

Local Perpetrators of Sexual Assaults against Jewish Women during the Holocaust in Ukraine during the Holocaust in Ukraine

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Introduction

On January 8, 1954, the Odessa Military Tribunal sentenced a 30-year-old war veteran Yakiv Hrabovskiy, the father of two minor children, to 10 years of correctional labor camps for his service in the Ukrainian police in Nova Pavlivka, Odessa region¹. However, the Tribunal ignored the testimony of Jewish survivor Raisa, who insisted at the court hearing that she had been raped by Hrabovskiy in December 1941, when she was 13 years old. The defendant's attorney maintained that the most important thing about it is that Hrabovskiy actually saved Raisa and her parents when rescued them from a column of Jews who were about to be taken to be shot. And the prosecutor emphasized that the rape cannot be proved because this testimony was not corroborated by any other witness, except for Raisa, including her parents. What is striking here is that this case is one of the few in the Soviet judicial practice involving former collaborators and having direct evidence of a rape victim. Was Raisa's case a single evidence of rapes of Jewish girls by local collaborators considered by Soviet military tribunals after the war? What do we know about sexual violence against Jewish women by local collaborators during the Holocaust? How do they relate to other forms of their anti-Jewish violent practices? What drove perpetrators, and how did they reckon with their actions? How their behavior was influenced by and evolved from the Nazi policy of exterminating the Jews?

In the last two decades, there has been growing scholar interest in sexual violence in Nazi-occupied territories. The large majority of these studies relate to Central and Eastern Europe and focus on the study of sexual crimes by occupying forces, in particular, the security forces - German, Hungarian and Romanian soldiers, the Wehrmacht, the SS (Schutzstaffel), the SD (Sicherheitsdienst)². There are only a few studies that analyze sexual violence in Holocaust with a focus on Ukraine³. This topic is only briefly covered in studies on the gender specificity of local Jewish women's

¹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), RG-31.018M, reel 25, spr. 9357, ark. 438.

² Gertjeanssen, Wendy Jo. 2004. *Victims, Heroes and Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front during World War Two*. PhD thesis, University of Minnesota; Flaschka, Monika. 2009. *Race, Rape and Gender in Nazi-Occupied Territories*. PhD diss., Kent State University; Mühlhäuser, Regina. 2010. *Eroberungen: Sexuelle Gewalttaten und intime Beziehungen deutscher Soldaten in der Sowjetunion 1941-1945*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition; Mühlhäuser, Regina. 2011. "Between 'Racial Awareness' and Fantasies of Potency: Nazi Sexual Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union, 1942-1945." In *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog, 197-220. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

³ Havryshko, Marta. 2019. "Zhvaltuvannia u skhovkakh: seksualne nasylstvo pid chas Holokostu v Ukraini." *Holokost i Suchasnist'* 1(17):10-30.

experiences⁴. However, the existing studies are insufficient for understanding the role of local collaborators in the sexual victimization of Jewish women during the Shoah in Ukraine. The local perspective will help to look at the intersection between sexuality, ethnicity and violence during the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe from a different standpoint.

Using a wide range of sources including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of Soviet postwar trials (1943-1980s), related to Ukraine, documents from regional offices of former KGB Archive - now the Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, testimonies of Jewish Survivors and their non-Jewish neighbors this article seeks to analyze forms, topography, dynamic, and functions of sexual violence against Jewish women and girls⁵ perpetrated by local police during the Holocaust in Ukraine. It analyzes how age, gender, ethnic, racial, national, political identity, combatant status, and position of power of the perpetrators contributed to their sexually violent behavior. This study also considers how ideas and discourses of body, sexuality, as well as femininity, masculinity, and gender roles influenced perpetrators' motivations and strategies for sexual violence, as well as to victims' and survivors' experiences of these processes.

Geographically, the article focuses on Ukrainian territories that were occupied by the Germans and its allies during World War II and became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic after their liberation. During the war, these territories belonged to different administrative divisions. The first German territory was Eastern Galicia taken from the Poles in 1939. It was incorporated into the General Government (GG) as District Galicia. Another former Polish territory - Volyn, along with most other Ukrainian lands were incorporated into the Reich Commissariat Ukraine (RKU). A part of Ukrainian lands was transferred to Romania. In particular, the territory of Chernivtsi region was included in the governorship of Bukovyna, and the region of the Dniester and the Bug rivers was known as Transnistria, name given by the Antonescu regime. Zakarpattia has been a part of Hungary since 1939.

Contextualizing Rape: the Role of Local Police in the Holocaust

During the Holocaust, over 1.6 million Jews were killed in Ukraine⁶. These killings were committed mostly by mobile killing squads of the SS, Security Service (SD or Sicherheitdienst), assisted by the Waffen-SS ('armed SS', the SS military elite),

⁴ Aleksion, Natalia. 2014. "Gender and the Daily Lives of Jews in Hiding in Eastern Galicia." *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*. No. 27, Gender and the Holocaust. New Research. 38-61; Podolsky, Anatoly. 2010. "The Tragic Fate of Ukrainian Jewish Women under Nazi Occupation, 1941-1944." In Hedgepeth S. M., Sidel R. G. (eds.). *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*, 94-107; Hon, Maksym and Ivchuk, Nataliia. 2016. "Zhinky v chas Holokostu: doli, povedinka ta henderni nerivnosti." *Holokost i Suchasnist'* 1 (14): 9-49.

⁵ This article is focused on sexual crimes committed by local police forces against Jewish women and girls during the Holocaust in Ukraine, although their victims were also women of other ethnic origin, including Roma, Ukrainian, and Polish women. This article also does not analyse the rapes of Jewish men and boys, but we have some evidences of this, for example, in forms of sexual torture, forced nudity, mutilation of the genital and reproductive organs, and rape.

⁶ Kruglov, Aleksandr. 2008. "Jewish losses in Ukraine, 1941-1944." Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, eds. *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 273.

Wehrmacht, and police battalions. However, as aptly stated by Martin Dean, “without the collaboration of indigenous forces it would undoubtedly have been more difficult for the Germans to implement their planes⁷”. Tens of thousands of locals in Ukraine were involved in the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” planned and organized by Nazi. A special role in this belonged to police forces formed by local non-Jewish residents. At the beginning of German invasion of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian People's Militia, Sich, Ukrainian Militia had been formed. In the summer and autumn of 1941, instead of these formations, there were formed Ukrainian Auxiliary Police⁸ (*Ukrainische Hilfspolizei*) and Schutzmannschaft Bataillon in the General Government and *Schutzmannschaft (Schuma)* in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine. It was composed of local police (*Schutzmannschaft-Einzeldienst*), Schutzmannschaft-Bataillonen, fire police (*Feuerschutzmannschaft*) and auxiliary and reserve units (*Hilfschutzmannschaft*)⁹. Both *Hilfspolizei* and *Schuma* were subordinated to the German Order Police (*Ordnungspolizei*). The ethnic composition of *Schutzmannschaft* in the RKU was very diverse. The majority consisted of Ukrainians. There were also Russians, Belarusians, Volksdeutschers, Poles and others, while the GG recruited only Ukrainians, and Poles were mostly recruited to Kripo and the Polish police¹⁰. Local police formations were also created by Romanians in Transnistria. Police departments, where the majority was composed of Ukrainian, were often referred to as the Ukrainian police. They were subordinated to the Romanian Gendarmerie. Ethnic Germans were recruited to detachments known as the Selbstschutz at the disposal of SS Sonderkommando R leaders (Bereichkommandos)¹¹.

The issue of policemen's motivation remains delicate. What we know for certain is that it was very different and included political motivation – some Ukrainians, including nationalists¹², related Germany with the possibility of creating Ukrainian statehood and military training¹³. An important role in this regard had been played by ideological motives, such as nationalism, anti-Semitism and anti-communism. The Germans tried to take advantage of such views. Often, when recruiting local police personnel, priority was given to those who suffered Soviet repression in the 1920s and 1930s. For example,

⁷ Dean, Martin. 2000. *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 164.

⁸ It is worth noting that the term “Ukrainian Auxiliary Police” had geographical reference, not ethnical, and was referred to as police formations formed on the territory of Ukraine by local non-Jewish people.

⁹ Dereiko, Ivan. 2012. *Mistsevi formuvannia nimetskoï armii ta politzii u Raikhskomisariati “Ukraina” (1941-1944 roky)*. Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy, 65-67, 84.

¹⁰ Radchenko, Yurii. 2017. “Ukrainska politsiia ta Holokost na Donbasi.” *Ukraina moderna* 24: 76.

¹¹ See more: Steinhart, Eric C. 2015. *The Holocaust and the Germanization of Ukraine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Solonari, Vladimir. 2014. “Hating Soviets—Killing Jews: How Antisemitic Were Local Perpetrators in Southern Ukraine, 1941-42?” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15 (3): 505-533.

¹² On relationship of two OUN fractions (OUN-Bandera and OUN-Melnyk) with Germans during the WWII see for example, Bruder, Franziska. 2007. *‘Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!’ Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1929-1948*. Berlin: Metropol; Grelka, Frank. 2005. *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/42*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz; Himka, John-Paul. 2011. “The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Ukrainian Police, and the Holocaust.” Seventh Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine, 20-22 Oct. 2011, accessed at www.academia.edu; Struve, Kay. 2013. Komanda osobogo naznacheniya "Lvov". *Ukrainskaya militsiya i "Dni Petlyury"* 25 i 26 iulia 1941, *Problemy istorii Holokostu: naukoviy zhurnal*. 6: 102-124.

¹³ Finder, Gabriel and Prusin, Aleksandr. 2004. “Collaboration in Eastern Galicia: The Ukrainian police and the Holocaust.” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 34:2: 112.

Vasyl Tarasenko, a policeman from Solonka village in Poltava region, remembered that, during police recruitment process, the chief of local police said that he needed “those who have grievances against the Soviet power”¹⁴. At the same time, studies indicate that the vast majority of Holocaust accomplices had no explicit ideological motivation¹⁵. A large number of policemen cooperated with the occupiers due to their personal, pragmatic and economic motives, such as career aspirations, avoidance of compulsory labor in Germany, improvement of own or family’s material position or profit from Jewish property.

The involvement of police officers in Nazi extermination policy against Jews was inevitable for the simple reason that the Germans faced the problem of a lack of manpower in Ukraine. For instance, in the RKU by the end of November 1942, the cities housed about 8,700 Schuma and 2,800 German policemen (a ratio of three to one), and the countryside 42,600 Schuma and 3,700 German policemen (an eleven-to-one ratio)¹⁶. Not only the number of policemen was important for the Germans, but also their potential in identifying Jews, especially in small towns and villages where “everyone knows everyone”. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that local police ranked the lowest in the hierarchy of police forces in occupied Ukraine, it played a significant role in implementing the Holocaust. Local policemen rounded up Jews for deportation to death camps, ghettos and for mass executions on the outskirts of cities and villages, reported Jews in hiding and/or detained them. They guarded forced-labor camps for Jews, patrolled the ghetto, shot at those (Jews) trying to escape and then participated in the liquidation of the ghetto¹⁷. Some policemen shot Jews while convoying at killing sites or those in hiding¹⁸.

Rape was a formally prohibited form of violence against Jews. During the Soviet interrogation, the former Henichesk District Police Chief Andrii Falkernshtern, justifying the rape allegations, said that they were absurd because, at the beginning of the police activity, “all policemen signed pledges stating that the slightest connection with Jews is punished by shooting”¹⁹. Criteria related to sexual activity, and reproduction were also central to the Nazi project of Volksdeutschen – ethnic Germans – for the purpose of prevailing deemed bearers of “German blood” over the Slavic,

¹⁴ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 7, spr. 14220, ark. 10.

¹⁵ See, for example, Browning, Christopher. 1992. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins.

¹⁶ Berkhoff, Karel. 2004. *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 42.

¹⁷ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 24, spr. 33533, t.2, ark. 81.

¹⁸ For details on the involvement of auxiliary police in the Holocaust in the Soviet Union and Ukraine, in particular, see, for example, Breitman, Richard. 1990. “Himmler’s Police Auxiliaries in the Occupied Soviet Territories”, *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* 7: 23–39; Büchler, Yehoshua . 1996. “Local Police Force Participation in the Extermination of Jews in Occupied Soviet Territory 1941–1942”, *Shevut* 20: 79–98, Dean Martin. 2000. *Collaboration during the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44*. New York; Finder, Gabriel and Prusin, Alexander. 2004. “Collaboration in Eastern Galicia: Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust.” *East European Jewish Affairs* 34(2): 95–118; Prusin, Alexander. 2007. “The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust in the General Vicinity of Kiev, 1941–1943: Actions and Motivations.” *Holokost i suchasnist*. Studii v Ukraini i sviti: 31–59; Dieter, Pohl. 2002. “Ukrainische Hilfskräfte beim Mord an den Juden”, *Die Täter der Shoah: fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?* Göttingen; Golczewski Frank. 2003. “Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine.” In *Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der “Kollaboration” im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*. Göttingen.

¹⁹ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 74, spr. 14153, t.1, ark. 138.

Jewish or other Neighbors²⁰. It is clear that the purpose of the prohibition for local policemen to rape Jews was not the desire of the Germans to protect Jewish women, but rather to make this prohibition an efficient instrument for implementing racial policy. After all, from the German point of view, any sexual relations of local ethnic Germans with Jews (voluntary or involuntary) were perceived as the crime of *Rassenschande* (Racial defilement). At the same time, in the case of local collaborators of other ethnic origin, this prohibition had a rather utilitarian function and was aimed to discipline them. The Germans' greatest warning could have been the friendly attitude of policemen towards Jews. Because, on the one hand, the Germans believed that sentimental, loving feelings for Jews would diminish their effectiveness in implementing the "Final Solution". On the other hand, sex with Jewish women, despite its coercive nature, could be seen as a bribe that collaborators were not allowed to take in any form. Since, as a result of what Anna Hájková's calls a "sexual barter"²¹, the chances of Jewish women being saved increased. The release of arrested Jews by *Schutzmen* was regarded as one of the gravest crimes²² punishable by capital punishment.

Not much information is available on the response of German supervisors to incidents of rape of Jewish women by policemen. The investigation of such crimes pertained to the competence of the gendarmerie. A member of the OUN, a former policeman, Volodymyr Porendovskyi, recalls: "In the Rivne City *Schutzmannschaft*, one *Schutzman* raped a Jewish woman in custody. The German commandant interrogated the *Schutzman*, apparently with the help of a Ukrainian interpreter. The suspect in the rape of the arrested woman indignantly said something like that: "Come on! It's just a Jewiss"²³. What is peculiar in this case is not only the fact of the investigation itself, which, at first sight, can indicate the serious attitude of the Germans to the sexual crimes committed by policemen against Jewish women. Also significant is the fact that, as demonstrated by Porendovskyi in his memoirs, the anti-Semitic response of the accused *Schutzman* was regarded by the Germans as a good reason for recruiting him into the agents of the SD that would effectively identify the "Reich's enemies". As a result, the policeman became an agent and got away with sex crime. However, not all sex offenders could avoid punishment. In particular, Baryl Berko, a Jewish survivor, testified that it was the arrival of the Germans at the end of July 1941 in his native Jewish village Olizarka in the Rivne region that marked the end of the mass violence perpetrated by the local policemen. He recalled: "At Easter [1942] [policeman] Dmytro Denysiuk came to my house and raped my wife and daughter, and then the Germans learned about it and shot Denysiuk"²⁴.

However, the rapists could also be subject to milder forms of punishment. For example, the Holocaust survivor Mayer Cyker mentioned the following case in Zdolbuniv, Rivne

²⁰ Bergen, Doris L. 2006. "Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Unique and Typical?" In *Lessons and Legacies VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 185.

²¹ Hájková, Anna. 2013. "Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38. (3): 503-533.

²² Dereiko, Ivan. *Mistsevi formuvannia nimetskoi armii ta politsii u Raikhskomisariati "Ukraina"*, 90.

²³ Usach, Andriy. 2019. Presentation "Can we hear the voice of the local perpetrator of Nazi violence in Ukraine?" Conference "Genocides, Mass Murders and Deportations on Ukrainian Lands during World War II: How to Work with Sources?", Kharkiv, 17-19 April 2019.

²⁴ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 21, spr. 19090, t.14, ark. 160 zv.

region: One day the young girl, [she] was the daughter of the manager of the cement factory. [She was] a beautiful girl, about 17 or 18 years old. Her name was Hanna Prussak. She was raped and shot in the middle of the street. Apparently she was raped by Ukrainian militiamen, but then German officers found out what the militiamen did, and beat him up so badly. But then it was blamed on the Jews and they came to Judenrat and give them 10 hostages and they took them all the Jews and they killed them”²⁵. It can be assumed that this policeman was punished due to the fact that this case was made public because it took place in the city center in broad daylight. Maybe that is why policemen understanding possible consequences of their actions often killed their victims after the rape. Nevertheless, among local rapists of German ethnic origin there were those who were not particularly concerned with the ideas of racial hygiene and were not afraid of punishment. These included, among others, Volksdeutscher Florian Kokh. When his colleague tried to prevent Kokh from raping a Jewish girl at gunpoint, Kokh threatened him to complain to his chief that he “sympathized with the Jews”²⁶. Kokh’s confidence that he will not be punished for attempting rape, but his accuser will be demonstrates that punishments for sexual offenses against Jews, even if committed by local ethnic Germans, were marginalized in the system of punishments and disciplinary actions against policemen. Tolerance of sexual assaults, in turn, could be a direct encouragement to rapists. Moreover, as evidenced by numerous sexual assault facts below in this article, Germans and Romanians have not only often turned a blind eye to the rapes of Jewish women by local policemen, but have also committed them.

The Beginning: When Home is no Longer a Safe Place

The outbreak of anti-Jewish violence by local people took place at the start of the German-Soviet war in the context of power shift. In some places, pogroms took place before the arrival of the Germans, in others with the participation of German policemen and soldiers. In many settlements, anti-Jewish actions took place following the opening of prisons, where many NKVD prisoners had been executed. Jews were blamed for the Soviets’ mass murder of Ukrainian prisoners. Local people burning with the desire for revenge rushed to crush and rob Jewish stores and homes, beat and kill Jews, first of all, those who were considered to be active communists. Only in Eastern Galicia during anti-Jewish pogroms in Stanislaviv, Lviv, Ternopil’, Buchacz, Zolochiv, Skalat, and other locations more than 12 000 Jews were killed.²⁷ Many testimonies attest to the horrific acts of brutality enacted on women’s bodies during pogroms in different places in western Ukraine. Violence against women took many forms, including, forced nakedness²⁸, and

²⁵ Testimony 11593, USH Shoah Foundation VHA.

²⁶ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 92, t. 1, spr. 10890, ark. 114.

²⁷ Dieter, Pohl. 2007. “Anti-Jewish pogroms in Western Ukraine: a research agenda” in Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth Cole, and Kai Struve (eds), *Shared History—Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet Occupied Poland, 1939–1941*. Leipzig: Leipziger Universita ¨tsverlag, 306.

²⁸ Himka, Joan-Paul. 2011. “The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd.” *Canadian Slavonic Papers*. 53(2-4), 212-213; Interview with a woman born 1923, conducted in 2017 in Stratyn, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast’ by Marta Havryshko, Archive of the project “Social anthropology of filling the Void: Poland and Ukraine after Second World War”.

rapes²⁹. A former resident of Boryslav, OUN member, Lonhyn Kohut recalls events in his hometown: “It was a great hatred of Jews. Our people caught the Jews and killed them on the streets... many women were killed. They cut their breasts off. One woman was pregnant. Her stomach has been cut”.³⁰ The role of local policemen, who continued their anti-Jewish actions in the subsequent days and months, in these pogroms is indisputable. But unlike the newly-arrived Germans, they lived in the neighborhood of the Jews for many years, knew their names, studied with them at school, had personal or economic relations with them. The war changed these relationships and led to an escalation of interethnic violence. A typical example in this respect is the situation in Rafaliv district of Rivne region. The outbreak of war gave the locals the hope for the restoration of the Ukrainian state, and, with it, the power that they had fully enjoyed, at least, until the Germans came to Rafalivka in late July 1941. One of the survivors of Rafalivka ghetto recalls: “When the Germans came it became much safer”³¹. By this time, local authorities had been conducting anti-Jewish actions. In particular, local policemen conducted attacks on the Jewish settlement Olizarka, located five kilometers from Rafalivka. There were more than 50 Jewish yards. A unique testimony about several attacks of local policemen on the village in the July 1941 was left by Baryl Berko, referred to above. He recalls that during the very first attack on the village, policemen not only robbed Jewish homes, but also raped a 16-year-old rabbi’s daughter Emma, a schoolgirl Henia and a 16-year-old Perla, who died from bleeding that evening. The attack was repeated two days later. Six Jewish girls came to Baryl’s house to hide from the rapists because his house was on the outskirts of the village. But soon, three policemen, Avhust Tkach, Fadei Matviichuk and Dmytro Denysiuk, a native of Olizarka village, mentioned earlier, came to the house. They forced Baryl to lie on the floor and raped his 16-year-old daughter, Roza, and all the other girls. One of them, Fania, had serious bodily injuries and soon died due to the inability to timely provide her with the necessary medical treatment³².

Sexual violence was not only for sexual gratification, but also violence that exhibited clear anti-Semitic motivation. The Jewish girls were perceived by the assailants as Jews who were regarded as sympathizers and bearers of Soviet power. Most notable in this context were public rituals of humiliation, ridicule and abuse of Jews. For example, in the summer of 1941, local Jews were gathered in the Rafalivka synagogue, where policemen burned hexagonal stars on the foreheads of two Jewish Communist girls, Milia Fish and Zhenia Dikhter³³. According to Baryl, during the assault in Olizarka, policemen forcibly drove local Jews into the yard of a rabbi, severely beaten him, burned his beard, asking about the location of his Komsomol daughter³⁴.

²⁹ About rapes in Kremenets see Lower, Wendy. 2011. “Pogroms, mob violence and genocide in Western Ukraine, summer 1941, varied histories, explanations and comparisons.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 13 (3): 224.

³⁰ Interview with Lonhyn Kohut (b. 1920), recorded by M. Havryshko, 11 October 2018, Melbourne, Australia, author’s private archive. About rapes in Ternopil’ see: Testimony 23989, USH Shoah Foundation VHA.

³¹ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 21, spr. 19090, t.14, ark. 161.

³² USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 20, spr. 19090, t.7, ark. 255-258.

³³ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 21, spr. 19090, t.10, ark. 263, 282.

³⁴ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 20, spr. 19090, t., ark. 282.

Mass rapes in the summer of 1941 took place in the context of a widespread violence against Jews. They were spontaneous or organized, committed by one person or by a group, and served to punish or revenge on Jews under the principle of command responsibility. The specificity of wartime rape is that women have being raped primarily because of their national, religious and ethnic identity and only secondary because of their sexual features, and the crime is seen, in contrast to peacetime rape, in much less sexual terms³⁵. This means that Jewish women and girls experienced rape primarily because they were Jews and secondary because they were women. In other words, rapes were not only a threat to women, but also a threat to whole ethnic group to which they belonged. The violent rape of young girls was a powerful demoralizing factor for the entire Jewish community. Those rapes could be also considering in terms of construction of gendered identity. The woman's body was brutalized because of its symbolic meaning as a reproductive body. After severe physical injuries sustained during the rape, women were potentially (and really in case of death) losing their ability to give birth to new Jews. At the same time, through sexual abuse, rapists exercised and reinforced their hyper masculinity and simultaneously demasculinized Jewish men, which couldn't protect their daughters, sisters and wives.

Sexual Terror in Ghettos, Camps and Prisons

Sexual violence was an element of everyday existence of Jewish women and girls living in ghettos and camps, as well as in other places where Jews were temporarily detained before being executed or sent to another destination throughout the Nazi-occupied territory³⁶. It had different forms and performed different functions – consolidation of the power hierarchy, terror, humiliation, dehumanization, acquisition of information, robbery, sexual pleasure. As the examples below show, perpetrators of sexual assaults were not only Germans, Romanians, and Hungarians, but their local helpers as well. *Forced prostitution*, by which I mean negotiated sex for survival, was a very common type of sexual violence. Many local policemen were involved in guarding ghettos. Some policemen used this power for their own benefit and forced women to have sex in exchange for medicines, clothing, and better housing. Many police abuses were associated with such a routine phenomenon for most ghettos as famine. The police officers were ordered to drive away the locals, who were giving some food to Jews out of mercy or trying to exchange it for some valuable things³⁷.

At the same time, the police officers were prohibited to let Jews out of ghettos, thus depriving them of the opportunity to find some food themselves. Therefore, the very permission to go beyond the fence or wall became an element of the war economy for many women. In certain cases, the policemen demanded sex in exchange for such permission, rather than jewellery or money. According to Jewish survivor Klara, that was the case of the Kamianets-Podilskyi ghetto guardian Ivan Chaikovskiy. She was recalling: "Hungry women agreed to have sex with Chaikovskiy just to be allowed to go

³⁵ Hansen, Lene. 2001. "Gender, Nation, Rape: Bosnia and the construction of security." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3 (1): 55-75.

³⁶ See more: Person, Katarzyna. 2015. "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust – the Case of Forced Prostitution in the Warsaw Ghetto." *Shofar* 33 (2): 103-121.

³⁷ See, for example, testimony of police officers, Jewish survivors and Non-Jewish witnesses about ghetto in Vynshnivets, Ternopil region (USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 24, spr. 33533, t.2, ark. 209, 219, 247, 260).

to buy some provision at the market. There were many such cases and all the ghetto residents were aware of it ... [He] raped ghetto residents Tania Brott, a woman named Hanka, and Donia Amster, and many other women. After that, they would come to me and my mother to cry and talk about it”³⁸.

The struggle for survival in ghettos and camps was also closely related to the issue of forced labour for Jews. Work meant a change for prolonged life. However, the working conditions themselves could lead to a fatal outcome, especially for the weak. That is why some women were forced to use their bodies as pay for easier jobs for themselves, their close ones or in order to be released from job at all. For instance, one of the Holocaust survivors from Nova Ushytsia, Khmelnytskyi region, recalled that “[policeman] Skrypnyk was hiring some citizens, and was releasing some from work in exchange for co-habiting with their daughters, that it raping them. For example, Haia Kunfman, who was living with a 20-year old girl from Bessarabia. The girl was forced to have a sexual relationship with him. Her name was Mania”³⁹. It is notable that Mania was forced to have sex not only by Skrypnyk but also by a policeman Mykola Korotkyi, who became the head of the industrial artel that used forced labour of Jews ⁴⁰. Some policemen promised to save Jewish women in exchange for sex services when a good opportunity appears. In particular, it concerns the men with senior managerial positions in police forces. For example, the 30-year old Anton Kabaliuk, assistant police chief of the city of Brailiv, Vinnytsia region, who, according to the Holocaust survivors, raped at least 100 Jewish girls⁴¹.

Sexual abuse in ghettos and camps was also represented in a form of gang rapes involving groups of policemen. According to the existing testimonies, sexual assaults mostly occurred in the evening or at night, when groups of often drunk policemen barged into the buildings where Jews lived. Very often, rapes were accompanied by robbery, which seemed to be the initial and main goal of the perpetrators. There are numerous testimonies *about the camp*, created by the Romanians at a former sovkhos nearby village of Bogdanivka in Odesa region, where over 55 thousands of Ukrainian, Romanian and Hungarian Jews were held⁴². An inhabitant of Bogdanivka recalled: “The camp was guarded by local police. Sometimes, they would come to our barracks, they were drunk, they would take away some valuable and good things, beat people, pull some young girls and women out of pigsties, rape them and then get them back”⁴³.

There are lots of Jewish testimonies showing that there were numerous high-profile officers with great authority among rape offenders in ghettos and camps. Volodymyr Pekilis, Jewish inhabitant of a forced labour camp in Bakhova Hora in Berdychiv recalled that “despite his old age,” the 46-year old camp guard commander Trokhym

³⁸ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 52, spr. t.2, ark. 107, 120.

³⁹ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 31, spr. 20972, ark. 37.

⁴⁰ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 31, spr. 20972, ark. 12, 34.

⁴¹ Dodik Semyon. “Sudba i zhyzn malchika iz rasstreliannoho getto”, <https://www.proza.ru/2004/01/10-149>. Last view 8 October 2019.

⁴² Steinhart, Eric C. 2015. *The Holocaust and the Germanization of Ukraine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 122-123.

⁴³ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 19, 13189, t. 21, ark.13. Testimonies of other Jewish Survivors of Bogdanovka about rapes by policemen see USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 19, 13189, t. 21, ark. 101, USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 92, t. 1, spr. 10890, ark. 35).

Piskun-Oberemskyi was sexually exploiting young Jewish girls Sonia, Fira, Klava and Raya, who were about 18-20 years of age. As for the psychological state of rape victims, according to the witness, they used to say “They had rather be shot dead faster”⁴⁴. However, as in many other cases of gender-based violence against Jews, it was clear that sexual motivation was not the only one in case of Piskun-Oberemsky. He used to abuse those women not only as women but also as Jews. In particular, this is evident from the following fact: according to Anna Alstein, in May 1942, on “a very cold day”, Piskun-Oberemskyi “undressed them and drove them to the river, where they spent about half an hour in water for just for mockery”⁴⁵. Having brought them back to the camp, he said, “I gave a bath to the Jews today”⁴⁶. This and other stories show how helpless Jewish men were. They could not prevent rapes, and when tried, they were beaten up. Being separated from women in camps and ghettos, Jewish men very often even did not have the opportunity to intervene. The physical absence of Jewish men during rapes was definitely an important factor for perpetrators that facilitated sexual offences. Jewish men learned about regular raping from women themselves during sporadic meetings.

The aforementioned examples also show that sexual abuse in ghettos and camps had severe psychological consequences for not only rape victims and their relatives – parents, husbands, and children, who were direct witnesses to rapes. Shouting and crying of the raped and their defenders were heard by the neighbours, too. Rape victims shared their stories. These stories were discussed in the community and used as a precaution for parents of young girls. The latter, for their part, tried to hide their daughters or make them more attractive⁴⁷.

Brothers in Crimes: Germans, Romanians, and Local Policemen

Not only did the local police rape the Jews themselves, but they also were accomplices in sexual crimes of the occupation authorities. For instance, the Holocaust survivor Isaac Wahman testified that on the eve of the first mass shooting of Jew in Bar, on August 19, 1942, they were all driven from the ghetto to a local stadium. Some people were selected for work and accommodated in barracks. In a couple of days, the Jews were ordered to go to work at a sugar factory. The head of the Bar district police in Vinnytsia Hrihoriy Andrusiv came there. He selected two young girls, of 15-16 years, one of whom was an acquaintance of Isaac, and ordered Isaac to go with them to a downtown house, where German officers were stationed. Andrusiv was accompanying them. The three of them were led into the room, where two German officers were staying. It is obvious from Isaac’s story that Germans had been expecting visitors since soon after their arrival, they took off their clothes and started bathing in the previously prepared bath. Isaac recalled: “Andrusiv ordered us to take our clothes as well and commanded the girls to wash the Germans. After they were finished, they took those two girls to the room, where they had undressed [before]. Andrusiv and I stayed in the room, where my and girls’ clothes

⁴⁴ USBU u Zhytomyrskii oblasti, spr. 7091, ark. 26.

⁴⁵ USBU u Zhytomyrskii oblasti, spr. 7091, ark. 28.

⁴⁶ USBU u Zhytomyrskii oblasti, spr. 7091, ark. 26.

⁴⁷ About rape fear, see examples from Pechora – Bronshteyn, Moris. 2013. Mertvaya petlya, Intervyu s uznikami Pechorskogo kontslagerya. Walnut Creek, California, 127; from Shargorod – Testimony 38318, USH Shoah Foundation VHA, from Beresne - Testimony 25381, USH Shoah Foundation VHA, from Obodovka - Testimony 33863, USH Shoah Foundation VHA.

lay. After a while, the door opened and both girls came out. Their perineum was in blood. I gathered the Germans had raped the girls and then kicked them away to us. Andrusiv ordered me to wash the blood off the girls' bodies"⁴⁸. Isaac managed to escape from that house back to the ghetto, but he never saw those girls ever since. He was guessing they had been shot. His suggestion seems to be quite reasonable since Germans were often concealing the traces of their crimes against racial purity.

The role of Andrusiv was not only about selecting Jewish girls for sexual pleasure of Germans. There is evidence stating he used to rape girls along with Germans. During the Soviet interrogation, one of Jewish survivors, Klara testified: "During the shooting, one German said to Andrusiv in German that it was necessary to leave 20 young women for entertainment. I could understand those words. Only 16 young women and girls were selected out of total number of people, who were not shot yet. I was one of them. The 16 of us were ordered to get dressed and we were taken from the pits to the city of Bar, to a two-storey building near the state bank by police officers Brushnytskyi, Kolodiy and two unknown policemen... Andrusiv led me to one room and raped on a bed. I was a virgin before that"⁴⁹.

All the girls were shot after they had been raped. Being convinced that none of the victims survived, Andrusiv denied the fact of the rape even at face-to-face questioning with Klara (just as he denied Isaac's testimony). One might assume that he indeed could not recognize the woman as the investigation was taking place more than 20 years after the said events. Klara was only 16 at the time, while he was sitting in front of a middle-aged woman. Besides, she started stuttering after what she had been through, which was confirmed by her sister and acquaintances⁵⁰. It is quite plausible that Andrusiv was simply trying to divert suspicions from himself and shuffle off the blame on to Germans. However, during the investigation, Andrus repeatedly confirmed that "very young girls", who were "very frightened and crying" were selected for sexual exploitation during one of the mass shootings of Jews in Bar on October 15, 1942. He emphasized that the selection was performed by the German gendarme and SD worker, and he was responsible for logistics only – providing additional protection for those girls at the scene of the shooting, transporting them to the SD building in the city downtown, as well as enhanced security of the building on that night⁵¹.

Based on the available sources, it is evident that some local policemen in Transnistria also selected sex slaves for Romanians, and after they contracted sexually transmitted diseases, they killed them⁵². The policemen were instructed to kill those sex slaves, who became pregnant⁵³. It can be assumed that sex trafficking functions were entrusted by the Germans and Romanians to the trusted subordinates. Andrusiv was such a person. The chief of the German gendarmerie Richard Wilhelm Schulz used to call him "the

⁴⁸ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 11, spr. 28506, t.3, ark. 273.

⁴⁹ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 11, spr. 28506, t.2, ark. 110-111.

⁵⁰ According to the Soviet forensic report, stuttering could be the result of rape.

⁵¹ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 11, spr. 28506, t.1, ark. 146-147, 178, 198.

⁵² USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 80, spr. 10011, t. 2, ark. 104.

⁵³ Desbois, Patrick. 2007. *The Holocaust by Bullets: The Mass Shooting of Jews in Ukraine 1941-1944*. Paris: Memorial de la Shoah, 126.

great Germanophile”⁵⁴. Germans expressed their gratitude to Andrusiv for his service by awarding him medals. In this context, the right to rape those women was a peculiar form of remuneration for Andrusiv’s service. Those stories serve as a testament to the fact that the gang rape of Jewish women and girls, where both Germans and the local police were involved, was not just about sexual gratification. Involving local policemen in sexual offences served as a means for building links between different perpetrators – high-profile occupying authorities and their local subordinates. Such a sexual violence pattern can be an outstanding example of strategic rape, which is ordered and controlled by Germans.

Opportunistic Rape: Hanka’s Story

The term “opportunistic rape” refers to sexual abuse of Jewish women by local policemen, which was neither planned beforehand, nor systematic, and it lacked the element of attack on a female body as a political body, unlike in cases of gang rape in ghettos and camps. In case of the latter, sexual abuse serves the aim of terrorizing, subjugation and demoralizing the entire Jewish community. As Wood argued, opportunistic rape by military men (armed actors) in war is a “rape carried out for private, individual reasons, not group objectives”⁵⁵. The motivation of men could be stemming from the desire to receive sexual gratification and demonstrate their power. Misogyny and sexism can play an important part in such cases, with the key factor being the desire to take advantage of the situation of the power imbalance between armed policemen and vulnerable women, which applied all Jewish women and girls during WWII. This particular kind of gender-based violence could be well illustrated by the story of Hanka.

We know about the last moments of her life from her acquaintance, Ukrainian woman Natalia, who testified on Soviet trial almost 30 years after the death of Hanka. The events she was witnessing took place in summer 1942, a few days before the mass shooting of Jews in Bakhova Hora near Rafalivka. On that day, Natalia with her parents and neighbours was working in the field near local railway, when they saw their acquaintances, policeman Arsentiy Panasiuk and the 18-year old Jewish girl Hanka. Natalia could hear Hanka asking “Let me go to the woods, Sienka, I’ll give you a gold watch.” Apparently, Hanka used a contracted, informal form of his name, the way he was called in Rafalivka, where they used to live and go to the same school. Maybe that was why Hanka counted on his mercy and she also might know that Panasiuk was friends with a Jewish girl during the pre-war time. According to the testimony of his cousin, Volodymyr Panasiuk, who also used to serve as a Schutzman, before the outbreak of the war, Arsentiy had romantic relations with his fellow villager, a Jewish girl named Haya⁵⁶. However, despite Hanka's begging, he continued to lead her along the railway and then ordered her to turn into the woods nearby. Out of curiosity, Natalia with her mother and neighbour ran to that place. She later testified about what she had seen there:

⁵⁴ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 11, spr. 28506, t.5, ark. 251.

⁵⁵ Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2018. “Rape as a Practice of War: Toward a Typology of Political Violence.” *Politics and Society*. 46(4): 513–537.

⁵⁶ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 20, spr. 19090, t.5, ark. 42.

“We could see it all well from the height of the railway roadbed. Senka Panasiuk was standing near her and seemed to be loading a gun. Then, he turned his gun on Hanna and shot two times in her head. Hanka shuddered and remained in the same position. Panasiuk put his gun on his shoulder and walked down the railway to Rafalivka. He could see us but said nothing, neither we talked to him. We came closer to Hanka. She was lying in the same position with no signs of life. There was blood near her head on the grass. We did not see wounds on her body and we could not see if there were any on her head since it was covered with a dress. We realized that Panasiuk shot Hanka after he’d raped her. I noticed that Hanka's watch was gone”⁵⁷.

After a while, Natalia saw that watch at Panasiuk’s home, however, he was denying everything during the investigation, even the fact that he knew Hanka. It appears that it was not the watch that was the reason for Panasiuk’s killing his fellow villager, despite the fact she had been begging for mercy. Her murder had to conceal the rape, not the robbery. Most likely, it was a spontaneous decision, without any preliminary plan and was facilitated by the circumstances of impunity and non-accountability. Ukrainian policemen were charged with the patrolling of villages without German supervision, and they empowered to kill persons whom German leaders defined as enemies of the state, for example, Jews⁵⁸. Therefore, the delegated "right to murder" has become a de facto and unofficial right to rape, which could and would be concealed by murder.

Concluding remarks

Sexual violence is one of the most difficult research topics, especially during the Holocaust, when most rape victims and witnesses were killed and Jewish survivors (both rape victims and witnesses) were not always ready to share their experience and stories. Obviously, the number of women raped during the Holocaust will remain an unanswered question. However, identification and analysis of new cases, including this article, enable to shed some light on the issue of whether sexual abuse during the Holocaust was a widespread phenomenon, as well as identify the perpetrators and learn what motivated their actions.

Sexual assaults committed by policemen took different forms, including forced nakedness, sexual tortures, rape, gang rape, forced prostitution, sexual slavery. They occurred in various places. The topography of violence includes Jewish homes, streets, fields, woods, barns, where they had been hiding, ghettos, camps, prisons, execution sites. The issue of motivation of the perpetrators remains very complex and covers both ideological and political motives, as well as personal reasons, such as revenge, demonstration of power, lust. Hypermasculinity, misogyny and militaristic culture play an important part in the rape issue. Meanwhile, there were several factors that directly contributed to sexual violence frequency. Particularly, an important factor was the collapse of power at the beginning of the German-Soviet War and the outbreak of organized or spontaneous violence against Jewish people, who were considered the

⁵⁷ USHMM, RG-31.018M, reel 21, spr. 19090, t.10, ark. 60.

⁵⁸ Lower, Wendy. 2005. *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 136.

representatives of the Soviet power. An important part was played by the direct involvement of policemen in the Nazi racial politics: both ideological training and their daily functions of protecting or eliminating ghettos and camps, accompanying Jews to the killing sites, led to the dehumanization of Jewish people, and therefore to the normalization of daily violence against them. In this context, sexual abuse of Jewish women by policemen was just one of the numerous types of violence in the chain of the official policy of deprivation and humiliation of the Jews, which might not seem the worst (when compared to, for instance, mass shootings of women and their children).

When defining sexual violence patterns, it is necessary to take into account two most important criteria: motivation and reactions of local and German supervisors. According to Wood's wartime rape methodology, it is possible to define that sexual assaults committed by policemen were divided into opportunistic rape, rape as practice and rape as strategy. Opportunistic rape could stem from individual motives and could be punished, therefore, they tried to hide it. Rape as practice was usually intended to get information from women, take their property, or was used as a means of humiliation and torture. Such sexual violence was usually tolerated by the senior management, especially when it comes to high-rank policemen, who enjoyed the trust of the occupation officials. Rape as strategy belongs to a well-planned organized form of sexual violence during the Holocaust period. It was the most common during the early stages of the war, especially during the anti-Jewish pogroms. Another example of rape as strategy is sexual slavery under the supervision of Germans.

This presentation does not exhaust the issue of exploring the role of local collaborators, especially policemen, in the sexual victimization of Jewish women and girls during World War II, but rather serves as an introduction. The discovery of new sources and new questions to the "old sources" will enable researchers not only to get an in-depth understanding of sexual violence perpetrated by local collaborators in Ukraine but also to see the intersection between gender, sexuality, power and ethnicity in the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe.

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