

# S:I.M.O.N.

**S**HOAH:  
**I**NTERVENTION.  
**M**ETHODS.  
**D**OCUMENTATION.



## S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON.

S:I.M.O.N. is the open-access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI). It is committed to immediate open access for academic work. S:I.M.O.N. serves as a forum for discussion of various methodological approaches. The journal especially wishes to strengthen the exchange between researchers from different scientific communities and to integrate both the Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust into the different 'national' narratives. It also lays a special emphasis on memory studies and the analysis of politics of memory. The journal operates under the Creative Commons Licence CC-BY-NC-ND (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives). The copyright of all articles remains with the author of the article. The copyright of the layout and design of articles remains with S:I.M.O.N. Articles can be submitted in German or English.

S:I.M.O.N. ist das Open-Access-E-Journal des Wiener Wiesenthal Instituts für Holocaust-Studien (VWI). Es setzt sich für einen sofortigen offenen Zugang zur wissenschaftlichen Arbeit ein. S:I.M.O.N. dient als Diskussionsforum für verschiedene methodische Ansätze. Die Zeitschrift möchte insbesondere den Austausch zwischen ForscherInnen aus unterschiedlichen Forschungszusammenhängen stärken und sowohl die jüdische Geschichte als auch die Geschichte des Holocaust in die verschiedenen „nationalen“ Erzählungen integrieren. Ein besonderer Schwerpunkt liegt auch auf Ansätzen der Memory Studies und der Analyse der Geschichtspolitik. Die Zeitschrift arbeitet unter der Creative Commons-Lizenz CC-BY-NC-ND. Das Urheberrecht aller Artikel verbleibt beim Autor des Artikels. Das Urheberrecht für das Layout und die Gestaltung von Artikeln bleibt bei S:I.M.O.N. Artikel können in deutscher oder englischer Sprache eingereicht werden.

Vol. 12 (2025) No. 2

<https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

PUBLISHER | MEDIENINHABER & HERAUSGEBER

Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien (VWI) Forschung – Dokumentation – Vermittlung  
A-1010 Wien, Rabensteig 3, Österreich

CONTACT | KONTAKT

[simon@vwi.ac.at](mailto:simon@vwi.ac.at)

EDITORIAL TEAM | REDAKTION

Editor-in-chief | Chefredaktion: Éva Kovács (VWI)

Editors|RedakteurInnen: Raul Cârstocea (University of Leicester), Zuzanna Dziuban (Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History at ÖAW), Michal Frankl (Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR),

Marianne Windsperger (VWI)

Webmaster: Bálint Kovács

Copy Editor (English) | Lektor (Englisch): Dean Vuletic

Copy Editor (Deutsch) | Lektorin (Deutsch): Marianne Windsperger

Production editor: Marianne Windsperger, Teresa Preis

Layout of PDF | Grafiker: Hans Ljung

Open Access Assistant | Open-Access-Assistentin: Barbara Grzelak

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD |

INTERNATIONALER WISSENSCHAFTLICHER BEIRAT

Nanci Adler (Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies – NIOD, Amsterdam)

Natalia Aleksion (University of Florida, Gainesville)

Elisabeth Gallas (Leibniz-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur – Simon Dubnow, Leipzig)

Jürgen Matthäus (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington)

Dirk Rupnow (Universität Innsbruck)

David Silberklang (Yad Vashem – Internationale Holocaust-Gedenkstätte, Jerusalem)

ISSN: 2408-9192

In appreciation to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) for supporting this publication.



The Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) is funded by:

 Federal Ministry  
Education, Science  
and Research

 Federal Chancellery

 **Stadt  
Wien** | Kultur

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

---

- Alexandra Birch*  
**To the “City of Bread”?** 4  
Testimonial Perceptions of Holocaust Evacuation

- Roman Shliakhtych*  
**Ukrainian Military Collaborators** 22  
Information in the Archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute  
for Holocaust Studies

- Mirnes Sokolović*  
**From Avant-garde to the Yugoslav Literary Right** 41  
Correspondences Between Poetic Concepts and Fascism  
in the Magazine *Ideje*, 1934–1935

- Daniela Bartáková*  
**Power and Space** 58  
Detention Protocols and Criminal Proceeding Records  
of the Jewish Inhabitants in Protectorate Prague, 1939–1943

- Mark Lewis*  
**“Wheels and Cogs”** 84  
Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports 1941–1943  
Part 2

### ESSAY

---

- Hannah Riedler*  
**“Don’t Mention This to the Gestapo for Now”** 111  
Betrayal, Corruption, and Sexual Abuse in the Everyday  
Life of the *Umwandererzentralstelle* Litzmannstadt

### EVENT

---

- Irina Scherbakowa*  
**Stoff für die Erinnerung** 127  
Über die Ausstellung *Material. Das weibliche Gedächtnis des GULAGs*

Alexandra Birch

# To the “City of Bread”?

## Testimonial Perceptions of Holocaust Evacuation

### Abstract

Composers, poets, academics, and even the state Yiddish theatre, were all evacuated between 1941 and 1942 as part of the Soviet intelligentsia. Evacuated families and intellectuals are an emerging category of Holocaust survivors. Soviet citizens were evacuated not according to levels of danger, but rather to the material value to the state. A comparison between the transit of Soviet evacuation, including Gulag transit, and the forced movement of Jews during the Holocaust links the victim groups and reveals the inextricable overlaps between the Holocaust and the Gulag. In both cases, there was uncertain language about travel vaguely “east” to the unknown republics of the central Soviet Union and to the death camps of the *Generalgouvernement*. The Jews who survived in the evacuation to Central Asia also had the memory of Soviet deportations to Siberian detention, the Gulag, and to Russian camps from which few returned. A discussion of Jewish life in Tashkent and evacuee interactions with local Bukharian Jews reveals the difficulties of life in Tashkent, the contributions of Jews both in the military and in home production that challenge pejorative post-war notions of cowardly Jews hiding from the front, and the various factors which led to integration – or the lack thereof – in the Central Asian community. The overlap between the Holocaust and the Gulag, the discussion of life in Tashkent, and a testimonial reading of evacuation establishes the frameworks for the rise of post-war Stalinist antisemitism in the Soviet Union and the preservation of Yiddish culture in exile in Central Asia.

With the outbreak of the Second World War in the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of civilians immediately sought refuge in the Soviet interior. This transit inward built on centuries of Russian imperial exodus to Siberia and Central Asia, including colonisation of the space and the resettlement of criminal elements to the “periphery”. Evacuation from the German advance opened a new category of “evacuation” separate from that of the displaced people (“refugees” or *bezhenets*) following the First World War.<sup>1</sup> As Rebecca Manley discusses at length, there is a distinction between internal Soviet refugees and a more universalised refugee experience. The internal Soviet refugees were evacuees and belonged to a distinctly chaotic category of evacuation.<sup>2</sup> In Soviet documentation, wartime displacement was not referred to as removal but as “flight”.<sup>3</sup> Considering evacuation from the Holocaust relationally to the Gulag reveals that the apt comparison is not with Europe’s many refugees, as Anna Akhmatova has suggested in her *Poema bez goroya* (Poem Without a Hero).<sup>4</sup> Rather, there are blurry categories between survivors, evacuees, refugees, and political prisoners which complicate narratives of Holocaust and Gulag survivorship and post-war antisemitism. A detailed reading of evacuation testimonies builds on Man-

1 Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 7–8.

2 Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, introduction.

3 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) f. a-259, op. 40 d. 3028, 82–83.

4 Anna Akhmatova, *Poema bez goroya* (Moscow: Samizdat Publication, 1976).

ley's analysis, offering individual insights into these experienced and changing categories, as well as into life in Central Asia, and informing post-war subjectivities.

This testimonial reading also expands on the interactions of Ashkenazi Jews with their Central Asian counterparts and hints at Orientalist sentiments and the loneliness of evacuees. The Jews who survived in the evacuation to Central Asia also had the memory of Soviet deportations to Siberian detention, the Gulag, and to Russian camps from which few returned. Intellectuals were not evacuated for benign humanitarian concerns, but were able to leave in the initial, confusing bureaucratic upheaval of the initial days of Operation Barbarossa, along with the party leadership and civilians necessary for the war effort.<sup>5</sup> Most critically, the confusion and disorientation articulated in testimonies points to the changing categories of refugee, survivor, and evacuee, and the larger geopolitical forces which forced migration across the Soviet Union. Arbitrary Soviet bureaucracy and the disintegration of the party apparatus, combined with the enforcement of martial law and the rapid advancement of the German army, cost a large majority of Jews in the western borderlands their lives.<sup>6</sup> The evacuee experience in the Second World War was intertwined with the Russian imperial displacement of citizens, the resettlement and Russian colonisation of Central Asia, and the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Gulag transit. Even between western Soviet and Polish Jews, there were differing reactions to the German invasion based on age, perceptions of Communism, gender, and religiosity, which changed even across the 1940s.<sup>7</sup>

The evacuation history of Tashkent often largely ignores the experiences of Central Asian Jews, notably the Bukharian community, who interacted with Western Soviet and Polish evacuees. Similarly, the larger category of "evacuee" flattens the differing experiences of Soviet and Polish Jews in exile. For example, Polish Jewish evacuation has largely been integrated into Polish diasporic history and not broader Jewish or Soviet historiography.<sup>8</sup> Research by Albert Kaganovitch and Atina Grossmann reinforces the patriotism and military service of Bukharians and their willingness to host and welcome Ashkenazim, particularly when they saw religious commonality. Bukharian reactions directly counter the antisemitic idea that "Jews fought the war from Tashkent" and show the importance of Jewish military service from Central Asia. Furthermore, welcoming refugees and providing financial and material support for religious evacuees in Tashkent and Samarkand contributed to Jewish solidarity movements and the preservation of culture during the onslaught of the Holocaust. These local and individual preservation efforts, like welcoming a Chabad family or helping with an Ashkenazi wedding, were coupled with more official support like the relocation of the Yiddish theatre to Tashkent and the evacuation of intellectuals.

By drawing on testimonies from the Fortunoff Archive, the USC Shoah Foundation, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Bukharian Lens Project, a more complete picture of the evacuation experience emerges. This work builds on Manley's, Anna Shternshis', and Eliyana R. Adler's analyses, reinforcing the dis-

5 Anna Shternshis, "The Rear", in *Jews in the Soviet Union: A History*, vol. 3: *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe, 1939–1945*, eds. Oleg Budnitskii, David Engel, Gennady Estraiikh, and Anna Shternshis (New York: New York University Press, 2022), 213–215.

6 Shternshis, "The Rear", 214.

7 Eliyana R. Adler, "I Became a Nomad in the Land of Nomadic Tribes: Polish Jewish Refugees in Central Asia and Perceptions of the Other", in *Distrust, Animosity, Solidarity: Jews and Non-Jews during the Holocaust in the USSR*, eds. Christoph Dieckmann and Arkadi Zeltser (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem: 2021), 243–277.

8 Atina Grossmann, Mark Edele, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 13.

orientation of evacuation and the changing self-identification with categories like “refugee” and “evacuee”. Testimonies also highlight underlying ethnic and regional tensions, like those related to Asiatic perceptions of Central Asia that lingered in the Russian imperial consciousness, and any residual Jewish associations to Central Asia which existed in the pre-war period.

### The Mythic Steppe – Flight and Bukharians in the Jewish *Zeitgeist*

Decisions to leave Poland and the western Soviet Union were made quickly amid panicked uncertainty. This was further complicated by gender and class dynamics, as well as the memory of previous wars, and if the advancing Germans or Soviets were more perceptually dangerous.<sup>9</sup> Evacuees left family behind, and they were often the sole survivors of Polish and Ukrainian families. Fritzi S. said “young people had to save themselves, so we went to the trains” on 2 July 1941, narrowly missing the arrival on 5 July of the Germans who, with Ukrainian collaborators, killed all of the Jews in the city inside the kosher slaughterhouse.<sup>10</sup> Repeated testimonies point to the warmth of Tashkent and refuge in the “city of bread”, referencing a popular 1923 book by Aleksandr Neverov, *Tashkent City of Bread*.<sup>11</sup> Polish Jews specifically referenced the formation of Władisław Anders’ Polish army in exile, the desire to enlist, and the possibilities of further flight via Iran to Israel. Although a small minority joined this branch of the Polish army in exile, most were discouraged by humiliating patriotism tests from lower-ranked Polish officers, which kept the Jews in Tashkent and Central Asia.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to personal decisions to continue to Tashkent, official mechanisms pushed people further east. From 1939, the Soviets realised that they had an enormous Jewish refugee problem dating from the Tsarist Pale of Settlement, and the Soviet Friendship Treaty which created a new demarcation line along the Bug River. The decision to send Jews to the interior from 1939 was thus part of a larger, elaborate set of rules on who could leave and where they could go to, or “passportisation” ostensibly to clarify refugees’ legal status.<sup>13</sup> Theoretically, the evacuation was meant to be organised, with “spontaneous self evacuation” heavily discouraged.<sup>14</sup> There was a large, overarching plan in 1942: from March to July 1942, intellectuals were specifically evacuated to Kursk then onward to Saratov and the Tatar Republic, and from July to September 1942 more intellectuals were evacuated.<sup>15</sup> In Ukraine, men, tractors, draught animals, and grain were evacuated first, whereas the Tatar evacuations first sent children eastward.<sup>16</sup> The Georgian republic wanted to send arriving evacuees onward to Central Asia, for example.<sup>17</sup> The initial zone of evacuation was to central Russia, but then the evacuation council expanded the possible areas to include Siberia, Central Asia, and Kazakhstan, with the export of “Sovietising elements”

9 Eliyana R. Adler, *Survival on the Margins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 15–30.

10 Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

11 Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 186.

12 *Ibid.*, 187.

13 Budnitskii, Engel, Estraiikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 8–9, 31.

14 Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 48–54.

15 Glavnoe Pereseincheskoe Upravlenie pri Soviete Ministrov RSFSR, fond A-327, RG-22.027 M. Accession 2011.18.

16 “Iz istorii Velikoi otechestvennoi voiny: nachalo voiny”, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 7 (1990): 207.

17 GARF. A-259, op. 40 d. 3037, 20.

being an added benefit.<sup>18</sup> Could one even flee? Having documents and being on the Soviet side of the border at the outbreak of war were also enormously decisive. Felix F., who worked in the Yiddish theatre, was caught trying to return to his family in Poland from Moscow, but he had a Soviet employment card and was sent back to the Soviet Union and ultimately evacuated.<sup>19</sup> Gilda Z. told her father that she wanted to flee to Russia with her youngest brother, and she was given the option by “White Russians” of taking the Soviet passport and continuing on to Brest Litovsk or going back to Poland.<sup>20</sup> For Evelyn E., she happened to be visiting her grandparents for Shabbat, and they were able to all evacuate as they lived on the Soviet side of the border.<sup>21</sup>

The histories which focus on Polish-Jewish exile pay limited attention to Jewish experiences and local interactions in Central Asia, the importance of solidarity with Central Asian Jews, and the possibility of other historical mythologies about Tashkent beyond the single book by Neverov. Eisenstein described the evacuation as a “journey into the unknown”, but there are historical mythologies about both the Steppe and Central Asia which lingered in Soviet and Jewish consciousness.<sup>22</sup> The perception of a warm, welcoming, Jewish Central Asia has origins in the Purim story, which approximates the persecutions of Xerxes I in the fourth century CE, ultimately resulting in a diasporic community of Persian-speaking Jews in Central Asia.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, panicked Polish and Western Soviet Jews did not plan an exile to Tashkent based on the Central Asian Jewish flight in the fourth century. However, the mythos of this region as a place of plenty and warmth, and not being completely foreign, is not exclusively traceable to a book from the 1920s. Why did Jews choose the warmth of Tashkent over the colony allocated to them in Birobidzhan? Anders’ Army was not the most geographically expeditious path to Iran nor to Israel from the western Soviet Union. Finally, when Jews arrived in Tashkent, their interactions with Bukharians were not as “intermittent” as the Polish testimonies suggest.<sup>24</sup> Religious Jewish interaction in Tashkent and across Uzbekistan was a significant solidarity movement which continued through the Soviet destruction of evacuated Jewish institutions and even into the post-Soviet diaspora, with strong ties between the Chabad-Lubavitch and Bukharian communities. Combined, the motivations of Jews to evacuate specifically to Tashkent, combined with the Bukharian and local preservations of Jewish culture, create a more complete picture of Jewish life in exile.

In testimonies, the description of Tashkent as a city of warmth seems to mean both the climate and the welcoming safety of the Soviet interior. David S. discussed the literal cold of his initial evacuation to a transit camp and “extreme Polish antisemitism” before taking a train to Tashkent “where it was warm”. He described more than the climate, saying that Tashkent was full of “beautiful places, nice, warm, just like Iran”.<sup>25</sup>

18 Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 43–44.

19 Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

20 Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

21 Evelyn E. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1791), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

22 Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 119.

23 Michael David Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 396.

24 Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 201.

25 David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.



Tashkent was “like a paradise”.<sup>26</sup> Leopold S. initially mentioned the book *Tashkent: City of Bread* when leaving Arkhangelsk, but continued on to Ferghana past Kazakhstan, where stations had “mountains of grain” because it was a “Silk Road city [where] they grow mulberry trees there”.<sup>27</sup> Central Asia generally registered as a land of plenty and refuge. Joseph L. continued onward from Ufa, not sure that Tashkent was “tropical, but it was hot”, to search for accommodation away from mosquitoes and where there was an “overabundance of fruits: sweet melons, marmalades, and juices”.<sup>28</sup> Bianca B. went south because of the climate and fruits, to the “magic city of Samarkand”, as there “everything will be beautiful”.<sup>29</sup>

Evacuating Jews were aware that there was a Jewish population in Tashkent. Anna S. from Minsk decided to go to Tashkent “because it was warm, and they had food and clothes”, but also because “many Jewish people were in Tashkent. The Jewish population there is very different than in Minsk.”<sup>30</sup> This survivor was not referring to the evacuated Polish population, but rather to the knowledge that there were already Jews in Central Asia. When pressed, she said “[i]t’s the same religion, they call us *Ashkenazik*; they are different in many ways”, and she clarified to the interviewer that they are “from Bukhara”.<sup>31</sup> David S. knew before he evacuated that Tashkent was like Iran, and about his time in Samarkand he said that “[t]here are lots of Jews there [in Bukhara], actually they were the first ones there. They look like Arabs, and these countries are mostly Muslim, but Bukhara is in Uzbekistan, but not Muslim.”<sup>32</sup> Matthew T. considered possible avenues out of Poland, including Chicago and the growing Zionist movement under statesman and marshal Józef Piłsudski, but then mentioned flight east to Central Asia and Siberia, “where there were already Jewish cities”, as a possibility under the Soviets.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, the discussion about Tashkent was not just about its literal warmth and food resources, but situated the city in a longer historical continuum. The recurring pattern for Jewish flight seems to come from a combination of hope for success with a diminished fear of Soviet reality.<sup>34</sup> The perception of Central Asia in testimonies links Tashkent to longer Jewish patterns of flight and to Russian imperial depictions of orientalism, refuge, and exoticism. Fritzi S. from Romania described the climate as “like Israel”, while Israel M. from Poland said that Uzbekistan was “near Persia” and full of “old, old, cities”, referring to Samarkand.<sup>35</sup> Israel M. mentioned this proximity to Iran again later, and that travel to Israel was possible via Iran.<sup>36</sup> In his testimony, he specifically and repeatedly mentioned Israel, rather than Mandate Palestine. Continuing on to Iran and then Palestine was not only mentioned in the context of Anders’ Army, but as a viable path to safety. As Ben S. remembered, “after

26 Alexander Ameisen, Interview 51752, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 12 September 2001, Accessed 14 February 2024.

27 Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).

28 Joseph L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 891), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

29 Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

30 Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

31 Ibid.

32 David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082).

33 Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).

34 Budnitskii, Engel, Estraiikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 111.

35 Israel M. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1273) and Fritzi S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2604).

36 Ibid.



Stalingrad, we decided and wanted to go to Tashkent, first because Tashkent was the city of bread and it's close to Iran and we could maybe continue to Palestine".<sup>37</sup> Peter G. was able to do this by bribing a train conductor to go "somewhere warm" before continuing on to Palestine in 1946 as a Polish citizen.<sup>38</sup> Joining the army was not the goal of this transit to Palestine, and I suggest that this continuation along a geographically inefficient route to Tashkent, Iran, and then Israel has a lingering connection to Jewish survival and historical displacement from Israel.

Finally, the Jewish evacuation to Tashkent was accompanied by a larger cultural evacuation from Soviet capitals, including Moscow, Minsk, Vilna, and Kyiv, where cultural figures were evacuated with extreme priority along with military material. Soviet citizens were evacuated not according to levels of danger, but rather to the material value to the state, alongside military equipment.<sup>39</sup> Composers, poets, academics, and even the Yiddish theatre, were all evacuated as part of the Soviet intelligentsia between 1941 and 1942. The refugee policy was intended to help the country prepare for defence, so theatres evacuated and in exile were an additional benefit – a Sovietising element in the republics far from Moscow and an acceleration of the *korenisatsiia*, or "nativisation", policy which prioritised recognisable national idioms in Sovietising cultural products and in education.<sup>40</sup> The cultural evacuations of composers like Mieczyslaw Weinberg, actors like Solomon Mikhoels, and writers like Der Nister preserved Yiddish culture in exile, as such figures wrote cultural testaments of their experiences as (sole) survivors infused with sonic and literary fragments of the lives they left in the West. Evacuation became a part of *Yiddishkeit*, another displacement of a mercurial people.<sup>41</sup>

### Life in Tashkent

Tashkent was not the "city of bread" that refugees were expecting, and typhus combined with impossible living conditions and dysfunctional systems forced many refugees to move on further to collective farms or other cities in Uzbekistan. Some had hints before arriving, like Rachel L., who was told she was going somewhere called "the hungry Steppe" when she was herded onto a train in Belarus.<sup>42</sup> Discrimination against refugees was initially largely resource driven and generally xenophobic, not specifically antisemitic.<sup>43</sup> The hunger which affected refugees was shared by the local population and by evacuating non-Jewish Poles and Russians. Evacuees were aware that "the Uzbeks were hungry themselves – they were resentful" and that "they didn't have enough rice to eat, so they wouldn't give us rice".<sup>44</sup> Matthew T. said that Tashkent was a disaster with nothing to eat, people stealing in order to have enough food, and "black bread in hot water instead of even a cup of tea".<sup>45</sup>

37 Ben S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1344), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

38 Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 760).

39 Zvi Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 233.

40 GARF f. 8418, op. 2, d. 99, 23.

41 Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century: New Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 194.

42 Rachel Lewin-Liberow, Interview 31941, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 28 May 1997, accessed 8 February 2024.

43 Albert Kaganovitch, *Exodus and Its Aftermath: Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Interior* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022), 151.

44 Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030).

45 Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).

Because Soviet authorities had restrictions on resettlement to major cities, Tashkent was not necessarily the final stop for many evacuees. However, for those too weak to continue after the long journey, a brief stint in the hospital in Tashkent often meant that they remained in the city for some time with their travelling compatriots, or that they were assigned to nearby collective farms upon discharge. Mary L. was initially in the hospital before she was taken out by her engineer husband to a communal apartment – her privileges both in the hospital and on release were guaranteed by her husband’s valuable job.<sup>46</sup> Renata B. was able to exchange gold for good food and remain with her mother because her mother was immediately taken to the hospital when they arrived in Tashkent.<sup>47</sup> Again, in this testimony, there was not only a medical necessity to remain in Tashkent but a hint of corruption or privilege from evacuees who still managed to retain a substantial amount of gold by this point in their journey. On arrival, Sala M. was quarantined with a temperature and concerns about typhus, along with her mother and sister. She subsequently thought that her mother was poisoned and killed by hospital officials, so she left with her sister to live with another Jewish couple who fed them and gave them clothes.<sup>48</sup> Louis K. was concerned about being arrested by the KGB after seeing his uncle arrested prior to the war, and when he was in Tashkent, he went with the other Polish children to a Russian orphanage after being released from an initial stint in the hospital, so as not to bring attention to his Jewish identity.<sup>49</sup>

Life was particularly difficult for evacuated women, who comprised nearly two-thirds of the evacuees.<sup>50</sup> Most of the women in exile were widows and almost all had small children.<sup>51</sup> The loss of children during transit and in the harsh winters and poor living conditions was noted by most survivors with great emotion: “we lost so many children”.<sup>52</sup> Khava Irs from Latvia gave birth outside in minus 40-degree weather because nobody would let her into a house. In Nizhnie Kumashki, a refugee named Bukhanova gave birth in a stable, and in Pikhtulina, Fruma Belinson and her four children were tossed out on to the street in freezing temperatures.<sup>53</sup> When the grandfather of Evelyn E. died during the journey as a result of refusing to eat non-Kosher food, her grandmother was responsible for burying him in a *tallit*. Faced with the unimaginable burden of raising a small child alone, the grandmother repeatedly put Evelyn in an orphanage in order to give them both a better chance at survival, before they returned together to Poland in 1946.<sup>54</sup>

Shortages of food and basic supplies meant that almost all evacuees had to have secondary incomes or trade on the black market in order to survive, and a sizeable population of people who were evacuated were afterwards arrested for sabotage and theft. Morris W. arrived to Samarkand and was allocated work in a factory, before

46 Mary Ludner-Kaletsky, Interview 54486, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 16 June 2000, accessed 8 February 2024.

47 Renata Breit, Interview 5016, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 17 August 1995, accessed 12 February 2024.

48 Sala Mydlak, Interview 19231, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 27 August 1996, accessed 10 February 2024.

49 Louis Kadlovski, Interview 39796, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 19 March 1998, accessed 8 February 2024.

50 Shternshis, “The Rear”, 249.

51 Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).

52 Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).

53 Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 152–153.

54 Holocaust Testimony of Evelyn E. (HVT 1791), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

being accused of sabotage and deported to a labour camp near Dzhambul.<sup>55</sup> Renee S. helped a young couple with their children as an ersatz nanny, before the husband was arrested for selling Tsarist gold coins (*Nikolashka*) and sent to forced labour. Renee then turned to black-market jobs, selling stolen sugar and bread to help support herself and the children.<sup>56</sup> Esther G.'s mother did the same for her, and bought food on the black market to survive. She had greater success with Uzbek people than with Russian people, and they preferred to trade with Muslims, although they lived with Russians.<sup>57</sup> David S. bought and watered down alcohol to sell on the black market or to trade to *kolkhozniks* for food.<sup>58</sup> Solomon S. said that, amid the disease, malaria, and food shortages in Tashkent, "the only way to survive was to steal where you work. All of Russia was stealing!" He acknowledged the risks of black-market distribution, that everything had to remain secret, but said that anyone who survived was doing it.<sup>59</sup>

Bukharian-Ashkenazi interaction was therefore limited by two primary factors. First, as Kaganovitch suggests, there were religious and cultural reasons which fostered Jewish solidarity and led to Orthodox Bukharians offering refuge to Ashkenazim. Second, concerns over resources and disease meant that Bukharian-Ashkenazi solidarity was greater outside of the initial arrivals and urban integration in Tashkent and was more common in interactions in Samarkand and other cities to which refugees continued. Bukharian Jews across Uzbekistan largely preferred to house religious Jews first because they were concerned about being denounced to the Soviet authorities by the arriving Ashkenazim for keeping Jewish practices in the home. Yet, how could religious Jews practice as evacuees in exile? Material concerns for safety and food made religious adherence a low priority for many evacuees who were "too afraid to even close their eyes at night".<sup>60</sup> Bukharians feared repressions like those from 1937 to 1939 and increasingly guarded community practices from Shabbat to *kashrut* to life-cycle events like *brit milah* as secret rituals that were not to be shared outside of protected knowledge spaces.<sup>61</sup> Communism and Judaism were antithetical, and any public displays of ritual were dangerous.<sup>62</sup> Bukharians were also concerned about non-religious Jews bringing non-kosher products into their homes or corrupting children with secular influences.<sup>63</sup> It is also possible that, because Tajiks and Uzbeks distanced themselves from refugees, so did Bukharians who were suspicious of Russian and Polish Jews.<sup>64</sup> Still, as Manley correctly points out, Jews were more welcomed by earlier refugees or Bukharians than by fellow, anti-semitic evacuees.<sup>65</sup> However, religious solidarity also echoes a larger divide in the survivor community between religious and secular survivors. Those who were reli-

55 Morris Winter, Interview 28839, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 25 February 1997, accessed 13 February 2024.

56 Renee Stern, Interview 25239, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 30 January 1997, accessed 10 February 2024.

57 Esther Goldfarb, Interview 58079, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 17 June 2001, accessed 10 February 2024.

58 David Steiner, Interview 26961, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 12 February 1997, accessed 13 February 2024.

59 Solomon Scharf, Interview 2866, VHA-USC.

60 Renee Stern, Interview 25239, VHA-USC.

61 Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 182, 186.

62 Alexander Ameisen described his *chuppah* as a very quick wedding where four people helped him then immediately ran away as it was still dangerous: "a communist is not a Jew". Alexander Ameisen, Interview 51752, VHA-USC.

63 Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 182, 186.

64 *Ibid.*, 185.

65 Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 230.

gious and maintained elements of ritual practice during evacuation or in camps largely credited their survival to an unwillingness to break Jewish law. Some of this sentiment is echoed in survivor testimonies, so that their “purpose was to survive as religious Jews, not just to survive” and that to “go with the stream, would have meant annihilation”.<sup>66</sup>

Bukharian collective memory considers that Bukharians helped Ashkenazim during the war, and the relationship between religious Ashkenazi movements, like the Chabad-Lubavitch one, and the Bukharian community were strengthened during the war.<sup>67</sup> Rena Yeliazarova from Panjakent near Samarkand said that her father saw taking in Jewish refugees as a “religious obligation” and remembered inviting religious Ashkenazim to their home for holidays “like they became part of the family”.<sup>68</sup> Markiel Gavrilovich Kulangiev’s family housed four Ashkenazi families in their house in Samarkand where they “lived very amicably”, and Sofia Davidovna Pavlanova and Amnon Davidovich Abramov housed Jewish evacuees, including two medical students, in Ferghana and provided them with jobs in a food warehouse.<sup>69</sup> Aniuta L. lived for ten years in Tashkent, and she said that the worst conditions provided were by non-Uzbeks, and favourably remembered the Kashgir and Bukharian Jews as being religious and full of kindness (“where the Bukharian Jews went, European Jews went”) with a large yard and two holidays a year.<sup>70</sup> Growing Jewish solidarity and national self-awareness led to synagogues being opened in fifty-three districts of the Soviet Union between 1943 and 1947, with new Bukharian synagogues in Stalinabad in 1943 and Bukhara in 1945.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the prevailing Bukharian collective memory of helping many Jews, attitudes to Ashkenazim were varied.<sup>72</sup> Irwin L. said that the locals in Tashkent would not even let them too close because they were full of lice, and Berry G. also avoided disease in Tashkent and continued on to Samarkand “where they spoke Jewish”.<sup>73</sup> The attitude toward Uzbeks was largely positive: in Tashkent “we were surrounded by wonderful people, Uzbek people, who were very conscientious, very friendly, and very hospitable”.<sup>74</sup> Most had not even known, prior to their arrival, that there were even Jews in Central Asia. Anna S. said that initially she saw Bukharians and “thought they were Uzbeki, but they didn’t want to show that they are Jewish. I think they had a synagogue but it wasn’t official.”<sup>75</sup> Adel R. said that it is mostly Muslims who lived in Tashkent: “they’re like the Arabs, the same thing”.<sup>76</sup> Bianca B. echoed the separation of Bukharians and that they were first identifiable by their Bukharian kippah. She said Bukhara was “like a ghetto, not because they were separate from Muslims, but because they were really Kosher”. With this evacuee, the Bukharians shared only

66 Rachel Lewin-Liberow, Interview 31941, VHA-USC. In a later part of the interview, she says a cousin without a large family “wasted her years” not being religious, and that anything other than orthodoxy is a shame.

67 Ibid., 181. For example, eight Chabad families lived in Avram Aminov’s courtyard during the war.

68 Manashe Khaimov and Daniel Allen, “Bukharian Lens Project 2014 – JCCA’s Bukharian Teen Lounge”, *YouTube*, 3 July 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=atQSR\\_R\\_Yv8A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atQSR_R_Yv8A), accessed 17 November 2023.

69 Ibid.

70 Aniuta Leibman, Interview 40816, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 28 April 1998, accessed 21 January 2024.

71 Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 180.

72 Ibid., 184.

73 Holocaust Testimony of Betty G. (HVT 4150), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library; Holocaust Testimony of Irwin L. (HVT 2755).

74 Donia Meiler, Interview 37009, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 14 October 1997, accessed 10 February 2024.

75 Anna S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2514).

76 Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 2 February 1997, accessed 21 January 2024.

some bread and two eggs, but were otherwise not helpful, and she and that her family had “no connection whatsoever to Bukharians – all the Polish Jews kept together”.<sup>77</sup> I also suggest that the most immediate identification of Jews would have been language rather than dress or custom, given the danger of openly practicing Judaism in the Soviet Union and during the war. For Jews immersed in Yiddish culture in the western Soviet Union, Russian and Bukhori speaking Jews would not have registered as Jews without some identifiable overlap in religious practice. Aniuta L. said as much: “in Uzbekistan, it’s customary to speak your own language, only for Russians was Yiddish a problem, like how Uzbeks spoke Uzbek”.<sup>78</sup> Farsi-based Bukhori would have been unrecognisable to Yiddish speakers, with an entirely different set of cultural practices of Judaism (*minhag*).

### “The Jews Should Have Been Abandoned to Hitler”: Antisemitism in Exile

By August 1942, official mentions of antisemitism had reached Lavrentii Beria, and locals even expressed the desire that Hitler would exterminate the Jews to help solve housing issues resulting from the mass migration to Central Asia.<sup>79</sup> A large influx of largely poor, Polish-Jewish refugees helped fuel post-war antisemitism in the non-metropolitan Soviet Union while, simultaneously, evacuations of intellectuals like Mikhoels bolstered Jewish solidarity and interests until the post-war liquidation of Jewish institutions.<sup>80</sup> Attitudes towards Jews were worse in exile than to other refugees, and many people in the eastern regions of the Soviet Union had never seen Jews, particularly the stereotypical Hassids from the western part of the country.<sup>81</sup> Kaganovitch divides this antisemitism into two categories: first, the notion that Jews were disloyal or untrustworthy or lacking in patriotism; and, second, that Jews participated in institutions of power, which ergo led to failures of domestic policy in the Soviet Union.<sup>82</sup>

Simcha S. served in the Soviet army before being demobilised, in 1939, because he was not a Soviet citizen. He was deemed untrustworthy according to Stalinist policy and sent to Central Asia in 1941.<sup>83</sup> Matthew T. attempted to join the Red Army after two people from Kishinev tried to steal his cotton, but the army would not take him with a Jewish passport. He later changed his passport for a Polish passport at the first opportunity.<sup>84</sup> Although a number of sites along the way were army organisational centres, like Poltava, the experience of many evacuees was that the government would not take Jews “as they didn’t trust them”, and these evacuees instead continued on to work on collective farms. Jews returned to Poland the way they evacuated, on cattle cars with as much food as they could take, often on a multi-week journey to homes where they were no longer welcome.<sup>85</sup> Even when Jews were able to join the Red Army, they were faced by tremendous antisemitism, and they often had to join

77 Bianca B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1597).

78 Aniuta Leibman, Interview 40816, VHA-USC.

79 BG Kostyrchenko, ed., *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm v SSSR: Ot nachala do kul’minatsii 1938–1953* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2005), 33.

80 Fitzpatrick, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 133–161.

81 Kaganovitch, *Exodus and its Aftermath*, 154.

82 Ibid.

83 Simcha S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1407), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

84 Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349).

85 Adel Rosh, Interview 26469, VHA-USC.

different divisions to find one in which they were safe.<sup>86</sup> Some Jews served in all-Jewish battalions and even assigned religious meaning to their service. Shamuël Manievich Abramov from Samarkand served alongside two brothers, both of whom were killed in an entirely Bukharian squad. Gavriel Yusupovich Kalantarov was completely surrounded while serving in a unit that was mixed, with Jews and non-Jews, and used religious Jewish language to describe his salvation from that situation. At the age of nineteen, Boris Rafaelovich Ishakov saw the draft as *pkuah nefesh*, or that to save one life is to save the world. Solomon Ishakovich Yusupov remembered being treated and helped by locals as a soldier of the Red Army, and not even recognised as a Jew.<sup>87</sup>

Outside of the military, Jews faced antisemitism from their Polish and western Soviet compatriots with whom they were evacuated. Felix F. said that, in Central Asia, he encountered antisemitism because there Jews were blamed for the war, and he was frequently called “Abrahamic” as a slur while living in Tashkent. He remembers being denied positions because his passport indicated Jewish rather than Polish ethnicity.<sup>88</sup> When Michael G. encountered a Pole en route back home to Poland, he posed as a fellow Polish soldier and asked what happened to the Jews. The soldier casually replied “oh, we killed them all”, and he described the Holocaust in graphic detail before advising Michael G. to continue to the American zone.<sup>89</sup>

By 1949, 230,700 Jews had repatriated to Poland, despite it being a vast graveyard of stolen homes, murdered families, and former concentration camps.<sup>90</sup> Throughout the war, there were several possibilities for repatriation to Poland or to claim either Polish or Soviet citizenship, notably the 1943 Polish break with the Soviet government after the exposure of Katyn, and the 1946 final orders for Polish repatriation under Stalin.<sup>91</sup> Polish Jews who survived in exile were in many ways stuck in a liminal state, as neither victims nor survivors, unable to fully process their own difficult experiences of evacuation while grieving the complete destruction of their home communities and families.<sup>92</sup> Acceptance of passports was also an unknown, like for Bernard O., who “heard a little about Katyn in Tashkent” but who ultimately refused Soviet papers and was arrested and sent to the Gulag for a lack of any current documents.<sup>93</sup> Gilda Z. and her friend who was posing as her husband were also sent to Arkhangelsk Oblast for hard labour when they refused Soviet passports and asked to return to Poland during evacuation.<sup>94</sup> Felix F. also describes the clear choice to accept a Soviet passport: “if not accepting Soviet citizenship it was back to Poland or

86 Ben S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1344).

87 These four testimonies come from the Bukharian Lens Project from 2014, directed by Manashe Khaimov with the goal of linking previous generations to new generations of teenagers and emphasising the heroism of Bukharians and survival during the Second World War.

88 Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).

89 Michael G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1880), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

90 Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 201.

91 Paul Allen, *Katyn: Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010). Repatriation remains a contested term, and it is one being reclaimed in Polish consciousness, as it was also the euphemistic Soviet name given to the mass deportations of Poles eastward.

92 John Goldlust, “Neither ‘Victims’ nor ‘Survivors’: Polish Jews Reflect on Their Wartime Experiences in the Soviet Union During the Second World War”, in *Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1939–1959): History and Memory of Deportation, Exile and Survival*, eds. Katharina Friedla and Markus Nesselrodt (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2022), 214–235.

93 Bernard Organek, Interview 52285, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 13 June 1990, accessed 16 February 2024.

94 Gilda Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3030), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.



put on a cattle car to Siberia labelled as ‘enemies of the people’.<sup>95</sup> Simcha S. “correctly” chose the Soviet passport when offered, and he went to the Russian interior to work alongside Gulag prisoners as a mine worker.<sup>96</sup> By June 1940, 70,000 to 78,000 Jews had been sent to the Gulag or the “Soviet hinterlands” for refusing Soviet passports.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the difficulty of evacuation, both in transit and in life on the collective farms, a number of survivors credited the Soviet government with their survival, laid the responsibility of the Holocaust squarely with the occupying Germans, and had more difficulty disentangling Soviet and local perpetration. For many the red star and triumph over the swastika was a sign of hope, and even Stalin remains a nostalgic figure for some.<sup>98</sup> When David S. returned to Lublin, having heard about the Holocaust, he said for the Polish, “when the Bolsheviks were there, from the first and second World War, they kept [antisemitism] under control, but when the Germans came, it all came out, blossoming again”.<sup>99</sup>

### Walking Like Human Corpses: Gulag Prisoners or Evacuees?

Another mechanism to understand the overlapping groups of evacuees, survivors, and refugees is to include the perspectives of survivors victimised both under the Gulag system and in flight from the Nazi Holocaust. This comparison also supports Eliyana Adler’s argument that the decision to flee was based on numerous factors, including gender and psychological proximity to previous wars. Complicating this were the Jews who survived because they were in the Gulag, or the Jews who were arrested and sent to the Gulag while in evacuation. Adding to Adler’s claims about the myriad factors leading to flight was the fear of the KGB and arrest, which was held by Jews who had already interacted with official Soviet policy. Jews remembered the threat of pogroms from the imperial period as well as the threat of the Russian-Soviet penal system which “nobody survived”.<sup>100</sup> Facing these real dangers was often not preferable to the abstract danger of the advancing Germans who were perceptually civilised. Indeed, some of the same Jews fleeing to Tashkent by 1942 were departing not from Poland, but from the Gulags of the 1920s and 1930s. Finally, even after initial flight, evacuees continued to interact with the Gulag: rampant corruption in Tashkent and the necessity of black-market trade for food often meant that Jews were sent on to labour camps for theft before the war had concluded.<sup>101</sup> One “had to take their chances with the black-market – do whatever to survive!”<sup>102</sup> Testimonies provide insight into the motivations to leave, the conditions of evacuation, and the self-assigned perceptions of survivorship and life in exile. Through a critical

95 Felix F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1287).

96 Simcha S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1407).

97 Budnitskii, Engel, Estraiikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 33.

98 Rita H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT. 2012) Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. Fryda Bland received a kiss on the cheek from Stalin in Moscow at a post-war meeting of workers, and in her testimony she credited him with both victory and Jewish survival: Fryda Bland, Interview 55083, VHA-USC.

99 David S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 3082).

100 Zlata G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1492), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

101 Hilda Busch, Interview 33714, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 28 August 1997, accessed 13 February 2024.

102 Bernard Organek, Interview 52285, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 13 June 1990, accessed 16 February 2024.



reading, traces of Nazi and Soviet terror are evident in these testimonies, emphasising the complicated decisions to evacuate, the view of safety in the Soviet Union, and the lingering antisemitism which would follow evacuees in the post-war period.

There is a difficulty in classifying “Gulag survivors” and “Holocaust survivors” among evacuees. Former prisoners often remained and joined established refugee networks in Central Asia. The inverse was also common: there were Jews who were initially evacuees before they participated in black-market activities or other minor infractions which earned them time in the Gulag until or beyond the end of the war. In comparative memory politics, the sentiment shared by Julius Margolin and others is that “Hitler killed so many Jews, that there is no need to add to his count the victims of Stalin”.<sup>103</sup> The flawed definition of the Holocaust as murder in the camps of Jewish victims has been heavily contested, challenged, and complicated since the 1990s.<sup>104</sup> Approaching these erroneous and simplified claims of Nazi apologists with more nuance and adding the expanded victim groups of the Holocaust, including refugees and Soviet POWs, reinforces a theoretical understanding of the Holocaust.

In Holocaust testimony which overlaps directly with the Gulag, there is a clear intersection between Soviet terror and Holocaust perpetration. Matthew T. from Tavian, Poland, who was evacuated via Ukraine, said that people had to decide if they would “flee west to escape Stalin”, and that “to be sent to Siberia is how people survived” – it “could be a blessing”.<sup>105</sup> He also said that the Ukrainians welcomed the Germans because they had such a hard time under Stalin with hunger, starvation, and churches being confiscated. Later, when he was in Tashkent, he says that the *kolkhoz* where he worked was where Stalin used to send the peasants to pick cotton as a punishment.<sup>106</sup> Meyer G., who was sent to a labour camp after his evacuation to Yangiyul in Uzbekistan, mentions the hierarchy among prisoners, that he was sent to the camps “along with the people who were specifically taken in 1937”.<sup>107</sup> For those who survived both the Holocaust and Gulag, we get a sense of Sovietisation and the impact of re-education – a double eradication of a Jewish self, first in the Holocaust or during evacuation, and then through Sovietisation. Solomon S., who built a custom oven for *matzah* for Passover when he was in Tashkent, said that after his time in Siberia, he became an avowed communist, and that the Soviets never touched religion – everything was just meant to be equal under a socialist system.<sup>108</sup> By 1940, the gamble for many Soviet Jews was between a death sentence under National Socialism, but with the hope of outliving their executioners, or life in prison under the Soviets.<sup>109</sup>

Israel M. described the situation succinctly: “[e]ither the Jewish people were deported by the Russians when they occupied Poland to Siberia and they were in labour camps, or the people who ran away voluntarily came to the southern part of Russia, the exact opposite, which was very hot”.<sup>110</sup> There were three categories of people in the Soviet Union: people who were in prison, people in prison, and people who

103 Julius Margolin, *Podróż do krainy zeków* (Wolowicz: Czarne, 2013).

104 Ernst Nolte, “Marxismus und Nationalsozialismus”, *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983): 389–417.

105 Matthew T. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2349), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

106 Ibid.

107 Meyer Galler, Interview 52318, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 13 December 1989, accessed 8 February 2024.

108 Solomon Scharf, Interview 2866, Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, 28 May 1998, accessed 20 January 2024.

109 David Engel, “New Lands, New Subjects,” in *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 33.

110 Israel M. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 1273), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

would soon be in prison.<sup>111</sup> Hyman K., who was born in Kishinev, was accused of theft and sent to a Russian prison with his parents, “deep into Russia where the Germans would not dare go”. After he was freed, he made his way to Tashkent via Saratov, but the Gulag provided his initial movement east and out of the eventual German zone.<sup>112</sup> Leopold S. was clear that he was sent to the Gulag in Arkhangelsk as a “punishment from the communist party” and hinted at antisemitic motivations for deportation and for the exceptionally gruelling forced labour on the Jewish high holidays.<sup>113</sup> Being born in Germany or “speaking Yiddish” was an excuse to be sent to a Soviet labour camp, like Selina H.’s father and brother who were sent to Siberia for hard labour from Bialystock and never returned.<sup>114</sup> Peter G. was also arrested in the Soviet zone in 1939 because he did not speak Polish or Yiddish, only German and French. He eventually signed a coerced statement that he had escaped illegally, and he was sentenced to five years of hard labour.<sup>115</sup> Leopold S. who was doing hard labour in Arkhangelsk, recalled seeing Gulag prisoners from the region walking like “human corpses” and he was afraid to even look at them. He also echoed other Gulag punishments and labour practices in his testimony, and he was reluctant to categorise his forced labour as the same as the Gulag prisoners with which they shared work. Upon his release he was able to go anywhere in the Soviet Union, and he left in 1941 for the warmth in Central Asia.<sup>116</sup>

In the testimonies which specifically address both evacuation and extensive time in the Gulag, we see hints of the methodology of Stalinist terror that existed across the system in the camps. Ada R. spoke about the methodologies of the Gulag in Central Asia, and how those evacuating the Holocaust ended up in and interacting with these same networks. Her father was arrested by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, as a “political prisoner”, not as a Jew, and she and her family were arrested later as family of an “enemy of the people” and sent to a Siberian *kolkhoz* specifically for women and children, where their work involved sheep pastoralism. The methodologies of survival in camps were also similar, as Bernard O. considered his job as a prison camp tailor a light sentence, and he continued his secondary economic activities by sewing secret pockets into clothes to help others steal bread. This eventually led to his deportation, with his brother, to a more demanding labour camp: ITK 13 in Western Siberia.<sup>117</sup> Meyer G. was transferred from a collective farm in Yangiyul, Uzbekistan, to Aktubinsk in Kazakhstan, where he lived in immense barracks with no heating, tried to avoid typhus, and his diet during forced labour was “constantly on bread”.<sup>118</sup> Leopold S. left Poland with his brother in 1939 via Lvov, where they picked up another brother. He was eventually stopped by the Russian authorities and sent to Arkhangelsk Oblast, where he worked on abandoned villages to make them more habitable for Russian settlement in the north.<sup>119</sup> Peter G. also did hard labour in Arkhangelsk and spoke of the difficult survival tasks, including gathering straw, and

111 Bernard Organeck, VHA-USC.

112 Hyman K. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4400), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

113 Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

114 Selina H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 2521), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

115 Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 760), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.

116 Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).

117 Bernard Organeck, Interview 52285, VHA-USC.

118 Meyer Galler, Interview 52318, VHA-USC.

119 Leopold S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT 4450).

of the brutally cold boxcar journey to the camp.<sup>120</sup> From forced confessions, to Yiddish and other non-Russian languages as cause for denunciation, the mechanisms of Soviet arrest established in the 1920s are echoed in these testimonies.

### A Survivor of the Gulag or of the Holocaust? Conclusions

Evacuation transit from the Holocaust is complex. Rather than simply seeking refuge, survival was deeply intertwined with Soviet carceral policies and a history of transit to the interior. Survivor self-identification with victimisation was similarly complex, with recognition among a community of similar refugees of hardships in exile, but without the same subscription to “survivorship” like those who survived camps.<sup>121</sup> Evacuation narratives understandably focus on the evacuees, but there was also sizeable interaction upon arrival in Central Asia with Bukharian Jews, and there was the establishment of Ashkenazi Jewish institutions in exile. Evacuation testimony combined with Central Asian Jewish testimony provides a more complete look at the changing categories of evacuee throughout the war, at life in Tashkent, and at the lingering perceptions and mindsets which contributed to evacuation.

Wartime evacuation contributed to post-war antisemitism, with pervasive ideas like “Jews survived the war in Tashkent” and an increase in public hostility, denial of housing, and further humiliation. Many evacuees chose to remain in Central Asia as a second home, encouraged by Soviet authorities.<sup>122</sup> Artistic actions like *Zhdanovshchina* were entangled with the post-war political climate and targeted ethnicity as well as political dissidence. The post-war Soviet Union rebuilt from the Second World War with a glorious victory, which meant that it was essential to dispel the sentiment that the “Jews and their Bolshevik henchmen” had safely lived out the war in exile, while valorous draftees “died at the front to defend kikes”.<sup>123</sup> Evacuation seems to be tied to anti-Sovietism, a counternarrative to the state glorification of the Great Patriotic War. As such, there was a corollary suspicion of intellectuals who had been evacuated versus those who had served in the Red Army. As evidenced in post-war artistic products, returning artists and composers grappled with the complexities of survivorship and evacuation, while simultaneously navigating a hostile political climate in the last decade of Stalinism.

The story of evacuation is perhaps told in three parts, the first being transit, the next of life in exile, including intersection with the Gulag, and finally the third about the negotiation of post-war antisemitism and dealing with the knowledge of the Holocaust. Dissecting the dynamics of the transit to Tashkent provides insights into the priorities of the evacuees once they arrived – survival strategies, community and family structures, solidarity and identification (or not) with the local populations, and the long reach of Soviet bureaucracy in Central Asia. These themes from a history of transit provide the context for the post-war fear of both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, and of the danger of being Jewish even in relative safety. In the artistic realm, the preservation mechanisms of hidden community knowledges remained private, concealed, and cryptic in the post-war, as 1945 marked the end of Hitlerite – but not all – antisemitism.

120 Peter G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT. 760).

121 Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 200.

122 Shternshis, “The Rear”, 263.

123 Budnitskii, Engel, Estraiikh, and Shternshis, *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe*, 114.

## Bibliography

- Adler, Eliyana R. *Survival on the Margins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020.
- Akhmatova, Anna. *Poema bez goroya*. Moscow: Samizdat Publication, 1976.
- Allen, Paul. *Katyn: Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Budnitskii, Oleg, David Engel, Gennady Estraiikh, and Anna Shternshis, editors. *Jews in the Soviet Union: A History*. Volume 3: *War, Conquest, and Catastrophe, 1939–1945*. New York: New York University Press, 2022.
- Dieckmann, Christoph, and Arkadi Zeltser, editors. *Distrust, Animosity, Solidarity: Jews and Non-Jews during the Holocaust in the USSR*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2021.
- Friedla, Katharina, and Markus Nesselrodt, editors. *Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1939–1959): History and Memory of Deportation, Exile and Survival*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2022.
- Gitelman, Zvi, editor. *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Grossmann, Atina, Mark Edele, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, editors. *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.
- Kaganovitch, Albert. *Exodus and Its Aftermath: Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Interior*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022.
- Khaimov, Manashe, and Daniel Allen. "Bukharian Lens Project 2014 – JCCA's Bukharian Teen Lounge". *YouTube*. 3 July 2014. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atQsRr\\_Yv8A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atQsRr_Yv8A). Accessed 17 November 2023.
- Kostyrchenko, B.G. editor. *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm v SSSR: Ot nachala do kul'minatsii 1938–1953*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2005.
- Manley, Rebecca. *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Margolin, Julian. *Podróż do krainy zeków*. Wolowiec,: Czarne, 2013.
- Nolte, Ernst. "Marxismus und Nationalsozialismus". *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983): 389–417.
- Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century: New Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.

## Archival sources

### Holocaust Testimonies, Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library:

- HVT 760 Peter G.
- HVT 891 Joseph L.
- HVT 1273 Israel M.
- HVT 1287 Felix F.
- HVT 1344 Ben S.
- HVT 1407 Simcha S.
- HVT 1492 Zlata G.
- HVT 1597 Bianca B.
- HVT 1791 Evelyn E.
- HVT 1791 Evelyn E.
- HVT 1880 Michael G.
- HVT 2012 Rita H.,

HVT 2349 Matthew T.  
HVT 2514 Anna S.  
HVT 2521 Selina H.  
HVT 2604 Fritz S.  
HVT 2755 Irwin L.  
HVT 3030 Gilda Z.  
HVT 3030 Gilda Z.  
HVT 3082 David S.  
HVT 4150 Betty G.  
HVT 4400 Hyman K.  
HVT 4450 Leopold S.

**Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation:**

Ameisen, Alexander. Interview 51752. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 12 September 2001. Accessed 14 February 2024.

Bland, Fryda. Interview 55083. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 19 March 2008. Accessed 12 February 2024.

Busch, Hilda. Interview 33714. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 28 August 1997. Accessed 13 February 2024.

Breit, Renata. Interview 5016. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 17 August 1995. Accessed 12 February 2024.

Galler, Meyer. Interview 52318. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 13 December 1989. Accessed 8 February 2024.

Goldfarb, Esther. Interview 58079. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 17 June 2001. Accessed 10 February 2024.

Kadloviski, Louis. Interview 39796. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 19 March 1998. Accessed 8 February 2024.

Lewin-Liberow, Rachel. Interview 31941. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 28 May 1997. Accessed 8 February 2024.

Liebman, Aniuta. Interview 40816. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 28 April 1998. Accessed 21 January 2024.

Ludner-Kaletsky, Mary. Interview 54486. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 16 June 2000. Accessed 8 February 2024.

Meiler, Donia. Interview 37009. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 14 October 1997. Accessed 10 February 2024.

Mydlak, Sala. Interview 19231. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 27 August 1996. Accessed 10 February 2024.

Organek, Bernard. Interview 52285. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 13 June 1990. Accessed 16 February 2024.

Rosh, Adel. Interview 26469. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 2 February 1997. Accessed 21 January 2024.

Scharf, Solomon. Interview 2866. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 28 May 1998. Accessed 20 January 2024.

Steiner, David. Interview 26961. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 12 February 1997. Accessed 13 February 2024.

Stern, Renee. Interview 25239. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. 30 January 1997. Accessed 10 February 2024.

Winter, Morris. Interview 28839. Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation.  
25 February 1997. Accessed 13 February 2024.

**State Archives of the Russian Federation:**

GARF f. a-259, op. 40 d. 3028.

GARF f. 8418, op. 2, d. 99.

**US Holocaust Memorial Museum:**

Glavnoe Pereseincheskoe Upravlenie pri Soviete Ministrov RSFSR fond A-327, RG-22.027  
M. Accession 2011.18.

“Iz istorii Velikoi otechestvennoi voiny: nachalo voiny”. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 7 (1990):  
207.

**Alexandra Birch** is a professional violinist and historian who works comparatively on the Nazi Holocaust and Soviet mass atrocity, including the Gulag, through the lens of music and sound. She holds a PhD in History from the University of California Santa Barbara, and a BM, MM, and DMA from Arizona State University in violin performance. Previously, she was a fellow at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Wilson Center, and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, where she released CDs of recovered music and finished her first book *Hitler's Twilight of the Gods: Music and the Orchestration of War and Genocide in Europe*. Her current project is titled *Sonic Shatterzones: The Intertwined Spaces, Sounds, and Music of Nazi and Soviet Atrocity*. Email: [birch.alexandra@gmail.com](mailto:birch.alexandra@gmail.com)

Quotation: Alexandra Birch, To the “City of Bread”? Testimonial Perceptions of Holocaust Evacuation,  
in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 4–21.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art\\_abir01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art_abir01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal  
of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA  
(Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).

Roman Shliakhtych

# Ukrainian Military Collaborators

Information in the Archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal  
Institute for Holocaust Studies

## 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> In 1963, the Documentation Centre of the Association of Jews Persecuted by the Nazi Regime was established in Vienna,<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in 1974, the Simon Wiesenthal Center was established with its headquarters in Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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*.<sup>9</sup> 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*,<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

5 See, for example, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, "Simon Wiesenthal Conference", last modified 5 May 2024, <https://www.vwi.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 reichskomissariatu "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)"<sup>12</sup> 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 171<sup>st</sup> Police Battalion, in which he describes the murders of Jews in the Dnepropetrovsk area.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> Another folder, "Wladimir-Wolinsk",<sup>15</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician)

The 14<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> Much has been written about the activities of the SS Division (Galician) and its personnel, both by Ukrainian and foreign researchers.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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).<sup>25</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician). This formation is described in a subsection with the eloquent title “The Darkest Page of History”.<sup>26</sup> 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)”.<sup>27</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Galician Volunteer Regiment CC were included in the 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician). The situation was similar with the Ukrainian Legion of Self-Defence, which the Germans called the 31<sup>st</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (Galician) in this crime.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> This information

34 Bolianovskyi, *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.<sup>38</sup> There is also a modern Ukrainian historiography on this issue.<sup>39</sup> 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)”.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> 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).<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> 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., *Fashytskye 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> Another Lviv policeman, Ivan Kalimun, mentioned in his report that, on 14 August 1942, he killed one Jew and wounded another.<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> In fact, it is now known that the Soviet authorities demanded that Canada extradite Kupiak.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup> 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.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>

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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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).<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> Another letter from Rudi Moser deepens the accusations against Skripnik on the basis of his anonymous, falsified biography.<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup> 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".<sup>79</sup> Instead, it is now known that he studied at least at the Warsaw School of Political Science.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> It is now known that many Volksdeutsche in the occupied territories were involved by the Nazis in various structures, including the police.<sup>83</sup> 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.<sup>84</sup> 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.<sup>85</sup>

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 Anatolii Bilotserkivskiyi. 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.<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup> The letter once again emphasised the crimes of the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 "Bilotserkivskiyi 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”.<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup>

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.<sup>91</sup> 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,<sup>92</sup> 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-

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., *News from Ukraine*, no. 14, March 1977.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., letter, 1 April 1984.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., letter, 17 February 1995.

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

<sup>92</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Bibliography

- Black, Peter, Béla Rásky, and Mariane Windsperger, editors. *Mittäterschaft in Osteuropa im Zweiten Weltkrieg und im Holocaust in Osteuropa/Collaboration in Eastern Europe During the Second World War and the Holocaust*. Vienna and Hamburg: VWI and New Academic Press, 2019.
- Bolianovskiy, Andriy. *Dyviziiia Halychyna. Istoriiia*. Lviv: Instytut ukrainoznavstva im. I. Krypiakevycha NAN Ukrainy, 2000.
- Borodina, Tetyana. "Zaluchennia ukrainskoi politsii do vchynennia Holokostu v Kremenchutsi (1941–42)". *Ukraina Moderna* 34 (2023): 197–228.
- Dean, Martin Christopher. *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Dean, Martin Christopher. "Radianski etnichni nimtsi i Holokost u Reikhskomisariati Ukraina, 1941–1944". In *Shoa v Ukraini: istoriia, svidchennia, uvichnennia*, edited by Reia Brandona and Vendi Lauer. Kyiv: Dukh i litera, 2015.
- Havryshko, Marta. "Dyviziiia Vaffen SS 'Halychyna': manivtsi heroizatsii". Spilne, 12 October 2023, accessed 28 April 2024. <https://commons.com.ua/uk/diviziya-vaffen-ss-galichina-manivci-geroyizaciyi/>.
- Himka, John-Paul. *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941–1944*. Stuttgart: Ibidem Press, 2021.
- Hofbauer, Carmen. *Simon Wiesenthal als Publizist*. PhD dissertation, University of Salzburg, 2002.
- Khromeychuk, Olesya. "Undetermined" Ukrainians: Post-War Narratives of the Waffen SS 'Galicia' Division. Nationalisms Across the Globe, volume 11. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013.
- Landwehr, Richard. *Fighting for Freedom: The Ukrainian Volunteer Division of the Waffen-SS*. Silver Spring, MD: Bibliophile Legion Books, 1985.
- Motyka, Grzegorz. *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960: działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii*. Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN and RYTM, 2006.
- Mykhalchuk, Roman. "Antysemitska propahanda v hazeti 'Volyn' ta zhurnali 'Ukrainskyi khliborob' rivnenskoho vydavnytstva 'Volyn': porivnialnyi analiz". *Storinky istorii: zbirnyk naukovykh prats* no. 56 (2023): 221–240.
- Nikolaieva, Natalya, and Oleksander Ishchuk. "Dmytro Kupiak: Shtrykhy do biohrafii". *Naukovi zapysky Natsionalnoho universytetu "Ostrozka akademiia": Istorychni nauky* no. 9 (2007).
- Pick, Hella. *Simon Wiesenthal: Eine Biographie*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997.
- Shaikan, Valentina. *Kolaboratsionizm na terytorii reikhskomisariatu "Ukraina" ta viiskovoi zony v period Druhoi svitovoi viiny*. Kryvyi Rih: Mineral, 2005.
- Shkandrij, Myroslav. *In the Maelstrom: The Waffen-SS "Galicia" Division and Its Legacy*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023.
- Shliakhtych, Roman. "Zaluchennia chleniv ukrainskoi dopomizhnoi politsii do masovykh ubyvstv yevreiv na terytorii Raikhskomisariatu 'Ukraina'" *Problemy istorii Holokostu: ukrainskyi vymir* no. 13 (2021).
- Smyrnov, Andriy. *Mstyslav (Skrypnyk): hromadsko-politychnyi ta tserkovnyi diiach, 1930–1944*. Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2009.
- Stauber, Roni, editor. *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Sytnyk, Daniil. "Ukrainska politsiia ta Holokost u Kyievi, 1941–43". *Ukraina Moderna* 34 (2023): 229–261.
- Wiesenthal, Simon. *Recht, nicht Rache: Erinnerungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1995.

**Roman Shliakhtych** is a lecturer in the Department of Social-Humanitarian Science at the State University of Economy and Technology in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine. Since 2023, he has been a doctoral student at Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, and his dissertation is on the involvement of members of the Ukrainian auxiliary police in the implementation of Holocaust policy in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine. He has been researching the participation of local policemen in the Holocaust on the territory of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine since 2014. Roman is the author of two monographs, and he has published more than forty studies in professional publications. He has been a fellow at leading Holocaust research centres, such as Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yahad-In Unum, and, from 2023 to 2024, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies.

Email: [shliakhtych\\_rp@kneu.dp.ua](mailto:shliakhtych_rp@kneu.dp.ua)

### **Acknowledgments**

The research conducted for this article was supported by the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Quotation: Roman Shliakhtych, Ukrainian Military Collaborators. Information in the Archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 22–40.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art\\_rshl01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art_rshl01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA  
(Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).

Mirnes Sokolović

# From Avant-garde to the Yugoslav Literary Right

Correspondences Between Poetic Concepts and  
Fascism in the Magazine *Ideje*, 1934–1935

## Abstract

In the magazine *Ideje* (Ideas), edited and published in Belgrade in 1934 and 1935 by the prominent author Miloš Crnjanski, Yugoslav avant-gardists published numerous texts expressing right-wing views on aesthetics and politics. Literary historians such as Milo Lompar argue that the editors and contributors of *Ideje* were unjustly accused of being fascist propagandists. As this article demonstrates, a significant feature of these texts in *Ideje* is the incorporation of race theory and biological criteria – viewed as cultural constants – as factors influencing political life. The analysed authors specifically engage in a critique of liberal policies and advocate for the rebirth of Europe in the spirit of a new authoritarianism, anti-semitism, and corporatism. These positions align with the broader trend of reactionary modernism that was prevalent in European literature at the time.

## Introduction

In the 1930s, as they sought answers to the cultural crisis facing bourgeois society, modernists expanded their influence across European literary traditions, often adopting reactionary policies in the process. These intellectuals embraced fascism and National Socialism, believing that these could offer an alternative to the materialism, positivism, and liberal chaos of the time. While rejecting Enlightenment ideals, they remained committed to modernity and progress, seeing technology as a tool for revitalising national traditions and inventing new nationalisms. This shift in thought found expression in the works of writers and intellectuals in German, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, and French literatures who engaged in political discourse, searching for ways to reshape society through the lens of new, radical ideologies. In Yugoslavia, journals like *Ideje* (Ideas) became platforms for these ideas, contributing to the broader European intellectual movement. Avant-garde literature challenged and questioned bourgeois society in the literary field, and, in the 1930s these writers, through the pages of the *Ideje* magazine, became involved in affirming and seeking political concepts as solutions to the crisis produced by society.

Jeffrey Herf explains that reactionary modernists described technology using the jargon of authenticity, emphasising immediacy, experience, will, instinct, and race over rational abstractions like intellect, analysis, and concepts associated with Jews. Cultural protests against capitalism were transformed into racial-biological categories. Jews, seen as embodying abstraction, became the target. Their elimination was equated with a cultural revolution restoring feeling and immediacy to a world

perceived as threatened by soulless rationality. Ultimately, as Herf concludes, “the Holocaust was one outcome of this cultural revolution”.<sup>1</sup>

Discussing the French intellectual scene, Sandrine Sanos notes that far-right intellectuals constructed an “aesthetics of hate” as a solution to political crises through aesthetics. This did not imply that specific artistic forms were inherently reactionary but rather that, for these intellectuals, only certain forms offered a resolution to their political concerns.

The aesthetics of hate and the idea of a cultural revolution aimed at purging the national collective also attracted avant-garde writers in Serbia, which was at the time part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a South Slavic state established in 1918 that brought together several ethnic groups. The kingdom was a constitutional monarchy under the rule of the Serbian royal family, with King Alexander I as its first monarch. Its government was characterised by a mix of centralism and efforts to unify the diverse ethnic groups, and it was in permanent crisis due to ethnic tensions and political instability.

The magazine *Ideje*, edited and published by the prominent writer Miloš Crnjanski in Belgrade in 1934 and 1935, stood out as a platform where Serbian avant-garde thinkers gave controversial right-wing positions an essayistic and polemical expression. The focus rested on Crnjanski and Svetislav Stefanović. As a poet and essayist in the first and second decades of the twentieth century, Stefanović was regarded as a progressive and modernist writer, who in the 1920s advocated for the avant-garde acceptance of foreign influences in Serbian poetry. However, already in the 1930s, in a series of articles in *Vreme* and *Ideje*, he preached the hierarchy of races in Europe and justified the burning of Jewish authors’ books in Germany, while also translating and interpreting Benito Mussolini’s book *The Corporate State*. During the Second World War, Stefanović became one of the most active members of the collaborationist Serbian Literary Cooperative, and after the war he was executed by firing squad. Other contributors to *Ideje* included avant-garde figures such as Stanislav Vinaver, Dragan Aleksić, Todor Manojlović, and Ivo Andrić. Most contributors, including the editor Crnjanski, were officials within the institutions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, with some serving in the diplomatic corps.

The involvement of modernist writers with right-wing ideas raises the question of the intersection between high culture and barbarism, a theme that has never been significantly addressed in the history of Yugoslav literatures. In post-Yugoslav academic literary history, written mainly by literature professors, there is a tendency to absolve intellectuals who contributed to *Ideje* in the 1930s and 1940s. Professors often omit mentioning texts that these writers published in right-wing journals and downplay their poetics of the time. They sanitise the writers’ biographies and contexts, emphasising that these authors were unjustly suppressed or banned in communist Yugoslavia. This literary-historical rehabilitation is sometimes conducted with moral fervour, as if to correct missed opportunities and restore unjustly condemned writers. It is framed as reclaiming the “great value” of their work, which was supposedly repressed.

Gojko Tešić, a literature professor from the University of Novi Sad and the most influential historian of Serbian literature, addressed this issue in 1990 in the preface to the anthology *Utuljena baština* (Extinguished Heritage). He described the literary historians’ treatment of suppressed authors, including Crnjanski, as being marked

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 31.



by “ideological conformity”, a “spirit of vengeance”, and the “terror of one-party thinking”.<sup>2</sup> He criticised the judgments that labelled these writers’ work as “worthless, right-wing, unacceptable, insignificant, and void”. However, neither the preface nor the anthology examines the texts or concepts that Stefanović and Crnjanski advocated in *Ideje*.

More recently, Milo Lompar, another prominent Serbian literature professor, has argued in his 2011 book *Duh Samoporicanja* [The Spirit of Self-Denial] that the treatment of writers like Stefanović and Crnjanski results from “ideological labels imposed by public discourse” and reflects the “ideological orthodoxy” of regime-affiliated literary historians in Tito’s Yugoslavia. He claims that this represents “discrimination against the literary right”, suggesting, for example, that Crnjanski was unjustly “perceived as a propagandist for fascism”.<sup>3</sup>

For Lompar, Crnjanski’s “Serbian attitude” serves as an exemplary concept. This attitude, as outlined in 1934, refers to a policy that is “neither intrusive nor violent, but purely Serbian”.<sup>4</sup> Lompar emphasises Crnjanski’s vision of a civil, non-violent representation of Serbian cultural policy and public consciousness, drawn from the legacy of *Ideje*. The Serbian attitude, as defined by Milo Lompar in *The Spirit of Self-Denial*, is a fundamental concept of Serbian cultural politics in political, business, and media terms. The question about it, in the context of the “constant Yugoslav crisis”, was raised by Miloš Crnjanski in 1934, noting “a whole complex of themes and motives that are always activated as an obstacle directed against the awareness of the Serbian attitude”.<sup>5</sup> According to Milo Lompar, the Serbian attitude is “deeply intertwined with the will to exist, which cannot be imposed on either individuals or nations, which is not obligatory but a matter of choice”.<sup>6</sup>

This article revisits the literary-historical assumptions about Crnjanski’s “Serbian attitude” from 1934. It questions how much of this vision aligns with non-violence and how much reflects the militaristic, right-wing (fascist) context of that era, as a remedy for the crisis in society. It also examines how the concepts promoted in the pages of this journal were connected to right-wing and fascist ideas of the time. More specifically, the article elucidates *Ideje* writers’ views of race and blood taxonomies while probing whether these authors showed antisemitic leanings. By returning to the textual fabric of *Ideje* and exploring its broader poetic and political network in parallel with other contemporary texts, this article assesses whether the concepts espoused in the author’s writings genuinely aligned with fascist propaganda.

The article also demonstrates that *Ideje* became a mouthpiece for extreme visions and calls for societal transformation, as the racial and cultural ideas advanced by its contributors reflected a broader evolution from avant-garde experimentation to explicitly political programs with far-reaching ideological implications. Fascism and National Socialism promised to restore creativity, beauty, and national unity, offering a stark alternative to the materialism and liberalism of the time. The articles printed in the journal reveal how some of the then most progressive and stylistically innovative writers became advocates for the instrumentalisation of a radical cultural revolution. In the cases of Crnjanski and Stefanović, their image as leading and progressive writers in contemporary Serbian and Yugoslav culture helped to legitimise and justify political actions. Their openness to right-wing philosophical concepts

2 Gojko Tešić, *Utuljena baština: antologija* (Belgrade: Književno-izdavačka zadruga Dositej, 1990), 12.

3 Milo Lompar, *Duh samoporicanja* (Belgrade: Catena mundi, 2018), 65.

4 Ibid., 535.

5 Ibid., 326.

6 Ibid., 328.

would, a decade later, prepare the ground among intellectuals for the acceptance of fascist political ideas. These examples demonstrate how prominent artists and intellectuals can be mobilised to frame and justify barbaric political missions as elevated cultural endeavours.

### Slavism and Race

The promotion of Slavism in the pages of *Ideje* grants one ethnic tradition a grandiose image, a sense of belonging to a civilisation, and a millennial cultural continuity tied to the Orthodox origins of Slavic literacy, while also emphasising the distinctiveness of Serbian tradition within the Yugoslav context. It would be a modernist variant of Völkisch thought within the South Slavic cultural context.

Examining the role of Latin influences in the Yugoslav context, Crnjanski observed in 1934 that “Latin culture and Latin education, from the luxurious coastal cities and their rich churches, remained only like sea foam for our people on the Adriatic coast”. For this reason, he argued, it would be worthwhile to advocate for a focus on Slavic culture and its thousand-year-old tradition, which he described as “closer to the people”.<sup>7</sup> Slavic literacy, Crnjanski emphasised, held particular importance for the Balkans, where it gained traction because the Slavic language was permitted in the work of the Methodius Church and its successors. Among Slovenes, Croats, Czechs, and Poles, however, Slavic cultural traits emerged much later and only after “long and difficult people’s struggles”.<sup>8</sup>

Crnjanski speculated on the potential of the religious and educational work of the creators of Slavic literacy, Cyril and Methodius, the Byzantine Christian theologian missionaries. If their efforts had been entirely successful and sustained across centuries among all Slavic nations, he suggested, “who knows whether the spirit that fills Europe today and rules over it would not be completely different and higher”.<sup>9</sup> To make his broader reflections on European and South Slavic culture more tangible, Crnjanski asserted that

[o]nly among the Serbs, in our Middle Ages, a great Slavic educational force was conceived and preserved. Only in the Balkan regions were great traces of splendid architecture and painting preserved, which are studied today by all of Europe. There lie the roots of a broad material culture, whose protectors became the Nemanjić dynasty, a dynasty so powerful and luminous that, as one of our writers rightly said, they were like meteors.<sup>10</sup>

This cultural concept, now with an overt Serbian ethnic dimension, was embodied in Saint Sava, a Serbian prince and Orthodox monk and the first archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Church. His principles of social justice extended beyond theocracy to encompass Enlightenment. According to Crnjanski, Europe had yet to recognise the significance of this progressive and enlightening Serbian era, which he framed as a blend of Slavic sentiment and folk traits central to Saint Sava’s philosophy.

Stefanović also underscored the importance of a pan-Slavic-Balkan cultural synthesis within a European context, though his writings in *Ideje* adopted overtly racial

7 Miloš Crnjanski, “Latinska kultura i latinska prosveta, iz raskošnih primorskih gradova i njenih bogatih crkava ostala je samo morska pena za naš narod na jadranskim obalama”, *Ideje* no. 7 (December 1934): 1.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

terminology. His concept corresponds to the classification made by the racial ideologist from Nazi Germany, Hans F. K. Günther. In his book *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (Racial Anthropology of the German People) from 1922,<sup>11</sup> Günther wrote about six European “races”: the Nordic, Alpine, Dinaric, Mediterranean, East Baltic, and Phalian races. Drawing on the racial taxonomy promoted by contemporary eugenicists who were influential in shaping Nazi racial policies, Stefanović described the Nordic, Dinaric,<sup>12</sup> and Mediterranean races as superior within European humanity, highlighting their preservation through “wise crossbreeding”. He claimed that this crossbreeding was not merely a means of saving “the West and its culture from the destruction already so much announced”, but a foundation for creating “a new and better, the hope of all, a fairer culture”.<sup>13</sup>

For Stefanović, race became a central factor in political and cultural life. He argued that

[t]he racial factor is called not to accept and implement the historical determinism of materialistic science but to actively take the fate of the people into its own hands. It must change the very foundations of the economic structure of society and replace the culture of profit with a new culture of work, which, as a truly new and first path, appears on the horizon of human history. This ultimately means once again: spirit must conquer matter.<sup>14</sup>

The contributors to *Ideje* did not develop their cultural and political ideals in isolation but rather as an evolution of their previous work, drawing upon an ongoing intellectual tradition. Stefanović’s *Pogledi i pokušaji* (Views and Attempts) served as a kind of manifesto. In this 1919 avant-garde book, he envisioned the Slavs rejecting the “inheritance of Rome” – a metaphor for both imperialism and Christianity. Stefanović identified two great tasks for the Slavs: liberation from Rome’s legacy and resistance against the monotheistic traditions of imperialism. He wrote that “[t]he cursed legacy of Rome – the system of looting and enslaving smaller and weaker nations, whose last terrible deed is today’s outrageously bloody world war – must be overthrown”.<sup>15</sup>

What Stefanović presented as Nietzschean artistic vision in 1919 later evolved into a quasi-biological ideology in *Ideje*. The avant-garde Yugoslav visions of the Dinaric man as a redeemer of decadent Europe had, by the 1930s, become a political programme. Stefanović argued that while some worried about the decline of the Nordic race, “perhaps this type has completed its historical mission, as has individualistic capitalism”.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he proposed the Dinaric type as a model:

[a] heroic-humane man, not a hero-master – hard, cruel, egoistic, and inhumane – but a hero filled with kindness, with a softness of heart and soul. He

11 Hans F. K. Günther, *The Racial Elements of European History*, trans. G.C. Wheeler (London: Methuen & Co., 1927).

12 Jovan Cvijić and Vladimir Dvorniković analysed the Dinaric race as a key component of the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Balkans. Cvijić believed that the Dinaric race, associated with high mountainous regions, had specific physical traits such as height and sharp facial features, and he linked it to a warrior spirit and endurance. Dvorniković, on the other hand, connected the Dinaric race to cultural and social norms, emphasising strength, endurance, and perseverance. Each of them saw people of the Dinaric type as having shaped Balkan society through their mental and cultural peculiarities. Although approaching the topic from different angles, both emphasised the importance of geographical factors in shaping the social traits of Dinaric peoples. Jovan Cvijić, *La Péninsule balkanique: géographie humaine* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1918); Vladimir Dvorniković, *Srbi i njihov svet: sociološke studije o narodnoj psihologiji* (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica “Jugoslavija”, 1934).

13 Svetislav Stefanović, “Rasa i kultura”, *Ideje* no. 23 (April 1935): 4.

14 Svetislav Stefanović, “Rasizam i ekonomska struktura društva”, *Ideje* no. 26 (May 1935): 4.

15 Svetislav Stefanović, *Pogledi i pokušaji* (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1919), 48.

16 Stefanović, “Rasa i kultura”, 5.

is one who not only knows how to rule but can heroically endure fate's blows and hardships, which the ruling type, inclined to hedonism, cannot.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Marxist intellectuals, Stefanović attributed a central role in cultural and historical developments not to economic conditions but to race. He wrote that “[a] race made dependent on economic conditions – which ultimately leads to the accumulation of wealth and the proletarianisation of labour – degenerates and decays”. He even extended this view to individual examples, asserting that “[a]s there are superior individuals, so there can be superior races”.<sup>18</sup> He highlighted mixed Nordic-Dinaric figures, like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, as examples of cultural and intellectual greatness.

Stefanović also articulated antisemitic ideas, arguing that the preservation of racial purity among Jews, through endogamy, made them “foreign and often unloved” among other peoples. Conversely, Stefanović warned of the detrimental outcomes of mixing Germanic and Jewish races, asserting that “mixed marriages of these two races degenerate and become sterile already in the second or third generation”.<sup>19</sup> He argued that the Jews, by limiting intermarriage to their own communities, often even among close kin, had preserved their racial purity, which maintains “[c]ertain fixed and unchanged physical and psychological characteristics. But it has made the Jews foreign and alien, often unloved and unwelcomed, at least in the company of other peoples.”<sup>20</sup>

Stefanović saw Mussolini's corporate state as a solution for European cultural and racial degeneration. He praised its elasticity, claiming that it provided an alternative to both capitalist oligarchies and communist dictatorships. The corporate system, he argued, was adaptable to different nations and heralded “a new century of corporate production, corporate work, and corporate spirit”.<sup>21</sup> Stefanović viewed the corporate system as capable of taking unique forms in Germany, Italy, and America. He envisioned “an authoritarian superclass state where all classes are in mutual control, harmony, and proportion. The democratic oligarchies of the capitalist class or the dictatorship of the workers in communism.”<sup>22</sup> Stefanović presents this system as modern and in harmony with the needs of life, marking the end of the era of individualism and individualistic production, and instead heralding the dawn of “[c]orporate production, corporate work, and corporate spirit”.<sup>23</sup>

The racial and cultural ideas advanced by the contributors to *Ideje* had ideological implications that extended beyond immediate context of these implications. These ideas reflected a broader evolution from avant-garde experimentation to explicitly political programmes.

In fact, the solutions which authors like Stefanović championed formed a critical backdrop for policies during the government of Milan Nedić. For instance, in a 1941 political proclamation, Stevan Ivanić, the commissioner of the Ministry of Social Welfare in collaborationist Serbia, advocated for establishing institutions dedicated to racial-biological research and the protection of “our people” from undesirable hereditary influences and improper racial mixtures:

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

[t]he need is increasingly felt, both in science and practice, to protect human generations from the unfavourable consequences of hereditary diseases and flaws, but also to cultivate the racial and biological characteristics and properties of our people. Our people belong to the Dinaric race, one of the finest human races. This rich heritage, endowed by God with excellent qualities, must be preserved, nurtured, and improved by all means recognised and accepted by modern science.<sup>24</sup>

The convergence of Stefanović's racial theories and Ivanić's political declarations highlights the troubling intersection of intellectual discourse and policy during this period.

### Blood Index and Fascist Anatomy

The evolution of Stefanović's style and his early engagement with avant-garde ideas reveal a trajectory towards right-wing ideology, notably in his use of medical metaphors. In 1923, four years after *Pogledi i pokušaji*, Stefanović published an article titled "Obnova umetnosti i pojave primitivizma" (The Renovation of Art and the Emergence of Primitivism) in the magazine *Misao* (Thought). He criticised conservative critics and aesthetic formulas and argued against the dismissal of primitivist tendencies as mere barbarism or the destruction of art. Instead, Stefanović championed primitivism, presenting it as a vital force that ennobles art. Drawing on foundational European works like *The Aeneid* and the legend of the Holy Grail, he suggested that primitivism revitalises art much like the infusion of "primitive blood" rejuvenates degenerate races.<sup>25</sup>

Stefanović's medical metaphors increasingly shifted towards concrete ideological applications with explicit political consequences. By 1934 and 1935, he explored in *Ideje* the role of blood groups in racial differentiation, asserting their significance in distinguishing European peoples from Asians. Stefanović cited Paracelsus to emphasise the primal importance of blood: "[b]lood is a very special juice", he explained, referencing Paracelsus' belief in the fundamental role of blood in human identity and arguing that blood groups represent primordial racial characteristics, possibly predating other anthropological traits. Stefanović extended this biological framework to analyse the Hungarian population, differentiating groups by their blood indices. He posited that a high European index among some Hungarians indicated that they were linguistically Hungarian but racially European – potentially German or Slavic – while a lower, more Asian blood index suggested descent from the original Arpad Hungarians, so closer to Asian ancestors.

For Stefanović, blood groups were not merely biological markers but also tools for describing and predicting the character and role of entire races and peoples. He maintained that these categories, both biological and medical, held significant political implications, preceding cultural and social concepts. This approach was integral to what he described as "scientific investigations of the racial problem", which he considered to be crucial for both theoretical exploration and practical politics.

The contributors to *Ideje* aligned their work with the propaganda and intellectual jargon of the period, providing a pseudo-scientific framework for militaristic and

24 Cited in Olivera Milosavljević, *Potisnuta istina: kolaboracija u Srbiji 1941–1944*. (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006), 167.

25 Svetislav Stefanović, "Obnova umetnosti i pojave primitivizma", *Misao* no. 13 (1923): 151.

racial ideologies. Stefanović's writings thus reflect the broader intellectual collaboration with the Nazi project, merging medical, biological, and political narratives into a coherent fascist agenda.

### High Literacy and Bestiality

Under the editorial leadership of Crnjanski, *Ideje* was distinctive for its concept of involving the most well-known Yugoslav authors of the time in a collaborative project that promoted the hierarchy of races and ideas parallel to the classifications of Nazi eugenic ideologies. In doing so, even when not explicitly reproducing racial theories, many esteemed writers contributed to the magazine by introducing numerous cultural and historical associations. Within this framework, they also introduced revolutionary symbols and key elements from Yugoslav cultural traditions. These gave the magazine and its concept a progressive image, thus attributing a high intellectual tone to the ideological concepts, as if offering a solution to the political crisis.

In this sense, a significant contribution to the magazine is that of Ivo Andrić, by then a recognised author and member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and later a Nobel laureate. He gave a lengthy interview to *Ideje* and contributed a well-known text to it about the renowned nineteenth-century South Slavic poet Petar Petrović Njegoš. Known for blending modernist inspiration with traditional themes and genres, Andrić reflected on his generation's experience during and after the First World War also in *Ideje*. In the interview, he was introduced as a nationalist youth who had been interned and incarcerated, and who was marked by the "passive endurance in suffering characteristic of our Bosnians".<sup>26</sup> Andrić described his generation as being shaped by a silent struggle and a longing for lost joyful years, burdened by the mystical punishment of surviving war:

[w]e from 1914 look into each other's eyes and with fervour and deep melancholy look for ours from 1914, which looked terrible, wonderfully big, like the end of the centuries, which is slowly disappearing and fading like a song that is sung less and less.<sup>27</sup>

In *Ideje*, Andrić also argued for erecting a monument to Petar Petrović Njegoš, describing it as a duty for every man who lived honourably and for Njegoš as a unique figure in a "bloody land where it is most beautiful and most difficult to be a poet". Andrić wrote that

[t]hat tragic hero of Kosovar thought carried the stigmas of struggle and suffering in his spirit: the anxious minute of Lazar's choice, as well as the horror of Miloš's decision, all the weight of the Kosovo curse, just as saints carry the wounds of Christ on their bodies. This is also the tragedy of Balkan existence, which managed to see all the misery of the heavy inheritance that pressed on his head, without ever ceasing to wish for heaven. Njegoš saw the history of the universe as a struggle between light and darkness in which God always wins.<sup>28</sup>

Although the Kosovo Myth was a cornerstone of the cultural policy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, it represents an ethnocentric topos of Serbian culture, which, like

26 Ivo Andrić, "Ponekad se pitam da li je to mistična kazna za nas koji smo preživeli", *Ideje* no. 5 (November 1934): 2.

27 Ibid.

28 Ivo Andrić, "Njegoš", *Ideje* no. 5 (November 1934): 2.



the cult of Saint Sava, would later become the foundation of the cultural policy of collaborationist Serbia.

The concept of *Ideje* as a magazine was characterised by its blending and affirmation of seemingly different concepts; for example, high-cultural symbols from the Yugoslav tradition and the revolutionary image of the Young Bosnia movement, which Andrić evokes in his writings, alongside eugenics as a concept from Nazi Germany. Thus, it was possible that, after Andrić's contributions, the magazine published in the following month contributions from its regular collaborator Branimir Maleš, an anthropologist and doctor who was educated in Rome and was a member of several anthropological associations in fascist Italy. Maleš was a lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, a physiologist and anthropologist who, from 1941, served as the head of the Department for Public Education in the collaborationist Ministry of Education. In this way, the magazine intertwined the nexus of high culture and racial theories, which were illuminated and mutually legitimised within the Yugoslav context, justifying one another.

In the text "Narodnost i rasa" (Nationality and Race), Maleš elaborated on racial typologies – the Mediterranean, Nordic, Alpine, Celtic, and Armenian – assigning psychological traits to each. He argued that what is "psychologically good" in a race should become part of the national programme. He claimed that

[r]ace and group were written in golden letters in the programme of Hitler's and Mussolini's efforts. The latter, for example, conducts annual anthropological surveys in new towns for Italian workers, to identify what is good and what is wrong. Each race has its own values and role in the history of the world, as well as in the progress and betterment of the entire nation. While cultural endeavours are recognised in nationality, the health and physical and mental progress of the people is recorded in race.<sup>29</sup>

Proving that this blend of high culture and barbarism is realised even through the work of the same author, Stefanović, recognised for his translations of William Shakespeare and Goethe, justified book burnings in Germany. In the edition of *Ideje* of 30 March 1935, he referenced Werner Schlegel's arguments to defend the practice. According to Stefanović and Schlegel, Jewish authors opposed great figures like Shakespeare while misinterpreting Sigmund Freud's theories and promoting pan-sexualism. Stefanović cited obscene passages to suggest that these authors fostered defeatist and stateless visions incompatible with national reconstruction. He argued that, "at the time of national reconstruction, the homeland cannot tolerate so much mud and sludge in its own belly".<sup>30</sup>

Stefanović also decried the dominance of avant-garde art, accusing publishers and authors of promoting perverted values as being inviolable. He viewed German students who burned books as driven by a revolutionary impulse, distinct from the youthful fervour of victorious revolutions. Instead, they sought purer spiritual values. The juxtaposition of texts in *Ideje* raises questions about literature's moral authority. George Steiner, a literary critic who, in the 1960s, recognised the intertwining of high culture and barbarism that fuelled the Holocaust and thus did not see these as exclusively separate and opposing forces, wrote in his book *Language and Silence* that

[w]hen barbarism came to twentieth-century Europe, the arts faculties in more than one university offered very little moral resistance, and this is not

29 Maleš, "Narodnost i rasa", *Ideje* no. 8 (December 1934): 3

30 Svetislav Stefanović, "Komentar spaljivanja knjiga", *Ideje* no. 20 (March 1935): 3.

a trivial or local accident. In a disturbing number of cases the literary imagination gave servile or ecstatic welcome to political bestiality. That bestiality was at times enforced and refined by individuals educated in the culture of traditional humanism. Knowledge of Goethe, a delight in the poetry of Rilke, seemed no bar to personal and institutionalised sadism.<sup>31</sup>

Steiner observed that literary values and extreme cruelty can coexist within the same community, even in the same individual. The pages of *Ideje* exemplified this coexistence, where the promotion of cultural ideals shared space with the preparation of the ideological jargon for extermination.

Not all authors in *Ideje* bear responsibility for others' texts, but the magazine offers a stark lesson in post-Holocaust poetics. High culture cannot always be trusted, as it sometimes legitimises barbarism within the same intellectual project.

### Jews and the "White Race" in Europe

A biologically infused glossarium, akin to a cartographic delineation, serves to define the territories allocated to nations and authoritarian states. As a response to the general cultural crisis identified by the authors of *Ideje*, Crnjanski offers the cult of Saint Sava, because "St. Sava saw more and more over time that a man can be a good Christian and at the same time love his homeland and his people, and that at the same time he can, even must, serve God and the flock that God has entrusted to him".<sup>32</sup>

In *Ideje*, Crnjanski, as an editor, presents several texts that bear even more significance when considering their connections to the right-wing and fascist narratives of the time. In the text "Hitler u Larussu" (Hitler in Larousse), an anonymous author unambiguously wrote about Hitler's ideology, in which – as stated in the appendix – peoples are most valuable for their racial characteristics, and the ethnic issue stands as the most important among historical problems. "According to Hitler, Christianity, throughout the centuries, destroyed the values of the Aryan race and made it impossible to create national elites (...) According to Hitler, the Jews have always worked against the white race in Europe and they should be destroyed, especially since they hold the finances in their hands." Furthermore, to further introduce the public to this idea, the author asserted that the most significant characteristic is that the Jews are designated as a people that are not German, "simply because it is a different race".<sup>33</sup>

Indicating the broader political context, Đorđe Perić stated in the article "Moralno jedinstvo Evrope" (Moral Unity of Europe) that faith in progress, in the brotherhood of peoples, in the eternal "we", is shaken among broad layers of the masses and the spiritual elites of Europeans. "Even the social doctrines about the change of classes in the evolutionary progress of mankind no longer excite anyone", wrote Perić. "The World War dealt a heavy blow to the political doctrines of the bourgeois classes, doctrines that were founded by the great French Revolution. Today, nobody will go to the barricades for the defence or victory of bourgeois freedom." One great era, wrote Perić, with great ideas and political teachings, has irretrievably passed: both on the liberal wing and "after the Russian social experiment, there are few who still

31 George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 49.

32 Miloš Crnjanski, "Povodom priprema 700 godina od smrti Svetog Save", *Ideje* no. 8 (December 1934): 1.

33 Anonymous, "Hitler u Larussu", *Ideje* no. 3 (October 1934): 4.

believe that the working class will take matters into their own hands with the help of parliamentary or trade union mechanics".<sup>34</sup> Perić set for writers the great task of clearing the dense underbrush of literature with their pens if they were ever to understand how life has brought new forms that demand adequate expressions.

In the text "Špengler o revoluciji i proletarijatu" (Spengler on the Revolution and the Proletariat), Dimitrije Najdanović, was even more relieved to see in the metropolis, as on the stage of the downfall of every great culture, gathered – as in a huge boil – "the symbolism of death, extinct forces, piles of dead atoms, the uprooted peasantry from below, while the degenerate, decayed waste from the upper classes, the intellectual pariah, pour into his great cloaca from above ... The direction of their radical nihilism is: the destruction of the living whole and the living unity of the people." These intellectuals, according to Najdanović, under the hypnosis of communist ideology, dreamt of destroying culture: "Jacobin France is the anticipation of Bolshevik Russia; democracy and active liberalism are the anticipation of Bolshevism."<sup>35</sup>

In the texts of both Stefanović and Crnjanski, and in shorter ones, the death of the liberal European era is regularly proclaimed, signalling the transcendence of democracy. Therefore, Lompare's qualification of the "Serbian attitude" affirmed in *Ideje* magazine as a civic and pacifist concept is highly questionable, given that the bourgeois and liberal tradition is consistently undermined in favour of fascist concepts.

### Modern Nationalism after the Great War

Reprinting Werner Schlegel's<sup>36</sup> text "German Nationalist Youth", *Ideje* discussed the national unity and camaraderie that emerged in the frontline trenches during the First World War, a phenomenon that remained unclear to those born in the pre-war era. From the outset, it was evident that this perspective was shared by Adolf Hitler, a German soldier who, according to Schlegel, "forged his faith on the anvil of the front", and only when Hitler began to introduce his vision to the German people did this vision take shape. In the final part of the text, Schlegel presented the lesson taught to the German people in the 1933 revolution, a moment of complete renewal: "[i]n order to get the future, it was necessary first of all to conquer the past once more".<sup>37</sup>

Parallel to such renewal in the Serbian language, Vladimir Vujić, a future head of the Ministry of Education and Religion in the collaborationist government of Milan Nedić, distinguished between two forms of nationalism. He critiqued the old nationalism that once, in the "old blessed times", preceded the Enlightenment, human ideals, and the romanticism of the era, aligning with the liberal thought of the enthusiastic citizenry. This old nationalism, Vujić wrote, "meant the desire to get rid of foreign political ownership, so that we, the belated and backward ones, could as soon as possible reach the lucky people of the West, 'own in our own'".<sup>38</sup>

As Hannah Arendt wrote, at the core of the nationalisms of Central and Eastern European peoples lay the belief in the right of this peoples to expand. Lacking pros-

34 Đorđe Perić, "Moralno jedinstvo Evrope", *Ideje* no. 2 (October 1934): 4.

35 Dimitrije Najdanović, "Špengler o revoluciji i proletarijatu", *Ideje* no. 2 (October 1934): 7.

36 Werner Schlegel (1900–1982), was a German publicist who was active during the Nazi period as a foreign policy officer in the Reich Chamber of Literature (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*).

37 Verner Šlegel, "Nemačka nacionalistička omladina", *Ideje* no. 17 (March 1935): 4.

38 Vladimir Vujić, "Naš novi nacionalizam i Evropa", *Ideje* no. 21 (April 1935): 3.

pects for overseas expansion, they were compelled to realise expansion within Europe. “Nazism and Bolshevism”, Arendt added, “owe more to pan-Germanism, i.e., pan-Slavism, than to any other ideology or political movement”, directly imitating their slogans.<sup>39</sup> Arendt further observed that the *race-thinking* ideology “was victorious in many parts of the spiritual world long before the Nazis started their ill-fated attempt at world conquest”.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on the nineteenth-century ideals of Arthur de Gobineau, whose racism triumphed as an ideology by the early twentieth century, the racism of the 1930s aligned with Nazi ideas that rejected “the principle of equality and solidarity of all peoples guaranteed by the idea of humanity” and advocated for the creation of “an elite that would replace the aristocracy”. Gobineau himself proposed the creation of a “race of princes, the Aryans, who he said were in danger of being submerged by the lower non-Aryan classes through democracy”.<sup>41</sup>

While there was limited space for such ideas among the victorious bourgeoisie in the liberal optimism of the nineteenth century, Arendt noted that, by the 1930s, these ideas had gained widespread popularity, spreading unstoppably in the press and in the essays of renowned writers, warning “that the fall of civilizations is due to a degeneration of race, and the decay of race is due to a mixture of blood”.<sup>42</sup> The main causes of the crisis, according to the ideologues of fascism, were parliamentary inactivity, pacifism, feminism, democracy, and the affirmation of foreign influences that undermined national cultures in Europe. Stereotypes from Italian fascism, to which avant-garde poets also contributed, as noted by Alice Kaplan, linked “bourgeois parliamentarism with female ‘inactivity’”. Fascism, in its rejection of modernity and individuality, cast Jews as the exponents of modernity and individuality, characteristics deemed unacceptable to fascist communitarianism. Kaplan emphasised that fascism’s attraction to avant-garde poets could be understood through their “fixation” on a foreign community, as Jean-Paul Sartre identified in fascism the “coexistence of left and right wing” ideologies, as well as an “erotic dimension” that drew people in.<sup>43</sup>

Walter Adamson, in his analysis of the Florentine avant-gardes, points out that, “[u]nlike the Romantics, the Modernists seldom thought of a simple return to the past”.<sup>44</sup> Modernists, especially those on the right, were more inclined to seek a Nietzschean revaluation of values, where technological, industrial, and sometimes national power would be imbued with a new spirituality. Seeing the new world of science and industry as a cultural void, they positioned themselves as the voices that would impart the new spirituality adequate to this emerging reality, slowly leading to political transformation. This approach was not surprising, as avant-garde writers on the literary right adopted the mode of gathering around a magazine as if it were a large political party, publishing manifestos and instructing the masses in the construction of ideological “bombs”.

However, unlike earlier avant-garde movements, the ideological “bomb” of the 1930s contained real explosives. The Italian avant-gardes also sought to revive a new culture that would encourage the development of human creativity in technology, industry, science, and art, rejecting “bourgeois” ideals as outdated positivism and

39 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951), 222.

40 *Ibid.*, 158.

41 *Ibid.*, 173.

42 *Ibid.*, 172.

43 Alice Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 14.

44 Walter Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 256.

democracy.<sup>45</sup> Adamson draws parallels between the rhetoric of the Florentine avant-garde and Mussolini's speeches, wherein the Italian leader advocated for "cultural renewal" and a "spiritual revolution". Adamson emphasises that the difference between the two positions was not merely rhetorical: "Mussolini was willing to engage in the political action necessary to translate the ideal into reality."<sup>46</sup>

In *Ideje*, Vujić, Crnjanski, and Stefanović, as well as authors who discussed Hitler's ideology and the moral renewal of Europe, insisted on a shift in contemporary nationalism, urging adaptation to the new rhythms of the world and the abandonment of old liberal nationalism. This represented the pursuit of a solution to the political crisis within the aesthetic domain, which, according to Sandrine Sanos, is a key characteristic of "the aesthetics of hatred" in interwar literature.<sup>47</sup>

Herf also notes that right-wing intellectuals were drawn to fascism partly because they hoped it would resolve the cultural crisis of bourgeois society. Fascism and National Socialism promised creativity, beauty, aesthetic form, and the spiritual unity of the nation, offering an alternative to materialism, positivism, and the chaotic liberalism of the time.<sup>48</sup>

According to Herf, *reactionary modernists* were thinkers who rejected the Enlightenment but remained committed to modernity and progress, unaware of the contradiction between modern phenomena and tradition. These thinkers, such as Ernst Jünger, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Ezra Pound, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline, did not reject the power of technology; rather, they championed industrialisation and modern literary practices while striving to modernise national traditions. They saw themselves as "liberators of the dormant power of technology", which they believed capitalist economy and parliamentary democracy had suppressed.<sup>49</sup>

Herf further explains that

by focusing on technology, Jünger and other reactionary modernists proved themselves to be as 'progressive' as, if not more so than, left-wing intellectuals. But where the left associated the advancement of technology with the Enlightenment, reactionary modernists like Jünger found beauty in the technique precisely in its attack on the greatest achievement of the Enlightenment – the autonomous individual.<sup>50</sup>

Nonetheless, this tension between tradition and modernity, progress and reaction, community and society, rationalisation and charisma, would persist, contributing to the disintegration and coherence that fascism sought to impose on the avant-garde.

### Contradictions in Pirandello's Relationship with Fascism

In the sixth edition of *Ideje*, an anonymous author explored the paradoxical relationship between Luigi Pirandello and fascism, revealing the inconsistencies between avant-garde movements and the political regime. Pirandello was introduced

<sup>45</sup> Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>47</sup> Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 76.

<sup>48</sup> Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 31.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

as “the most original writer whom contemporary Italy has produced in the twilight of its literary and intellectual powers”.<sup>51</sup>

The author then highlighted Mussolini’s paradoxical view, whereby Pirandello’s works were described as expressions of the “new fascist era”. Mussolini was quoted in a conversation with Ludwig, stating that “Pirandello inadvertently creates a fascist theatre: life is the way we want to make it, it is our creation”. However, the author pointed out that not only did fascism embrace Pirandello, but Pirandello also aligned with fascism, seeking a great literary name when other movements like Marinetti’s futurism had waned.

Despite acknowledging the paradox, the author observed that fascism, as it emerged in Italy, revitalised trust in life, which had been suppressed by the agnosticism of a sceptical liberal-democratic era. However, the author emphasised that Gabriele D’Annunzio’s work aligned more closely with the poetics and ideology of fascism. D’Annunzio, “the last great rhapsodist and courtier poet”, was portrayed as an authentic precursor to the fascist era. The text thus presented a striking contrast between Pirandello’s reluctance to fully embrace fascist ideals and D’Annunzio’s enthusiastic commitment.

Despite agreeing with the fascist notion that theatre transforms life into a living event, Pirandello’s works, according to the anonymous author, ultimately betrayed the fascist vision. Pirandello, argued the author, remained loyal to the relativism and scepticism characteristic of the previous liberal era. This tension is emblematic of the broader struggle faced by avant-garde writers who, while often drawn to fascism’s political barbarism, failed to fully embrace its vision. The avant-garde’s relativism and defeatism prevented a complete alignment with fascist ideals, and the writers remained ambivalent, sometimes seeming to agree with the fascist project and at other times completely rejecting it. Their poetics sometimes undermined and betrayed political ideals.

## Conclusion

The authors in *Ideje*, many of whom were high-ranking officials or collaborators with the Yugoslav regime, sought to present themselves as the voices advocating for a solution to societal issues, such as the plight of workers and the decay of the West. These positions put their works within a political framework, contrary to the claims of literary historians like Lompar and Tešić, who assert that their writings should be examined separately from their clear political agendas. The concepts promoted in *Ideje* resonate closely with the political language of fascism from that period.

Even when these avant-garde writers found themselves aligned with the right wing of the Yugoslav press, they continued to seek a new rhythm more attuned to reality. Their quest often led them to explore more radical approaches compared to the socially leftist literature that adhered to bourgeois conventions. In their works, these authors declared the obsolescence of the old liberal language, invoking a new world order based on the foundation of a shattered liberal civilisation. Even as they expressed their ideological commitment to the right, their political engagement remained deeply tied to their literary pursuits.

<sup>51</sup> B.R., “Pirandelo pronalazi svoje maske kroz svoju fantaziju na sumornom planu italijanskog provincijalnog života”, *Ideje* no. 6 (November 1934): 1.



In his contributions to *Ideje*, Crnjanski particularly exemplified the tension between right-wing ideological formulas and a disturbed, avant-garde syntax. His works exhibited a peculiar rhythm marked by sentence explosions, overemphasis, and distortions of temporal and spatial perspectives, as if attempting to reinterpret the past within a modern context. Crnjanski, like other European avant-garde writers in the 1930s, embraced a right-wing turn, yet his works continued to bear witness to the profound crises of language and concept that characterised the avant-garde movements. By imbuing his work with a modernist rhythm, Crnjanski re-energised a political programme that sought to restore old concepts through new forms. This revival of old ideals, while wrapped in new linguistic rhythms, symbolised a restoration of cultural and ideological traditions.

In the Yugoslav context, the authors of *Ideje* aimed early on to rejuvenate the Serbian language through the lens of fascist ideology, seeking to revitalise it in line with the rising nationalist revolution. Their engagement with the language was an artistic pursuit as well as an ideological one, attempting to restore a sense of national identity and pride through the language itself, often infused with fascist ideals.

## Bibliography

- Adamson, Walter. *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism*. London: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Andrić, Ivo. "Ponekad se pitam da li je to mistična kazna za nas koji smo preživeli". *Ideje* no. 5 (November 1934): 2.
- Anonymous. "Hitler u Larussu". *Ideje* no. 3 (October 1934): 4.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951.
- Crnjanski, Miloš. "Latinska kultura i latinska prosveta, iz raskošnih primorskih gradova i njenih bogatih crkava ostala je samo morska pena za naš narod na jadranskim obalama". *Ideje* no. 7 (December 1934): 1.
- Crnjanski, Miloš. "Povodom priprema 700 godina od smrti Svetog Save". *Ideje* no. 8 (December 1934): 1.
- Crnjanski, Miloš. "Već godinama u našem društvu traje sabotaza svega što je državno". *Ideje* no. 10 (January 1935): 1.
- Günther, Hans F. K. *The Racial Elements of European History*. Translated by G. C. Wheeler. London: Methuen & Co., 1927.
- Herf, Jeffrey. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Kaplan, Alice. *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Lompar, Milo. *Duh samoporicanja*. Belgrade: Catena mundi, 2018.
- Maleš, Branimir. "Narodnost i rasa". *Ideje* no. 8 (December 1934): 3.
- Mosse, George L. *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1999.
- Najdanović, Dimitrije. "Špengler o revoluciji i proletarijatu". *Ideje* no. 2 (October 1934): 7.
- Perić, Đorđe. "Moralno jedinstvo Evrope". *Ideje* no. 2 (October 1934): 4.
- R., B. "Pirandelo pronalazi svoje maske kroz svoju fantaziju na sumornom planu italijanskog provincijalnog života". *Ideje* no. 6 (November 1934): 1.
- Sanos, Sandrine. *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. *Pogledi i pokušaji*. Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1919.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "Obnova umetnosti i pojave primitivizma". *Misao* no. 13 (1923): 151.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "O krvnim grupama i rasnom problemu". *Ideje* no. 6 (November 1934): 3.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "Demokratski sistem, kao i njegovo zastupanje, postao je preživeli sistem kabinetske politike". *Ideje* no. 9 (December 1934): 1.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "Rasa i kultura". *Ideje* no. 23 (April 1935): 5.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "Rasizam i ekonomska struktura društva", *Ideje* no. 26 (May 1935): 4.
- Stefanović, Svetislav. "Komentar spaljivanja knjiga". *Ideje* no. 20 (March 1935): 3.
- Steiner, George. *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Steiner, George. *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Šlegel, Verner. "Nemačka nacionalistička omladina". *Ideje* no. 17 (March 1935): 4.
- Tešić, Gojko. *Utuljena baština: antologija*. Belgrade: Književno-izdavačka zadruga Dositej, 1990.
- Vujić, Vladimir. "Naš novi nacionalizam i Evropa". *Ideje* no. 21 (April 1935): 3.

**Mirnes Sokolović** is a PhD candidate at the University of Graz. He holds an MA degree in South Slavic literatures from the University of Sarajevo. He is one of the founders and editors of the Sarajevo literary magazine *SIC!* and the editor of the volume *Nacija i poststrukturalizam* (2013). He has also contributed to the cultural sections of the Belgrade-based *E-novine* and Sarajevo's *Oslobođenje*. He publishes prose, essays, literary criticism, and feuilletons in various magazines. His monographs include the novel *Rastrojstvo* (Sarajevo, 2013), and collections of essays in *Izokrenuti durbin* (Sarajevo, 2020) and *Kraj avanture* (Zagreb, 2021). He was a Junior Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies from 2023 to 2024.

Email: [mirnes.sokolovic@edu.uni-graz.at](mailto:mirnes.sokolovic@edu.uni-graz.at)

Quotation: Mirnes Sokolović, From Avant-garde to the Yugoslav Literary Right. Correspondences Between Poetic Concepts and Fascism in the Magazine *Ideje*, 1934–1935, in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 41–57.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art\\_msok01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art_msok01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).

Daniela Bartáková

# Power and Space

## Detention Protocols and Criminal Proceeding Records of the Jewish Inhabitants in Protectorate Prague, 1939–1943

### Abstract

During World War II, numerous locations in Prague underwent significant transformations, particularly affecting the Jewish population. Synagogues, prayer houses, buildings, and apartments changed their function and were converted into storage facilities under the *Treuhandstelle*, which managed these assets. Public spaces were also altered; Jews were barred from many places, the Vltava embankments and city parks, and Jewish cemeteries were repurposed as city greenery. These changes reflect broader efforts to control and marginalise the Jewish community. This study highlights specific areas in Prague where anti-Jewish activities were notably prevalent, necessitating a demonstrative display of authority and power.

*(...) I don't have to explain that it wasn't allowed; nothing was allowed. Radios and gramophones, sweaters, and bicycles had to be handed over; it was not allowed to go to the library, the theatre, or the cinema. Nowhere. It was not allowed to go to the public park either. Nothing. It was not allowed to leave Prague later. For example, in the trams, yellow Magen David was only on the back platform, so we were not allowed to walk through the centre of Prague. When we wanted to meet as a youth, and we wanted to meet, we were not allowed to walk; we had to walk around and everything on foot because on Saturdays and Sundays, we were not allowed [to meet] at all. And so on, and so forth. Then they kicked us out of the apartment. They just told us, "You can leave the furniture and everything here; you have a room in a shared apartment with two more families. Each family has one room".<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

This article analyses and interprets the data set collected within the project "Integration and Segregation in Cityspace: the History of the Holocaust in Prague Through a Web Application".<sup>2</sup> While the application makes it possible to study historical information in public space and trace the fates of the victims of the Holocaust to the city space, the article offers some additional aspects of interpretation of the primary sources examined for the application – the cases of violations of anti-Jewish regulations and ordinances, or "incidents" (*incidenty*, as these violations were named by the project's research team). The article outlines some of the power structures and hierarchies associated with the sociocultural significance of space that were relevant in wartime Prague. The data are based on an analysis of more than 2,400 arrest and

1 Archiv židovského muzea v Praze [Archive of the Jewish Museum in Prague], Testimony no. 0281, E. A.

2 The project was supported by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TAČR), project TL01000366. See Michal Frankl et al., "Present and Absent: Exploring the Holocaust of Jews in Prague Using a Mobile Application", available online at: [https://austriaca.at/0xc1aa5576\\_0x003c13df.pdf](https://austriaca.at/0xc1aa5576_0x003c13df.pdf), accessed 30 March 2025.

detention protocols and criminal proceeding records for the violation of anti-Jewish orders from 1939 to 1943. Detention protocols and criminal proceeding records were filled out by police officers and officials during detention and subsequent investigation. They may include brief statements from the detainees and, in some cases, appeals. These come from the fond of the Police Directorate in Prague, held in the National Archives in Prague.<sup>3</sup> As part of the research, particular incidents were connected with the Holocaust victims' database<sup>4</sup> and placed into the city space based on the residence addresses and/or their locations. These incidents, together with the victims' database, represent a category that might help us find orientation in the spatial and social geographies of Prague during the Second World War. Last but not least, the research team examined the reasons for detention and the amounts of fines imposed, as recorded in the protocols, and these were monitored, documented, and further analysed. This unique data set was used for the MemoMapPrague, which provides insights into the microhistory of Jewish Prague during the Second World War, spatial restrictions and exclusions of the Jewish population, and Jews' interactions with other inhabitants of Prague.<sup>5</sup>

The analysed documents represent a highly problematic and deeply biased source. Rather than providing direct accounts, they reflect the administrative and ideological framework of the Protectorate's policing system. These records – detention protocols and criminal proceeding files – were filled out by police officers who were not neutral record-keepers but agents of an oppressive regime. Many of them had served in law enforcement before the occupation and continued their work under the Protectorate, now subordinated to German security forces. Their role was not merely bureaucratic: they were active participants in enforcing Nazi racial policies, including the persecution of Jews. Consequently, the documents they produced were shaped by the authorities' priorities rather than the detainees' realities.

Moreover, the content of these records was profoundly influenced by the asymmetrical power dynamic between the interrogators and the arrested individuals. Filling out a form was not a neutral act but a tool of control, shaping how detainees' narratives were framed and recorded. The detained Jewish individuals – men and women of various ages and social backgrounds – were questioned under duress, knowing that their statements could have severe consequences. Their words were filtered through the perspective of officials whose primary concern was classifying and prosecuting, not documenting the truth. Given the already precarious situation of Jews under Nazi rule, when economic and labour restrictions had left many destitute, even minor infractions could lead to devastating penalties. The procedural absurdity of these investigations was evident: Jews were criminalised not for actual crimes but for their mere existence within a system designed to exclude and persecute them.

3 Národní archiv Praha [National Archives in Prague] (NA), Policejní ředitelství Praha II [Police Directorate II in Prague] (PDP), 1941–1950.

4 The database was created by the Terezín Initiative Institute in collaboration with the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Memorial. Since 2001, the web portal provides the public with documents relating to Nazi racial persecution and genocide in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and it includes a database of victims as well as digitised archival documents from the National Archives. Database of Victims, <https://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-victims/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

5 MemoMap <https://www.ehri-project.eu/ehri-and-masaryk-institute-new-web-application-memogis-prague>, accessed 30 March 2025; <https://memomap.cz/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

## Mapping Exclusion

In the summer of 1939, German and Czech authorities in the Protectorate introduced measures that laid the foundation for the persecution of Jews. On 21 June, the Regulation on Jewish Property allowed Germany to seize Jewish property and applied the Nuremberg Laws' definition of a Jew. In July, the Germans set up the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*) in Prague, aiming to oversee the forced migration of Jews and manage their assets. The Jewish Religious Community was tasked with relocating Jews to Prague for emigration, though this process was bureaucratic and burdensome. Lastly, in August, the Interior Ministry issued a directive to separate Jews from non-Jews in public spaces, encouraging local authorities to enforce bans, leading to a patchwork of restrictions across the Protectorate. By the winter of 1939 and 1940, these restrictions were increasingly standardised.<sup>6</sup> During the Second World War, many places gradually changed their character and purpose (not only) for the Jewish inhabitants of Prague. The project team located and traced these places. By a decree from September 1941, authorities typically converted synagogues into storehouses for confiscated Jewish property. Dozens of other sites underwent similar transformations. Officials repurposed prayer houses, buildings, and apartments as storage facilities for seized Jewish assets, managed by the newly established *Treuhandstelle*, which oversaw already confiscated property. Other public spaces also changed: authorities banned Jews from entering the Vltava embankments and city parks, while repurposing Jewish cemeteries as public greenery instead. Many places took on new functions – at least for one part of the population.<sup>7</sup>

This article aims to highlight places in Prague that, for various reasons, were under the close scrutiny of the Nazi authorities and experienced a higher frequency of anti-Jewish incidents compared to other parts of the city. These were areas where the need to demonstrate power and control was more intense – from the time the anti-Jewish regulations came into effect until the end of the deportations of Prague's Jewish population. These spatial reconfigurations can be further understood through the concept of public space.

In its narrowest definition, public space is intended to serve as a setting for social interaction. However, as the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre suggests, public space is not a singular entity but rather a complex of overlapping spheres, each shaped by different forces and actors. One such sphere is the representation of power, embodied in space as designed and imposed by the state, urban planners, architects, and technocrats. This form of space often reflects control, regulation, and authority – characteristics clearly visible in Nazi interventions within the urban fabric of wartime Prague.

6 Benjamin Frommer, "The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia", in *Prague and Beyond: The History of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands*, eds. Kateřina Čapková and Hillel Kieval (Pennsylvania 2025), 196–234, here 206–207.

7 For more about the topic, see *ibid.*; Benjamin Frommer, "Zurück ins Ghetto (und ins Dorf): Ausweisung und Umsiedlung der jüdischen Bevölkerung im nationalsozialistischen Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren", in *Delugiert und ghettoisiert: Jüdinnen und Juden vor der Deportation*, eds. Christine Schindler and Wolfgang Schellenbacher (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, 2022), 21–38; Wolf Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung in Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren* (Göttingen 2016). See also: Guy Miron, "Lately, Almost Constantly, Everything Seems Small to Me": The Lived Space of German Jews under the Nazi Regime, *Jewish Social Studies* 20, no. 1 (2013): 121–149; Guy Miron, *Space and Time under Persecution. The German-Jewish Experience in the Third Reich* (Chicago and London, 2023); Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black. Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge 2009).



Another important dimension is the lived and symbolic space created through daily routines, social interactions, and the shared experiences of urban life. This is the realm that shapes how a city is collectively imagined – a process Lefebvre describes as people making places their own by assigning them specific meanings and functions, such as streets, public buildings, monuments, or parks.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is a functional sphere, which captures the practical ways in which residents inhabit and move through the city. By viewing these altered sites through Lefebvre's framework, we can better understand how public space was not only materially transformed during the Nazi occupation, but also how its symbolic and functional dimensions were forcibly redefined for a significant segment of the population.

Immediately after the Nazi occupation, the occupiers – together with collaborating local authorities – systematically redefined public space in Prague. These changes became apparent in the city's urban planning, architecture, and everyday use. What had previously served as a setting for social interaction, collective experience, and civic identity was transformed into a tool of exclusion and control. For a significant part of the population – particularly Jews and Czech nationals – public space became a terrain of marginalisation and surveillance. The German authorities, supported by Nazi urban planners and architects, implemented a broad strategy of ethnic homogenisation, typical of radical nationalist regimes. This strategy relied on three main instruments: assimilation, forced displacement, and physical extermination. In practice, these goals were advanced through the transfer of capital assets, the Aryanisation of Jewish property, and the settlement of ethnic Germans in strategic areas of Czech territory.

Urban planning and architecture became active agents of these policies. German urban planners proposed a radical transformation of Prague into a “Führer city” – a symbolic and administrative centre of the Reich. They planned new urban axes, monumental administrative buildings, and spatial reorganisations that followed the ideological principles of the Third Reich. These changes were not abstract: they directly targeted the multicultural Czech-German-Jewish fabric of the city.<sup>9</sup> German architectural and urban planners supported this process; the German dominance was endorsed by “visualising elements of Germanisation”.<sup>10</sup> Germanisation also took place on a visual-symbolic level. The authorities systematically erased Czech national symbols from the public space and replaced them with German ones. German street names began to appear before their Czech equivalents or fully replaced them. Statues, signs, and other markers of Czech identity were removed or renamed to align with Nazi ideology. Through these spatial and symbolic interventions, the occupiers imposed a new public order that sought to erase existing identities and assert German dominance.<sup>11</sup>

Hand in hand with Nazi urban planning and restructuring, the Nazi authorities implemented new anti-Jewish laws and, little by little, projected their policy onto the public space. From 1939, the number of anti-Jewish orders and regulations increased

8 Jaime Iregui, “Veřejný prostor” [Public Space], in *Atlas transformace* [Atlas of Transformation] (Prague 2009), 767–768; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford 1991), 68–168.

9 Miloš Hořejší, *Protektorátní Praha jako německé město: Nacistický urbanismus a Plánovací komise pro hlavní město Prahu* [Protectorate Prague as a German City: Nazi Urbanism and the Planning Commission for the Capital City of Prague] (Prague 2013), 20.

10 *Ibid.*, 20.

11 Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 67–76. For example, a famous boulevard in Staré Město (the Old Town), Pařížská (Paris) Street, was changed to Nürnberger Street. Vítězné Square in the Dejvice district was renamed Wehrmacht Square, and Wilsonova Street leading to the central train station was named after the composer Richard Wagner.

significantly, based initially on the order regulating encounters between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations in public life. Several other measures restricting the Jewish population were derived from that order in the whole territory of the Protectorate. From then on, Jews were gradually forbidden to enter city public spaces freely – including cafés, restaurants, parks, town spas, shops, libraries, Vltava riverbanks, cinemas and theatres, hospitals, and poorhouses. The newly emerging “Jewish map” gradually limited Jews in space.<sup>12</sup>

One of the key areas within Holocaust studies is the geography of the Holocaust, which understands the genocide as a spatially grounded event – deeply embedded in specific locations, temporal frameworks, and territorial dynamics. Territoriality, in this context, is viewed as a manifestation of social power, facilitating processes of exclusion, relocation, concentration, and displacement. This systematic spatial reorganisation has increasingly become the subject of critical scholarly analysis. What emerged from these practices was a spatial framework of oppression – driven by ideological, racial, and economic imperatives, explicitly formulated in policy and materially implemented across multiple dimensions of human experience.<sup>13</sup> Thus, power is not just exercised through laws and actions but is embedded in spatial practices. The spaces of the Holocaust, such as ghettos, camps, and segregated areas, were actively constructed to enforce racial and ideological control, making them integral to the functioning of Nazi policies.

The focus of the study is not on the concrete places but their interconnection with territorial ideas and practices such as *Lebensraum* – its urban and architectural planning, distinguishing Aryan and non-Aryan spaces, and the transformation of non-Aryan spaces to Aryan ones. As Tim Creswell has emphasised, the “[e]ffect of space is not simply a geographical matter. It always intersects with sociocultural expectations.”<sup>14</sup> Creswell’s theory of space shows that space is not just a passive setting but an active site where racial, ethnic, and cultural ideologies intersect with geographic boundaries. In the case of the Holocaust, the spaces where persecution occurred were not randomly selected but were strategically chosen to reflect and enforce a social order based on racial discrimination and dominance.

The places where anti-Jewish persecutions happened, where all the incidents happened with higher frequency, show a relationship between space and sociocultural power and can be traceable based on class and racial criteria. “(...) [A]uthority connects a particular place with a particular meaning to strengthen and ideological position” – that is, to regulate space in a way that frames any deviation or alternative use as a transgression.<sup>15</sup> Lefebvre’s perception of space helps explain how the Nazis constructed spaces not just for physical containment but as expressions of social and political ideologies. The spaces created under the Nazi regime were not simply geographic locations but were deliberately shaped to reinforce the racialised ideologies that justified the marginalisation, persecution, and eventual annihilation of the Jews.

As Creswell further points out, space and place are used to structure a normative landscape; through space and place, we perceive what is right, just, and appropriate.

12 The term was used by Helena Petrův, *Zákonné bezpráví, Židé v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* [Legal Injustice, Jews in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia] (Prague 2011), 206. See also: Hana Kubátová and Jan Láníček, *The Jew in Czech and Slovak Imagination, 1938–1989: Antisemitism, the Holocaust, and Zionism* (Leiden and Boston 2018), 48; Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung in Protektorat*; and Frommer, “The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia”.

13 Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, eds., *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Indiana 2014), 43.

14 Tim Creswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis and London 1996), 8.

15 *Ibid.*, 9.

We gain better a orientation about ourselves in society. The organisation and use of public space were integral to creating a “normative” landscape under the Nazi regime. The exclusion and segregation of Jews from public space were not just about controlling their movements but about structuring a social order that defined who was included and who was excluded. This spatial organisation helped normalise racial hierarchies and reinforced the cultural narrative of Aryan superiority.

Since the value and meaning of any space are created, reproduced, and defended by an authority, the space must be protected by the authority from heresy. Such “normative space” illustrates how the physical spaces of oppression were not only instruments of social control but also reinforced the regime’s ideological and moral authority. The constructed spaces such as ghettos, concentration camps, and exclusion zones were not simply places of suffering but also representations of the Nazi state’s power to define what was “normal” and what was “deviant”.

From this perspective, one can examine Prague during the Protectorate, the frequency and placing of particular incidents, and the city’s urban planning. The geographic layout of the Protectorate, where certain incidents occurred in specific locations, highlights how space was strategically used to reinforce the ideological goals of the Nazi regime. The urban planning in Prague during this time was designed to physically segregate Jews from the broader population and to establish symbolic boundaries between “Aryan” and “non-Aryan” spaces.<sup>16</sup>

Since transgression serves to foreground the mapping of ideology onto space and place, it is necessary to interconnect social marginality, resistance, and the shaping of otherness. In this context, transgression is not just the act of breaking laws but also the contestation of the spatial boundaries imposed by the regime. Jewish resistance often took the form of rejecting or subverting the spatial orders that sought to marginalise them, and these acts of resistance were crucial in challenging the physical and symbolic boundaries which the Nazis sought to impose. From this point of view, those who became socially marginalised and ostracised and their re-anchoring in the social structure and geographies of the Nazi occupation and the wartime social conflict can tell us something about the newly established “normality”. The process of marginalising Jews and segregating them in specific spaces helped to create a “new normal”, where exclusion and dehumanisation became institutionalised. The physical transformation of urban spaces into places of confinement and segregation was key to reinforcing this social order and establishing the new norms that justified racial exclusion.

Suppose that the dominant group determines the rules of the use and the meaning of public space and excludes and segregates Jews from it with greater or lesser intensity in different areas. In that case, it sends a clear message about the functioning of public space to national, ethnic, and religious groups of the Protectorate – Germans, Czechs, and Jews.<sup>17</sup> The way in which public space was used to exclude Jews sent a clear message to the different groups within the Protectorate about their status in the social hierarchy. The creation of boundaries around Jews, whether physical (e.g. ghettos) or symbolic (e.g. racial laws), helped communicate who was considered part of the “national community” and who was relegated to the status of “other”.

An extensive examination of the matter entails numerous factors, including the various motivations of Jewish inhabitants for visiting specific locations. These may include trips to grocery stores, where goods might have been more accessible for

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 9.

Jews, as well as visits to cafes, where there was a higher likelihood of Jews being served despite prohibitions. These narratives encompass tangible human experiences – instances when the burdens of daily life became intolerable, and defying anti-Jewish regulations became a means to preserve dignity, if only momentarily. “Nothing was allowed”, as vividly described in the aforementioned firsthand account of life under Nazi restrictions, with individuals being forbidden from entering public spaces, meeting others, or even using public transport freely. Acts of resistance – however small – became vital for maintaining a sense of normalcy and humanity amidst the overwhelming oppressive measures.

Furthermore, co-moving into shared apartments is traceable only with difficulty. Nonetheless, the centrally organised resettlement of Prague’s Jewish population – especially from the periphery into the historical centre, such as Josefov, the Old Town, and later the New Town and Vinohrady – significantly altered the demographic and spatial patterns of Jewish life during the Second World War. This process, led by the Central Office for Jewish Emigration and executed by the Jewish Religious Community under duress, often meant that Jews were relocated into overcrowded, substandard housing, severing ties with their original neighbourhoods and support networks. While such developments may have been visible in the plans of German urban administrators, this study leaves these broader demographic variables aside. Instead, it focuses on the most apparent and direct spatial dynamics relevant to understanding the geography of these incidents. Lastly, it introduces several individual perspectives that reveal how those affected perceived and navigated the reshaped urban space.<sup>18</sup>

### Drafting “Jewish Prague”: The Spatiality of Jewish Life and Its Representations

By the time of the industrial revolution, Prague already exhibited a distinct spatial organisation, with the “governmental” and administrative core concentrated on the left bank of the Vltava River and the commercial and trade-oriented hub on the right bank. Outside the historic city walls, there were traditional agricultural villages, such as Libeň, Bubny, Holešovice, Bubeneč, and Dejvice. These areas were gradually transformed through industrialisation as factories were established in these areas. This led to a physical expansion of the city towards the outskirts, notably into Karlín and Smíchov.

However, the modernisation and urbanisation of Prague encompassed more than just industrial development. A key factor was the process of centralisation and the expansion of administrative functions, which were necessary to manage the growing complexity of an urban society. As Prague’s population increased and the economy diversified, there was a corresponding need for better governance, infrastructure planning, and public services. These developments were facilitated by the removal of the old city walls in the second half of the nineteenth century, which allowed previously peripheral areas to be integrated into the city’s urban fabric.

Urban planning became more deliberate, with new boulevards, squares, and civic institutions reflecting modern principles of hygiene, transportation, and public life. The construction of apartment blocks not only in new districts like Vinohrady but also in older areas such as Staré Město and Nové Město replaced earlier, often me-

<sup>18</sup> Frommer, “The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia,” 196–234.

dieval, urban structures. Public transport systems, including horse-drawn and later electric trams, enabled greater mobility and contributed to the spatial reorganisation of the city.

At the same time, the social landscape of Prague became more stratified. While districts like Vinohrady were designed as orderly residential quarters for the upper middle class – with amenities such as parks, cafés, and theatres – other neighbourhoods such as Žižkov and Holešovice developed into dense working-class areas, characterised by smaller apartments and proximity to industrial sites. These neighbourhoods often lacked sufficient infrastructure and public services, which underscored the growing socioeconomic divide within the city.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, Prague's transformation during the nineteenth century was shaped not only by industrialisation but also by interrelated processes of modernisation, including administrative centralisation, urban planning, infrastructure development, and social differentiation. These forces collectively reshaped the city's physical structure and the daily lives of its inhabitants, laying the foundations for the modern metropolis.

Since the second middle of the nineteenth century, Josefov – Prague's Jewish Town – underwent several turbulent transformations. However, it was above all after 1848, following the abolition of the Familiants Laws and the legal emancipation of Jews, that massive migration from rural areas to Prague significantly reshaped the topography of Jewish settlement in the city. While isolated cases of Jewish property acquisition existed prior to 1848 – often through Christian intermediaries – the major demographic and spatial changes occurred only in the wake of full civic rights, which enabled Jews to settle more freely and purchase real estate across Prague. “Especially after 1859, with the introduction of legislation for freedom of movement, Prague Jews sought escape from the physical as well as the figurative ghetto. Josefstadt, numbering 5,929 Jews (95 per cent of the population) in 1843, 4,798 (45 per cent) in 1880, and 2,198 (24 per cent) in 1900, with its narrow overcrowded streets and old housing, became a ghetto in the sense of a slum, shared with the Prague poor regardless of religion.”<sup>20</sup> As Cathleen Guistino has described, “[e]mancipation from the ghetto allowed wealthier Jews to move to more salubrious, comfortable parts of Prague; poorer Jews stayed in the former ghetto's built space, where they were joined by a great number of impoverished Christians. By 1890, Josefov had become the city's slum and was regularly referred to as ‘the quarter of the poor’, and the majority of its residence were Christians.”<sup>21</sup> Between 1893 and 1917, the whole district underwent through redevelopment – *asanace* – transforming Josefov into a fashionable and lucrative area. Josefov was not the only rebuilt district at that time, an inevitable transformation affected the other city parts too – like Staré Město, Nové Město, and Podskalí – as part of a broader modernisation strategy aimed at constructing profitable and hygienic housing.<sup>22</sup>

19 Martin Ouředníček, “Sociálně prostorová struktura industriální Prahy” [Socio-Spatial Structure of Industrial Prague], in *Krajina jako historické jeviště: k počtům Evy Semotanové* (Prague 2012), 263–283, [http://www.historygis.cz/sites/default/files/8\\_ourednicek\\_m\\_2012\\_socialne\\_prostorova\\_struktura\\_industrialni\\_prahy\\_in\\_chodejovska\\_e\\_simunek\\_r\\_eds\\_krajina\\_jako\\_historicke\\_jeviste.pdf](http://www.historygis.cz/sites/default/files/8_ourednicek_m_2012_socialne_prostorova_struktura_industrialni_prahy_in_chodejovska_e_simunek_r_eds_krajina_jako_historicke_jeviste.pdf), accessed 30 March 2025.

20 Michal Frankl, Martina Niedhammer, and Ines Koeltzsch, “Contested Equality: Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 1861–1917”, in *Prague and Beyond*, 120–156, here 126–127.

21 Cathleen M Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900* (New York 2003), 255.

22 Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague 1861–1914* (West Lafayette, 2006). For more about the clearance reconstruction of the Prague Jewish Ghetto, see Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town*; Alfons Adam, *Unsichtbare Mauern, Die Deutschen in der Prager Gesellschaft zwischen Abkapselung und Interaktion* (1918–1938/9) (Essen, 2013), 104–106; Frankl, Niedhammer, and Koeltzsch, “Contested Equality: Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 1861–1917”, 120–156.

By the early twentieth century, Prague experienced an intense migration of workers, clerks, businesspeople, industrialists, and merchants. The middle and upper-middle classes settled mostly in the downtown areas – Nové Město, Josefov, Staré Město, and Vinohrady – and partially also in the new progressive urban areas – Smíchov, Karlín, Letná, and Bubeneč.<sup>23</sup> Like many other European metropolises, Prague's city centre represented a lucrative living place due to its quality and symbolic historical value. In the course of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia, the Dejvice, Bubeneč, and Střešovice districts quickly developed into desirable modern residential zones.<sup>24</sup> Migration to Prague intensified in the 1930s, reaching 15,000 to 19,000 people annually, mainly workers and public sector employees. The total number of inhabitants had exceeded one million already in 1939.<sup>25</sup>

Alongside the city inhabitants' diverse demographic and socioeconomic structure, national heterogeneity was quite characteristic for Prague too. The numerically significant minorities were the Jews and the Germans. The largest concentration of Germans, over 20 per cent, was in the Nové Město and Vinohrady districts, especially in the new residential areas behind the National Museum.<sup>26</sup> The Jewish population was mostly affiliated with the German language. However, since the fin de siècle, Prague Jews gradually changed their German language affiliation to the Czech one. As Gary B. Cohen points out, it is challenging to determine the exact composition of the German and Czech Jewish populations. At the turn of the century, Jews from the wealthiest area of Prague in Nové Město tended to have German nationality, while in the poorest quarters, such as Josefov and Holešovice, the Jewish population tended rather to have Czech nationality.<sup>27</sup> The German majority among the Jewish population was settled in wealthy urban districts, primarily due to their economic interests and cultural, political, and social preferences. However, this binary distinction between "German" and "Czech" Jews oversimplifies the complex and fluid nature of Jewish identities in Prague. As Kateřina Čapková demonstrates in her monograph *Czechs, Germans, Jews?: National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia*, many Jews navigated multiple identities, often embracing both the German and Czech cultures simultaneously. This bilingualism and biculturalism was not merely a transitional phase but represented a stable state for many individuals, reflecting a pragmatic approach to the multicultural environment of Prague. Official statistics of the late Habsburg Empire and Czechoslovakia often failed to capture this fluidity, as they were not designed to document multiple affiliations or bilingualism.<sup>28</sup>

Other parts of the city with traditionally strong and prosperous German and German Jewish communities included the area around St. Jindřich Church, which neighbored Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square/Wenzelsplatz), the street Na Příkopě (Am Graben), and the Lower New Town, particularly the area of Na Poříčí (Porschitz). This area hosted the most important German cultural institutions, bank

23 Ibid.

24 Oufedníček, "Sociálně prostorová struktura industriální Prahy"; Adam, *Unsichtbare Mauern*, 104–106.

25 Ibid., 273.

26 Adam, *Unsichtbare Mauern*, 109.

27 For more details, see Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 76.

28 Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?: National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia* (New York: 2012). In her work *Geteilte Kulturen*, Ines Koeltzsch further elaborates on this theme by examining the everyday interactions and shared cultural spaces among Czechs, Germans, and Jews in Prague. She illustrates how cultural and social exchanges in urban spaces contributed to the formation of hybrid identities, challenging the notion of fixed national categories. Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen: Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag, 1918–1938* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012).



houses, fancy shops, cafés, and new residential dwellings. There was the German House Casino, the central organ of German culture in Prague and an umbrella organisation for German liberal free associations;<sup>29</sup> the Urania adult education centre; and the editorial offices of German daily newspapers.<sup>30</sup> Even though Prague's German population gradually decreased, these areas preserved their German character until the Second World War.

The integration of Jews, patterns of population migration, and the restructuring of city districts highlight the intricate relationship between urban topography and identity formation. The spatial distribution of Jewish communities in Prague cannot be solely understood through the lens of socioeconomic status or linguistic affiliation. Instead, it reflects a dynamic interplay of personal choices, cultural interactions, and historical contingencies that shaped the multifaceted identities of Prague's Jewish inhabitants. Gentrification, nationalisation, and the power struggle between German and Czech nationals became integral to this spatial project. It was apparent in public space in the abovementioned places, in architecture, and in national symbols. Czechs, Germans, and Jews living together underwent an economic, cultural, ethnic, and national transformation of the places that gradually began to be symbolically perceived as sites of national consciousness. This shift was evident in changes to urban terminology – for example, the former Horse Market was renamed Václavské náměstí. On a symbolic level, Ferdinand Avenue came to represent a cultural divide: while the German Theatre stood on one side, the Czech National Theatre was built on the opposite end. These spaces became sites of “voluntary segregation”, as Czechs and Germans used them to express their identities during Sunday walks and other public occasions. Besides the sharply defined territorial distinctions, other areas beyond the purview of national boundaries represented territories of mutual interconnection.<sup>31</sup> Social norms and expectations often reinforced this segregation, leading to the separation of both groups in various aspects of their lives. Such areas can thus be seen as examples of spatiality and territoriality.

The dynamic component of demographic events and changes went hand in hand with Prague's urban and architectural development. In the 1930s, Prague also had to face an economic crisis. The “emergency colonies” built for the poorest inhabitants of Prague, as well as apartment buildings for workers, contrasted with the luxury quarters for the social elites. However, this development did not significantly affect existing national maps of the city. German and Jewish minorities resided in the downtown area, while the wider city centre was primarily inhabited by middle and higher-middle-class individuals, clerks, and factory owners. Specific districts within the city aligned with the social, demographic, and ethnic makeup of their residents. Overall, the Jewish community in Prague was well integrated and actively participated in commerce, industry, and trade. The professional structure of the Jewish population was similar to previous decades. Jews worked as physicians, lawyers, and business owners. Most Jews belonged to the well-educated, middle, or upper-middle classes. The occupational profile of Jews was similar to those of Jews

29 Ibid., 80–81; Scott Spector, *Prague Territories National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: 2000), 7.

30 Adam, *Unsichtbare Mauern*, 109.

31 Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 93–104, 93. See also Richard Biegel, “Václavské náměstí a zrození pražské ‘city’ na počátku 20. Století” [Wenceslas Square and the Birth of Prague ‘City’ in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Stoletá Praha* 35, no. 2, (2019): 86–113, and Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*, 253–332.

in Germany and Austria.<sup>32</sup> Similarly to Berlin, Vienna, and other European cities, Jews were settled in various districts of Prague, including suburban areas. This urban trend of Prague's Jewish and German population had several causes. The city centre's depopulation resulted from the growing importance of the new commercial centre in Nové Město. The increasing attractiveness of the new and more extensive modern centres of Vinohrady and Žižkov also lured many residents from other districts.<sup>33</sup>

According to the statistician Antonín Boháč, in the 1920s, the Prague districts with the highest concentrations of Jewish residents included the Josefov (Prague V), where Jews made up 47 per cent of the population, as well as Staré Město, Nové Město, and Vinohrady, each with a Jewish population exceeding 20 per cent. Although Josefov had the highest relative proportion of Jewish inhabitants, it was a small and spatially limited quarter. As a result, the majority of Prague's Jewish population resided outside of Josefov, primarily in the adjacent and expanding urban districts. The German nationals were concentrated in similar localities, only slightly further away from the historical downtown – that is, in Nové Město, Vinohrady, and Smíchov (over 15 per cent). The German and/or Jewish population was more numerous in the city centre and represented a relatively solid and stable economic and social class. This corresponds to the overall social differentiation of the population of Prague, which, unlike many other European metropolises, did not undergo the stage of urban centre proletarianisation.<sup>34</sup>

Based on the 1930 census, Prague's total Jewish population – referred to as “Israelites” in Czechoslovak statistics in order to distinguish religious affiliation from national categories – was 35,435, constituting 4.2 per cent of the city's population. The census terminology can be misleading, as the categorisation of nationality before 1918 was based on the language of daily use (*Umgangssprache*), and after 1918 on the mother tongue or declared ethnic origin. These categories were interpreted as indicators of “nationality”, yet they did not necessarily reflect actual national identity or self-perception. Many individuals were compelled to choose one category even though their cultural or ethnic identity might have been more complex. In the same year, 50.9 per cent of Prague Jews were registered as Czechoslovak nationals, 22.8 per cent as German nationals, and 22.7 per cent as Jewish nationals. Almost half of Czechoslovak Jews (46.4 per cent) were settled in Prague.<sup>35</sup>

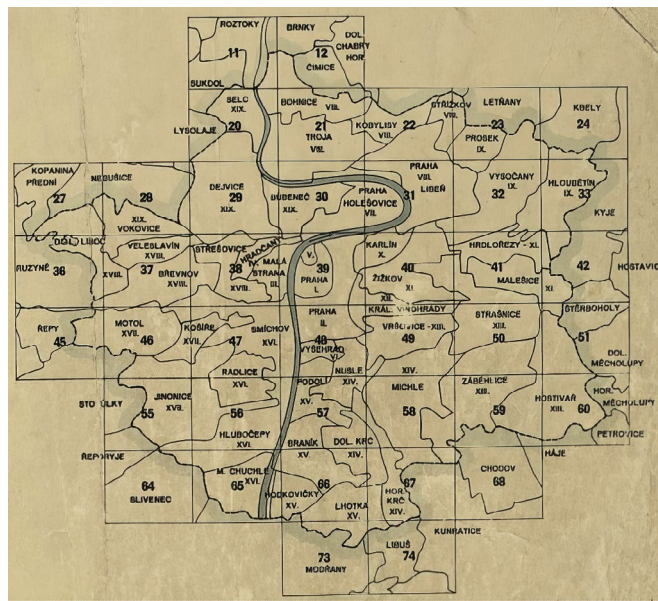
Although the number of Jews of Czechoslovak nationality was increasing, a large part of the Jewish population of Prague spoke German. Jews were scattered throughout the whole city. The traditional settlement areas of the German-speaking and Jewish populations were located in districts I to VII, that is, in the inner city.

32 Jana Vobecká, *Demographic Avant-garde. Jews in Bohemia Between the Enlightenment and Shoah* (Budapest and New York: 2013), 152–153.

33 Ouředníček, *Sociálně prostorová*, 275–277.

34 Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*, 66.

35 *Ibid.*, 68–69.



Plan of the city of Prague and its surroundings (1938).<sup>36</sup>

The 1930 census recorded the number of Jewish and non-Jewish German nationals in the districts of Prague as follows:<sup>37</sup>

#### Topographical Distribution of the Population in Prague by District (1930)

Prague District	Total (N) (N=100)	Czecho-slovaks N / %	Germans N / %	Jews (Nationality) N / %	Jews (Religion) N / %	Foreigners N / %
I–VII	206,867	180,308 / 87.2	19,352 / 9.4	3,914 / 1.9	16,668 / 8.1	5,421 / 2.6
I	30,481	25,749 / 84.5	3,083 / 10.1	1,206 / 4.0	4,988 / 16.4	967 / 3.2
II	78,121	66,358 / 85.0	8,952 / 11.5	1,201 / 3.4	7,060 / 9.0	2,617 / 3.4
III	21,218	18,627 / 87.8	2,015 / 9.5	71 / 0.3	292 / 1.4	496 / 2.3
IV	9,100	7,986 / 87.8	937 / 10.3	17 / 0.2	145 / 1.6	112 / 1.2
V	3,497	2,539 / 72.6	561 / 16.0	345 / 9.9	1,373 / 39.3	131 / 3.8
VI	5,308	5,141 / 96.9	73 / 1.4	32 / 0.6	60 / 1.1	93 / 1.8
VII	59,150	53,908 / 91.1	4,091 / 6.9	714 / 1.2	2,771 / 4.7	1,005 / 1.7
VIII	54,395	52,174 / 95.9	1,592 / 2.9	237 / 0.4	951 / 1.7	695 / 1.3
IX	26,721	26,039 / 97.4	425 / 1.6	39 / 0.1	231 / 0.9	356 / 1.3
X	24,002	21,166 / 88.2	1,899 / 7.9	504 / 2.1	2,211 / 9.2	400 / 1.7
XI	97,819	94,069 / 96.2	2,593 / 2.7	421 / 0.4	2,216 / 2.3	1,216 / 1.2
XII	95,497	83,988 / 87.9	7,919 / 8.3	1,634 / 1.7	7,048 / 7.4	3,170 / 3.3
XIII	68,283	64,880 / 95.0	1,834 / 2.7	247 / 0.4	1,032 / 1.5	1,361 / 2.0
XIV	74,099	71,548 / 96.7	1,197 / 1.6	284 / 0.4	808 / 1.1	1,527 / 2.0
XV	16,919	16,349 / 96.6	384 / 2.3	31 / 1.8	138 / 0.8	229 / 1.4
XVI	69,705	64,833 / 93.0	3,752 / 5.4	352 / 0.5	1,565 / 2.2	1,228 / 1.8
XVII	23,673	22,920 / 96.8	345 / 1.5	31 / 0.1	157 / 0.6	280 / 1.2
XVIII	29,140	28,094 / 96.4	609 / 2.1	46 / 0.2	303 / 1.0	450 / 1.5
XIX	61,695	55,718 / 90.3	3,918 / 6.4	490 / 0.8	2,04 / 3.3	1,900 / 3.1
Bubeneč	30,514	26,799 / 87.8	2,440 / 8.0	314 / 1.0	1,428 / 4.7	1,245 / 4.1

<sup>36</sup> Orientační plán hlavního města Prahy s okolím (1938) [Plan of the city of Prague and its surroundings is available on webpage of the Municipal Library of Prague (1938)], accessed 2 April 2025, <https://web2.mlp.cz/mapa1938/klad.php>.

<sup>37</sup> Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*, 361.

## Reshaping Prague: Spatial Transformation under National Socialism

After establishing the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the urban landscape underwent significant transformations, particularly for the Jewish community. When examining the locations where Jews faced heightened persecution, it is crucial to consider the city's traditional "German territories", which have historical significance in the tensions between Germans and Czechs, as previously discussed. However, other factors within the urban environment likely influenced these dynamics. It is important to consider the city centre's bustling areas and traffic hubs, along with the national and social reflections of space.

During the Second World War, the trams were a necessary means of transport for Prague, as buses were cancelled due to the lack of petrol. Leveraging Prague's well-established tram network from the interwar period, trams became the city's primary mode of public transportation due to their reliance on electricity, which was more readily available during wartime. Although Prague's public transport was restricted to Jews by order, it is still interesting to look at the frequency of incidents in the areas of the main tram lines. These naturally crossed the city's significant economic, banking, and commercial arteries.

Since 1938, the No. 1 had been the main tram line of the city centre, leading from Vypich to Čechovo náměstí. In 1940, the route was slightly modified and led from Vypich to Třída Krále Jiřího. Another tram line leading to the city centre was circular line No. 2, starting and ending at Flora. Other tram lines connected the wider centre or outskirts of the city and crossed the city centre. And, as already mentioned, anti-Jewish regulations were strongly represented at several exposed locations. Among other restrictions, Jews were forbidden from entering Václavské náměstí on certain days, as well as and the Vltava embankment, city parks, and the streets around the Crop Exchange near St. Henry's Church during its period of operation.

All the incidents can be considered in light of the percentage of the Jewish population in particular districts and, at the same time, with regard to the area of interest of the Nazis. Thus, the routes of the main tram lines that crossed the city centre were the streets of the former promenades, both originally Czech on the lower part of Václavské náměstí and Národní třída, and the former German promenade on Příkopy and Můstek. That is, the so-called Golden Cross (central traffic and urban crossroad) were among the most exposed places. As adumbrated above, thanks to modernisation and unusual construction activities, Václavské náměstí – the headquarters of the whole area – became the dominant feature of multiethnic Prague. Czech and German nationals visibly struggled for dominance there in the nineteenth century, and the place came under the scrutiny of the German authorities again during the Second World War. Monumental new buildings with shops, businesses and offices, arcades, cinemas, theatres, cafés, bars, restaurants, and buffets (*automaty*), became a symbol of prosperity. This process was stopped by the German occupation and its effort to reinterpret national symbols, characters, and urban spaces.<sup>38</sup> Alongside Václavské náměstí, no less eminent was the area around the street Na Příkopě with its bank houses and business centres. Therefore, it was unsurprising that incidents at these places occurred much more frequently and were often based on denunciations made by fellow citizens.

In addition to the city centre, the Nazis were also interested in the Vinohrady district with its sizeable German-speaking minority. At the same time, Vinohrady rep-

<sup>38</sup> Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*, 256–288.

resented a modern district where several thousand new apartments were to be built for the newly arrived German population.<sup>39</sup> However, in contrast to Bubeneč, the representation of the Jewish population in Vinohrady was significantly higher, at 9.2 per cent.

Furthermore, it is interesting to highlight the plans and sites of interest of the German Planning Commission for the Capital City of Prague and its Surroundings (*Planungskommission für die Hauptstadt Prag und Umgebung*). While this topic goes beyond the scope of this article, it may point to several places where the persecution of Jews was more frequent and, therefore, to potential future research. For example, the areas from which the Jewish population was first evicted or moved into shared apartments could be a subject of further study.

The commission divided Prague into several areas, focusing on the city centre and urban greenery for aesthetic, social, and hygienic reasons. In practice, formerly industrial or workers' districts of the city were to be radically reconstructed. These included the districts of Žižkov, Libeň, and Vysočany.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, there was a plan to settle incoming German officials, members of the Wehrmacht, SS, teachers, and other newcomers to appropriate areas. Lucrative districts of Prague were in the spotlight; enclosed settlement colonies were to be established for German citizens, and Jewish and Czech populations were to be displaced. Appropriate natural and hygienic conditions were found in Střešovice, Petřín, Bubeneč, Baba, and Holešovice, and the German population was relatively strong in these districts already.<sup>41</sup> After all, housing and urban greenery were part of the Nazi ideology *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil). As indicated above, the most lucrative parts of the city centre and the broader centre were Staré Město, Nové Město, Josefov after clearance reconstruction, and the newly constructed apartment buildings in Vinohrady. Residential areas in Dejvice, Holešovice, Bubny, and Střešovice had a prestige for German urban planners too. The share of the Jewish population was less than five per cent there, while the German population was already relatively high. In addition, these areas were strategically located around the city's main arteries.<sup>42</sup>

The plan to create exclusively German districts in the occupied Prague territories with traditional German settlements and partly based on the newly arrived German military, police, and administrative units, was also a part of the effort to demonstrate the strength and superiority of Nazi Germany. As an integral part of such a manifestation of power – whether it was for the Czech inhabitants, the German minority of Prague, or directed beyond regional borders – the persecution of the empire's enemies, including the Jewish population, was part of the project. Another integral part of the plan was transforming public space and limiting its use, at least for some parts of the population. It is apparent in the number and placement of incidents, that is, the reasons for the detention and persecution of Jews.<sup>43</sup>

39 Hořejší, *Protektorátní Praha*, 161.

40 Ibid., 156.

41 Ibid., 161.

42 An example of the importance of this can be seen in the Jizera project, which sought to bring better drinking water to lucrative neighbourhoods. See Jaroslav Jásek, "Chutnější pitná voda pro 'lepší lidi'" [Tastier Drinking Water for "Better People"], in *Evropská velkoměsta za druhé světové války. Každodennost okupovaného velkoměsta, Praha 1939–1945 v evropském srovnání* [European Cities during World War II. Everyday Life of an Occupied City. 1939–1845 Prague in European Comparison] (Prague 2007), 103–109.

43 Olga Fejtová and Václav Ledvinka, eds., *Evropská velkoměsta za druhé světové války. Každodennost okupovaného velkoměsta, Praha 1939–1945 v evropském srovnání* [European Cities during World War II. Everyday Life of an Occupied City. 1939–1845 Prague in European Comparison] (Prague 2007).



One of the personalities dealing with the Germanisation of Prague was the newly appointed mayor of Prague and historian, Josef Pfitzner, who participated in creating the two-track administration to dominate the Czech space. Among his first steps to reorganise the administration of the city was his discrediting of Czech officials and provoking of attacks on the Czech opposition.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, streets were renamed and their bilingual designation was mentioned, which was inaugurated in the Dejvice district in April 1940. Pfitzner presented his concept of a German Prague in his book *Das tausendjährige Prag*, in which he examined the ideological subjugation of the city's Czech population.<sup>45</sup> In addition, he focused on discrediting historical figures associated with Czech nationalism, and on the removal of symbols of the Czech nation from public space. Pfitzner also concentrated on the consistent ideological retraining and testing of Prague guides in the spirit of Nazi ideology. Part of this German propaganda was an order to the Prague Monuments Office to have the statue of Moses removed from Pařížská (Nürnberger) Street at the expense of the Jewish Religious Community, as well as the monument to Rabbi Löw from Mariánské Square.<sup>46</sup> It was also significant for Nazi propaganda that the 1944 Prague guidebook stated that the Old-New Synagogue from the thirteenth century, together with the Jewish town hall and the Jewish cemetery, represented the only remains of the former Jewish town without any other historical information.<sup>47</sup>

### Incidents – Violations of Anti-Jewish Regulations Within the Territory of Prague

Based on documents from the Police Directorate in Prague which are held in the National Archives in the Czech capital, one of the most common incidents was the missing letter “J” in an ID card, which appeared in more than 500 protocols and criminal proceedings. Then there was missing or hiding a Jewish star, which appeared in



Frequency of Incidents in Prague.

44 Vojtěch Šustek, “Nacistická kariéra sudetoněmeckého historika” [Nazi Career of Sudeten German Historian], in Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939–1945 [Josef Pfitzner and Protectorate Prague in 1939–1945], vol. 1, eds, Alena Mišková and Vojtěch Šustek (Prague: 2000), 8–38.

45 Josef Pfitzner, *Das tausendjährige Prag* (Bayreuth: 1940).

46 *Ibid.*, 14–15.

47 *Grosser Führer der Hauptstadt Prag und Umgebung* (Berlin: 1944), 76.



more than 190 cases. Following these were shopping outside the time set up for Jews (more than 130 cases), arrests for visiting cafés, restaurants, and dance parties (more than 80 cases), and arrests for staying in the Vltava embankments and passing through it (more than 70 cases). Among the numerous incidents were also the non-submission of driving licenses, dwelling at train stations, walking through parks, and visiting theatres or cinemas, offences which were recorded in several dozens of cases.

I will now focus on the spatial frequency of incidents in particular districts where the percentage of the Jewish population was higher. The address of the incident can be monitored in records of individual detentions or criminal proceedings; if not specified, the incident is located based on the individual's permanent address.

### Missing letter “J” in ID cards

The most frequent incident was the arrest for the missing letter “J” on ID cards, punished in more than 500 cases. The duty of marking ID cards with the letter “J” was based on the decree of the Reich Protector Office from January 1940. The fine was in the range of 1,000 to 3,000 K (Crowns) or five to ten days in prison. The actual amount of the fine often depended on the discretion of the police officer. However, in many cases, the fines were roughly equivalent to an average monthly salary during the Protectorate, though the exact amount varied by year. The fines were usually too high for the Jews, whose food rations were lower than those of the non-Jewish population. Although we can only speculate whether it was a pragmatic or economic decision, Jews often chose prison for several days rather than paying a fine: keeping cash was a rational choice during the Second World War.

A violation of this measure was often discovered at police offices when people applied for new identification documents. In May 1941, seventy-five-year-old Albert Winternitz applied for residence registration and a new ID. Since his documents were not marked with the letter “J”, the police inspector punished him with a 1,000 K fine or five days in prison, where he eventually served his sentence since the fine was too high for him. Winternitz was murdered in Treblinka in October 1942.<sup>48</sup>

Jews usually found out about the regulation at the office; sometimes, the offence was discovered during a police street control. In many cases, we can find broader detention contexts in the protocols. In the criminal proceeding records, we can find dozens of protocols of many older people who did not leave their homes anymore due to health issues. That was the case of seventy-eight-year-old Anna Wernerová, who applied for her ID to be marked with the letter “J” in September 1941, unaware that her ID was supposed to be marked already. As mentioned in the protocol, she was poor, unable to walk without help, and supported by her son. At the time, she was waiting for a free place in a Jewish senior citizen's home in Prague. Despite all these facts, she was punished with a fine of 1,000 K or seven days in prison. Wernerová was deported to Theresienstadt in July 1942 and subsequently to Treblinka, where she was murdered.<sup>49</sup>

In another criminal proceeding record, we can find the story of Regina Machlupová, aged seventy-six, who went to the police station to register for residence in October 1941. As her ID was not marked with the letter “J”, she was punished with a fine of 2,000 K or seven days in prison. “(...) I still stay at home, and (...) I didn't know

48 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Winternitz Albert”, 16 May 1941.

49 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Wernerová Anna”, V 2457/2, 9 September 1941.

that I'm obliged to take care of supplementing my ID with a designation of Jewish origin. Otherwise, I wouldn't pass the register to list to the doorman for registration."<sup>50</sup> She appealed unsuccessfully and paid the total fine despite her serious health issues. As apparent from the appeal protocol, she was treated for cancer. Machlupová was deported to Theresienstadt in July 1942, where she passed away a few months later.<sup>51</sup>

#### Number of Incidents in Selected Prague Districts<sup>52</sup>

Prague district	Jewish share of total population as a percentage	Number of incidents
Prague XII – Vinohrady	9.2	166
Prague II – Nové město	9	139
Prague I – Josefov	16	68

A higher frequency of this offence can be observed in Prague's VIII and X districts, where there were almost fifty cases recorded. There were also similar cases in the Dejvice, Bubny, and Holešovice districts. In district V, Josefov, where the population was 40 per cent Jewish, there were even only thirteen cases recorded.

#### Non-wearing and Hiding of a Jewish Star

In September 1941, a new order of the Reich Protector in Bohemia and Moravia was passed, announcing that the Jews were not allowed to appear in public without a Jewish star which must be "(...) visibly worn on the left breast side of the clothing".<sup>53</sup> Jews were often persecuted for covering the star or if it had insufficient stitching. The incidents often occurred based on denunciations.

Even wearing the Jewish star on the wrong side was a reason for punishment, as is evident from the detention protocol of Sylvio Klein, who was arrested in March 1942 for "sewing a Jewish Star on the right instead of the left side". On the protocol, we can read that the star was sewn by his mother on the wrong side by mistake. Unfortunately, this mistake was noticed by a police officer in Hybernská Street. At that time, Klein was eighteen years old. He was deported to Theresienstadt in May 1942, and in February 1943 to Auschwitz, where he was murdered.<sup>54</sup>

Jan Beinkoles was persecuted in Jindřiška Street in March 1942 because he "was walking down the sidewalk with a dirty Jewish Star sewn at the corners only". He was deported to Theresienstadt in July 1942, and from there to Auschwitz in December 1943, where he was murdered at the age of twenty-eight.<sup>55</sup>

50 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Machlupová Regina", M 308/16, 6 November 1941.

51 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Odvolání proti trestnímu nálezu [Appeal against a criminal conviction]: Machlupová Regina", M 308/16, 7 November 1941.

52 The table includes only that districts that are most relevant for the scope of this study. A more comprehensive overview, including temporal patterns, can be accessed via the timeline on the online MemoMap, <https://memomap.cz/>, 2 April 2025.

53 *Verordnungsblatt des Reichsprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren* (12 September 1941), <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex-day?aid=bum&datum=19410912&seite=1&zoom=33>, accessed 30 March 2025.

54 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol o zadržení [Detention Protocol]: Sylvio Klein", K 2096/9, 28 March 1942; <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/376730-klein-sylvio-silvia-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

55 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol o zadržení [Detention Protocol]: Jan Beinkoles", B 1019/19, 22 March 1942, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/405447-beinkoles-jan-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

In April 1941, Valerie Weissová was punished with a fine of 1,000 K or five days in prison for covering a Jewish star in a tram. She was denounced by Josef Povýšil, for whom Jewish passengers did not vacate a seat even the tram was overcrowded. Weissová allegedly only waved her hand in response to Povýšil's complaint over the seat and covered her star with a scarf. In reaction to the accusation, she stated in the protocol that "I thought there were free seats in the wagon. The witness didn't speak to me at all. I cleaned my nose; therefore, I was holding a tissue. It is not true that I was covering the star."<sup>56</sup> Weissová paid the fine. She was deported to Theresienstadt in January 1942, and in September 1943 to Auschwitz, where she was murdered at the age of fifty-four.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast to incidents regarding the missing letter "J", arrests for not wearing or covering a Jewish star, punished in at least 195 cases, can be traced quite well based on the addresses of particular incidents. Details about the detention and criminal procedure can also be found in the protocols.

Prague district	Jewish share of total population as a percentage	Number of incidents
Prague II	9	142
Prague XII	9.2	38
Prague I	16	27

The highest incidence was in District II, where Jews were most often detained on Václavské náměstí (21 cases), in Jindřišská Street (15 cases), and Na Poříčí (11 cases). Several cases of the arrests of individuals were recorded in the streets U Půjčovny, Berlínská třída (today Revoluční), Třída Richarda Wagnera (today Wilsonova Street), and Na Příkopě, and on the square called Petřské náměstí.

Many incidents also in District XII – Vinohrady, especially in Vinohradská Street (10 cases). In District I there were in 27 cases. In none of the other districts was the incidence of the violation of the order significant: there were 5 cases in District V – Josefov, 7 each in districts VII and VIII, and 9 in District XIX.

Again, the results do not correspond to the percentage of the Jewish population in particular districts. However, the places with a higher frequency of incidence were connected to the conflict about public space. Czech and German nationals had struggled over these areas since the nineteenth century, and the new Nazi supremacy of power began to manifest itself on a symbolic level as these areas represented important city crossroads.

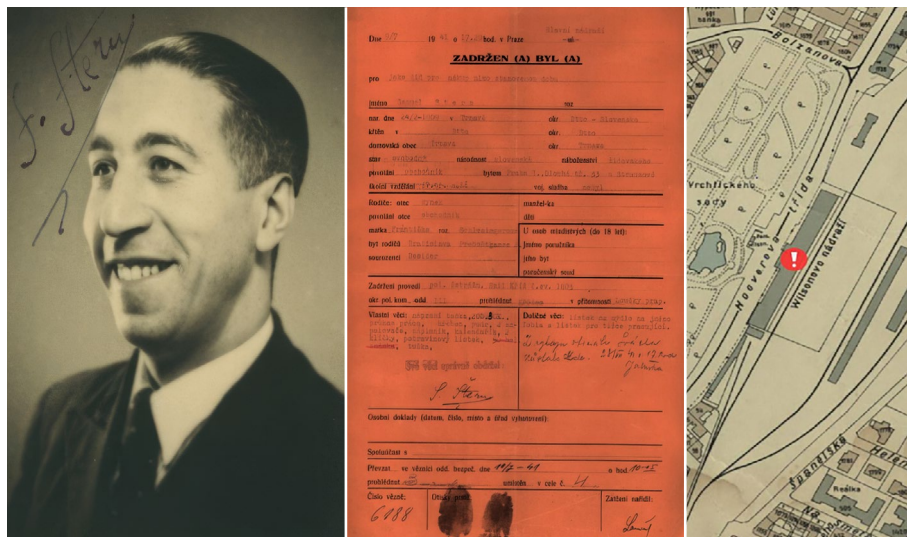
### Shopping Hours for the Jews

On 9 July 1940, the regulation of shopping hours for the Jews was imposed following the policy of contact restriction between the Jewish and Aryan populations. In Prague, shopping hours were set from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. However, in 1941, these were changed to 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Individual shops were obliged to display an information board with Jewish shopping hours and a ban

<sup>56</sup> NA, PDP (1941-1950), "Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Valerie Weissová", V 1974/7, 21 November 1941; available online at: <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/364747-weissova-valerie-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid; <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/133573-valerie-weissova/Weissova>, accessed 30 March 2025.

on Jews entering outside of these hours. Jews were usually not allowed to shop in the morning in order to prevent them from buying any fresh products.<sup>58</sup> Space, place, and, now even more explicitly, time, were used to structure a normative landscape and reinforce an ideological stance.



**ID photo of Samuel Stern (NA, PDP, 1941–1950, S 5984/3 [Stern Samuel]).**  
**Detention Protocol of Samuel Stern (NA, PDP, 1941–1950, S 5984/3 [Stern Samuel]).**  
**Location of the incident as displayed on MemoMap Prague.**

In July 1941, Samuel Stern, aged thirty-two, was arrested at the Hlavní nádraží (Main Train Station) in Prague for buying cigarettes after 5:00 pm. He stated in the protocol that “I apologise for the fact, I was standing in the line, and it was after five o’clock before it was my turn”.<sup>59</sup> He was sentenced with a fine of 5,000 K or fourteen days in prison. Since the amount of the fine was extraordinarily high and he was poor, as he stated in the protocol, he went to jail. Stern was deported to Theresienstadt in April 1942; two days later, he was deported to Zamošć, where he was murdered.<sup>60</sup>

A disproportionate amount of punishments is apparent from the criminal record proceeding of the spouses Jetty and Evžen Šternlicht, who were punished with a fine 100 K or two days in prison each for buying oranges at the shop in Na Můstku Street in March 1941.<sup>61</sup>

In December 1941, Bernard Brenner bought a newspaper outside the shopping hours for Jews. The relevant protocol states that “[w]hen the tobacco shop clerk, obeying the order, refused to give him the newspaper, he threw the money at the shop window, took the newspaper in a truly cheeky Jewish way, and he wanted to leave”. He was

58 “Restriction of Shopping Hours for Jews in Aryan Shops”, <https://www.holocaust.cz/dejiny/soa/zide-v-ceskych-zemich-a-konecne-reseni-zidovske-otazky/ghetto-bez-zdi/protizidovske-zakony-a-narizeni/protizidovska-narizeni-omezujici-vstup-a-pobyt-na-verejnych-mistech/omezeni-nakupni-doby-pro-zidy-v-arijskych-obchodech/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

59 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol o zadržení [Detention Protocol]: Samuel Stern”, S 5984/3”, 9 July 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/401933-stern-samuel-nezpracovano/>, 30 March 2025.

60 Samuel Stern, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/127515-samuel-stern/>, 30 March 2025.

61 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of Criminal Proceedings]: Evžen Sternlicht”, S 6000/2, 22 March 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/402140-sternlicht-evzen-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025. The couple was deported to Theresienstadt in December 1941, and from there to Riga in January 1942 where they were murdered. <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/127577-evzen-sternlicht/>; <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/127581-jetty-sternlichtova/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

arrested and sentenced with a fine of 5,000 K or fourteen days in prison; he paid the fine.<sup>62</sup> Bernard Brenner died at the age of seventy-four in Theresienstadt.<sup>63</sup>

About 136 protocols concerning the violation of shopping hours are preserved in the National Archives.

Prague district	Jewish share of total population as a percentage	Number of incidents
Prague II	9	74
Prague I	16	39
Prague XII	9.2	19

The penalty for this incident was imposed in 74 cases in District II, mostly at Hlavní nádraží (21 cases) and in Na Poříčí (12 cases), as well as in Jindřišská Street and at Hybernské nádraží.

It was followed by 39 cases in District I, with a slightly higher frequency of 6 cases in Ovocný trh (Fruit Market). There were other incidents scattered all around District I. In District XII – Vinohrady, there were 19 cases, and 11 in District V.

### Other Incidents

Among other violations of the anti-Jewish orders were the arrests for visiting cafés and restaurants. According to the decree of the Police Directorate of 14 August 1939, Jews were not allowed to enter cafés, restaurants, and sweet shops. Owners had to mark their shops with the German-Czech inscription “*Juden nicht zugänglich – Židům nepřístupno*”. Jews were only allowed to visit places that had a separate part for Jewish customers.<sup>64</sup>

In August 1941, Max Wiener was punished for visiting the Burger Sweet Shop in Vodickova Street. According to the protocol, his visit exceeded the time allocated for Jews by one minute. He was punished with a fine of 1,000 K or five days in prison: he paid the fine.<sup>65</sup> Wiener was deported to Theresienstadt in November 1942. He was murdered in Auschwitz in September 1944 at the age of forty-two.<sup>66</sup>

In a protocol from December 1940, we can read details about the arrest of seventy-five-year-old Adolf Benda, who visited a restaurant where he drank tea to get warmer. He stated in the protocol that the restaurant owner was his friend and unaware of Benda's Jewish origin. He was punished with a fine of 3,000 K or fourteen days in prison.<sup>67</sup>

62 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Bernard Brenner”, B 2960/11, 7 December 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/409703-brenner-bernard-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

63 Bernard Brenner, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/79316-bernard-brenner/> accessed 30 March 2025.

64 “Omezení styku nežidovského a židovského obyvatelstva ve veřejném životě [Restriction of Contact between Non-Jews and Jews in Public Life]”, 14 August 1939, <https://www.holocaust.cz/dejiny/soa/zide-v-ceskych-zemich-a-konecne-reseni-zidovske-otazky/ghetto-bez-zdi/protizidovske-zakony-a-narizeni/protizidovska-narizeni-omezujici-vstup-a-pobyt-na-verejnych-mistech/omezeni-styku-nejidovskeho-a-zidovskeho-obyvatelstva-ve-verejnem-zivote/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

65 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of Criminal Proceedings]: Max Wiener”, V 3381/1, 1 August 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/366028-wiener-max-nezpracovano/>, 30 March 2025.

66 Max Wiener, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/134399-max-wiener/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

67 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Adolf Benda”, B 1191/3, 16 December 1940, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/406008-benda-adolf-nezpracovano/>, 30 March 2025.



Benda was deported to Theresienstadt in February 1942. In October 1942 he was deported to Treblinka, where he was murdered.<sup>68</sup>

Frequent violations of this regulation occurred in the popular garden restaurant Šatovka in district Dejvice – V Šárceckém údolí. As is evident from several criminal records, the restaurant was well known among the Jewish population as a place offering a separate non-Aryan room. However, the restaurant became a thorn in the eye for the Czech fascists' movement. In August 1940, in their journal *Vlajka* (The Flag), an article reported on a police raid on the restaurant: “[t]he tenant of the restaurant was happy with the way the business was doing. She didn't mind at all that, by order, Jews were not allowed to stay in (...) For their comfort, 'intimate separate rooms' were also set up. Many Jewish gourmets brought girls to this successful restaurant, but mostly Aryan girls.”<sup>69</sup> The author further writes about the impudence of the Jews who “(...) occupied a nearby wooded hill, where it looked like in the Promised Land”.<sup>70</sup> It was supposed to be the reason that the police organised the raid and as a consequence arrested about forty Jews.

In August 1940, Elsa Weidbergová was sentenced to a fine of 500 K or three days in prison for visiting Šatovka, where she wanted to play bridge with her friends. As she mentioned in the protocol, she saw the inscription “For non-Aryans” on a tree. In November 1942, Weidbergová was deported to Theresienstadt, and in September 1943 to Auschwitz, where she was murdered aged forty-five.<sup>71</sup>

The fact that the possibility of visiting the Šatovka restaurant was confusing for the Jewish population also confirms Karel Frankl's testimony. As he stated, he visited the restaurant in June 1940, although he was aware that the restaurant was not marked as accessible to Jews. “Neither was there an inscription ‘Židům nepřístupno – Juden nicht Zugänglich’ and Mr. Klinger, as well as flyers distributed at the Jewish religious community, confirmed to me that the restaurant is accessible to the Jews”, he stated in the protocol. He also mentioned in his appeal that he had asked the restaurant's owner, Ms. Uhlířová, to confirm whether the restaurant was open to Jews. Uhlířová confirmed that she had already obtained permission to open the non-Aryan section, but since she had received the approval a day earlier she had not yet marked the restaurant.<sup>72</sup> The amount of the fine was the same as in the previous case. Frankl was twenty-one years old when he was deported to Terezín in July 1942; two months later, he was deported to Raasiku, where he was murdered.<sup>73</sup>

These orders were most often violated again in District II, where there about 40 cases. The highest frequency was on Václavské náměstí (13 cases). In District I there were 22 cases. A higher frequency also occurred in District XIX due to the fashionable Šatovka restaurant, where the order was violated in 22 cases.

In District XII – Vinohrady, there were 15 cases recorded. However, we can only speculate on the reasons for the visits to particular restaurants and cafés. Still, the

68 Adolf Benda, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/76541-adolf-benda/>, 30 March 2025.

69 NA, Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Va I, K. 2322, sign. n 7, “Vlajka” [Flag], 30 August 1940, 30, P.r., “Policejní razie na Židy v Šárce – 40 židů předvedeno – četní židé vykoupáni v potoku [Police Raid on Jews in Šárka – 40 Jews Brought in Police – Many Jews Bathed in the Stream]”.

70 Ibid.

71 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Eliška Weidbergová”, V 1581/9, 19 July 1940, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/362819-weidbergova-eliska-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025; Eliška Weidbergová, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/131937-eliska-weidbergova/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

72 NA, PDP (1941–1950), “Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Karel Frankl”, F 1423/1, 19 December 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/116051-frankl-karel-trestni-rizeni/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

73 Karel Frankl, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/85555-karel-frankl/>, accessed 30 March 2025.



frequency of these incidents could correspond to the popularity of certain Prague cafés among the Jewish population, who visited them despite the prohibition.

Another cluster of incidents concerned Jews who lingered on the Vltava River embankment. From July 1941, Jews were not allowed to be on the Vltava River embankment in the section from the Railway Bridge at Smíchov to the Hlávka Bridge. The fine ranged from 10 K to 5,000 K or from twelve hours to fourteen days in prison.<sup>74</sup> Based on the preserved protocols, one of the locations where violations of the order were most frequently recorded was Švehlovo nábřeží (Švehla Embankment, today Nábřeží Ludvíka Svobody/Ludvík Svoboda Embankment) in District II, where the order was violated in about 70 cases. Due to its location, the site was undoubtedly in the police officers' scope for the same reason as the places mentioned above.

In February 1942, Pavel König stated in a protocol that he was on the Švehla Embankment on his way back from Veletržní palác (Exhibition Palace)<sup>75</sup> when accompanying his sick uncle to the assembly point for transportation. He further stated that he knew about the prohibition order, but he thought they could at least cross the embankment. Pavel König was sentenced to a fine of 2,000 K. He was deported to Theresienstadt in July 1942, where he passed away aged forty.<sup>76</sup> As evident in many protocols, the requirements of the regulation – and how to properly comply with them – were often unclear and confusing.

In September 1941, Šalomon Seidemann was also sentenced to a fine of 2,000 K, or six days in prison, for walking on the Švehla Embankment. The absurdity of the order and punishment was underlined by police officer Rudolf Pěkný, who stated in the protocol that he saw the defendant on the embankment walking normally: "I can't say he was looking or browsing around, or walking aimlessly."<sup>77</sup> Seidman was deported ten months later to Theresienstadt where he died at the age of seventy-eight.<sup>78</sup>

The last cluster I will focus on is situated in District II: the incidents involving entry to the Crop Exchange (Plodinová burza) and surrounding streets at the time of the market. The decree from December 1940 clearly defined streets where entry was prohibited: Panská, Nekázanka, Senovážná, and Dlážděná streets, part of Jindřišská Street from Panská to Dlážděná, and the western part of Senovážné Square. The punishment was the same as in the case of the previous order.<sup>79</sup> The Jews were forbidden from attending the exchange to prevent them from accessing agricultural products. The areas under strict control were Jindřišská Street (27 cases), Senovážné Square (30 cases), and Nekázanka, Panská, and Hybernská streets. The German population had lived in those streets since the pre-war period. As stated in most of the protocols, the detained persons forgot that it was an exchange day. We can often read that they were walking home or working on assignments.

74 "Zákaz prodlévání Židů na březích Vltavy v Praze [Ban on Jews Lingered on the Vltava River Banks in Prague]", <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/121141-zakaz-prodlévani-zidu-na-brezich-vltavy-v-praze/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

75 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Pavel König", K 3665/7, 2 February 1942, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/379871-k-nig-pavel-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

76 Pavel König, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/99919-pavel-k-nig/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

77 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Šalomon Seidman", S 947/4, 27 September 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/404748-seidemann-salomon-nezpracovano/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

78 Šalomon Seidmann, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/123518-salomon-seidmann/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

79 "Zákaz vstupu na plodinovou burzu v Praze [Ban on Entry to the Crop Exchange in Prague]", <https://www.holocaust.cz/dejiny/soa/zide-v-ceskych-zemich-a-konecne-reseni-zidovske-otazky/ghetto-bez-zdi/protizidovske-zakony-a-narizeni/protizidovska-narizeni-omezujici-vstup-a-pobyt-na-verejnych-mistech/zakaz-vstupu-na-plodinovou-burzu-v-praze/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

In October 1941, Alfred Weiner was fined in Senovážné Square for violating the ban. He stated in the protocol that he was aware of the order but thought that he was not in the western part of the square. "I live by driving vegetables from Senovážné Square to Radice. I have been waiting here since 7:30 a.m. until my carriage is loaded with vegetables (...). I have nothing to do with crop exchange."<sup>80</sup> Alfred Weiner was punished with a fine of 2,000 K or seven days in prison; he paid the fine. In April 1942 he was deported to Theresienstadt, and in May 1944 to Auschwitz, where he was murdered when he was sixty-five years old.<sup>81</sup>

### Conclusion: Data Interpretation

This article has focused on the spatial impact of anti-Jewish regulations in Prague under the Protectorate, indicating how these measures affected not only the Jewish population but also the wider urban society. Rather than just analysing the incidents themselves, the study has outlined how space was actively shaped, policed, and re-signified through the implementation of anti-Jewish laws. These laws conveyed a clear message about the boundaries of belonging and exclusion, which became materially embedded in the everyday experience of urban life.

Tim Cresswell's concept of transgression, introduced at the beginning of the article, provides a theoretical lens through which we can understand how normative orders are spatialised and how violations of these orders reveal the ideological frameworks that structure them. In the context of Nazi occupation, space in Prague was not merely a backdrop but also an active medium through which power relations were exercised and contested.

Power relations do not simply act upon space – they are also produced by it. Certain urban areas became instruments of control, where the systematic enforcement of anti-Jewish regulations sought to transform their meaning. The selection of specific locations for surveillance, exclusion, or forced absence underscores how the regime used space to naturalise its ideological goals.

The spatial dimension demonstrates and affirms the power of place in hegemonic struggles. Behaviour is shaped by the specific qualities of places selected by dominant powers to redefine their meaning. The place always plays a role in the construction of ideology and the discourse surrounding it. The significance of a place is thus not fixed but constructed through specific power-driven narratives that present themselves as norms or standards of normality.<sup>82</sup> In this context, the enforcement of anti-Jewish norms in Prague can be seen as a project of spatial normalisation – transforming certain sites into spaces of exclusion, control, and ideological significance. This article has argued that the space itself played a constructive role in the implementation of anti-Jewish ideology and should be analysed as both a product and a producer of power. Thus, certain places in Prague were supposed to change their meaning through systematic control over compliance with anti-Jewish regulations.

As evidenced by the protocols and records of criminal proceedings, these incidents were monitored with higher frequency in places where the German popula-

80 NA, PDP (1941–1950), "Protokol trestního řízení [Protocol of criminal proceedings]: Alfred Weiner, V 1752/2, 14 October 1941, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/363523-weiner-alfred-nezpracovano/>, 30 March 2025.

81 Alfred Weiner, <https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obeti/132622-alfred-weiner/>, accessed 30 March 2025.

82 Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place*, 60.

tion was traditionally stronger and where national clashes were more apparent due to their fundamental or/and symbolic importance. Demonstrations of power and ideological struggles for the meaning of place were significant regarding prosperous places, businesses, traffic, and public transport crossroads. Václavské náměstí, the Na Příkopěch, and Na Poříčí streets, and the area around St. Jindřich Church had been areas of interest, power, and demonstrations of the dominance of Czech and German nationals since the nineteenth century. German urban planners also focused on other prosperous localities, such as the districts of Vinohrady, Dejvice, and Bubeneč. Nazi ideological discourse gave new meaning to the places which German nationals had previously struggled for. Their focus on the Jewish population resulted from the antisemitic character of the “Third Reich”. At the same time, the Jews became an instrument of Aryanisation and a demonstration of the Germanisation of public space for the Czechs.

The number of incidents recorded in each district does not necessarily correspond to the number of Jewish residents living there at the time. A case in point is District V – Josefov. While Josefov had once been the core of Jewish life in Prague, by the early twentieth century it had largely lost this role and became more of a symbolic and historical centre. Following the clearance and redevelopment of the area, its Jewish population significantly declined, and everyday Jewish life shifted to other districts of the city. Only under National Socialist rule were Jews again forcibly concentrated in the city centre, particularly in the former ghetto of Josefov and the Old Town – a development aptly described by Frommer as a return to „the former (and now again) ghetto“.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the relatively lower number of incidents in Josefov compared to its symbolic status may reflect the fact that, unlike other parts of the city, the display of power and control was not as intensely manifested in this historically Jewish space until it was repurposed by the regime.

The number of protocols and records of criminal proceedings concerning the violations of anti-Jewish regulations is not necessarily lower in districts with a lower Jewish population. Therefore, the question remains whether the Nazis had any ambitions to control and “struggle” for the apparently Jewish area before the start of the planned deportations of the Jewish inhabitants. However, another district with a high frequency of incidence was District Vinohrady, where the Jewish population was quite strong. On the other hand, since the Districts of Dejvice and Bubeneč, were in the interest of the German urban planners, the number of incidents was relatively high even though the Jews consisted about five per cent of the population. At this point, it is also important to emphasise that the number of incidents began to decrease immediately with the onset of deportations in the fall of 1941.

This topic deserves further deep investigation, particularly concerning the issues of the forced migration of the Jewish inhabitants of Prague, and the question of the overall migration of the Jewish population during the period of the Protectorate. From the given documents, we can observe the changes of address changes during that period. Furthermore, another avenue for future research could be the role of the Czech population and the Czech police in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. As is evident in many protocols, incidents of violations of anti-Jewish regulations were often based on denunciations, and the names of the informers are this known to us. The amount of fines and penalties remain debatable too. However, location remains a decisive factor for understanding many incidents in Prague during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

<sup>83</sup> See Frommer, “The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia”, 212.

## Bibliography

- Archive of the Jewish Museum in Prague.
- National Archives in Prague.
- Grosser Führer der Hauptstadt Prag und Umgebung* (Berlin: 1944).
- Alfons Adam, *Unsichtbare Mauern, Die Deutschen in der Prager Gesellschaft zwischen Abkapselung und Interaktion (1918–1938/9)* (Essen, 2013).
- Richard Biegel, “Václavské náměstí a zrození pražské ‘city’ na počátku 20. Století” [Wenceslas Square and the Birth of Prague ‘City’ in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century], *Staletá Praha* 35, no. 2, (2019): 86–113.
- Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black. Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge 2009).
- Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague 1861–1914* (West Lafayette, 2006).
- Tim Creswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis and London 1996).
- Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews?: National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia* (New York: 2012).
- Michal Frankl et al., “Present and Absent: Exploring the Holocaust of Jews in Prague Using a Mobile Application”, available online at: [https://austriaca.at/0xc1aa5576\\_0x003c13df.pdf](https://austriaca.at/0xc1aa5576_0x003c13df.pdf).
- Michal Frankl, Martina Niedhammer, and Ines Koeltzsch, “Contested Equality: Jews in the Bohemian Lands, 1861–1917”, in *Prague and Beyond*, 120–156.
- Benjamin Frommer, “The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia”, in *Prague and Beyond: The History of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands*, eds. Kateřina Čapková and Hillel Kieval (Pennsylvania 2025), 196–234.
- Benjamin Frommer, “Zurück ins Ghetto (und ins Dorf): Ausweisung und Umsiedlung der jüdischen Bevölkerung im nationalsozialistischen Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren”, in *Delogiert und ghettoisiert: Jüdinnen und Juden vor der Deportation*, eds. Christine Schindler and Wolfgang Schellenbacher (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, 2022), 21–38.
- Cathleen M Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague’s Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900* (New York 2003).
- Wolf Gruner, *Die Judenverfolgung in Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren* (Göttingen 2016).
- Miloš Hořejší, *Protektorátní Praha jako německé město: Nacistický urbanismus a Plánovací komise pro hlavní město Prahu* [Protectorate Prague as a German City: Nazi Urbanism and the Planning Commission for the Capital City of Prague] (Prague 2013).
- Jaime Iregui, “Veřejný proctor” [Public Space], in *Atlas transformace* [Atlas of Transformation] (Prague 2009), 767–768.
- Jaroslav Jásek, “Chutnější pitná voda pro ‘lepší lidi’” [Tastier Drinking Water for “Better People”], in *Evropská velkoměsta za druhé světové války. Každodennost okupovaného velkoměsta, Praha 1939–1945 v evropském srovnání* (Prague 2007), 103–109.
- Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, eds., *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Indiana 2014).
- Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen: Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag, 1918–1938* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012).
- Hana Kubátová and Jan Láníček, *The Jew in Czech and Slovak Imagination, 1938–1989: Antisemitism, the Holocaust, and Zionism* (Leiden and Boston 2018).
- Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford 1991), 68–168.

- Guy Miron, "Lately, Almost Constantly, Everything Seems Small to Me": The Lived Space of German Jews under the Nazi Regime, *Jewish Social Studies* 20, no. 1 (2013): 121–149.
- Guy Miron, *Space and Time under Persecution. The German-Jewish Experience in the Third Reich* (Chicago and London, 2023).
- Martin Ouředníček, "Sociálně prostorová struktura industriální Prahy" [Socio-Spatial Structure of Industrial Prague], in *Krajina jako historické jeviště: k počtům Evy Semotanové* (Prague 2012), 263–283.
- Helena Petrův, *Zákonné bezpráví, Židé v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* [Legal Injustice, Jews in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia] (Prague 2011).
- Scott Spector, *Prague Territories National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: 2000).
- Vojtěch Šustek, "Nacistická kariéra sudetoněmeckého historika" [Nazi Career of Sudeten German Historian], in *Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939–1945* [Josef Pfitzner and Protectorate Prague in 1939–1945], vol. 1, eds, Alena Míšková and Vojtěch Šustek (Prague: 2000), 8–38.
- Jana Vobecká, *Demographic Avant-garde. Jews in Bohemia Between the Enlightenment and Shoah* (Budapest and New York: 2013).

**Daniela Bartáková** works at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, where she is involved in the Czech node of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI-CZ). She previously worked on the project "Felix Weltsch, Jindřich Kohn, and the Intellectual History of Interwar Czechoslovakia". She teaches Modern Jewish History at CET Prague.

Email: [bartakova@mua.cas.cz](mailto:bartakova@mua.cas.cz)

Quotation: Daniela Bartáková, Power and Space. Detention Protocols and Criminal Proceeding Records of the Jewish Inhabitants in Protectorate Prague, 1939–1943, in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 58–83.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art\\_dbar01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art_dbar01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).

Mark Lewis

# “Wheels and Cogs”

## Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports, 1941–1943 Part 2

### Abstract

Viennese policemen, as part of the German *Schutzpolizei* (uniformed police) after March 1938, complied with orders to guard deportation transports of Austrian Roma and Jews between 1941 and 1943. Previous theories about the German police have argued that they engaged in mass murder in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, due to peer pressure, obedience to authority, ideological training in police schools, or the influence of ideological careerist junior officers. This study, based on the personnel files of sixty-five policemen, 98 per cent of whom were hired before the Nazis came to power, contests those theories. It proposes a four-stage, time-dependent hypothesis about why police obeyed orders. The first three stages were covered in the first half of the article, which appeared in volume 11, number 2, of S.I.M.O.N. The article in this issue begins with the fourth stage. During the Second World War, the police overcame cognitive dissonance about deporting people by justifying their actions to themselves: guard duty was part of their job as members of military police units, and the priority during the war was to protect Germans, not “racial outsiders” and foreigners. This part of the study describes the bureaucratic thoroughness with which the deportation trips were organised and how policemen were selected for guard duty. This section also analyses a post-war investigation in which some policemen claimed they had merely “acted under orders”. Similarities in their answers demonstrate that their responses were probably coordinated by higher police officials who wanted to exonerate the policemen and reinstate them on the force. Although some prior historiography has claimed that the Viennese police were totally transformed into a democratic institution after the Second World War, many policemen who had served as deportation guards were rehired. Their actions were swept under the rug because most policemen fitted limited legal definitions that did not connect them to the Nazi Party; some belonged to the SS Police, but disciplinary commissions ruled that this was distinct from voluntarily joining the SS. Furthermore, it appears that the new police administration viewed policemen as men who had suffered from bombardment and family hardship during the war and deserved to have their jobs back.

Part 1 of “Wheels and Cogs”: Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports, 1941–1943”, which appeared in volume 11, number 2, of S.I.M.O.N., explained the historiographical background and sources for this study of Viennese uniformed policemen (*Sicherheitswache*), who were integrated into the German uniformed police (*Schutzpolizei*) in March 1938. The study, based on sixty-five personnel records of policemen, revealed that 75 per cent of the group had joined the police during the First Republic. Then, the rule of law was supposed to be upheld and the police were supposed to be “non-political”, yet prejudices against Jews and Roma existed in police policy and in policemen’s worldviews. The study showed that only about a quarter of the police were Nazi Party members; therefore, the group as a whole did not execute orders because of pre-existing political affiliations or absolute



ideological conformity. Instead, other historical processes shaped both the policemen and the institution. The cultural views and police attitudes bequeathed by the Habsburg period formed a substrate. Police authority expanded during the late Republic and Austro-fascist periods. Nazi police officials, both Austrian and German, reshaped the Viennese police force in 1938 and 1939, according to policies that the Germans had implemented since 1933. Ideology was important, but Part 1 argued that the process of deploying this ideology and reshaping the policemen's view – setting conditions in which they could adapt to the system – occurred in stages.

This article deals with the fourth stage of the process, the formation of police battalions, the impact of the command structure, and how wartime policies privileged “racial Germans” over all others. The study then examines a post-war internal police investigation of policemen who guarded deportation transports, showing that several policemen may have been instructed by non-Nazi police officials to give similar exonerating statements, which would clear them for reinstatement and rebuild a force without criminal taint. The article concludes by explaining that post-war police officials did not want to weed out many officers who had participated, viewing them as “good Austrians” who had suffered under the Nazis, Allied bombardment, and wartime deployment.

In the fourth stage, the Nazis used the war context to begin deportations and assigned Viennese policemen to Reserve Police Battalions in the autumn of 1941. The decisions to begin deportations were made at higher levels, but the range of new police responsibilities to control forced labourers and supervise additional anti-Jewish restrictions set a pattern indicating that only “Aryans” were valuable. Putting police into the military battalions may have made it easier for some to overcome any cognitive dissonance about deporting people, but the Schutzpolizei established the tasks and the procedure. Policemen's post-war claims that they had to comply or would have been prosecuted by SS courts and then shot are disputable. There is currently no evidence that this happened.

The decision to use policemen to guard transports first appears locally during a Vienna meeting on 17 October 1939, when Eugen Becker, representing the city's economics office (*Wirtschaftsamt*), Adolf Eichmann of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*), and Karl Ebner, the leader of the Jewish department in the Viennese Gestapo, met to discuss the city's role in helping to deport Jews to Poland. At that time, Becker, speaking on behalf of then Gauleiter Joseph Bürckel, said the city could make the Schutzpolizei available to guard transports. They were first used for this purpose when Jewish men were deported to Nisko, Poland, to build a labour camp in the General Government in October 1939.<sup>1</sup> However, the names of these policemen have not surfaced in historical records, so they could not be included in this study. After two transports to Nisko the *Zentralstelle* had to stop the deportations temporarily because the military needed the trains.<sup>2</sup> Still, Eichmann's organisational success in Vienna helped him obtain a pro-

1 Andrea Löw, ed., *Deutsches Reich und Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. September 1939–September 1941*, vol. 3: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–45* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012), Doc. 24, 124–126; Hans Safrian, *Eichmann's Men*, trans. Ute Stargardt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [German, 1993]), 55–57; Doron Rabinovici, *Eichmann's Jews: The Jewish Administration of Holocaust Vienna, 1938–1945*, trans. Nick Somers (Cambridge: Polity, 2011 [German, 2000]), 89–93. For in-depth research about the two Nisko transports, the relations between the *Zentralstelle* and the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, the building of camps, and the fate of the deportees who fled to the Soviet zone and those who returned to Vienna, see Jonny Moser, *Nisko. Die ersten Judendeportationen* (Vienna: Edition Steinbauer, 2012).

2 Safrian, *Eichmann's Men*, 57.

motion to become the head of the deportation planning office in the Reich Security Main Office, Referat IV B 4, and he spent the rest of 1939 and part of 1940 working on projects to deport Jews from Germany, Austria, and Poland to Madagascar and then to the General Government. In the fall of 1940, the Governor and Nazi Party District Leader of Vienna (*Reichsstatthalter und Gauleiter*), Baldur von Schirach, lobbied Adolf Hitler to approve the deportation of Viennese Jews, which he did in a letter from 3 December 1940.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, in Vienna, new regulations were introduced as a result of the war. The police had been given detailed instructions in May 1940 to supervise incoming Polish agricultural labourers, indicating an expansion of the forced-labour war economy.<sup>4</sup> During the winter of 1941, police were required to make donations to help the families of the German army; they gave a total of 31.5 million RM, exceeding the previous year.<sup>5</sup> Not only did this induce conformity to state policy, but it also brought the war home. In February 1941, the district chiefs of the non-uniformed criminal police were told to prepare for air attacks; they needed to ensure they had adequate ration cards for clothing, enough manpower for the hospitals and precincts, and were in contact with their Schutzpolizei counterparts.<sup>6</sup> This was a further indication that Viennese society was on a war footing. Just prior to this, on 13 February 1941, the Zentralstelle and the Viennese Gestapo had told the Jewish community that they were resuming deportations. The Gestapo informed the regular police that Jews who tried to leave Vienna without a special certificate from the Zentralstelle must be arrested and taken to a collection camp (a school) on the Castellezgasse.<sup>7</sup> Police then guarded five transports to the General Government in February and March 1941. The victims were Viennese Jews who were sent to rural towns and then murdered in the Operation Reinhard extermination centres in the summer of 1942. (This study does not include data on those policemen, because no reports with their names have surfaced).<sup>8</sup> After the German Luftwaffe bombed Yugoslavia in April 1941, a large number of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic German) refugees came to Vienna, and police were told to avoid punishing them if they violated passport rules.<sup>9</sup> Thus, repeatedly, special wartime measures reinforced the idea that the police had to do their part so that German people – to the exclusion of others – were protected.

Furthermore, a stream of additional restrictions on Jews in autumn 1941 gave the police increased cause to take action against Jews. Starting on 19 September 1941, Jews older than six were required to wear an identifying star permanently sewn onto their exterior clothing; attaching it with safety pins (so it could be removed) or cov-

3 Ibid., 67–71.

4 Archiv der Landespolizeidirektion Wien (LPDW), Normalien 1940, II 3012/40/3, Der Polizeipräsident, Rundverfügung. Behandlung der im Reiche eingesetzten Zivilarbeiter- und Arbeiterinnen polnischen Volkstums, 25 May 1940.

5 LPDW, Normalien 1941, P 5031-41, Der Polizeipräsident, Rundverfügung. Tag der Deutschen Polizei; Anerkennung, 8 March 1941.

6 Ibid., Staatliche Kriminalpolizei, Kriminalpolizeileitstelle Wien, KPL. I B 181/1941, Aktenvermerk, 26 February 1941.

7 Ibid., Der Polizeipräsident, Rundverfügung, II 5220-41, Evakuierung von Juden aus Wien in das Generalgouvernement, 13 February 1941. The police president, Gotzmann, was transmitting an order (given in quotation marks) from Gestapo Chief Franz Huber. This is one of the key pieces of evidence that Thomas Mang uses to argue that Huber alone, not Eichmann's Zentralstelle, gave the green light for deportations to begin. Mang, "Gestapo-Leitstelle Wien, mein Name ist Huber". *Wer trug die lokale Verantwortung für den Mord an den Juden Wiens?*, (Münster: Lit, 2004), 251. This indeed seems to be the case, but it does not support Mang's view that Huber ordered the deportations without the higher authority of the RSHA.

8 Safrian, 67–71; Rabinovici, 102–107.

9 LPDW, Normalien 1941, II 3020/41, Flüchtlinge aus Jugoslawien; polizeiliche Erfassung, 8 April 1941.

ering it was subject to punishment by police.<sup>10</sup> On 13 October, Jews were no longer allowed to use district health offices, except in Vienna's second district.<sup>11</sup> The police were also informed that the Jewish community could only buy soap and toiletries at a handful of shops; presumably the police would ensure that they shopped nowhere else.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, police were instructed that they should increase their surveillance of telephone booths and were ordered to treat vandals as saboteurs.<sup>13</sup> By the time the deportations began in November 1941, the police were fully involved in guarding a society that was supposed to be protected from saboteurs, criminals, Roma, and Jews.

In August 1941, policemen were mustered into Reserve Police Battalions and then trained in early 1942 at Schönbrunn, Wiener Neudorf, or the military shooting range at Kagran.<sup>14</sup> The battalions were divided into different companies, and those that trained at Kagran were called the Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use (*Reserve Polizei Bataillon zur besonderen Verwendung*).<sup>15</sup> The key decision to use police to guard Jews deported from the Reich (including Austria) and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia came on 4 October 1941, when Kurt Daluege, the chief of the *Ordnungspolizei* (Order Police), and Reinhard Heydrich, the chief of the *Sicherheitspolizei* (Security Police), agreed that the *Ordnungspolizei* (encompassing the *Schutzpolizei*) would provide the manpower to guard the transports.<sup>16</sup> At this point the main waves of transports began (with the first of twenty trains arriving at the station near Łódź on 16 October 1941),<sup>17</sup> about two to three months after policemen

10 This was required for: registered members of the Jewish community in Vienna; so-called "Geltungsjuden" who, according to the Nuremberg Racial Laws, had one Jewish and one "Aryan" parent; and persons legally defined as Jews but who had converted to a different religion or did not belong to any religious community. Only persons in "privileged mixed marriages" were exempt. See Dieter J. Hecht and Michaela Raggam-Blesch, "Der Weg in die Vernichtung begann mitten in der Stadt. Sammellager und Deportationen aus Wien 1941/42", in Dieter J. Hecht, Michaela Raggam-Blesch, and Heidemarie Uhl, eds., *Letzte Orte. Die Wiener Sammellager und die Deportationen 1941/42* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2019), 34–38, and Rabinovici, *Eichmann's Jews: The Jewish Administration of Holocaust Vienna, 1938–1945*, 109–110.

11 LPDW, Normalien 1941, II 3020/41, Errichtung einer amtsärztlichen Dienststelle für Juden, 13 October 1941.

12 Ibid., IV 10.00-41, Einkaufsregelung für Juden, 22 October 1941.

13 Ibid., Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6210/41, Beschädigung von Münz-Fernsprechern.

14 Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission statements: LPDW, Personalakten: B., Anton, St.Nr.669/19 (9/57), Niederschrift, 7 September 1946; H. IV, Anton, St.Nr.857/20 (94/57), 9 September 1946; N., Oskar, St.Nr.398/28 (131/62), 25 September 1946. Anton B. admitted to guarding a Jewish transport to Riga in February 1942; so did Anton H., who also stated that he guarded another transport (one wagon attached to a regular train) to Theresienstadt in 1942, though the date was probably 30 March 1943. See Mark Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs": Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports, 1941–1943 (Part 1), *S.I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON*, 11, no. 2 (2024): 27–28, n. 92. Oskar N. denied guarding any transports, and because the YVA records only show he was assigned to the Stettin transport, he was not counted as a participant in this study. Not everyone followed the same training pattern as these three. Albin K. stated that he was assigned to the 16<sup>th</sup> District (Schmelz) until the Nazi takeover. Next, he was assigned to the 4. Hundertschaft in the Marokkanerkaserne, which was sent to Mährische Kromau for the invasion of the Sudetenland. This lasted four weeks, then they returned to Vienna. The Hundertschaft was dissolved and they went back to their regular duties. He testified that "[i]n August 1941 a Police Reserve Battalion was assembled in the Schedilstraße and militarily trained. This Battalion went to Kagran in January 1942 and received the name Watch-Battalion Vienna for special use (Wach-Baon Wien z.b.V.) I was assigned to this battalion until August 1942." He guarded a Jewish transport to Kovno on 23 November 1941, which he admitted to the Überprüfungskommission, though he gave the incorrect date of December 1941 (LPDW, Personalakt K., Albin, St. Nr.848/36 (148/61), Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 18 September 1946). Various typists typed "Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission" with different spacing. This paper has standardised this.

15 Ibid.

16 Yad Vashem Archives, O.51, Nazi Documentation, File No. 88, Item No. 36855621 [hereafter YVA], Folio 6, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Schnellbrief. Evakuierungen von Juden aus dem Altreich und dem Protektorat, Kdo. g 2 (01) Nr.514/41 (g), 4 October 1941.

17 Bertrand Perz, "Wiener Juden und Jüdinnen im Getto Litzmannstadt", in *Post 41. Berichte aus dem Getto Litzmannstadt – Ein Gedenkbuch*, eds. Angelika Brechelmacher, Bertrand Perz, and Regina Wonisch (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2015), 19, 64.

were assigned to Police Battalions. Franz Butenop, a police inspector from Hamburg who became the chief of staff for the Viennese Schutzpolizei in 1938 – and whose role in these operations has not been thoroughly investigated –<sup>18</sup> issued instructions on 24 October 1941 for five transports of Roma (5,000 persons) to the Litzmannstadt/Łódź ghetto, from Mattersburg, Fürstenfeld, and Pinkafeld, requiring 100 policemen and five higher-ranking police officers from Reserve Police Battalion 172.<sup>19</sup> A list of twenty-one policemen assigned to the transport of 4 November 1941 exists; these men rounded up and deported Roma from the Lackenbach camp near Mattersburg.<sup>20</sup> I located personnel records for five.<sup>21</sup> Four stated they had been in the Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use and had trained at Kagran.<sup>22</sup> None were Nazis, and all except one were former soldiers in the Austrian Army (*Bundesheer*) who had joined the police relatively late – in 1935 or 1936.<sup>23</sup> Whether their prior military training and habituation to command made them appropriate for the Roma transport remains a matter of speculation. A few of them also guarded a Jewish transport to Kovno, indicating that successful completion of the Roma transport made them reliable for the next one (Jews).<sup>24</sup> However, considering the group of all policemen involved in transports, fifty-one were not in the *Bundesheer*, and all but two had joined the Viennese uniformed police before 1930 (before the Austro-fascist period). Therefore, one cannot readily conclude that they complied with orders due to socialization in a military structure; for those who had been in the First World War, that was more than twenty years before. Even if one places great weight on the police battalion routine of military training and the possibility of foreign military deployment (two factors that differentiated their lives from regular police duties), they still had been shaped by their home and family life, expectations about male authority, and years of service in a police force that had first limited civil liberties and then enforced racial exclusion.

18 Franz Butenop (born 1896 in Malente-Greismühlen, Germany) was a First World War veteran who joined the Hamburg Schutzpolizei in 1919 and became an inspector of the Ordnungspolizei in Hamburg in 1937. He was transferred to Vienna effective 1 June 1938. Bundesarchiv (Berlin-Lichterfelde), VBS 1069 (R 19)/ZB 0960 A. 01. Personalakte des Obersten der Schutzpolizei, Pol.O-Kdo.P II(2a) But VI 78b, 7 November 1938; O.-Kdo.P II (2a)56 b Nr. 29, 16 May 1938.

19 YVA Folio 4, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, 1a 6260/Zig./Nr.369/41 (g), 24 October 1941.

20 Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes [DÖW] 10 501-c. The document itself is undated but names the policemen assigned to the 4 November 1941 transport. See also Alfred B. Gottwaldt and Diana Schulle, *Die "Judendeportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945: Eine kommentierte Chronologie* (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2005), 52–55, 63–64.

21 See the Ref.IV Ueberprüfungskommission statements in their personnel files: G., Josef, St.Nr.619/36 (15/64), Niederschrift, 11 September 1946; P., Josef, St.Nr.797/36 (160/65), Niederschrift, 10 September 1946; S., Thomas, St.Nr.58/36 (116/69), Niederschrift, 10 September 1946; and W. Rudolf, St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969), Niederschrift, 10 September 1946. Josef G., Josef P., and Thomas S. admitted to guarding Jewish transports; Rudolf W. admitted to guarding a Roma transport. Franz N., St.Nr.286/21 (479/52), was never questioned, but Josef G. and Josef P. named him as a witness regarding their involvement in a Jewish transport to Kovno.

22 The same four who gave statements.

23 The exception was Franz N., who joined the police in 1921.

24 The date that policemen in this study guarded a transport to Kovno is not completely clear. Four policemen told the post-war examining commission that they had guarded a Jewish transport to Kovno, but the dates they gave (three stated February 1942, one stated December 1941) do not correspond to the date that Gottwaldt and Schulle said was the sole transport from Vienna to Kovno, on 23 November 1941 (carrying 995 Austrian Jews). Gottwaldt and Schulle report that this was part of a group of five transports originally scheduled for Riga but were rerouted at the Gestapo's request to Kovno. It is possible the policemen misremembered or used these dates to coordinate their stories, a point addressed later in this article. Compare LPDW, Personalakt G. III, Josef, St.Nr.619/36 (15/64), Polizeidirektion Wien, Generalinspektorat der Sicherheitswache, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 18 September 1946; K., Albin, St.Nr.848/36 (148/61), Niederschrift, 18 September 1946; P., Josef, St.Nr.797/36 (160/65), Niederschrift, 10 September 1946; S., Thomas, St.Nr.58-36 (116/69), Niederschrift, 10 September 1946, with Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendeportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 98–100, 107–108.

The police command structure established the process for the deportations; this should be recognised, because it was not an entirely the Zentralstelle or the Gestapo's operation.<sup>25</sup> The police procedure became so regularised that it operated without constant supervision from the police president's office, proven by the fact that the second police president, Leo Gotzmann, was on medical leave for about five weeks in April and May 1942 while the deportations were in full swing.<sup>26</sup> The Schutzpolizei received its orders from the Inspector of the Ordnungspolizei in Austria (Ernst Kaltenbrunner), but he was simply transmitting orders that came from Daluge.<sup>27</sup> In Vienna, Butenop issued instructions containing the dates of upcoming transports, which police companies would be used, and the equipment and weapons the police should bring. We have these instructions for November 1941 and for many transports in 1942 and 1943.<sup>28</sup> After the Romani transports of October–November 1941, Butenop or his staff instructed that Reserve Police Companies East, West, and South handle the Jewish transports of 1942, and that Police Watch Battalion I handle the 1943 transports.

The police companies selected the transport leaders and the policemen who would guard the transports. The police were instructed to report to the train stations (the Aspangbahnhof in 1941 and 1942, and the Nordbahnhof in 1943), where they took custody of the deportees from the Zentralstelle; Eichmann and his deputy Alois Brunner perfected the system of registering Jews, stealing their property, and rounding them up in temporary facilities in Vienna.<sup>29</sup> Then, the police transport leader telephoned the SS officer at the Zentralstelle to confirm that the deportation was ready. Orders from 1942 and 1943 note that this was either Alois Brunner or Ernst Girzick.<sup>30</sup> The policemen were instructed to guard the transport until its final destination, when they would transfer the human cargo to the Security Police. In the orders of March 1942 onwards, they were instructed to make immediate use of their weapons (pistols and carbine rifles) in case Jews attempted to escape. For the 1942 transports, a Jewish person (marked by an armband) was designated as the *Transportleiter* (not really a "leader", as the name suggests, but a Jewish liaison), and two Jewish doctors were to accompany each transport. These were not specified for the 1943 transports, which were smaller.<sup>31</sup> Everything was rationally planned and bureaucratically recorded: schedules, personnel assignments, financial accounting, and post-deportation reports.<sup>32</sup>

25 Mark Lewis, "Continuity and Change in the Vienna Police Force, 1914–1945. Part 2 [1933–45]", *S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON*, 7, no. 1 (2020): 68–70.

26 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Reichsstatthalterei Wien, Referat Ia-S Pol (Schutzpolizei), 2508/771/42, K. 551.

27 Peter R. Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 106–112.

28 YVA Folio 4, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/Zig./Nr.369/41 (g.), Betr.: Gestellung von Transportkommandos, 24 October 1941; Folio 8, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/42, Betr.: Gestellung von Transportkommandos, 20 March 1942; Folio 93, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/43, Betr.: Gestellung von Transportkommandos, 4 January 1943.

29 Safrian, *Eichmann's Men*, 14–45, 72–90, 118–130; Rabinovici, *Eichmann's Jews. The Jewish Administration of Holocaust Vienna, 1938–1945*, 102–112. Brunner developed the system of forcibly removing Jews from their homes ("Aushebung"), requiring that the IKG provide 400–500 Jewish helpers (called "Ordner") who went house to house, preventing persons on deportation lists from escaping, helping them pack, and accompanying them to the collection camps in Vienna. See Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, "Der Weg in die Vernichtung", 43–48.

30 YVA Folio 36, Kdo.d.Sch. Nr. 76 3/6 1620; YVA Folio 93.

31 Compare YVA Folio 8 with Folio 33.

32 For the reports, see YVA Folio 15, 95. Pol.Revier, Erfahrungsbericht über durchgeführten Judentransports, 4 May 1942 [Jewish transport to Włodawa, 27 April 1942]; YVA Folio 27, 95. Pol.Revier, Erfahrungsbericht über durchgeführten Evakuierungstransport (Juden), 16 May 1942 [Jewish transport to Minsk, 6 May 1942]; YVA Folio 42, 152. Polizeirevier, Erfahrungsbericht, Betr.: Transportkommando für den Judentransport, Wien-Aspangbahnhof nach Sobibor am 14.6.1942 [Jewish transport to Sobibor, 14 June 1942]; YVA Folio 90, 90.Pol.Revier, 6260, Betr.: Erfahrungsbericht über durchgeführten Judentransport, 19 October 1942 [Jewish transport to Minsk, 5 October 1942].



Orders were given in advance, not on the day of the mission, as one policeman claimed in 1946.<sup>33</sup> This is proven by the fact that transport leaders were given cash advances for travel expenses before the trip; so were other policemen.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Butenop's orders specified the required weapons, flashlights, and rations; it is unlikely that this would have been left to the last minute for a multi-day journey. Furthermore, the police transport leaders received their authorisation documents in advance, which they showed to border guards and military personnel during the trip. In a very interesting case, after the war, a family which was allowed to move into the apartment of Josef H., a transport leader, found his documents in the basement. They show that he led six policemen to guard a "Jewish evacuation transport" to the ghetto in Theresienstadt on 13 August 1942; fifteen policemen to guard a "Jewish evacuation transport" to the "occupied eastern territory" on 31 August 1942; and again six policemen to guard a "Jewish evacuation transport" to Theresienstadt on 10 September 1942.<sup>35</sup>

Starting in March 1942, Butenop specified that a transport leader should be a *Revier Leutnant* (a precinct lieutenant) and should come from the Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use. Furthermore, he ordered that they should have experience leading a prior transport.<sup>36</sup> Personnel files and accounting records for seven transport leaders show that many led multiple transports. Six were ardent Nazi Party members (and a seventh, Johann Peter II, probably was also, since he led multiple transports and had a higher rank).<sup>37</sup> This suggests that the Schutzpolizei wanted transport leaders who were experienced policemen, possessed Nazi credentials, and would ensure the mission was completed. Virtually all the transport leaders belonged to an older generation, born between 1894 and 1900; they had joined the police between 1918 and 1923, during the early First Republic, and had therefore spent around two decades in the force (except for one).<sup>38</sup> Therefore, most do not fit the profile that Michael Wildt describes for the Reich Security Main Office administrators and which Ian Rich applied in his analysis of the two German Reserve Police Battal-

33 LPDW, Personalakt J. I., Alois, St.Nr.217/23, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 7 September 1946. He was in Pol. Battalion 172 and admitted to guarding a transport to Riga.

34 YVA 51/88/36855621 is filled with these. For example, Folios 33–35 show the amounts that Josef F. I, Josef B., and Josef H. IV were advanced for a transport to Minsk on 27 May 1942, how much they claimed, and how much they needed to be reimbursed.

35 See Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs", Part I, n. 60, concerning his documents.

36 YVA Folio 8.

37 The Nazis were Josef H. (1900–?), Otto M. (1897–1983), Johann Pflamitzer (1902–?), Robert R. (1895, disappeared 1944/45), Johann S. II (1895–?), and Josef T. (1907–1978). Johann Peter II (1894–1944) was likely a Nazi, because he led five transports; it is doubtful that the Schutzpolizei would have entrusted a non-Nazi for these missions. None of the five who survived the war was reinstated, but this was because they had belonged to the Nazi Party after March 1938 or had been convicted by a Volksgericht of having been an illegal Nazi. Some processes of dismissal were very long, stretching into the mid-1950s. None was investigated for having led transports; State Police and prosecutors may not have known. The policemen's post-war statements and their witnesses should be regarded sceptically, because they were trying to keep their jobs and avoid criminal prosecution. For Otto M., see LPDW, Personalakt M., Otto, St.Nr.291/18(253/47), Grundblatt; Lebenslauf 22 October 1945; YVA Folio 109, 113–114; Personalakt, Abschrift des Gau-Aktes Nr. 93.155; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WStLA), 2.7.1.4. Gauakten, Gaukartei G 303-14/28, K1/213; Personalakt, Vg 11f Vr 4324/27 Hv 154/48 (Abschrift), Urteil, 22 October 1948. For Pflamitzer, see YVA Folios 52, 54, 111, 112; WStLA, Volksgericht A1, Strafsache gegen Swinger, Heinrich und Pflamitzer, Johann, Vg 8e Vr 543/55, Niederschrift, Generalinspektorat der Sicherheitswache, 16 April 1947. For Robert R., see YVA Folios 65–66, 76–81, 88–89; LPDW, Personalakt R., Robert, St.Nr.218/44, Dienstzettel an das BfI-Abtg. 2, R. [anonymised], Politische Überprüfung wegen Besoldung, 27 May 1947; Ref.IV.Besoldung, Aktenvermerk, 19 July 1945; Niederschrift, Margarete R., 2 August 1949; Niederschrift, Margarete R., 25 November 1950). For Johann S. II, see WStLA, Gaukartei G 303-13/31: K1/292; LPDW, Personalakt S. II., Johann, St.Nr. 244/46, Vg 1c Vr 6338/46, Urteil, 22 January 1947 (Abschrift); YVA Folios 37–40. For Peter II, see LPDW, Personalakt Peter II, Johann, St.Nr. 276/45 (231/1918), Kommando der Schutzpolizei, 2 F- 3530/26.6, 27 June 1944.

38 This was Josef T. (1907–1978); see Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs", Part I, 21, n. 60.



ions involved in murder operations in Ukraine.<sup>39</sup> The Viennese transport leaders were not young, career-climbing SS officers in their twenties; they were trained, experienced policemen who had been promoted during the First Republic, joined the Nazi Party (usually before 1938), and had adapted to the Austro-fascist and Nazi regimes. Some were definitely ideologically motivated, but these were just the transport leaders, not the six to twenty subordinates under them. No post-war records cover any information about speeches or verbal instructions the policemen received, so we do not know what influence the transport leaders had on the other men.

Although the Schutzpolizei's records of assignments and finances only cover a portion of the transports, the policemen in this study guarded a significant number of transports (more than half of the mass transports) and participated in most of the major waves. This indicates how routine this process became, and how integral the police were to the overall mechanism. Table 1 shows the transports which these policemen guarded. The number assigned to the transports corresponds to the numbers used by Jonny Moser in his tables, allowing one to compare this table to his (it therefore represents a subset of the overall Austrian transports).<sup>40</sup> Additionally, Table 1 lists the departure dates, the number of deportees, the destination, and the wave of these deportations. The policemen in this study guarded thirty-five Jewish transports (around half of the total), and one "Gypsy transport" (out of five).

Viennese policemen guarded deportations of Jews to the "Reichskommissariat Ostland" (Kovno, Riga, and Minsk), part of the second wave of deportations from November 1941 to February 1942. These destinations were chosen because officials in Warthegau (where Łódź ghetto was located) rejected allowing any more Jews and Roma to come there. All told, there were seven trains to Minsk, five transports rerouted to Kovno, and twenty to Riga.<sup>41</sup> However, there are only records for policemen who participated in two of these transports.<sup>42</sup>

The police continued their actions during the deportations of Jews to the General Government (Izbica, Włodawa, and Sobibor), part of the third wave from March 1942 to July 1942. This massive wave of deportations (forty-three transports from the Greater Reich as a whole, each comprised of approximately 1,000 people) represents the fulfilment of a plan worked out by Eichmann and his Department IV B 4 in the Reich Security Main Office, coordinating the deportation and extermination of European Jewry with Gestapo officials, railway officials, Higher SS and Police Leaders, and the Ordnungspolizei. Eichmann established the parameters for the plan after the Wannsee Conference, held in January 1942. The main targets of the Viennese deportations were Austrian Jews under sixty-five, though stateless Jews and foreign Jews from Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania were also deported, despite the fact that Eichmann's instructions said foreign Jews were to be excluded.<sup>43</sup>

39 Ian Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators of the German Police Battalions: The Mass Murder of Jewish Civilians, 1940–1942* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 10–32; Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

40 Jonny Moser, "Österreich", in *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), 76–86, Tables 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4.

41 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendeportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 84–85.

42 Regarding the date of the Kovno transport, see n. 24.

43 See Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendeportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 137–159, 192; Steffen Hängs, *Das Transitghetto Izbica im System des Holocaust* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2018), 264–270. YVA Folio 13, which states that Johann Peter II and Johann F. led a Jewish transport to Riga on 23 March 1942, gives a destination that was later changed. The financial record directly below it, balancing the amount the two men were paid in advance for the trip versus what they actually spent, lists the destination as Izbicia (Izbica).

**Table 1: Deportations with Known Policemen (Subset of all Deportations)**

Departure Number from Vienna	Date	Destination	Number of Deportees**	Phase (Reich-wide perspective)
Not listed	04.11.1941	Łódz (Litzmannstadt)	Roma (1,000)	One of five Roma transports, part of 1 <sup>st</sup> wave, including 20 Jewish transports from important cities in the Reich (Germany and Austria), October–November 1941
11	23.11.1941?	Kovno	Jews (995)	2 <sup>nd</sup> wave, heading to Reichskommissariat Ostland, 32–33 transports, November 1941–February 1942
16	06.02.1942	Riga	Jews (997)	2 <sup>nd</sup> wave, November 1941–February 1942
17	09.04.1942	Izbica	Jews (998)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, 45,000 Jews from the Greater Reich (including Vienna and the Protectorate), sent to the eastern border of the General-Government and to the Warsaw ghetto, March–July 1942
18	27.04.1942	Włodawa	Jews (998)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, March–July 1942
19	06.05.1942	Minsk	Jews (994)	Minsk wave, 17 transports of Jews from the Greater German Reich (primarily from Vienna and Theresienstadt) to Minsk and Maly Trostinec, May–September 1942
Not listed	05.08.1942	Stettin	Not people? Supplies or material?	
20	12.05.1942	Izbica	Jews (1,001)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, March–July 1942
21	15.05.1942	Izbica	Jews (1,006)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, March–July 1942
22	20.05.1942	Minsk	Jews (986)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942
23	27.05.1942	Minsk	Jews (981)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942
25	05.06.1942	“Ostgebiet” (Izbica/Sobibor)	Jews (1,001)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, March–July 1942
27	14.06.1942	Sobibor (originally Izbica)	Jews (996)	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave, last transport from Vienna for this wave
30	10.07.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (993)	Theresienstadt transports (incoming) in the summer of 1942, following the deportation of Jews from the Protectorate to this transit camp and then outgoing transports to eastern ghettos, camps, extermination centres
31	14.07.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (988)	Theresienstadt transports, summer 1942
32	17.07.1942	Auschwitz	Jews (995)	First transport to Auschwitz from Vienna
34	28.07.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (988)	Theresienstadt transports, summer 1942
35	13.08.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (997)	Theresienstadt transports, summer 1942
36	17.08.1942	Minsk-Maly Trostinec	Jews (1,003)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942
37	20.08.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (997)	Theresienstadt transports, summer 1942
39	31.08.1942	Maly Trostinec	Jews (967)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942

\* Jonny Moser, “Österreich”, in *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der Jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), 76–86, Tables 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4.

\*\* The numbers of Jewish victims come from Moser’s calculations of those actually deported, except for the victims from Macedonia and Thrace, which come from the Yad Vashem database. That database lists the number of persons rounded up in each town and how many arrived at Treblinka. There is a range of minimum and maximum victims for Kavalla, Xanthe, Komotini, and Alexandroupolis, which is why the total figure is from 4043 to 4272.

Departure Number from Vienna	Date	Destination	Number of Deportees**	Phase (Reich-wide perspective)
40	10.09.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (990)	Theresienstadt transports, Part II, August–October 1942. After transport on 8–9 October 1942 (the last of 13 large transports from Vienna), only 8,000 Jews were left, either in mixed marriages or regarded as “Geltungsjuden” under the law
42	14.09.1942	Ostgebiet (Minsk)	Jews (992)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942
42	24.09.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (1,287)	Theresienstadt transports, Part II, August–October 1942
43	01.10.1942	Theresienstadt	Jews (1,290)	Theresienstadt transports, Part II, August–October 1942
44	05.10.1942	Minsk	Jews (544)	Minsk wave, May–September 1942
46a	05.01.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (100)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943
46b	08.01.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (101)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943
47c	11.01.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (100)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943
47a(A)	03.03.1943	Auschwitz	Jews (75)	Phase of deportations to Auschwitz, with an important change in the rules: Jews working in war-essential industries were now included
Not listed	25.03.1943	Malkinia (Treblinka)	Jews from Macedonia and Thrace (4,043–4,272 total)	Bulgarian police transferred Macedonian and Thracian Jews to Viennese police
Not listed	26.03.1943	Malkinia (Treblinka)	Jews from Macedonia and Thrace	Bulgarian police transferred Macedonian and Thracian Jews to Viennese police
Not listed	28.03.1943	Malkinia (Treblinka)	Jews from Macedonia and Thrace	Bulgarian police transferred Macedonian and Thracian Jews to Viennese police
47b(B)	31.03.1943	Auschwitz	Jews (85)	Auschwitz transport as above, including Jews working in war industries. Transport included 49 Romanian Jews
46f	30.03.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (101) ('Zigeuner' is a mistake in the Schutzpolizei records)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943
46g	01.04.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (72)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943
46i	24.06.1943	Theresienstadt	Jews (151)	Smaller transports to Theresienstadt, November 1942–June 1943

\* Jonny Moser, “Österreich”, in *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der Jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), 76–86, Tables 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4.

\*\* The numbers of Jewish victims come from Moser’s calculations of those actually deported, except for the victims from Macedonia and Thrace, which come from the Yad Vashem database. That database lists the number of persons rounded up in each town and how many arrived at Treblinka. There is a range of minimum and maximum victims for Kavalla, Xanthe, Komotini, and Alexandroupolis, which is why the total figure is from 4043 to 4272.

As this wave was occurring, there was also a set of deportations of Jews to Minsk and Maly Trostinec (one in late November 1941, the rest from May to October 1942). This wave of seventeen transports mainly departed from Vienna and Theresienstadt, the latter housing elderly people and serving as a clean, model camp that the Nazis could show to the world.<sup>44</sup> By this point, the Viennese police had become experienced in handling these transports; some of the same officers were assigned the job multiple times.<sup>45</sup>

Additionally, the Viennese police guarded large-capacity deportations of Jews to Theresienstadt (each around 1,000 persons, leaving Vienna from June 1942 to October 1942). There were about thirty-one of these altogether (plus four smaller capacity ones). Police included in this study were involved in eight of these transports. The goal was to deport Viennese Jews older than sixty-five.<sup>46</sup> Children under fourteen were also included, as well as Jewish veterans from World War One whose marriages to non-Jews had been dissolved. There were also smaller deportations of Jews to Theresienstadt (from January to June 1943), consisting of around 100 Jews each time, often elderly.<sup>47</sup> The policemen under study here were involved in six of these. While earlier transports had used between ten and fifteen policemen plus a leader for each train, the squads were now reduced to five policemen and a leader.<sup>48</sup> For the final transport for which I have police data (24 June 1943), the local Gestapo ordered the transport, which was comprised of 151 or 152 people and was only guarded by four policemen.<sup>49</sup> The victims were probably Jews who had been in hiding, who had been denounced, or who had violated various decrees.

Another set of deportations involving the Viennese police comprised over 4,000 Jewish men, women, and children from Macedonia and Thrace, transported by three trains in March 1943 to Malkinia (destination Treblinka). These deportations were organised by the Bulgarian Commissariat for Jewish Affairs (in collaboration with the Germans); roundups and property seizures were conducted by squads of Bulgarian soldiers and police. Bulgarian police guarded the victims as they were transported by barge up the Danube to Vienna; Viennese police records state that they provided the Bulgarian police with provisions and accommodations in the

---

This corresponds to Hänschen's chart of deportations to Izbica, which lists Izbica as the destination of the transport leaving Vienna on 9 April 1942. Regarding a Jewish deportation that went to Włodawa on 27 April 1942, the unsigned police report (from the 95. Polizei Revier, 4 May 1942, YVA Folio 15) was probably written by Johann Peter II, since he was from that Revier and led at least five transports.

44 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendepportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 230–238.

45 For example, the policemen Johann K., Alois K., and Leopold D., who came from 1.Res.Pol.Komp.West and guarded the Minsk transport on 20 May 1942 (YVA Folio 30), were the same team used for a transport to Izbica on 12 May 1942 (Folio 23), with B. (no first name given) taking the place of Anton H.

46 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendepportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 277.

47 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendepportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 337–342, 347–348, 353, 361. As noted in the footnotes in Part I, "[a]lthough YVA Folio 117 (advancing funds to four policemen) states the transport of 30 March 1943 was a "Zinguener" [sic] transport, the Schutzpolizei order states it was one of three Jewish transports (YVA Folio 110, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/43, Betr: Gestellung von Begleitkommandos, 29 March 1943). Another reason why this was probably a Jewish transport is that one of the assigned policemen, Anton H. IV, admitted in 1946 that he guarded a Jewish transport to Theresienstadt, consisting of only one wagon attached to a regular train (LPDW, Personalakt H. IV, Anton, St.Nr.857/20 (94/57), PD-Wien, Generalinspektorat der Sicherheitswache, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 9 September 1946.) Although he stated the date was 1942, he probably got the date wrong. This is not ruled out by his service record, since he admitted that he remained in Vienna in a "special use battalion" until 4 November 1943 before being transferred to The Hague (ibid., Lebenslauf, 25 May 1946)".

48 YVA Folio 93, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/43, 4 January 1943, Gestellung von Transportkommandos.

49 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die "Judendepportationen" aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 361; YVA Folio 122, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6269/24.6, 22 June 1943, Gestellung eines Begleitkommandos.

Otto-Steinhäusl barracks (named for the late Austrian Nazi police president).<sup>50</sup> Three large, armed Viennese police squads (two squads had fifteen policemen; one had twenty-four) then took over guard duties for the next leg of the journey. The collaboration between different Axis police forces is noteworthy, because the Bulgarian police expelled the victims from the Balkans and transported them into the Reich, and the Austrians moved them to the final extermination centre. This horrible journey for the victims was probably one of the longest trips of anyone deported during the Holocaust.

Finally, out of nine numbered transports to Auschwitz (there were also unnumbered ones and “Einzeltransporte” between 1940 and 1944),<sup>51</sup> there are police records for three Auschwitz trips. The first was a large transport of 995 people, including many women, which left on 17 July 1942. There were also two smaller ones on 3 March and 31 March 1943, the first with seventy-five Jews, the second with approximately eighty-two, of which forty-nine were Romanian.<sup>52</sup> Importantly, the deportations to Auschwitz in March 1943 were part of a phase in which Jews who were working in war-essential industries, as well as Jews from Axis countries, were now included.<sup>53</sup>

### Were the Policemen Forced to Comply with Orders?

At the end of the war, some policemen remained in Vienna or in Lower Austria because their units had been deployed to defend the city against the incoming Soviet army;<sup>54</sup> others allegedly were ordered to withdraw to Linz,<sup>55</sup> while others claimed their unit refused to fight the Soviets, effectively giving them passage into the city.<sup>56</sup> Still, other policemen came back to the city in 1945 and 1946, after foreign deployment or Allied detention.<sup>57</sup> Following the Nazi capitulation and the Soviet occupation of Vienna, an Austrian registration staff of the uniformed police (*Erfassungstab der Sicherheitswache*) ordered in April 1945 that Viennese policemen must report for duty, in order to maintain “peace and order” in consultation with the Soviets.<sup>58</sup> Traditional, moderate, and conservative police officials (all non-Nazis, though some had served under the Nazi regime) re-established the

50 See YVA Folio 109, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, Ia 6260/43, 26 March 1943, Gestellung von Transportkommandos. The Yad Vashem deportation database leaves out the role of the Viennese police in these events, stating only that the Bulgarian Commissariat for Jewish Affairs and the Bulgarian police were involved. Compare <https://deportation.yadvashem.org>, accessed 20 June 2021. See the transports from Greece to Treblinka, leaving on 4, 5, 6, and 7 March 1943.

51 Moser, Tabelle 4, 86.

52 See the Yad Vashem database, Transport 47a, <https://deportation.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&itemId=7085829&ind=2> and Transport 47b, <https://deportation.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&itemId=7085848&ind=3> (accessed 22 June 2021) for the nationalities of the victims. Moser counted eighty-five victims: see Moser, 86, Tabelle 4. YVA Folio 119, Nachweisung, 29 March 1943, incorrectly gives the destination as “Auspitz”, but this is corrected in Folio 120, Vermerk, 29 March 1943.

53 Richtlinien des RSHA “zur technischen Durchführung der Evakuierung von Juden nach dem Osten (KL Auschwitz)”, 20 February 1943, in Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Die “Judendeportationen” aus dem Deutschen Reich von 1941–1945*, 373–379.

54 LPDW, Personalakt L. I., Leopold, St.Nr.184/24 (301/53), Mein Lebenslauf, 28 June 1946.

55 LPDW, Personalakt S., Thomas, St.Nr.58/36 (116/69), PD-Wien, Generalinspektorat der Sicherheitswache, Referat III/d, Niederschrift, 19 October 1946.

56 LPDW, Personalakt P., Anton, St.Nr.815/20 (149/59), Gruppe Dr. Helfer. Sicherheitswachesektor ehemaliges Schutzpolizei-Gruppenkommando Wien-Süd, 5–6.

57 LPDW, Personalakt B., Franz, St.Nr.31/27 (163/63), Lebenslauf, 23 May 1946.

58 Ulrike Wetz, “Geschichte der Wiener Polizei-Direktion vom Jahre 1945 bis zum Jahre 1955 mit Berücksichtigung der Zeit vor 1945”, PhD dissertation (University of Vienna, 1971), 197.

General Inspectorate of the Sicherheitswache, which became embroiled in a political struggle with the Austrian communists, who had established a rival volunteer police force (*Polizeiliche Hilfsdienst*) and controlled the State Police until September 1947.<sup>59</sup> The General Inspectorate, following a 1945 law designed to build a non-Nazi civil service,<sup>60</sup> began examining each policeman who had been in the force between 1938 and 1945 to determine if he had been a Nazi Party member (including an “illegal”) or an SS member, and whether he had denounced any of his colleagues. After examining eighty-four cases, I conclude that the process followed the letter of the law, yet the police bureaucracy was more concerned with group membership in the Nazi Party or SS than with actual actions committed while on duty. The net effect was that participation in deportations was swept under the rug.

There was some type of State Police investigation into policemen who guarded transports, because nineteen personnel files (out of eighty-four, including men who guarded the Stettin transport) contain statements that the policemen gave to an oversight commission (*Überprüfungskommission*) in September and October 1946. The statements begin with the official remark that the policeman “was accused of having participated in Jewish transports as an escort during the Hitler regime, based on a letter from the Staatspolizei from 31 August 1946.”<sup>61</sup> Neither the letter nor the original Staatspolizei investigation could be located in the Austrian State Archives or in the Vienna City Archives, so we currently do not know the extent of the investigation that prompted the recording of these statements, nor which documents the Staatspolizei had.<sup>62</sup> Many policemen whose names appear in the Schutzpolizei assignment lists and financial records were not apparently questioned. In the existing statements, the policeman usually indicated his assigned Police Battalion, when and where he was trained, and some very basic information about the transport (if he admitted it). Ten admitted guarding a Jewish transport, two denied guarding a Jewish transport but admitted guarding a Roma one, and seven denied any involvement. Six who denied participating are not included in the group of sixty-five (the basis of this paper), because I could not prove through other documents that they guarded transports.<sup>63</sup>

Eight policemen stated that they had to comply with orders; otherwise, they would have been brought before an SS court and shot. However, key sentences in these statements are identical, indicating that an official working with the Über-

59 Ibid., 180–192, 349–393.

60 Beamtenüberleitungsgesetz (St.GBl.Nr.134/1945).

61 LPDW, Personalakt N., Ludwig, St.Nr.69/25(185/55), Ref.III/d Ueberprüfungskommission, Amtsvermerk, 5 October 1946.

62 The Staatspolizei produced a report about the organisation of Jewish deportations that was used in the trial of Karl Ebner, the Viennese Gestapo official who was head of the Jewish Department (Referat II/D) and then deputy head of the Vienna Gestapo, but this report was from February 1947 and concerned bureaucratic responsibility for ordering deportations in 1942 and 1943 (the Zentralstelle) and in 1944 (Gestapo Referat II/D), and it does not deal with the involvement of the Viennese police as guards (Vg 12 Vr 1223/47). This document is marked A.V. v. 27.2.1947.

63 Admission of a Jewish transport: A., Alois (St.Nr.55/26 (82/64)), B., Anton (St.Nr.669/19 (9/57)), G., Josef (St.Nr.619/36 (15/64)), H., Michael (St.Nr.37/25 (24/62)), H. IV., Anton (St.Nr.857/20 (94/57)), J. I., Alois (St.Nr. 217/23), K., Albin (St.Nr.848/36 (148/61)), P., Josef (St.Nr.797/36 (160/65)), S., Rudolf (St.Nr.918/19 (119/49)), and S., Thomas (St.Nr.58/36 (116/69)). Denial of Jewish transport and admission of Roma transport: B., Johann (St.Nr. 80/34 (239/1969)) and W., Rudolf (St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969)). Denial of any involvement: C. IV, Josef (St.Nr.300/25 (188/56)), G., Anton (St.Nr.102/1947), K., Karl (St.Nr.667/22 (49/60)), N., Oskar (St.Nr.398/28 (131/62)), P., Franz (St.Nr.160/29 (213/1970)), S., Leopold (St.Nr.337/28 (45/66)), and W., Rudolf (St.Nr.224/28 (86/60)). Karl K. is counted as a guard despite his denial because YVA Folio 113 shows he guarded a transport of Thracian and Macedonian Jews to Malkinia (Treblinka) on 25 March 1943. Josef C. IV, Anton G., Oskar N., Leopold S., and Rudolf W. were assigned to the Stettin transport which, as noted above, did not apparently involve deportees. Franz P., whom Johann B. named as a witness (for his involvement in a Roma transport) denied participating in Jewish transports. His name is not mentioned in the Yad Vashem documents, so he was not included in the data analysis of the group of sixty-five.



prüfungscommission possibly wrote them and then had the policemen sign the final product. Thomas S., who admitted guarding a Jewish transport to Kovno in February 1942, stated that the task was “undertaken without pleasure, since each of us knew that after the first or second transport, foreign deployment on the front followed. But it was futile [to refuse], because every individual had to participate in these transports; otherwise, he would have been charged by the SS court with the known draconian consequences (shooting).”<sup>64</sup> Franz P., who was assigned to the same Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use as Thomas S. and denied involvement, said he recalled that many of his colleagues had to participate without a choice. His key sentence about the consequences is almost identical to Thomas S.’s, as is his statement about imminent deployment to the front: “[n]o one was ordered for these transports willingly, since each knew that after the first or second such transport deployment on the front was coming. *But it was futile [to refuse], because every individual had to participate in these transports; otherwise, he would have been charged by the SS court with the known draconian consequences (shooting)* [my emphasis].”<sup>65</sup>

Some statements by policemen who guarded a Jewish transport to Riga in February 1942 also tried to reduce culpability by claiming that the Jews were fortunate to have had Viennese policemen as escorts. Rudolf S., who admitted to guarding this transport (and who also guarded two others in 1943, according to Schutzpolizei documents),<sup>66</sup> claimed that the presence of Vienna policemen was positive: “[t]he Jews were happy that Viennese policemen had been assigned to them, since they knew that they were treated humanely and loyally by them.”<sup>67</sup> Three weeks after Rudolf S. gave his statement, Michael H. used virtually the exact same sentence. After admitting that he guarded two transports in 1942, one to Łódź and one to Šķirotava (outside of Riga, probably the same transport that Rudolf S. guarded), he stated that “I also did not notice that the Jews were insulted or mistreated by anyone. *The Jews were happy that they had been escorted by Vienna policemen, since they knew that they were treated humanely and loyally* [my emphasis].”<sup>68</sup> The identical language suggests that an official formulated these statements or the policemen were told what to say. Although some Jewish survivors later testified that the Viennese police were not brutal during the loading,<sup>69</sup> the treatment was harsh during the trip. Testimony at-

64 LPDW, Personalakt S., Thomas, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungscommission, Niederschrift, 10 September 1946. Original: “Diese Transporte wurden sehr ungerne übernommen, da jeder von uns wusste, dass nach den ersten oder zweiten Transports, der auswärtige Einsatz an die Front folgte. Aber es war zwecklos, weil jeder einzelne an diesen Transports teilnehmen musste, widrigenfalls er mit einer Anzeige an das SS Gericht mit den bekannten drakonischen Folgen (Erschiessung) rechnen musste.”

65 LPDW, Personalakt P., Franz, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungscommission, Niederschrift, 9 September 1946. “Niemand liess [sic] sich gerne für solche Transporte kommandieren, da jeder wusste, dass er nach einem oder zwei solcher Transport zum Einsatz an die Front komme. *Aber es war zwecklos, da jeder einzelne an diesen Transports als Begleitperson teilnehmen musste, widrigenfalls er mit einer Anzeige an das SS-Gericht mit den bekannten drakonischen Folgen (Erschiessung) rechnen musste* [my emphasis].” I could not confirm through other police documents that Franz P. was assigned to this transport. According to his autobiography, he was sent to Kagran in January 1942 and put into the Pol. Wachbtl. 2. Kompanie, remaining there until 21 February 1943 (ibid., Mein Lebenslauf, 15 April 1946). If he did guard a transport, it would have been in this period, but he denied it in his Ueberprüfungscommission statement.

66 YVA Folios 94, 110, 117.

67 LPDW, Personalakt S. Rudolf, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungscommission, Niederschrift, 16 September 1946. “Die Juden waren erfreut, dass sie Wiener Polizisten als Begleitung zugeteilt erhielten, da sie wussten, dass sie von diesen menschlich und loyal behandelt werden.”

68 LPDW, Personalakt H., Michael, St.Nr.37/25 (24/62), Ref.III/d Ueberprüfungscommission, Niederschrift, 5 October 1946. “Ich habe auch nicht bemerkt, dass die Juden von irgend jemanden [sic] angestänkert oder misshandelt worden wären. *Die Juden waren froh, dass sie Wiener Polizisten als Begleitung erhalten hatten, da sie wussten, dass sie von diesen menschlich und loyal behandelt werden* [my emphasis].”

69 USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive, Interview Dr. Helga Feldner-Busztin, 28 December 1998, No. 48497, Tape 3, 2:50–3:28.

tributed to Wolf Seiler states that people were beaten on platforms, were later transferred from passenger cars to cattle cars (where they were locked in), and went insane.<sup>70</sup> Herbert Schwarz, deported to Riga in January 1942, reported that he (as a young Jewish “gofer” on the transport) and other orderlies were instructed to pry up dead bodies frozen to the floor of the luggage car and move them, and they were whipped.<sup>71</sup>

The two policemen who admitted to guarding a Roma transport to Łódź in November 1941 gave limited information about the situation. Rudolf W., who was a member of the Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use stationed at Wiener Neudorf, said he was excused from a Jewish transport because he was a trainer (*Ausbildner*) for his unit; he claimed, however, that he had no choice but to guard a transport of Roma (Gypsies, *Zigeunern*) from Mattersburg to Łódź because there was a shortage of personnel. He too used the same justification that refusal would have resulted in a charge before the SS court and “the known draconian consequences (shooting).”<sup>72</sup> In a separate, later Volksgericht investigation, not related to the transports, he was accused of training Ukrainian police in Galicia and participating in the mass murder of Jews in the ghetto at Stanislaw.<sup>73</sup> Johann B., who was in the same Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use as Rudolf W., said that during his training period at Wiener Neudorf he was ordered to Fürstenfeld, where the gendarmerie had brought Roma to a nearby labour camp.<sup>74</sup> They were then loaded on trains, which his unit guarded and then unloaded in the ghetto at Łódź. He merely stated that there were “no incidents” during the transport. Another policeman, Alois A., admitted to belonging to a fifteen-man group from the Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use that guarded a Jewish transport to Riga in February 1942.<sup>75</sup> Both Johann B. and Alois A. gave the same justification that they were under orders and would have been brought up on charges and shot if they had not complied.

One may reasonably doubt whether policemen would have been executed for refusing. No cases of refusal appear in the files of the SS courts (archived in Berlin and Vienna); instead, the courts were arguably used to discipline police who engaged in “excessive” beating or rape, did not follow orderly, “rational” killing routines, or who were accused of sodomy. In this light, the courts served as a control mechanism to reinforce the concept of correct behaviour for a male figure of the “German master race.”<sup>76</sup> Additionally, some Viennese policemen claimed they did not have to partic-

70 DÖW 854, undated report from after 1945, p. 1.

71 USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive, Interview Herbert Schwarz, 30 June 1995, No. 3634.

72 LPDW, Personalakt W., Rudolf, St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969), Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 10 September 1946.

73 Ibid., PD Wien I/59067, Auszugsweise Abschrift a.d. Sammelakt Stanislaw, 18 January 1948.

74 LPDW, Personalakt B., Johann, St.Nr. 80/34 (239/1969), Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 10 September 1946.

75 LPDW, Personalakt A., Alois, St.Nr.55/26 (82/64), Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 9 September 1946.

76 In the Bundesarchiv (Berlin-Lichterfelde), NS 7 (SS- und Polizeigerichtsbarkeit), I only found four cases dealing with Schutzpolizisten, none concerning refusal to comply with deportation orders. For a case of a Schutzpolizist (Ludwig Wölfer) accused of murdering without command in Radom, Poland (and the question of when his sentence could be converted to probation, so that he could be transferred to an anti-partisan unit), see BA NS 7/6592. For the case of a dentist in the Schutzpolizei in Stettin, sentenced to five years in a Straflager in Danzig-Matzkau for homosexual activity, see BA NS 7/1083. The dentist requested that he be castrated, which was approved by a doctor, who said the dentist engaged in mutual masturbation, not oral or anal sex; the dentist's request might indicate that the punishment system led men to go to extremes to avoid going to a camp. The dentist also requested a pardon (after his castration), but the records do not show whether he was in fact castrated or pardoned. For the case of a Viennese Kriminalbeamte found guilty of sodomy with underage men and sent to Dachau, see Mark Lewis, “Continuity and Change in the Vienna Police Force, 1914–1945. Part 1 [1914–33]”, *S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON*, 6, no. 2 (2020): 40–41. For the case of

ipate for various reasons. Thomas S., who admitted guarding a Jewish transport (see above), stated that he was able to avoid other transports because he was a member of the policemen's sports association (*Polizei Sport-Vereinigung*).<sup>77</sup> He does not explain how that created an exception. Franz P., assigned to the same Reserve Police Battalion for Special Use, said that other men in his unit were required to guard Jewish transports, but he had avoided it because he had an accident in 1940 and was only minimally fit for duty. There are no medical records in his file confirming this, however, and in February 1943 he was assigned to a police battalion successively deployed to Slovenia, France, and Alsace; he said he was its "Schreiber", (a clerk or typist for the unit), so he was not incapable of working.<sup>78</sup> Another policeman in the same battalion said he was having dental work done at the time and could not be assigned to foreign duty.<sup>79</sup> There are no documents in the policemen's files showing that they actually used these excuses at the time of the orders, or that they were excused. They may have invented these statements in 1946 to keep their jobs.

The proposed model of stages leading to compliance fits the data better than theories that chart the evolution of German police organisational culture (as opposed to Austrian police institutions), ideological indoctrination through police schools, or the role of junior officers who set the example of decisive, violent behaviour.<sup>80</sup> First, starting in the late nineteenth century, policemen's prejudicial beliefs about Jews and foreigners were reinforced by everyday culture, religion, and political parties. The police also reinforced and supported politicians' views that travelling Roma constituted a "criminal plague" and should be expelled. Second, in the 1920s and 1930s, existing police command structures became more authoritative and less responsive to individual rights due to the political context of fascism. Third, in the late 1930s, antisemitic decrees and anti-Roma police orders set harsh social boundaries that, in the minds of policemen, legitimised deportation and made compliance easier. Fourth, the negative aspects of war (mobilisation, bombardment, food shortages, destruction) ended normal relationships between the police and the people they patrolled: true Austrians were Germans, while other groups deserved no protection. To sum up, the police complied with deportation orders without cognitive dissonance because of their belief system, the privileging of police over individual rights, the establishment of social boundaries, and the effects of war, creating a legitimising cover.

### Post-war Reinstatement

To what extent was the Vienna police denazified after 1945, and why was police participation in guarding transports not considered in reinstatement decisions? Scholars have addressed the first question, but they had to rely on figures produced by the Austrian and Allied governments and did not have access to personnel re-

a head of a local Sicherheitsdienst branch in occupied Yugoslavia who was convicted of murder and rape by the SS and Police Court in Belgrade, see Götz Aly, "The Universe of Death and Torment", in *Unwilling Germans: The Goldhagen Debate*, ed. Robert R. Shandley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 171.

77 LPDW, Personalakt S., Thomas, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 10 September 1946.

78 LPDW, Personalakt P., Franz, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 9 September 1946.

79 LPDW, Personalakt W., Rudolf, St.Nr.224/28 (86/60), Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 16 September 1946. This is a different Rudolf W. than the one who admitted guarding a Roma transport (St. Nr.67/36 [226/1969]).

80 See Edward B. Westermann, *Hitler's Police Battalions: Enforcing Racial War in the East* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 2005); Hans-Christian Harten, *Die weltanschauliche Schulung der Polizei in Nationalsozialismus* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh/Brill, 2018); Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators of the German Police Battalions*; and the historiographic discussion in Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs", Part 1.

cords that enables an analysis of the lower ranks.<sup>81</sup> They have not addressed the second question, because they may not have known that there had been a Staatspolizei investigation resulting in the General Inspectorate taking statements from policemen. The personnel records, which extensively document the post-war reinstatement process, show that no policeman was dismissed for the deportations: out of sixty-five, ultimately only eleven were dismissed for other reasons. Why was participating in deportations swept under the rug? First, the post-war police officials wanted to rebuild their ranks with trained policemen, and reinstated officers fit the bill. Second, they wanted to create an image that the new police force was comprised of “loyal Austrians”, based on political membership and political reliability, excusing or ignoring questionable actions committed by police who were not Nazis. Third, police officials wanted to preserve social cohesion and promote the welfare of the police as a social institution by keeping policemen employed.

Ulrike Wetz, in a dissertation about the Viennese police between 1945 and 1954, hardly mentions the commission of war crimes (not to mention crimes against humanity) at all.<sup>82</sup> She contends that the post-war reconstruction of the Viennese Sicherheitswache was a Cold War struggle: non-Nazi, supposedly democratically-oriented police traditionalists tried to build a new force to deal with Vienna’s dire security problems and wrest power from the communist-controlled *Polizeiliche Hilfsdienst* (a volunteer force comprised of former resistance fighters, civil servants, and Wehrmacht deserters) and from the *Staatspolizei* (state police), controlled by communists until September 1947.<sup>83</sup> She uses data on hiring and terminations in the Sicherheitswache from 1945 to 1948 to argue that up to two-thirds of the force was changed through new recruitments, retirements, and dismissals in 1945 and 1946, a replacement process that would normally take fifteen to twenty years. This allegedly shows how thoroughly the Nazis were removed from the force.<sup>84</sup> The problem with this interpretation is that it does not break down dismissals and transfers by reason, so one does not know who was dismissed for Nazi activity (and what type thereof), who was dismissed for other political reasons (such as being a communist), and who was dismissed for failing to pass physical fitness exams. In fact, some cases of reinstatement show that the police administration was willing to find desk jobs for policemen injured in the war.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Wetz did not have access to personnel files showing cases of policemen who had applied or belonged to the Nazi Party after 1938 yet were still reinstated after 1945.

Dieter Stiefel argues that Austrians had more control over their own denazification than the Germans because Austrians wrote their own denazification legislation, although the Allies pressured them to strengthen their denazification laws and revise them in 1947. He holds that once former Nazis were allowed to vote again in the 1949 elections, Austria’s denazification process was over, despite the fact that Austrian People’s Courts (*Volksgerichte*) continued until 1955 to pursue war crimes cases

81 Wetz, “Geschichte der Wiener Polizei-Direktion vom Jahre 1945 bis zum Jahre 1955 mit Berücksichtigung der Zeit vor 1945”, 338, 351; Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (Vienna, Munich, and Zurich: Europaverlag, 1981), 154–160.

82 Wetz, “Geschichte der Wiener Polizei-Direktion vom Jahre 1945 bis zum Jahre 1955 mit Berücksichtigung der Zeit vor 1945”, 332–334.

83 *Ibid.*, 348–421.

84 *Ibid.*, 335–338.

85 See the case of Albin K., whose leg was amputated, later in this article. Thomas S., who was run over by a truck (driven by the SS), was given a job as a boat instructor (LPDW, Personalakt S., Thomas, Bitte um Dienstzuteilung zur Zillenfahrerabtlg., 18 March 1946).

and cases of illegal membership in the Nazi Party from 1933 to 1938.<sup>86</sup> The decisions about whether to reinstate these policemen occurred during three events: the Allied occupation of Austria; the power struggle inside the police administration between the traditional police professionals on the one side and the communist-controlled Staatspolizei and the Polizeiliche Hilfsdienst on the other; and the evolution of Austrian attitudes toward the Nazi past between 1945 and 1954, when Austria regained its sovereignty. Initially, some Austrians supported the “Opferthese” (the victim thesis: “the Germans imposed their ideology on us and occupied our country”), then moved to partial recognition of responsibility (“we had our Nazis and fellow-travelers, and the hard-core ones should be excluded from civil professions and participation in politics”). After 1948, this was followed by partial amnesty combined with a Cold War political calculation: “[i]t’s more democratic to allow former Nazis to have their rights again if they have renounced their views and support the Republic. And we must oppose the communists.”<sup>87</sup> By the 1950s, in the case of the Viennese police authorities, there was relativisation and amnesia. For example, the general inspector intervened twice to lift the suspension of Rudolf W., whom Volksgericht prosecutors investigated twice for allegedly murdering civilians in Stanislaw. In 1949, the General Inspectorate argued that if his suspension was not lifted, he would look for work elsewhere, so it was essentially protecting him and claiming his innocence.<sup>88</sup> He was reinstated in 1949, and the Austrian President, Theodor Körner, suspended disciplinary proceedings against him in 1952.<sup>89</sup> In 1957, when Rudolf W. was not allowed to enrol in an officer training program, the General Inspector personally wrote an astonishing memo that shows that he wanted to clear almost the entire Viennese uniformed police; in case of Viennese policemen accused of mass murder in Galicia, it was just a matter of a few bad apples. “For the accused, who for ten years now were the object of a legal investigation, absolutely no proof has been found, and it can hardly be produced because of the passage of time and the foreign location; moreover, only a limited number of members of the Schutzpolizei under discussion may have participated in the aforementioned excesses.”<sup>90</sup>

Apart from the statements that the General Inspectorate took (or wrote) from a limited number of policemen who guarded deportation trains, their involvement played no role in whether they should be reinstated. It instead depended on whether they had belonged to the Nazi Party and the SS, which greatly limited consideration of their involvement in controlling and policing Viennese society.

In 1945 and 1946, policemen had to fill out a police questionnaire about their past political affiliations and ranks, as well as write a short autobiographical statement about their career path. The police administration checked Nazi Party records and interviewed their work colleagues and neighbours, who rarely criticised or denounced anyone. Under the terms of the 1945 law dealing with the transition to a new civil service, the *Beamtenüberleitungsgesetz* (St.GBl.Nr.134/1945), policemen who were in the force during the Nazi period but were not Nazi Party members (either during the illegal period or after 1938) and were not SS members could be

86 Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich*, 18–19, 247–259.

87 Ibid., 48–75. See also Robert Knight, “Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia”, *The Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 3 (2007): 572–612; Siegfried Göllner, “The Politics of Denazification: Parliamentary Debates in Austria, 1945–57”, *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 38, no. 1 (2018): 76–87.

88 LPDW, Personalakt W. Rudolf, St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969), G.I., IIb, Gesuch an den Herrn Bundespräsidenten um gnadenweise Einstellung eines eingeleiteten Disziplinarverfahrens, 19 January 1952, 24–25.

89 Ibid., 27, Generaldirektion für die öffent. Sicherheit to Bundespolizeidirektion, Zl. 80.257-3/52, 7 June 1952 (Abschrift).

90 Ibid., 55, Generalinspektor to Disziplinarkommission, G.I.-IIb-2141/24/7-56, 28 August 1957.



rehired.<sup>91</sup> According to the data in this study, in 1945 and 1946, only six policemen who had guarded transports were removed, either because they had been party members, applicants, or SS members.<sup>92</sup> There were no detailed investigations into policemen's later foreign deployments (when they might have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity), nor consequences for having admitted to guarding a deportation transport. Furthermore, five of them were reinstated in 1947 and 1949 after they appealed their dismissals. Sometimes (but not always) these were cases in which the policemen had applied to join the Nazi Party after 1938 but had not received membership. The police administration tended to view them as men who had been pressured, made mistakes, or were actually "true Austrians".<sup>93</sup>

In 1947 the Austrian parliament revised the denazification laws (the *Bundesverfassungsgesetz* of 6 February 1947) to create two levels of "incriminated persons": a lower level (*Minderbelastet*) and a higher level (*Belastet*). Lower-level incriminated persons included regular Nazi Party members, and higher-level incriminated persons were defined as war criminals (specified by a 1945 law called the *Kriegsverbrechergesetz*), Nazi Party members at the rank of cell leader or higher, all SS members, and Gestapo and Sicherheitsdienst members at the rank of *Untersturmführer* (second lieutenant) or higher.<sup>94</sup> The two types of incriminated persons had to register with the authorities and could be punished for failing to do so or for providing false information.

After the passage of the 1947 law, the General Inspectorate continued using the same process of a questionnaire, autobiographical statement, background interviews, and a check of Nazi-era records to determine who could be reinstated. Policemen classified as *Minderbelastet* were not allowed to work for the police again unless their "political behaviour" had been examined by a review commission, which voted on their cases.<sup>95</sup> In the period from 1947 to 1948 period, another twelve policemen in

91 The *Beamtenüberleitungsgesetz* (St.GBl.Nr.134/1945) gave hiring preference in the civil service to persons who were dismissed for political reasons (except Nazi activity) during the Dollfuß-Schuchnigg era or had been resistance fighters. However, the section which the General Inspectorate often used was Paragraph 6 (3), which said that if a civil servant had been hired prior to the Nazi takeover and had remained in service after 13 March 1938, the person could be considered for rehiring.

92 LPDW, Personalakten H., Anton (St.Nr.68/30 (343/64)); H. IV, Josef (St.Nr.96/35 (42/72)); M., Otto (St.Nr.291/18(253/47)); P., Anton (St.Nr.815/20 (149/59)); R., Karl (St.Nr.236/23 (107/63)); S., Franz (St.Nr.525/20 (98/61)).

93 For example, Anton H. (1907–1995) was initially removed because he belonged to the Nazi Party since 1941, but he was reinstated in 1949 due to character references claiming he had been pressured and was an "idealist" (see Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs", Part 1, 27–28, n. 92). Anton P. was removed in July 1946 due to suspected NSDAP membership but was reinstated in January 1947 because he produced witness testimony and a report claiming he had been in a resistance group (Personalakt P., Anton, docs. 14, 16, 26–31, 42). Otto M. was the only one who was not reinstated. Initially dismissed because documents showed that he had applied to the SS in 1937, a *Volksgesetz* ruled that this was a backdated application. It also found that he was not an illegal Nazi but had only belonged to the party from 1938 to 1945, despite some documents showing the contrary. A district registration list commission granted his appeal that his designation should be changed from the higher level of incrimination to the lower. Still, the police had a legal basis to refuse his reinstatement: his Nazi Party membership (for citations, see n. 37).

94 Wetz, "Geschichte der Wiener Polizei-Direktion vom Jahre 1945 bis zum Jahre 1955 mit Berücksichtigung der Zeit vor 1945", 325.

95 The *Verbotsgesetz* of 1947 (St.GBl.Nr.25/1946) stated that policemen who were at the lower level of incrimination (for example, former party members) could only rejoin the police "by necessity and after a special examination of their political behaviour before 27 April 1945" (§ 19 (1) (b) (bb) (2)). The law stated that the commission was supposed to be comprised of the interior minister or his deputy, a representative from the Interior Ministry, a representative from the policemen's professional organisation (a labour union), and representatives from each of the three officially recognised political parties (§ 19 (3)). In some police documents, this commission was called the "Kommission nach § 19 des Verbotsgesetzes 1947 beim Bundesministerium für Inneres", although when it convened for voting it was called the "Interne Kommission des Generalinspektorates" (Internal Commission of the General Inspectorate) and actually had eight members. The commission heard a report (which summarised the results of the background investigation), then voted.



the sample were dismissed and pensioned off because they had been illegal Nazis or belonged to the party after 1938.<sup>96</sup> However, some of these, who had been required to register as *Belastet*, appealed to their municipal district's complaint commission (*Beschwerdekommision*, separate from the police's review commission) on the grounds that they had not been illegal Nazis, or that they were not real SS members, because they were required to join the *Polizei SS* and had received an SS rank equivalent to their police rank. Courts and registration authorities upheld this viewpoint.<sup>97</sup> Some policemen who successfully won this appeal turned next to the General Inspectorate and requested reinstatement in the force. Others were in detention pending war crimes investigations on allegations that they had been illegal Nazis or had participated in mass murders in Galicia.<sup>98</sup> When the latter investigations were ultimately suspended in the 1950s, these policemen also asked to be reinstated. Therefore, from the group of twelve initially dismissed in 1947 and 1948, four were ultimately reinstated,<sup>99</sup> and a fifth, Johann Pflamitzer, who had been a transport

96 LPDW, Personalakten: B., Josef, St.Nr.148/24 (446/47); F., Johann, St.Nr.215/25 (94/1947); J. I., Alois, St.Nr.217/23; K., Johann, St.Nr.1298/19 (480/50), K., Othmar, St.Nr.73/25 (137/63); Pflamitzer, Johann, St.Nr.332/1923(296/47); R., Franz, St.Nr.177/1923(952/45); S., Johann (II), St.Nr.244/46; T., Josef, St.Nr.52/26 (226/63); T., Josef, St.Nr.542/36 (300/52); W. XII., Johann, St.Nr.423/47; W., Rudolf, St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969).

97 Personalakt B., Josef, Bundesministerium für Inneres, Beschwerdekommision, BK 6448/48, Entscheidung, 2 June 1950; Personalakt F., Johann, Beschwerdekommision, BK 83/51, 28 June 1951. This caused a Volksgericht to overturn its decision that he had joined the SS voluntarily; Personalakt K., Othmar, Beschwerdekommision, BK 551/50, 17 June 1950. Nevertheless, in all three cases, the policemen were denied reinstatement because documents still showed they had belonged to the Nazi Party after March 1938.

98 Two policemen who guarded deportation transports and were later investigated for mass murders in this area (today in Ukraine) were Rudolf W. (already mentioned) and Johann K. According to Schutzpolizei records, Johann K. guarded two transports of Jews, one to Izbica and one to Minsk, in May 1942 (YVA, Folio 23, I 2501/42 Vermerk, 9 May 1942, and Folio 30, I 2501/42 Vermerk, 19 May 1942.) He was then deployed to Stryj in Galicia from June 1942 to October 1944 and was accused by other policemen after the war of having led a murder commando there (LPDW, Personalakt K., Johann, St.Nr.1298/19 (480/50), Auszugsweise Abschrift der Anzeige d. Staatspolizei, I/5527/47 v. 18.11.1947 an die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien). After an initial Austrian war crimes investigation in 1947, he was handed over to the Soviets, who sentenced him to twenty-five years and held him in various labour camps in the Soviet Union until 1955, roughly a year after Austria regained its independence (*ibid.*, Niederschrift aufgenommen mit Pol.-Rev.-Insp.i.P. Johann K., 22 November 1955). A year later, in 1956, Austrian prosecutors reopened the investigation of his activities in Stryj (*ibid.*, Pol. Abt. 15 St 24119/55, 23.7.1956). A witness said that he had shot forty-two Jews in a slaughterhouse after they had been captured in a bunker (*ibid.*, Abschrift, Geschäftszahl 31 Vr 3331/56, Benachrichtigung), but Johann K. denied involvement in any shootings and said that he had only directed street traffic (*ibid.*, G.I.-IIb, Niederschrift aufgenommen mit Pol.-Rev.-Insp.i.P. Johann K., 13 September 1957). The investigation was suspended in 1957 on the order of Austria's president. Police disciplinary proceedings against him were also suspended (on the grounds that he could not be investigated for activities while he was employed by the Third Reich, not Austria), but he was not rehired (*ibid.*, OrNr. 70 and 71, G.I.-IIb-2121a/185/30-56, 7 August 1958).

99 These were Alois J., Othmar K., Josef T. (St.Nr. 52/26 (226/63)), and Rudolf W. (St.Nr.67/36 (226/1969)). Alois J. was initially dismissed due to a Soviet order, but the Viennese police reversed it. No document showed he was a Nazi, though he admitted to guarding a transport to Riga (Personalakt, J., Alois, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 7 September 1946). Othmar K. had been a Nazi from 1932 to 1934, then withdrew during the illegal period and rejoined in 1938. He was first dismissed in 1947, and even though a Beschwerdekommision believed his claims that he was forced to rejoin the party and pressured to join the *Polizei SS*, the General Inspector and the State Police did not want to reinstate him, believing that he had a Nazi orientation. However, a state secretary from the Interior Ministry personally wrote to the General Inspector and got him reinstated in 1953 (Personalakt K., Othmar, doc. 48, Staatssekretär to General Täubler, 15 April 1953). Josef T. joined the party in 1933, left when it was illegal, then rejoined in 1941. He was dismissed in 1948 and repeatedly applied for reinstatement, which was approved by the Internal Commission in 1949, which said that even though he had been a party member, there was nothing politically negative about him (Personalakt T., Josef, Protokoll der Sitzung der internen Kommission des Generalinspektorates, 26 March 1949). The Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (which supervised the police) said in 1950 that reinstatements were not going to be considered until further notice, but he was reinstated in 1952 (*ibid.*, G.I.-IIIa-2-14/61/8, Wiederindienststellung von 21 Sicherheitswachbeamten des Ruhestandes, 15 July 1952). According to Schutzpolizei documents, he guarded a Jewish transport to Auschwitz on 3 March 1943 and one to Theresienstadt on 24 June 1943 (YVA, Folios 106, 124).

leader, was actually not forced to retire until 1956, though that was an exceptional case.<sup>100</sup>

Overall (see Table 8), the data show that forty-six of the sixty-five (71 per cent) who had guarded transports were reinstated. Although there were initially twenty-two dismissals, eleven got their jobs back after appeals, so only eleven were ultimately dismissed (17 per cent). Regarding the rest, six were killed in the war or declared dead (9 per cent), there are no post-war records for one, and another one was approved for re-instatement but did not rejoin the force because he failed to appear for his medical exam.

**Table 8: Reinstatements**

Reinstated post-Second World War	46	70.77%	Includes 5 Nazi Party members
Dismissed (forced retirement)	11	16.92%	All belonged to the Nazi Party, but two joined in October 1940
Approved for reinstatement but did not show up for medical exam (hence did not re-join force)	1	1.54%	
Missing and declared dead, or killed in the war	6	9.23%	
Unknown (no post-war records)	1	1.54%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

Why did the deportations not matter? The legal constraints established by the Austrian parliament created the concept that membership in the Nazi Party, illegal membership between 1933 and 1938, and activity to support the Nazi movement (even without belonging to an organisation) were forms of treason against independent Austria. These categories, not an individual examination into a policeman's actions, could separate incorrigible Austrians from ones who could be re-educated. This was based on the idea that most Austrians were good at heart and had been victimised by the Germans. The real culprits in the police were supposedly the "Reichsdeutsche", the Germans who served in senior positions, despite the fact that both police presidents, Steinhäusl and Gotzmann, were Austrian Nazis. Alois A., for example, who admitted guarding a transport to Riga, claimed his transport leader was a Reichsdeutscher, though he could not remember the name or the names of the fifteen other policemen on the trip.<sup>101</sup> A post-war complaint commission (dealing with appeals for changes to the Nazi registration list) claimed that the reason policemen's SS applications were falsely backdated to show that they had applied when the organisation was illegal was so that Steinhäusl could retain a sufficient proportion of Austrians versus Reichsdeutsche.<sup>102</sup>

Wetz's hypothesis that police authorities reinstated men in order to increase the size of the force, which they believed was necessary to secure Vienna against crime and outnumber the Polizeiliche Hilfsdienst, is also plausible. By gradually inserting trained policemen into the precincts as instructors and advisors, purging members of the Hilfsdienst who had criminal records or were physically unsuitable, and re-

100 Pflamitzer joined the police in 1923 and the Nazi Party in 1932, remaining an illegal Nazi. After the war, a Volksgericht ruled that he was an illegal and had denounced two policemen, sentencing him to two years in prison in 1949. The judgment was later vacated and further prosecution suspended (Vg 8e Vr 543/55). Nothing in the prosecution ever concerned his leading deportation transports.

101 LPDW, Personalakt A., Alois, Ref.IV. Ueberprüfungskommission, Niederschrift, 9 September 1946.

102 LPDW, Personalakt B., Josef, BK 6448/48, 4.

moving the communists from the Staatspolizei leadership in 1947, the traditionalist police leadership, with the support of both the Social Democratic and Austrian People's Parties, succeeded in reducing the number of communists in the police. This Cold War political struggle might have been the context, though it was not explicit in cases researched for this study. The fact that so many were reinstated without fully examining their actual activities (in Vienna and abroad) counters Wetz's claim that, because two-thirds of the force was changed in 1945 and 1946, the police was fully transformed to serve the Second Republic.<sup>103</sup> Both former Nazis and non-Nazi policemen who had deported Austrians (and other nationals) to their deaths remained in the force. Twenty-eight did not retire until the period from 1961 to 1974.

Another factor that may have led police authorities to ignore the policemen's role in deportations (or accept the view that they followed orders) was sympathy for their economic and social situation. Some policemen stated in their autobiographies and correspondence that they had been wounded in the war, their apartments had been destroyed by Allied bombing, or they helped rebuild bombed-out police stations. Virtually all had families and children, so one can infer that the police authorities believed that if a policeman had not joined the Nazi Party, and he had been in the force since the 1920s or 1930s, he had a right to employment again. Albin K., for example, who admitted guarding a transport to Kovno, was shot in the leg in 1943 in Ukraine; his leg had to be amputated.<sup>104</sup> His first wife died of tuberculosis in 1943, and he married a second time in June 1945. According to the wife of his building's caretaker, Albin K. opposed Nazism and had told a female air-raid attendant, an ardent Nazi, to take down a picture of Hitler from an air-raid cellar. His colleagues from the police station on Tannengasse said that he was not Nazi oriented.<sup>105</sup> Never a Nazi Party member, he was reinstated. Johann W., who, according to Schutzpolizei records, guarded a Jewish transport to Izbica on 15 May 1942 and a Jewish transport to Auschwitz from 17 to 19 July 1942,<sup>106</sup> was also reinstated. Those facts never emerged in his post-war reinstatement process. His postwar autobiography described that he was a former plumber who joined the police in 1921. Born in Moravia to a single mother, he moved to Vienna at the age of six, and he was drafted into the Habsburg Army in 1915, when he was wounded and contracted malaria.<sup>107</sup> He claimed in his post-war questionnaire that he had belonged to the Social Democratic Party from 1929 to 1934 and then the Fatherland Front until 1938 (the only political organisation allowed during the Austro-fascist period); neither claim was apparently checked, though they are plausible.<sup>108</sup> There were no records showing he was a Nazi Party member, and a very brief post-war police report said that he was a Nazi opponent and a "good comrade and Austrian".<sup>109</sup> He and his wife had a son who was draft-

103 Wetz, 355.

104 LPDW, Personalakt, K., Albin, Kommando der Schutzpolizei, 2b-3160/17.11, 19 November 1943.

105 Ibid., Erhebungsbericht, 10 June 1945.

106 YVA, Folios 25, 56–57, showing he was assigned to these transports and given travel advances. For the Auschwitz trip, he was also reimbursed for additional costs. In a second autobiography written in 1946 (after he had been reinstated), he said that had been denounced in March 1938 by Nazis who wanted him removed from the police because he had taken action against them during the illegal period (for distributing party flyers). However, he claims he was only transferred to a different station. He did not provide a detailed chronology of his posts during the war, only stating that he had bookkeeping and patrol duties and was then assigned to a police company in March 1945 that was sent to Hollabrunn. He said he directed street traffic in various towns along the path of the Wehrmacht's withdrawal. LPDW, Personalakt, W., Johann, St.Nr.488/21 (249/56), Ansuchen um Aufnahme in den Chargen-Kurzkurs 1946, Lebenslauf, 27 May 1946.

107 Ibid., Lebenslauf, 24 September 1945.

108 Ibid., Grundblatt, 24 September 1945.

109 Ibid., Ergänzungsbericht, 27 September 1945.

ed into the Wehrmacht in 1942 and was taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1945, not returning to Vienna until 1947.<sup>110</sup> Probably seen as a family man, a policeman who had done his duty and had been on the police force for decades, and not fitting any of the definitions of the denazification laws, he was reinstated in September 1945. Therefore, the General Inspectorate's examination of the policemen's past might not have been influenced only by the Cold War struggle against the communists. It might have also been influenced by a sympathetic view that they had been loyal Austrians who were forced to tolerate a harsh situation under Nazism (over which they supposedly had no control), and by a pragmatic belief that their manpower was needed to restore public order after the Nazi defeat. The role of regular policemen guarding deportation trains could be concealed or cordoned off as an unfortunate event ordered by the Nazis, and policemen could say "I had to follow orders". Yet, as this article has shown, they complied without extreme duress, a process influenced by the four-stage process detailed above.

---

110 Ibid., Bezirkspolizeikommissariat, Währing, Amtsnotiz, 24 December 1947.

## Bibliography

- Aly, Götz. "The Universe of Death and Torment". In *Unwilling Germans: The Goldhagen Debate*, edited by Robert R. Shandley, 167–174. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Black, Peter R. *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Botz, Gerhard. *Nationalsozialismus in Wien. Machtübernahme, Herrschaftssicherung, Radikalisierung, 1938/39*. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2008.
- Brechelmacher, Angelika, Bertrand Perz, and Regina Wonisch, editors. *Post41. Berichte aus dem Getto Litzmannstadt. Ein Gedenkbuch*. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2015.
- Breitman, Richard. "Gegen Nummer eins'. Antisemitische Indoktrination in Himmlers Weltanschauung". In *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord? "Weltanschauliche Erziehung" von SS, Polizei und Waffen-SS im Rahmen der "Endlösung"*, edited by Konrad Kwiet, Jürgen Matthäus, Jürgen Förster, and Richard Breitman, 21–34. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003.
- Browder, George C. *Hitler's Enforcers: The Gestapo and the SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Bundesministerium für Justiz und Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Geschichte und Gesellschaft, editors. *80 Jahre Justizpalastbrand. Recht und gesellschaftliche Konflikte. Symposium Justiz und Zeitgeschichte 11. und 12. Juli 2007 in Wien*. Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2008.
- Cohen, Gary B. *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914*. Purdue University Press, 2006.
- Curilla, Wolfgang. *Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei im westlichen Europa 1940–1945*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh/Brill, 2020.
- Dehmal, Heinrich, Oskar Dreßler, Hans Gretz, Albin Körschner, Anton Walitschek, and Oskar Daranyi, editors. *Der österreichische Bundes-Kriminalbeamte: Gedenkwerk anlässlich des 80jährigen Bestandes des Kriminalbeamtenkorps Österreichs*. Vienna: Verlag für Polizeiliche Fachliteratur, 1933.
- Enderle-Burcel, Gertrude, and Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, editors. *Antisemitismus in Österreich 1933–1938*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2018.
- Freund, Florian. "Das Zigeunerlager im Getto Litzmannstadt". In *Post41. Berichte aus dem Getto Litzmannstadt. Ein Gedenkbuch*, edited by Bertrand Perz, Angelika Brechelmacher, and Regina Wonisch, 71–101. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2015.
- Garscha, Winfried R., and Barry McLoughlin. *Wien 1927. Menetekel für die Republik*. [East] Berlin: Globus, 1987.
- Geldmacher, Thomas. *Wir als Wiener waren ja bei der Bevölkerung beliebt: österreichische Schutzpolizisten und die Judenvernichtung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944*. Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2002.
- Göllner, Siegfried. "The Politics of Denazification: Parliamentary Debates in Austria, 1945–57". *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 38, no. 1 (2018): 76–87.
- Gottwaldt, Alfred B., and Diana Schulle. *Die "Judendeportationen" aus dem deutschen Reich von 1941–1945: Eine kommentierte Chronologie*. Wiesbaden: Marix, 2005.
- Charles A. Gulick, Jr. "Administrative and Judicial Processes as Instruments of Clerical Fascism in Austria". *California Law Review* 32, no. 2 (June 1944): 161–181.
- Hänschen, Steffen. *Das Transitghetto Izbica im System des Holocaust*. Berlin: Metropol, 2018.

- Harten, Hans-Christian. *Die weltanschauliche Schulung der Polizei in Nationalsozialismus*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh/Brill, 2018.
- Hecht, Dieter J., Michaela Raggam-Blesch, and Heidemarie Uhl, editors. *Letzte Orte. Die Wiener Sammellager und die Deportationen 1941/42*. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2019.
- Heim, Susanne, and Maria Wilke, editors. *Deutsches Reich und Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Oktober 1941–März 1943*, volume 6: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–45*. Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019.
- Knight, Robert. “Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia”. *The Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 3 (2007): 572–612.
- Lewis, Mark. “Continuity and Change in the Vienna Police Force, 1914–1945. Part 1 [1914–33]”. *S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON* 6, no. 2 (2020): 21–42.
- Lewis, Mark. “Continuity and Change in the Vienna Police Force, 1914–1945. Part 2 [1933–45]”. *S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON* 7, no. 1 (2020): 45–74.
- Lewis, Mark. “The Failed Quest for Total Surveillance: The Internal Security Service in Austria-Hungary during World War I”. In *World War I in Central and Eastern Europe: Politics, Conflict and Military Experience*, edited by Judith Devlin, Maria Falina, and John Paul Newman, 19–41. London: I.B. Tauris, 2018.
- Lewis, Mark. “‘Wheels and Cogs’: Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports, 1941–1943 (Part 1)”. *S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON* 11, no. 2 (2024): 4–37.
- Löw, Andrea, editor. *Deutsches Reich und Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. September 1939–September 1941*, volume 3: *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–45*. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012.
- Mallmann, Klaus-Michael. “‘...Mißgeburten, die nicht auf diese Welt gehören’. Die deutsche Ordnungspolizei in Polen 1939–1941”. In *Genesis des Genozids: Polen 1939–41*, edited by Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Bogdan Musial, Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsstelle Ludwigsburg der Universität Stuttgart, 71–89. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004.
- Mang, Thomas. *“Gestapo-Leitstelle Wien, mein Name ist Huber”. Wer trug die lokale Verantwortung für den Mord an den Juden Wiens?* Münster: Lit, 2004.
- Matthäus, Jürgen. “Die ‘Judenfrage’ als Schulungsthema von SS und Polizei. ‘Inneres Erlebnis’ und Handlungslegitimation”. In *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord? “Weltanschauliche Erziehung” von SS, Polizei und Waffen-SS im Rahmen der “Endlösung”*, edited by Konrad Kwiet, Jürgen Matthäus, Jürgen Förster, and Richard Breitman, 87–113. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003.
- Milgram, Stanley. *Obedience to Authority*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Moser, Jonny. *Nisko. Die ersten Judendeportationen*. Vienna: Edition Steinbauer, 2012.
- Moser, Jonny. “Österreich”. In *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, edited by Wolfgang Benz. Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte, 67–93. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996.
- Pauley, Bruce F. *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Rabinovici, Doron. *Eichmann’s Jews: The Jewish Administration of Holocaust Vienna, 1938–1945*. Translated by Nick Somers. Cambridge: Polity, 2011 [German, 2000].
- Rich, Ian. *Holocaust Perpetrators of the German Police Battalions: The Mass Murder of Jewish Civilians, 1940–1942*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.



- Rosenfeld, Oskar. *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto: Notebooks from Łódź*. Translated by Brigitte M. Goldstein. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002.
- Rothländer, Christiane. *Die Anfänge der Wiener SS*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2012.
- Rozenblit, Marsha L. *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Safrian, Hans. *Eichmann's Men*. Translated by Ute Stargardt. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [German, 1993].
- Sarközi, Rudolf. *Roma. Österreichische Volksgruppe. Von der Verfolgung bis zur Anerkennung*. Klagenfurt/Celovec: Drava, 2008.
- Schmidt, Daniel. "Polzeisoldaten. Die Oberhausener Schutzpolizei zwischen Bürgerkrieg und Vernichtungskrieg 1918–1945". In *Eine keine reine Stadtgesellschaft: Oberhausen im Nationalsozialismus 1933 bis 1945*, edited by Clemens Heinrichs, 171–183. Oberhausen: Verlag Karl Maria Laufen, 2012.
- Stelzl-Marx, Barbara, Andreas Kranebitter, and Gregor Holzinger. editors. *Exekutive der Gewalt. Die österreichische Polizei und der Nationalsozialismus*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2024.
- Stiefel, Dieter. *Entnazifizierung in Österreich*. Vienna, Munich, and Zurich: Europaverlag, 1981.
- Tálos, Emmerich. *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem. Österreich 1933–1938*. Vienna: Lit, 2013.
- Ungar-Klein, Brigitte. *Schattenexistenz: jüdische U-Boote in Wien, 1938–1945*. Vienna: Picus Verlag, 2019.
- Wakie, Patrick. "Policing Homosexuality in Weimar Berlin". Master's thesis, College of Staten Island, City University of New York, 2018.
- Waddington, P.A.J. *Policing Citizens: Authority and Rights*. London: UCL Press, 1999.
- Weigl, Andreas. *Demographischer Wandel und Modernisierung in Wien*. Vienna: Pichler, 2000.
- Weigl, Marius. "Armutspolitik, Antiziganismus und Wohlfahrt in Cisleithanien zwischen 1900 und 1914". In *Poverty, Charity and Social Welfare in Central Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, edited by Milan Hlavačka, Olga Fejtová, Václava Horcáková, and Veronika Knotková, 389–408. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.
- Westermann, Edward B. *Hitler's Police Battalions: Enforcing Racial War in the East*. Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2005.
- Weisz, Franz. "Umstellung der personalen Organisation der ehemaligen Österreichischen Polizei auf jene des Deutschen Reiches". *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 50 (1995): 79–95.
- Wetz, Ulrike. "Geschichte der Wiener Polizei-Direktion vom Jahre 1945 bis zum Jahre 1955 mit Berücksichtigung der Zeit vor 1945". PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1971.
- Wildt, Michael. *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*. Translated by Tom Lampert. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.
- Winkler, Elisabeth. "Die Polizei als Instrument in der Etablierungsphase der austrofaschistischen Diktatur (1932–1934) mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Wiener Polizei". PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1983.

**Mark Lewis** is Associate Professor of European History at the City University of New York (College of Staten Island and the Graduate Center). He is the co-author, with the late Jacob Frank, of *Himmler's Jewish Tailor: The Story of Holocaust Survivor Jacob Frank* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), and the author of *The Birth of the New Justice: The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment, 1919-1950* (Oxford University Press, 2014), which won the inaugural Bronisław Geremek Prize in 2015 and the 2013 Fraenkel Prize. He has published a variety of articles about the Austrian police during the First World War, the interwar period, and the Nazi period.

Email: [mark.lewis@csi.cuny.edu](mailto:mark.lewis@csi.cuny.edu)

Quotation: Mark Lewis, "Wheels and Cogs". Why Viennese Policemen Guarded Deportation Transports, 1941-1943, Part 2, in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 84-110.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art\\_mlew01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/art_mlew01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).

Hannah Riedler

## “Don’t Mention This to the Gestapo for Now”

Betrayal, Corruption, and Sexual Abuse in the Everyday Life of the *Umwandererzentralstelle* Litzmannstadt

### Abstract

The case of Erich Lorenz, the commander of the Flottwellstraße camp of the *Umwandererzentralstelle* (UWZ) in Litzmannstadt (Łódź), who committed suicide in 1941, offers insights into the daily life and dynamics of the UWZ under National Socialist rule. Through a micro-historical approach, this case exemplifies the opportunities for abuse that arose in the occupied East, where acts of corruption and violence were frequent. While administrative files and personal testimonies provide a fragmented but revealing picture, they also require critical analysis, as many sources aimed to conceal or redirect blame. The investigation into Lorenz’s financial misconduct and sexual relations with Polish women underscores the widespread culture of impunity and exploitation within the UWZ. Furthermore, the close-knit personal relationships among SS members, the cover-up of wrongdoings, and the punishment of those who exposed misconduct illustrate the internal dynamics of power structures, built on self-interest and mutual protection.

On 8 August 1941, Erich Lorenz, the commander of the Flottwellstraße camp of the *Umwandererzentralstelle* (Central Resettlement Office, UWZ) in Litzmannstadt (Łódź), killed himself. The investigation that ensued after his death, along with the statements of his colleagues, friends, and relatives, provides insight into everyday life in the camp city of Litzmannstadt. This life was marked by a self-perception as a “master race”, as well as by corruption, and even sexual abuse. In the occupied Polish territories, SS men of the German occupation authorities were able to get away with much that would not have been tolerated back home. This article attempts to reconstruct the Lorenz case using a micro-historical approach.<sup>1</sup> The UWZ camps were as much places of violence for those affected as they were places of service for the perpetrators.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this article is to make comprehensible what the everyday life of

1 It is inspired by essays and books that combine the history of violence with everyday history, such as: Jochen Böhrer, “Die heile Welt des Eduard Schmidt. Gewalt und Alltag deutscher Polizeieinheiten und Dienststellen in Polen 1939–1943”, in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945*, ed. Jochen Böhrer and Stephan Lehnstaedt (Fibre-Verlag, 2012); Maren Röger, “Von Fischotter und seiner Frau Besatzungsalltag und NS-Rassenpolitik am Beispiel eines deutsch-polnischen Paares im Generalgouvernement”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 299, no. 1 (2018): 70–98; Markus Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009); Elissa Koslov Mailänder, *Gewalt im Dienstalltag. Die SS-Aufseherinnen des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Majdanek 1942–1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009).

2 Stephan Lehnstaedt, “Zwei Okkupationsregime. Einleitende Überlegungen zur Erforschung von Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen”, in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945* (Osnabrück: Fibre-Verlag, 2012), 21; Alexa Stiller, “Gewalt und Alltag der Volkstumspolitik. Der Apparat des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums und andere gesellschaftliche Akteure der veralltäglichten Gewalt”, in *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945* (Osnabrück: Fibre-Verlag, 2012), 58.

a UWZ man looked like, but also to understand the dynamics that prevailed in National Socialist power structures, and thus the possibilities of comradesly cohesion as well as the internal and external sanctioning of alleged crimes. The article is based on comprehensive, previously unprocessed source material on the UWZ. General information on the UWZ Litzmannstadt can be found in administrative files, most of which are stored in the *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (Institute of National Remembrance, IPN) in Warsaw.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, SS personnel files from the Bundesarchiv in Berlin and files from the DÖW in Vienna were used.<sup>4</sup>

## German Deportation Policy in Poland and the UWZ

After the invasion of Poland, the German occupiers divided the western parts of Poland they occupied into two zones – the territories annexed to Germany that were to be “Germanised” and the *Generalgouvernement* (General Government) further East. As ethnic Germans from the Soviet sphere of influence were to settle in the annexed territories, unwanted groups – until March 1941, a total of 408,525 people was affected – were to be forcibly resettled in the Generalgouvernement.<sup>5</sup> As the settlement of ethnic German groups living predominantly as farmers became more important,<sup>6</sup> non-Jewish Polish landowners were increasingly targeted for deportation,<sup>7</sup> while Jews were forced to live in ghettos.<sup>8</sup> In order not to shift this potential agricultural labour force exclusively to the Generalgouvernement, however, the deported families were first checked for their potential “Germanisation” or labour in newly established “resettlement camps” controlled by the UWZ.<sup>9</sup>

The UWZ was headed by Rolf-Heinz Höppner and its official headquarters were in Posen (Poznań). It formed the interface between Eichmann’s Department IV D 4 in the RSHA<sup>10</sup> – responsible for planning deportation policy and communicating with the Reichsbahn – and the local Kreishauptleute, Arbeitsstäbe, and police for carrying out resettlement actions. The UWZ had seven departments, for example for administration or police operations.<sup>11</sup> Of particular importance, however, was the camp inspectorate, responsible for monitoring five resettlement camps with a total of around 8,000 inmates.<sup>12</sup> The camp inspectorate was not located in Posen, but in

3 Especially relevant are IPN GK 69 (Umwandererzentralstelle Posen) and GK 68 (Umwandererzentralstelle Posen, Nebenstelle Litzmannstadt).

4 For Berlin, see Bundesarchiv (Barch) R 9361-III Personalakten SS. For DÖW, see, among others, DÖW 23675/3 and DÖW 21955/5.

5 Alexa Stiller, *Völkische Politik. Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939–1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022), 481–483. Approximately 70,000 of these early deportees were Jews. Alexandra Pulvermacher, “Early Deportations of Jews in Occupied Poland (October 1939–June 1940): The German and the Soviet Cases”, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 36, no. 2 (Autumn 2022): 125–153.

6 For example, Maria Wardzyńska, *Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z okupowanych ziem polskich włączonych do III Rzeszy w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw: IPN, 2017), 175.

7 For the experiences of those affected, see source editions such as Ryszard Dylński, *Wysiedlenie i poniewierka. Wspomnienia Polaków wysiedlonych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego z ziem polskich „wcielonych” do Rzeszy 1939–1945* (Poznań: Wydaw. Poznańskie, 1985).

8 Götz Aly, *„Endlösung”. Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995).

9 Phillip Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939–1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 144.

10 David Cesarani, *Adolf Eichmann. Bürokrat und Massenmörder* (Berlin: List Taschenbuch, 2012).

11 IPN GK 68/6, Allocation of responsibilities of the UWZ, 19 April 1940, 3–4.

12 The camp inspection was supported by Department VI (medical care of the camps) as well as Department IV (RuS leaders, which became an “independent external branch” at the end of 1940). IPN GK 69/25(1), Copy of the final report on the “resettlements” of the “Volhynia Action”, 4–12.

the UWZ's more important branch office in Litzmannstadt (Hermann Göringstraße 56, today ul. Piotrkowska 133).<sup>13</sup> While “fundamental and organisational questions” were dealt with in Posen, a varying number of field offices,<sup>14</sup> the transports to the Generalgouvernement, as well as the “resettlement camps”, were managed from Litzmannstadt.<sup>15</sup>

After their arrival in the city, the deportees were first sent to the general UWZ-selection-camp (*Schleusungslager*) in Flottwellstraße (earlier Wiesenstraße, today ul. Łąkowa), where they had to undergo an initial “screening”.<sup>16</sup> Those who at first glance appeared “unsuitable for permanent residence in Germany” were immediately taken to the Tauentzienstraße camp (earlier Luisenstraße, today ul. 28. Pułk Strzelców Kaniowskich).<sup>17</sup> The others were examined by the so-called “racial examiners” of the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (RuSHA).<sup>18</sup> If they were found to be fit for work or “Germanisation”, they were also sent to the Konstantynów camp in Konstantynów (today ul. Łódzkiej 27) near Litzmannstadt and later to Germany. All others were brought to Tauentzienstraße, where they awaited deportation to the Generalgouvernement.<sup>19</sup> Later, additional camps were set up in the city and Litzmannstadt remained central in this process.<sup>20</sup> The head of the UWZ Litzmannstadt, Hermann Krumej (together with his deputy Hermann Püschel),<sup>21</sup> was described as “indispensable for the work” there.<sup>22</sup> He was actively involved in shaping deportation policy on the ground. When protests by *Generalgouverneur* Hans Frank and (still largely secret) preparations for war against the Soviet Union led to a complete halt to deportations in March 1941, the UWZ had to assert itself against resettlements carried out independently by local authorities.<sup>23</sup> Although deportations to the Generalgouvernement were no longer possible, the UWZ was able to retain its central function thanks to Krumej's efforts. Until its dissolution in 1944, it conducted “selections” of evicted families and either sent them to Germany or instructed them to stay with relatives.<sup>24</sup> The deportations were never resumed. The Germans concentrated their resources on the Holocaust instead.

13 IFZ MA 708/5, Letter of the RSHA to Krumej, 17 April 1940, 361.

14 By April 1940, there were field offices in Wieluń, Koło, Sieradz, Lask, and Konin. Phillip Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution*, 141. The exact number and location, however, changed. Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 232–234.

15 See, for example, IPN GK 68/204, Letter by Höppner to Krumej regarding transports, 21 June 1940, 16.

16 Maria Rutowska, “Aussiedlungen von Polen und Juden”, in *Vertriebene von 1939*, ed. Jacek Kubiak (Wydawnictwo miejskie Poznań, 2015), 36–38.

17 IFZ MA 708/5, Letter from the SD Head Office Posen to Office III in the RSHA dated 14 March 1941, 415. The Konstantynów camp had since January 1940 already been in use as a resettlement camp and increasingly became the starting point for the deportation of forced labourers to the Old Reich. S. Abramowicz, “Niemiecki obóz przesiedleńczy w Konstantynowie Łódzkim 1940/1943”, in *Ludność cywilna w łódzkich obozach przesiedleńczych*, ed. Joanna Żelazko (Łódź: IPN, 2010); Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 424–441.

18 The SS Race and Resettlement Office was responsible for racial examinations and marriage licenses for members of the SS as well as the “racial evaluation” and selection of the populations in the occupied territories. Isabel Heinemann, *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 345.

19 IPN GK 68/109, Selection of labourers during the resettlement operation by the UWZ, 1 April 1940, 17.

20 Michael G. Esch, “Die Umwandererzentralstelle im besetzten Polen 1939–1944”, in *Migration steuern und verwalten. Deutschland vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Jochen Oltmer (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2003).

21 BArch R 9361-III/548684, Letter by Krumej regarding Püschel's promotion, 11 February 1942, 437.

22 IPN GK 68/94, Letter by Höppner to Amt III B at RSHA 30 May 1941, 2–3.

23 IPN GK 69/15, Letter by Krumej to all field offices, 2 November 1940, 106.

24 Stiller, *Völkische Politik*, 515–516.

## The Everyday Life of UWZ Men and the Lorenz Case

The German civil administration was typically manned by staff from Germany and politically reliable ethnic Germans.<sup>25</sup> In theory, only the best were supposed to come to the East. However, due to staff shortages, institutions in Poland could not be too selective.<sup>26</sup> This was also the case for the UWZ<sup>27</sup> where, in addition to guards and “racial examiners”, employees such as typists or drivers (sixteen alone in the Flottwellstraße camp), as well as qualified SS leaders, had to be found.<sup>28</sup> The shortage of staff influenced its composition. The SS leaders came from all over Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland, had varying educational backgrounds, and belonged to different generations. However, a solid core of UWZ men who stayed with the UWZ for several months to years formed.<sup>29</sup> There seems to have been a collegial atmosphere among them.<sup>30</sup> Not only did they support one another in the face of accusations from the outside,<sup>31</sup> or suggest employees for promotion,<sup>32</sup> but, just like in other institutions in the East, they often spent their free time together.<sup>33</sup> Birthday parties,<sup>34</sup> excursions<sup>35</sup> and other get-togethers are recorded.<sup>36</sup> In some cases, the SS leaders had brought their families to the East. Marriage and family life contributed to the crimes in the East, as the career in Poland then took on the form of a normal profession.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the UWZ, however, marriage also made an active contribution, as some wives and children were employed by the UWZ.<sup>38</sup> As a result, business and private life got mixed up in everyday life.

On 8 August, a sudden death shook this small community. A few days earlier, SS-*Obersturmführer* Erich Lorenz had been accused of sexual intercourse and “orgies” with Polish women in an internal complaint by his UWZ colleague, Ludwig Witthinrich, the commander of another UWZ camp:<sup>39</sup>

[d]rinking and dancing would continue late into the night and into the early hours of the morning. When L.[orenz] was alone, he would summon a Polish girl from the Flottwellstrasse camp to spend the night entertaining himself with her.<sup>40</sup>

25 IPN GK 68/214, Activity report of the UWZ field office in Konin, 25 April 1940, 4.

26 Florian Dierl, Zoran Janjetović, und Karsten Linne, *Pflicht, Zwang und Gewalt. Arbeitsverwaltungen und Arbeitskräftepolitik im deutsch besetzten Polen und Serbien 1939–1944* (Essen: Klartext, 2013), 76.

27 IPN GK 69/20, Letter by Krumey to Eichmann regarding staff shortage, 10 September 1940, 80. This was also the case with other institutions in Litzmannstadt, such as the Ordnungspolizei. Bartosz Wójcik, *Vernichtungsaltag. Die Deutsche Ordnungspolizei in den annektierten polnischen Gebieten 1939–1945 Fallstudie Łódz/Litzmannstadt* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2021), 451.

28 IPN GK 68/23, List of employees paid by the office, 2–3.

29 If employees were found to be unsuitable, they could lose their position despite the staff shortage. For example, the camp leader, Dr. Lach, forced pregnant women, the elderly, and children to participate in physical exercises. IPN GK 68/52, Letter by Krumey to Höppner regarding Dr. Lach, 13 November 1940, 8.

30 For example, they addressed each other as “dear comrade”. IPN GK 69/227, Letter by Krumey to Walter Vogel, 16 November 1940, 13; IPN GK 69/216, Letter by Püschel to Hermann Münzner, 8 March 1941, 30.

31 IPN GK 69/61, Memo regarding the misconduct of SS Sturmann Leysers, 16 July 1940, 2–3.

32 IPN GK 69/204, Copy of the promotion certificate for Artur Harder, 20 April 1940, 24; IPN GK 69/223, Letter by Krumey to SS-Oberabschnitt Süd regarding Kaspar Schwarzhuber, 10 September 1941, 33.

33 Böhler, “Heile Welt”, 114.

34 IPN GK 69/229, Letter by Mollenhauer to Krumey regarding a get-together, 1 February 1942, 35.

35 IPN GK 69/215, Letter by Witthinrich to the Regierungspräsident, 23 February 1942, 8.

36 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Statement by Johann Orant regarding Lorenz, 27 January 1942, 762.

37 Stephan Lehnstaedt, *Okkupation im Osten. Besatzeralltag in Warschau und Minsk 1939–1944* (München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2010), 233.

38 The wives of Willi Schmidtsiefen, Emma (IPN GK 69/429), and of Rudolf Barth (IPN GK 68/23) worked at the UWZ. The son of the office leader, SS-Untersturmführer Josef Peters, worked in the Obornik field office. IPN GK 69/60, Report of the Obornik field office by Josef Peters, 31 August 1940, 4.

39 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS Main Office, 7 February 1942, 753–755. His camp was located in Gneisenaustraße UWZ camp (today ul. Żeligowskiego).

40 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Ludwig Witthinrich to Krumey regarding Lorenz, 29 January 1942, 761.



Krumey then reported Lorenz to the Gestapo in Litzmannstadt on August 6 to “clarify the facts of the case”,<sup>41</sup> whereupon Lorenz was arrested and hanged himself in his cell just two days later.<sup>42</sup> Forced sexual contact by members of the SS was common in occupied Poland. Physical coercion or blackmail was often used and places of imprisonment, such as camps, were particularly exposed to this behaviour.<sup>43</sup> In many cases, however, such contacts were quietly tolerated and did not lead to arrests.<sup>44</sup> Lorenz, though, was accused of further misconduct after his arrest.

### Accusations of Embezzlement and Lorenz’s Past

In the course of the Gestapo investigation, Lorenz was found to have embezzled around 40,000 Reichsmarks.<sup>45</sup> Working at the UWZ offered numerous opportunities for self-enrichment.<sup>46</sup> For Lorenz, as head of the camp that all deportees passed through, it was easy to pocket personal belongings or valuables. This was not the first time he committed wrongdoings in this regard. Lorenz was born in Rostock in 1906 and had been a Nazi Party member since 1932.<sup>47</sup> In 1936, he began working for the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD)<sup>48</sup> Marienwerder (East Prussia) in Rosenberg. Once he began working there, the branch office started to experience difficulties with monthly expenses as Lorenz repeatedly asked for additional funds.<sup>49</sup> After he had long left Rosenberg (he had been working for the UWZ’s predecessor organisation since November 1939),<sup>50</sup> disciplinary proceedings were initiated against him in January 1941. As part of these proceedings, it was discovered that he had incurred a number of debts while in Rosenberg.<sup>51</sup> Lorenz blamed his financial difficulties on his wife’s illness and her “inadequate economic management”.<sup>52</sup> As both the mayor of Rosenberg<sup>53</sup> and Krumey (who attested to Lorenz’s “impeccable SS-like attitude”)<sup>54</sup> gave him a positive review, the disciplinary proceedings were discontinued on 30 April 1941, just three months before his death.<sup>55</sup> Lorenz emphasized that he had managed to move into “settled circumstances” during his time at the UWZ.<sup>56</sup> It might have been the embezzlement he was later accused of that helped him in this.

Lorenz’s background makes two things clear. First, it is likely that the embezzlement accusations made against the already dead Lorenz in the summer of 1941

41 IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Krumey to IdS Damzog, 6 August 1941, 16.

42 IPN GK 69/212 Letter from Krumey to IdS Damzog, 11 August 1941, 17–18.

43 Maren Röger, *Kriegsbeziehungen. Intimität, Gewalt und Prostitution im besetzten Polen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2015), 189.

44 A guard was caught “in an unmistakable situation, standing closely with a Polish girl”. IPN GK 69/149, Report on the auxiliary policeman Bülow, 25 January 1941, 12.

45 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Dr. Kaufmann to Referat ID 1 RSHA regarding Lorenz’s suicide 31 October 1941, 756.

46 IPN GK 69/20, Telegram from Krumey to Eichmann, 17 August 1940, 49.

47 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Investigation results of the IdS Königsberg, 30 April 1941, 599.

48 The SD, founded in 1931, was the intelligence agency of the SS. In 1939, it became, alongside the Gestapo, a department in the newly established *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*.

49 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from Erich Pullert to the head of the S Marienwerder, 1 August 1939, 660–661.

50 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Interrogation transcript of Lorenz, 11 February 1941, 621–626.

51 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from the IdS Königsberg to the RSHA I D 2 regarding Lorenz, 30 January 1941, 638.

52 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from the IdS Königsberg to the RSHA ID 2 regarding Lorenz, 24 March 1941, 612.

53 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Interrogation transcript of the mayor of Rosenberg, 4 April 1941, 609–611.

54 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from Krumey to IdS Königsberg regarding Lorenz, 7 March 1941, 614.

55 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Investigation results of the IdS Königsberg, 30 April 1941, 599.

56 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from IdS Königsberg to RSHA I D 2 regarding Lorenz, 24 March 1941, 612.

were true. After Lorenz started working for the UWZ, he could apparently steal from the deportees – as well as the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* that was supposed to process the possessions – for quite some time with impunity. Due to a lack of oversight in combination with the already mentioned staff shortages, the East presented many opportunities for self-enrichment. Second, and more importantly, Lorenz's background underscores that Krumei was at least aware of the accusations made against Lorenz in the past as Lorenz informed him of the investigation. Krumei was later accused by Witthinrich of having also at least been in the know when it came to Lorenz's activities at the UWZ. Before Witthinrich was questioned by the Gestapo, Krumei allegedly asked him what he knew about the allegations of embezzlement:

I [Witthinrich] replied to him: "As an SS leader, I prefer not to speak about this since most of what I know is only hearsay. Those directly involved who knew about it should speak first". Obersturmbannführer Krumei responded to me, "That's right, don't mention this to the Gestapo for now, as it could drag other circles into it. Police Inspector Haarbrücker has just reported to me that he has completed the inspection of L[orenz]'s camp, and everything is in perfect order. At least in this regard, we are in the clear."<sup>57</sup>

Due to personal animosities that will be discussed below, Witthinrich's statement is questionable, but nonetheless very interesting. It shows that Lorenz's embezzlement might have been known to several UWZ men, including himself. Embezzlement and corruption in general and for the UWZ specifically – as other reports suggest – were common.<sup>58</sup> Embezzlement was often so widespread that it was not enough of a reason to remove a camp commander from his post.<sup>59</sup> It was only after Witthinrich had accused Lorenz of intercourse with Polish women that the embezzlement accusations seemed to have come up.

The only other person who faced consequences connected to Lorenz's case was an SS trainee by the name of Schlag. He had had the task of transferring the assets "confiscated" by the UWZ in Lorenz's camp to the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost*,<sup>60</sup> and he was also mentioned in Witthinrich's complaint. Schlag had allegedly also been present at Lorenz's "orgies". In connection with this, Schlag's general integrity began to be questioned and he was dismissed in August 1941. However, no evidence of embezzlement was found against him,<sup>61</sup> even though his records were subsequently reviewed and examined for inconsistencies.<sup>62</sup> Krumei only stated that there was suspicion "that Schlag must have been aware of the inaccuracies of [...] Lorenz without reporting them".<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the narrative of complicity prevailed.<sup>64</sup> It stands to reason that Lorenz, after his death, and Schlag, who was only an SS candidate, were good scapegoats. Whoever was responsible for or involved in the loss of 40,000 Reichsmarks could now breathe a sigh of relief. Even if Krumei may not have been actively involved, it is reasonable to suspect that he was at least aware of what was happening. This made a detailed investigation into the missing money all the less

57 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS Main Office regarding Krumei, 7 February 1942, 753–755.

58 IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Mollenhauer to Krumei, 3 April 1942, 52.

59 Frank Bajohr, *Parvenis und Profiteure. Korruption in der NS-Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001), 91.

60 IPN GK 69/322, Certificate for Erich Schlag by Krumei, 5 December 1941, 14.

61 IPN GK 69/322, Letter from the UWZ to the 112<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte regarding Erich Schlag, 4 October 1941, 37.

62 IPN GK 69/322, Copies of letters from Schlag, 22 September 1941, 9–11.

63 IPN GK 69/322, Certificate for Erich Schlag by Krumei, 5 December 1941, 14.

64 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS Main Office regarding Krumei, 7 February 1942, 753–755.

desirable. Krumeý wanted to let the matter blow over. When a former secretary gave him new details about the matter in December 1941,<sup>65</sup> he asked her “politely and urgently” not to bother him anymore.<sup>66</sup> The Lorenz case, however, was anything but closed.

### Lorenz’s Wife, Mistress, and the SS Investigation

The case was reopened following a complaint from Lorenz’s widow. On August 9, she had been informed that Lorenz had committed suicide while in detention. She allegedly did not react surprised,<sup>67</sup> and she then travelled from her home in Sudetenland to Litzmannstadt to settle formalities. During her stay, she learned that her husband had shared an apartment with Marlotte Broszeit, a typist from the camp inspectorate. Broszeit had left Litzmannstadt after Lorenz’s death to look after her own as well as his parents.<sup>68</sup> Mrs. Lorenz, however, made accusations against other UWZ employees who had not only neglected to point out to Lorenz “the unworthy nature of his conduct” as an SS leader, but had regularly visited the couple’s apartment and allegedly addressed Broszeit as “Mrs. Lorenz”.<sup>69</sup>

At the beginning of January 1942, an investigation into the Lorenz case was initiated by the *Personalamt D 1 (Dienststrafsachen)* of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA)*<sup>70</sup>, which brought this previously unaddressed aspect of Lorenz’s numerous transgressions into the spotlight. Connected to this, the *Inspekteur der Sipo und des SD (IdS)* Posen, Ernst Damzog, asked for statements on Lorenz’s financial situation and his relationship with Broszeit from the UWZ men allegedly involved.<sup>71</sup> They all stated that they had been to Lorenz’s apartment several times to play cards and drink beer and schnapps with other UWZ men and their wives (such as Witthinrich and his wife), and occasionally with Krumeý.<sup>72</sup> Broszeit was usually also present. However, they emphasised that they never played for large sums,<sup>73</sup> and that it had only “subsequently become known” that Lorenz had “spent larger sums on other occasions”. Allegedly, however, no one had reason to suspect that Lorenz as “an old SS-leader” would be in financial trouble.<sup>74</sup> All those questioned made efforts to downplay their connection to Lorenz. Krumeý, for example, said that although he had accepted Lorenz’s invitation three times, he had not “socialized” with him and

[i]n professional terms, there was initially nothing to reproach L. for, as he deliberately did everything to conceal his true character, even from me. To what extent Br.[oszeit] was aware of L.’s activities is beyond my knowledge.<sup>75</sup>

The UWZ staff was careful to hide any possible involvement in misconduct. Thus, their statements of Lorenz’s relationship with Broszeit were also similar to each other. Most of them emphasised that they were aware of the relationship but did not see it

65 IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Broszeit to Krumeý, 8 December 1941, 75–77.

66 IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Krumeý to Broszeit, 15 December 1941, 78.

67 IPN GK 69/212, Telegram from the SD section Reichberg to the UWZ Litzmannstadt, 9 August 1941, 30–31.

68 IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Broszeit to Krumeý, 8 December 1941, 75–77.

69 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Dr. Kaufmann to Referat ID 1 RSHA regarding Lorenz, 31 October 1941, 756.

70 The RSHA was a central security agency that coordinated the SS, police, and intelligence services.

71 IPN GK 69/212, Personalakte Lorenz, Schreiben des IdS Damzog an die UWZ Litzmannstadt vom 14. Jänner 1942, 80.

72 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to Krumeý regarding Lorenz, 29 January 1942, 761.

73 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Statement by Johann Orant regarding Lorenz, 27 January 1942, 762.

74 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Statement by Hilmar Haarbrückner regarding Lorenz, 28 January 1942, 763.

75 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Krumeý regarding Lorenz, 30 January 1942, 760.

as an obstacle to social relations. In other institutions in the East, much stricter conditions prevailed. Women who got involved in affairs with married men in their department were often transferred.<sup>76</sup> The UWZ did not seem to be that strict. After all, Lorenz had apparently assured his colleagues that he had already set his divorce in motion and intended to marry Broszeit. Krumey, too, stated that Lorenz had convincingly conveyed both his intention to divorce (as well as his wife's consent to said divorce) and his plans to marry. He emphasised that he had repeatedly admonished Lorenz and urged him to "arrange for a residential separation between him and Broszeit" prior to the wedding.<sup>77</sup> The allegations that Broszeit had been addressed as "Mrs. Lorenz" were denied by all the SS men involved.<sup>78</sup> As one of them put it: "[d]uring my visits to Lorenz's apartments, nothing occurred that could have caused offense or went beyond the bounds of a collegial gathering."<sup>79</sup>

The claim that there were no doubts about Lorenz's intention to marry seems hardly credible, at least in the case of Krumey who was aware of Lorenz's previous disciplinary proceedings. After all, Lorenz had displayed similar behaviour in Rosenberg, where he had caused a scandal not only with his finances but also through his relationship with his housemaid, Ella Pohl. He had allegedly gotten her pregnant and promised to marry her. Following his transfer, she reportedly attempted suicide.<sup>80</sup> Lorenz did admit to the relationship but once again justified it with his wife's illness,<sup>81</sup> and insisted on the woman's lack of credibility, a view that was corroborated by the mayor of Rosenberg.<sup>82</sup> For, although divorce from his wife had "repeatedly been discussed", it had not occurred out of consideration for his ill wife and their child.<sup>83</sup> Lorenz's widow's complaint was also discredited as self-serving. She had supposedly only made the accusations against the UWZ men because they had put obstacles in her way when she wanted to take her deceased husband's furniture.<sup>84</sup> In general, a picture emerges of the department as a kind of band of brothers who supported each other as comrades. For example, despite knowing about Lorenz's history in Rosenberg, Krumey stressed that he believed Lorenz's intention to marry Broszeit was genuine.

### Witthinrich's Revenge

The investigation had placed Krumey, as the head of the UWZ Litzmannstadt, in an uncomfortable position. His situation was further exacerbated by accusations directed at him personally. The interrogations concerning the Lorenz case presented Witthinrich with an opportunity to harm Krumey on a personal level. On 7 February 1942, about a week after submitting his own statement on his involvement with Lorenz, Witthinrich addressed a letter to the *SS Hauptamt* regarding "the behaviour of SS-Obersturmbannführer Krumey". In this letter, he accused Krumey of "insufficient supervision, which led to the suicide of Obersturmführer Lorenz", a "lack of camaraderie", and "violations of the fundamental principles of the SS". Regarding the first point, Witthinrich argued that Krumey had done nothing to intervene in the

76 Lehnstaedt, *Okkupation*, 235.

77 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Krumey regarding Lorenz, 30 January 1942, 760.

78 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Statement by Gustav Bednarz regarding Lorenz, 30 January 1942, 765.

79 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Statement by Johann Orant regarding Lorenz, 27 January 1942, 762.

80 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from IdS Königsberg to RSHA I D 2 regarding Lorenz, 30 January 1941, 638.

81 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from IdS Königsberg to RSHA I D 2 regarding Lorenz, 24 March 1941, 612.

82 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Statement by the mayor of Rosenberg, 4 April 1941, 609–611.

83 BArch R 9361-III/541085, Letter from IdS Königsberg to RSHA I D 2 regarding Lorenz, 24 March 1941, 612.

84 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Haarbrückner to Krumey regarding Lorenz, 28 January 1942, 763.

relationship between Lorenz and Broszeit (whom he referred to as a “whore”) and had attempted to cover up Lorenz’s embezzlement, as mentioned earlier. Witthinrich likely became involved due to a lingering grudge against Krumei, which he explained under the second point, “lack of camaraderie”. In mid-July 1941, Witthinrich had expressed indignation in a letter to the UWZ leadership about being accused by an anonymous individual of having had informal relations with Polish camp personnel. In response, Krumei had conducted an internal investigation about Witthinrich, who vehemently denied the accusations, asserting that he had “never had a glass of beer or schnapps with a Pole” and demanding that “this scoundrel who came up with the malicious slander be punished as an example”.<sup>85</sup> The matter did not seem to be proceeding to Witthinrich’s satisfaction, as he repeatedly inquired about it with Krumei. The latter eventually stated that he had imposed a “substantial” fine on the “slanderer” but did not disclose the identity of this individual.<sup>86</sup> After Witthinrich demanded an apology in front of the entire UWZ staff, Krumei finally named the employee Lignarius as the perpetrator.<sup>87</sup> Witthinrich confronted Lignarius, who denied having anything to do with the matter.<sup>88</sup> After Lorenz’s arrest, Witthinrich finally learned from Krumei that Lorenz had been the actual source of the rumour.<sup>89</sup>

Witthinrich thus felt unfairly treated and repeatedly asked Krumei for a personal talk on this matter, which never took place.<sup>90</sup> Instead, Krumei had allegedly assigned one of Witthinrich’s employees, *SS-Hauptscharführer* Fritz Ismer, to “spy” on him by reporting “irregularities” in his camp:

[h]owever, since he was acting correctly and reported that everything was in order here and that he would no longer be used for such spying, an open conflict ensued. In this, *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Krumei said to I[smer], “You are of no use here; you must go to the front”.<sup>91</sup>

Witthinrich listed this behaviour under “violations of the SS regulations”. Eventually, Ismer was transferred to the Chełmno extermination camp in the winter of 1941–1942 because of this. This account was confirmed by Ismer in a post-war interrogation.<sup>92</sup> In his submission to the SS Headquarters, Witthinrich then described the further course of events. Between mid and late January 1942, when the investigation into Lorenz began, Krumei had allegedly decided to “finish off” Witthinrich because he was “too correct” and should not know “everything that’s going on here”. When confronted by Witthinrich about this, Krumei denied making such statements but suggested that Witthinrich “look for another job”. Although Witthinrich had indeed started to do so, he explained his motivation for writing the lengthy complaint about Krumei to ensure “that younger, inexperienced SS comrades are spared from stumbling”.<sup>93</sup> Following his letter, an investigation was indeed initiated against Krumei at the Department for SS Disciplinary Affairs in the RSHA under the number 2229/42.<sup>94</sup>

85 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to UWZ, 18 July 1941, 770.

86 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Note regarding Krumei, 782.

87 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Note by Witthinrich, 782.

88 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Note by Witthinrich, 770.

89 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS-Hauptamt regarding Krumei, 7 February 1942, 753–755.

90 IPN GK 69/229, Secret Letter from Witthinrich to Krumei, 3 December 1941, 37.

91 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS-Hauptamt regarding Krumei, 7 February 1942, 753–755.

92 DÖW 21955/5, Protocol of testimony of Fritz Ismers, 9 November 1960, 191–193.

93 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Witthinrich to the SS-Hauptamt regarding Krumei, 7 February 1942, 753–755.

94 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from RSHA, 9 April 1942, 1.

## Krumey Collects Evidence

By this point, Krumey really seemed to regard Witthinrich as a thorn in his side. While Witthinrich's initial complaint about Lorenz that had caused his arrest had been an internal one, these new accusations were directed at the SS-Hauptamt. Witthinrich had thus put Krumey in an unpleasant situation. The involvement of external actors was a red line that Krumey did not want Witthinrich to cross with impunity. To get rid of him, it appeared that Krumey needed evidence against him. A number of reports by police sergeant Karl Mollenhauer, also a UWZ man, came in handy in this regard. Already several days before Witthinrich's damaging statements against Krumey, on 1 February 1941, Mollenhauer reported to Krumey that Witthinrich had told him about a notebook with incriminating evidence regarding other UWZ members like Krumey, and stemming from a birthday party where there were other UWZ leaders and their wives.<sup>95</sup> Whether Witthinrich was aware of these accusations is unknown. In any case, just a few weeks later, he wrote a report in which he accused Mollenhauer of "having relations with a Polish woman". Mollenhauer had invited this woman on an excursion, "touched her inappropriately", and bragged about having "used her sexually", despite both of them being married. As a servant of the Reich, Witthinrich claimed to take offence at this "marriage-violating" behaviour.<sup>96</sup> In Mollenhauer's justification of the events, he said the woman was actually German, that he had been unaware that she was married to a Pole, and that Witthinrich just wanted take revenge on Mollenhauer because the latter had severed all contact with him in January.<sup>97</sup>

This incident apparently increased Mollenhauer's motivation to write additional reports about Witthinrich from March 1942 onwards. Mollenhauer accused Witthinrich himself of calling Broszeit "Mrs. Lorenz" and of avoiding (unscheduled) inspections of his camp.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, he allegedly sold beer in the camp and was regularly heavily intoxicated during working hours:

I submit this report to describe his unreliability and his bad character [...]. I declare W[itthinrich] to be a denunciator who continually grumbles against his superiors and an inferior person, whom I have come to know during my many years of service as a gendarme.<sup>99</sup>

The sudden increase in Mollenhauer's reports during the proceedings against Lorenz and Krumey suggests that Krumey was gathering evidence which he could use to get rid of Witthinrich. In a letter from Witthinrich's son to Krumey, the son accused the UWZ leader of spreading false statements about his father, namely that he was a drunk.<sup>100</sup> Witthinrich was either genuinely fond of alcohol, or this was part of Krumey's strategy.

Especially interesting is one report on Witthinrich's alleged ties to the deceased Lorenz. Broszeit had already stated that these two had been close and would do things that "could only be done among good comrades".<sup>101</sup> The relationship, however, had deteriorated shortly before Lorenz's arrest. Mollenhauer now described an even-

<sup>95</sup> IPN GK 69/229, Secret report by Mollenhauer to Krumey, 1 February 1942, 751.

<sup>96</sup> IPN GK 69/215, Letter from Witthinrich to the Regierungspräsident, 23 February 1942, 8.

<sup>97</sup> IPN GK 69/215, Letter from Mollenhauer to Püschel, 28 February 1942, 4.

<sup>98</sup> IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Mollenhauer to Krumey, 5 March 1942, 45.

<sup>99</sup> IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Mollenhauer to Krumey, 7 March 1942, 49–50.

<sup>100</sup> IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Witthinrich to Krumey, 23 June 1942, 68.

<sup>101</sup> IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Broszeit to Krumey, 8 December 1941, 75–77. Broszeit and Witthinrich's wife had also gotten along well. BArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Gustav Bednarz regarding Krumey, 30 January 1942, 765.



ing shortly before Lorenz's death, when the two had argued while intoxicated. Soon after Lorenz's arrest, Witthinrich had said to Mollenhauer, "[t]hank God that bastard is dead. Hopefully, he hasn't dragged anyone else down with him."<sup>102</sup> Broszeit had also written to Krumej about Witthinrich's alleged attempts to implicate her in Lorenz's schemes.<sup>103</sup> Witthinrich might or might not have been at least informed of Lorenz's schemes. Much more interesting than determining who was specifically involved, however, is the fact that such allegations were never made against Witthinrich publicly – not even by Krumej who had reason to suspect him of being disloyal. He never forwarded these reports to a higher authority. Instead, on 14 April, Krumej finally reported to the IdS Posen, Ernst Damzog, that Witthinrich had embezzled coal.<sup>104</sup> The other accusations from Mollenhauer were either not credible enough or too risky for Krumej. For some reason he seems to have been reluctant to initiate further investigations into the Lorenz case. This either means that Witthinrich's accusations were at least partly true or that he was perceived as a potential future troublemaker. In May 1942, Witthinrich reported new attempts at "defamatory harassment" by Krumej to the SS-Hauptamt. Krumej allegedly "locked a Pole in a cell for 24 hours in freezing cold without a coat" in order to extort false testimony about Witthinrich:

[t]he Pole (the former camp elder) was supposed to falsely testify that money and other items had been taken from the packages. However, even under arrest, the Pole stuck to the truth and reiterated that the packages were always opened by the recipients themselves in accordance with regulations and under the supervision of the camp commandant's office.<sup>105</sup>

Even if Krumej had not been aware of Witthinrich's complaint letters to the SS-Hauptamt up to that point, he was still aware through Mollenhauer's reports that Witthinrich could pose a threat to him. Complaints about Krumej's leadership had been expressed by other UWZ men in the past.<sup>106</sup> They had, however, not involved higher authorities as they were directed at Krumej directly and thus did not lead to retaliation. Witthinrich's offenses – the fact that he had complained about the state of affairs at the UWZ Litzmannstadt to the outside – were apparently so serious that they could not be tolerated. Krumej, however, wanted to avoid the matter looking like revenge. This is why, he clarified in a letter to the IdS,

[f]or the sake of order, I would like to point out that I reported Witthinrich's misconduct regarding the unauthorised removal of coal from a UWZ depot before your notification that Witthinrich had filed a complaint against me. With this clarification, I aim to ensure that if Witthinrich is eventually held accountable, it does not appear as though I acted out of revenge.<sup>107</sup>

Krumej's strategy was successful. Witthinrich, who had been on leave since March 1942 and had continued to live in the apartment provided by the UWZ, was forced to spend the time until his next assignment in his hometown due to a shortage of housing in Litzmannstadt.<sup>108</sup> On 10 June 1942, he officially left the UWZ and was transferred to his new post as a camp commander in Norway.<sup>109</sup> Krumej had prevailed. This likely also influenced the outcome of the investigation.

102 IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Mollenhauer to Krumej, 3 April 1942, 51.

103 IPN GK 69/212, Letter from Broszeit to Krumej, 8 December 1941, 75–77.

104 IPN GK 69/229, Note from Krumej regarding Witthinrich, 18 April 1942, 55.

105 BArch R 9361-III/538242, Copy of a letter from Witthinrich to the SS-Hauptamt, 2 May 1942, 729.

106 IPN GK 69/204, Letter from Arthur Harder to Krumej, 17 July 1941, 2.

107 IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Krumej to IdS Damzog, 15 April 1942, 54.

108 IPN GK 69/229, Letter from Krumej to Witthinrich, 5 June 1942, 61.

109 BArch R 9361-III/564226, Lebenslauf Witthinrichs, 9 December 1944, 626.

## Closing the Investigation

On 15 May 1942, the investigating IdS prepared a final report in which Krumei was given a favourable reference.<sup>110</sup> A month later, the RSHA confirmed these positive statements about Krumei and emphasised that, in contrast, Witthinrich gave the “impression of a very stubborn and self-righteous person”.<sup>111</sup> The investigation was not yet concluded, but the initiation of criminal proceedings was deemed unlikely.<sup>112</sup> In August, the matter was taken over as a disciplinary case by I D 2 (*SS-Disziplinarsachen*) of the RSHA. It seems that a conversation with the head of the UWZ in Posen, Rolf-Heinz Höppner, about Krumei and Witthinrich was decisive for this. Krumei and Höppner’s friendly relationship might have influenced this assessment:

[Höppner] gave SS-Obersturmbannführer Krumei the best possible reference, describing him as a very decent character. Allegedly, Krumei was even said to be almost too decent. In contrast, SS-Sturmbannführer Höppner characterised SS-Obersturmführer Witthinrich very poorly. He also believed that Witthinrich had failed in terms of his work performance during his time in Litzmannstadt.<sup>113</sup>

Krumei had previously been described as a “reliable Nazi, with a clear and mature judgment”.<sup>114</sup> Apart from the seemingly friendly relations with the investigating IdS as well as his superior Höppner, the SS authorities must have been more likely to believe the testimony of an SS leader who was consistently deemed ideologically steadfast and who had made his mark on deportation policy.<sup>115</sup> Thus, in October 1942, only Witthinrich’s accusations regarding the lack of supervision in the case of Lorenz’s and Broszeit’s relationship were taken into account:

[f]rom our perspective, he should have intervened officially under all circumstances to protect the reputation of the Security Police and the SD. His excuses cannot absolve him, as such cohabitation is entirely unacceptable, even from the standpoint of a pending divorce.<sup>116</sup>

Otherwise, there was no indication that Krumei had “behaved incorrectly in any way”. Since Krumei was assessed as “very good on the job” and “almost too honourable”, he was only formally reprimanded by I D 2 (*SS-Disziplinarsachen*) of the RSHA.<sup>117</sup> On 21 April 1943, the disciplinary penalty was removed from his record.<sup>118</sup> Krumei had managed to solidify his position and eliminate Witthinrich as a rival. Krumei was thus able to rally the remaining UWZ men even more closely behind him – a talent for which he had already been praised at the beginning of his career.<sup>119</sup>

[h]e has excelled in the particularly challenging task of aligning the SS members, who were summoned and assigned from various departments, in a unified manner. It is especially noteworthy that Krumei managed to main-

110 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from ID 2 RSHA to Reisch, August 1942, 720.

111 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from RSHA to IdS Damzog, 19 June 1942, 724.

112 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from RSHA to RKF, 1 July 1942, 726.

113 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from ID 2 RSHA to Reisch, August 1942, 720.

114 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Evaluation report, 842.

115 IPN GK 69/20, Letter from Krumei to Eichmann regarding “Aktion Saybusch”, 16 September 1940, 92.

116 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Template by ID 2 RSHA, 23 September 1942, 704.

117 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from ID 2 to RKF, 1 October 1942, 711. Other UWZ men in closer contact with Lorenz were also acquitted of any guilt because the department head had not acted as a role model. BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from ID 1 regarding Haarbrückner, 21 December 1942.

118 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Internal note from ID, 24 June 1943, 690.

119 BAArch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from SS-Oberabschnitt Nordsee to SS-Abschnitt XIV, 870.

tain a very good camaraderie with his men despite the very difficult working conditions and that he always fully committed himself to their well-being.<sup>120</sup>

It can be assumed that the men did not always act correctly. However, from then on, misconduct no longer became known to the outside world. Krumei, who was able to consolidate his position within the UWZ, was subsequently able to rise further and became one of the central perpetrators of the Holocaust. Alongside other UWZ men loyal to him, he was responsible for the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz.<sup>121</sup>

## Conclusion

The investigative reports and (secret) accounts of all UWZ members must of course be problematised as source material that is not necessarily reliable. Most reports either served the purpose of denying one's own wrongdoing or accusing someone else of misconduct. However, even if the motivation for all these accusations by various members of the department may often have been of a personal nature, it can still be assumed that they were not all completely made up. The sources can still provide insight into the everyday life of the UWZ men. As mentioned in multiple statements, SS leaders in the East, in this case in the UWZ, were often more or less forced to be in close contact with each other also after working hours. Friendships and fall-outs were common. Both fraudulent as well as abusive behaviour also seem to have been common, even if the latter especially is only mentioned in passing in the reports discussed above. Witthinrich accused Lorenz, Schlag, and to a certain extent Mollenhauer of (forced) sexual relations with Polish women. Even though he emphasized "Rassenschande" over the fact that Lorenz had possibly raped women from the UWZ camp, it still makes clear how prevalent sexual abuse – a topic often not talked about in survivor testimonies – must have been. Other forms of physical violence, such as Krumei torturing a Polish camp elder to get information on Witthinrich, is also mentioned only in passing. The picture that emerges is one of general corruption and abuse.

The Lorenz case clearly illustrates the opportunities that opened up for German occupation officials who were deployed in the East. Lorenz, whose problematic financial situation, past trickery, and extramarital affairs had already been the subject of another investigation, seemed to be able to display the same behaviour with (temporary) impunity in Litzmannstadt. It was only Witthinrich's denunciation, accusing him of relations with Polish women, that triggered an investigation by the Gestapo in Litzmannstadt and then by the RSHA. However, the close personal relationships between various SS leaders (including Witthinrich) and Lorenz, as well as the various accusations against Krumei and Witthinrich in particular, suggest that Lorenz did not act alone or unnoticed. The assertions of Lorenz's colleagues that they knew nothing of his financial problems or the embezzlement must be questioned, at least with regard to the fact that his superior, Krumei, was aware of his previous history. As violence and fraud seem to have been widespread, yet no SS investigation was previously conducted, it must be assumed that the UWZ men covered up each other's wrongdoings or looked the other way. Those who did not abide by the rules of

120 BAarch R 9361-III/538242, Letter from Ehlich to the head of SS-Abschnitt XIV, 9 August 1943, 935–936.

121 Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Verbrechen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2022), 103–104; DÖW 23675/4, Decision in the criminal case against Krumei and Hunsche, 396. See also Cesarani, *Eichmann*.

this community were eliminated, as the examples of Witthinrich and Ismer show. Witthinrich especially incurred the wrath of his comrades through his complaint to a higher authority. This led to accusations against him. Thus, it was not those who violated SS rules by, for example, having extramarital relationships who were automatically transferred or sanctioned, but those who exposed this community built upon abuse and self-enrichment.

## Bibliography

### Archival Sources

Bundesarchiv Berlin (Barch): R 9361-III/538242, 564226, 538242 and 541085.

Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW): 23675/4 and 21955/5.

Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN): IPN GK 69/20, 23, 52, 60, 109, 149, 204, 212, 215, 227, 229, 322, 429 and 68/6.

Archive of Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ) Munich: MA 708/5.

### Source Edition

Ryszard Dyliński, *Wysiedlenie i poniewierka. Wspomnienia Polaków wysiedlonych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego z ziem polskich „wcielonych“ do Rzeszy 1939–1945*. Poznań: Wydaw. Poznańskie, 1985.

### Secondary Literature

Abramowicz, S. „Niemiecki obóz przesiedleńczy w Konstancynie Łódzkim 1940–1943”. In *Ludność cywilna w łódzkich obozach przesiedleńczych*. Łódź: IPN, 2010.

Aly, Götz. „Endlösung“. *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995.

Bajohr, Frank. *Parvenüs und Profiteure. Korruption in der NS-Zeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001.

Böhler, Jochen. “Die heile Welt des Eduard Schmidt. Gewalt und Alltag deutscher Polizeiformationen und Dienststellen in Polen 1939–1943”. In *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945*, edited by Jochen Böhler and Stephan Lehnstaedt, 89–116. Osnabrück: Fibre-Verlag, 2012.

Cesarani, David. *Adolf Eichmann. Bürokrat und Massenmörder*. Berlin: List Taschenbuch, 2012.

Dierl, Florian, Zoran Janjetović, and Karsten Linne. *Pflicht, Zwang und Gewalt. Arbeitsverwaltungen und Arbeitskräftepolitik im deutsch besetzten Polen und Serbien 1939–1944*. Essen: Klartext, 2013.

Esch, Michael G. “Die Umwandererzentralstelle im besetzten Polen 1939–1944”. In *Migration steuern und verwalten. Deutschland vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Jochen Oltmer, 177–206. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2003.

Heinemann, Isabel. *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut. Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013.

Koslov Mailänder, Elissa. *Gewalt im Dienstalltag. Die SS-Aufseherinnen des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Majdanek 1942–1944*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009.

Lehnstaedt, Stephan. *Okkupation im Osten. Besatzeralltag in Warschau und Minsk 1939–1944*. Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2010.

Lehnstaedt, Stephan. “Zwei Okkupationsregime. Einleitende Überlegungen zur Erforschung von Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen”. In *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945*, edited by Jochen Böhler and Stephan Lehnstaedt, 15–29. Osnabrück: Fibre-Verlag, 2012.

Pohl, Dieter. *Nationalsozialistische Verbrechen 1939–1945*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2022.

Pulvermacher, Alexandra. “Early Deportations of Jews in Occupied Poland (October 1939–June 1940): The German and the Soviet Cases”. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2022): 125–153.

Roth, Markus. *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009.

- Röger, Maren. *Kriegsbeziehungen. Intimität, Gewalt und Prostitution im besetzten Polen*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2015.
- Röger, Maren. "Von Fischotter und seiner Frau Besatzungsalltag und NS-Rassenpolitik am Beispiel eines deutsch- polnischen Paares im Generalgouvernement". *Historische Zeitschrift* 299, no. 1 (2018): 70–98.
- Rutherford, Phillip. *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939–1941*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.
- Rutowska, Maria. "Aussiedlungen von Polen und Juden". In *Vertriebene von 1939*, edited by Jacek Kubiak, 28–47. Wydawnictwo Miejskie Poznań, 2015.
- Stiller, Alexa. *Völkische Politik. Praktiken der Exklusion und Inklusion in polnischen, französischen und slowenischen Annexionsgebieten 1939–1945*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022.
- Stiller, Alexa. "Gewalt und Alltag der Volkstumspolitik. Der Apparat des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums und andere gesellschaftliche Akteure der veralltäglichten Gewalt". In *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen 1939–1945*, edited by Jochen Böhrer and Stephan Lehnstaedt, 45–66. Osnabrück: Fibre-Verlag, 2012.
- Wardzyńska, Maria. *Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z okupowanych ziem polskich włączonych do III Rzeszy w latach 1939–1945*. Warsaw: IPN, 2017.
- Wójcik, Bartosz. *Vernichtungsalltag. Die Deutsche Ordnungspolizei in den annektierten polnischen Gebieten 1939–1945 Fallstudie Łódź/Litzmannstadt*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2021.

**Hannah Riedler**, MA studies with a focus on Eastern European History at the University of Vienna, doctoral studies at the University of Klagenfurt, VWI Junior Fellow 2023–2024 and Irma Rosenberg Award for the Research of National Socialism 2024. Research interests: Occupied Poland in the Second World War, Holocaust, deportations in Poland in the Soviet and German occupation zones.

Email: [hannah.riedler@aau.at](mailto:hannah.riedler@aau.at)

Quotation: Hannah Riedler, "Don't Mention This to the Gestapo for Now." Betrayal, Corruption, and Sexual Abuse in the Everyday Life of the *Umwandererzentralstelle* Litzmannstadt in S.I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 111–126.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/ess\\_hrie01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/ess_hrie01)

S.I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 1 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).



Irina Scherbakowa

# Stoff für die Erinnerung

Über die Ausstellung *Material. Das weibliche Gedächtnis des GULAGs*

## Abstract

„Ich bitte um Erlaubnis, ein Telegramm abzuschicken. Im Moment meiner Festnahme befanden sich zwei Kinder, zwei und vier Jahre alt, in meiner Wohnung!“ Diese Worte in einer schönen, geschwungenen Handschrift sind Teil der Ausstellung *Material. Women’s Memory of the GULAG* („Material. Das weibliche Gedächtnis des GULAGs“). Auch die Antwort des Gefängnisdirektors ist erhalten – kurz und knapp: „Abgelehnt!“ Über 100.000 Dokumente wurden von der russischen Stiftung und Menschenrechtsorganisation Memorial International gesammelt. Etwa zweihundert Alltagsgegenstände, selbstgebastelte Dinge – wie eine Nagelfeile aus einer Keramikscherbe oder eine Nadel aus einer Fischgräte, zum Teil nie verschickte Briefe und Zeichnungen – hatte die Stiftung für die Ausstellung *Material. Das weibliche Gedächtnis des GULAGs 2021* im Kellergeschoß der Moskauer Memorial-Zentrale zusammengetragen. Die Ausstellung wurde kurz nach der Eröffnung geschlossen, Mitarbeiter:innen von Memorial Moskau haben aufgrund des politischen Drucks das Land verlassen. Die Kuratorin Irina Scherbakowa stellte in einem Workshop im Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien am 27. November 2024 Objekte dieser letzten Ausstellung vor und gab Einblicke in kuratorische Überlegungen. Ihren Einführungsvortrag drucken wir hier ab.

Die Idee einer Ausstellung über die Erinnerung der Frauen an den Gulag kam uns in Memorial schon vor vielen Jahren. Doch bevor die Ausstellung entstand, war eine Ausstellung über die Schicksale von Vätern, die in Gefängnissen und Lagern starben, erstellt worden. Die Ausstellung mit dem Titel „Daddy’s Letters“, der 2014 ein Buch mit demselben Titel folgte, löste ein lebhaftes Echo aus und traf, wie sich herausstellte, einen wichtigen Nerv im Familiengedächtnis. Wahrscheinlich, weil der Vater, der nicht aus der Haft zurückkehrte, in der Wahrnehmung der Kinder oft ein vages, aber ideales Bild blieb, dem sich die Kinder gedanklich zuwandten und mit dem sie ihr eigenes Leben abglich. Mütter, die den Gulag überlebt hatten, wurden häufiger abgelehnt. Söhne und Töchter, die getrennt von ihnen aufwuchsen, hatten sie als jung und attraktiv in Erinnerung, trafen sie aber fast nicht wiedererkennbar, gealtert und erschöpft von den langen Jahren des Lagers wieder.

Sie entsprachen nicht dem Idealbild, sondern wurden zur Verkörperung des Leids, das ihre Familie zwischen den Mühlsteinen des Terrors ereilt hatte. Nach der Befreiung aus dem Lager mussten die ehemaligen Häftlinge nicht nur eine Bleibe und Arbeit finden und sich mühsam an das Leben anpassen. Sie mussten auch Kräfte sammeln, um zerrissene Familienfäden, wieder zu verknüpfen und Beziehungen zu den Kindern herzustellen, um wenigstens das Unverständnis und die Entfremdung zu überwinden. Es waren hauptsächlich Frauen, die die Erinnerungen an den Gulag – ob in materieller oder verbaler Form – aufbewahrt hatten und uns diese als Erbschaft hinterließen.

Während die Zahl der Frauen im ‚Gulagprozentual‘ deutlich geringer war als die der Männer (insbesondere die jener Frauen, die wegen politischer ‚Vergehen‘ verur-

teilt worden waren), war die Zahl der Überlebenden unter ihnen aber größer. Männer, denen es gelungen war, das Lager zu überleben, verstarben oft schon wenige Jahre nach der Befreiung. Evgenia Ginzburg spricht darüber in ihren Memoiren und zitiert ein Gedicht von Boris Slutsky: Es gab viele alte Frauen und wenige alte Männer – was alte Frauen krümmte, brach alte Männer. Das Archiv und die Museumsammlung von Memorial sind zu einem großen Teil daraus entstanden, was Frauen aufbewahrt haben. Auch die Sammlung der Memoiren wird von Autorinnen dominiert. Dennoch war es eine schwierige Aufgabe, aus den in dreißig Jahren gesammelten Dokumenten, Gegenständen und Artefakten eine Ausstellung über Frauen zu gestalten. Ein so großes Thema wie „Frauen im Gulag“ zu behandeln, überstieg unsere bescheidenen Möglichkeiten. Abgesehen von der Begrenzung durch den kleinen Ausstellungsraum, gibt es auch historiografische Probleme, die mit der Untersuchung dieses Themas verbunden sind. Zunächst einmal ist es schwierig, aus der riesigen Menge an Dokumenten, die in den staatlichen Archiven aufbewahrt werden, diejenigen herauszufiltern, die sich speziell auf Frauen beziehen. In diesem staatlichen ‚Gedächtnis‘, bestehend aus Befehlen, Direktiven, Verordnungen, Berichten, Bescheinigungen, Untersuchungsakten, in dem riesigen Papierumlauf, der mit dem Gulag verbunden ist, gibt es große Lücken. Frauen wurden mit den gleichen Urteilsformulierungen und Paragrafen unterdrückt und verfolgt wie Männer, und sie fielen in die gleichen Kategorien. Eine Ausnahme stellte die besondere Situation des großen Terrors dar: es entstand eine eigene Kategorie für Ehefrauen und Familienmitglieder der Landesverräter. In der Regel wurden Frauen in Bezug auf den Arbeitsinsatz, die sanitären Normen, die Ernährung usw. nicht von der Masse der Häftlinge abgegrenzt. Die Dokumente, die sich speziell mit Frauen befassen, beziehen sich hauptsächlich auf Schwangerschaft und Geburt im Lager. Im Allgemeinen sagen die Archivdokumente des Gulags wenig über das Schicksal einzelner Personen aus, als wollten sie das vollenden, was dem Repressionsapparat nicht gelungen ist – eine reale Person zu vernichten, sodass nur ein namenloser Gefangener ohne Geschlecht und ohne Gesicht übrigbleibt. Welches Bild der Frauen im Gulag ist im kulturellen Gedächtnis entstanden? Die wichtigste Quelle ist zweifellos der Text. Viele Jahre lang waren Memoiren der einzige Aufbewahrungsort für Gedächtnisinhalte – es gab keine Gedenkstätten, Denkmäler, Museen, Ausstellungen und all das, was dieses Gedächtnis im öffentlichen Raum geformt und unterstützt hätte. Aber es gab nur wenige Memoiren, die von weiblichen Häftlingen in Stalins Lagern im Samisdat kursierten. Unter ihnen sind die bekanntesten und in gewisser Weise auch künstlerisch bedeutenden Memoiren von Evgenia Ginzburg mit dem Titel „Die Gratwanderung“, die die Vorstellung vom Schicksal der Frauen in den Lagern Stalins geprägt haben. Die überwiegende Mehrheit der anderen schriftlichen Zeugnisse wurde verstreut in Schubladen versteckt, wo sie bis zur Perestroika aufbewahrt wurden.

In den vergangenen Jahren ist eine ganze Reihe von Erinnerungsliteratur von Frauen erschienen, mündliche Zeugnisse wurden aufgezeichnet, und es wurden historische und künstlerische Ausstellungen organisiert, um die Lagerkunst weiblicher Häftlinge zu präsentieren. All dies musste berücksichtigt werden, um die Charakteristika des weiblichen Blicks und der weiblichen Perspektive zu verstehen. Es bestand kein Zweifel, dass die semantische Grundlage der Ausstellung die Erinnerungen sein sollten. Aus ihnen entsteht ein kollektivbiografisches Bild einer Frau, die zum Zeitpunkt der Verhaftung etwa zwanzig bis vierzig Jahre alt war und im Allgemeinen aus einem städtischen, intellektuellen Milieu stammte. Viele der Memoiren der Frauen scheinen zu einer epischen Geschichte zu verschmelzen, mit Ergänzungen, Präzisierungen, Fortsetzungen und manchmal mit denselben Personen. Es ist daher

kein Zufall, dass sogenannte wandernde Sujets von Memoiren zu Memoiren reisen. So beschreibt Evgenia Ginzburg eine für Frauenmemoiren sehr typische Episode als sie nach mehreren Jahren im Gefängnis zum ersten Mal ihr Spiegelbild sieht, aber nicht sich selbst, sondern ihre Mutter darin entdeckt. Die gleiche Episode des sich Nicht-Erkennens findet sich auch in den Memoiren von Olga Adamova-Sliozberg und in einigen mündlichen Erzählungen. Und es ist nicht so, dass jemand diese Geschichte von jemand anderem übernommen haben könnte, vielmehr haben die Erzählerinnen einfach ähnliche Dinge erlebt. Die soziale Nähe und die Ähnlichkeit der Lagerschicksale ermöglichen es uns, das Lager im Detail durch die Augen ehemaliger Häftlinge zu sehen, auch wenn dies, wie heute bekannt ist, keineswegs das gesamte Bild des Gulags widerspiegelt. Andererseits entsteht gerade durch die Tatsache, dass die Memoiren oft dieselbe Lager- und Gefängnisumgebung beschreiben, in der sich bei aller Ungeheuerlichkeit des Gulags die Wege von Menschen als Angehörige einer bestimmten sozialen Schicht mit jenen von Bekannten und Verwandten kreuzen, sie sich in derselben Zelle, in der Baracke, auf dem Transport, im Lager treffen, ein Gefühl eines bestimmten Narrativs, einer Meistererzählung. Dieses Narrativ bildete die Grundlage für das Szenario der Ausstellung. Ihr Hauptinhalt ist eine Geschichte des Überlebens unter unmenschlichen Bedingungen. Dieses Überleben hing von vielen Faktoren ab, unter anderem von dem konkreten Zeitraum, in der sich eine Gefangene hinter dem Stacheldraht befand, in den 1930er Jahren oder in den 1940er und 1950er Jahren. Aber auch davon, an welchen Orten sie sich befand: in Karlag (Kasachstan), MinLag (Republik Komi) oder Kolyma, und davon, wer sie in den schwierigsten Momenten der Gefangenschaft begleitet hatte. In welcher Form zeigt sich die ethnische Vielfalt der Gefangenen bzw. der Kolonisierungscharakter des Gulags? Gerade in den Handarbeiten der Gulag-Insassinnen zeigt sich der Kolonisierungscharakter, der die Gefangenen zu den Sklaven der Lagerzivilisation werden ließ. Den Erinnerungen der Frauen nach zu urteilen, waren die Freundschaften im Lager, die gegenseitige Hilfe und die Aufrechterhaltung der familiären Bindungen, insbesondere jene zu den Kindern, von großer Bedeutung. Eine wichtige Rolle spielte auch die Wahrnehmung des Lagers als Fortsetzung des Lebens, egal wie schrecklich es manchmal erscheinen mochte. Und die Möglichkeit, in sich selbst die geistige und moralische Kraft für diese Fortsetzung zu finden. Ein wichtiger Teil der Überlebensstrategie einer Frau war der Wunsch, die Baracken des Lagers menschlich aussehen zu lassen, nicht unterzugehen, sich selbst zu bewahren, in der Hoffnung auf ein zukünftiges Treffen mit ihren Kindern. Daher finden wir in den Memoiren der Frauen eine ausführlichere Beschreibung des Lagerlebens und der Möglichkeiten, es zu ‚verbessern‘. Und eine offenere Darstellung dessen, was am schwersten zu ertragen war – die ständige Erniedrigung und Gewalt, die das Leben einer Frau im Lager begleitete.

Aber wie kann man dies in einer Ausstellung zeigen? Das ist umso schwieriger, da es kaum eine visuelle Darstellung des Gulags gibt, welche nur ansatzweise das vermitteln kann, was in den Memoiren beschrieben wird. Der Propagandadokumentarfilm von 1928 über die Solovetsky-Sonderlager, in dem auch Frauen zu sehen sind, kann nicht als eine solche Illustration angesehen werden. Es ist sicherlich unmöglich, das wirkliche Leben im Lager anhand dieser Aufnahmen zu beurteilen. Auch die wenigen, in den persönlichen Archiven ehemaliger Häftlinge aufbewahrten Fotos, die bei besonderen Anlässen aufgenommen worden waren – eine Aufführung im Lagertheater, eine allgemeine Aufnahme des Personals des Lagerkrankenhauses mit Freigelassenen usw. – lassen keine Rückschlüsse zu. Nur die aus den Ermittlungsakten stammenden Häftlingsfotografien in Vollansicht und im Pro-

fil vermitteln in gewissem Maße die menschliche Verfassung nach der Verhaftung. Auch die im Lager entstandenen Kunstwerke, die in unserer Sammlung aufbewahrt werden, vermitteln nur selten diese Atmosphäre. Es gibt fast keine Genreskizzen vom Lagerleben, von Häftlingen bei der Arbeit. Vor allem gibt es Zeichnungen von Landschaften und Personen, bei denen es schwierig ist, zu erraten, wo sie gemalt wurden. Es sei denn, man kann feststellen, welche Materialien ihre Schöpferinnen anstelle von Farben verwendet haben. Es ist vielmehr, wie vieles in der Lagerkunst, ein Versuch, in eine andere Welt zu flüchten, sich von Umständen zu lösen, an die man sich unmöglich gewöhnen kann. Offensichtlich hätte das Konzept der Ausstellung einen anderen Weg einschlagen müssen, nicht versuchen sollen, die Erinnerungen zu illustrieren. Im Gegenteil: man hätte von dem materiellen ‚Gepäck‘ ausgehen sollen, das die ehemaligen Häftlinge gerettet, aufbewahrt, und unserem Archiv und Museum übergeben haben – sie selbst oder ihre Angehörigen.

Was konnte man aber ins Gefängnis mitnehmen, außer einem Löffel, einem Becher und anderen kleinen Gegenständen, die man während der Etappen, auf dem Transit, in den Baracken und Zellen aufbewahrte, um sie einem nahestehenden Menschen im Lager zu geben? Vor allem das, was direkt mit dem Körper zu tun hatte, was ihn vor der Kälte und dem Schnee im Norden, vor der Hitze im Sommer in der kasachischen Steppe schützen musste. Was konnte unter den schwierigen Bedingungen des Lagerlebens gerettet werden? Das Wichtigste waren natürlich Briefe von Verwandten. In seltenen Fällen war es Gefängnis- oder Lagerkleidung, häufiger beispielsweise bestickte Servietten, Handtaschen, Koffer usw., die man von Lagerfreunden geschenkt bekommen hatte. Im Grunde handelt es sich dabei um eine materielle Erinnerung. Nicht nur an geliebte Menschen, sondern auch an die „Robinsonade“ im Frauenlager, an die Bedeutung jedes Fadens, jeder Schnur, jedes Stückchens, als buchstäblich aus dem Nichts wunderschöne Objekte der Handarbeit entstanden. Generell sollte die Ausstellung zeigen, wie die kommunistische Utopie im Gulag aussah, wo das strahlende Bild eines geschlechtslosen Zukunftsmenschen herrschte, für den die Kleinigkeiten und Annehmlichkeiten des bürgerlichen Lebens im Namen großer Ziele abgelehnt werden sollten. Wo die Ablehnung der bürgerlichen Materialität proklamiert wurde und wo für Handarbeit kein Platz war. Doch schon vor dem Lager waren es die Frauen, die die Schattenseiten dieser Utopie kannten, und wussten, welche Bedeutung häusliche Armut, Mangel und Elend im Leben eines sowjetischen Mannes hatten und dass die Rettung in der handwerklichen, traditionellen Kunst des weiblichen Überlebens lag. Das Lager hat dies in vielfacher Hinsicht bestätigt und bekräftigt. So kam der Titel unserer Ausstellung zustande: „Material“. Natürlich war dieser Titel metaphorisch gemeint, der Betrachter sollte Assoziationen haben – Stoff und die Leinwand des Lebens, Text und Textilien; und ein Verständnis für die Bedeutung der materiellen Welt gewinnen, die im Gulag praktisch verschwunden war. Dies war der Schlüssel zum Gespräch über das Gedächtnis der Frauen. Das Ausstellungsszenario sah vor, dass die Stoffobjekte verschiedene Perioden des Lagerlebens in einer semantischen und chronologischen Abfolge illustrieren. Diese Zeitabschnitte sind nach dem ausgestellten „Material“ benannt: Schnitt, Knoten, Rückseite, Lappen, Seil, Stich, Faden, Schlaufe, Einlage. „Abgeschnitten“ illustriert eine Verhaftung – ein „Abschneiden“ von einem früheren Leben. „Knoten“ ist eine Etappe, eine lange Reise ins Ungewisse; „Rückseite“ ist der Alltag im Lager, wobei der Abschnitt „Lumpen“ Kleidungsstücke aus dem Lager darstellt. „Spindel“ zeigt die Lagerarbeit von Frauen in Webereien und Stickerei-Werkstätten. „Stich“ – Kreativität; „Fäden“ sind Dinge, die von Frauen im Lager für Kinder und Angehörige hergestellt wurden. „Muster“ – der Sinn des spirituellen



Lebens und des Glaubens, – bestickte Ikonen, Gebetsbücher. „Die Schlinge“ ist etwas, worüber man nur schwer sprechen und was man noch schwieriger zeigen kann – Demütigung, Gewalt, Tod. „Perelitsovka/Umwendung von Stoff“ – Befreiung aus dem Lager. Und „Naht“ ist eine Erinnerung, die noch Jahrzehnte nach dem Ende des Gulags verborgen bleibt.

Die Architekten der Ausstellung, Kirill Ass und Nadezda Korbut, standen vor der schwierigen Aufgabe, den kleinen Raum der Ausstellungshalle so zu gestalten, dass er das Gewebe des Lagerlebens beherbergt, das durch eine Vielzahl von Exponaten unterschiedlicher Größe veranschaulicht wird: ein großes Stück, ausgerissen aus einem Laken, auf dem die von den Frauen in Karlag zusammengetragenen Rezepte aufgeschrieben wurden, und winzige Geldbörsen, Handtaschen, Schatullen mit



Vera Bekzadyan sammelte Rezepte, an die sich Frauen im Lager Temnikovsky erinnerten. 1939–1943. Baumwolle, Druckbleistift, 159 x 27 cm. Aus der Buntman Familien-Sammlung.

© Yuri Palmin, Darya Krotova/Memorial

Mustern – so klein, dass es unmöglich ist, sich vorzustellen, wie sie im schwachen Licht der Baracken entstanden sein könnten. Die Idee der Architekten war es, Dinge, die aus Lagerabfällen hergestellt wurden – Fetzen, Flicker, abgerissene Fäden, als wertvolle Relikte zu zeigen. In der Ausstellung wurden sie unter transparenten Hüllen mit genau ausgerichtetem Licht platziert, so wie der teuerste Schmuck in Juweliersgeschäften ausgestellt wird. Oder in unterschiedlich großen Vitrinen in Holzrahmen an der schweren grauen Betonwand, die die Ausstellungshalle säumte. Auf wundersame Weise erhaltene Kleidungsstücke wie Gefängnis- und Lagerkleidung und „Telogreiki“ – (spezielle Wattejacken), wurden auf Schaufensterpuppen aus schwarzem Samt ausgestellt. Die Etiketten unter den ausgestellten Gegenständen enthielten keine Namen oder Geschichten der Personen, denen sie gehörten, sondern nur eine Beschreibung der Gegenstände selbst, den Namen des Lagers und das Datum. Dies war die Idee hinter der Ausstellung – ein kollektives Bild zu schaffen, ein gemeinsames Mosaik der Lagerfrauen. Die Zitate aus den ausgewählten Memoiren wurden auf alten Schreibmaschinen auf Schreibpapier aus den 1960–1980er Jahren getippt, und die einzelnen Blätter lagen frei auf den Leisten der Betonwand bereit, sodass jeder Besucher/jede Besucherin sie lesen konnte. Die Idee, einzelne Linien in die Wände der Ausstellungshalle zu ritzen, stammte von der Illustratorin und Kalligrafin Natalya Toropitsyna. In der weißen, hell erleuchteten Erweiterung der Ausstellungshalle waren aufgezeichnete mündliche Erzählungen ehemaliger Häftlinge zu hören, einzelne Stimmen aus dem Frauenlagerchor. Im Anhang zum Katalog wird zum ersten Mal in Russland die Lagerkorrespondenz von Evgenia Ginzburg mit ihrem Ehemann Pavel Aksyonov veröffentlicht. Dabei handelt es sich um 15 Briefe, die sie von Kolyma aus an ihren Mann schickte, der sich von Juli 1940 bis Dezember 1945 in den Lagern der Region Archangelsk und der Republik Komi befand. Einer der Briefe enthält Zeilen, die zum Epigraph dieser Ausstellung werden könnten:

Du schreibst über die Legitimität der Trauer im menschlichen Leben, über die Tatsache, dass erst der Wechsel von Hell-Dunkel, Glück und Unglück tatsächlich das Leben selbst schafft. Das ist richtig. Ab einem bestimmten Stadium adelt Trauer, erhebt sich über den Alltag und verleiht dem Titel einer Person mehr Rechte. Aber wie überall wird auch hier aus Quantität Qualität. Manchmal gibt es so viel Leid, dass es einfach nur eine Verletzung unserer Menschenwürde darstellt. In solchen Momenten ist es notwendig ... das Schicksal mit einer unglaublichen, gigantischen Willensanstrengung umzukehren ...



**Irina Scherbakowa**, geboren in Moskau, ist Historikerin, die bis 1987 als Germanistin und Übersetzerin deutscher Belletristik tätig war. Ab Ende der 1970er Jahre sammelte sie Tonbandaufzeichnungen der Erinnerungen von Opfern des Stalinismus. Seit 1999 ist sie Vorstandsmitglied und Leiterin der Bildungsprogramme der Gesellschaft „Memorial“. Scherbakowa ist Autorin von drei Büchern: *Nur ein Wunder konnte uns retten: Leben und Überleben unter Stalins Terror* (Campus 2000), *Zerrissene Erinnerung: Der Umgang mit Stalinismus und dem zweiten Weltkrieg im heutigen Russland* (Wallstein 2010), *Die Hände meines Vaters: Eine russische Familiengeschichte* (Droemer Knauer 2017). Scherbakowa ist Trägerin des Carl-von-Ossietsky-Preises (2014), der Goethe-Medaille (2017) und des Österreichischen Ehrenkreuzes für Wissenschaft und Kunst (2019).

E-Mail: [irinas@zukunft-memorial.org](mailto:irinas@zukunft-memorial.org)

Quotation: Irina Scherbakowa, Stoff für die Erinnerung. Über die Ausstellung *Material. Das weibliche Gedächtnis des GULAGs* in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 12 (2025) 2, 127–133.

[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/eve\\_isch01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225/eve_isch01)

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 12 (2025) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0225>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-SA  
(Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives).