

John-Paul Himka

Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust

OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry,
1941–1944

UKRAINIAN VOICES

Collected by Andreas Umland

- 7 *Olexander Scherba*
Ukraine vs. Darkness
Undiplomatic Thoughts
With a preface by Adrian Karatnycky
ISBN 978-3-8382-1501-3
- 8 *Olesya Yaremchuk*
Our Others
Stories of Ukrainian Diversity
With a foreword by Ostap Slyvynsky
Translated from the Ukrainian by Zenia Tompkins and Hanna Leliv
ISBN 978-3-8382-1475-7
- 9 *Nataliya Gumenyuk*
Die verlorene Insel
Geschichten von der besetzten Krim
Mit einem Vorwort von Alice Bota
Aus dem Ukrainischen übersetzt von Johann Zajackowski
ISBN 978-3-8382-1499-3
- 10 *Olena Stiazhkina*
Zero Point Ukraine
Four Essays on World War II
Translated from Ukrainian by Svitlana Kulinska
ISBN 978-3-8382-1550-1
- 11 *Oleksii Sinchenko, Dmytro Stus, Leonid Finberg*
Ukrainian Dissidents: An Anthology of Texts
ISBN 978-3-8382-1551-8

The book series “Ukrainian Voices” publishes English- and German-language monographs, edited volumes, document collections, and anthologies of articles authored and composed by Ukrainian politicians, intellectuals, activists, officials, researchers, and diplomats. The series’ aim is to introduce Western and other audiences to Ukrainian explorations, deliberations and interpretations of historic and current, domestic, and international affairs. The purpose of these books is to make non-Ukrainian readers familiar with how some prominent Ukrainians approach, view and assess their country’s development and position in the world. The series was founded and the volumes are collected by Andreas Umland, Dr. phil. (FU Berlin), Ph. D. (Cambridge), Associate Professor of Politics at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Senior Expert at the Ukrainian Institute for the Future in Kyiv.

John-Paul Himka

UKRAINIAN NATIONALISTS AND THE HOLOCAUST

OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of
Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944

ibidem
Verlag

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Cover graphic: "The Pogromist Who Looks Like a Revolutionary" by Nikita Kadan.

In the collection of the Arsenal Gallery in Białystok.

ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-1548-8

© *ibidem*-Verlag, Stuttgart 2021

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar. Dies gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und elektronische Speicherformen sowie die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

Printed in the EU

For Chrystia
who stood beside me

Contents

Acknowledgments	9
Abbreviations	11
Introduction	13
1. Historiography	21
2. Sources.....	69
3. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.....	117
4. The First Soviets, 1939-41.....	173
5. Anti-Jewish Violence in the Summer of 1941.....	199
6. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Police in German Service	305
7. The Fate of Jews in the Ukrainian Nationalist Insurgency	359
8. Conclusions.....	441
Bibliography	447
Place and Name Index	487

Acknowledgments

I have received support for the research that went into this book from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Pinchas and Mark Wisen Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Killam Fund, University of Alberta; Support for the Advancement of Scholarship, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta. I am very grateful for their generosity.

It has been a pleasure working with *ibidem*-Verlag, particularly with Jana Dävers, Valerie Lange, and Andreas Umland. I appreciate their guidance and respect for an author's vision of a book.

I have many people to thank. Although I am responsible for all the views put forward in this volume, I have had a great deal of help along the way. Persons who need to be singled out for their contribution to the appearance of this study are Vadim Altskan, Tarik Cyril Amar, Omer Bartov, Andriy Bolianovsky, Jeffrey Burds, Marco Carynnyk, Martin Dean, Sofia Dyak, Ernest Gyidel, Wendy Lower, Jared McBride, Oleksandr Melnyk, Ada Ogonowska, Dieter Pohl, Antony Polonsky, David Lee Preston, Per Anders Rudling, Roman Solchanyk, Wiesław Tokarczuk, and Larry Warwaruk. The following scholars worked at one point or another as research assistants for this book: Eduard Baidaus, Natalka Cmoc, Eva Himka, Rylan Kafara, Taras Kurylo, Mariya Melentyeva, Michal Mlynarz, Oksana Mykhed, Iaroslav Pankovskiy, and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe. Those who read and helped me rework chapters were Raisa Ostapenko, Alan Rutkowski, the East Europeanist Circle at the University of Alberta led by Heather Coleman, and participants in the Danyliw Seminar in 2018. I wish I had the words I need to express the depth of my gratitude.

Abbreviations

AŽIH	Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv, Freiburg
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DALO	Derzhavnyi arkhiv L'vivs'koi oblasti
DAIFO	Derzhavnyi arkhiv Ivano-Frankivs'koi oblasti
DARO	Derzhavnyi arkhiv Rivnens'koi oblasti
DAZhO	Derzhavnyi arkhiv Zhytomyrs'koi oblasti
EM	<i>Ereignismeldungen UdSSR des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und SD</i> (title varies)
f.	folio
HDA SBU	Haluzevyi derzhavnyi arkhiv Sluzhby bezpeky Ukrainy
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti
KPZU	Komunistychna partiia Zakhidn'oi Ukrainy
NANU	Natsional'na Akademia nauk Ukrainy
NKGB	Narodnyi komissariat gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti
NKVD	Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del
NTSh	Naukove tovarystvo im. Shevchenka
op.	opys
OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
OUN-B	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Bandera faction)
OUN-M	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Melnyk faction)
<u>P</u>	Polish
PUN	Provid ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv
r.g.	record group
<u>Ro</u>	Romanian
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt
SB OUN	Sluzhba Bezpeky Orhanizatsii ukrains'kykh natsionalistiv
SBU	Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy
SD	Sicherheitsdienst

spr.	sprava
TsDAHO	Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob "iednan' Ukrainy
TsDAVO	Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia Ukrainy
TsDIAL	Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy, m. L'viv
TsGAOR	Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii, vysshikh organov gosudarstvennoi vlasti i organov gosudarstvennogo upravleniia SSSR
UCRDC	Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre
UHVR	Ukrains'ka holovna vyzvol'na rada (Ukrainian Su- preme Liberation Council)
UNDO	Ukrains'ke natsional'ne demokratyчне ob"iednannia (Ukrainian National Democratic Union)
UPA	Ukrains'ka povstans'ka armiia (Ukrainian Insur- gent Army)
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
UVO	Ukrains'ka viis'kova orhanizatsiia (Ukrainian Mil- itary Organization)
V	verso
YIUN	Yahad-in Unum Testimony
YVA	Yad Vashem Archives

Introduction

The Theme and Plan of the Book

This study concerns the participation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its armed force, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrains'ka povstans'ka armiia*, UPA), in the destruction of the Jewish population in Ukraine under German occupation, 1941-44. There were three major phases in which the nationalists contributed to the mass murder. (Since I do not use the definite article before OUN and UPA, readers would be advised to pronounce these terms as acronyms: o-OON, oo-PA.)

First, militias organized by OUN were key actors in the anti-Jewish violence of the summer of 1941, in the immediate aftermath of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The militias arrested Jews in order to subject them to forced labor, humiliation, and murder; thousands of those arrested were executed by German units, mainly Einsatzgruppe C and Waffen-SS Division "Wiking." The Ukrainian nationalist militias assembled the Jews for the Germans' violence, since they could identify Jews more easily than the invaders and knew the localities, including Jewish neighborhoods in the cities. Sometimes the violence was accompanied by bloody public spectacles, as in the pogroms unleashed in Lviv and Zolochiv in early July 1941; sometimes the OUN militias murdered selected Jews and their families more discreetly, and sometimes they just murdered all the Jews in a village.

Second, OUN recruited for and infiltrated the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in Galicia and the stationary Schutzmannschaften in Volhynia. These police units provided the indispensable manpower for the Holocaust. They rounded up Jews for deportation to the death camp at Belzec or for execution by shooting; although most of the actual killing was done by the Germans, the Ukrainian policemen also killed in certain circumstances. These liquidation actions took place primarily from early 1942 through the middle of 1943.

Third, early in 1943 thousands of these Ukrainian policemen deserted from German service to join the OUN-led nationalist insurgency. Possessed of some military training and familiarity with both weapons and killing, they took leadership positions in UPA. As soon as the former policemen joined them, UPA launched a massive ethnic cleansing project, at first in Volhynia and later in Galicia. Although it was primarily directed against Poles, there were other non-Ukrainian victims, including Jews. In the winter of 1943-44, as the Red Army moved westward, UPA lured surviving Jews out of their hiding places in the forests, temporarily placed them in labor camps, and then murdered them.

In each of these three phases of anti-Jewish violence, the responsibility of OUN was different. In the first phase, the militias, and the OUN leadership which established them, were primarily responsible for rounding up Jews for the Germans, although the militias did some killing themselves. Altogether the militias were accomplices in the murder of thousands of Jews and shooters in the murder of many hundreds. In the second phase, OUN cannot be held responsible for all that Ukrainian policemen did in Galicia and Volhynia, since police structures were primarily under German control and by no means were all the policemen nationalists, at least initially. OUN's responsibility here lay in its strategy of deliberately infiltrating the police, which drew its members and sympathizers into the eye of the genocidal storm. For the most part, Ukrainian policemen rounded Jews up for others to kill, but sometimes they themselves killed Jews. Altogether the death toll from police round-ups was in the hundreds of thousands. In the third phase, OUN's responsibility was direct. Here, the organization was killing Jews primarily on its own initiative, as part of a far-reaching ethnic cleansing project; it was not only finding the Jews for murder, but its forces were perpetrating the killings themselves. The Jewish victims of OUN in this phase probably numbered in the thousands.

I have structured the book as follows. After this brief introduction, there are several chapters that provide context. The first is a rather extensive examination of the historiography. One factor contributing to the controversy surrounding the role of OUN and UPA in the murder of Jews stems from the peculiar way the

historiography developed. For almost half a century after World War II, neither Holocaust scholars nor historians of the nationalists researched the topic. In this scholarly vacuum, accusations and denials were as if weightless, unanchored by evidence. Since about 1990, however, more and more information has come to light and many more scholars have examined the issues. But also since then, there has been a polarization of views over the issue of nationalist collaboration in the Holocaust, determined more by politics, specifically in the form of memory politics, than by contradictory evidence. The second chapter concerns sources. Here I outline the evidentiary record as we know it today and also discuss the particular problems the various kinds of source materials present.

After these two chapters, which present the epistemological context, I turn to the historical context for our problem. In the third chapter I look at OUN before Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, with special attention to three issues: why it emerged and proved attractive to Ukrainian youth in Galicia, its relationship to fascism, and the place and nature of antisemitism in its ideology. In chapter four I turn to the first Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine (Galicia, Volhynia, Bukovina), in 1939-41. Some scholars argue that this historical interlude is crucial to understanding how the destruction of the Jews played out in these territories; I present my own understanding of how it affected perceptions and outcomes during the Holocaust.

The final three chapters are devoted to the phases of OUN's participation in the Holocaust: the anti-Jewish violence of the summer of 1941; the police's role in the systematic destruction of Jews in Galicia, Volhynia, and – to a lesser extent – elsewhere on Ukrainian lands in 1942-43, with special reference, of course, to the connections between the police and OUN; and, finally, UPA's murder of Jews in 1943 and 1944. The book ends with the presentation of the conclusions I have come to.

This book is not a study of how “Ukrainians” behaved during the Holocaust. It does not generalize about an entire national community but concentrates on a particular political movement. Although at the time this study is being written, powerful forces in Ukraine and in the Ukrainian diaspora aim to identify the entire

Ukrainian nation with the heritage of OUN and UPA, this is at the very least an intellectual error, especially in relation to the war period itself. Also, this is not a study of the whole range of collaboration of Ukrainians with the German wartime authorities. That is a much larger and much more complicated topic. Nor is this even a study of those Ukrainians who actively participated in the Holocaust. For example, the notorious “Ukrainian guards” of German camps, perhaps more properly known as Trawniki men after the camp at which they were trained, do not figure in this book. For the most part these were captured Red Army soldiers rather than ideological allies of the Nazis, and their work in German death and labor camps had no relation to OUN structures.

Geography

There is no consensus regarding the proper geographical nomenclature for borderland territories and localities, in which much of the events recounted in this study took place. For example, in this book I will frequently refer to “Galicia,” a region that produced a very specific Ukrainian political and intellectual culture. Andrzej Zięba argues, however, that historians should abandon this term unless it is in relation to the Austrian crownland that existed from 1772 to 1918 or to the Distrikt Galizien established by the Germans that existed from August 1941 to July 1944. In his view, historians should use only the official state nomenclature of the Second Polish Republic; in the case of what I call Galicia, he would refer rather to the palatinates (*województwa*, voyvodships) of Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol. For certain studies, this is, I think, not only justified, but is a good practical choice.¹ But for this study, the regional specificity of what I call Galicia is important. It is the region where OUN emerged and achieved its greatest influence, and although UPA was active first in another region, Volhynia, its leadership was to a large degree of Galician origin. So by using this term, I mean to call attention to the regional specificity. Zięba also points out that

1 This procedure is used, for example, by Kopstein and Wittenberg, *Intimate Violence*.

Ukrainian historians, even when they use the term “Galicia,” are really referring to Eastern Galicia, that is, the eastern part of the Austrian crownland, in which Ukrainians formed a majority of the population.² “Eastern Galicia” was also a geographical concept that demanded much attention from the diplomats who were working out the post-World-War-I settlements from 1918 through 1923. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, who had used the term Eastern Galicia and Galicia in her earlier work, has lately been arguing that historians should designate what I call Galicia by its transliterated Ukrainian equivalent, Halychyna.³ But as a linguistic conservative by inclination, I will retain the usage Galicia, which appears in my earlier publications and which is common practice in English-language studies of Ukraine. Today Galicia, as I am using it, comprises roughly the oblasts of Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and Ternopil in Ukraine.

Just north of Galicia is a region I will refer to as Volhynia, although it does not encompass all of the territory to which that name has referred historically. Some scholars now employ the distinction Western Volhynia to refer to what I will be calling Volhynia. For this study, I mean the parts of historical Volhynia that were incorporated into Poland from 1921 to 1939. In 1941, under German occupation, Galicia became Distrikt Galizien within the General Government while Volhynia was incorporated into the Reichskommissariat Ukraine.⁴ Volhynia had comprised the Volhynia palatinate in interwar Poland, which had its capital in Łuck, and comprises today Rivne oblast, a small part of Ternopil oblast, and Volhynia oblast (with its capital in Lutsk) in Ukraine. Galicia and Volhynia together comprised “Western Ukraine,” a term used by the Soviet administration in 1939-41.

There are a few other territories I will refer to. When I write of Bukovina, I mean what is more accurately referred to as Northern Bukovina, that is, the territory which Soviet Ukraine annexed from

2 Zięba, “Ukraińcy, Polacy i niemiecka zagłada Żydów,” xxvi-xxvii.

3 Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Ukrainian Bishop, American Church*, xvi.

4 There is an excellent study of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine: Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair*.

Romania in 1940 and which today comprises most of Chernivtsi oblast in independent Ukraine. By Transcarpathia, I mean the region which since 1945 has been Transcarpathia oblast, first in Soviet Ukraine and then in independent Ukraine.

It is always difficult to make choices about place names. In the period with which this book is concerned, borders and administrations shifted. What started out as the southeastern palatinates of the Second Polish Republic came under Soviet rule in September 1939, then passed to German rule from summer 1941 until summer 1944, and then returned under Soviet rule. Thus Lwów became Lviv, then Lemberg, and then Lviv again. Some scholars use the Polish names for all localities that existed in interwar Poland. I considered this same practice, but did not adopt it. My concern was that readers should be able to find the localities I mention on modern-day maps and geographic applications. Thus I use the Ukrainian name for all places within the boundaries of today's Ukraine. It would be cumbersome, even for a specialist, to find a present-day locality with only its Polish name. I had thought of using the names as they are found in Google Maps, but resigned from this idea after realizing that there were problems with consistency in that application. So I am rendering place names from Ukrainian, with modified Library of Congress transliteration (soft signs omitted; use of Y in place of I for the initial letter when followed by a vowel, so Yabloniv instead of Iabloniv). I think this method will most easily allow readers to search place names on the Internet and ascertain their location. Upon first mention in the text of localities that were in Poland between the wars, I will give the place name in Polish in parentheses. Localities that are in today's Poland rather than in Ukraine, such as Przemyśl, will only appear in their Polish forms. I will also provide the Romanian name for localities in Bukovina, which belonged to Romania between the wars. In some cases, the Polish or Romanian names are identical with the Ukrainian names. Cities and places that are well known in English by names that would violate the practices set out here, such as Warsaw (instead of Warszawa) and Babi Yar (instead of Babyn Yar), will be referred to by these common names. I think that the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, is now becoming better known by its Ukrainian name, even though Kiev had

once been more common. Many place names in Ukraine have changed since World War II. I will use both the modern and historical names as seems best for the context.

In sum, my choice of place name usage has not been guided by any considerations of historical correctness but rather by what I think will make geographic orientation easier for the reader.

Technical and Terminological Matters

In transliterating bibliographical data from the Cyrillic and Yiddish alphabets, I am using the Library of Congress systems without diacriticals. For Ukrainian and Russian names in the text, I am using the modified Library of Congress system devised by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian studies; its main features are the elimination of soft and hard signs, the simplification of certain last-name endings to -sky, and the use of “Y” instead of “I” to transliterate the initial letters of certain names (e.g., Yuliiian instead of Iuliiian).

In this study I am using the term “nationalists” as shorthand for members and sympathizers of OUN and UPA. I do not mean to include all those who championed Ukrainian cultural and political independence. When I am using the word “nationalist” in a wider sense, I will signal that I am doing so.

I will be referring to folios of testimonies from the archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (AŻIH). Many individual testimonies are comprised of both a handwritten and typed copy, each with its separate pagination. I will be citing the folio numbers of the typed copies.

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.