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Ukrainian Military Collaborators

Information in the Archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal
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Abstract

This article analyses documents from the archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) that contain information about Ukrainian military collaborators. There are four groups of such sources: documents of personal origin; press materials; documents from archives in different countries; and printed publications. They differ in their information potential and purpose of creation. In this article, I analyse the research potential of documents from the VWI archive regarding crimes committed by members of the Ukrainian auxiliary police as well as by members of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician). Information about the involvement of Ukrainian police officers in the Holocaust can be found in various types of sources. These include eyewitness accounts, archival documents, and press materials. They provide a lot of factual material about specific crimes. The information about the Division of the SS (Galician) is mainly concentrated in various brochures, bulletins, and books. These contain information not only about the military history of the division, but also about individual members of this unit who committed violence against civilians, including Jews.

Introduction

Simon Wiesenthal is perhaps one of the most famous whistleblowers against the Nazis and their collaborators in the post-war period. He was born in the town of Buchach in 1908.¹ The Nazi occupation of the region found him in Lviv, where he was already a well-known architect. During the Holocaust, Wiesenthal lost almost his entire family, with only his wife surviving. He himself experienced all the horrors of the Nazi occupation, miraculously escaping when Jews were shot in Lviv's Brigidki prison, then being for some time in the Janowska concentration camp in Lviv, and from mid-1942 working as a hard labourer repairing railroad tracks.² He survived and decided that the criminals should be held accountable for their actions, devoting his entire life to finding and identifying those who committed crimes against Jews and others. After the war, many former Nazis and their accomplices escaped punishment and continued to live under false names in many countries around the world, including in Europe. To search for these people, Simon Wiesenthal founded the Documentation Centre in Linz in 1947, which would collect materials for further trials of Nazi criminals.³ In 1963, the Documentation Centre of the Association of Jews Persecuted by the Nazi Regime was established in Vienna,⁴ but it was not the only such initiative as there were many of

1 Hella Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal: Eine Biographie* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997), 47.

2 Simon Wiesenthal, *Recht, nicht Rache: Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1995), 22.

3 *Ibid.*, 36.

4 Carmen Hofbauer, *Simon Wiesenthal als Publizist* (PhD diss., University of Salzburg, 2002), 46–47.

them.⁵ Finally, in 1974, the Simon Wiesenthal Center was established with its headquarters in Los Angeles.⁶

During the 1960s and 1970s, Wiesenthal joined the search for Adolf Eichmann, who played a sinister role in the final solution to the Jewish question.⁷ Thanks to the efforts of Wiesenthal and the staff of his centres, it was possible to track down and bring to justice Franz Stangl, the commandant of the Treblinka and Sobibor death camps, where about 750,000 people were killed.⁸ However, this is certainly not a complete list of those who were identified and punished for their crimes. We know of many more examples because, thanks to the activities of Wiesenthal, real criminals were found and punished. And all of these searches are reflected in the various sources that are now collected in the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies' Simon Wiesenthal Archive (VWI-SWA).

The archive is indeed an important component of the VWI, as it combines materials from the archives of the Jewish Community of Vienna, documents collected by Simon Wiesenthal, and materials from other archives around the world. These documents cover the participation of war criminals of various nationalities in the Holocaust as well as in other genocides that took place during the second half of the twentieth century. Some of them are unique. For example, only in this archive can one find the originals of Wiesenthal's personal correspondence regarding the search for war criminals in the post-war period. These letters can be found in various archival storage cases as well, since letters were addressed and sent to different people. Among the materials stored in the archive is a great deal of information about individuals who served in the auxiliary police or other German military units during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, and who participated in the murder of civilians, including Jews.

The purpose of this article is to analyse documents from the VWI-SWA that contain information about individuals who were members of the local auxiliary police or other Nazi military units during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine.

Collaborationism was inherent in all countries that were occupied by the Nazis and their collaborators. In 2011, a collection of articles appeared in the volume *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust*.⁹ In this work, historians from different parts of Europe reflected on collaborationism in their countries. In another collection of articles under the title *Collaboration in Eastern Europe During the Second World War and the Holocaust*,¹⁰ the authors reveal different levels of collaborationism. They focus in particular on the cooperation of local residents in the Nazi punitive and repressive structures and the involvement of local residents in the administrative bodies of the Nazis. Ukrainians, like other local residents, cooperated with the occupiers in various areas: from everyday life to the administrative management of the occupied territories. Other occupation structures in which Ukrainians were involved included the German military and police forces.¹¹

5 See, for example, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, "Simon Wiesenthal Conference", last modified 5 May 2024, <https://www.wvi.ac.at/index.php/veranstaltungen-a/simon-wiesenthal-conferences/icalrepeat.detail/2022/11/02/407/-/survivors-toil-the-first-decade-of-documenting-and-studying-the-holocaust>.

6 Hofbauer, *Simon Wiesenthal als Publizist*, 52.

7 *Ibid.*, 290–291.

8 *Ibid.*, 294.

9 Roni Stauber, ed., *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust* (London: Routledge 2011).

10 Peter Black, Béla Rásky, and Marianne Windsperger, eds., *Mittäterschaft in Osteuropa im Zweiten Weltkrieg und im Holocaust in Osteuropa/Collaboration in Eastern Europe During the Second World War and the Holocaust*, Beiträge des VWI zur Holocaustforschung, vol. 7 (Vienna and Hamburg: VWI and New Academic Press, 2019).

11 Valentina Shaikan, *Kolobratsionizm na terytorii reikhskomisariatu "Ukraina" ta viiskovoi zony v period Druhoi svitovoi viiny* (Kryvyi Rih: Mineral, 2005).

Methodology and Source Base of the Study

The documents on Ukrainian collaborators in the VWI archive have different origins and, therefore, vary in content and form. I can distinguish several groups of such documents. First of all, there are letters written by Wiesenthal himself or sent to him by the witnesses of crimes, detectives who were looking for criminals, and official structures. Each archival case has such letters. Another group is the copies of documents from various archives around the world. They are a valuable source for establishing the circumstances under which a crime was committed and determining the circle of people involved. The VWI archive contains a large number of materials published in various newspapers and magazines. The press materials reflect various aspects of post-war justice, as well as the reaction of the population of different countries to the realisation that war criminals were hiding among them. Among the other documents stored in the VWI-SWA are copies of scholarly articles and original books, including some that were never published. These sources present authors' visions of the problems associated with war criminals who operated on the territory of Ukraine.

In the VWI archive, all these sources are grouped into separate folders by subject. For example, the folder "Ukrainische Polizei/Lemberg/Distrikt Galizien (Dokumente)"¹² contains both trophy materials from the Nazi occupation of the western Ukrainian region and materials of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes (ChGK). Also among the documents in this folder are Soviet press materials that contain information about specific perpetrators of violence against local residents who escaped punishment and were outside of the Soviet Union. One thematic folder thus contains documents of different origins. This is done in order to provide deeper and more comprehensive information about, for example, the Ukrainian auxiliary police that operated in Lviv during the Nazi occupation. Also, the VWI-SWA contains storage cases that have information about crimes and criminals on the territory of individual settlements. For example, the folder "Dnepropetrovsk" contains an excerpt from the diary of a former member of the 171st Police Battalion, in which he describes the murders of Jews in the Dnepropetrovsk area.¹³ In addition, the folder contains memoirs of the Volksdeutscher Viktor Puch, who was involved in crimes in Dnipro during the Nazi occupation of the city.¹⁴ Another folder, "Wladimir-Wolinsk",¹⁵ contains eyewitness accounts of the murders of Jews in this city, which were collected by the Israeli Police Centre for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes. There is also information about the German organisers and perpetrators of these crimes. The cases, which are collected on a geographical basis, thus provide coverage of Nazi crimes in the territory of the respective geographical region, as well as identification of the persons involved in these crimes. The materials in these archival cases reflect the crimes not of any one unit, but of others operating in the region. Instead, the bulk of the documents are in the personal files on war criminals of different nationalities.

In this article, I will analyse sets of documents that are collected in separate folders but that reflect the relevant thematic areas. These cases are stored in I.1. "Falldossiers zu NS-Täterinnen und -Tätern, inkl. Hilfsmittel, 1938–2005" (Cases of Nazi Criminals and Their Accomplices, 1938–2005). This is the main collection of the

¹² VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4673, "Ukrainische Polizei/Lemberg/Distrikt Galizien (Dokumente)".

¹³ VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 691, "Dnepropetrovsk", part 1, 2–3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, part 3, 1–2.

¹⁵ VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4832, "Wladimir-Wolinsk".

VWI-SWA, which is actually a collection of case files that were opened mostly on people who managed to escape from justice after the end of the Second World War. The overwhelming majority of the collection is represented by personal files on individuals suspected of committing war crimes. Some of the files reflect the activities of various punitive units, as well as specific geographical areas where violence and the killings of civilians took place. After analysing more than fifty files, I have identified two main themes: the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician), and the involvement of Ukrainian auxiliary police units in the Holocaust in various parts of Ukraine from 1941 to 1944.

The methodology of working with such ego-documents was applied to memoirs, diaries, and letters. Thus, in order to introduce them into scholarly circulation, it is necessary to establish the time of their creation, the circumstances under which they were created, and to determine how objective the information they contain is. This can be done by comparing them with other known sources or by verifying the facts and events they refer to. It is clear that these materials should be used in conjunction with other known sources. However, at the same time, testimonies, diaries, and other similar documents give an idea of the Holocaust from the bottom, that is, they “humanise this genocide”. They show it through the eyes of victims and eyewitnesses. This is important because such sources often contain unique information that cannot be found in any other document. Interesting and important are Wiesenthal’s letters to the judicial and investigative authorities of different countries, to public organisations that were searching for Nazi criminals, as well as their responses. This correspondence, on the one hand, shows the mechanism of forming suspicions against individuals and, on the other hand, is a valuable source for identifying possible criminals. After all, Wiesenthal, based on the materials he collected, often sent information about specific individuals he knew to initiate criminal proceedings or as a response to an appeal.

A separate group of sources is the official documents of various organisations. They are represented by documents from the Nazi occupation, which describe the activities of the Ukrainian auxiliary police and other military units. There are also documents from German archives, mostly materials from the post-war trials of Nazi criminals. They also contain information about Ukrainian collaborators and the crimes they were involved in. They sometimes make it possible to identify these figures and reveal their personal motives for participating in these crimes. I have grouped these documents chronologically and according to their information potential. After all, documents from the Nazi occupation are franker about the crimes and the people involved in them because, at that time, a report, for example, on the number of Jews killed during their resettlement to a ghetto was completely considered to be a working document that reflected the “normal” workflow. And no one benefitted from downplaying or exaggerating the information. The documents of post-war trials are another matter, when defendants tried to justify themselves at any cost and came up with various arguments in their defence. In addition, this group of sources also includes ChGK materials. The archive does not have a separate folder for such sources, so they can be found in many cases.

As I have already noted, the archive also contains press materials from different countries. Several thematic blocks can be distinguished from newspaper and magazine articles. First, there is information about the trials of Nazi criminals and their accomplices that took place in countries in the post-war period. The vast majority of information is about trials in Germany and Austria, as well as in Canada and the United States. After all, it was in these countries that many Ukrainian collaborators

found refuge and some of them were identified and convicted. Second, there are the testimonies of eyewitnesses. These people talked about what they saw and very often mentioned the criminals they knew.

Another type of source that can be found in the VWI-SWA are collections of documents, manuscripts of research papers, as well as various brochures, bulletins, and yearbooks that reveal various aspects of the participation of Ukrainian collaborators in Nazi crimes. This information is often presented as an author's interpretation, which reflected the author's position and could be quite specific. Collections of documents, brochures, bulletins, and yearbooks give an idea of the scale of crimes in certain regions of Ukraine and also specify the role of individual collaborators in them. These books and brochures were undoubtedly an important source of information for Wiesenthal.

14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician)

The 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) was formed during the German occupation of Ukraine in April 1943. It was initiated and led by Germans and consisted of local Ukrainian volunteers. Although the division itself was not created by the Germans as a punitive unit, especially one that was to be involved in the Holocaust, after its defeat in the Battle of Brody in July 1944 it was replenished with 12,000 new members (in addition to 3,000 survivors). As the researcher Marta Havryshko notes, among them were members of various police forces who had a criminal past.¹⁶ Much has been written about the activities of the SS Division (Galician) and its personnel, both by Ukrainian and foreign researchers.¹⁷ However, the VWI-SWA contains many documents that reflect the attitude of different organisations to this formation and its soldiers, as well as Wiesenthal's attempts to identify and prosecute the members of the division who, in his opinion, were responsible for crimes.

Another researcher, Myroslav Shkandrij, has studied not only the military history of the SS Galicia Division, but also the post-war processes and the politics of memory. This includes the Deschênes Commission, which played an important role in clarifying all the circumstances of the division's activities.¹⁸ Wiesenthal also provided important information for this commission. This is reflected in the relevant cases from the VWI archive.

In order to understand what the SS Division (Galician) was, Wiesenthal collected various books and brochures that dealt with this unit. Particularly interesting is a handwritten copy of the book *The Ukrainians and the SS*, by Philip H. Buss.¹⁹ It is written in English and there is both a manuscript and a printed version, with the latter being 148 pages long. As the text only takes up half-pages, the total volume of the manuscript is much smaller than a standard book text, meaning that it is in the format of either a large article or a small book. The first section of the book, entitled "The Avant-Garde", provides a brief history of the Ukrainian military formations –

16 Marta Havryshko, "Dyviziia Vaffen SS 'Halychyna': manivtsi heroizatsii", Spilne, 12 October 2023, accessed 28 April 2024, <https://commons.com.ua/uk/diviziya-vaffen-ss-galichina-manivci-geroyizaciyi/>.

17 See, for example, Richard Landwehr, *Fighting for Freedom: The Ukrainian Volunteer Division of the Waffen-SS* (Silver Spring, MD; Bibliophile Legion Books, 1985), and Andriy Bolianovskiy, *Dyviziia Halychyna. Istoriia* (Lviv: Instytut ukrainoznavstva im. I. Krypiakevycha NAN Ukrainy, 2000).

18 Myroslav Shkandrij, *In the Maelstrom: The Waffen-SS "Galicia" Division and its Legacy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023).

19 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, "Ukrainische SS/Manuskript Philip Buss".

Nachtigall and Roland – that were created by the *Abwehr*, the German military intelligence and counterintelligence agency, at the beginning of the Second World War. The author emphasises that, although the Nachtigall was led by Germans, the Ukrainian soldiers of this unit were greatly influenced by the OUN(B), groups of Ukrainian nationalists united under the leadership of Stepan Bandera. Therefore, many of them considered their service in this unit as preparation for the creation of their own Ukrainian army. However, the Germans did not foresee the creation of a Ukrainian state, especially after the repression of members of both OUNs began, and these units were eventually disbanded.²⁰ Furthermore, almost thirty pages describe the attitude of the German leadership to the Ukrainian armed forces at the beginning of the Soviet-German war and the change in this attitude when it became clear that the blitzkrieg had failed. The author also notes that the creation of the Ukrainian auxiliary police was a forced step, but necessary for the establishment of the German occupation regime. Moreover, a major role in the formation of police units was played by members of both OUNs who, in the author's opinion, were engaged in spreading propaganda among Ukrainian youth to get them to join these units. In addition to local civilians, Buss notes the role of Soviet prisoners of war in police units. Their role was especially significant at the stage of the creation of the Waffen SS Division.²¹

Buss writes that, as early as April 1941, Gottlob Berger, the head of the SS General Directorate, approached Himmler with a proposal to form a unit of 679 Ukrainians.²² At first, Himmler refused, but a year later he ordered the formation of a 400-man guard battalion of Ukrainians. They were to guard prisoners in the area of the Polish town of Dębica.²³ It was only after the defeat of German troops at Stalingrad that a decision was made to create a military division of Ukrainians. The author emphasises that the SS Division (Galician) was conceived as an ordinary German military formation.²⁴ It was composed of Ukrainians who volunteered in large numbers. The OUN(M) approved the creation of the division, while the OUN(B) officially opposed it but in practice encouraged some of its members to join the unit. According to the author, this was done in order to gain the military experience necessary for service in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), as well as to prevent their opponents from controlling the division from the OUN(M).²⁵ Thus, Buss notes that the Division of the SS (Galician) was not a punitive unit but was part of the structure of the SS troops and performed tasks that came from the German leadership. This is a controversial statement because the division was involved in anti-partisan (punitive) actions in Slovakia and Slovenia. In general, the work describes the formation and history of the division in some detail; however, no specific facts of the division's participation in crimes against civilians are given in it.

There are no similar facts in the book of Marko Terlytsia entitled *Here is the Evidence*. This pseudonym was used by Petro Kravchyk, who was a member of the Communist Party of Canada in the post-war period and had quite close ties with the Soviet Union. His work is in the best traditions of Soviet propaganda literature. It was written in English and published in Ontario in 1984. Obviously, it was intended to spread the Soviet narrative among Canadians about the activities of the Ukrainian

20 Ibid., 2–15.

21 Ibid., 15–44.

22 Ibid., 50.

23 Ibid., 52.

24 Ibid., 73.

25 Ibid., 76.

nationalist movement during the Second World War. The central plot of the brochure is the creation and activities of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician). This formation is described in a subsection with the eloquent title “The Darkest Page of History”.²⁶ At the very beginning of the text, the author notes that, “after the Battle of Stalingrad, the Nazis turned to Ukrainian nationalists for help and offered to form the SS Division (Galician)”.²⁷ This sentence demonstrates quite clearly how Soviet propaganda worked: first came the true fact, and then came what needed to be conveyed to the reader. So, the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) did indeed begin to form in the spring of 1943. But the sentence goes on to emphasise that “the Nazis turned to Ukrainian nationalists for help”. The reader was supposed to have a natural idea of the close cooperation between Ukrainian nationalists and the Nazis. However, documents and modern research prove the falsity of this Soviet mythology.²⁸ First, it is necessary to distinguish between two OUN groups. For example, the OUN under the leadership of Andriy Melnyk took a more loyalist position towards the Third Reich, while the OUN under the leadership of Stepan Bandera collaborated with the Germans quite cautiously and only during the summer and autumn of 1941. Later, the OUN(b) and the UPA would also wage an anti-German struggle. Second, Bandera’s group condemned the creation of the Division (Galicia), because at that time the group already had its own military structure, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

Similar myths abound on other pages of this work. For example, in subsection titled “Without Superfluous Sentiments”, the author accuses Ukrainian nationalists of contributing to the Holocaust but does not provide any evidence for that.²⁹ In general, such works are a valuable source for studying the methods and techniques used by Soviet propagandists to spread their ideas among citizens of other countries.

However, among the documents stored in the archive of the VWI is one entitled “Atrocities” which, based on data from various sources, presents facts related to the crimes committed by members of the SS Division (Galician) against the civilian population, be they crimes committed by the SS Division (Galician) itself or by individuals who were included in its composition.³⁰ These events are arranged in chronological order and represent a kind of reference. In my opinion, the document’s author was Wiesenthal himself.

The document includes facts relating to the participation of the division’s members in the suppression of the uprising in the area of the Slovak city of Košice that was under Hungarian rule.³¹ These events took place in June 1944. The document also mentions the activities of a special detachment of the SS Division (Galician) near the Polish city of Dębica. On 23 November 1943, fifty-five people were killed and about seventy residents were sent to Gaswagen.³² However, there are questions about the perpetrators of this crime. Today it is known that a regiment of Ukrainians was formed in the Dębica area in 1942 to guard the camps.³³ A combat group led by Obersturmbannführer Friedrich Beyersdorff, which included members of the divi-

26 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, “Ukrainische SS/Kriegsverbrecher Kanada”, part 1, 41–46.

27 Ibid., 42.

28 Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960: działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN and RYTM, 2006), 91.

29 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, “Ukrainische SS/Kriegsverbrecher Kanada”, part, 78–81.

30 Ibid., part 2.

31 Ibid., 1. Between 1920 and 1938, Košice was part of Czechoslovakia, and between 1938 and 1945 it was part of Hungary.

32 Ibid., 3.

33 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, “Ukrainische SS/Manuskript Philip Buss”, 52.

sion, was formed in February 1944. It was supposed to operate in the Kholm and Podlasie regions in coordination with three combat groups of German divisions directed against Soviet partisans.³⁴ Thus, it was this unit that took part in punitive actions against partisans and the local population. But it was formed later than the events described above. Therefore, it is likely that some Ukrainian unit could have participated in the events in the Dębica area. However, to date, it has not been proven that it included members of the SS Division (Galician).

The document goes on to describe the destruction of the village of Huta Pieniacka in February 1944. As a result of the action, only seventeen villagers survived. The 4th and 5th regiments of Galician volunteers did participate in these events, but they were not subordinated to the division command at that time. It is now known that the SS Galician Volunteer Regiments were formed during 1943 and were used, among other things, for such punitive actions. Later, at least some of the soldiers of the 4th Galician Volunteer Regiment CC were included in the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician). The situation was similar with the Ukrainian Legion of Self-Defence, which the Germans called the 31st Security Battalion of the SD. It took part in the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, and at that time it was also not part of the division, although later the soldiers of this unit also became its members. Thus, we can state that the SS Division (Galician) was formed as a military formation to fight the Red Army. However, some of the soldiers of this military unit, as well as members of other military formations attached to it, participated in crimes against the civilian population, including Jews. This has been studied by the researcher Olesya Khromeychuk. She notes that the inhabitants of the village of Huta Pieniacka were killed by members of police battalions, which were later attached to the division. Regarding the massacre in the villages of Slovakia, the researcher notes that there is no sufficiently substantiated evidence that would testify to the involvement of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) in this crime.³⁵ This situation was also noted by Wiesenthal. In a document titled "Memo" dated 20 April 1986, he noted that it is difficult to find documents about the division's activities. Apparently, most of the killings of civilians were committed by a combat group led by Beyersdorff in March 1944. Also, crimes against civilians were committed by units that were later incorporated into the division. After the Second World War, many of the division's soldiers ended up in Canada and the United States. These countries had a fairly strong Jewish diaspora. The memory of the difficult Ukrainian-Jewish relations during the Nazi occupation occasionally led to discussions about the wartime crimes and their perpetrators. One of these discussions resulted from the realisation that many war criminals, including those from Ukraine, could have entered Canada in the 1950s. To a large extent, this became known due to the Wiesenthal's activities. In the early 1980s, he sent the Canadian government a list of 218 Ukrainians who allegedly served in the SS and entered the country as immigrants after the Second World War.³⁶ Not many of the people on the list, as Wiesenthal noted, were members of the SS Division (Galician). This information led to the fact that the problem of war criminals in Canada reached the highest level, and the Deschênes Commission was formed to address it. In 1984, it made a request to the Wiesenthal Center to provide all the information known to the centre about these individuals.³⁷ This information

34 Bolianovskiy, *Dyviziia Halychyna*, 384.

35 Olesya Khromeychuk, 'Undetermined' Ukrainians: Post-War Narratives of the Waffen SS 'Galicia' Division, *Nationalisms Across the Globe*, vol. 11 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013).

36 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, "Ukrainische SS/Kriegsverbrecher Kanada", part 1, 12.

37 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4578, "Ukraine", part 6, 2–41.

was provided to the Canadian government in the form of a list of suspects. It contained information not only about the members of the division, but also about Ukrainian police officers who operated in various regions of occupied Ukraine.

Involvement of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in the Holocaust According to Documents from the VWI-SWA

Much has been written about the role of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in the Holocaust. There are works by well-known historians about Ukrainian policemen and their participation in the murder of Jews.³⁸ There is also a modern Ukrainian historiography on this issue.³⁹ In general, it should be noted that modern Holocaust studies in Ukraine are impossible without understanding the participation of not only German but also local perpetrators. This is eloquently evidenced by various sources, including those collected in the VWI-SWA. However, the vast majority of the materials in the archive concerning the participation of local police in the Holocaust relate to the western regions of Ukraine, and there is much less information about police officers who operated in central and eastern Ukraine. This can be explained by the fact that, after the Second World War, the bulk of the Ukrainian diaspora abroad consisted of Ukrainians from the western regions of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), most of whom did not have Soviet citizenship and therefore could not be interned in the Soviet Union. Among these people were many who collaborated with the Nazis during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine and participated in violence against the civilian population.

A large file is entitled “Ukrainische Polizei/Lemberg/Distrikt Galizien (Dokumente)”.⁴⁰ It contains materials from Ukrainian archival repositories, mainly from the regional archives of the Lviv and Volyn regions. The documents from the State Archives of Lviv Oblast are copies of original documents of the Ukrainian police in Lviv dating back to 1941 and 1942. This is the period in which mass murders of the Jewish population were carried out in the city, and when the Lviv Ghetto and Janowska concentration camps operated. According to these documents, local policemen were actively involved in escorting Jews to the place of their execution, as well as in robbing the city’s Jewish community. For example, from a report dated 24 June 1942, we learn that about 300 Jews were arrested in Lviv on that day. Twenty-three Ukrainian policemen participated in this action, and twelve Jewish apartments were robbed and appropriated.⁴¹ A report dated 15 August 1942 describes the number of rounds of ammunition used by Ukrainian policemen during the convoy of Jews. The document names ten policemen who used a total of forty rounds of ammunition.⁴² An important aspect of this list is that it is personalised, so such information could have become the basis for further criminal prosecution.

38 See, for example, John-Paul Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2021); Martin Christopher Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

39 See, for example: Tetyana Borodina, “Zaluchennia ukrainskoi politzii do vchynennia Holokostu v Kremenchutsi (1941–42)”, *Ukraina Moderna* 34 (2023): 197–228; Daniil Sytnyk, “Ukrainska politzia ta Holokost u Kyievi, 1941–43”, *Ukraina Moderna* 34 (2023), 229–261; Roman Shliakhtych, “Zaluchennia chleniv ukrainskoi dopomizhnoi politzii do masovykh ubyvstv yevreiv na terytorii Raikhskomisariatu ‘Ukraina’”, *Problemy istorii Holokostu: ukrainskyi vymir* no. 13 (2021): 86–115.

40 VWI-SWA, Fond I.1, folder 4673, “Ukrainische Polizei/Lemberg/Distrikt Galizien (Dokumente)”.

41 Ibid., 44.

42 Ibid., 79.

Another type of document in this archival case is the ChGK reports, as well as several references and articles written by the Soviet historian and lawyer Yulian Shulmeister. His scholarly research and assistance in the search for Nazi criminals was highly appreciated by Wiesenthal, as can be seen from their correspondence.⁴³ This file contains two certificates written by him about the Holocaust in Drohobych and Stryi. The first certificate outlines the history of the formation of German punitive and repressive structures and describes their leaders.⁴⁴ The second reference provides data on the number of people killed in Stryi, as well as when these killings took place. According to Yulian Shulmeister, 40,000 people were killed during the entire period of the occupation of the city. Most of them, about 10,000, were killed in September and October 1942.⁴⁵ The ChGK materials refer to the murders of Jews not only in the Lviv Oblast but also in the towns and villages of the Volyn Oblast. These documents also recorded the participation of local perpetrators in these crimes.

One of them was apparently Stepan Holod. He participated in the murders of the Jewish population in Stryi. The case contains the testimonies of three local residents who spoke of Holod's personal involvement in the shootings of Jews. For example, the witness Maryia Moskaliuk recalled that Holod and other members of the auxiliary police killed the Moishy Liby family in August 1941 and later shot the Shairoykh family.⁴⁶ Another witness, Yevstakhiya Krepets, testified that Holod led a firing squad of local policemen who carried out demonstrative executions of local residents in the Stryi Bazaar Square.⁴⁷ In addition, the file contains several lists of local policemen from Stryi, and Holod is among them. Another confirmation of his service in the local police is a photo of him in military uniform among other police officers.

The file also contains articles by Yulian Shulmeister. One of them tells the story of Yuri Teodorovich, a member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in Lviv and an alleged participant in the action to evict Lviv Jews to the Belzec extermination camp. During this action, he used six rounds of ammunition and killed two people.⁴⁸ Another, tellingly titled "The Werewolf", recounts the story of Ivan Stebelskyi, an OUN member and alleged participant in the shootings of Jews in Drohobych in January 1942. This article also mentions that he belonged to the German security service (SD).⁴⁹ In another of his works, "Complicity in the Crime", Shulmeister draws attention to Volodymyr Osidach, who in 1981 was found guilty by a Pennsylvania court of being the chief of police of Rava-Ruska during the Nazi occupation and therefore responsible for the crimes that took place in that city. Furthermore, based on eyewitness accounts, the participation of two other policemen, Bohdan Koziy and Mykhailo Derkach, in the murders of the Jewish population is emphasised. They were also in the United States when the investigation into their crimes began.⁵⁰ In general, the articles have text that includes dates, the locations where the shootings took place, and the names of eyewitnesses to these events. They can thus be verified.

43 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4575, "Ukrainische SS/Kriegsverbrecher Kanada", part 1.

44 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4673, "Ukrainische Polizei/Lemberg/Distrikt Galizien (Dokumente)", Information – 12 May 1989.

45 Ibid., Information – 10 May 1989.

46 Ibid., Testimony of Maryia Moskaliuk.

47 Ibid., Testimony of Yevstakhiya Krepets.

48 Ibid., *Fashystskye palachy y amerykanskye pokrovytely Lvovskaia pravda*, (17 August 1985).

49 Ibid., *Oboroten Lvovskaia hazeta* (29 June 1984).

50 Ibid., *Spivuchast u zlochyni Literaturna Ukraina*, (31 March 1983).

The file entitled “Ukraine” contains much information about the crimes in which the Ukrainian auxiliary police participated.⁵¹ One of the first documents in this file is a chronological table showing the participation of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in the murders of Jews in western Ukraine. The events in the table are recorded chronologically and cover the period from 5 July 1941 to 14 December 1943. This list records crimes against Jews in which from several dozen to several thousand people were killed. For example, on 5 July 1941, the Ukrainian auxiliary police were involved in the murder of seventy Jews in Ternopil. On 29 November 1941, 1,500 Jews from Boryslav were murdered, and Ukrainian auxiliary police also participated in that. The largest mass murder recorded in this list is the shooting of 6,000 Jews in Kostopol on 26 August 1942.⁵² However, the sources from which this table was created are not indicated. Also, from the list of these crimes it is not always clear what exactly the role of the local police was. Did the police only gather Jews or escort them to the crime scene? Or did the police directly participate in the killing of people?

More informative is the brochure *Lest We Forget*, edited by Michael Hanusiak.⁵³ He was a journalist of Ukrainian origin as well as a member of the Communist Party of the United States. He was allowed to work with Soviet archives and he wrote a series of articles about Ukrainian collaborators who lived in the United States. However, it was his brochure that became the most famous of his publications. It was first published in October 1973. The brochure consists, among other things, of documents from Lviv’s Ukrainian auxiliary police that were intended to demonstrate the extent of the police’s involvement in the Holocaust. For example, the local policeman Kost Fedak reported on 13 August 1942 that, during a Jewish rally on Zamarstynivska Street, he fired several times into a hiding place where people were gathered. As a result, one Jew was wounded.⁵⁴ Another Lviv policeman, Ivan Kalimun, mentioned in his report that, on 14 August 1942, he killed one Jew and wounded another.⁵⁵ These reports thus demonstrate that some members of the Lviv auxiliary police killed local Jews and participated in various stages of the Holocaust. However, these materials should be treated with great care and criticism, as it is now known that this brochure was the result of an operation conducted by the KGB UkrSSR.⁵⁶ However, the archives of the VWI also contain niche documents that focus on the participation of local policemen in the Holocaust. These are the personal files of individual officers.

Among the documents in Fond I.1., the files on war criminals from different countries stand out. As a rule, they are separate archival cases, sometimes multivolume. They contain materials that could provide the basis for the criminal prosecution of a person. Of the total number of cases in this fond, dossiers on Ukrainian collaborators account for approximately five per cent. They vary in size and information content, but they reveal the mechanism for identifying and subsequently searching for such individuals. The vast majority of such dossiers concern members of the Ukrainian auxiliary police.

I have already mentioned the police officer Bohdan Koziy. The VWI-SWA has a file on this person. The first document in the file is a letter from Alexander Epstein to Wiesenthal, dated 20 June 1978. In this letter, Epstein notes that an article appeared

51 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4578, “Ukraine”.

52 Ibid., part 1, Ukrainian Polize.

53 Ibid., part 4, “*Lest We Forget*” by Michael Hanusiak.

54 Ibid., 98–99.

55 Ibid., 101.

56 Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust*, 31–32.

in the *Miami Herald* newspaper stating that, during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, Koziy worked for the police in the village of Lisets in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast and participated in the murders of local Jews. The author of the letter asked Wiesenthal for more information about him.⁵⁷ However, at the time, the Wiesenthal Documentation Centre's archives had no information about this person. But with the trial of Koziy and after he was deprived of his American citizenship, the facts of his biography during the Nazi occupation became known. Moreover, in the Ukrainian SSR, criminal proceedings against Koziy began in 1975.⁵⁸ That is why his biography appears in the VWI archive dossier. It states that, from 1942 to 1944, he participated in the arrests and deportation of Jews from the village of Lisets to Stanislaw (now Ivano-Frankivsk). It also notes that he was involved in the murder of members of the Kandler and Bredgolts families as well as three children of local Jews.⁵⁹ Without waiting for the decision to revoke his American citizenship, he left for Costa Rica and died there in 2003.

Another similar case, which also begins with a letter to Wiesenthal, concerns Dmytro Kupiak. The letter was sent in October 1972 by Morton Shulman, who calls himself "a member of the Ontario legislature". According to the text of the letter, it becomes clear that Kupiak was running for the Parliament of Canada, but the Soviet Union reported that, during the Nazi occupation, he had been involved in the murder of civilians.⁶⁰ In fact, it is now known that the Soviet authorities demanded that Canada extradite Kupiak.⁶¹ In the Soviet Union, he was accused of involvement in the murders of civilians in the Lviv region as part of the OUN security service. Kupiak never denied his affiliation with the OUN, but he did not admit to participating in the killings of civilians in the Lviv region. In 1972, he did run for the Progressive Conservative Party in the elections for the Canadian national parliament, but he came in second in his constituency.⁶² In 1970, the Kamenyar publishing house published a collection of materials about the trial of members of Kupiak's group. An English translation was published for foreign readers in 1972. The book, titled *Day of Reconciliation*, is one of the main materials in the dossier on Kupiak from the VWI-SWA. According to this text, in the summer and fall of 1941, Kupiak was actively involved in the creation of a local police force in the villages of Yablunivka and Noviy Milyatin. In these same villages, he and other policemen were allegedly involved in the arrests and murders of the Jewish population: in particular, the victims Hrihoriy Karavan and Mayer Hatsfraid are mentioned. He also arrested and abused other local residents.⁶³ But Wiesenthal noted in his response letters that there was no information about Kupiak in the Documentation Centre, in Israeli archives, or in the German Prosecutor General's Office which investigated crimes in the Lviv region.⁶⁴ Therefore, he was rather sceptical about the possibility of making Kupiak criminally liable, but he noted that the absence of information in foreign institutions could not be evidence of a person's innocence.

57 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2089, "Koziy Bogdan", 1–2.

58 "Polsha prosyt Kosta-Ryku vydat byvsheho natsysta ukraïnskoho proyskhozhdennia", Korrespondent.net, last modified 10 May 2024, <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/events/83594-polsha-prosit-kosta-riku-vydat-byvshego-nacista-ukraïnskogo-proishozhdennia>.

59 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2089, "Koziy Bogdan", 7–8.

60 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2229, "Dmytro Kupiak", 3.

61 Natalya Nikolaieva and Oleksander Ishchuk. "Dmytro Kupiak: Shtrykhy do biohrafii", *Naukovi zapysky Natsionalnoho universytetu "Ostrozka akademiia": Istorychni nauky* no. 9 (2007): 279.

62 *Ibid.*, 282.

63 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2229, "Dmytro Kupiak", 15.

64 *Ibid.*, 8.

This principle is the basis for many personal cases stored in the VWI-SWA, one of which is the file on Mykola Leskiw.⁶⁵ In the aforementioned book *Lest We Forget*, among the many names of police officers is Mykola Leskiw. Based on this information, in November 1986, Wiesenthal wrote a letter to Neal M. Sher, the director of the Special Investigations Center of the United States' Department of Justice. In it, he asks for it to be verified whether Leskiw, who was living in Philadelphia at the time, was the policeman who killed Jews in Lviv during the Nazi occupation.⁶⁶ A similar method of searching for war criminals is found in other cases documented in the VWI-SWA. For example, in the case of Mykola Rybak, there is also a letter to Sher asking him to find out whether a Chicago resident with a similar first and last name was the same policeman.⁶⁷ This case apparently did not receive any follow up, as there is no response from the Center for Special Investigations in the documents. Unlike the case of Leskiw.

In January 1987, in his letter of reply, Sher confirmed that Leskiw did indeed live in Philadelphia and that information about him was being checked.⁶⁸ However, the verification was delayed, because in April 1990 Wiesenthal again wrote a letter to Sher asking for information about the progress of the investigation against Leskiw and other persons about whom he had made inquiries earlier.⁶⁹ A few days later, he received a reply that no comprehensive evidence of this person's criminal activity had been provided and therefore it was not possible to identify him.⁷⁰

The file contains several other letters regarding Leskiw that Wiesenthal sent to various addressees. All of these letters claimed that this man, a resident of Philadelphia, was a war criminal who killed Lviv Jews.⁷¹ Wiesenthal explained his special interest in this case by his own personal story, because in those days his family was killed in Lviv. His persistence paid off, and in June 1990, the Center for Special Investigations interrogated Leskiw in the United States and took a sample of his handwriting for examination. By that time, the original reports of the Lviv auxiliary police from 1942 had already been obtained, and such an examination could be conducted. In addition, his brother's wife, who lived in Buchach, was interrogated.⁷² This investigation confirmed that the American citizen Leskiw was not the policeman who was involved in the murder of Lviv Jews in 1942. Wiesenthal reported this conclusion to the Director of the Center for Special Investigations on 12 December 1990.⁷³ Thus, although the suspicion against Leskiw was not confirmed, this case is an interesting source of information on the identification of war criminals after the Second World War. Persons who had committed crimes during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine led a rather ordinary life abroad, and it was difficult to suspect many of them of having committed criminal acts in the past. Moreover, the authorities in both the United States and Canada were reluctant to launch investigations against their citizens, especially if the evidence came from the Soviet Union. After all, it is known that, during the Cold War, Soviet special services tried to discredit, at any cost, members of the diasporas of those republics that were part of the Soviet Union. And members of the Ukrainian diaspora, especially those who had been present on

65 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2349, "Mykola Leskiw".

66 Ibid., part 2, 1.

67 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 297, "Mykola Rybak".

68 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 2349, "Mykola Leskiw", part 2, 2.

69 Ibid., part 3, 1–2.

70 Ibid., part 5, 2.

71 Ibid., part 4, 1–4; part 5, 1–3.

72 Ibid., part 9, 4–5.

73 Ibid., part 11, 1–2.

the territory of Ukraine during the Nazi occupation and later became well-known members of the diaspora in America, often became the focus of this struggle.

One method of discrediting these Ukrainians was to accuse them of war crimes, and the case at Mstislav (Stepan) Skripnik is interesting in this regard.⁷⁴ The first document in this case, a letter, dates back to 1972. At that time, Skripnik was the metropolitan of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in the United States. In 1990, at the First Council of the UAOC in Kyiv, Mstislav was elected patriarch of Kyiv and All Ukraine. In 1992, he became the first patriarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate (UAOC-KP).⁷⁵ In other words, he was not just a well-known but also a rather influential member of the diaspora, and in the first years of Ukraine's independence he also headed the UAOC-KP.

What made Wiesenthal interested in this famous church leader? The answer is found in the aforementioned letter of 1972. In it, Frank Slutzkin wrote to Wiesenthal that Metropolitan Skripnik, who was the nephew of Simon Petlura, expressed anti-semitic views and, in general, conducted a campaign against Jews.⁷⁶ Another letter from Rudi Moser deepens the accusations against Skripnik on the basis of his anonymous, falsified biography.⁷⁷ This document became the main part of the case. It is written in English on five pages, and it contains facts from Skripnik's life that differ from his official biography. In particular, the text emphasizes that, in 1919 and 1920, he allegedly took an active part in Jewish pogroms and in the looting of Jewish property. According to the anonymous author, during the Second World War he headed the police in Volyn, which was stationed in the city of Rivne. The text goes on to describe his participation in the murders and robberies of Jews.⁷⁸ In general, this document was intended to accuse Skripnik of crimes against humanity and demonstrate his hatred of Jews. It is highly likely that this forgery was produced in close cooperation with the Soviet secret services. And this forgery is quite unsuccessful because there are many contradictions in the text. For example, the author claims that Skripnik only had a secondary education and "did not try to continue his studies".⁷⁹ Instead, it is now known that he studied at least at the Warsaw School of Political Science.⁸⁰

Ukrainian historiography has proven that, during the Nazi occupation, Skripnik was indeed in Rivne, but from 1 September 1941 he headed the directorate of the Volyn Publishing House, which published a newspaper of the same name. In this newspaper, Skripnik was the author of at least three articles in which antisemitic ideas were used.⁸¹ However, the author of the anonymous text did not mention this episode in his biography. This may be another proof of falsification. Thus, similar Soviet falsifications about members of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States and Canada were produced quite actively after the end of the Second World War. They made a destructive contribution to the already tense Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the diaspora.

74 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 3805, "Mstislav (Stepan) Skripnik".

75 Andriy Smyrnov, *Mstyslav (Skrypnyk): hromadsko-politychnyi ta tserkovnyi diiach, 1930–1944* (Kyiv: Smolohy, 2009).

76 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 3805, "Mstislav (Stepan) Skripnik", Frank Slutzkin's letter, 7 April 1972.

77 Ibid., Rudi Moser's letter, 25 May 1972.

78 Ibid., anonymous letter.

79 Ibid., anonymous letter, 2.

80 Smyrnov, *Mstyslav (Skrypnyk)*.

81 Roman Mykhalchuk, "Antysemitska propahanda v hazeti 'Volyn' ta zhurnali 'Ukrainskyi khliborob' rivnenskoho vydavnytstva 'Volyn': porivnialnyi analiz", *Storinky istorii: zbirnyk naukovykh prats* no. 56 (2023): 234.

However, the files of the VWI archive contain information not only about local police officers from the western regions of Ukraine. One can also find documents about members of the Ukrainian auxiliary police from other Ukrainian regions. However, this information is usually found in files organised on a geographical basis, or in those files that refer to specific occupation structures or military formations. For example, in the already mentioned case of crimes on the territory of Dnipropetrovs'k, there is a letter from Wiesenthal to Prosecutor General Adalbert Ruckerl dated 14 January 1969. This document, based on the testimony of Y. Dorachynska, cites facts concerning the criminal activities of Viktor Puch, who at the time lived in Belgium. During the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, he, according to the witness, was the head of the operational department of the Gestapo in Dnipro (obviously, we are talking about the SD because the Gestapo, as a separate structure of the secret police in the occupied territories of Ukraine, did not exist). The witness said that Puch was directly involved in the torture of prisoners.⁸² It is now known that many Volksdeutsche in the occupied territories were involved by the Nazis in various structures, including the police.⁸³ Therefore, Puch's work in the SD was quite possible. Unfortunately, there are no other documents in this case that indicate the beginning of the criminal prosecution of this person, or the lack of evidence of his cooperation with the Nazis.

Other Ukrainian local police officers are mentioned in a letter from the Deschênes Commission to Wiesenthal. This letter is dated 1 November 1985. The members of the commission asked Wiesenthal to provide them with more information about some individuals, including those who were in the ranks of the local auxiliary police. Thus, from the letter we can learn that Ivan Dik was the deputy chief of police in the city of Selidove in the Donetsk region, and that Ivan Shevtsov held the same position but in the city of Snizhne also in that region.⁸⁴ The letter does not contain any information about these individuals or their crimes. However, it does provide facts about other defendants. For example, Pyotr Plaka participated in the shooting of nine people in the Kharkiv region, and Myhailo Poltavets mocked civilians in the Sumy region.⁸⁵

Information about local police officers from this region can also be found in personal files. One of them was created by Anton Shpak, also known as Anatoliy Bilotserkivskiy. After the Second World War, he emigrated to Kanaly and in 1949 organised a branch of the Union of Ukrainians and a cell of the Ukrainian Revolutionary Democratic Party in Lyashyn.⁸⁶ In other words, he was also a fairly well-known person among the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada.

The central document of this case is a letter from Anatoly Dniproviy to Wiesenthal, dated 10 December 1983.⁸⁷ The letter once again emphasised the crimes of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) and focused on the figure of Bogdan Babiak, who was one of its leaders and later a well-known public figure in Montreal. The letter was enclosed with an article from the *Visti z Ukrainy* newspaper from March 1977. The article stated that, from the beginning of the occupation of Bila

82 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 691, "Dnepropetrovsk", part 3, letter, 14 January 1969.

83 Martin Christofer Din, "Radianski etnichni nimtsi i Holokost u Reikhskomisariati Ukraina, 1941–1944", in *Shoa v Ukraini: istoriia, svidchennia, uvichnennia*, eds. Reia Brandona and Vendi Lauer. (Kyiv: Dukh i litera, 2015).

84 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 4578, "Ukraine", part 6, 4.

85 *Ibid.*, 4–5.

86 "Bilotserkivskiy Anatolii Vasylovych", *Entsyklopediia suchasnoi Ukrainy*, last modified 18 May 2024. <https://esu.com.ua/article-40911>.

87 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 3769, "Shpak Anton (alias Anatol Belotserkovski)", letter, 10 December 1983.

Tserkva, Shpak joined the local auxiliary police and later rose to the position of deputy chief of police. In October 1941, according to the article, he was involved in the murder of a Jew in a place called the “Tovste tract”.⁸⁸ The letter and article prompted Wiesenthal to appeal to Bob Kaplan, then the attorney general of Canada, to find these individuals and clarify the circumstances set forth in these documents.⁸⁹ Thus, both defendants in the case, who were suspected of committing war crimes, were well-known members of the Ukrainian diaspora. There are no other documents that could confirm the suspicions in the case. Moreover, the response from the attorney general of Canada clearly states that, after checking the information on Shpak, no evidence of his participation in war crimes was found.⁹⁰

Also available in the archive of the VWI is the case file of Myhailo Borysenko. The case file reveals that, during the Nazi occupation, he was a member of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in Poltava and participated in the execution of local Jews in November 1941. This information was sent by Alex Krashenninikow to Wiesenthal.⁹¹ However, the source of these facts remains unknown. In the post-war period, a person with such data was found in Philadelphia in the United States. In April 1990, Wiesenthal consequently asked Sher to verify this information. However, the response of the director of the Center for Special Investigations is unknown as it is not in the file. At the same time, Wiesenthal continued to collect information about the possible criminal activities of Borysenko. In 1995, he received a response from the Yad Vashem archives. It contained copies of ChGK reports on the crimes of the Nazis and their accomplices in the Poltava region. These reports formed the basis of the relevant case,⁹² but there was no information about Borysenko and his crimes there either.

Conclusions

The analysis of Record Group I.1 from the VWI archive allowed me to identify four groups of sources containing information about Ukrainian military collaborators. These are documents of personal origin, archival materials, the press of different countries, and authors’ materials, both published ones and manuscripts. All these documents are placed in thematic files. The overwhelming majority of the collection consists of files on persons suspected of committing war crimes, including against the Jewish population. The bulk of these personal files concern German perpetrators. This is understandable, since the organisers and perpetrators of the Holocaust were mainly German officials of various levels. At the same time, there are also files on local perpetrators, including those from Ukraine, and it is now known that the Holocaust in Ukraine, like other Nazi crimes, was committed not only by Germans but also by local collaborators.

There were relatively few local collaborators who were involved in the Holocaust, but their criminal activities are still understudied. At the same time, the extensive work carried out by Wiesenthal was precisely intended to identify specific perpetrators and thus deprive supporters of the collective responsibility of Ukrainians of their arguments. This evidence was carefully collected by Wiesenthal and his col-

88 Ibid., *News from Ukraine*, no. 14, March 1977.

89 Ibid., letter, 1 April 1984.

90 Ibid., letter, 17 February 1995.

91 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 373, “Borysenko Mychajlo”, part 1, 1–2.

92 VWI-SWA, RG I.1, folder 3259, “Poltava”.

leagues and is today stored in the VWI archive. Among them are documents created with the support of the Soviet special services. They are an important source for studying the information and propaganda work. After all, the publications of Michael Hanusiak or the falsified biography of Metropolitan Skripnik are examples of such work.

Another group of cases presented in Record Group I.1 are materials documenting crimes on the territories of cities and towns. These include various documents concerning violence against Jews as well as the perpetrators of this violence. In such cases, one can find archival materials such as minutes of court hearings against suspected war criminals. As a rule, this information was important for the formation of suspicions against specific individuals, as well as for answering inquiries that came to Wiesenthal from different parts of the world.

From all these groups of sources and cases, two thematic blocks of information were identified. The first is about the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) and the alleged participation of its members in war crimes. The information in the VWI-SWA about this unit is mainly concentrated in various brochures, bulletins, and books. They differ in their information potential and purpose. There are openly pro-Soviet propaganda materials that were intended to accuse and discredit all Ukrainians who served in this military unit. Others are more academic, in the sense that they have a solid source base and unbiased conclusions. There is also interesting information about the SS Division (Galician) in various newspapers, mostly from the United States and Canada. These materials allow us to understand how the memory of this unit influenced Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the diaspora. Undoubtedly, the materials prepared by Wiesenthal for various judicial bodies are also important in this regard.

The second thematic block of information concerns the participation of local Ukrainian police officers in the Holocaust. This information is found both in the files of individuals and in the files of German punitive and repressive structures, such as the local police. Information about the involvement of Ukrainian police officers in the Holocaust can be found in various types of sources. These include eyewitness accounts, archival documents, and press materials. Some of the suspicions formed from these sources did not form the basis of criminal cases, but this does not mean that the facts provided by Wiesenthal are fiction. We know that local policemen were involved in the Holocaust during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, and therefore all information that covers such crimes should be carefully checked and, if confirmed, introduced into scholarly circulation.

The examples and cases given in the article allow us to see the potential of the materials collected by Wiesenthal. After all, he collected all the materials available to him, and today this collection of sources is of great research interest. When taking into account the open archives of the Soviet special services in Ukraine, the facts about the criminal activities of Ukrainian military collaborators collected in the VWI archive are quite typical for the period of the Nazi occupation of Ukraine. This mainly regards participation in military formations and repressive structures, information about specific crimes, and attempts criminals to avoid punishment. However, it is important that Wiesenthal exposed those criminals who were outside the jurisdiction of Soviet justice. That is, the evidence base he collected is of exceptional importance for an objective study of crimes against the civilian population during the years of the Nazi occupation of Ukraine.

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