

The Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Holocaust

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The following paper is a historical investigation into the participation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and related nationalist formations in the destruction of the Jewish population in Ukraine, particularly in the regions of Volhynia, Galicia, and Northern Bukovina.¹

The paper is organized as follows. It starts with a discussion of the sources used, not only listing them, but assessing their reliability for this topic. It then presents material about UPA's involvement in the murder of Jews in the first period of its activity, that is, in the spring, summer, and fall of 1943 in Volhynia. Then it turns to a new period in UPA's presence in Volhynia, the winter of 1943-44, as the Red Army closed in. The next section follows the murders as they spread to Galicia in 1943-44 and to Northern Bukovina in 1944-45. In these three sections I am primarily concerned to present the material found in the sources. When summarizing Jewish testimonies, I try to convey their original flavor. Following these documentary sections, I explain why it is reasonable to believe the evidence that UPA killed Jews routinely and systematically. This section on the context of murder could be much longer, but here I limit myself to what I consider the essential points. Then I examine two issues that are raised in Ukrainian national historiography, particularly in polemical contexts: the participation of Jews themselves in UPA and the record of UPA and UPA members as rescuers of Jews. Finally, in the conclusions, I sketch the overall picture as it emerges from the evidence and analysis.

Sources

I originally decided to write this paper while slowly working my way through a large collection of Jewish survivor testimonies collected after the war in Poland by the Jewish Historical Commission. Altogether, the Commission collected about 7200 testimonies, only a portion of which deal with the territories of Galicia and Volhynia. For this paper I have systematically surveyed the first 1800 of them and also made use of additional testimonies from this collection that I was directed to from other literature consulted. I have not read through the Yiddish-language testimonies, however.² The testimonies are preserved as the Collection of Testimonies of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady) in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego), record collection (zespół) 301 (abbreviated AŻIH, 301 in the footnotes). The testimonies were sometimes taken by interview and sometimes written by the survivors themselves, with the former predominating.

¹ This paper was written while I held the Pinchas and Mark Wisen Fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for partially funding my project "Ukrainians and the Holocaust in History and Memory." This paper draws on the research assistance of Eduard Baidaus, Michal Mlynarz, and Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe. Key insights that led me to research the Ukrainian Insurgent Army came from the late Janusz Radziejowski back in the mid-1980s and more recently from Jeffrey Burds and Omer Bartov.

² Some testimonies have both a Polish version and a Yiddish version; I cite from the Polish version. Most testimonies have a handwritten and typewritten version; I cite from the typewritten version.

Like all testimonies, they have their weaknesses. I have elsewhere analyzed one of the testimonies from this collection by comparing what it says about events in the Lviv pogrom to photographic evidence of these same events. I did not find a contradiction between the testimony and the pictures and films. The testimony, I concluded, accurately described what the woman who wrote it experienced. I did note, however, that she was not able to learn much about the pogromists who attacked her.³ And as we will see in the testimonies from this collection that I cite below, their descriptions of the perpetrators were not very precise, and it is usually I who am assuming that they are referring to UPA. The persons actually attacking them, however, may have been with other nationalist units, such as units of the Security Service (SB) of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), or even in bandit gangs. The Russian historian Aleksandr Diukov, whose work will be discussed below and who based himself on a different set of sources, wrote that “the main burden of the battle against the Jews and other ‘undesirable elements’ fell not on UPA formations, but on a nominally independent structure that was subordinate to its command – the Security Service of the OUN.”⁴ The perplexing diversity of forces in the field is well caught in the memoir of a Jewish survivor who identified several groups that were killing Jews near Kortelisy, Ratne raion, Volhynia oblast: “Conditions for the Jewish community of Kortelisy went from bad to worse. They began to suffer casualties, not so much at the hands of Germans in the forced labor details, but mainly at the hands of various armed marauding Ukrainian groups. Some of these called themselves Partisans, who favored Russia; others went by the name of Bulbovtsi, who were Ukrainian nationalists; and there were those who were plain criminals. These groups fought among themselves, and the only thing they had in common was that they robbed from farmers and killed Jews.”⁵ However, since UPA was the master of the woods where most of the action in the testimony takes place, it is reasonable to assume that most of what is said refers to UPA or to the OUN SB.

In another publication I compared three testimonies about the same event, the mass execution of Jews in Tovste, Zalishchyky raion, Ternopil oblast. These were two testimonies from the Jewish Historical Institute’s collection and an interview I had taken myself with a Ukrainian eyewitness. Numerous details were remembered differently – the number of Jews that were shot at one time, whether they stood on a plank or walked directly into the pit, the total number of victims, and so on. But all agreed on the main points: at least a thousand Jews were marched in groups through the town to the cemetery and shot there by the Germans.⁶ I believe that this is what we may expect of testimonies and memoirs – that they record the main points but cannot be relied upon for detail.

However, the veracity of particular testimonies can always be challenged. Below I will cite testimony 397 from the Institute’s collection. This was unusual in that it was a collective testimony, although parts were ascribed to particular individuals. One of them, Doba Melamed, whose testimony will be cited below, said that after their group escaped their attempted murder by armed banderivtsi,⁷ they ended up in a Polish village, Huta Stara. Because these Jews had been organized in a work camp by the banderivtsi and settled in homes abandoned by Poles in Kudranka and Horodyshche, Poles from these villages accused them of collaborating with the Ukrainian enemy. The Poles would have killed

³ Ivan Khymska, “Dostovirnist’ svidchennia: reliatsiia Ruzi Vagner pro l’viv’skyi pohrom vlitku 1941 r.,” *Holokost i suchasnist’* no. 2 (4) (2008): 43-79.

⁴ Aleksandr Diukov, *Vtorostepennyi vrag. OUN, UPA i reshenie “evreiskogo voprosa”* (Moscow: Regnum, 2008), 73.

⁵ Laizer Blitt, *No Strength to Forget: Survival in the Ukraine, 1941-44* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 45.

⁶ John-Paul Himka, *Ukrainians, Jews and the Holocaust: Divergent Memories* (Saskatoon: Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage, forthcoming 2009).

⁷ I will be using the terms banderivets (singular), banderivtsi (plural), and banderite to indicate the Bandera wing of the OUN. Jewish testimonies use this term often and perhaps loosely to identify the nationalist partisans.

them all, she said, but a Soviet lieutenant intervened, and only three of the Jewish men were taken into the woods and shot. Testimonies from Poles who came to Huta Stara from Kudranka also record the arrival of these Jews from the banderite work camp, but their testimonies deny that the Poles harmed these Jews in any way and say instead that the Poles had always hid and fed these same Jews earlier.⁸ This shows that one can always go back to square one: someone accuses someone else of murder, and the person accused denies it. Individual cases can always leave some doubt, but the accumulation of numerous similar testimonies indicates that they describe something that really happened.

The same problems of testimony as a genre apply to another major collection of Jewish testimonies I consulted, that of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education (abbreviated as Shoah Foundation in the notes). These are videotaped interviews conducted from 1994 to 2002. I only listened to interviews conducted in English, Polish, Russian, German, and Ukrainian, and accessed material on UPA by searching in the collection's index under keywords. The interviews have been divided into numbered segments, which I refer to in the notes. I found that these interviews, although largely conducted with a different group of people and a half century later than the testimonies in the collection of the Jewish Historical Institute, tell the same basic story.

The same things are true of the printed Jewish memoirs that I went through in the library of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – they have all the problems of the testimonies, yet they come from a different set of people in different time periods who tell the same story.

There is one more important point to make about Jewish survivors' memoirs and testimonies. Very few Jews survived in Volhynia and Galicia where UPA was most active.⁹ The vast majority of the Jews were dead even before UPA appeared on the scene. Therefore survivors' testimonies are very rare. As we will see, the survivors who did stay alive long enough to relate their experience with UPA just barely cheated death. It is in the nature of things that most Jews who encountered UPA in its role as implementer of the Holocaust would not be alive later to bear witness. Hence, these testimonies are of great value and speak in place of those many who could not speak. The murderers left no testimony themselves about their crimes, and the surviving Jews often felt that they were being hunted precisely in order to hush them up, not only for posterity but concretely before the Soviets returned to power. Jan Gross has written in his book *Neighbors*: "When considering survivors' testimonies, we would be well advised to change the starting premise in appraisal of their evidentiary contribution from a priori critical to in principle affirmative. By accepting what we read in a particular account as fact *until we find persuasive arguments to the contrary*, we would avoid more mistakes than we are likely to commit by adopting the opposite approach, which calls for cautious skepticism toward any testimony *until an independent confirmation of its content has been found*. The greater the catastrophe, the fewer survivors. We must be capable of listening to lonely voices reaching us from the abyss..."¹⁰

Poles who suffered at the hands of UPA also recorded the murder of Jews. For their testimonies, I made use particularly of the compilation by Władysław and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane*

⁸ Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludność polskiej Wołynia, 1939-1945*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo von borowiecky, 2000), 1:260-61.

⁹ On the elimination of the Jewish populations in these regions see Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews 1941-1944* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The Federation of Volhynian Jews, 1990); Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944: Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997); Thomas Sandkühler, "Endlösung" in Galizien: *Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz, 1941-1944* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996).

¹⁰ Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 139-40. Emphasis in the original.

*przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939-1945.*¹¹ These testimonies are perhaps more problematic than the Jewish ones. National conflict between Poles and Ukrainians in this region was intense, with roots in the late nineteenth century and an actual war in 1918-19. Moreover, the Poles of Galicia were heavily influenced by the right-wing nationalism of the National Democrats. Thus a well articulated anti-Ukrainian ideology was likely to influence the presentation of their recollections. Nonetheless, the basic approach to testimonial literature outlined above still applies to them. Polish testimony is relevant to Volhynia in 1943 (until the Poles were driven out from there) and to Galicia in 1943-44.

Another problematic set of sources that proved useful for particular parts of this study was the collection entitled "Postwar War Crimes Trials Related to the Holocaust" in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM RG-31.018M). This collection contains records of NKVD and SMERSH interrogations mainly of former policemen in German service. It is highly probable that the statements of the accused were obtained using torture. But there is also other evidence included with these cases, in particular the testimonies of eyewitnesses. Most of the cases were initiated at the end of the war, when the overriding concern of the Soviet authorities was that these were disloyal Soviet citizens who went over to the Germans. Generally, in the cases where the prosecutors could not obtain concrete evidence that a particular policeman had murdered people, that individual was sentenced to exile rather than execution, so there was some level of justice in the rough justice being applied. The Soviet authorities at that time were generally uninterested in publicizing the crimes of the collaborators for propaganda effect, since they were both embarrassed by the extent of the collaboration and interested in ascribing as many crimes as possible to the Germans, for whom they were tallying up a bill of damages. The details of the crimes described in the investigations fit with what I know from other sources of how the Holocaust proceeded in Western Ukraine and also with what I know from comparative genocide studies. I agree therefore with the judgment of another scholar who has worked even more extensively with this collection: "While the testimonies...do not give exact dates or numbers of victims, they provide relatively accurate descriptions of the Holocaust in various localities. These descriptions are corroborated by archival documents and modern studies. Hence, there is no reason why the interrogation and trial records – if combined with other available materials – should not be used as historical sources relating to the sites and instances of genocide."¹²

I made every effort to gather Ukrainian bystander recollections of what happened. I examined fifty-six Ukrainian memoirs preserved in the Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Education Centre in Winnipeg for information on the Holocaust; these were collected as a result of a memoir contest held in 1947. The only item I found that was remotely relevant to the present study was an odd Russian-language memoir of an antisemite and UPA sympathizer perhaps from the Kuban. His memoir concerned a trip he took back to the Soviet Union in 1947, and it equated popular manifestations of antisemitism with Ukrainian national resistance.¹³ In May and June 2009 Eva Himka conducted interviews for me with twenty elderly nationalists in Lviv. The list of questions included one specifically addressing whether UPA

¹¹ See also the web page *Nie-Cala prawda*, which aims to prove that not Polish peasants, but Ukrainians, particularly those in UPA, were guilty of massacring Jews in Volhynia and Galicia. Although his presentation is polemical, the author also searched volumes in the series *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich...* for documentation about UPA murders of the Jewish population. http://solidarni.org/publicystyka/historia/nie-cala_prawda accessed 21 October 2009.

¹² Alexander Victor Prusin, "Fascist Criminals to the Gallows!": The Holocaust and Soviet War Crimes Trials, December 1945-February 1946," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003):18. See also Tanja Penter, "Collaboration on Trial: New Source Material on Soviet Postwar Trials against Collaborators," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 782-90.

¹³ "Konkurs na spohady," *Oseredok*, no. 64 (Nikolai Ivanenko).

killed Jews, which the interviewees unanimously denied. One interviewee told us of documents proving that Soviet agents disguised as UPA soldiers committed atrocities in order to engender hatred toward UPA. Interviewees also referred to the Jewish doctors who served in UPA as evidence that UPA was not involved in the Holocaust.¹⁴

I hope soon to make use of the interviews collected by Father Patrick Desbois and his Yahad-in unum project. Father Desbois has been interviewing elderly Ukrainians, mainly villagers; many of them talk frankly about their own participation or the participation of others in the murder of Jews. I have been able to listen to a few of the interviews, none of which touched upon UPA, but I suspect that the full set will shed more light on the role of the Ukrainian nationalist insurgency in the Holocaust.

Although I rely primarily on the mutually corroborating narratives of eyewitness testimonies, I have supplemented them with documents emanating from OUN and UPA themselves as well as from German documents as cited by other scholars.

I have refrained from integrating into this paper sources cited by Aleksandr Diukov, mentioned above. His monograph on OUN and UPA and their solution of “the Jewish question” brings to light much new documentary material, mainly emanating from OUN, UPA, and the Soviet authorities. However, these documents come from the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) archive. I do not doubt that the sources are genuine, but the archive where they are located is problematic. It is not open to all researchers, and its policy is selective. It is an archive that promotes a particular historical politics, which includes on its agenda vilification of Ukrainian nationalism. Like Aleksei Miller, who shares these reservations about the archive and the products that emanate from it, I consider Diukov’s book to be “completely decent.”¹⁵ Still, for this paper I will not make use of it. I will, however, point out that, while using a source base largely independent of that used for this study, Diukov has come to virtually the same conclusions as I have with regard to the Ukrainian national insurgency and the Holocaust.¹⁶

The Course of the Murders

Volhynia Spring-Fall 1943

During its first period of activity, UPA overtly espoused hostility to Jews. This comes out in both UPA documents and eyewitness testimonies. A leaflet that OUN distributed to Ukrainians of the neighboring Chełm region and Podlachia in August 1943 states: “...The eternal enemy of Ukraine, Moscow, sends for the destruction of the Ukrainian nation bands of gypsies, Muscovites, Jews, and other rabble, the so-called 'red partisans.'”¹⁷ We also have the conspectus of a certain Mykhailo Smenchak, who was undergoing political training with UPA or, perhaps, the banderist OUN. Lesson twelve concerned “our relations towards national minorities.” About Jews he wrote: “We consider them agents of Muscovite imperialism, formerly tsarist but now proletarian. Still, we have to first beat the Muscovites and then the surviving Jews (*zhydiv nedobytktiv*).”¹⁸ A Polish testimony speaks about an order to kill all the Poles, Jews, and communists in the area and throughout Ukraine. The author of the testimony heard about this from a Ukrainian friend who fed them while he and his family hid in the forest. The friend

¹⁴ Eva Himka and John-Paul Himka, “Interviews with Elderly Nationalists in Lviv,” paper presented at the Fifth Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukrainian Studies, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 29-31 October 2009.

¹⁵ Aleksei Miller, “Rossiia: vlast’ i istoriia,” *Pro et Contra* (May-August 2009):17.

¹⁶ Diukov, *Vtorostepennyi vrag*, 71-87.

¹⁷ Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny. Novi dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1996), 366.

¹⁸ USHMM RG-31.017M, reel 1, Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Rivnens’koi Oblasti, f. 30, op. 2, od. zb. 82, ll. 36v-37.

warned the family not to return to their home.¹⁹ Another Polish testimony said that UPA soldiers passing through the Polish colony of Głęboczyca, Volodymyr-Volynskyi county were heard to be singing: *Vyryzaly my zhydiv, vyrizhemo i liakhiv, i staroho, i maloho do iednoho; Poliakov vyrezhem, Ukrainu zbuduiem.*²⁰

Immediately below I summarize Jewish survivor testimonies and memoirs that describe the activities of UPA in Volhynia in the period from spring through fall 1943.

Then about twelve years old, Seweryn Dobrzenski, remembered the emergence of the banderite UPA in Volhynia. He was Jewish and staying with a Polish family in a forested area of Berezne raion, Rivne oblast. His situation there was good, and the family would have let him stay beyond the spring of 1943 if UPA had not started killing Poles and Jews in the area. He fled to the forest, but one day the banderites surrounded the forest and searched it. They found three Jewish bunkers and killed over two hundred Jews with grenades and rifles. They also killed dozens of other Jews at different times. Later the boy went to work for a Ukrainian farmer. The banderites saw him and did not touch him. They said that they were no longer going to kill Jews, but it turned out this was a trap. Many Jews were deceived and came out of the forest, settling in the homes of Poles who had fled or been killed. His mother was in a house with both Jews and Poles. Ukrainians came to the door, and most of the house's inhabitants did not expect that they were in danger, since the killing seemed to have stopped. His mother, however, and some others managed to escape. The banderites told those who remained in the house to lie on the floor. They proceeded to kill a dozen Jews and ten Poles using a machine gun. His mother went to another house in the predawn hours to check on her other son, Seweryn's brother, and found his corpse and that of a little girl. The mother then took Seweryn away from the Ukrainian farmer, whom they no longer trusted. This could have been in mid-October. His mother and he went deep into the forest where about a hundred Jews were living in bunkers. Some Polish partisans were also nearby. In late December UPA attacked the forest. They caught about twenty Jews and let them go, saying that this was now Ukrainian territory. But Seweryn and his mother did not trust them, sure that this was another trap.²¹

At the age of twelve Mordechaj Kleinman fled from the ghetto in Ludwipol, Kostopil county (on the site of Ludwipol is now Sosnove, Berezne raion, Rivne oblast). After working for a while for a Polish farmer, he eventually ended up in the forest with a group of about twenty Jews, partially armed and in touch with pro-Soviet partisans. He remembered the woods as full of partisans of various types. He singled out the "Ukrainian-nationalist *partyzantka*" for shooting at the Jews.²²

Jakub Grinsburg, a boy of fifteen who was hiding in and around Radyvyliv, Rivne oblast, in the second half of 1943 and early 1944, had known two Jews whom the banderivtsi killed in the nearby village of Sytne. He himself was caught by a "Ukrainian-banderivets'." The banderivets' was taking him to a field in order to kill him, but he managed to escape.²³

Jewish testimonies state that UPA killed Jews at the same time it was killing Poles. The Poles who had been hiding Vera Shchetnikova and her brother in 1943 were killed by the banderivtsi, and the banderivtsi also killed Jews.²⁴

¹⁹ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:150.

²⁰ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:872; see also 2:1269. Translation: We slaughtered the Jews, we'll slaughter the Poles, old and young, every one; we'll slaughter the Poles, we'll build Ukraine.

²¹ AŽIH, 301/1222, 5-9.

²² AŽIH, 301/75, 1.

²³ AŽIH, 301/305, 2.

²⁴ Shoah Foundation, 45238 Vera Shchetnikova, 140-43.

Polish testimonies corroborate that UPA killed Jews together with Poles. On 23 July 1943 UPA soldiers tried to kill a Jew in the largely Ukrainian village of Ochnówka, Volodymyr-Volynskiy county, but the man managed to escape. They killed his son and severely beat and wounded his wife, who was Polish.²⁵ An UPA attack in July or August 1943 on the village of Medwedówka, Kostopil county, left fifty-seven dead, mainly Poles, but also four Jews who were hiding among them.²⁶ In late August 1943 an UPA unit killed Jews who were hiding with Poles in Głębczyca, Volodymyr-Volynskiy county.²⁷ On 30 August 1943 Ukrainian detachments headed by Fedor Hałuszko and recruited from local nationalists and communists burned the village of Myślina, Kovel county, and murdered the inhabitants, mainly Poles, but also four Jewish families, including three children.²⁸ When UPA attacked the Polish village of Rudnia Potasznia, Kostopil county, in October 1943, they also killed a Jewish couple.²⁹

Polish testimonies also mention murders that seem to have been more directed at Jews alone. UPA killed a Jew named Moszek in the village of Bubnów, Horokhiv county.³⁰ In September 1943 UPA soldiers killed two Jewish boys, Abram and Berko, who were hiding in the colony of Piłsudszczyzna, Horokhiv county.³¹ In fall 1943 Ukrainians killed a Jewish woman named Agapujew hiding in the colony of Zalesie, Kostopil district.³² Osada Osowa, Kostopil county, was a Jewish settlement with a prewar population of about 900. The Jews of Osowa engaged in agriculture as well as crafts and trade. By 1943 Jewish survivors of Osowa were hiding in the nearby woods, which were systematically searched by UPA. When UPA found these survivors, they murdered them.³³ In the Czech village of Nowiny Czeskie, Dubno county, about twenty Jews were still alive at some point in 1943 when an UPA soldier pretending to be a Soviet partisan lured them to the forest, supposedly to the partisans. Instead, they were murdered there.³⁴

Polish testimonies also speak of UPA denouncing Polish settlements to the Germans for harboring Jews. On 16 June 1943 a German battalion surrounded the Polish village of Huta Stepańska, Kostopil county, as a result of UPA denunciations that the villagers had organized a well armed partisan unit that received drops from aircraft, had a short-wave radio and artillery, printed and distributed anti-German leaflets, cooperated with Soviet partisans, and hid Jews. After investigating, the Germans left the village.³⁵ In fact, though, young Jewish refugees, the brothers Waks, had come to Huta Stepańska precisely because it was a well armed camp. At first the Poles did not trust them, suspecting them of being Ukrainians or spies from the Ukrainians, and threatened to kill them. But a man on horseback told the Polish police to let them go. In late spring 1943 [probably, however, July 1943], “the Ukrainian bandit army” attacked the village to kill the Poles, and the Waks brothers fled together with the Poles to Rafałówka.³⁶ Battles with the banderivtsi and the Poles’ distrust of the Jewish partisans also figure in the account of Gitla Szwarcblatt.³⁷

²⁵ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:929.

²⁶ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:270.

²⁷ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:872, 874.

²⁸ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:367.

²⁹ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:277.

³⁰ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:189.

³¹ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:191.

³² Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:216.

³³ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:313.

³⁴ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:91-92.

³⁵ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:287.

³⁶ Shoah Foundation, 13213 Mike Walsh (Mordechai Waks), 55-60.

³⁷ AŽIH, 301/1237, 2v-3v.

The Polish colony of Ludwikówka, Dubno county, had been attacked unsuccessfully several times by UPA. UPA denounced the colony to the SS for harboring Jews and Soviet partisans. On the night of 13 July 1943, a large unit of SS, Vlasovites, and Ukrainian police attacked the village and burned most of the colony's inhabitants in a barn.³⁸

In confirmation of the eyewitness reports of UPA's murders of the Jewish population in Volhynia in 1943 we can adduce reports from the Mykhailo Kolodzinsky division (*zahir*) of UPA, whose Book of Reports (*Knyha zvitiv*) has been preserved. The division operated in the forests of Volhynia; it routinely killed any surviving Jews it encountered and reported on this to its superiors. "On 14 November [1943] the platoon with the platoon's Polish [word illegible], following up a denunciation, attacked Jews who had settled in the forest near Ostrivtsi. Having shot four Jews, two escaped, and they caught two alive." Ostrivtsi is a village about half way between Rafalivka and Volodymyrets in Rivne oblast. "On 15 December [1943] the [unit's] cavalry in the village of Selets caught ten Hungarian Jews who had left a work battalion. That very day they were dispatched to 'the bosom of Abraham.'" Selets is in Dubrovychsya raion, Rivne oblast.³⁹ The Kolodzinsky division was part of UPA Army-North. Based near Dubrovychsya, it reported to the commander of the "Zahrava" military district.⁴⁰ The German historian Franziska Bruder also found an OUN-UPA report from 20 September 1943 that said: "[The Jews,] almost completely liquidated, in small groups or as individuals hide in the woods and wait for a change in the political situation. We ourselves liquidated in the Horyn [River] region seven Jewish men and a Jewish woman."⁴¹

Volhynia Winter 1943-44

The winter of 1943-44 was a period when OUN and UPA were officially adopting a policy of national tolerance, hoping to become acceptable partners for the Western Allies. At the same time, this was the most intense period of their murder of Jews. An example of the new, tolerant line is a letter of instruction the OUN leadership addressed to political referents of the nadraiony, dated 8 January 1944. It said simply: "We do not attack [*ne vystupaiemo proty*] the Jews."⁴² As we will see from the survivors' testimony, which documents repeated attempts to lure Jews out of hiding in order to kill them, these instructions should not be taken at face value. The idea of Jewish Bolshevism was still alive in the UPA environment. A one-page, typewritten leaflet dated 31 December 1943 (a time when UPA was killing many Eastern Ukrainian POWs) appealed to the youth of Volhynia not to treat Eastern Ukrainians with suspicion any more, because they too are taking part in the national struggle. One of the reasons that the East possesses less national consciousness is that it has spent a quarter of a century "in Jewish-Bolshevik slavery." The leaflet does not seem to be official, but rather to have been authored by an Eastern Ukrainian serving in UPA.⁴³

³⁸ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:88.

³⁹ USHMM RG-31.017M, reel 1, Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Rivnens'koi Oblasti, f. 30, op. 2, od. zb. 89, 7v, 11v. This source was poorly microfilmed and therefore barely readable; parts were entirely illegible, especially much of 1944 (from March on).

⁴⁰ Petro Sodoł', "Orhanizatsiina struktura UPA," http://forum.ottawa-litopys.org/documents/dos0301_u.htm accessed 26 October 2009.

⁴¹ Franziska Bruder, "Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!" *Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1929-1948* (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), 219. Bruder thought there was a typographical error in the report because it said "na tereni Horyni." She thought it must have been referring to the locality Horynka. The Horyn River, however, runs through territory that figures in Jewish testimonies as the home of hiding survivors and the site of UPA massacres.

⁴² Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny*, 379.

⁴³ Voron, "Druzi ukraintsi." USHMM RG-31.017M, reel 1, Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Rivnens'koi Oblasti, f. 30, op. 1, od. zb. 16, f. 52.

Some time in 1943 UPA destroyed a Jewish civilian camp located in the woods south of Sernyky, Lutsk county and associated with Soviet partisans under the command of Maksim Misiura.⁴⁴ One of the partisans, himself Jewish, came to the camp to recruit one of his two cousins living there. But the next morning UPA attacked the camp and killed just under fifty Jews, including both of the partisan's cousins.⁴⁵ Another Jewish survivor account confirms UPA's destruction of the civilian camp. Lazar Bromberg joined the Misiura partisans in early 1943. Of the original group that he left Sernytky with, only two of eight survived; the rest died in battles with the bul'bivtsi.⁴⁶ At one point he quarrelled with the partisan leadership and left his unit together with some other Jewish partisans. They went to the Jewish civilian camp, which was about ten kilometers distant. They stayed there four days, but the bul'bivtsi attacked and slaughtered all the civilians, including the children. He and his Jewish partisans managed to fight their way out, but were unable to save any of the civilians.⁴⁷

Max Grossblat was hiding with a group of about a hundred Jewish, but not Soviet, partisans somewhere in the woods of Volhynia. He remembered that both the banderivtsi and the bul'bivtsi attacked them continually, wanting to clear the woods of Jews.⁴⁸

Many Jewish testimonies describe UPA's deliberate mass murders of Jewish survivors in the Volhynian forests as the Red Army approached in the winter of 1943-44. A common thread in most of the narratives is that UPA attempted to lull the Jews' suspicions and to coax them out of hiding in order to kill them, a phenomenon that was also mentioned with less frequency in the earlier period.

Vera Shchetnikova recalled how she was hiding with about eighty-five other Jews in the general vicinity of the county capital Sarny in mid-January 1944. The banderivtsi discovered their bunkers and decided to destroy all the Jews who lived in them. In her view, this was so that there would be no witnesses left when the Soviets came. Their goal was to round up all the Jews, take them to the village of Stepań, Kostopil county, and there shoot them. They had surrounded the bunkers and were setting up a machine gun, but the Jews rushed out of the bunkers and ran in all directions before they finished setting up the gun. The young fled, and the banderivtsi only ended up with the elderly and invalids. They told the Jews they caught that they should go to Stepań, where they would not be shot but given work. A few of the Jews who escaped decided to go to the village the banderivtsi indicated. However, they met a woodcutter, a Stundist⁴⁹ from Kazimierka, who told them not to go there. He said that graves had already been dug for them and advised them to wait a few days until the Soviets came.⁵⁰

Pola Jasphy was hiding with some other Jews in the forests near Antonivka, Volodymyrets raion, Rivne oblast (about half way between Rafalivka and Sarny), where there were armed Ukrainians who had murdered and driven out the Polish population. Many Jews found refuge in the houses abandoned by the Poles, while others hid nearby in the forest. She estimated that there were several hundred Jewish refugees in the vicinity in the fall of 1943. They made contact with the banderivtsi, who said that they

⁴⁴ A picture of five Jewish partisans who served with Misiura, perhaps including our eyewitness, can be found in the gallery of the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation website: http://jewishpartisans.org/t_switch.php?pageName=gallery+pop+up&image_id=428&room_image_id=370&gallery_id=20 accessed 22 October 2009.

⁴⁵ Shoah Foundation, 1979 Milton Turk, 64-68.

⁴⁶ Bul'bivtsi in the narrower sense refers to the followers of Taras Bulba-Borovets, who established the Ukrainian Insurgent Army before the banderivtsi took it over. In Jewish testimonies, however, the term is often used in reference to Ukrainian nationalist partisans in general.

⁴⁷ AŽIH, 301/1046, 1-2.

⁴⁸ Shoah Foundation, 11957 Max Grosblat, 40-41.

⁴⁹ A type of Baptist.

⁵⁰ Shoah Foundation, 45238 Vera Shchetnikova, 152-59.

were not going to kill Jews, and the surviving Jews of the area went to work for them. This lasted until early January 1944. On the 4th of the month she learned that all the Jews who were living near the formerly Polish houses (she in the meantime had moved to another part of the forest) had been killed by the Ukrainians. She and a few others managed to hide in the hay in a barn. The next day some Ukrainians came searching for them with pitchforks, but missed them by a meter. She stayed in that barn for eight days. In her opinion, the banderivtsi had deliberately gathered the Jews together in order to kill them.⁵¹

A similar story was recorded about half a century earlier, the testimony of Doba Mełamed, a Jew who fled to the forest with her family from the Tuchyn ghetto: "In the summer of 1943 the Banderivtsi began to kill the Poles....We found out that near the town of Antonivka in the village of Rezyca,⁵² Jews were living in liberty, that the banderivtsi had announced that they will not kill the Jews because they are fighting against a common enemy. We went to Rezyca. In fact there were two hundred Jews living at liberty, working for the peasants as tanners, tailors, cobblers, and the like." The Mełameds were suspicious and fled further. "The houses of the Poles stood empty. Then the banderivtsi announced that England and America, as countries with which they were allied, had forbidden them to kill Jews, that they will allow Jews to take over the homes abandoned by the Poles....In December 1943 the banderivtsi again began to register the Jews. After registration they announced that if one Jew escaped, the rest would be killed....In December 1943 a certain Jew knocked on our window pane and shouted: 'Run for it, the banderivtsi have killed the Antonivka Jews.' We fled to the forest. We sent the forester to investigate. He came back with the news that the banderivtsi had killed all the Jews, with axes and knives."⁵³

Yet another such tale, probably describing events in the vicinity of Radyvyliv, Rivne oblast, at the beginning of 1944, was told by Mina Grinzajd. She was in a group of 376 Jews who reached an agreement with the banderivtsi to work for them as tailors, cobblers, and leather workers. From time to time the banderivtsi "resettled" some of the workers in groups of twenty to thirty, in reality shooting them. At the end of three months, the original group was reduced to thirty-four.⁵⁴

From another locality, forests near Ozeriany and Kupychiv, Turiisk raion, Volhynia, comes yet another such description. The banderivtsi set up a labor camp in which seventy Jews were working. They gave Jews in nearby bunkers an equivalent of the Germans' *Kennkarte*, which would allow the Jews to leave their bunkers for work without being harmed. In fact, though, the banderivtsi attacked the bunkers three times, killing seventeen of the inhabitants. All seventy Jews who worked in the labor camp were murdered.⁵⁵

A Volhynian Jew, Emil Goldbarten, related that there were many Jews hiding in woods in the vicinity of Mizoch, Zdolbuniv county. The Germans were afraid to go into the woods because of UPA activity there. [UPA had its headquarters not far away in Derman monastery.] Although UPA kept the Germans out, they killed the Jews in the woods themselves. In January 1944 Goldbarten was captured by

⁵¹ Shoah Foundation, 37150 Pola Jasphy, 230-39; also 150-63.

⁵² I have been unable to identify this locality.

⁵³ AŽIH, 301/397, 12-14.

⁵⁴ AŽIH, 301/2888. I have primarily relied on Franziska Bruder's translation of this Yiddish-language testimony. Bruder, "*Der ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*," 218-19. The place name mentioned in the testimony is "Kritniv," rendered by Bruder as Krytyniw. I suspect this is Korytne in Radyvyliv raion. Mina Grinzajd says the agreement was reached with the banderivtsi in January 1943. This seems too early for the establishment of a work camp associated with the Ukrainian nationalists; all the other examples we know come much later in the year, after the emergence of UPA. I suspect she meant January 1944. That timing fits perfectly with the many other cases.

⁵⁵ AŽIH, 301/1510, 2-3.

three Ukrainian partisans, who took him to a house and gave him a bed. They said, You are an intelligent man, you are going to work for us. But this was a lie, Goldbarten said in his testimony: they killed all the Jews whom they caught. In the house where he was supposed to stay was a young girl who used to work for Goldbarten before the war. She asked one of the UPA partisans what they were going to do with him. He answered, What are we going to do? We're going to kill him. And she said, He was such a nice man, I used to work for him, he was so nice to me. Goldbarten overheard this conversation and managed to escape. He was hiding in a barn in the straw and heard the partisans searching for him, asking, Did you see a Jew here? The housewife said, No. They took a pitchfork and stuck it in the straw. Goldbarten had not had time to dig a proper cavity in the straw and was all cramped up. The partisan stood above him, sticking and sticking his pitchfork into the straw, but never striking his hidden target. What the hell, he said. Where did he disappear to? Two or three weeks later Goldbarten was liberated.⁵⁶

Aron Baboukh was surviving in villages in the vicinity of Volodymyr Volynskyy and was kept alive primarily through the efforts of Ukrainian rescuers who hid him from the banderivtsi. In February 1944 many banderivtsi suddenly appeared in the village where he and his friend were hiding in a bunker, and the village became dangerous for them. One day, searching for fuel, he and his friend stumbled upon some banderivtsi who tried to capture them and shot at them. The banderivtsi found the bunker with more Jewish refugees and shot every one of them. Aron Baboukh claimed that the banderivtsi killed hundreds of Jews, and that he was an eyewitness to their atrocities.⁵⁷

The memoirs of Jacob Biber resonate with many of the other testimonies. His cousin had been invited by the "Bulbas" to set up a tannery in the Stubicki forest west of Siomaky (north of Liuboml, Volhynia oblast). Biber's Ukrainian employer said: "See...they are not touching any Jews."⁵⁸ Biber went to visit his cousin, who told him: "The Bulbas are treating me well,...but...I don't trust the Bulbas, because there are too many killers among them who do not need witnesses around with the times changing the way they are. The Soviets are winning the war and getting nearer." His cousin also told him about a Jewish girl who went to work for the Bulbas in Stubicki forest and was later found shot to death in the forest.⁵⁹ In mid-December 1943 Biber visited his cousin again. He "told us he was working with a whole crew at the Bulbas' tannery and had acquired an assistant. He advised us again to be extremely careful, as some of the Bulbas were still killing any Jews they could find."⁶⁰ Some time later the Bibers went to stay with another Ukrainian family, the Pavluks. One morning when they were all doing chores, several Bulbas came into their house. One of them, a former Red Army soldier who had now become a leader in the movement, told Biber: "Next time I find you here, I'll kill you. Right now I don't want to smear Pavluk's floor with your dirty blood."⁶¹ The cousin was captured by a Bulba commander in the village of Chornoplesy, just west of Siomaky, and skinned alive by him and a helper. That same commander also killed the last surviving Jewish woman in Chernoplesy. The woman begged to be spared because she had nursed the commander as a baby, but he had no mercy. The Bulbas also shot another of Biber's friends at this time.⁶²

By the winter of 1943-44 there were few Poles left in Volhynia, so we have no Polish testimonies about UPA's activities at that time vis-à-vis the Jews.

⁵⁶ Shoah Foundation, 7722 Emil Goldbarten, 62-69.

⁵⁷ Shoah Foundation, 26557 Aron Baboukh, 114-25.

⁵⁸ Jacob Biber, *Survivors: A Personal Story of the Holocaust*, Studies in Judaica and the Holocaust, 2 (San Bernardino: R. Reginald, The Borgo Press, 1989), 137.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 145-46.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 151-52.

Galicia 1943-44

As the Red Army was about to take over Volhynia, many UPA units crossed into Galicia, spreading the murder Poles and Jews to this region as well.

Murray Burgman was in a forced labor camp in a Carpathian village which he referred to as Limanowa but which was more likely Limna, located about half way between Ustrzyki Dolne (now in Poland) and Turka (raion center, Lviv oblast).⁶³ Jews from the labor camp worked in the mountain forests and used the opportunity to dig bunkers. Some later hid in these bunkers in the woods, including Burgman. The banderivtsi, however, came looking for them and killed many. Burgman said he had heard rumors that the banderivtsi were killing Jews, but he did not want to believe it. But he and his brother had to flee their bunker when the banderivtsi did come. When they returned to the bunker later, they saw that the food that they had left there was doused with gasoline. This was to spoil the food so that they would have nothing to eat.⁶⁴

For Jews hiding in the woods near Svirzh, Peremyshliany raion, Lviv oblast, it became “very dangerous,” because the banderivtsi were attacking.⁶⁵ A young girl who was living in these same woods said that her group was protected by both Polish and Soviet partisans and that they fought against the banderivtsi.⁶⁶ There is another testimony from this same area with more details. It says that the banderivtsi conducted a search of the woods in March 1944. One of the banderivtsi warned the Jews hiding in the bunkers of the upcoming attack, and five hundred Jews then fled to a nearby Polish village.⁶⁷ The next morning at 7:00 the banderivtsi attacked the rest of the Jews, burning any structures they had above ground and throwing grenades into their bunkers. Later the banderivtsi attacked the Polish village, which was defended by a self-defence unit composed of Poles and Jews. Two Jewish families perished in that attack. The banderivtsi attacked the village again on Easter Sunday 1944 and killed both Poles and Jews, but again met combined Polish and Jewish resistance.⁶⁸

Also near Peremyshliany, in the Ostałowiecki forest, there was a group of a hundred Jews hiding. Unfortunately, their footprints in the snow revealed the location of the bunkers. The woods were searched a number of times before several hundred “Ukrainians” launched a major attack on the morning of 2 March 1944. Of the hundred Jews mentioned in the testimony of Lipa Stricker, only ten survived. He managed to hide in the bushes. The slaughter lasted an hour. All the Jews were killed with knives. Stricker’s son had ten knife wounds, six in his chest, four in his back. Stricker’s wife lay murdered and naked. Her sister and her two adult daughters were also murdered there.⁶⁹ (Perhaps the incident described here is connected with the series of incidents described immediately above.)

In Reklyntsi, Sokal raion, Lviv oblast, in the winter of 1943-44 “the Ukrainians-banderivtsi began to organize. They began to attack the Poles. They murdered some Polish families in the village. They burned Jewish houses.” Jews who were hiding in the village feared for their lives. The Ukrainian who was sheltering the narrator, Szyja Rajzer, and other Jews also began to fear for his life and told the Jews to

⁶³ This camp is not listed in M. Dubyk, ed. *Dovidnyk pro tabory, tiurny ta hetto na okupovanii terytorii Ukrainy (1941-1944). Handbuch der Lager, Gefängnisse und Ghettos auf dem besetzten Territorium der Ukraine (1941-1944)* (Kyiv: Derzhavnyi komitet arkhiviv Ukrainy, Ukrain’s’kyi natsional’nyi fond “Vzaiemorozuminnia i prymyrennia” pry kabinetni ministriv Ukrainy, 2000).

⁶⁴ Shoah Foundation, 15542 Murray Bergman, 105-12.

⁶⁵ AŽIH, 301/790, 3.

⁶⁶ AŽIH, 301/843, 11.

⁶⁷ The testimony calls the village Hanaki, but I have not been able to locate it. It was close to Svirzh, however.

⁶⁸ AŽIH, 301/808, 2-3.

⁶⁹ AŽIH, 301/1136, 4.

leave. This had become very dangerous now, because the peasants had set up a guard around the village “organized especially against Jews and Poles.”⁷⁰ (Some of our Lviv interviewees told us how their fathers joined the village guard, armed with axes, scythes, and pitchforks.)⁷¹

The Friedman family was hiding in the countryside near Brody, Lviv oblast, in the fall of 1943. “One evening Father heard the Banderas marching toward our hiding place and he assumed we had been discovered. He took out his razor blade and prepared to slit our throats. ‘We will not be tortured,’ he whispered to Isaac and me. ‘Otherwise, we will give away your mother and Sarah.’” Referring to December 1943, he recalled hiding from German patrols and Bandera bandits. “Both groups wanted to kill us.” Referring to early 1944, he wrote: “The retreat of the Germans had left a clear field for the Banderas. They went about their business of murdering Poles....The Banderas seemed to have gone berserk, killing every Pole they got their hands on. I had never heard or seen such wailing, and I hope to God I never do again....The Banderas were now desperate to find Jacob Friedman [the author’s father]. Nearly every prominent Jewish man in the area around Brody had been accounted for, except Father.”⁷²

In March 1944 a thirteen-year old boy was given shelter by a Ukrainian family in the village of Berlyn near Brody, Lviv oblast. He tried to convince the family he was Christian by reciting his prayers. The woman of the household insisted he take a bath, and when he took off his clothes, she saw he was Jewish. She said she was afraid because there were so many banderivtsi in the area and asked him to move to a village closer to the front.⁷³

Also near Brody a friend of Szyja Rajzer perished at the hands of the banderivtsi.⁷⁴

Leon Knebel was hiding in the woods near the village of Opaka, near Boryslav, in Drohobych raion, Lviv oblast, from mid-April until the Soviets came in early August. Of the group of twelve Jews he was hiding with, three were killed by the banderivtsi. “The banderivtsi were cruel,” he wrote. “They also lived in the wood and simply hunted the Jews.” They did not merely kill those they caught but tortured them. One day twenty-four victims were murdered. “Later we found the corpse of a young Jewish woman, Mala Ehrenfeld; both of her hands were cut off and strips of skin had been cut out of her body.”⁷⁵ Ignacy Goldwasser was hiding in the same forests. In the two months preceding the return of the Soviets, he had to hide from the banderivtsi, who were destroying Jewish bunkers and killing Jews.⁷⁶ Also in the same forests was Edzia Szepeicher. She said that banderivtsi posed as pro-Soviet partisans and invited the Jews in her bunkers to join them. Suspicious, she and some others managed to escape, but the banderivtsi caught over twenty others, forced them to undress, and murdered them.⁷⁷ An eleven-year-old girl described the murderers in the Opaka woods as Germans and Ukrainian policemen.⁷⁸

A survivor who hid in the woods between Horodenka and Borshchiv (raion capitals in Ternopil oblast) wrote: “These bloody outfits [“*Banderowtzes*” who turned against the Germans in 1943] always

⁷⁰ AŽIH, 301/2986, 22-23.

⁷¹ Himka and Himka, “Interviews with Elderly Nationalists.”

⁷² Henry Friedman, *I’m no Hero: Journeys of a Holocaust Survivor* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), 33-37.

⁷³ AŽIH, 301/198, 6.

⁷⁴ AŽIH, 301/2986, 14.

⁷⁵ AŽIH, 301/679, 6-7.

⁷⁶ AŽIH, 301/2193, 10-11.

⁷⁷ AŽIH, 301/3359, 5.

⁷⁸ AŽIH, 301/1205, 8-9.

killed Jews who had managed to survive by hiding in the woods, whenever they found them.”⁷⁹ Basically the same was said by another survivor from the Horodenka area.⁸⁰

A teenage girl hiding in Skala, Borshchiv raion, Ternopil oblast, also remembered the *Banderowtzi*, whom she defined as “the roaming ‘partisan’ gangs that had arrived in the region from the forest.” “I was convinced,” she wrote, “[that] I would be just as vulnerable in the house as on the road. *Banderowtzi* swooped down on village or town and took what they wanted. No sport short of obliterating a German division would give them more pleasure than to roister through this place and kill Jews.”⁸¹

The Soviets liberated the camp at Rozhanivka, Zalishchyky raion, Ternopil oblast, at the end of March 1944. They learned that in a neighboring village, Ukrainians took all the Jews away at night and killed them so that there would be no witnesses. The banderivtsi came and lured Jews as if to the pro-Soviet partisans, but in reality they took them into the woods and killed them all.⁸² The intense persecution of Jews in this area by the banderivtsi finds corroboration in the testimony of Hilary Kenigsberg. He was working in a German-run labor camp in the town of Tovste, also in Zalishchyky raion. (Rozhanivka and Tovste are so close that I wonder if the same camp is meant.) He said that beginning in early 1944 the banderivtsi began to comb the nearby woods for Jewish bunkers, and when they found Jews they killed them in a horrible way. Their terror in the woods was so great that Jews were actually fleeing from the woods to the Germans for protection!⁸³

In fall 1943 dozens of Jews were hiding in bunkers in forests near Naraiv, Berezhany raion, Ternopil oblast. When five went out to obtain some potatoes, they were attacked by banderivtsi and one was badly wounded. In March 1944 the banderivtsi terrorized a Pole who they knew was helping to feed these Jews and made him lead them to the Jews’ hideout. The banderivtsi tried to lure the Jews out, speaking in Russian and telling them that they were looking to employ chauffeurs and mechanics. When the Jews refused to come above ground, they threatened to suffocate them in the bunkers. Then all went out except the narrator and his two cousins. The banderivtsi shot all the Jews who came out, a total of fifty-one people, including the narrator’s father and both of his brothers. Later, the survivors went out. Accompanied by one of their Polish protectors, they found the corpses stacked in a huge pile. The Pole who was with them told them that the banderivtsi first shot the children, then the adults. Not long afterwards, the Pole who protected them had to flee, because the banderivtsi were burning down all the Poles’ houses. In the intervening months before the Red Army arrived, the Jews in this group were still endangered by banderivtsi patrolling the area, but managed to keep out of their sight.⁸⁴ There exists another account of murders of dozens of Jews by banderivtsi in these woods in the first three months of 1944, with particular intensity in March. The narrator witnessed many of the fresh corpses himself and helped gather up the survivors. He lost many relatives, including his own father, in these killings.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Frederic L. Bernard, “In the Eye of the Storm: Surviving in Nazi-Occupied Poland” (Bound typescript in USHMM, 1995), 141-42.

⁸⁰ AŽIH, 301/3647, 3.

⁸¹ Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, *Strange and Unexpected Love: A Teenage Girl's Holocaust Memoirs* (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1993), 211, 213.

⁸² Shoah Foundation, 18287 Benno Noskovich, 100-02.

⁸³ AŽIH, 301/3337, 14.

⁸⁴ AŽIH, 301/879, 2-4.

⁸⁵ AŽIH, 301/6012, 2-4.

Bronislawa Stepniewska, from Sniatyn, Ivano-Frankivsk (at that time called Stanyslav) oblast, remembered a very dangerous period of anarchy (*okres bezkrólewia*) when the Germans retreated and the banderivtsi were on the prowl.⁸⁶

There were many Jews hiding in forests north of Rohatyn, raion center of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. According to one of them, Jack Glotzer, numerous banderivtsi appeared in the vicinity in 1944, and they were particularly dangerous because they knew every inch of the woods. They stayed for about five or six months. As the Red Army approached, the Bandera movement searched for the Jews in order to kill them. They said that when the Russians came the Jews would squeal on them. But this was impossible because the Jews did not know who they were. In Glotzer's opinion, if it weren't for the Ukrainians, many more Jews would have survived. The Soviets stopped about sixty kilometers from where Glotzer was hiding. If they had gone further, many more Jews would also have survived.⁸⁷ This is corroborated by the fate of Natan Arsen. Local Ukrainians told his older brother Borys that Natan managed to survive in a bunker in the environs of Rohatyn until April 1944. At that time a unit of the OUN-UPA SB was ethnically cleansing the territory of Jews and Poles. They found Natan's hideout, tied him to the tail of a horse, and drove the horse across the frozen fields. The Ukrainians did not know where the remains were, nor could they name the individuals responsible for the murder.⁸⁸

A Jewish partisan witnessed banderivtsi torturing a Jewish family of four that had been hiding in a bunker near Oleshiv, Tlumach raion, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. The banderivtsi subsequently put them on a cart and took them to the woods to kill them.⁸⁹

A ten-year-old boy told the Jewish Historical Commission with tears in his eyes that his father, along with another Jewish man, had been murdered by banderivtsi just two months ago while he was travelling on business between the raion capital Tlumach and the oblast capital Ivano-Frankivsk. This was in 1945, already after Soviet rule had returned.⁹⁰

Banderivtsi killed a Jewish woman as well as about twenty Poles in the village of Piątkowa, Przemyśl county in 1944-45, according to a Polish testimony.⁹¹

Frank Golczewski has found German documentation that supports what the Jewish eyewitness accounts say was happening in Galicia. In May 1944, the Germans and UPA were negotiating a tactical alliance. The German 1st Armored High Command noted that "in the event of an agreement," UPA would be expected, among other things, to provide "active help against Soviet paratroopers, Red Army stragglers, Bolshevik, Polish and Jewish gangs." In April 1944 Wehrmacht intelligence reported: "By our own reconnaissance, a gang of Jews was observed east of Bibrka [Peremysliany raion, Lviv oblast], the planned destruction of which could not ensue due to use of the intended troops in another operation. The UPA has successfully taken up pursuit of the Jewish gangsters and up to now shot almost 100."⁹² Dieter Pohl also quotes a German document backing up what the testimonies tell us. In March or April

⁸⁶ Shoah Foundation, 20476 Bronislawa Stepniewska, 30-31.

⁸⁷ Shoah Foundation, 20586 Jack Glotzer, 12-15.

⁸⁸ B.S. Arsen, *Moja hirka pravda. Ia i Kholokost na Prykarpatti* (Nadvirna: Nadvirnians'ka drukarnia, 2004), 316..

⁸⁹ AŻIH, 301/4680, 14.

⁹⁰ AŻIH, 301/803.

⁹¹ Maciej Dalecki et al., *Zbrodnie nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności cywilnej w południowo-wschodniej Polsce (1942-1947)* (Polski Związek Wschodni w Przemyślu, 2001), 184.

⁹² Frank Golczewski, "Shades of Grey: Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia," in *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*, ed. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 143.

1944 UPA leaders told German officials that they were going to cleanse the Chełm-Rava Ruska region of “Poles, bandits, and Jews.”⁹³

There is even second-hand testimony about the murder of Jews from the Ukrainian side that supports what the Jewish testimony had to say about such activities in the environs of Rohatyn. Petro Maslii, a *dyviziinyk* who ended up in Britain, wrote in an unpublished memoir about two young Jewish women who were hiding in near his village (Luchyntsi, Rohatyn raion, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast). As to their ultimate fate, he first wrote that he would not say, since he left the village in June 1944. Then a little later in his memoir he wrote: “I heard that at the time Polish colonists were being murdered, those who ignored the request to leave Ukrainian lands and return to indigenous Poland, these [two Jewish women] were also murdered and buried in the fields where there was once a wonderful meadow. I cannot guarantee this, because I only heard about it.”⁹⁴

Another two Jewish women were luckier with UPA, according to a story they told a representative of a Jewish relief agency in 2001. Fellow villagers in Starunia, Bohorodchany raion, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, wrote to the agency to help two old Jewish women, sisters. When the representative met them, they were still afraid to be recognized as Jews. They had managed to survive the war by successfully posing as poor Ukrainian women; a wealthy individual in Ternopil gave them jobs. After liberation they had difficulties legalizing themselves, since they had no documents. They returned therefore to Starunia, where their house, robbed entirely of its belongings, was occupied by another family. A local farmer gave them shelter, but people began to demand they leave the village. This was in 1945-46, when “the boys from the forest” called the tune. Eventually the sisters had to hide in their host’s attic whenever anyone came over. Then one day two men from the forest came to the farmer who was sheltering them and demanded he bring out the two Jewish women. The sisters thought they had met their end. But the senior of the two men told them: “Girls, don’t be afraid, and remember that as long as we are in charge of your region no one will dare to lay a finger on you.” From then on they were greeted on the street, even with smiles.⁹⁵

Perhaps this had become UPA policy. As UPA’s military situation deteriorated it sought a *modus vivendi* with non-Ukrainians. A secret order from the Buh military region of UPA dated 5 September 1944 called for restoring relations with the Poles and for treating the Jews as a national minority.⁹⁶ An OUN-UPA instruction issued two days later said, under the heading “Jewish Question”: “Take no actions against the Jews. The Jewish issue is no longer a problem, there are so few of them left.”⁹⁷

Moreover, there were many new recruits to the movement in Galicia, and it seems that there was a less uniform policy with respect to killing Jews. Perhaps the story of the Polishchuk father and son who rescued Jews represents a tendency that appeared in the Galician UPA. There is even an OUN leaflet from Galicia, dated February 1944, that called upon Ukrainian policemen not to become involved in “German pogroms” against the Jews.⁹⁸ The Ukrainian nationalist historian Volodymyr Viatrovych has called attention to a text that indicates that some Galician nationalists were engaged in rethinking their Jewish policy. This was a response to an antisemitic article written by the nationalist ideologue Dmytro Dontsov in 1944. A young member of the OUN’s supreme council, Osyp Pozychaniuk, called for a

⁹³ Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, 376.

⁹⁴ Letter of P. Maslii to the Ukrainian Canadian Documentation Centre (Toronto), 29 January 1991, UCRDC, “Spomyny,” no. 51.

⁹⁵ This story is told in Arsen, *Moia hirka pravda*, 351-53.

⁹⁶ TsDAVO 3833-2-3 <http://io.ua.1532331p> accessed 28 May 2009.

⁹⁷ Cited in Bruder, “*Der ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*,” 223.

⁹⁸ Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, 375.

complete renunciation of antisemitism and of any other form of xenophobia. His response still, however, bears the marks of its origin in the antisemitic environment of the nationalists. He wrote that the Ukrainian people were not going to be attracted to the movement by an antisemitic line, but “not because the people sympathizes with the Jews.” Rather, “the people has endured at the hands of the universal carriers of this antisemitism – the Hitlerite hordes – an even greater tragedy than the Jews.”⁹⁹ In spite of this tendency in another direction, the murder of Jews was widespread in all three Galician oblasts.

Bukovina and Lemko Region 1944-45

I have found two Jewish memoirs that report UPA murders of Jews in Bukovina before and after the return of the Soviets.

Leizer Roll was from Berehomet, Storozhynets raion. In the spring of 1944 he and some other Jews arrived in Storozhynets but could not go back to the village of Berehomet. The banderivtsi were in charge there and killed Jews who dared to return. A friend of his who returned was killed the first night with axes, cut in half, together with his wife and small child. The dismembered corpses were piled on the table. They also took a Jewish doctor to the woods and tied him between two bent trees. When they let go of the trees, the doctor was ripped in half.¹⁰⁰

Nyzhni Stanivtsi in Storozhynets raion had been the scene of a bloody pogrom initiated by Ukrainian nationalists and the returning Romanian authorities in the summer of 1941.¹⁰¹ After the Germans were driven out by the Soviets, the Wiesenfeld family wanted to return to the village. This was in 1945. But there were banderivtsi in the woods, whom Chana Wiesenfeld characterized as left-over Germans in combination with Ukrainian fascists. When the nationalists discovered that Jews were coming back to Nyzhni Stanivtsi, they started to shoot at the house they were in. They killed several people, including a doctor. The rest, who were lying on the floor, survived. They also left a letter saying, We don't need you dirty Jews; if you do not leave this town, you will be killed in the morning. So the Wiesenfelds asked a Russian officer to put them on a tank, which took them to Vashkivtsi, not far from Galicia. The banderivtsi were there too, and they were also shooting Jews there. But in this bigger town the Soviets had the upper hand and were able to keep the banderivtsi under control.¹⁰²

There is a report that UPA killed the Jewish woman Faja Dym in Kalnica, Lesko county, on 13 February 1945.¹⁰³

Context for Murder

Those socialized into a historical narrative that makes heroes of the soldiers in UPA will be reluctant to accept the evidence of ethnic cleansing and war crimes presented above. Their criticisms can be easily anticipated. There will never be enough documented instances and the documentation will never be trustworthy enough to convince everyone, just as not everyone is convinced that the Holocaust, the Nanjing massacre, and the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33 actually happened. So here I am going to make the case that it is reasonable to accept this evidence, that, given the context, it makes

⁹⁹ Volodymyr V'iatrovych, *Stavlennia OUN do ievreiv: formuvannia pozytsii na tli katastrofy* (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo Ms, 2006), 84-85.

¹⁰⁰ Shoah Foundation, 11289 Leizer Roll, 39-41.

¹⁰¹ Vladimir Solonari, “Patterns of Violence: The Local Population and the Mass Murder of Jews in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, July-August 1941,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 763.

¹⁰² Shoah Foundation, 15665 Chana Wiesenfeld, 11.

¹⁰³ Dalecki, *Zbrodnie nacjonistów ukraińskich*, 113.

sense that UPA murdered Jews. Of course, in trying to explain this course of action, I am far from trying to justify it. Here I will focus on only three issues: how police who had been involved in the Holocaust set the tone for UPA, how the murder of Jews flowed out of a more comprehensive ethnic cleansing project that the nationalist insurgency undertook, and how the identification of Jews with the Soviet regime led to deadly calculations on the part of UPA. There are other important factors to consider, such as antisemitism, the atmosphere created by the Nazi occupation, and the continuity of the nationalist revolution initiated in the summer of 1941, but I will leave them aside for this paper.

Police

To begin with, there is the important role of former Ukrainian policemen in UPA. Although a military formation under the name UPA existed in Volhynia under the command of Taras Bulba-Borovets prior to the spring of 1943,¹⁰⁴ it was then, with the defection to the Volhynian forests of thousands of Ukrainian policemen, that the banderivtsi-led UPA, UPA as we know it, came into being. This incident and some of its repercussions have been well described by Timothy Snyder, and what he says warrants citation at length:

...Ukrainian nationalists had a political motive to collaborate with the Germans and to encourage Ukrainian youth to join Nazi organs of power. Yet in daily practice cooperation with the Nazis had little to do with this political goal [establishing an independent Ukrainian state], which the Nazis opposed, and much to do with killing the Jews, a major Nazi policy....The greatest change in Volhynian society was the murder of 98.5 percent of Volhynian Jews. Yet our purposes require us to keep in view the consequences of the Holocaust for the collaborators. The Nazis trained Ukrainian policemen not only in the use of weapons, but in the hatred of Jews. From the SS young Ukrainian recruits received anti-Semitic indoctrination in their own language....By this time [late 1942], a few thousand Ukrainian men had already committed political murder for a cause that was not even their own....The Final Solution had taught them that the mass murder of civilian populations may be achieved by way of precise organization and the timely presence of men willing to shoot men, women, and children....The next spring, in March-April 1943, virtually all of these Ukrainian policemen left the German service to join the Ukrainian partisans of the UPA....People learn to do what they are trained to do, and are good at doing what they have done many times. Ukrainian partisans who mass-murdered Poles in 1943 followed the tactics they learned as collaborators in the Holocaust in 1942: detailed advance planning and site selection; persuasive assurances to local populations prior to actions; sudden encirclements of settlements; and then physical elimination of human beings.¹⁰⁵

The tactics just described by Snyder in reference to the murder of the Poles are recognizable in the incidents described in Jewish testimonies. Moreover, former policemen already had experience in finding Jewish hideouts and bunkers, which was a routine task assigned by the Germans.

¹⁰⁴ The predecessor to Borovets's UPA was his Poliska Sich. It was deeply involved in the mistreatment and then extermination of the Jewish population of Olevsk, a raion center in Zhytomyr oblast, in the period from July through November 1941. "Olevsk," entry by Jared McBride and Alexander Kruglov for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's [USHMM] in *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, vol. 2: *German-Run Ghettos*, ed. Martin Dean (forthcoming, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003) 160, 162.

Jewish survivor testimony also links UPA with the former police. Aron Babouch, who was hiding in the vicinity of Volodymyr-Volynskiy, thought that the Germans had deliberately left these policemen behind to fight the Soviets.¹⁰⁶

Jacob Biber was working as a tanner for a Ukrainian in Siomaky when the banderite UPA was formed. He and his Ukrainian employer had rather different feelings about the significance of the new armed force. His employer, Zachar, returned from town and ran into the barn where Biber and his wife were staying. He excitedly told them: "The militz has split from the Germans....Our boys have run off on orders from the nationalist underground. They grabbed a lot of ammunition from the Germans and spread throughout the village. They are preparing for a battle that will be decisive in our struggle for independence....We are a force under the name of Taras Bulba." Biber said that he and his wife were not sure how good that news was, but they were glad that the Germans were losing ground. Zachar was sure that this was good news for the Bibers. That night as the UPA marched through the village, Zachar told them: "From now on, you are free people." But Biber wrote in his memoirs: "We did not feel free. We had mixed emotions about the force going by. We knew how many killers there were in those lines of marching men to whom independence meant a chance to fill their own pockets."¹⁰⁷ One of the "Bulbas" they encountered walking on the road one day was Ivan Ryszhey [Ryzhii], whom they had known since childhood. Earlier he had volunteered for the militia under the Germans, and once took a German soldier's place so that he could shoot Jews all day.¹⁰⁸

Soviet sources also provide examples of Ukrainian policemen who helped the Germans exterminate the Jews in Volhynia and subsequently served in UPA.¹⁰⁹

Aside from the mass transfer of Volhynian police to UPA, Ukrainian policemen from Galicia also joined UPA. Cases of individuals in Galicia who joined the police even without prior involvement in OUN and then went from the police into OUN and UPA can be found in the records of Soviet war crimes trials. According to an NKVD military tribunal, Yaroslav Melnychenko joined the Ukrainian police in the spring of 1943 and served in the town of Skala-Podilska, Borshchiv raion, Ternopil oblast. The NKVD accused him of involvement in the execution of Jews in the Skala woods. He denied it, admitting he was present, but stating that other policemen did the shooting. He did not seem to have any OUN background, at least none that the NKVD was able to uncover, but he joined UPA in December 1944 or earlier. Taking the pseudonym "Izhak," he served under "Kamin" in the Borshchiv region and was wounded in battle and captured in an NKVD operation in April 1945.¹¹⁰ Mykhailo Tkachuk joined the police in September 1941. He was a guard in the Kremianets ghetto and conveyed dozens of Jews to execution. (Kremianets is a raion capital in Ternopil oblast.) He was promoted to the rank of deputy commander in the police in February 1943 and joined OUN in the following month. In OUN he was appointed an officer of the Security Service (*pidraionnyi kerivnyk SB*).¹¹¹ Mykola Kovalchuk joined the police in March 1942 and served in the Schutzmannschaft in Kremianets as part of Schutzbattalion 102. In that capacity he shot Jews in mass executions at the local concentration camp. He left the police and joined OUN in March 1943, at first entering an armed unit of the melnykites,¹¹² but then changing his allegiance to the

¹⁰⁶ Shoah Foundation, 26557 Aron Baboukh, 86.

¹⁰⁷ Biber, *Survivors*, 135-36.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 137-38.

¹⁰⁹ From the Extraordinary State Commission: USHMM RG-22.002M; TsGAOR (now GARF) 7021/71/52, "Zakliuchenie," 30 November 1944, f. 37. The document lists former policemen in Klesiv, Sarny raion, Rivne oblast, who were now in "bands of 'UPA.'"

¹¹⁰ USHMM RG-31.018M, reel 84; GDA SBU Ternopil', spr. 19710, vol. 1, Mel'nychenko Ia.V.

¹¹¹ USHMM RG-31.018M, reel 84; GDA SBU Ternopil', spr. 19401, vol. 1, Tkachuk M.N. ta inshi.

¹¹² That is, members of the wing of OUN led by Andrii Melnyk.

banderite wing and entering UPA. Somewhat later he was made a *stanychnyi* in the banderite OUN's security service. In that capacity, according to his SMERSH investigators, he made lists of people to execute.¹¹³ Petro Chaika really made the rounds. He started his career in the Soviet militia in 1939. Nineteen forty-one found him in the Red Army. He was wounded and captured by the Germans, but managed to escape. He joined the Ukrainian police in Lviv to avoid being sent to Germany as a forced laborer and also to avoid persecution for his past as a Soviet militiaman. As a Ukrainian policeman he took part in Jewish actions, of course, and he confessed to his SMERSH interrogators that he had personally killed a Jewish woman and wounded a Jewish man and woman. He fell afoul of the Germans for not handing in keys from apartments in the ghetto. He escaped from a camp near Kraków in December 1943. He denied any OUN involvement, but it seems that in 1944 he joined an OUN SB unit headed by Dmytro Kupaik ("Klei"). Other members of the unit testified in 1965 that he had indeed been one of them.¹¹⁴

Not only were there large numbers of former policemen in UPA, but they would naturally occupy leadership positions, as we see was the case with the Galician policemen who joined. They joined the nationalist units with their own weapons, which was important for partisans, especially for the underarmed UPA. They had some military training and much experience in killing. Whether they were really interested in killing Jews in order to eliminate witnesses to their previous crimes, as Jewish survivors maintained, is uncertain. That these were men who were used to killing Jews is certain, and that they had internalized the rationale for their murders is very likely.

Ethnic Cleansing

The primary target of ethnic cleansing in both Volhynia and Galicia was the Polish population. UPA's murder of Poles has been well documented,¹¹⁵ and it resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. UPA also massacred the inhabitants of ethnic German villages.¹¹⁶ These murders were in line with the slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians" that the OUN had been pursuing since the outbreak of the war. The war with the Poles was particularly important, however. This was UPA's baptism of fire. The murders of Polish civilians in Volhynia set off a vast conflagration of violence, as Poles retaliated and collaborated with their other enemies, the Germans and the Soviets, in order to get weapons and military back up.

In the fierce war between Poles and Ukrainians, many Jews chose the Polish side, or had that side chosen for them. As the Jewish survivor Seweryn Dobroszkłanka said, the emergence of UPA improved relations between Jews and Poles in Volhynia, since they were both in danger from the same source.¹¹⁷ Jews joined Polish self-defence units, according to Polish testimonies. A self-defence unit in the military colony Bortnica, Dubno county, consisted of fifteen Poles and eight Jews. When Ukrainians attacked the colony on (Gregorian) Christmas day 1943, eight Poles and three Jews fell in battle. The

¹¹³ USHMM RG-31.018M, reel 84; GDA SBU Ternopil', spr. 31732, vol. 1, Koval'chuk N.P.

¹¹⁴ USHMM RG-31.018M, reel 99; GDA SBU Lviv, spr. 30853, vols. 1-2, Chaika P.F.

¹¹⁵ There is a huge literature on this subject. I have found particularly illuminating Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations*, 154-78, and I.I. Il'iushyn, *Volyns'ka trahediia 1943-1944 rr.* (Kyiv: Natsional'na akademiia nauk Ukrainy, Instytut istorii Ukrainy; Kyivs'kyi slavistychnyi, universytet, 2003). Collections of Polish testimonies have been cited frequently in the notes to this paper.

¹¹⁶ Serhiichuk, *OUN-UPA v roky viiny*, 312. The Siemazkos tallied the number of murders by Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia in 1941-45 mentioned in the many Polish and Jewish testimonies they examined. By their calculations and estimates, the testimonies attest also to the murder of 342 Czechs, at least 135 Russians, and dozen of Roma. Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 2:19. There are also reports that UPA killed a family of Roma in Smerek, Lesko county, in the Lemko region on 21 October 1945. Dalecki, *Zbrodnie nacjonalistów ukraińskich*, 164.

¹¹⁷ АЖИ, 301/1222, 6.

colony was burned down.¹¹⁸ The Polish colony of Ziniówka, Dubno county, had a self-defence unit which included Jews who were being hid. Attacked by UPA on 14 July 1943, the self-defence unit evacuated to the Polish-Czech colony of Kurdybań Warkowicki, also in Dubno county.¹¹⁹ Twenty-five Jews served in Kurdybań Warkowicki's self-defence unit (of sixty Jews who had found refuge in that colony).¹²⁰ Jews fought together with Poles against the banderivtsi in a Polish village near Svirzh, Peremyshliany raion, Lviv oblast (Galicia).¹²¹ There is first-hand testimony of a Jewish partisan who sided with the Poles against Ukrainian bands around Tovste and Buchach in Ternopil oblast.¹²² Many OUN and UPA documents from 1943 and 1944 show that the Ukrainian nationalists considered the Jews and Poles to be allies against the Ukrainians.¹²³

Thus the logic of the situation was that the Jews were identified with the Poles during the ethnic cleansing of Volhynia, which lasted from the spring through the fall of 1943, by which time most of the Poles had left, and during the ethnic cleansing of Galicia, which began in earnest in January 1945. Just as UPA killed Poles in this period, it also killed Jews in Polish self-defence units, Jews whom Poles sheltered, and, in fact, Jews in general.

Jews as Bolsheviks

An extremely important factor, and the one I believe played a crucial role in the decision to lure Jews to their death in the winter of 1943-44 when the Poles were already gone, was the Ukrainian nationalists' identification of Jews with the hated Soviets. This was the motivating argument of the pogroms of 1941, and to this day there are many Ukrainian nationalists associated with the tradition of OUN and UPA who consider the Jews responsible for the Stalinist repressions of the 1930s, the Holodomor (the famine of 1932-33), and the NKVD murders of 1941.¹²⁴

Postwar Ukrainian testimonies always refer to the Soviets as the "liberators" in quotation marks, ironically. Jewish testimonies, however, use the word liberators with genuine appreciation of their deliverance. The crux of the matter was that for Ukrainian nationalists the Soviet Union was the ultimate evil, the Germans a lesser evil; for the Jews, the Germans were the ultimate evil, and the Soviets either a lesser evil or, for some, a positive good. The Soviets brought life to Jews, but death to Ukrainian nationalists. How could their interests not be opposed?

Thousands of Jews joined the pro-Soviet partisans, mortal enemies of UPA. For example, Szlojme Katz showed his interviewers from the Jewish Historical Commission a certificate from his commander that he had killed twelve Germans and six banderivtsi. He had joined pro-Soviet partisans in the Zhytomyr region in late May 1943, one of about twenty-five Jews in a unit comprised of about a thousand partisans. (The rest, he said, were Russians and Poles.) In his testimony he listed a number of battles in the environs of Rivne in which his unit, though outnumbered, killed many banderivtsi and took

¹¹⁸ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:60.

¹¹⁹ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:109.

¹²⁰ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 1:107.

¹²¹ See above, xx.

¹²² Joshua Wermuth, "The Jewish Partisans of Horodenka," in *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, ed. Yuri Shul, 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 226-30.

¹²³ They are cited in Bruder, "Der ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen," 168.

¹²⁴ I have dealt with this issue elsewhere. See particularly, "Ethnicity and the Reporting of Mass Murder: *Krakivs'ki visti*, the NKVD Murders of 1941, and the Vinnytsia Exhumation," forthcoming in a volume on violence in the borderlands edited by Omer Bartov and Eric Weitz; and Himka and Himka, "Interviews with Elderly Nationalists."

their horses.¹²⁵ Other Jewish testimonies also confirm that Jews in pro-Soviet partisan units were at war with Ukrainian nationalist partisans.¹²⁶

UPA was an insurgent movement. Like most insurgent movements, whether the Viet Cong, the Soviet partisans, the Taliban, or the Lord's Resistance Army, it was ruthless. It functioned in an environment in which preventive murder was the norm. In 1941, for example, when the Germans attacked, the NKVD made a decision to kill all the political prisoners it could not evacuate lest they offer their services to the Germans. With the Soviets advancing on Volhynia in the winter of 1943-44, the nationalist partisans made a chilling rational calculation: the Jews who were in hiding could prove very useful to the Soviets – it would be better if they were dead.

The Other Side of the Story

Jews in UPA

Genuine testimonies of Jews who served in UPA are rare, but I have run across one. Lea Goldberg was hiding with some Stundists in the village of Polytsi outside her native Rafalivka, Volodymyrets raion, Rivne oblast. She was about fourteen when UPA attacked the Stundist community. The UPA men had little ammunition and apparently did not want to waste it, so they started beating her to death with clubs. She protested that she was a Ukrainian girl who believed in independent Ukraine, and one of the UPA partisans ordered the others to stop. He said that they could always kill her later, but in the meantime she could be of some use. She was taken to their camp to serve as a nurse. One of the first things she heard in the camp was someone declaring that the hated Jews had to be killed for the sake of Ukraine. She witnessed many atrocities committed by these partisans, including knife murders of Jewish babies. After she had served for about six months, one of the banderites, drunk, forced his way into her room and tried to kill her. She managed to wound him with his own gun, and that night she escaped from the camp. Her closest friend among the Stundists led her to some Soviet partisans, and thus she survived the war.¹²⁷

Collecting oral history on the town of Berezhany, the Israeli scholar Shimon Redlich interviewed a Jew who served as a physician with UPA. He gave the interview on the condition that his real name not be revealed, which, he felt, might endanger him. Poldek, as he called himself, had become friends with a man who was the chief of police in a village and a member of UPA. This man suggested he serve with the nationalist partisans, and Poldek agreed. "I was asked to translate books of basic medicine from Polish and German into Ukrainian and to teach young Ukrainian women to be nurses for the underground." He refused some tasks that UPA assigned him. One was to perform surgical experiments on a Soviet partisan they had captured in battle; another was to save the life of a wounded SS man. He escaped from the unit in summer 1944 and returned to Berezhany, now in Soviet hands.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ AŽIH, 301/589, 1-2.

¹²⁶ For example, AŽIH, 301/926, 4; AŽIH, 301/1488, 2; AŽIH, 301/4680, 12-14.

¹²⁷ AŽIH, 301/1011. This testimony is in Yiddish. I read it in an English translation in a manuscript in preparation at Florida Atlantic University entitled "First Reports: An Anthology of Early Holocaust Testimonies Taken from Record Group 301 of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland," ed. Felix Tych et al.

¹²⁸ Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919-1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 23, 127.

Many in Ukraine cite the purported memoirs of Stella Krenzbach,¹²⁹ which were originally published in the overseas Ukrainian diaspora in 1957, but were also republished in Ukraine after independence.¹³⁰ This text paints a very positive picture of UPA, but it has long since been shown to be a fabrication.¹³¹

I have not been able yet to consult the memoirs of Dr. Abraham Sterzer,¹³² about which Franziska Bruder has expressed some misgivings.¹³³

An UPA unit under the leadership of Stepan and Roman Polishchuk (father and son) is said to have saved about fifty Jews. These Jews also took part in battles together with their saviors.¹³⁴ I have not been able to learn anything more about the Polishchuks and the soldiers under their command, however.

The Security Service of Ukraine published documents on their website about Leiba-Itsyk Dobrovsky, a Jew who served as a political consultant and propagandist for UPA Army-North.¹³⁵ A brief biography posted on the internet informs us that Dobrovsky served in the Red Army and was captured by the Germans. He was able to obtain false papers that changed his nationality from “Jew” to “Ukrainian” and Ukrainianized his name and patronymic. He escaped from the camp and went to the town of Korets, a raion center in Rivne oblast. There he found work in the local gymnasium and took his meals at the cafeteria of the Ukrainian police. He made friends with some members of OUN, who directed him to UPA in July 1943. He was a well-educated individual – he had finished the law faculty at Kyiv University and was well versed in history. UPA entrusted him with propaganda work. It is not clear whether UPA was ever aware that Dobrovsky was Jewish. SMERSH apprehended him on 1 February 1944 and learned his real identity and nationality.¹³⁶

¹²⁹ For example, one of our Lviv interviewees referred us to them. Himka and Himka, “Interviews with Elderly Nationalists.”

¹³⁰ Stella Krentsbakh, “Zhyvu shche zavdiaky UPA,” *Poklyk sumlinnia*, 20 June 1993. The Ukrainian poet Moisei Fishbein posted the 1957 version together with an English translation by Marta D. Olynyk on his blogsite: <http://mosesfishbein.blogspot.com/2009/10/memoirs-of-stella-krenzbach-i-am-alive.html> accessed 26 October 2009.

¹³¹ B. Kordiuk, “Pro liudei, spovnenykh samoposviaty.” *Suchasna Ukraina*, 20 July 1958. Philip Friedman, *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust* (New York: Conference on Jewish Social Studies, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980), 203-04 n. 57.

¹³² Abraham Sterzer, “We Fought for Ukraine!” in *Litopys UPA*, 23:341-45.

¹³³ See the misgivings expressed in Bruder, “*Der ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*,” 220-21.

¹³⁴ Iakiv Suslens’kyi, *Spravzhni heroi. Pro uchast’ hromadian Ukrainy u riatuvanni ievreiv vid fashysts’koho henotsydu* (Kyiv: Tovarystvo “Ukrainy,” 1993), 14. Suslens’kyi cites as his source Zelik Broiderman. Dieter Pohl mistakenly refers to the Babii partisans as also connected with UPA; in fact, they were pro-Soviet. Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, 375. See the memoirs of a Jew who served with the Babii partisans: AŽIH, 301/510.

¹³⁵ “U Sluzhbi bezpeky Ukrainy vidbulys’ Hromads’ki istorichni slukhannia ‘Ievrei v Ukraini’ komu vyzvol’nomu rusi,” press release of the Security Service of Ukraine, 14 April 2008. This can be found on the Service’s website <http://www.sbu.gov.ua/sbu/control/uk/index> accessed 24 October 2009.

¹³⁶ Oleksandr Namozov, “Ukrains’kyi povstanets’ Leiba Dobrovs’kyi?” *Viche Kostopil’shchyny*, 20 June 2009, http://www.kostopilpost.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=26 accessed 26 October 2009.

Ukrainian sources say that many Jews served in UPA as physicians.¹³⁷ Mykola Omeliusik wrote what I can only categorize as a dishonest account of UPA's treatment of the Polish population of Volhynia in 1943, but in it he also wrote about the lack of doctors and how Jews filled that gap. "In the situation the OUN organization proposed to Jewish doctors that they join UPA. Many of them joined and were secretly transported to their assigned place. Many of them were stolen out of the ghettos with their families, where they were under police guard. I did not hear of a case in which the Jewish doctors tried to go over to the side of the Red partisans. There were instances when a unit had to disperse when confronted with a more powerful enemy and without exception the doctors would reappear in their unit. In one case a Jewish doctor had to hide from the Red partisans up to his neck in mud for a whole day before he could get back to his unit."¹³⁸ One of the interviewees in Lviv in 2009 also told us that Jewish doctors who served in UPA never betrayed it and that most of these Jews died in battle.¹³⁹

Moisei Fishbein, a Jewish admirer of Ukrainian nationalism and UPA, said that he personally knew doctors who served in UPA, among them the memoirist Abraham Sterzer who lived in Israel after the war. Fishbein also listed others: Samuel Noiman, whose UPA pseudonym was Maksymovych; Shai Varma, pseudonym Skrypal; Roman Vynnyts'kyi, pseudonym Sam; and the fictitious Stella Krenzbach, the only one about whom he could provide biographical details.¹⁴⁰

Borys Arsen, whose brother was killed by UPA near Rohatyn, had a cousin, Moisei Zilber, who served for a long time as a dentist for UPA. Arsen did not know what happened to him in the end.¹⁴¹

The presence of Jewish doctors in UPA is also borne out by the records of Soviet interrogations. Prominent UPA officer Yevhen Basiuk gave the names of two Jewish paramedics who worked with UPA.¹⁴² A Ukrainian policeman, Osyp Velychuk, was asked by his NKVD interrogators in Hrymailiv, Husiatyn raion, Ternopil oblast, if he knew anyone who joined UPA. He replied: "I know that Gudz Nikolai took Markevich Miacheslav [sic], a Jew, into an 'UPA' band in the fall of 1943. In the winter of 1944 my mother Velichuk Ekaterina received a letter from him with a cancellation from the city of Ternopil; he wrote that he was living well, but where he was living he did not write. I do not know anyone else who went into UPA."¹⁴³

I have run across testimony that UPA attempted to recruit among Jews in the ghetto of Murafa, south of Vinnytsia. This was reported by a Jewish man from Bukovina who was deported to Murafa by the Romanians. He described the recruiters as Ukrainian partisans who had now broken with the Germans, even though they had not necessarily given up their antisemitism.¹⁴⁴ However, judging by what other Jews remember, some recruitment offers by UPA were not made in good faith, but were intended rather to lure Jews to their death. Perhaps the same caution should apply to information from the Soviets' interrogation of UPA *kraiovyi providnyk* Fedir Vorobets'. He claimed to have recruited a Jew

¹³⁷ Petro J. Potichnyj, *My Journey*, Litopys UPA, Series "Events and People," 4 (Toronto-Lviv: Vydavnytstvo "Litopys UPA," 2008), 55. Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult for this paper "Medychna opika v UPA," *Litopys UPA* (Toronto and Lviv, 1992), 23:341-63.

¹³⁸ Mykola Omeliusik, "UPA na Volyni v 1943 rotsi," *Visti kombatanata*, no. 2 (23) (1966): 20-21.

¹³⁹ Himka and Himka, "Interviews with Elderly Ukrainian Nationalists."

¹⁴⁰ Ol'ha Betko, "Poet M. Fishbein: dlia mene UPA – tse sviate," BBC Ukrainian.com, 14 October 2008.

¹⁴¹ Arsen, *Moia hirka pravda*, 12.

¹⁴² *Litopys UPA*, new series, 9:128.

¹⁴³ USHMM RG-31.018M, reel 83; GDA SBU Ternopil', spr. 31025, vol. 1, Herman H.M., Velychuk, O.Z., f. 57.

¹⁴⁴ Shoah Foundation, 2079 Mark Brandman, 83-84.

from Korosten', Zhytomyr oblast, to spread rumors that the Ukrainian nationalists considered Jews to be an "equal nation."¹⁴⁵

Rescue Activities of UPA

I have been able to find no major rescue operation ascribed to UPA, except for the shadowy story of the Polishchuks' UPA unit that saved fifty Jews.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps more information on that unit will surface.

The Security Service of Ukraine, which has been promoting a positive image of the supreme commander of UPA Roman Shukhevych, has stated that he helped his wife rescue a Jewish girl named Iryna Raikhenberh in 1942-43.¹⁴⁷ The Security Service has not released information on the circumstances and motivation of the rescue.

In most other documented cases in which members of UPA were involved in rescue (and perhaps in the case of Shukhevych as well), the motivation was personal rather than political and had to do with an individual or individuals rather than a targeted group. In the Ukrainian village of Hodovychi, Kovel county, the Omelianiuk family rescued a Jew and has been recognized for this by Yad Vashem. They had two relatives in UPA who passed on information to them that helped them keep their refugee from harm.¹⁴⁸ Genya Finkelstein told the story of a compassionate man who saved her as a child, but who at the same time was an antisemite, a banderite nationalist who later fought with UPA. She lived with a Ukrainian family from summer 1942 through summer 1944. This was in Babyn, about twenty kilometers east of Rivne on the Horyn River. At first she claimed to be a Ukrainian orphan from Kyiv, but they discovered she was Jewish when she talked Yiddish in her sleep. The woman maltreated her, but the husband was relatively kind. He felt compassion for her and kept his wife from reporting her to the Gestapo. Also, he promised to marry her to his younger brother when she got older. "Her husband, Petro, was a good-hearted man but a Jew-hater since the days when he had worked as chief butcher in a restaurant owned by a Jewish family in the city of Lvov....Petro belonged to a group of Ukrainians who were fighting for Ukrainian independence."¹⁴⁹ In the course of the January 1944 UPA murders described by Vera Shchetnikova, a banderivets recognized one of the Jewish women as a former classmate and friend; he shot in the air, let her and her sister and her daughter go, and told them that Rivne was already in Soviet hands.¹⁵⁰

There is also the case, described above, of a banderivets warning Jews in the woods near Svirzh, Peremyshliany district, Lviv oblast, that his unit was going to attack them the next morning. The lives of hundred of Jews were saved. The testimony does not suggest why this banderivets did what he did.¹⁵¹

How Many Jews Perished at the Hands of UPA?

Numerical estimates provided by testimonies usually reflect perceptions rather than provide reliable data. A Jewish survivor and resistance fighter estimated that three thousand Jews had fled to the

¹⁴⁵ *Litopys UPA*, new series, 9:691.

¹⁴⁶ See above, xx.

¹⁴⁷ "U Sluzhbi bezpeky Ukrainy."

¹⁴⁸ Shoah Foundation, 36160 Dmitrii Omelianiuk, 203-04.

¹⁴⁹ Genya Finkelstein, *Genya* (N.p., 1998), 77-97; quote 77-78.

¹⁵⁰ Shoah Foundation, 45238 Vera Shchetnikova, 153-55.

¹⁵¹ See above, xx.

woods and the neighboring steppe from the Tuchyn ghetto, but only several dozen survived the war. The rest died “in partisan battles and during the attacks of fascist-bandit murderers.”¹⁵²

The testimonies consulted by the Siemaszkos attest to 1210 plus an additional unknown quantity of Jews killed by Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia in 1941-45; seventy-nine of these Jews have been identified by name. However, the Siemaszkos argue that many more were killed. They cite estimates by Shmuel Spector that there were 200,000 Jews in Volhynia; that 150,000 of these were killed during the liquidation of the ghettos; and that 3500 Volhynian Jews survived the war. Thus there is a remainder of 46,000 Jews who were murdered by Ukrainians or else died of hunger, exposure, disease, or exhaustion during the time they were hiding.¹⁵³ I am uncomfortable with calculations based on such global estimates. Spector himself spoke of “thousands of survivors...slaughtered by the Ukrainian nationalist partisans.”¹⁵⁴ A Polish historian of UPA, Grzegorz Motyka, has also estimated that UPA killed one or two thousand Jews, mainly in Volhynia.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, there is a consensus developing among scholars that Ukrainians killed about forty to sixty thousand Poles in 1943-45. UPA bears the most responsibility for that. UPA was able to surround whole villages and herd the inhabitants into churches and burn them to the ground. If they only succeeded in killing tens of thousands of a population concentrated in entire settlements, it is difficult to imagine that they could have killed near as many Jews, who had already been greatly reduced in number and who were dispersed, hiding underground, and seeking out the remote places.

This estimate in the lower thousands is far from certain, however. Consider the case of the Jews in the forests near Svirzh, described above, in which five hundred Jews were able to escape certain death at the hands of the banderivtsi by what amounted to a fluke.¹⁵⁶ Jews in the woods tended to cluster together for safety. If the survivor populations were concentrated enough, it may be necessary to ascribe a larger death toll to UPA and to the OUN SB.

Conclusions

I believe that this paper demonstrates conclusively that UPA participated actively in the destruction of the Jewish population of Western Ukraine. It had reasons of its own to kill Jews, and did so even when in open revolt against the Germans. UPA routinely killed Jews during the assault on the Polish population of Volhynia in 1943. The Jews had fled to Polish settlements to evade death at the hands of the Germans and Ukrainian police and later UPA. When UPA attacked the Polish villages and colonies, they killed Jews along with Poles, and Jews fought against UPA together with Poles. As we saw from the reports of the Kolodzinsky division, this unit killed and, sometimes, captured Jews it stumbled across and reported these incidents without hesitation to its superiors. The regions near Berezne and Kostopil, where murders were also reported, belonged to the same military district (“Zahrava”) as the Kolodzinsky division. Probably these murders reflect the influence of Dmytro Kliachkivsky (pseudonym Klym Savur) who was instrumental in organizing the murder of the Poles. Further research is still needed, but it may be the case that the “Zahrava” district was marked by more systematic killing than other regions.

¹⁵² AŽIH, 301/652, 5.

¹⁵³ Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo*, 2:1079-80.

¹⁵⁴ Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, 256.

¹⁵⁵ Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942-1960: działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN; RYTM, 2006), 295-97.

¹⁵⁶ See above, xx.

With the Poles gone and the Soviets approaching, UPA made a decision to find the remaining Jewish survivors and liquidate them. As the Germans had taught them, they made assurances to Jews that they would not harm them anymore, they put them to useful work in a camp-like setting, and then they exterminated them. Some accounts describe registration of the Jewish workers, a typical German procedure. Others relate that Jews were taken to execution to another spot, suggesting a prepared killing site, again in accordance with German practice. Again it seems as if the worst outrages took place in the “Zahrava” district, although by no means was this the only region where UPA killed Jews. Probably UPA was hoping to eliminate pro-Soviet human capital. These murders took place at the same time OUN was trying to make overtures to the Western Allies (as were the East European collaborationist regimes). Whether there was any initial sincerity in promises to the Jews that things had changed and that they were no longer going to be killing them or whether they were taking cynical advantage of the new situational logic is not clear, although the latter explanation fits better with such facts as we know. What is absolutely clear, however, is that a major attempt was launched at this time to eliminate Jewish survivors completely. Only some Jews’ deep suspicions of the banderites and some overly clumsy attempts at murder have made it possible for us to find out anything at all about these massacres in relatively isolated places.

Driven out of Volhynia, UPA moved its base of operations to Galicia. Jews speak of large numbers of nationalist insurgents suddenly appearing. Murders of Poles and Jews continued here, although there were also tendencies in opposition to that policy. There are indications that the violence continued into northern Bukovina, in villages where there had been a nationalist presence earlier. There seem to have been incidents as well when UPA fought in the Lemko region.

Why did UPA kill the Jews? It is perhaps difficult today to reconstruct the antisemitic mindset of that poisoned time under the Nazi occupation. UPA was fighting for a Ukrainian state, by which they understood not only an independent state, but one composed of Ukrainians exclusively. A report from the “Zahrava” military district in August 1943 about the situation around the city of Kostopil, Rivne region, calmly related: “There are no national minorities in the region, with the exception of a few Jews who recently voluntarily came to work for us.”¹⁵⁷ This was in a region that only a few years earlier had a mixed population. UPA had clear ideas about what the Ukraine they were building should be like. As the song they sung said: *Vyryzaly my zhydiv, vyrizhemo i liakhiv, i staroho, i maloho do iednoho; Poliakov vyrezhem, Ukrainu zbuduiem* – “We slaughtered the Jews, we’ll slaughter the Poles, old and young, every one; we’ll slaughter the Poles, we’ll build Ukraine.”

Much of the rank and file leadership came from the police. Killing Jews was something they had spent over a year doing. True, the Germans did most, or at least much, of the actual shooting, but Ukrainian police were up to their elbows in the dirty business. People explain to themselves why they commit murder, why the person they are killing really does not deserve to live. Jacques Semelin has come to an important insight about what fuels genocidaires – we hate whom we have injured.¹⁵⁸ What would motivate the former *politsai* to think differently about the Jews they killed when they began also to kill Poles? In fact, these victims went hand in hand – they were allies now, they were not Ukrainian, they were even found in the same places or in close proximity. Jews were also looking to the Soviets like wolves to the forest. They would greet the Soviet “liberation” with joy. They would put themselves at the service of their deliverers, tell them what they knew about the nationalist insurgency, aid them with their skills as tanners, artisans, doctors, propagandists, teachers. UPA men knew that many Jews would

¹⁵⁷ Cited in Namozov, “Ukrains’kyi povstanets’.”

¹⁵⁸ Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

be angry at the Ukrainians, especially the Ukrainian nationalists, and they were.¹⁵⁹ Killing Jews was not hard for the nationalist partisans, either morally or militarily, and they did it and they kept on doing it.

What about the Jews in UPA? They definitely served as doctors. It was a way of staying alive, at least for a time. As a result of the Holocaust and because of the increased demands of war, there was a shortage of medical personnel throughout Eastern Europe, and UPA felt that shortage as well. There was a marriage of convenience between a partisan unit desperately in need of doctors and nurses and Jews desperately in need of a place that would keep them out of the hands of the Germans. It is not a good sign, however, that we have few indications that Jewish physicians and medics survived their service with UPA, that the fullest accounts we have are by persons who escaped UPA, and that the picture they paint of the nationalist partisans is so negative. As to the presence of Leiba-Itsyk Dobrovsky in Army-North, which seems to have been responsible for a disproportionate share of the murders, it is unlikely that the UPA leadership knew his nationality. There are other isolated cases of Jews attempting to stay alive by finding a place in the apparatus of perpetration. Amazingly, the chief of the Ukrainian police in Dubrovysia was a Jewish man named Chaim Sygal.¹⁶⁰ That occasionally UPA soldiers saved individual Jews is not unusual. Ukrainian police occasionally saved individuals, as did Hlinka Guardists in Slovakia. Part of the power of the perpetrator is that he has control over life and death, he has that discretion. When, as in one of our reported cases, a man is part of a team killing Jews and he lets a few of them go because he knows them, this indicates that the motivation for rescue is very circumscribed. As to the possibility of larger rescue operations conducted by UPA, such as that ascribed to the Polishchuks, I have to admit to scepticism. Jewish testimonies very freely identified the help of Ukrainian rescuers – peasants, clergymen, Stundists, even individual members and sympathizers of UPA. Why do we have no memoirs of Jews who were part of a group rescued by an UPA unit? Probably because such incidents did not exist or were at least extremely rare.

By the time UPA emerged in the spring of 1943, most of the Jews of Galicia and Volhynia were already dead. The Jews UPA were killing were a small number of survivors. Perhaps the total number of Jews murdered by UPA itself (as opposed to the police formations in which many of the same individuals served previously) was several thousand, but perhaps the number was much higher. In any case, UPA made the survivor experience in Western Ukraine even more hellish.

UPA's role in the Holocaust is a topic that requires further investigation, further reflection, and further discussion. But we can discern its main features clearly. Although what UPA did to the Jews may not have been, in the larger scheme of things, a major contribution to the Holocaust, it remains a large and inexpungible stain on the record of the Ukrainian national insurgency.

¹⁵⁹ Bruder, *“Der ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen,”* 239, cites many examples of OUN-UPA documents referring to Jews collaborating with the organs of repression in the aftermath of the return of Soviet power. From the memoirs of a Jewish doctor who survived the war in Galicia: “We were also co-opted onto the Russian army draft board for participation in operations against the Ukrainian nationalists. I took part in this activity willingly and showed them no mercy: I drafted them into the army or sent them to the Donbass coal mines for hard labor....I sat on medical committees with Soviet army personnel and Communist Party officials who regularly got falling-down drunk. Sometimes I joined in, to forget or to harden my heart toward the Ukrainian population which, here too, had collaborated with the Germans.” Baruch Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 245-46.

¹⁶⁰ “Dąbrowica,” entry by Alexander Kruglov and Samuel Fishman for Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos.*