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## RAPE AS A FORM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE HOLOCAUST (EVIDENCE FROM GENERAL DISTRICT VOLYN-PODILLIA)

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the paper* is to uncover rape as the most criminal form of sexual violence directed at Jewish women during the Holocaust (in the example of the General District Volyn-Podillia).

*The scientific novelty* of the paper is in the fact that rape as sexual violence directed at Jewish women during the Holocaust in a single territory (Volyn and Podillia) has been singled out and analyzed for the first time in a separate study.

*The research methodology* is based on the principles of scientism, historicism, objectivity, problematic-historical, and searching methods, as well as methods of analysis and systematization. The oral history method has become important in the study.

*Conclusions.* Rape, in the context of sexual violence, was a common practice during the Holocaust. Such crimes were committed by German soldiers, the Gestapo and other occupiers, their minions – collaborators, the Ukrainian police, as well as civilians, neighbors, rescuers, and ‘ordinary men’. Despite the prohibition of sexual relations between Germans and Jewish women, that rule was not enforced either in Germany or in the territories it occupied. The waves of sexual violence in the analyzed territories of Volyn and Podillia could be considered the initial period of the occupation, staying in the ghetto, and ‘Final Solution to the Jewish Question’, as well as the period of hiding. The conclusions of the study show that the committed sexual crimes depended more on mercantile reasons, satisfying the sexual needs of the rapists than on their ideological/anti-Semite or political preferences.

Enforcers of the Ukrainian police during their service in the civil administration of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, who, by virtue of their official duties, were most often in contact with Jews and had the opportunity to commit violence against them, were widely involved in the crimes committed. Gang rapes were frequent, indicating the impact of brutalization and violence during the war, and the perpetrators’ belief that they would not be punished. Sometimes after rape, women were tried to be killed in order to conceal the traces of the crimes.

Jewish women had a ghost of a chance of defending themselves. They succeeded only in some cases. Sexual violence affected not only women and girls but also men, for whom it was an act of humiliation, a manifestation of their inability to protect women.

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*Keywords:* Holocaust, sexual violence, rape, Jewish women, General District Volyn-Podillia, Ukrainian police

## ЗГВАЛТУВАННЯ ЯК ФОРМА СЕКСУАЛЬНОГО НАСИЛЬСТВА ПІД ЧАС ГОЛОКОСТУ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОЇ ОКРУГИ «ВОЛИНЬ-ПОДІЛЛЯ»)

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### АНОТАЦІЯ

**Мета дослідження** полягає у висвітленні згвалтувань під час Голокосту як найбільш злочинної форми сексуального насильства над євреями (на прикладі генеральної округи “Волинь-Поділля”).

**Наукова новизна** статті полягає у тому, що вперше в окремій розвідці про сексуальне насильство над євреями виокремлено та проаналізовано згвалтування під час Голокосту на окремо взятій території (Волинь і Поділля).

**Методологія** дослідження базується на принципах науковості, історизму, об’єктивності, проблемно-історичного, пошукового методів, а також методах аналізу та систематизації. Важливим у дослідженні став метод усної історії.

**Висновки.** Згвалтування в контексті здійснення сексуального насильства стало поширеною практикою під час Голокосту. Такі злочини вчиняли німецькі солдати, гестапо й інші окупанти, їхні прислужники – колаборанти, українська поліція, а також цивільні жителі, сусіди, рятувальники, “звичайні чоловіки”. Незважаючи на заборону сексуальних стосунків німців з євреями, це правило не виконувалося ні в Німеччині, ні в окупованих нею теренах. Хвилями сексуального насильства в аналізованих теренах Волині та Поділля можна вважати початковий період окупації, перебування в гетто та “вирішення єврейського питання”, а також період переховування. Висновки дослідження свідчать, що скоєні сексуальні злочини залежали більше від меркантильних причин, задоволення сексуальних потреб насильників, а не від їхніх ідеологічних/антисемітських чи політичних уподобань.

Широко долучилися до скоєних злочинів представники української поліції під час їхньої служби у цивільній адміністрації РКУ, які в силу службових обов’язків найчастіше контактували з єврей(й)ками і мали можливість чинити над ними насилля. Частинами випадками були групові згвалтування, що свідчить про вплив бруталізації та насилля в час війни, уявлення насильників, що їх не буде покарано. В частині випадків після згвалтування жінок намагалися вбивати, щоб приховати сліди злочинів.

Єврейські жінки мали примарні шанси себе захистити. Це вдавалося лише в деяких випадках. Сексуальне насильство впливало не лише на жінок і дівчат, а й на чоловіків, для яких це було актом приниження, виявом їхньої нездатності захистити жінок.

**Фінансування.** Цей проект отримав фінансування через проект EURIZON, який фінансується Європейським Союзом за грантовою угодою № 871072. Також це дослідження було здійснено завдяки доступу до джерел із колекції ‘Visual History and Education’ Фонду Шоа (Університет Південної Каліфорнії, США) та усних свідчень Yihad-In unum (Париж, Франція).

**Ключові слова:** Голокост, сексуальне насильство, згвалтування, єврейські жінки, генеральна округа “Волинь-Поділля”, українська поліція

## INTRODUCTION

Sexual crimes have always accompanied major wars, especially when it comes to genocides. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the events of Russia's current war against Ukraine. Rape and other crimes of a sexual nature committed by the Russian military in Ukraine, not only against women but also against men and children, are considered by scholars as a systematic policy of Russia against the civilian population with the aim of demoralizing and morally breaking the resistance of Ukrainian society. In the system of structural violence, this is a kind of act of domination, which is used to humiliate the victims.

It should be noted that sexual violence is not only physical penetration into a woman's body. Such acts include moral and psychological violence, which may not cause physical pain but cause humiliation: forcing women to expose themselves in public, searching women's bodies, photographing them naked, observing childbirth, shaving hair, etc. Although, among this list, the most serious sexual crime is rape itself.

Sexual violence implies the different positions of women and men. However, during the studied period, the common matter was that the rape of women was not only a problem of a specific person but of the entire nation, because the abuse was committed against an occupied nation that could not defend itself. The current issue is the subject of analysis for many researchers. In particular, Marta Havryshko emphasizes the problem of victimization of men who were traumatized by sexual violence against women, because they could not prevent that violence and protect their relatives<sup>1</sup>.

*This study is devoted to the uncovering of sexual violence during the Holocaust, analyzing the example of the General District Volyn-Podillia. During the Nazi occupation, the District was part of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (RKU), where its main institutions were located. The city of Rivne was the center of the RKU. It housed the Staff Headquarters of the Quartermaster-General (Generalquartiermeister) and the economic administration of Army Group 'South', the Staff Headquarters of the Army Group South Rear Area Command (Rückwärtiges Heeresgebiet Süd) in Ukraine, the Central Issuing Bank of Ukraine (Zentralnotenbank Ukraine), the German Supreme Court (Deutsches Gericht Rowno), etc. The region ranked first in terms of area and second in population in the RKU (as of 1943). In the second half of 1941, two of the three biggest actions to exterminate Jews occurred there: in Kamianets-Podilskiy (26-28 August 1941) and Rivne (6-8 November 1941).*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Topical studies on sexual crimes committed by the German military in the occupied Soviet Union belong to Regina Miulkhoizer. The scholar analyzes many sexual relations, from violent and coercive practices to consensual ones. Sexual violence was quite common during the war: Wehrmacht and SS soldiers committed rape and other sexual crimes and had relationships with women who were forced to provide sexual services in return for protection or food. In this context, the scholar

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<sup>1</sup> Гавришко М. Жінки в антиєврейських погромах літа 1941-го в Галичині: жертви, призвідниці та рятівниці. *Міжнаціональні відносини в Україні у XX – на початку XXI ст. Західні землі: монографія* / від. ред. Іван Патер, упоряд. Михайло Романюк; НАН України, Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип'якевича. Львів, 2020. С. 345-403.

dispels the myth that military commanders, adhering to the Nazi ideology of “desecration of the race”, strictly “suppressed the sexuality of soldiers”<sup>2</sup>. Sexual violence was becoming a normal and acceptable practice of everyday situations in the war. Miulkhoizer notes that men not only had the power to commit sexual violence but were themselves vulnerable and sexually abused<sup>3</sup>. Although such aspects are little studied in historiography.

Jeffrey Burds studies sexual violence in Europe during World War II. The scholar highlights German views on gender and separately analyzes violence against Jewish women. Important aspects of his studies are the legacy of wartime sexual violence and the traumas experienced by victims<sup>4</sup>.

In Ukrainian historiography, sufficient progress in gender studies and, in particular, the position of women during the Holocaust has been observed in the last decade. Marta Havryshko is the most representative of the topic of sexual violence in her studies. Women’s experiences of war can be different, as the scholar shows in the example of the anti-Jewish pogroms in the summer of 1941 in Halychyna when women were not only victims but could act as instigators of crimes, be saviors, etc<sup>5</sup>. Based on court proceedings’ materials where cases of rape of Jewish women by Nazi collaborators were heard, the scholar analyzes the case in the town of Bar in Vinnytsia oblast. This example attracts attention not only to the principle of territoriality of our study (Volyn-Podillia General District) but also to the striking facts of group abuse of Holocaust victims<sup>6</sup>. It is important that the study raises the ‘embarrassing’ issue of sexual violence by neighbors, saviors of Jewish women who were hiding in forests, barns, apartments, bunkers, etc. The subject matter of the paper is not the sexual violence of the Nazis, but rather, the neighbors of the Jews, who chose different models of behavior during times of mass violence<sup>7</sup>. Separately, the scholar analyzes sexual violence in the ghettos and camps of Ukraine. It became a means of terrorizing not only women but also the entire Jewish community. The author proves that the Nazi camps and ghettos in Ukraine were just only one of the places in the topography of terror, but it was there, in the spaces of forcible confinement, that sexual violence was particularly concentrated, massive, and brutal<sup>8</sup>. A separate study is devoted to legal proceedings in Soviet Ukraine in the 1940s,

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<sup>2</sup> Mühlhäuser R. *Sex and the Nazi Soldier: Violent, Commercial and Consensual Encounters during the War in the Soviet Union, 1941-45*. Edinburgh University Press, 2021. 392 p.

<sup>3</sup> Мюльхойзер Р. Незаперечний злочин. Сексуальне насильство німецьких вояків під час “Війни на знищення” в Радянському Союзі у 1941-1945 рр. *Жінки Центральної та Східної Європи у Другій світовій війні: гендерна специфіка досвіду в часи екстремального насильства*: збірник наукових праць / за наук. ред. д. іст. н. Г. Грінченко. Київ: ТОВ «АРТ КНИГА», 2015. С. 270-277.

<sup>4</sup> Бердз Дж. Сексуальне насильство в Європі під час Другої світової війни (1939-1945 рр.). *Жінки Центральної та Східної Європи у Другій світовій війні: гендерна специфіка досвіду в часи екстремального насильства*: збірник наукових праць / за наук. ред. д. іст. н. Г. Грінченко. Київ: ТОВ «АРТ КНИГА», 2015. С. 278-306.

<sup>5</sup> Гавришко М. Жінки в антиєврейських погромах літа 1941-го в Галичині... С. 345-403.

<sup>6</sup> Havryshko M. Listening to Women’s Voices: Jewish Rape Survivors’ Testimonies in Soviet War Crimes Trials. *If this is a Woman. Studies on Women and Gender in the Holocaust* / eds. D. Neštáková, K. Grosse-Sommer, B. Klacsmann. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021. P. 221-242.

<sup>7</sup> Гаришко М. Згвалтування у сховках: сексуальне насильство під час Голокосту в Україні. *Голокост і сучасність: студії в Україні і світі*. 2019. № 1 (17). С. 10-30.

<sup>8</sup> Havryshko M. Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Perspectives from Ghettos and Camps in Ukraine. *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*. 18.05.2020. URL: <https://ua.boell.org/en/2020/05/18/sexual-violence-holocaust-perspectives-ghettos-and-camps-ukraine>

relating to sexual violence during the Holocaust. Based on archival criminal cases, testimonies of victims, witnesses, and defense, strategies of defense of the accused, their verdicts, and the attitude of judicial authorities to the testimonies of victims, witnesses, and accused are analyzed<sup>9</sup>.

Important gender studies are conducted by Maksym Hon and Nataliia Ivchuk, who analyze the situation of women during the Holocaust, their fate, behavior, and gender (in)equality. Although sexism did not play a decisive role in the ideology of the Nazis, during the Holocaust, some girls and women from the groups prepared for to be exterminated fell victim to it. In the context of genocide, acts of rape were perceived not only as physical abuse to Jewish women but also as their extra-physiological dimension could be seen: to cause psychological trauma to the relatives of the raped and to the social group as a whole (primarily men), who were unable to protect 'their own women'<sup>10</sup>. In another of their joint study, the female component in the political economy of the Holocaust, forms of violence against women (including sexual violence as an element of systemic violence), and defiled motherhood are highlighted. Sexual violence against Jewish women was a part of systemic violence in various forms: photographing naked women of the target group, humiliation, and abuse both on an individual and a collective level<sup>11</sup>. Nataliia Ivchuk analyzes gender-motivated violence during the Holocaust. The author notes that for the Nazis, Jewish women were those who could give birth to children, and the 'guilt' of men was that the latter could impregnate them. Since genocide is the targeted killing of a group, women and men, dehumanized by the Nazis, shared a common bitter fate. The cases of the study are the sources of Volyn-Podillia region (USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive), which reveal violence against Jewish men and women, including the rape of Jewish women<sup>12</sup>.

In Volodymyr Hinda's study of sex during the German-Soviet war, the author raises sufficient issues, in particular, he studies sexual crimes committed not only against Jewish women but also includes crimes committed by Wehrmacht soldiers, Red Army soldiers, Soviet partisans, UPA soldiers, and soldiers of the allied the USSR and Germany armies over the women in the occupied territories. As the author notes, "sex at the front does not correlate with such concepts as heroism or self-sacrifice", so until now, sexual life in extreme conditions has not been discussed much as a problem in itself<sup>13</sup>.

Important works include Anatolii Podolskyi's study of the tragic fate of Jewish women in Ukraine during the Holocaust, where the author analyzes the situation of

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<sup>9</sup> Havryshko M. Rape on Trial: Criminal Justice Actors in 1940s Soviet Ukraine and Sexual Violence during the Holocaust. *No Neighbours' Land: Postwar Europe in a New Comparative Perspective* / eds. Anna Wylegała, Sabine Rutar, Małgorzata Łukianow. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. P. 205-227. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10857-0\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10857-0_9)

<sup>10</sup> Гон М., Івчук Н. Жінки в час Голокосту: долі, поведінка та гендерні (не)рівності. *Голокост і сучасність: студії в Україні і світі*. 2016. № 1 (14). С. 9-49.

<sup>11</sup> Гон М., Івчук Н. Жіноче «обличчя» Голокосту: гендерний аспект геноциду євреїв в Україні (1941-1944). *Проблеми історії Голокосту: український вимір*. Реферований щорічний журнал. Дніпро: Інститут «Ткума»; ПП «Ліра ЛТД», 2022. Вип. 14. С. 10-40.

<sup>12</sup> Івчук Н. Гендерно-мотивоване насильство у часи Голокосту. *Суспільно-політичні та історичні аспекти розвитку сучасної єврейської громади України: європейський контекст*: монографія. Київ: ІПіЕНД ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України, 2022. С. 329-344.

<sup>13</sup> Гінда В. Секс і німецько-радянська війна. Київ: Арій, 2022. 368 с.

Jewish women during the Nazi occupation in the RKU and District Halychyna<sup>14</sup>; Roman Mikhhalchuk's work, where he gives the facts of sexual violence against Jewish women in Rivne<sup>15</sup>, Mizoch<sup>16</sup>, and Rivne region in general<sup>17</sup>; Volodymyr Muzychenko's study, where the situation in Volodymyr-Volynskyi is revealed<sup>18</sup>.

The sources of the study are the testimonies of Jews and non-Jewish witnesses, which are preserved in the world's largest collections of oral history testimonies: the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education (Los Angeles, USA) and Yahad-In Unum (Paris, France). Memorial Books should also be included in the archive of the Jews' testimonies. Criminal files on convicted persons in the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and in the oblast archival departments of the SBU keep record of a whole kaleidoscope of crimes committed by convicted policemen against the Jewish population during the Holocaust, including sexual violence and rape.

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET WAR

Sexual violence during the Holocaust was of a massive nature. Researchers and military psychologists note that during a war, there is always a surge of sexual activity among soldiers and officers, associated with the natural desire of men to fulfill their reproductive function in the moment of mortal danger<sup>19</sup>. Sexual violence is also compared to the penetration into a woman's body, as conquerors invade an occupied country. Analyzing the behavior and motivations of male rapists during genocides, Adam Jones notes that the most dangerous is the disillusioned and estranged man who may seek ways to assert himself through existential violence against women<sup>20</sup>. According to Alan Cooper's study, men committing sexual violence could have an acute crisis of masculine identity, so they sought to destroy the desired object – a woman. Thus, the rapist of a woman is generally a dysfunctional and humiliated man. According to the theory of Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, men rebel against the patriarchal order which alienates them, denying access to women. In response to this sense of marginalization and humiliation, genocidal masculinity rejects the old patriarchy and expresses itself through murder. The result of this is ritualized cruelty, "life force atrocities", destroying the most basic institutions of the reproduction of this group, especially the family<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Подольський А. Єврейські жінки України в добу Голокосту та нацистської окупації (1941-1944): спроби дослідження трагічної долі. *Жінки Центральної та Східної Європи у Другій світовій війні: гендерна специфіка досвіду в часи екстремального насильства*: зб. наук. пр. / ред. Гелінада Грінченко, Катерина Кобченко, Оксана Кісь. Київ: ТОВ «АРТ КНИГА», 2015. С. 219-230.

<sup>15</sup> Михальчук Р. Створення та функціонування Рівненського гетто. *Intermarum: історія, політика, культура*, 2022. Вип. 10. С. 73-91.

<sup>16</sup> Михальчук Р. «Я був гірше ніж собака і весь час питав чому так»: становище євреїв у Мізочі під час Голокосту. *Проблеми історії Голокосту: український вимір*. Дніпро: Інститут «Ткума»; ПП «Ліра ЛТД», 2022. Вип. 14. С. 58-100.

<sup>17</sup> Михальчук Р. Смерть і виживання під час Голокосту: терени сучасної Рівненщини. Рівне: Волинські обереги, 2022. 272 с.

<sup>18</sup> Музиченко В. Володимир єврейський. Історія і трагедія єврейської громади Володимира-Волинського. Нововолинськ: Формат, 2021. 432 с.

<sup>19</sup> Гінда В. Секс і німецько-радянська війна... С. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Джонс А. Геноцид: Вступ до глобальної історії / Пер. з англ. Катерини Дисси. Київ: ДУХ І ЛІТЕРА, 2019. С. 506.

<sup>21</sup> Джонс А. Геноцид: Вступ до глобальної історії... С. 506.

The brutalization of war, as well as political and ideological factors, might have played a certain role in the committing of sexual violence. Anti-Semitism and racial theories could also influence violence in various forms, including sexual violence, with the aim of dehumanizing the enemy. Even though in the Third Reich, sexual contacts between Germans and Jewish women were prohibited, according to the Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935, such relations did not stop. In the occupied eastern territories, located on the periphery far from the center, such sexual contacts (voluntary or forced) could occur even more often.

Officially, the practice of sexual relations between Germans and Jews was prohibited because, according to Nazi ideology, there was a danger of 'desecrating the blood of the Aryans'. However, as a matter of fact, that rule was not followed both in Germany itself and in the territories it occupied. Regina Miulkhoizer notes that measures to maintain discipline and punish soldiers, introduced by the Wehrmacht, were implemented extremely rarely. Failure to take such measures opened up a 'possibility space' where sexual violence became an acceptable and normal part of everyday situations in war and combat<sup>22</sup>. According to Volodymyr Hinda, the sexual behavior of men joining the army became much more active and aggressive than in peacetime: sexual activity and desire increased sharply, which became one of the reasons for gang rapes<sup>23</sup>.

In this regard, a dilemma arose. As Regina Miulkhoizer notes, on the one hand, sexual violence was considered undesirable because it undermined military discipline and the authority of the armed forces, and worst of all, it contradicted the racial ideas of Nazism, and on the other hand, sexual violence was considered an almost inevitable aspect of war. Since male sexual capability was seen as a demonstration of strength and something generally useful in the context of warfare, most military commanders did not think they had the right to impose a ban on sexual contact. Unlike desertion, the Wehrmacht did not consider sexual violence to be a 'primary crime'<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, serious punishments for such crimes could only be imposed in the West. For example, as Jeffrey Burds notes, it could have been a military tribunal and execution<sup>25</sup>. In the East, the situation was different. Given the local population's deprivation of rights, such cases were usually not publicized. Farther the German military was from the 'center of Aryan civilization', the less control there was over their behavior. Thus, they had more opportunities to commit violence. Compared to Western Europe, in the East, the Germans had much greater opportunities to abuse local women, particularly Jewish women. If the case of rape on the occupied territory of the USSR was submitted to the tribunal, German soldiers received much lighter sentences than on the Western Front. According to the opinion of Birgin Beck, such difference was caused by the methods of racial warfare. In particular, the 'Barbarossa' Decree of May 13, 1941, stipulated those crimes committed by German soldiers against the civilian Soviet population should not be punished (there were certain exceptions). Accordingly, as noted by David Raub Snyder, most of the men on the Eastern Front did not serve the full term of imprisonment. They were granted parole after only a few months in prison. After that, they could return to the ranks of the armed forces<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Мюльхойзер Р. Незаперечний злочин... С. 276-277.

<sup>23</sup> Гінда В. Секс і німецько-радянська війна... С. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Мюльхойзер Р. Незаперечний злочин... С. 275.

<sup>25</sup> Бердз Дж. Сексуальне насильство в Європі під час Другої світової війни... С. 286.

<sup>26</sup> Мюльхойзер Р. Незаперечний злочин... С. 275-276.

The Germans, their minions – collaborators and local residents sexually assaulted Jewish women throughout the entire period of occupation. However, in certain periods of time, characterized by the growth of anti-Jewish violence, such crimes occurred more often. The first wave of such violence could be considered the beginning of the occupation when, in the conditions of unformed administrative institutions of the new government, partial disorder, and pogroms, there was an opportunity to commit uncontrolled or controlled violence against Jews. The next growing wave could be considered the period of ghetto liquidation and the massacres of Jews when the occupiers tried to use the last days of the Jews' life to satisfy their mercantile and physiological interests (although systematic rapes were committed constantly during the period of ghetto functioning). Period of hiding after the massacres could be singled out as another period of sexual violence against Jewish women. During that time, they were vulnerable to the police, local residents who hunted them, and some rescuers who demanded payment in money, sexual services, etc. for their hiding. It should be noted that in all the above-mentioned cases (waves) and in general during the period of occupation, sexual violence was committed by officials of the German administration, the Gestapo, representatives of the Ukrainian police, various collaborators, as well as civilian residents (neighbors) of the Jews.

#### **THE BEGINNING OF THE NAZI OCCUPATION: THE FIRST WAVE OF ANTI-JEWISH VIOLENCE**

The beginning of the occupation of the territory of the Soviet Union by the Germans was characterized by a wave of anti-Jewish violence and pogroms. At that time, in the summer and fall of 1941, the actions of criminals, pogrom-makers, and other persons concerned were aimed at physical violence (murder) of Jews, looting of their property, sexual and moral humiliation, etc. The historiography of the issue is rather well-studied by foreign and Ukrainian scholars<sup>27</sup>. Kai Struve, for example, refutes the thesis that the manifestations of violence against Jews were spontaneous atrocities caused by anti-Semitism and self-interest. He emphasizes the central role of organized groups of OUN insurgents rebelling against the Soviet government, which, during the change of power, punished the 'tower of strength' of the Soviets<sup>28</sup>.

Researchers note that one of the unwritten rules of war is to allow the victors to sexually abuse women during a short period of disorder<sup>29</sup>. Thus, at the beginning of August 1941, less than two months after the invasion of the USSR, the commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army reported that the number of sexual crimes in the war zone had increased significantly<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Зокрема, деякі з них: *Mędykowski W.* W cieniugigantów: Pogromy 1941 roku w byłej sowieckiej strefie okupacyjnej: kontekst historyczny, społeczny i kulturowy. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2012; *Zbikowski A.* Local Anti-Jewish pogroms in the Occupied Territories of Eastern Poland, June-July 1941. *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: studies and sources on the destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-occupied Territories of the USSR. 1941-1945* / ed. *Lucian Dobroszycki, Jeffrey Gurock*. NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1993. P. 173-179; *Spector S.* The Holocaust of Volhynian Jewry, 1941-1944. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990. 383 p.; *Lower W.* Pogroms, mob violence and genocide in western Ukraine, summer 1941: varied histories, explanations and comparisons. *Journal of Genocide Research*. 2011. № 13 (3). P. 217-246; *Круглов А.* Погромы в восточной Галиции лета 1941 года: организаторы, участники, масштабы и последствия. *Проблеми історії Голокосту*. 2010. Вип. 5. С. 56-73.

<sup>28</sup> *Струве К.* Німецька влада, український націоналізм, насильство проти євреїв: літо 1941 року в Західній Україні. Київ: ДУХ І ЛІТЕРА, 2022. С. 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Мюльхойзер Р.* Незаперечний злочин... С. 269.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* С. 275.



Pogroms and violence in the territory of Volyn-Podillia were committed by various social, political, and ideological groups with their motives and goals: the German occupiers, their local supporters, neighbors of the Jewish, etc. The sources do not make it possible to identify the initiators of violence in all cases: was the primary factor external (Germans) or local? It should also be noted that sexual violence was not generally the primary goal of rioters, but often occurred in the course of the general continuum of violence, and sometimes it was of a spontaneous nature.

Thus, sexual violence is one of many other types of violence, committed along with beatings, murders, lootings, physical, moral, and psychological abuse, etc. The facts of the rapes of Jewish women at that time are well documented. Bluma Doitch from Rivne testified that when the Germans occupied the city, "there was hardly any Jewish house that the soldiers did not visit to rob and rape"... "Looting and rape became everyday phenomena", she recalled<sup>31</sup>. In addition, Doitch emphasized that some Ukrainians, after the occupation of Rivne, got the opportunity to take revenge on the Jews, so they joined the Germans' abuse of Jewish women, and "looted, raped, and killed as many as they could". They also informed the Germans and were a kind of "tour guides" to places where Jews could hide<sup>32</sup>.

A similar scenario was the treatment of Jewish girls and women in other towns where the occupiers came, in which not only the Germans acted as rapists. In Starokostiantyniv, on the second or third night, the occupiers came to a Jewish family. There was uproar all night – the Germans raped a 16-year-old Jewish girl<sup>33</sup>. During the pogrom in Lanivtsi, where Jewish houses were looted and 60 Jews were killed, Jewish girls were raped. According to the testimony of a Jewish witness, a Ukrainian starosta announced that Jews were forbidden to have children, and the punishment for violating the order was the castration of women to make them sterile<sup>34</sup>. Testimonies of rapes at the beginning of the occupation were documented in Rafalivka<sup>35</sup>, Stolin<sup>36</sup>, Snitkiv<sup>37</sup>, during the pogrom in Tuchyn<sup>38</sup>, etc.

Many sources indicate that the rapists were actual police officers, not imaginary Germans/Nazis. Miriam Kashuk-Szprync from Mizoch testified that on the fourth day after the occupation of the town, about two dozen of the most beautiful and educated Jewish girls were lined up and forced to walk through the streets of the town. On the way, the police resorted to insults and harassment. The girls were brought to a hospital where they had to wash underwear and blood-stained clothes. Just during that, a policeman named Anton took one of the refugee girls with him and sexually abused her. Miriam testified: "We didn't see anything – we just heard her horrible screams from the next room. Half an hour later, she came back, and he was following

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<sup>31</sup> Memorial book of Rivne. URL: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rovno/rov514.html>; Михальчук Р. Створення та функціонування Рівненського гетто... С. 81.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>33</sup> Yahad-In unum (Paris, France) (YIU). Testimony 865UK.

<sup>34</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945: Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe / vol. ed. *Dean Martin*. Vol. 2. Washington: Indiana University Press, 2012. P. 1402.

<sup>35</sup> University of Southern California (USA), Shoah Foundation Institute, Visual History Archive (USC SFI VHA). Testimony 29420, Grogorii Shirman.

<sup>36</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945... P. 1478.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. P. 1471.

<sup>38</sup> *McBride J.* The Tuchyn Pogrom: The Names and Faces Behind the Violence, Summer 1941. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 2022. Vol. 36, № 3. P. 321.

her. She was as pale as chalk and did not look at us. An oppressive silence fell in the laundry room. Anton came out, and she asked: "Why don't you ask anything?" We continued to be silent. There was no need to ask, everything was clear. Suddenly, she began wailing in an inhuman voice. She fell face down on the floor and hit her head on a brick. We all cried bitterly, saddened by our bitter fate"<sup>39</sup>.

Jewish women often died after being abused and physically injured. On several occasions, they were killed by the perpetrators themselves in order to conceal the traces of the crimes. Ann Kazimierski recalled that when the Germans came to Volodymyr-Volynskyi, her father and brother were killed in the prison, and her best friend Sarah was raped by German soldiers and died as a result<sup>40</sup>. During the pogrom in Vyshnivtsi in September 1941, 113 Jews were reported missing. Lootings and murders were combined with rapes. Policeman Khomitskyi and his colleague noticed Rukhlia Steiner and Gulia Katz, who climbed the trees because they were afraid of the pogrom. The policemen took them to the nearest house and raped them. After that, Gulia Katz managed to escape, and Rukhlia Steiner was killed<sup>41</sup>.

In addition to the Germans, representatives of the Ukrainian police, etc., civilians also could take advantage of the helpless situation of Jewish women. Such facts are less documented but are present in the testimonies of Jewish women. For example, Faina Ostrovskaia recalled that in Sudylykiv, at the beginning of the occupation, at the time when a ghetto had not yet been established, a neighbor, Ukrainian raped a little Jewish girl. She clearly stated that the rapist was not a policeman<sup>42</sup>.

#### **RAPES IN THE GHETTO AND DURING THE 'FINAL SOLUTION TO THE JEWISH QUESTION' ACTIONS**

Numerous facts of sexual violence occurred during the stay of Jewish women in the ghetto. On the one hand, in order to hide and avoid sexual abuse, Jewish women moved to the ghetto on their own initiative, considering it to be safer because the entrance to the area was closed to non-Jewish residents. On the other hand, the concentration of Jews in a limited local area created such conditions under which the policemen could easily find potential victims and abuse them. In such cases, ghetto buildings could not become a safe hiding place for Jewish women. In Volodymyr-Volynskyi, when, according to the testimony of a Jewish witness, "the Gestapo started looting, raping, and killing", it became dangerous for the Jewish girls Taubtsiia, Rakhel, and Fruma to stay in the house, so they on their own free will went to ghetto<sup>43</sup>. Klara Tokner, a Jewish woman from Dubno, who found herself in Warsaw ghetto with her mother, recalled that they were afraid of rapists and tried not to leave the ghetto because they could be raped<sup>44</sup>.

However, the ghetto buildings could not be a safe shelter from the Germans and the police, who frequently visited them. In such conditions, Jews could not protect themselves from physical and sexual violence. That is why many cases of rape were documented. In this context, researcher Marta Havryshko emphasizes that it was

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<sup>39</sup> Memorial book of Mizoch. URL: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Mizoch/miz090.html#Page95>; Михальчук Р. «Я був гірше ніж собака і весь час питаю чому так»... С. 91-92.

<sup>40</sup> Музиченко В. Володимир єврейський... С. 215.

<sup>41</sup> Клименко О., Ткачов С. Українці в поліції в рейхскомісаріаті «Україна»: німецький окупаційний режим на Кременеччині у 1941-1944 рр. Харків: Ранок НП, 2012. С. 162.

<sup>42</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 32781, Faina Ostrovskaia.

<sup>43</sup> Музиченко В. Володимир єврейський... С. 264

<sup>44</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 33092, Klara Tokhner.

there, in the spaces of forcible confinement, that sexual violence was particularly concentrated, massive, and brutal<sup>45</sup>. In Ostrozhets ghetto, such facts were mentioned by Nathan Peters<sup>46</sup> and Anatolii Burstein<sup>47</sup>. In particular, drunk SS men and policemen broke into the ghetto and raped young Jewish girls<sup>48</sup>. Jewish girls as young as 16 were raped in Yaryshivka ghetto<sup>49</sup>. The facts of sexual violence committed by the Germans in Brest ghetto were covered in great detail by a witness who was interviewed by the Yahad-In Unum team in 2009. The witness noted that “There were rapes there, everything was there. They did what they wanted there”:

– And who raped women, the Germans?

– Well, of course. No one else could enter there.

– Were they raped directly in the ghetto, or were they taken somewhere?

– No, they were taking them somewhere...

– Did they take the women out every evening?

– Well, almost every evening. It was through the window that we observed all that.

– And those women they brought out – were they young women?

– Well, of course. Young people, moreover, Jewish women, there were beautiful women. There were different ones. About ten of them entered the ghetto.

– Don't you know whether those women in the ghetto returned to the ghetto or already not?

– They used them there in the ghetto. They were not taken out beyond the wire to freedom. No one passed through the gate<sup>50</sup>.

The everyday life of Jews in the ghetto was full of violence. Policemen used their official position to satisfy their own lust due to the deprivation of rights of the ghetto prisoners. In Kamianets-Podilskyi ghetto, policeman Tchaikovskiy let women out of the ghetto only after they agreed to have sex with him. Hungry women consented to sexual relations with Tchaikovskiy so that he would let them go to the market to buy food. In such a way, Tania Brott, Hanka, young girls Basia and Donia Amster, and others were raped by him<sup>51</sup>.

It should be noted that cases of sexual abuse became more systematic during the liquidation of the ghetto. Knowing that the ‘Jewish question’ was about to end, the occupiers and their minions tried to use the last moments of the Jews’ lives to satisfy their mercantile interests. According to Gala Kopyt’s testimony, three days before the liquidation of Mizoch ghetto, the Germans went around and raped Jewish women. When several Germans entered her place at night, she was already pregnant and her husband tried to protect her: “When they came to me, my husband stood in front of my bed and covered me with his shoulders. He told the Germans that he was a doctor. They didn’t believe it, they said to show the medical instruments. Then they took our best things and left”<sup>52</sup>.

Local residents also participated in the crimes of the occupiers. According to the

<sup>45</sup> *Havryshko M.* Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Perspectives from Ghettos and Camps in Ukraine...

<sup>46</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 3150, Nathan Peters.

<sup>47</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 44907, Anatolii Burstein.

<sup>48</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945... P. 1441.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* P. 1368.

<sup>50</sup> YIU. Testimony 161B.

<sup>51</sup> *Havryshko M.* Rape on Trial... P. 216.

<sup>52</sup> YVA. Testimony 03/2232, Gala Kopyt. P. 5; *Михальчук Р.* «Я був гірше ніж собака і весь час питаю чому так»... С. 92.

story of Vera Shchetinkova, in Stepanky ghetto, the policemen brought Germans who raped Jewish girls at night. Sometimes, after raping, Jewish women were brought and left half-dead. Vera Shchetinkova mentioned a civilian resident (mentally ill and without one arm) Aliosha, who knew all the young girls in the area and pointed them out to the occupiers. It was impossible to hide from him. They chose the most beautiful girls. "As soon as it was evening, everyone was afraid, hiding in the ghetto"<sup>53</sup>.

The facts of violence were not uncommon, even in the last hours of the life of the ghetto prisoners who were being taken to the pit for execution. In Kupel, two Jewish women who taught at school tried to pay off themselves from the shooting. They hid money in their braided hair. After unplaiting their hair, they got money out of there and gave them to the Germans. At first, they were released, but when the women walked three kilometers away from the pit, the Germans arrived on motorcycles, raped them, and then killed them<sup>54</sup>. Aron Baboukh from Volodymyr-Volynskiy testified that while Jews were digging pits for shooting in Piatydni, the police were raping and killing. According to him, other witnesses also saw that the policemen selected the girls and raped them before killing them<sup>55</sup>.

Sexual violence also occurred after the massacres, when some Jewish women remained alive. After the liquidation of the ghetto in Kovel, fugitive Jews were captured and kept in the big synagogue for several days without food or water. At that time, the policemen periodically selected young Jewish girls from that group and raped them<sup>56</sup>. A similar situation arose in Starokostiantyniv, where, after the massacre on May 20, 1942, several hundred Jews were kept to work in the ghetto. The guards mistreated the ghetto residents; there is information about the rape of two young Jewish girls<sup>57</sup>.

Studying the tragic fate of Jewish women in Ukraine during the Holocaust, in particular, in the territory of the RKU, researcher Anatolii Podolskyi notes that almost always at the places of execution, women were stripped naked, and almost always before taking their lives, they were raped and subjected to severe torture and abuse<sup>58</sup>.

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE AFTER ESCAPING DEATH**

One should not idealize the behavior of those non-Jewish residents who helped the Jews by hiding them. The motives for such behavior were different, not always altruistic, and sometimes mercantile. Some of the saviors hid Jews to get material benefits from them. Being aware of the fact that the pursuing Jews were in a disadvantaged position, the saviors could take advantage of their helplessness/deprivation of rights. Thus, Jewish women could become victims of sexual violence not only from obvious enemies but also from acquaintances, friends, comrades, or other persons with whom they sought protection and support.

After escaping from the ghetto or places where the Jews were shot, new challenges awaited them. Both the occupiers and local residents hunted them for a certain fee.

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<sup>53</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 45238, Vera Shchetinkova.

<sup>54</sup> YIU. Testimony 857UK.

<sup>55</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 26557, Aron Baboukh.

<sup>56</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945... P. 1390.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. P. 1475.

<sup>58</sup> Подольський А. Єврейські жінки України в добу Голокосту та нацистської окупації... С. 222.

Sometimes those who showed empathy for the fugitives and hid them could also commit sexual violence against them. Analyzing the problem of the rape of Jewish women in hiding places, researcher Marta Havryshko asserts that “the experience of sexual violence against Ukrainian Jewish women in hiding places is relevant to the experience of local Jewish women in Eastern Europe”<sup>59</sup>.

It was very dangerous for Jewish men and women to stay in the forests, where they often became targets of abuse by various groups. In their testimonies, it is not always clear which groups were meant and who exactly perpetrated violence against them. However, there are testimonies about specific perpetrators of sexual violence. A Jewish woman Gitel, who wandered in Volyn forests with her husband Abram, recalled that she was sexually abused by a Bandera supporter who did it, holding a gun over the head of her husband Abram<sup>60</sup>. In his diary, the Jew Michael Diment mentioned the Ukrainians who caught Jewish and Polish girls in Volyn forests, raped them, “stuffed empty bottles into their vaginas, and tortured them to death”<sup>61</sup>.

In the houses of townspeople and peasants, where the Jews hid, they had to endure all the conditions they faced to survive, including physical and sexual violence. Mary Stolar from Rivne recalled that when she hid at her savior’s Kolia place for money, he soon began to drink a lot of alcohol. After getting drunk, he became aggressive and began to beat and rape her. As the Jewish woman noted: “He raped me every night”<sup>62</sup>.

Ida Eisenpart-Pliter, who hid in a village near Mizoch under the Ukrainian name Lida, recalled that she was sheltered by a woman who later warned her that it would be better if she ran away from them as soon as possible: “It seems that they want to capture you alive to torture a little. They even offered a reward to anyone who would bring you alive”. The Jewish woman herself later found out that one of the policemen, who set a price on her head, had been her ‘acquaintance’ for a long time and wanted to be with her. Once, when he went too far, Ida firmly refused him. He then said: “Lida, you are not Ukrainian. You are a rude Jewess! A Ukrainian woman would never do the way you did. I managed to remove the mask from your face”<sup>63</sup>.

Another example of testimony from Mizoch is about a Jewish woman who was ‘treated badly’. Sheiva Fradkina told about her mother and sister, who sought salvation and left Dubno for Mizoch. They were both killed. She recalled about her sister Malka Binshtok: “They told me, I don’t know if it’s true, how she was violated. She was just a girl. She was 16 years old”<sup>64</sup>.

#### THE PLACE OF POLICEMEN IN SEXUAL CRIMES

In this study, it is important to focus attention on specific perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence. Representatives of the Ukrainian police and other local units, who carried out the will and orders of the Nazis, played an important, perhaps primary role in that process. That is, the representatives of German authorities and the

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<sup>59</sup> Гаєришко М. Згвалтування у сховках... С. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. С. 19.

<sup>61</sup> Дімент М. Самотній вигнанець. Щоденник про Свинюхи та гетто в Локачах / За ред. Шмуеля Ягалома. Київ: УЦВІГ, 2016. С. 171.

<sup>62</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 3933, Mary Stolar.

<sup>63</sup> Михальчук Р. «Я був гірше ніж собака і весь час питає чому так»... С. 93.

<sup>64</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 44638, Sheiva Fradkina.

performers of the Holocaust for the residents were primarily not the Germans, but the local perpetrators, primarily the policemen. They were the ones who came into contact with the Jews during contributions, searches, lootings, liquidation of the ghetto, insults and violence, etc. Sometimes, in small settlements, residents even did not see the Germans, but the policemen were always there. In addition, many witnesses note that the policemen behaved worse than the Germans (just to prove their loyalty).

Archival criminal cases of convicted policemen show a wide range of crimes against Jews. Almost all of them were involved in physical violence (beatings), looting of Jews, involvement to varying degrees in the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' (convoying victims to the place of execution, individual shootings of Jews who tried to escape, segregation of Jews in the ghettos, etc.), and sexual crimes were among them. Physical and sexual violence was the result of opportunities to use their power position. They committed such crimes not only against the victims of the Holocaust but also against representatives of other nations.

In the sexual crimes committed by the policemen, several peculiar aspects can be distinguished:

- single rapes committed to satisfy their lust (so that no one would know);
- public rapes for the purpose of intimidating others;
- gang rapes; gang rapes involving other officials and civilians.

An example of *single rapes* were cases when Jewish women were caught by policemen, who, recognizing the deprivation of rights of the victims, physically abused them (rape, beating, etc.). In September 1942, the policeman Ivan Fedorov in Sernyky found in the street a Jewish woman Genia Bromberg hiding after the massacre<sup>65</sup>. The policeman ignored the request of the Jewish woman to let her go. Threatening her with a weapon, he took her to somewhere quiet and raped her. After the act of sexual abuse, he let the girl go, taking off her shirt. At the trial, Bromberg testified about Fedorov's threats: "If you don't agree to have sexual intercourse with me now, I will kill you". Frightened by the threat of execution, she "was forced to agree to have sexual intercourse with him"<sup>66</sup>. It should be noted that rape is only one of numerous crimes committed by Fedorov. He repeatedly robbed and beat Jews, and during the interrogation, he confessed that he personally shot two Jews – a five-year-old boy and a man, Yankel Turkeyvych, just because they were of Jewish nationality<sup>67</sup>.

Examples of *public rapes* include the criminal activity of Ivan Poiasiuk, the Chief of the district police in Polonne, who used various methods of obtaining information in the cell where the detainees were held. The indictment against him states: "Taking advantage of his official position, he publicly raped Soviet girls in the cells of those arrested, and the next day they were shot to death"<sup>68</sup>. On August 7, 1941, Poiasiuk, in a drunken state, raped a 16-year-old girl of Jewish nationality, who was being held under his police guard<sup>69</sup>. Apparently, acts of public rape were aimed at putting psychological pressure on other detainees, lowering their moral and psychological spirit, and making them 'more open' to communication/confessions.

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<sup>65</sup> Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in the Rivne region (ASSU RR). File 284. P. 76.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. P. 49.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. P. 33.

<sup>68</sup> Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in the Khmelnytskyi region. File 21279. P. 146.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. P. 242back.

*Gang rapes* were not uncommon. Such crimes were rather often committed by the authorities and police because they were interconnected in various forms of the system of mass and structural violence. The very atmosphere of police work was saturated with violent practices/methods. So, committing group sexual crimes was not something unacceptable. For example, Pavlo Savytskyi, a policeman from the village of Pohost in Rivne region, together with his police colleague Kruhlevych, came to Pryvitivka village at the end of July 1941 and took with them Nachan Shmidman, a 17-year-old Jewish girl. They brought her to Pohost village to the apartment of Ivan Hnedko, a Police Commandant. When Hnedko left the apartment, Savytskyi and Kruhlevych raped the detained Jewish girl<sup>70</sup>. Another example of group violence is the rape of the Jewish woman Zeida Slovtuk by seven representatives of the district police in Volodymyrets<sup>71</sup>. Gang rape is known to take place in Mizoch, when a policeman of Mizoch district police, Heorhii Kolomiets, and his colleague Straton Shah, raped a Jewish woman Sonia Tilchen<sup>72</sup>. In addition, the witness Volf Oks pointed to the rape of a Jewish woman named Vekhna by those individuals. According to him, Kolomiets together with Shah broke into the place of the Leiba, a Jew, and raped his daughter Vehna<sup>73</sup>. Thus, the case concerns the documentation of two acts of gang rape of Jewish women Sonia Tilchen and Vekhna Leiber by the police.

*Gang rapes involving other officials and civilians* were also not uncommon. The executive official position allowed some individuals to act at their own discretion and manner of conduct. The criminal case against Andrusiv, a Police Commandant of the town of Bar, is an example of this. During the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' near Bar, a high-ranking German official ordered Police Commandant Andrusiv to keep 20 young Jewish women 'to have fun'. 16 Jewish women were taken from the group, and policemen took them to a two-story building in Bar. A Jewish woman Klara testified that, besides Germans and policeman Andrusiv, there also was Kolivepyrk, the Chief of Bar Municipal Council. Thus, local officials, and not only Germans and policemen, were involved in sexual crimes. Andrusiv raped Klara, who was still a virgin. Kolivepyrk wanted to rape another 15-year-old girl in the same room on a different bed, but changed his mind and took her to another room. Andrusiv was convinced that after the rape, all the girls were shot, so he denied the act of rape and addressed all the accusations to the Germans<sup>74</sup>. However, in 1966, he was found guilty of complicity in the rape of sixteen Jewish girls and other war crimes and sentenced to death<sup>75</sup>.

Psychological aspects of committing group crimes are analyzed in interdisciplinary studies. According to scholars, a jointly committed action often creates an impression of strengthening loyalty and commitment in small groups. Gang rapes confirm the indissolubility of men's relations. Full of lustful and destructive impulses, men meet each other in a woman's body. In this way, they confirm their masculinity and potency<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> ASSU RR. File 14762. P. 15back, 34back, 54.

<sup>71</sup> The Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine. Fund 5. File 68230. P. 51.

<sup>72</sup> ASSU RR. File 3444. P. 62.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. P. 84back.

<sup>74</sup> *Havryshko M.* Listening to Women's Voices... P. 237.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. P. 238.

<sup>76</sup> *Мюльхойзер Р.* Незаперечный злочин... С. 273.

**BRUTALIZATION, MURDER, AND SEX-RELATED ABUSIVE TREATMENT**

In the scientific literature and sources, the facts of the brutal treatment of victims by criminals are highlighted. This is especially inherent in the traditions of Soviet historiography, where Germans were often depicted as sadists enjoying the torment of their victims. In fact, most of the crimes were committed by 'quite normal men' (according to Christopher Browning<sup>77</sup>), for whom it was just 'everyday work'. Strong anti-Semites, sadists, or mentally ill people made up a small proportion of those who took the lives of Jews.

However, alongside the documented facts of the murder of Jews, there are descriptions of the brutal treatment and torture of the victims before their deaths. In some cases, while committing sexual crimes, women were raped with extreme cruelty, and some of them died. Irvin Szames from Trochenbrod (Zofiówka) ghetto testified that the bodies of the raped girls were mutilated<sup>78</sup>. In Mlyniv, the Nazis raped women and girls and then shot them<sup>79</sup>. Jewish women were also killed for having an unwanted pregnancy. When a Jewish woman got pregnant by a German in Mezhyrichi, he ordered his subordinate to kill her<sup>80</sup>. In Ostrozhets, it is also known about the murder of two Jewish women who had sexual relations with Lieutenant Friedrich Vogel, a representative of the German Agricultural Administration (Kreislandwirt), and whom he killed personally<sup>81</sup>.

A common situation was sexual exploitation, where Jewish women were not only raped but also forced into long-term sexual relations, using them as women more than once. Bluma Doitch, a Jewish woman from Rivne, pointed to her neighbor as an example. The Germans raped her and ordered her to await them to come the next day, otherwise, they would kill her. When the victim managed to escape in the morning, the occupiers looted her house and neighboring houses<sup>82</sup>. In Dubrovytsia ghetto, the Commandant chose a girl for himself in the evening and handed her over to the policemen in the morning<sup>83</sup>. In August 1941, the Commandant in Zdolbuniv promised to release an arrested Jew if his daughter spent the night with him. The daughter fulfilled the condition, but the Commandant did not keep his word and did not release the Jew<sup>84</sup>.

Often, sexual crimes were committed against underage girls. For young Jewish girls, such behavior of the occupiers was perceived as particularly horrifying. When 15-year-old Edith Cimmer from Berezne was in danger of being raped, she recalled, "I didn't know anything about love or sex or what it meant". She panicked just thinking that she could be raped at that age. In the end, she engaged in self-reflection that she would rather be killed than raped<sup>85</sup>. There are quite a lot of facts about rape of minors and children during the Holocaust. According to the testimony of N. Anapolskyi, in Korets, the Germans raped 13-15-year-old Jewish girls in sight of their mothers, and

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<sup>77</sup> *Browning Chr.* Ordinary Men. London: Penguin Books, 2001.

<sup>78</sup> *Havryshko M.* Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Perspectives from Ghettos and Camps in Ukraine...

<sup>79</sup> *Михальчук Р.* Смерть і виживання під час Голокосту... С. 57-58.

<sup>80</sup> YIU, Testimony 1420UK.

<sup>81</sup> Острожець від давнини до сьогодні / упор. Н. Миколайчук. Вид. 2-ге, допов. Луцьк: ПрАТ «Волинська обласна друкарня», 2011. С. 51.

<sup>82</sup> Memorial book of Rivne. URL: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rovno/rov514.html>

<sup>83</sup> *Михальчук Р.* Смерть і виживання під час Голокосту... С. 58.

<sup>84</sup> The State Archive of Rivne region. Fund P-534. List 1. File 4. P. 101.

<sup>85</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 25381, Edith Cimmer.



do it with women and mothers in sight of children and men<sup>86</sup>. In Klevan, Germans organized orgies. One day, two Germans entered the house of a Jewish family, where the mother was bedridden. They threw the father out and raped the 15-year-old daughter in sight of her mother<sup>87</sup>. Policeman Pavlo Khvesiuk, being not indifferent to young Jewish women, is known to rape an underage Jewish woman Raia Poliak<sup>88</sup>. Such facts can also be found in Soviet documents. In the report of Volochysk raion Extraordinary State Commission (The Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Atrocities of the German Fascist Invaders and Their Accomplices and the Damage They Caused to Citizens, Collective Farms, Public Organizations, State Enterprises and Institutions of the USSR) of 27 June 1944 on the investigation of the crimes of the German occupiers, it is stated that for the slightest disobedience, Soviet citizens were beaten with rubber whips, sticks, arrested, and shot, women and minor girls were raped<sup>89</sup>.

In a number of cases, rapes occurred in sight of relatives or neighbors who could not help the victims. According to the testimony of V. Bulakh, in Korets the Germans chose beautiful girls, and “before everyone’s eyes they did what Hitler taught them”<sup>90</sup>. Thus, rape was a humiliation not only of women but also of men. Therefore, witnesses of rape could also be considered victims. At the same time, we should also consider the issue of victimization of men who, although they might not have seen the scenes of sexual violence against their women, were traumatized by them. First of all, because they could not prevent violence and protect their relatives<sup>91</sup>.

#### RESISTANCE OF JEWISH WOMEN

Could Jewish women resist sexual violence and defend themselves? Such cases existed but in rather limited ways. For that purpose, in particular, preventive measures were taken – they disfigured their faces so as not to attract the attention of rapists. Evgeniia Levitskaia from the village of Korytnytsia recalled that when the Germans looted and raped, her parents told her to put headscarves over her face so that her face was not visible and thus did not attract the attention of the rapists<sup>92</sup>. In Korets ghetto, according to the testimony of N. Anapolskyi, girls used various ointments to disfigure their faces and cut their hair bare, so as not to draw attention to themselves and not be raped. Shaia Kleiman testified: “I will never forget young women, girls who cut their hair bare on purpose, smeared their faces with mud and scratched them to look as ugly as possible”<sup>93</sup>. In Proskuriv (Khmelnyskyi), where Jewish women were raped by Nazi officers, Jewish girls tried to protect themselves and smeared their underwear with lipstick so that the Germans had an aversion to the ‘blood’<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> Анапольский Н. Благодаря добрым людям – украинцам, полякам – мы пережили смерть... Живыми остались только мы: свидетельства и документы / ред.-сост., авт. предисл. и коммент. Б. Забарко. Київ: Задруга, 2000. С. 32.

<sup>87</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945... P. 1381.

<sup>88</sup> Клименко О., Ткачов С. Українці в поліції в рейхскомісаріаті «Україна»... С. 74.

<sup>89</sup> Насильство над цивільним населенням. Хмельницька область. Документи органів держбезпеки. 1941-1944 / Автори-упорядники: Валерій Васильєв, Олена Лисенко, Світлана Маркова, Роман Подкур, Андрій Хоптяр, Юрій Хоптяр. Київ: Видавець В. Захаренко, 2022. С. 114.

<sup>90</sup> Михальчук Р. Смерть і виживання під час Голокосту... С. 58.

<sup>91</sup> Гавришко М. Жінки в антиєврейських погромах літа 1941-го в Галичині... С. 376-377.

<sup>92</sup> USC SFI VHA. Testimony 38823, Evgeniia Levitskaia.

<sup>93</sup> Гон М., Івчик Н. Жінки в час Голокосту: долі, поведінка та гендерні (не)рівності... С. 46.

<sup>94</sup> Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945... P. 1450.

There were cases when the courageous behavior of Jewish women prevented acts of abuse. They did not agree to tolerate violence and potential rapists retreated under the threat of publicizing their shameful acts. Thus, after escaping from Volodymyrets ghetto, Hanna, the Jewish woman, recalled the peasant, at whose place she was awaiting the partisans. He began to touch and caress her. Hanna warned him that he would scream and his wife would hear. After those words, he stopped his harassment and left her alone<sup>95</sup>. A similar incident occurred with a 15-year-old Jewish girl, Pesia, in Horodok. The owner of the house fed her and offered to stay for the night, but at night he tried to rape her. When Pesia started screaming, he turned her out because he was afraid that his wife would hear<sup>96</sup>.

An attempted rape might have been interrupted when a third party intervened. In the criminal case of Józef Seidel (a Pole), who worked as a secret agent of the Gestapo in Kostopil from 1943 to 1944, there is a record of the attempted rape of Ukrainian Anastasiia Tsybuliak. In April 1943, the Gestapo shot her husband as a Soviet activist. Then Seidel began to victimize the woman in the village of Mokvyn in Rivne region. He threatened her that she, like her husband, was a 'Bilshovychka' and that he would "shoot her like a dog". Tsybuliak testified that once he was drunk and threatening her with a weapon, he tried to rape her. The attempted rape was prevented by the arrival of the neighbor's daughter, so Seidel let her go. The given fact concerned a Ukrainian woman, but it indicated potential threats from representatives of the occupiers who could use their official position, especially against defenseless women<sup>97</sup>.

Sometimes, the attempts to stop sexual abuse ended tragically. In the summer of 1942, in Mlyniv, policemen Kovalchuk and Shportiuik tried to sexually abuse the daughter of Potash, the Jew, who was killed along with his wife for resisting<sup>98</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sexual violence was a fairly widespread crime against Jewish women during the Holocaust. Among the various types of sexual violence, rape was the most serious crime. It was committed by the German occupiers, their minions – collaborators, the Ukrainian police, as well as civilians, 'ordinary men' throughout the entire period of occupation. The absolute majority of perpetrators were Christians brought up in patriarchal traditions. Among the rapists were also individuals who hid Jewish women, seeking payment for their services in such a way. The analysis of the sources shows that the committed acts of sexual violence depended more on the perpetrators' mercantile matters, and the satisfaction of their sexual needs (sometimes with manifestations of sadism), than on ideological/anti-Semite or political preferences.

Enforcers of the Ukrainian police, who by virtue of their official duties, most often came into contact with Jews and had the opportunity to commit violence against them, were the personification of the occupation authorities' crimes, in particular, sexual ones during the functioning of the civil administration in the territory of the General District Volyn-Podillia. There were frequent cases of gang rape, indicating the impact of brutalization, violence changing the norms of social morality, and the rapists' belief that there would be no punishment for crimes against the persecuted

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<sup>95</sup> Гавришко М. Згвалтування у сховках... С. 20.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. С. 24.

<sup>97</sup> ASSU RR. File 5330. P. 86.

<sup>98</sup> The Central State Archive of Public Organizations and Ukrainica. Fund 166. List 3. File 240. P. 226.

Jewish victims. After the rape, the perpetrators tried to kill the women in order to conceal the traces of the crimes. For a long time, for those who survived the trauma they had, prevented the availability of testifying about the events they had experienced, so a large number of important sources were lost.

Jewish women had a ghost of a chance of defending themselves. Sometimes they appealed to the conscience of the rapists, threatening to expose their actions to their relatives/wives. They succeeded only in some cases. Sexual violence affected not only women and girls who were abused but also the male members of the group, for whom it was an act of humiliation, a manifestation of their inability to protect women.

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