



SUMMARIES

VITALINA DANYLCHUK

SURVIVAL OF THE JEWS FROM RIVNE REGION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR BY BEING OSTARBEITERS OR IN GERMAN CAPTIVITY

Being based on the archived documents and recollections, the article highlights the questions of the exit of the Jewish population from Rivne region to work in Germany as well as the military captivity of the Jews both being the ways of their survival in the period of the WWII. The analysis of the position of the local Jewish community during the German occupation proved that the chances for the Jews to remain alive were scarce. However, extreme conditions had different effects on the behavioral pattern of people. Some realized the inevitability of elimination and went to doom, while others tried to resist the system and sought salvation. Among the individual unarmed forms of resistance, one can retrace the cases when the Jews escaped with their lives trying to exit from the territory of Ukraine to work in Germany.

The possibilities for the Jewish survival and the adaptation of the Jewish Ostarbeiters from Rivne region to the alien environment depended on the combination of circumstances, situational factors and people's personalities. Appearance demonstrating no "Semitic" features and visible physical handicaps was of prior importance. Age factor also had an influential value. Young able-bodied men and women would have escaped more often than the elderly. We can assume that, in terms of quantity, women prevailed among the Jewish Ostarbeiters as men who were resistive were either on the fronts or were taken prisoners of war. Those

who came to be in Germany found it extremely essential to have good communication and language skills, readiness to adopt alien habits and rules of behavior and demonstrate an absolute control of themselves.

While Jews generally were subject to elimination, the Jewish soldiers who were taken prisoners of war were definitely given particular attention. However, some of the POWs managed to hide their ethnicity and escape with their lives. Such people could be divided into two groups being the servicemen of the Polish army, who were taken captive by the Germans in September 1939, and the Red Army soldiers who were captivated in 1941. Having analyzed the informative and biographic materials available, one can able to retrace the factors which gave the Jews an opportunity to survive in extreme conditions on the German-occupied territory, with minimal danger of being ethnically identified. In case the danger came to be real, different behavioral patterns made it possible to avert suspicion and exposure.

SIMON GEISSBÜHLER

13 THESES ON THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORIES IN JULY 1941

The massacres in the first few days of the Romanian-German invasion on the southern front on 2 July 1941 are an important, but still much under-researched element of the Holocaust. This article presents 13 theses on the first phase of the Holocaust in Romanian-controlled territories in summer 1941. With regard to the events, this article underlines the importance of the massacre in Iași at the end of June 1941 as the starting point of the Holocaust in Romania and estimates that at least 43,500 Jews were killed in July/August 1941 in Northern Bukovina and in Bessarabia. As for the context, I contend that the mass murder of Jews in the first few days of the war in Romanian-occupied territories was a continuation of the anti-Jewish policies of persecution – but now in the radicalized context of the war of destruction. The mass murder of Jews was neither a “derivative” of the war nor a “collateral damage”, but an integral part and pre-defined goal of the Eastern Campaign. However, this mass murder was often improvised and steered

from below; it was not “modern”, but bloody handiwork. What happened in Northern Bukovina and in Bessarabia also highlights once more that the Holocaust cannot be “reduced” to Auschwitz: approximately half of all Jewish victims were not gassed, but shot, tortured or beaten to death (mostly in the East). With regard to the victims, perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders, the sources show that the Jews were astounded by the massive outbreak of violence. Particularly incomprehensible for most Jews was the fact that many perpetrators and collaborators were their neighbors. Local pogroms and local collaboration were indeed widespread in Northern Bukovina and in Bessarabia. The mass murder of Jews in Romanian-controlled territories was no secret; many knew what was happening. The motives of the perpetrators were complex. It is obvious, however, that ideological and political as well as economic motives were intertwined and are crucial to explain violence against defenseless Jews. As for memory and remembrance, there are hardly any physical traces of the former Jewish presence and of the Holocaust in today’s Northern Bukovina (Ukraine) and Bessarabia (Moldova). To find one of the very few remaining synagogues, a neglected cemetery, or a mass grave, one has to search assiduously. The former Jewish presence has been largely “erased”. But the mental traces of the former Jewish presence and of the Holocaust are also evaporating. For many in Romania (and elsewhere in Eastern Europe), the Holocaust remains to this day a taboo or an invention. Many in Romania continue to minimize Romanian crimes during the Second World War and Romania’s responsibility for the Holocaust in Northern Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transnistria.

ANDREJ KOTLJARCHUK

THE NAZI GENOCIDE OF ROMA ON THE TERRITORY OF OCCUPIED UKRAINE: THE ROLE OF SOVIET PATH DEPENDENCY IN THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICS OF MEMORY

The article analyses various instances of the memory politics of the Nazi genocide of Roma in Ukraine during wartime, Soviet and Post-Soviet periods of times through the prism of the theory of “path depen-

gency” and the concept of “sites of memory“. One of the aims of this study is to interpret recent trends in contemporary memory politics in Ukraine, with focus on the Roma genocide memorials, and the documentation of the victims. The author shows how Soviet ‘path dependency’ designed the limits of commemoration of the Nazi genocide of the Roma in Ukraine.

During World War II the leading Soviet newspapers informed the public about the mass killings of Roma by the Nazis on the occupied territories and stressed that the systematic extermination of this group was motivated by racial goals. However, after 1945, the systematic extermination of the Roma population by the Nazis became a taboo and was ignored by Soviet historiography and memory politics. The absence of an educated strata within the Roma group and the aggressive forgetting politics made impossible the recording of testimonies of the Soviet Roma tragedy immediately after the war. Today it is simply impossible because of a lack of witnesses and archival records.

The author draws interesting parallels with memory politics in Ukraine, and its conciliation with Belarus and Russia. In recent years, about twenty monuments commemorating victims of the genocide of the Roma have been erected in Ukraine. According to decision of the Ukrainian Rada dated 8 October 2004, the International Day of the Holocaust of the Roma is held annually on 2 August. Following the countries of the European Union, Ukraine abandoned the official use of the word ‘Gypsies’ in favor of the more politically correct name ‘Roma’. At the same time, in Belarus there only three sites of memory devoted to the Roma genocide and in Russia – no one. In Ukraine, over the last few years, a number of conferences on the genocide of the Roma were held, collections of scientific papers were published, and research centers were formed. At the same time, in Belarus and in Russia, not a single scholar specializes in this subject.

The author explains such contradiction by the radical change of memory politics of World War II in the contemporary Ukraine, which influenced by both the internal and external factors. The most important internal factor is the humanization of memory politics that is the diversion of memory politics from heroes to the sufferings of ordinary people. The revising of the Soviet myth of World War II opened the previously closed topics. The author shows how the realignment of Soviet history around new narrative axes is taking place in the memory politics

of today's Ukraine. The main external factor is a process of the integration of the Ukrainian state into the EU. It is worth noting that in contrast to the Soviet era, memory politics in the present-day Ukraine are being built on the basis of a European concept of reconciliation.

However, the memorialization of the victims of the Nazi genocide of the Roma has a number of objective obstacles related to the Soviet period. The problems related to commemoration of the genocide of the Roma, as this article has demonstrated, are limited by 'path dependence' and not by deliberately discriminatory politics towards the Ukrainian Roma. The politics of forgetting and poor integration into Soviet society did not give the Roma an opportunity for public recognition of their tragedy in the Soviet Union. One of the main problems of contemporary memory politics is the de-personalisation of the victims of the Roma genocide. The Roma traditionally avoid contact with the authorities, and the official data and the real number of the Roma can differ greatly. It is important to stress a number of factors which differentiate memory work on the Jewish and Roma tragedies. If today the Holocaust is remembered not only through monuments but also through deserted synagogues, the former Jewish ghettos and cemeteries, the Roma do not have any of these. With the genocide, almost all their physical space of memory was destroyed. For a long time the Roma minority did not share in the building of the Ukrainian nation. The commemoration of the Roma Holocaust has the possibility of changing this situation, boosting the inclusion of Roma in contemporary Ukrainian society.

JEROME S. LEGGE, JR.

WAR CRIMES IN ITALY AND ELUDING JUSTICE:
THE CASE OF MICHAEL SEIFERT

This article utilizes Canadian, German, and Italian documents to trace the life of Michael Seifert, an SD auxiliary who in 2000 an Italian military court convicted in absentia for crimes he committed in the Bolzano Police Transit Camp (*Polizei Durchgangslager*) in German-occupied Italy. An ethnic German from Landau, Ukraine, Seifert avoided conscription in the Red Army and obtained employment with the Ger-

man occupation forces as a guard at a shipyard and, subsequently, a similar position at a sanitarium where prisoners were interrogated by the Germans. Although not an interrogator himself, Seifert was useful in working with the occupation forces by virtue of his fluency in German and Russian.

As the war on the Eastern front turned against the Germans and the Red Army drove into the Ukraine in 1944, Seifert found himself re-assigned to German-occupied Italy by the spring. His first assignment was serving as a driver for Lieutenant General Wilhelm Harster, the Commander of the Security Police and SD for all of Italy in Verona. Shortly thereafter, Seifert was assigned to the Police Transit Camp at Fossoli. At the end of 1943/beginning of 1944, Italian police began to move incarcerated Jews from Italian cities and smaller make-shift camps into Fossoli. The camp served as a center from which Jews were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. By the time Seifert reached the facility in summer 1944, his role was focused on guarding political prisoners and the relatively small number of Jews who remained.

As Allied air superiority and partisan activities increased in the Fossoli-Modena area in summer 1944, the SS made a decision to transfer the prisoners to Bolzano, a facility more secure and closer to the Reich near the Brenner Pass. It was in Bolzano where Seifert committed his crimes. These included torture and murder of both Jews and Italian political prisoners. The event that precipitated the atrocities was Seifert's conviction of sexual assault on a local Bolzano woman outside the camp's confines with fellow ethnic German auxiliary Otto Sein. A special SS inquiry convened in Bolzano convicted the two men of raping the woman. While the sentence was to be served at the war's end, the camp command imprisoned the men immediately in a cell that adjoined many prison cells and Sein and Seifert were free to roam the facility and assault, brutalize, and in some cases murder the victims.

Seifert fled Bolzano as the war ended and the camp closed in May 1945. This article details Seifert's change in identity to a claim of Estonian citizenship, his avoidance of Allied justice, and his self re-invention in post-war Germany as an agricultural worker. Lying about his past, he sought immigration into Canada which needed help with agricultural manpower. He emigrated from Germany in 1951, reestablishing himself in the lumber industry. After several years outside of Vancouver, he settled in that city, attaining Canadian citizenship in 1966. In

the meanwhile, inquiries by Seifert's parents to the German Red Cross convinced them of his death but in 1960 his mother received notice from the agency that her son had been located in Canada. Much of the difficulty of finding him was related to the fact that he had lied about his country of birth.

Seifert's name resurfaced with the Italian government in 1994 when an Italian prosecutor located a large cache of documents that were hidden in 1960 by then Italian Attorney General Enrico Santacroce. These files became known as "the closet of shame" and contained comprehensive information on crimes committed by both Germans and Italians during the war. Some of the material was utilized to implicate Erik Priebke for his role in the Ardeatine Caves massacre in Rome in 1944. When the Priebke trial ended, attention turned to Seifert, following the publication of his Bolzano crimes in the Italian media. The Italian judicial authorities were aided also by a German prosecutor in Dortmund who had evidence that Seifert was living in Vancouver.

Seifert's trial was conducted by the Italian Military Court in Verona in November 2000. The prosecution utilized the testimony of living witnesses to Seifert's crimes in the camp as well as evidence from the closet of shame that was newly available. The court convicted Seifert on ten of the fifteen charges to include the most egregious crimes of murder and torture.

Finally, this essay describes the Canadian legal proceedings. The Canadians instituted legal procedures to strip Seifert of citizenship and extradite him to Italy beginning with his arrest by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in May 2002. As in the U.S., legal proceedings are designed to make the removal of citizenship difficult and the process is slow because of the avenues of appeal. Despite rulings in favor of the Canadian government by lower courts, it was not until January 2008 that the Supreme Court refused to review the case and Seifert was transported out of Vancouver to live out the remainder of his days at the Capua Vetere Prison in Santa Maria, Italy. He died on 6 November 2010 at age 84.