the "Bloc of Minorities," which participated in elections in 1922. Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia boycotted the elections. In 1925, some of the Jewish leaders, primarily from Eastern Galicia, signed an agreement with the Polish government in an attempt to ensure some elementary rights for the

²⁰Rachel Rosen.

Jewish minority. Ukrainians argued that Jews preferred an understanding with Poland to the maintenance of solidarity with the Ukrainians. The Jews and Ukrainians enjoyed friendlier relations during the municipal elections of 1927 due to their cooperation with each other.

Good relations between the Jewish people and the Ukrainians did not last long. Jews believed that they were in economic competition from Ukrainians and that they suffered from discriminatory Polish economic policy. The Ukrainian cooperative movement ousted many Jews from jobs, and Ukrainians perceived Jewish people as a pro-Polish element that helped to promote Polonization in Western Ukraine.

Thus, Ukrainians were predisposed to hate their Jewish brethren even before the Holocaust. Therefore, it was easy for the Nazis to encourage their collaboration. The Nazis were masters in propaganda and used the biases of the native populations, including the Ukrainians, to engage the people in ostracizing and eventually eliminating Jewish people from their societies.

RELATIONS BETWEEN UKRAINE AND SOVIET UNION

By the Second World War, Ukraine had the largest Jewish population within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. For a brief period between July 1940 and June 1941, when Stalin occupied the interwar Polish territory of eastern Galicia and western Volhynia, and the period of the interwar Romanian territories of northern Bukovina and southern Bessarabia, at least 2.45 million Jews lived in Ukraine, making it home to the largest Jewish population in Europe.²¹

²¹ Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, introduction to *The Shoah in Ukraine*, ed. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 1.

Thus, Ukraine always had a large Jewish population which composed a significant minority of the population.

A reason for the Ukrainians' willingness to accept the Germans was the suffering of the peasants throughout the Soviet Union due to the Great Famine. The peasants blamed the Soviets for their plight. Soviet leaders permitted the peasants to prosper in the 1920s, but took their land away from them in the early 1930s, in order to create collective farms where peasants would work for the state.²² Millions of farmers refused to cooperate with the government confiscation of their farms. They were either shot or exiled as a punishment. The forced collectivization led to widespread famine across the Soviet Union in 1932 to 1933 that killed millions.²³

Ukraine was not spared from the famine. Its harvest of 1930 was exceptional. It set a standard that could not be met in 1931, even if collectivized farming were as efficient as individual farming, which it is not. The government used the bumper crop of 1930 as a baseline number for requisitions for 1931. Ukraine was incapable of providing the required food.²⁴

Little food was left for the peasants. For example, in the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv, Kiev, Stalino, and Dnipropetrovsk, hundreds of thousands of people waited daily for a loaf of bread. The starvation crisis was so bad that city police removed famished children from the streets to get them out of sight. Hunger was far worse in the Ukrainian cities than anywhere else in the Western world; however, most of the dead were Ukrainian peasants. Many of them died

²² Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 18.

²³ Robert C. Tucker, "The Rise of Stalin's Personality Cult," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (April 1979): 347-348.

²⁴ Snyder, 33.

while working on the railways as part of Stalin's Five Year Plan.²⁵ Although Ukrainians considered cannibalism a taboo, starvation resulted in cannibalism in many parts of Ukraine.²⁶

DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM

The poor conditions in Ukraine led to hatred of the Soviets and nationalism. It is also a reason for Ukraine collaboration with the Germans. In the 1930s, the Ukrainian national movement, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) converged with some of the elements of Nazi ideology in Germany. OUN was established in 1929 and gradually developed into a major factor in the Ukrainian national movement.²⁷

Approximately twenty-five thousand young Ukrainian Nationalists fled from Western Ukraine, which was under Soviet control, to the German-occupied part of Poland after September 1939. These Ukrainians were trained by the Nazis and formed two notorious death battalions, "Nachtigal" and "Roland." This occurred before the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. These units participated in the pogroms during the occupation of the Nazis.²⁸ The Soviet Union removed the Ukrainian nationalists who did not flee to Germany to labor camps in the USSR. The Russian government distrusted them and perceived them as possible Nazi collaborators. According to estimates, from 1939 to 1940, about 312,000 families or approximately 1,250,000 people were deported from western Ukraine to Siberia, the Arctic

²⁵ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 21-23.

²⁶ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 50-51.

²⁷ Aharon Weiss, "Jewish-Ukrainian Relations in Western Ukraine During the Holocaust," in *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. Howard Aster and Peter J. Potichnyj (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1990), 409-411.

²⁸ B. F. Sabrin, *Alliance for Murder: The Nazi-Ukrainian Nationalist Partnership in Genocide* (New York: Sarpedon, 1991), 8.

Circle, and Soviet controlled Asia. Twenty percent of them were ethnic Ukrainians.²⁹ This deportation presented another reason for the Ukrainians' hatred against the Russians.

Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is the most important source for Nazi ideology. A primary principle of the ideology was that it tolerated no other political party except the Nationalist Socialist one. Hitler believed that the German race was superior to all other races even though Germans mixed their blood with invaders and conquered peoples. He opined that the Nordic or Aryan race was the highest, and its chief representative was the Germans. Everything needed to support Germans and the growth of Germany. Since Germany was unable to increase its agricultural production, Germany needed *Lebensraum*, living space, which was only achieved through war and the expulsion or annihilation of other peoples. Antisemitism played a key role in Hitler's philosophy. Hitler believed that it was essential to personify the enemy, and Jews were the chief enemy. He posited that only fear of authority and the use of force held the community together.³⁰ OUN adopted the Nazi ideas of antisemitism and the idea of a country for only one people, Ukrainians.

OUN eventually split into two factions in 1940 under different leaders. OUN-M members remained loyal to the original leader, Andrii Mel'nyk, and OUN-B participants supported Stepan Bandera. In the months before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, both OUN factions, working from their bases in Berlin and German-occupied Cracow, organized task forces that would follow the Wehrmacht, the German army, into Ukraine in order to recruit

²⁹ Marvin Kalb, *Imperial Gamble*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 83.

³⁰ Hajo Holborn, "Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (December 1964): 542-547.

supporters and set up local governments.³¹ The OUN-B had an antisemitic ideology, especially in the spring and summer of 1941. The OUN-B conference in Cracow in April 1941 objected to pogroms against Jews but stated that it combated Jews as the propaganda of the Muscovite-Bolshevik regime.³² A passage on the organization of local governments states:

The national minorities are divided into a. those that are friendly to us, that is, members of heretofore subjugated peoples, and b. those that are hostile to us—Muscovites, Poles, and Jews.

Re. a. Have the same rights as Ukrainians, are given an opportunity to return to their homelands.

Re. b. Destruction in the struggle, especially of those who defend the regime: deportation to their homelands, destruction especially of the intelligentsia, which should not be allowed to hold any administrative positions. In general, we make it impossible to produce an intelligentsia, that is access to schools....Jews are to be isolated and removed from administrative positions so as to prevent sabotage, Muscovites and Poles even more so. If, for example, there is an absolute need to retain a Jew in the economic administration, one of our militiamen should be placed over him and he should be liquidated for the slightest transgression. Only Ukrainians and not foreign enemies can be leaders in various branched of life.

Assimilation of Jews is barred.³³

THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

During the first decade of Soviet rule, a campaign of “indigenation” or nationalization existed to encourage the development of the Soviet Union’s nationalities. Jews in Ukraine benefitted from this policy. The official promotion of Jewish agricultural settlements, Jewish art, and Yiddish letters may have fostered the impression that Jews were the primary recipients of the

³¹ Karel C. Berkhoff and Marco Carynnyk, “The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Its Attitude toward Germans and Jews: Iaroslav Stets’ko’s 1941 Zhyttiepyss,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3/4 (December 1999): 149-150.

³² Berkhoff and Carynnyk, 152.

³³ Berkhoff and Carynnyk, 153-154.

Communist government. Anti-communist writers also identified Jews, such as Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky, with communism. Nazis promoted this association of Jews with Communists.³⁴ The Soviets, however, had an inherent suspicion of Jews and deported a large number of Jewish people to Siberia.³⁵ This shows that Jews did not support the Soviet regime and actually suffered just as much as the Gentile Ukrainians.

NAZI IDEOLOGY AND PROPAGANDA AGAINST JEWS OF EASTERN EUROPE

The Germans believed that they could convince local populations who had suffered at the hands of the Soviets of the undesirability of Jews by their extreme persecution of them for their alleged crimes. They deliberately sought collaborators to help them murder Jews. Already in the summer and fall of 1939, the Nazis planned pogroms in Lithuania and Ukraine. Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, contained instructions from Reinhard Heydrich, the second ranking officer in the SS after Heinrich Himmler, to make it clear to the Lithuanians and Ukrainians that Jews would “pay” at their hands for inciting the world to resist the Nazis. Heydrich therefore developed a plan for the “self-cleansing” actions (*Selbstreinigungsaktionen*) against Jews by the local, native populations. On July 2, 1941, he wrote to the *Einsatzgruppen* that its members were not to interfere with the actions of the local residents against Jews. Moreover, they were to encourage such pogroms. Heydrich had previously written on June 6,

³⁴ Frank Golczewski, “Shades of Grey: Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia,” in *The Shoah in Ukraine*, ed. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 122-123.

³⁵ Norman M. Naimark, “The Nazis and “The East”: Jedwabne’s Circle of Hell,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Autumn 2002): 479.

1941 that the Poles in Ukraine and Belarus would not be immediately eliminated because they could help initiate the pogroms and identify Jews.³⁶

Einsatzgruppen were German mobile killing squads, comprised primarily of German SS and police personnel, that followed the Wehrmacht into the Soviet Union. They executed communists, Jews, and other “undesirable” people, according to Nazi rhetoric. The German army provided logistical support to the *Einsatzgruppen*, including supplies, transportation, and housing. In the beginning, the units shot primarily Jewish men; however, by the end of the summer of 1941, they killed all Jews regardless of their sex or age and buried them in mass graves.³⁷

The Nazis wanted to eliminate religion, but they also wanted collaboration with the Ukrainians. The regular members of OUN did not openly reject their religious upbringing. Therefore, Heinrich Himmler allowed Greek Catholic chaplains in the SS Division Galicia, which was largely recruited by the OUN. The church supported armed collaborationism but refused to endorse killing which would have broken the Commandment of “Thou shalt not kill.” The priests gave sermons that warned Ukrainians against taking part in the pogroms against Jews; however, their influence was not strong enough to prevent the slaughter.³⁸ Moreover, the Nazis encouraged all Ukrainians to express the religious preferences because they believed that it would foster peace and order. They announced to the citizens: “The time of atheism is gone.

³⁶ Naimark, 480

³⁷ “Einsatzgruppen (Mobile Killing Units),” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed April 15, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=1005130>.

³⁸ Armstrong, 406.

The German authorities give you the opportunity to pray in freedom again.” The Ukrainians therefore held hope that German rule might bring more freedom and prosperity.³⁹

Adolf Hitler charged Heinrich Himmler with all security and police matters in the occupied territories. Before the invasion and in the summer of 1941, Himmler developed an elaborate plan for using Slavic policemen in the civilian zones. The Wehrmacht was in charge of the military zones and used police aides as needed. On July 30, 1941, the German military commander announced in the local Ukrainian newspaper that a new police force would be formed. There was to be one policeman for every ten households. The job was unpaid, but many Ukrainians responded to the offer. Within two months, Germans selected and deployed 6,000 Ukrainian auxiliary police in the northern half of the region alone.⁴⁰ Clearly, many Ukrainians were willing to collaborate without any monetary incentive.

Thus, the political grounds for antisemitism were in place even before the Germans had arrived in Ukraine. The wartime propaganda of the OUN-B was similarly militant. Leaflets informed the Ukrainian populace that Jews were their enemies and had to be destroyed. Leaflets also issued death threats to Jews.⁴¹ Throughout Ukraine, Jews were depicted as killers of Ukrainian patriots. A poster in Lviv stated: “You gave Stalin a welcome of flowers. We will greet Hitler with your heads at his feet.”⁴² Germans also posted their own notices to minimize

³⁹ Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 37.

⁴⁰ Lower, 50.

⁴¹ Berkhoff and Carynnyk, 154.

⁴² Naimark, 481.

local sympathies for Jews. Nazis posted such a notice after they killed Jews in mass *Aktionen* that read:

“WE ACTIVE Bolshevik Cadres, during the yid-bolshevik era seized the people’s homes, drove parents and children from their homes into the snow. We deported parents and children to Siberia. We seized so much of the people’s bread we created an artificial famine, and people [starved] to death. We destroyed grain crops, drove livestock away so that the German Army would not get them. We continue to agitate against the German armed forces even now. AND THEREFORE WE, WITHOUT QUESTION, DESERVE SUCH PUNISHMENT.”⁴³

Thus, the Nazis conflated the Jews with the Soviets, the former oppressor of the Ukraine, in order to turn the Ukrainians against them.

There are three elements that distinguish the Holocaust in the East from the Holocaust in Western and Central Europe. First, the Holocaust in the East represented to the citizens a war of liberation from Stalinism and Jewish-Bolshevism. Immediately after German occupation in the East, leaflets and posters calling for a people’s war of liberation from “Stalinist oppression” and “Jewish Bolshevism” appeared. Nazis promulgated these messages to win support of the local residents and to legitimize their authority.⁴⁴

Second, the Holocaust in the East usually was executed publicly in the presence of Gentiles. In the West, the Nazis transported the Jewish victims in sealed trains to concentration and death camps in Central and Eastern Europe which allowed deniability of the Holocaust to exist. In the East, the primary method of killing was shooting; in the West, most were perished in the camps.

⁴³ Burds, 65.

⁴⁴ Burds, 7.

During the first wave of Jewish killings by the *Einsatzgruppen* in summer and autumn of 1941, the SS intentionally exposed the Ukrainian militia to the shooting of Jews. During the second and final wave, the Nazis used the Ukrainian police for the slaughter. The liquidation of the ghettos in 1942 was a SS operation, but it was implemented by approximately 1,400 Germans and 12,000 Ukrainian policemen. The police did not do much shooting, but they provided the labor to lead 150,000 Volhynian Jews to their massacre. In the countryside, the Ukrainian policed actually did the killing.⁴⁵

Third, the Holocaust in the East mobilized a considerable amount of the local populations into becoming collaborators with the Germans. The Nazis relied heavily on the local people to carry out its agenda.⁴⁶ The *modus operandi* of the Nazis was to work with some organized local group who would help with the pogrom because they could identify and persecute Jews for the Germans. This was because local populations spoke different languages and knew the Jews in the area.

For these reasons, the Holocaust in the East proceeded differently than that in Western and Central Europe. The Nazis needed collaborators in the East to achieve their goals. Therefore, most of the occupations followed the same procedure.

OPERATION BARBAROSSA

Operation Barbarossa, began on June 22, 1941. Even before the invasion, Ukrainians began to attack Jews due to their supposed Communist sympathies.⁴⁷ The German attack on

⁴⁵ Timothy Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943," *Past & Present*, No. 179 (May 2003): 210-211.

⁴⁶ Burds, 12-13.

⁴⁷ Merin and Porter, 83.

Rovno began on this day. About three thousand Rovno Jews, approximately ten percent of all Jews in the region, fled successfully before the Nazis arrived.⁴⁸ The remaining Jews were annihilated in three stages. During July and August 1941, three thousand to four thousand were murdered during a period of “self-cleansing” vigilante-style pogroms. A mass action in November 1941 killed more than 17,500 adults and more than six thousand children. A follow-up mass action in July-August 1942 eliminated the remaining Jews in Rovno. By the end of July 1942, the government declared the city *Judenrein*, or cleansed of Jews.

German shooters usually had a choice about taking part in the mass shootings; however, this option was not available to the Ukrainian militia which had more members than the Germans. A Jewish survivor from Rovno testified that after several of the Ukrainian executioners dropped their weapons and started running toward the pits, their commander called them “Jew-lovers” and ordered them shot with the Jews.⁴⁹ The Germans did not care about the psychological health of the Ukrainians as they did with regard to their own people, and to accomplish their goals, they needed the help of the Ukrainians even if it was unwilling.

Immediately after arrival in Rovno, the Germans tried to alienate the citizens from Jews by ordering that anyone found helping a Jewish person would be shot immediately by a firing squad, along with members of their household. Substantial rewards were offered to Gentiles for assisting the police in tracking down hidden Jews. Jews had to stand in line and turn over any

⁴⁸ Burds, 30.

⁴⁹ Burds, 58.

gold and silverware to the government. This was done publicly and witnessed primarily by Ukrainians who found it amusing.⁵⁰

The administration passed anti-Jewish laws instantly. Eight days after the arrival of the Germans, all Jews aged eleven and older had to wear a white armband with a yellow Star of David. A month later the bands were changed to round yellow patches required to be worn on the left arm for all Jews aged fourteen and older. By the end of August 1941, the *Judenrat* issued an order that all Jews had to walk in the middle of the roads instead of on the sidewalks.⁵¹

Lviv was one of the first Ukrainian cities that the Nazis controlled. One the eve of World War II, it was a multinational city; Poles formed a slight majority of just over fifty percent of the population, followed by Jews at thirty-two percent and Ukrainians at sixteen percent of the population. Before the war, Lviv had been in Poland. From September 1939 until the end of June 1941, the Soviets ruled it and joined it to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Germans took the city on June 30, 1941.⁵²

OUN established a short-lived government in Lviv on June 30, 1941, headed by its antisemitic leader, Yaroslav Stetsko.⁵³ Showing its alliance with the Nazi ideology, OUN immediately inundated the city with leaflets encouraging ethnic cleansing. Ukrainians wanted

⁵⁰ Burds, 35.

⁵¹ Burds, 33-36.

⁵² John-Paul Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. 53, No. 2/4 (June-September-December 2011): 210.

⁵³ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 222.

their own independent country, but even after the Germans refused to give them independence, they continued to work with the Nazis.⁵⁴

Pogroms were short, violent outbursts by a community against its Jewish population. The impetus for the Lviv pogrom was the discovery of thousands of decomposing corpses of political prisoners previously murdered by the NKVD, the Soviet police force. The Soviets left them in the prisons because they realized that the Germans were advancing too rapidly for them to evacuate the prisons. Many Ukrainian nationalists were among the victims. The Nazis made Jews retrieve the corpses from three prisons and lay them out for public display. Two prisons were located near the Jewish quarter in Lviv. On June 30, 1941, Germans forced Jews to work at the prison and perform other tasks elsewhere. Jews had to help with Ukrainian nationalist printing operations, repair streets from bombing damage, and clean homes and toilets.⁵⁵ Many of the Jews recruited for the prison work were murdered when they were finished.⁵⁶

On July 1, 1941, a full-blown pogrom existed in Lviv. Jewish men and women had to clean the streets; meanwhile the crowd humiliated Jewish women and forced Jews to perform rituals that identified them with communism. Photographs show Gentiles laughing at the Jews cleaning the streets.⁵⁷ The Nazis degraded professional Jewish people by having them do demeaning, physical work.

⁵⁴ Sabrin, 9.

⁵⁵ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 209-211.

⁵⁶ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 216.

⁵⁷ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 212.

The Nazis did not spare Jewish women. They were beaten in the face and other parts of their bodies with sticks and tools, shoved, kicked, pulled by their hair, and tossed between the members of the crowd. Many women were stripped naked and exposed to the crowd. People chased some through the streets. Some reported rapes. Some of the crowd hit or kicked pregnant women in their stomachs. Members of the crowd also robbed Jewish women.⁵⁸

The Ukrainian militia and OUN played prominent roles in the Lviv pogrom. The first Nazi killing squad, the *Sonderkommando* 4b, arrived after the pogrom had already begun.⁵⁹ OUN had already worked closely with the Germans for several years. On May 2, 1939, Andrii Mel'nyk had assured the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that OUN shared the Nazi ideals.⁶⁰ Therefore, OUN was the logical group that the Nazis used in Lviv because it had the motive and means to implement the pogrom.

The Wehrmacht suppressed the pogrom in the evening of July 1, 1941, although isolated incidents continued for several days. Besides the pogrom, the German *Einsatzgruppe* C, with the aid of Ukrainian militia, conducted systematic murders of Jews for several days. As of July 2, 1941, the Ukrainian militia in Lviv operated under the German SS.⁶¹ Thus, the Nazis were always firmly in control and could have stopped the pogrom at any time if they had wanted to do so. Instead, they relied on the antisemitic ideology of OUN to carry out the Nazi agenda. The

⁵⁸ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 213-214.

⁵⁹ Mick, 349.

⁶⁰ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 221-222.

⁶¹ Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 219-220.

crowd composed of Poles and Ukrainians took advantage of the incident to harass and torture a common enemy and even benefit from the event by stealing Jewish property.

The Lviv Judenrat, the Jewish Council, estimated that two thousand Jews disappeared in the pogrom and executions. The correct number, however, is probably that reported in an internal German security report dated July 16, 1941 which claimed that the Germans captured and shot seven thousand Jews.⁶²

The Wehrmacht entered Tarnopol, Ukrainian SSR, on July 2, 1941 and Trembowla, Tarnopol region on July 5, 1941. Some Jews and others were killed on the day of entry. OUN came out from the underground before the Nazis' arrival to kill retreating Soviet soldiers, Jews, and Polish citizens.⁶³

Local Ukrainians welcomed the Germans with unconcealed joy in Tarnopol. Germans gave OUN the administration of the city, and it nominated a Ukrainian president. OUN created a police force. On the third day of the occupation, pogroms against Jews began. Pogroms had never occurred before in the history of this city. Nazis initiated the first pogrom which was followed by one instigated by Ukrainians. The reason for the Ukrainian massacre against Jewish people was that dozens of dead Gentiles were found in a prison, and Jews were blamed for it. Ukrainians rounded up hundreds of Jews, took them to the prison, beat them, and forced them to do the dirtiest jobs, including cleaning the bodies. Ukrainians viciously killed the Jews afterwards. Approximately five thousand Jews died in these two pogroms.⁶⁴

⁶² Himka, "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd," 221.

⁶³ Sabrin, 10.

⁶⁴ Sabrin, 22-24.

To summarize: While the Nazis executed the first pogrom in Tarnopol, Ukrainians initiated the second. Therefore, it shows that OUN and the Ukrainians thoroughly adopted Nazi ideology and did not need to be forced into collaboration. The Nazis quickly abandoned the pogroms and self-cleansing actions initiated by Ukrainians, primarily because they did not want to support local vigilante groups who could ultimately turn on them.⁶⁵

The Wehrmacht took Kiev in September 1941. On September 24, 1941, a series of mines and bombs exploded which destroyed the buildings where the Germans had established offices for their occupation. Germans were killed. The Soviet army had set some of the devices on timers before they withdrew from the city, and remaining NKVD members detonated others. The Germans claimed that if the NKVD was guilty, the Jews had to be blamed. The appropriate punishment for the Jews was the mass murder of all of them. To coordinate this heinous act, the Nazis practiced misinformation, telling Jews that they were being resettled and that they had to appear with their documents, money, and valuables at the appointed location. The Jews were then driven to the edge of a ravine known as Babi Yar where they were forced to strip and lie on their stomachs to wait for the shots. This process continued for thirty-six hours until the Germans and Ukrainians had killed 33,761 Jews.⁶⁶ This is the largest killing by bullets. The shooters involved 300 ethnic Germans from Germany and the Baltics and 1,200 ethnic Ukrainians.⁶⁷ Approximately 100,000 people, including Jews, Roma, Communists, and Soviet prisoners of war were slaughtered at Babi Yar.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Naimark, 482.

⁶⁶ Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 201-203.

⁶⁷ Burds, 58.

⁶⁸ "Kiev and Babi Yar," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed April 15, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleID=10005421>.

During mass liquidations of Ukrainian Jews, some young Jews escaped into the forests of Volyn, Ukraine, where partisans, rebel soldiers, had already been hiding. The partisans accepted only Jews who had weapons into their groups. People without weapons had to wander throughout the forests to try to organize and obtain weapons.⁶⁹

In the autumn and winter of 1942, middle-aged Jews, women, and children escaped from the ghettos and also fled to these woods in the hope of rescue. The Jews, whom the partisans did not accept, formed “family camps.” The existence of Jewish partisans originally kept small German units away from the forests.⁷⁰ These camps had few combatants, however, and were in constant danger of being discovered by the S.S. with the help of local police. The early camps were near villages, and Ukrainian peasants helped the authorities find them. Most of the local population hated the Jewish family-camps because Jews had to obtain their food from the peasants in the surrounding area.⁷¹ Already by the end of September of 1941, *Einsatzgruppe C*, which operated in northern Ukrainian territory, reported that Jews were considered a burden because they ate some of the food.⁷² Ukrainians did not have much food to share because they had not completely recovered from the Great Famine and the Nazis had also seized their food for the Germans.

Even though antisemitism was a major factor in the Soviet partisans’ attitudes toward the family camps, it was not the only reason for their dislike of Jews. Another significant ground

⁶⁹ Merin and Porter, 83.

⁷⁰ Merin and Porter, 87.

⁷¹ Merin and Porter, 84-85.

⁷² Hilberg, 200.

was that the goals of the partisan movement were different from those of the Jews. Jewish people established the family camps to save women, children, and the aged who had escaped liquidations operations, while the partisans established groups to fight the enemy.⁷³ Protecting families prevented fighting the enemy.

Usually, Ukrainians did not house or feed escaped Jews who were forced to live in earth holes or in crowded old huts with many other people. According to many sources, the local inhabitants revealed the Jews' whereabouts. Local populations who did not feel threatened by the Germans bought old Jewish furnishings from the empty ghettos at bargain prices.

There were probably several reasons for this collaboration. For instance, a German police company in the village of Samary, Volhynis, shot an entire Ukrainian family, including a man, two women, and three children, for harboring a Jewish woman.⁷⁴ In this manner, the Nazis made examples of those who tried to help Jews and thereby deterred others from giving any aid. Ukrainians' need for personal safety for themselves and their families outweighed the desire to help Jews.

Some Ukrainians did not support these extreme antisemitic measures. At least one hundred death sentences were imposed on Ukrainians who had aided Jews. Hundreds of Jewish children and adults were hidden in the residence of Archbishop Sheptytskyj and in Uniate monasteries.⁷⁵ Therefore, the people who were not partisans were more likely to help Jews;

⁷³ Merin and Porter, 88.

⁷⁴ Raul Hilberg, 200-201.

⁷⁵ Mick, 354.

however, many more Ukrainians, especially members of partisan groups, remained strongly antisemitic even after the deaths of thousands of Jews.

REMEMBERING COLLABORATION IN UKRAINE

The issue of historical memory in Ukraine began before Ukraine became an independent state as a result of the perestroika-era policies of Mikhail Gorbachev. Membership in OUN was considered “treason” under the criminal code.⁷⁶ The public memory of the Holocaust has become important generally in Eastern Europe only since 1991: German and Ukrainian nationalist propaganda had originally shaped the information about the Holocaust in Ukraine.⁷⁷ Other types of information was not readily available before 1991.⁷⁸ The term “Holocaust” came to Eastern Europe from the West only in the late and post-communist period. In Ukraine, the memory of the Holocaust is sometimes seen as a concession to Western pressure.⁷⁹

Jews were not permitted to be visible in the same way as the other two groups in the fight against the Germans. For example, the war trials against Lviv’s citizens focused on the treason people committed with the Nazis, but did not mention their antisemitic motives.⁸⁰ The Yanivska camp near Lviv held mostly Jews. In July 1943, it held 7,100 Jews and only 225 non-Jewish victims. Moreover, the citizens knew that its purpose was for the mass murder of Jewish

⁷⁶ Oxana Shevel, “The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Union Ukraine,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Spring 2011): 147.

⁷⁷ Tarik Cyril Amar, “A Disturbed Silence: Discourse on the Holocaust in the Soviet West as an Anti-Site of Memory,” *The Holocaust in the East*, ed. Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, (2014), 160.

⁷⁸ Amar, 161.

⁷⁹ John-Paul Himka, “Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives,” *Canadian Slavic Papers*, Vol. 50, No. 3/4 (September-December 2008): 368-369.

⁸⁰ Amar, 163.

people.⁸¹ The Soviet leaders knew as early as the summer of 1941 that the Germans were murdering Jews and Roma in the country. The pogroms of Lviv were among some of the first major Nazi atrocities reported by the Soviet media.⁸² This shows that the Soviets knew about the fate of Jews, yet still did not focus on the antisemitic reasons in their war trials.

The Nazi and the Ukrainian nationalist propaganda combined “Bolshevik crimes” with Jews to form “Judea-Bolshevik crimes.” This propaganda suppressed the fact that killings executed by the Soviet NKVD had Jews among the victims. Soviets, too, did not note the Jewish victims of the Nazis or the Ukrainian collaborators. Germans occupied Lviv for three years and spread antisemitic propaganda the entire time. Ukrainian nationalists continued to foster antisemitic stereotypes even after the Nazis left the city.⁸³ Therefore, Ukrainians did not merely translate Nazi rhetoric; antisemitism was especially ingrained in the Ukrainian Lviv population.

Both Germans and Ukrainian nationalists believed in authoritarian, violent, nationalist politics and antisemitism. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists supported the German attack on the Soviet Union and conducted propaganda campaigns against Russians and Jews. It used its militia to segregate or eliminate Jews.⁸⁴ It featured Jews as a national enemy.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, there was a dichotomy in the Ukrainian nationalist propaganda because they also warned Ukrainians not to be killed “like Jews.”⁸⁶ The Ukrainians made Jews both enemies and

⁸¹ Amar, 164.

⁸² Amar, 166.

⁸³ Amar, 167.

⁸⁴ Amar, 168.

⁸⁵ Amar, 169.

⁸⁶ Amar, 170.

victims. Moreover, the Soviet official position omitted the atrocities against the Jews and minimized Jewish victimization. One Soviet journalist in 1943 wrote that Jews captured by Nazis lacked national dignity and were treasonous by their capture.⁸⁷

The Soviets downplayed or ignored the Holocaust, and this is one of the primary reasons for the Ukrainian denial of the Holocaust. Ukraine did not have to consider the Holocaust and its implication under the Soviet regime. Traditional antisemitism, including allegations of ritual murder, continued during the communist regime and was a factor blocking the integration of the Holocaust.⁸⁸

There is also a dichotomy in Ukraine regarding Stepan Bandera and the other members of OUN. In Eastern Ukraine, OUN participants are perceived as war criminals who collaborated with the Nazis, while in Western Ukraine, the same people are glorified as heroic fighters against foreign oppression. Therefore, Jewish and Ukrainian memories of the war contradict each other due to the contradictory experiences of the two groups.⁸⁹ Linking the Jews to the Soviet regime and Soviet crimes was one way of exculpating the Ukrainians from their participation in pogroms and mass murders.⁹⁰

Jews, however, regarded the Ukrainians as collaborators and perpetrators. Jewish authors contend that the overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian population greeted the German army enthusiastically. The *Nachtigall* battalion, a Ukrainian unit of the German military

⁸⁷ Amar, 171.

⁸⁸ Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives," 365-367.

⁸⁹ Mick, 337-338.

⁹⁰ Mick, 363.

counterintelligence service *Abwehr*, and several Ukrainian expeditionary forces who had served as translators for the army, accompanied the German troops.⁹¹ Therefore, Jews regarded the Ukrainians as their enemies.

After independence, Ukrainian communists considered OUN as the enemy because it opposed communist rule. The nationalist and national-democratic right found OUN as a key positive protagonist in the liberation struggle. The center lacked a true ideology and accepted the Soviet version of historical memory, including that of the World War II era. The first and only explicit mention of OUN in Ukrainian legislation was in 1993 that gave war veterans benefits to those who fought against the German occupiers in 1941-1944 and did not commit crimes against peace and humanity, and who were rehabilitated under the 1991 law on the victims of political oppression. The 1991 law made OUN members considered guilty of treason due to their membership in OUN.⁹²

In Ukrainian collective memory, Ukrainians are seen as the primary victims of German and Soviet occupation. This is an obstacle to historical memory. Victimization narratives first appeared during the period of Gorbachev's reform and became prominent when the country became independent in 1991. The victimization counters accusations of widespread Ukrainian collaboration in the Holocaust.⁹³ Most Ukrainians now deny that local collaboration in the murder of Jews occurred. After Ukraine became independent, the people were reluctant to speak

⁹¹ Mick, 347.

⁹² Shevel, 148-149.

⁹³ Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives," 362-363.

about the Holocaust due to their shame. They believed that the Holocaust sullied their reputation as a nation.⁹⁴

Ukrainian historians trained during the communist era and who do not read Western languages follow the communist narrative on the lack of importance of the Holocaust. The younger and Western-trained scholars are more open to critical reassessments of the dark past of the Holocaust in Ukraine.⁹⁵ Thus, until there is a consensus among the historians, there can be no collective memory of the Holocaust.

The issue of reparations is marginal in the country. Ukraine had no state during World War II, and most of the Jewish property was confiscated under the theory of socialization rather than aryanization.⁹⁶ Therefore, Ukrainians do not believe that Jews are owed anything, unlike Jews who believe that they were victims of war crimes.

For these complex reasons, there remains no collective national historical memory of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Jews and Ukrainians have their own vernacular memories of World War II. Each group views the other as the enemy. Until Ukrainians stop embracing their role as victims during the war and acknowledge their collaboration with the Nazi regime, a national memory cannot exist in Ukraine.

⁹⁴ Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives," 359-361.

⁹⁵ Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives," 369-370.

⁹⁶ Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-Communist East European Historical Narratives," 371.

CONCLUSION

The Nazis ensured that the Holocaust in Ukraine occurred to accomplish their goals of the elimination of all Jews. To successfully implement its strategy of complete annihilation, the Third Reich had to recruit collaborators in the conquered territories. These people included the rank-and-file and not just the government officials. Ukrainians, believing themselves to be members of a suppressed group by both the Soviets and the Nazis, found it easy, especially with the help of Nazi propaganda, to blame their plight on the Jewish people. Although Nazis believed Slavs were inferior, they were adept at utilizing the emotional antisemitism of Ukrainians to promote Germany's policy of the elimination of Jews. Antisemitism and nationalism played large roles in the collaboration, but other factors, including economic security and personal welfare, influenced the Ukrainians' collaboration. The ultimate results of the collaboration are the devastation of Jewish culture and the deaths of approximately one million Jews in Ukraine.

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