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INTERETHNIC RELATIONS BETWEEN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH RESIDENTS OF VOLYN BEFORE AND DURING THE HOLOCAUST: CHILDREN'S ASPECT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to uncover the interethnic relations between Jewish and non-Jewish residents of Volyn before and during the Holocaust on the example of the situation with Jewish children.

The scientific novelty of the research paper is in the fact that, for the first time, using the experience of Jewish children before and during the Holocaust, the change in relations between Jewish and non-Jewish residents of Volyn has been analyzed.

The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, scientificity, objectivity, problem-historical and search methods, and the methods of analysis and systematization. The oral history method has become important as well.

Conclusions. Interethnic relations in the interwar period in Volyn were diverse. Prejudice and anti-Semitism against Jews existed, but this factor was marginal in the 1920s, and it somewhat intensified in the second half of the 1930s due to the strengthening of the positions of Nazism in Europe. Children of Jews and non-Jews reacted the least to those negative changes and were guided in their relationships by age and personal interests rather than political changes: they attended the same schools, made friends, played, and celebrated holidays together.

World War II and the Holocaust destroyed the framework of interethnic interaction and tolerance. Being a friend to a Jew during the Nazis' 'new order,' where Jews were given the status of outcasts, had become not only unprofitable but also dangerous. Such changes were most traumatically felt by Jewish children, who did not understand why yesterday's friends shunned, bullied, beat them, or tried to turn them in to the Nazis. The answer to these questions should be sought in numerous factors. Among them was not only the Nazi anti-Semitic policy, where Jews received the lowest status in the cohort of other nationalities, but also the behavioural reactions of local residents – 'bystanders' to the Jewish problem. The theory of baiting (bullying) can be helpful in understanding the relations between Jewish and non-Jewish children during the Holocaust, where the latter used baiting and violence against their peers, who in social terms had become an unprotected and weak link in the children's society. The perpetrators knew that not only would they not suffer any punishment, but they would also have the opportunity to enrich themselves financially at their peers' expense.

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Keywords: Holocaust, Jewish children, Volyn, interethnic relations during the Holocaust, oral history

МІЖНАЦІОНАЛЬНІ СТОСУНКИ ЄВРЕЙСЬКИХ І НЕЄВРЕЙСЬКИХ ЖИТЕЛІВ НА ВОЛИНІ ДО І ПІД ЧАС ГОЛОКОСТУ: ДИТЯЧИЙ ФОКУС

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Мета дослідження полягає у висвітленні міжнаціональних стосунків єврейських і неєврейських жителів на Волині до і під час Голокосту на прикладі єврейських дітей.

Наукова новизна статті полягає у тому, що вперше на прикладі досвіду єврейських дітей до та під час Голокосту проаналізовано зміну стосунків єврейських і неєврейських жителів на Волині.

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

Висновки. Міжнаціональні стосунки міжвоєнного періоду на Волині мали різноплановий характер. Упередження й антисемітизм щодо євреїв існували, однак цей фактор був маргінальним у 1920-ті рр., але дещо посилювався у другій половині 1930-х рр. у зв'язку з посиленням позицій нацизму в Європі. Діти євреїв і неєвреїв найменше реагували на негативні зміни і в стосунках керувалися віковими й особистими інтересами, а не політичними змінами: вони разом ходили до школи, товаришували, гралися, відмічали спільні свята.

Друга світова війна та Голокост зруйнували каркас міжетнічної взаємодії та толерантності. Бути другом для єврея під час «нового порядку» нацистів, де євреям відводився статус ізгоя, стало не лише не вигідно, а й небезпечно. Найтравматичніше такі зміни відчули єврейські діти, які не розуміли, чому вчорашні друзі цураються їх, знущаються, б'ють чи намагаються здати нацистам. Відповідь на ці питання слід шукати у багатьох факторах. Серед них не лише нацистська антисемітська політика, де євреї отримали найнижчий статус у когорті інших національностей, а й поведінкові реакції місцевих жителів-«спостерігачів» на єврейську проблему. Теорія цькування (булінгу) може бути корисною для розуміння стосунків дітей євреїв і неєвреїв під час Голокосту, де останні застосовували знущання та насилля щодо своїх однолітків, які у соціальному плані стали незахищеною та слабкою ланкою дитячого соціуму. Кривдники знали, що не лише не понесуть жодного покарання, а й матимуть можливість матеріального збагачення на біді однолітка.

Фінансування. Даний проєкт було підтримано програмою Європейського Союзу EURIZON project (грантовий договір No. 871072).

Ключові слова: Голокост, єврейські діти, Волинь, міжнаціональні стосунки під час Голокосту, усна історія

INTRODUCTION

The Holocaust was not only a great disaster for Jews but also a moral test for non-Jews. In the conditions of persecution of the Shoah victims, not all non-Jews showed a willingness to support or protect the persecuted and outraged. Concerned about their safety, local residents largely distanced themselves from the Jewish Tragedy. They understood that assistance could harm their safety and that of their families. At the opposite extremes of the behaviour of the 'bystanders' were the rescue of Jews and outright betrayal. In that triad, the form of estrangement generally prevailed.

The raised issue of the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish residents should be considered in the context of the 'allocation of roles' during the Holocaust. The classic triad: perpetrator – victim – bystander by Raul Hilberg has long been outdated and requires a rethinking of the role of those included in the 'bystander' category. Analysis of the behaviour of members of this group during extremes indicates the incompleteness of this categorization. In different situations, the 'bystander' could behave as a saviour or vice versa – as the instigator of the murder of Jews. Hence, research questions arise about the motivation and moral responsibility for such a behaviour.

In such circumstances, Jewish children during the Holocaust found themselves in a specific situation. They were the least adapted to the conditions of the Nazi occupation and changes in their lives, which is why the change in attitude towards them was perceived especially painfully. It was difficult for them to understand and accept why yesterday's friends became enemies, why their peers would take advantage of them, threatening to turn them in to the occupiers, although recently they were friends: they studied at school, played, and spent their free time together. An attempt to analyze the reasons for the change in such a situation is given in this research paper.

The purpose of the research paper is to uncover the interethnic relations in Volyn between Jewish and non-Jewish residents before and during the Holocaust using the example of Jewish children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The anti-Semitic plans of the Holocaust included not only the murder of victims but also their persecution and discrimination. In such conditions, Jewish children found themselves in a specific position, becoming the least protected and adapted compared to other members of the genocidal murder community. Their chances of survival were lower than those of adults because children depended on their parents, who also could not protect them. Researcher Nataliia Ivchuk notes in this context that for the murderers, Jewish children personified the descendants of the demonized enemy, members of a group that should be exterminated, regardless of gender and age¹.

The issue of the situation of Jewish children during the Holocaust and their relations with non-Jewish residents in Volyn is reflected in historiography in a fragmentary manner. There are works on the history of the Holocaust in individual settlements of Volyn, which describe the interethnic relations of Jews with non-Jewish residents (primarily with Ukrainians, Poles, and Czechs). These are Maksym

¹ Івчук Н. Діти як суб'єкт геноциду (на прикладі Голокосту). *Панорама політологічних студій*. 2013. Вип. 11. С. 203.

Gon's monograph about Rivne (pol. Równe)², Petro Dolhanov's book about the life and death of the Jewish community of Zdolbuniv (pol. Zdołbunów)³, and Roman Mykhalchuk's research papers about the Jewish community of Mizoch (pol. Mizocz)⁴. Andrii Usach, analyzing the role of local perpetrators of the Holocaust, refers to the facts of crimes against Jewish children in Mizoch⁵. Nataliia Ivchyk is the author of a study devoted to the tragic fate of children as subjects of genocide (using the example of the Holocaust)⁶.

Foreign researchers Timothy Snyder⁷, Tony Judt⁸, and Yitzhak Arad⁹ assess the situation with Jews during the Holocaust with regard to social and political changes. In the context of highlighting the roles during the Holocaust in Raul Hilberg's classification, Mary Fulbrook notes that in the system of collective violence, bystanders are not a neutral category, and, under certain circumstances, they can condone violence against the victim¹⁰. Froukje Demant, using the example of bullying, shows how violence against a victim whom a particular group is harassing can unfold¹¹.

The sources used in the study make it possible to analyze interethnic relations of Volyn population, in particular Jewish children with non-Jewish peers, and to trace their changes during the Holocaust. They are represented by collections of oral historical sources from the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education in the USA¹² and Yahad-In Unum in Paris¹³. An important role in the research is played by Jewish testimonies from the Memorial

² Гон М. ROWNE: обриси зниклого міста. Рівне. Волин. обереги, 2018.

³ Долганов П. Життя і загибель єврейської громади Здолбунова. Рівне: Волин. обереги, 2024.

⁴ Михальчук Р. Свідчення Ісаака Розенבלата як джерело вивчення Голокосту та місцевої історії. *Проблеми історії Голокосту: український вимір. Реферований щорічний журнал*. Дніпро: Інститут «Ткума»; ПП «Ліра ЛТД», 2023. Вип. 15. С. 60-99; Михальчук Р. Єврейська громада Мізоча в 1939-1941 рр. *Intermarum: історія, політика, культура*. 2023. Вип. 13. С. 215-219; Михальчук Р., Долганов П. «Єврею, ми тебе здамо, нам потрібен твій одяг»: пограбування євреїв Мізоча під час Голокосту. *Україна Модерна*. 2023. № 34. С. 146-196; Михальчук Р. Порятунк євреїв в Мізочі під час Голокосту у свідченнях жертв: відеоджерела Інституту візуальної історії та освіти фонду Шоа університету Південної Каліфорнії в США. *Пам'ять нетлінна: Голокост на теренах нашого краю. Науковий збірник «Велика Волинь»*. Вип. 62: Матеріали Міжнар. наук.-краєз. конф. (Бердичів, 13-14 вересня 2021 р.). / Упор. П.С. Скавронський. Бердичів: ФОП Мельник М., 2021. С. 226-238.

⁵ Усач А. То не німці...»: місцеві винуватці Голокосту у неєврейських усноісторичних свідченнях. *Слухати, чути, розуміти: усна історія України ХХ-ХХІ століть: зб. наук. праць / ред. Г. Грінченко*. Київ: АРТ КНИГА, 2021. С. 143-161.

⁶ Ibid. С. 198-206.

⁷ Снайдер Т. Життя і смерть західноволинських євреїв, 1921-1945. Шоа в Україні: історія, свідчення, увічнення. Київ: ДУХ І ЛІТЕРА, 2015. С. 113-162.

⁸ Джадт Т. Після війни. Історія Європи від 1945 року / пер. з англ. Катерина Зарембо. Київ: Наш формат, 2020.

⁹ Арад Й. Катастрофа євреїв на окупованих територіях Советского Союза (1941-1945). Днепропетровск: Центр «Ткума»; Москва: Центр «Холокост», 2007.

¹⁰ Fulbrook M. Bystanders: Catchall Concept, Alluring Alibi, or Crucial Clue? *Probing the Limits of Categorization: The Bystander in Holocaust History Edited by Christina Morina and Krijn Thijs. The Berghahn series Studies on War and Genocide*. Vol. 27. New York, Oxford, 2019. P. 15-35.

¹¹ Demant F. The many shades of bystanding on social dilemmas and passive participation. *Probing the Limits of Categorization: The Bystander in Holocaust History Edited by Christina Morina and Krijn Thijs. The Berghahn series Studies on War and Genocide*. Vol. 27. New York, Oxford, 2019. P. 90-106.

¹² USC SFI VHA, Testimony.

¹³ YIU, Testimony.

Book¹⁴ and the memoirs of Volyn inhabitants, which describe interethnic relations between Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, Czechs, and other nationalities¹⁵.

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD IN VOLYN (BETWEEN GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS AND ANTI-SEMITISM)

Interethnic relations in Volyn in the interwar period were diverse in nature. They were not cloudless, but not catastrophic either. Analysis of oral historical sources from the collections of the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education (USA) and Yahad-In Unum (France) – the memoirs of both Jews and non-Jewish residents to a greater extent show positive reflections of good-neighbourly relations. Many of such stories are based on a trade and economic basis, when Jews, because of their employment in trade, socialized with non-Jewish buyers and had the opportunity to lend products to local non-Jewish residents when they were unable to pay for a product or service immediately, or provided them with work.

Regina Lutyńska, a Pole resident of Volyn town of Mizoch, left a note in her memoirs that in the interwar period, there were many service sector institutions in the town (tailors, chefs, hairdressers), which were run mainly by Jewish families (although there were Czech and Polish families as well). For the author, the numerous Jewish shops full of various goods were, in her words, “a great deal of fun”¹⁶. The Ukrainian Maria Mosiychuk, Righteous Among the Nations, recollected that the Jews in Mizoch were skilled craftsmen, such as tailors and coopers, who made beautiful high boots, barrels, and harnesses for horses – “household things, things that people needed. And it was good. They did something; they were paid for it, which was how they lived. And many of them did much trade with us”¹⁷. Maria’s brother, Mykola, recollected his father, Sydir Slobodyuk (Righteous Among the Nations), who delivered goods to a local Jew. During those trips, the son was with his father, and in 1997, he recollected mentioned trips to an interviewer as follows: “Whether I went to the mill – there was a Jew there – Belemush, or to the bakery – there was Nukhim, who baked bread, or to some store – all there were the Jews too. So, I always went. I remember everyone by their last name”¹⁸. Such a linguistic construction of memoirs clearly indicates that the Jews were ‘of their own.’ In other words, the children socialized in close, interconnected interethnic relations and adopted the experience of friendly, mutually beneficial relations.

As researcher Maksym Gon notes regarding the coexistence of different nationalities using the example of Volyn town of Rivne (pol. Równe): “The ‘interethnic borderland’ was supplemented by contacts of those representatives who had their own businesses and created job opportunities for free-lance workers, regardless of their social and cultural identity. Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians usually bought

¹⁴ Бен-Оні А. (ред.). Меморіальна книга Мізоча (Мізоч, Україна). Переклад Д. Аладько. Тель-Авів, 1961 – Рівне, 2022. URL: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Mizoch/Mizu060.html>

¹⁵ Шабловська-Лутинська Р. Мізоч безповоротно минулої минувшини. Рівне: ПП «Формат-А», 2021.

¹⁶ Ibid. С. 12.

¹⁷ Михальчук Р. (публ.). Відеосвідчення Праведниці народів світу Марії Мосійчук як джерело вивчення Катастрофи та місцевої історії. *Голокост і сучасність. Студії в Україні і світі*. 2011. № 2 (10). С. 122-123; USC SFI VHA, Testimony 38193.

¹⁸ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 38669.

certain goods in stores owned by Jews. Craftsmen or merchants from among the latter produced their produced items in the hope that they would interest Christians”¹⁹.

Often, close friendships arose between children of different nationalities who studied at the same school. An example is the friendship between Leszko Smoczkiwicz, a Pole, and Kuba Bederman, a Jew, who studied together at Rivne Gumnasium of the Union of Settlers (pol. osadnicy)²⁰. Regina Lutyńska, a Pole, recollected that her classmate at Mizoch school was Lala Lipoitzka, a Jew: “We became friends when she was learning Hebrew, so I learned it for a while as well”. The Jewish mother would invite her daughter’s friend to their home for delicious pastries²¹. Zinaida Grinchenko from Chortoryisk (pol. Czartorysk) recollected that her school years were the most pleasant years of her life. According to her, Poles, Ukrainians, and Czechs lived together in harmony at that time²².

While studying together in Polish public schools in Volyn, children from Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian families established contacts and friendships. Later, this fact would become important amid the Nazis’ anti-Semitic policies and the Holocaust, when school friends would become saviours of persecuted and outraged classmates. Thus, in Mizoch, Sofia Hornstein was saved by the family of her classmate Maria Slobodyuk²³. Emiliia Dedek, who studied at a Polish gymnasium in Zdolbuniv, met a Jewish girl, Nina Bakovetska, and during the German occupation, her family would help Nina hide²⁴. The strength of the children’s relationship would manifest itself during the ‘Final Solution to the Jewish Question’, when Jewish classmates who sat together at the desk said goodbye and waved as they were taken to be shot, as was the case in Boremel (pol. Boremel)²⁵.

The school was one of the places where children of different nationalities socialized. However, children spent much time together at home, often living on the same street or district. In the children’s memoirs, it was spending time together during games in the yard and different celebrations. In Boremel, a non-Jewish Ukrainian witness recollected a neighbouring Jewish family with whom they lived well and were friends, especially remembering a girl named Pesia, who was friends with them, and they played together all day long²⁶. As a non-Jewish witness from Olyka (pol. Ołyka) noted: “There were no conflicts with Jews; the children played together”²⁷. In Rivne, in the ‘Kavkaz’ district, children lived and went to school together, although each attended his temple – a church, cathedral, or synagogue²⁸. A non-Jewish witness from Dubno (pol. Dubno) recollected his Jewish classmates – Eisenberg, Eisenstein, and Hait and noted: “We lived among Jews, we communicated... We knew many Jewish words, especially expletive ones”²⁹.

¹⁹ Гон М. ROWNE... С. 16.

²⁰ Ibid. С. 17.

²¹ Шабловська-Лутинська Р. Мізоч... С. 19.

²² USC SFI VHA, Testimony 44911.

²³ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 38193.

²⁴ Долганов П. Життя і загибель... С. 41.

²⁵ YIU, Testimony 1337U.

²⁶ YIU, Testimony 1343U.

²⁷ YIU, Testimony 1773U.

²⁸ Гон М. ROWNE... С. 28.

²⁹ YIU, Testimony 1379U.

Such interaction led to adopting each other's cultural and linguistic features. Children were less involved in adult quarrels. In this context, they were the age category that least felt the changes in interethnic relations. Unlike parents who could be at enmity with each other, the age characteristics of children determined their priorities in communication and friendship. In the words of Meyer Cyker, a Jew from Zdolbuniv: "We played with our non-Jewish Christian friends, visited each other on religious holidays... We were too young to engage in political discussions. Life was quite peaceful"³⁰. That was the peculiarity of a multicultural town: "children who play together, who do not feel language barriers in the heat of fun, who are not prisoners of the 'barricades' of otherness. This is the kind of little ones who are a friendly community..., where everyone 'of their own' felt surprisingly comfortable... These little ones learned the language of their neighbours in the course of everyday life. They learned it during games and communication with children of other nationalities"³¹.

Religious customs also contributed to interethnic interaction. Tamara Khomitska from Rokytno (pol. Rokitno) recollected that she especially liked Friday because, on Thursday, the Jews baked 'kifyky' (rolls), and on Friday, they distributed them. Ukrainian children lit a menorah for the Jews on Friday evening. Relations between Jews and Ukrainians were good, – Khomitska summed up³². In the words of a non-Jewish witness from Dubno, the tradition looked like that: "Jews would call children to flick a match and set fire to the group. They would give them a bun"³³.

In 1929, in Rivne, 82.8% of the population were Jews, 11% were Poles, and 4.5% were Ukrainians, who spoke different languages. As Maksym Gon notes: "The children of this provincial town, who, like a sponge, absorbed the culture of their neighbours (including linguistic and partly everyday culture), reflected this cultural diversity"³⁴. In this aspect, we agree with the researcher, who notes that the contradictions that arose between representatives of different nations were quickly resolved and did not play a noticeable role in their coexistence. The mirror of such tolerant interaction was the children – those who studied at the same school or were friends with the neighbouring children belonging to other faiths³⁵. In the words of Regina Lutyńska, a Pole, in the interwar period, between children of different nationalities, "there was a lot of friendship". "I do not remember there being any conflicts on national or religious grounds"³⁶.

In general, the relatively normal/tolerant coexistence of the 1920s – 1930s began to deteriorate in the late 1930s with the rise of anti-Semitic manifestations in Europe and Edward Śmigła-Rydz coming to power in Poland. For example, Sof'ia Demchuk from Berezhne (pol. Bereżne) recollected that after Piłsudski, the situation changed somewhat: she remembered anti-Semitic songs, caricatures, and inscriptions – 'Do not buy from a Jew'. At school, skipping rhymes with an anti-Semitic accent appeared: "Raz-dva-try – zhy-dy-psy, a poliak zi zloto ptatsy – vy-khot-ty" (One-two-three – Jews are dogs, and a Pole with golden bird – you-go-out). However, she noted that

³⁰ Долганов П. Життя і загибель... С. 49.

³¹ Гон М. ROWNE... С. 18.

³² USC SFI VHA, Testimony 45585.

³³ YIU, Testimony 1385U.

³⁴ Гон М. ROWNE... С. 14.

³⁵ Ibid. С. 64.

³⁶ Шабловська-Лутинська Р. Мізоч... С. 19.

parents tried suppressing such phenomena in their children. In particular, her mother scolded her and said it was impossible to do like that so that they would no longer say such things³⁷. Similarly, Basia Ioffe from Dubno said that signs of anti-Semitism became noticeable after the death of Piłsudski. She remembered the inscription – ‘Do not buy from a Jew’. In the evening, local residents could attack Jews and beat them. However, relations with non-Jewish classmates at school were good³⁸. In Lutsk, according to the memoirs of Zinaida Grinchenko, after Piłsudski’s death, inscriptions appeared: ‘Jewish money – the blood of the people’³⁹.

Vasyl Valdman from the village of Stadnyky (pol. Stadniki) noted that anti-Semitism was a little noticeable, but generally, they lived an ordinary life. Jews were called ‘Zhydy’, but it was not offensive. When the Soviet power came, they were called ‘Yevrei’. He testified about the Ukrainians that they treated Jews with friendliness; there even were neighbours who liked them⁴⁰. In the spring of 1936, a hitherto unheard-of case occurred in Rivne: in the first days of March, unknown people distributed an anti-Semitic leaflet. The press reported that fact: “This is the first case in a city that until now has been known for the harmonious coexistence and cooperation of all nationalities”⁴¹.

Sometimes, in the testimonies of non-Jewish residents about that period, a stereotypical view of things about Jews could be traced. A witness from Vyshniivtsi (pol. Łomadzyn) called them speculators. Before the war, Jews were engaged in trade: “They made a capital on everything; the Jews were so well-off that they paid people everything in dollars”. His story gave examples of conflicts when people “threw wind eggs at the Jews”⁴². A witness from Varkovychi (pol. Warkowicze) claimed that when Jewish children attended school together with Ukrainians and Poles, the Jews stank, literally: “You cannot sit like that – it stinks”⁴³.

Thus, prejudice and anti-Semitism existed in Volyn during the interwar period. However, one cannot speak of the significance of this factor in interethnic relations, which is confirmed by the memoirs of Jews about non-Jews. More like in the 1920s, manifestations of confrontation were marginal, the degree of which increased somewhat in the second half of the 1930s, in particular, due to the intensification of anti-Jewish hysteria and the strengthening of Nazism in Europe. Children of Jews and non-Jews in Volyn in such conditions reacted the least to possible negative options. They were guided by age and personal interests rather than social and political changes.

INTERETHNIC CHILDREN’S RELATIONS DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE HOLOCAUST

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and World War II began. According to the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, on September 17, 1939, the USSR annexed the territories of western Volyn. The way of life of the local population changed dramatically. Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians – real and imaginary

³⁷ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 49414.

³⁸ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 44302.

³⁹ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 44911.

⁴⁰ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 43886.

⁴¹ ГОН М. ROWNE... С. 65.

⁴² YIU, Testimony 839U.

⁴³ YIU, Testimony 1396U.

'enemies' of the new power became the subject of repression. Zionist organizations of Jews ceased to exist. In the conditions of the influx of a large number of Jewish refugees to Volyn, many of them faced arbitrariness and Soviet repression.

From the beginning of the Soviet occupation of Volyn, Jews perceived that power as a saving alternative to the German occupation. They understood that implementing communist ideas in practice would affect their lives and national and religious institutions. However, in the conditions of that time, they saw less evil in the USSR than in Nazi Germany⁴⁴.

The refugees told about the horrors of Nazism – stories about how the Germans treated Jews – they robbed them, drove them out of their homes, abused them, and forced them to do exhausting work and wear yellow badges⁴⁵. One of the Jewish refugees, who asked the Ashers in Mizoch to let her into their home, recollected: "I wandered around all night. I got completely soaked in the rain. Can I have a cup of tea and something to eat? I will pay any price. My house is destroyed, and we cannot find shelter anywhere. This damn Hitler can get to me anywhere. We are all ruined"⁴⁶. The refugee was let in and invited home.

The process of Sovietization of the economy led to adverse changes in the Jewish environment. Those Jews who ran the enterprises under Polish rule were considered bourgeoisie and faced difficulties in finding employment. As a result, the general standard of living of Jews decreased⁴⁷. Jews still tried to get a government job because it offered some opportunities. For example, Broinshtein, a Jew from Mizoch, noted that the accountant's position at a sugar factory saved him from imprisonment and deportation to Siberia⁴⁸. Another Jewish woman, Adah Fishfeder-Teichner, recollected that her brother Michael worked as an accountant but constantly feared being fired because of his social background as a descendant of a wealthy family⁴⁹.

However, considering the subsequent events of the Holocaust, Jews in their memoirs often evaluate the Soviet regime as better because, for them, it was a 'lesser evil' than the German one, which organized the Holocaust. Even the Soviet totalitarian repressions, the deportations of Jews to the regions of the Far North and Siberia, were the reason for the salvation of Jews from the Holocaust because they were not in the territories occupied by the Nazis. In the words of the Jew Asher Gilberg: "...many people concluded that 'the devil is not as terrible as he is painted'"⁵⁰.

However, World War II exposed the problem of interethnic relations. As researcher Yitzhak Arad noted, for Poles, the arrival of the Soviet army symbolized a 'stab in the back' during their fight against the Germans. Therefore, many Poles had a negative attitude towards Jews who favoured the Red Army, not realizing that such an attitude was dictated not by a hostile position towards Poland but by salvation from the Germans⁵¹.

In addition, the policy of the Soviet power exacerbated interethnic relations and anti-Semitic beliefs among Poles and Ukrainians. As Petro Dolganov notes: "Since the

⁴⁴ Михальчук Р. Єврейська громада Мізоча... С. 219.

⁴⁵ Бен-Оні А. (ред.). Меморіальна книга Мізоча... С. 61.

⁴⁶ Ibid. С. 79.

⁴⁷ Арад И. Катастрофа євреїв... С. 95.

⁴⁸ Бен-Оні А. (ред.). Меморіальна книга Мізоча... С. 90-91.

⁴⁹ Ibid. С. 235.

⁵⁰ Михальчук Р. Єврейська громада Мізоча... С. 221.

⁵¹ Арад И. Катастрофа євреїв... С. 82.

Soviet power eliminated the discriminatory barriers that existed in Poland to the employment of Jews in the civil service sector and allowed them to study at universities without hindrance on an equal footing with students from other ethnic groups, this could create the impression of some kind of 'pro-Jewish' policy. After all, the local population was used to the discriminated status of Jews"⁵².

Thus, World War II caused changes in interethnic relations in Volyn. In the conditions of a generally unstable social and political situation, tensions in relations grew.

The occupation of Volyn by the German authorities in 1941 exposed the problem even more. The attitude of non-Jewish residents towards their Jewish neighbours, yesterday's friends, changed. To a large extent, that was a consequence of the imposition of the orders of the 'new masters' of the occupied territories, where Jews were assigned the status of outcasts in society. The system of anti-Jewish measures included the isolation of Jews from the rest of the population and contrasting them with non-Jewish residents. The recording, registration, and identification of Jews with special marks as measures of humiliation of human dignity were a preparatory stage of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'. Segregation and isolation of victims in the ghettos intended starvation and death. Prohibiting relations with local residents was another factor in reducing the chances of salvation.

The Nazi anti-Jewish policy became discriminatory in comparison with other peoples: Jews were prohibited from moving freely between settlements, walking on sidewalks, etc.; an unfair distribution of food was introduced; the right to use ration cards only for working Jews; marriages with non-Jews were prohibited; forced labour; a tax was introduced for the birth of a Jewish child, as well as a tax 'for nationality' (which representatives of other nationalities did not pay). Given the above, we can conclude that the rights enjoyed in a limited form by the rest of the population were unavailable to Jews. In this context, historian Tony Judt notes: "If the authorities treat your neighbour unlawfully – because he is Jewish, has a good education, is a representative of an ethnic minority, has fallen out of favour with the regime, or just for no reason – why should you respect him yourself? In fact, it was often wise to act ahead of time and earn the favour of the authorities by playing a nasty trick on your neighbour"⁵³.

Being a friend of a Jew during the Holocaust was not only unprofitable, but also dangerous. Therefore, most non-Jews chose the position of a 'bystander', not interfering in the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'. Those who sympathized and saved Jews, as well as those who betrayed them, were few in number. Thus, the Holocaust not only destroyed the Jewish population and their social life but also, in the words of Serhii Plokyh, "traumatized and brutalized those who witnessed it"⁵⁴.

The most traumatic reaction to such changes was felt by children, who found it difficult to understand the sharp change in behaviour patterns towards them. While adult Jews understood the essence of the Nazis' 'new order', their children could not understand why yesterday's friends shunned them, bullied them, beat them, or tried to hand them over to the Nazis.

⁵² Долганов П. Життя та загибель... С. 73.

⁵³ Джадт Т. Після війни... С. 58.

⁵⁴ Плохій С. Брама Європи. Пер. з англ. Романа Клочка. Перероб. і доп. вид. Харків: Книжковий Клуб «Клуб сімейного дозвілля», 2021. С. 351.

The example of Vera (Dvoira) Shchetinkova from Rivne oblast clearly demonstrates that. On the first day of the occupation, a neighbour, Roman Komar, put a gun into the mouth of Vera's father, saying: "Well, Chaim, now we will settle accounts. Give me the gold, give me everything you have... our power has come, now we'll kill and shoot". Vera's father replied: "Romanchyk, I carried you in my arms; you grew up in my arms, and now you are putting a gun in me". And he replied: "But you are Yuda". Vera had not heard such a word before, but then she learned it: "Now they started calling me Yuda because till now they used to say Zhydovka". From the first days of the occupation, the boys she grew up with, who were her friends and with whom she grazed cows, started throwing stones at her brother and calling him 'Yuda'. Vera, who was 10 years old, was very surprised: "I thought to myself. Why are they beating me? What did I do wrong? I could not imagine why they were beating us. I could not imagine that". Psychologically, Vera was very upset by such a change. To an interviewer to whom she gave testimony in 1997, she said that she felt more pain from the insulting behavior towards her rather than from the physical beatings: "You know, we all were growing up together in the village... We all were growing up and playing together, and as the word is, we all grazed cows together. Everything had changed in one day"⁵⁵.

The story of Isaac Rosenblatt is breathtaking⁵⁶. After the destruction of Mizoch ghetto in October 1942, while hiding, he met shepherds whom he knew well because he had been friends with them before. He expected support/help from his 'friends', but the opposite happened. His former friends betrayed him and began to mock him with the words, "Jew, we will turn you in, we need your clothes, we will turn you in to the police"⁵⁷. They beat him so severely that, according to Rosenblatt, he urinated on himself and barely escaped from them. However, the perpetrators continued to pursue their victim, throwing stones at him from afar. To escape from them, Isaac had to risk his life and throw himself into the river to get to another village (although he could not swim). The shepherds got there after him, but Isaac hid in the shed at the house in a barrel. The owner (a Czech) knew the Jew's location but did not blow his cover to the pursuers. A similar situation occurred with Rosenblatt later when Ukrainian boys near the river recognized him as a Jew and told the policeman⁵⁸. Later in his life, Rosenblatt met various people who helped and betrayed him, but he survived the Holocaust and testified about it in 1997. However, the incident with the shepherds symbolized the greatest betrayal for him because all the boys had been friends before⁵⁹.

The occupation authorities, in every way, encouraged local residents to collaborate, perform orders, and search for Jews. In particular, to search for Jewish children, they actively used their peers from the non-Jewish population. Sofia Demchuk from Berezhne recollected that the Germans gave non-Jewish children sweets and treats so that they would seek Jews in hiding⁶⁰. Such practices became especially common after the liquidation of the ghetto when Jews and their children

⁵⁵ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 45238.

⁵⁶ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 38507; Михальчук Р. Свідчення Ісаака Розенבלата... С. 60-99.

⁵⁷ Михальчук Р., Долганов П. «Єврею, ми тебе здамо, нам потрібен твій одяг»... С. 146-196.

⁵⁸ Михальчук Р. Порятунк євреїв в Мізочі... С. 230.

⁵⁹ Ibid. С. 228.

⁶⁰ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 49414.

hid in the forests. For example, after escaping from Radyvyliv (pol. Radziwiłłów) ghetto, Riven Zeiger recollected how non-Jewish children were given sweets so that they would find Jews. They would wander through the forests and search for them for sweets⁶¹.

Dmitrii Omelianiuk from Volyn oblast recollected a mean and cruel German who used non-Jewish children to search for the Jews from Matseiv (pol. Maciejów). He and other Germans gave the children chocolate and said that if they caught a Jew, they would give them more. One boy agreed to do so for a chocolate bar and found a Jew in the basement. Then they gave the boy bread so that he could use it to lure out another Jew who was hiding. Having captured the Jewish boy, they mocked him and asked where the other escapees were hiding. After physical pressure, the boy led the occupiers to the ghetto and showed them the basement where other Jews were hiding. It was in August 1942⁶².

Germans and police searched for Jews, who often were hidden by local residents. Kostiantyn Grokhol'skii from Stepan (pol. Stepań) recollected how the Germans and policemen offered his ten-year-old daughter Oleksandra a chocolate bar in exchange for telling them where the Jewish woman Maria was hiding⁶³. Similarly, Maria Slobodyuk's younger sister, Raisa from Mizoch, was offered sweets so that she would show them where the Slobodyuks were hiding Sofia Hornstein, a Jew⁶⁴. There were also cases when, like in the small village of Puhachivka (pol. Puhaczówka) in Volyn, a 15-year-old boy received a bicycle for informing on a Jewish woman whom local Ukrainians hid⁶⁵.

Using peers by the occupiers in searching for Jews was one method of catching Holocaust victims. However, local residents also voluntarily joined the search for Jews in order to receive material consideration. Yankev Mendiuk, a fugitive from Mizoch ghetto, noted: "Given that the Germans gave salt and sugar for each Jew handed over, there was no shortage of enthusiastic volunteers ready to kidnap Jews"⁶⁶. Zofia Andrzejkowicz from Khrinnyky (pol. Chryniki) told that salt and matches were given if Jews from Demydivka (pol. Demidowka) ghetto were found⁶⁷. Vera Shchetinkova was hiding in the villages of Rivne region. When she was noticed by local people coming out of the Orthodox church in the village of Kuzmivka (pol. Kuźmiwka) after the service, she heard: "Ivan, Ivan, catch up, there a Jew is going, look"⁶⁸. This case is illustrative because those who professed Christian values, which are based on helping their neighbour, behaved quite differently in times of extremes, which reveals the variability of the behaviour of 'bystanders' during the Holocaust.

Thus, motivated more by greed than anti-Semitism, some local residents tried to take advantage of their Jewish neighbours' misfortune by either turning them in to the authorities or seizing their property⁶⁹. As historian Timothy Snyder notes, a large

⁶¹ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 30242.

⁶² USC SFI VHA, Testimony 36160.

⁶³ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 49525.

⁶⁴ Михальчук Р. (публ.). Відеосвідчення Праведниці народів світу Марії Мосійчук...; USC SFI VHA, Testimony 38193.

⁶⁵ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 36160.

⁶⁶ Бен-Оні А. (ред.). Меморіальна книга Мізоча... С. 72.

⁶⁷ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 36447.

⁶⁸ USC SFI VHA, Testimony 45238.

⁶⁹ Плохий С. Брама Європи... С. 354.

part of the local non-Jewish population was corrupted by the prospect of taking possession of Jewish property, and many began to view the murder of Jews from the perspective of their own economic interests⁷⁰. Therefore, during the Holocaust, the former 'normal relations' changed dramatically depending on different perspectives, in particular economic ones.

The 'normality' and 'abnormality' of such relations were determined by a combination of factors. Our analysis of the treatment of Jews by non-Jews during the Holocaust correlates with the research of modern scholars on the role of witnesses, who are no longer singled out as ordinary detached 'bystanders'. After all, depending on the situation, 'bystanders' could acquire different behavioural reactions, as evidenced by the above-given examples. Raul Hilberg's traditional approach to highlighting roles in the Holocaust – the 'perpetrator – victim – bystander' triad – has long been rethought. In this context, researchers indicate that a 'bystander' could turn into a perpetrator or a saviour under certain conditions, and these roles could change depending on the events. The analysis of the above testimonies confirms Mary Fulbrook's conclusions that in the system of collective violence, bystanders are not a neutral category. Therefore, their non-interference strengthens the behaviour of the perpetrator and may be an indulgence, causing increasing further violence against the victim⁷¹.

In the context of the stories of persecuted Jews, in particular, Isaac Rosenblatt, who was bullied by his non-Jewish 'friends', the explanation of such a phenomenon may be more understandable by analyzing the concept of bullying behaviour in the classroom, which Froukje Demant substantiated on the example of baiting. Feeling the victim's helplessness, the leader (bully) initiates the bullying process, which involves other children in the classroom who somehow take part in the process; that is, they are 'bystanders'. They support the bully, for example, by catching the victims and approving his actions. There are also children who position themselves as outsiders, do not interfere, or pretend nothing is happening. Thus, bullying is a group process. To explain this, Froukje Demant emphasizes that there is a social dilemma – on the one hand, children understand that bullying is wrong, and they would like to do something to stop it, but on the other hand, they seek to ensure their status and security among their peers in the group, so as not to become a target of bullying themselves if they act against the leader. So, behaving aggressively, or at least unfriendly, towards the victim of bullying becomes a way to confirm their belonging to the peer group. Over time, this becomes the social norm of the group⁷². Thus, when analyzing the behaviour of children during the Holocaust, one should take into account not only those trends that determined the transformation of Jews into outcasts of society in the context of the 'new order' but also social and psychological theories that explain the change in such behaviour of local non-Jewish residents.

CONCLUSIONS

Interethnic relations in Volyn during the interwar period were of a diverse nature. Analysis of oral historical sources, including the memories of both Jews and non-Jews, testify to positive reflections of good-neighbourly relations. Prejudice and anti-

⁷⁰ Снайдер Т. Життя і смерть... С. 142.

⁷¹ Fulbrook M. Bystanders... P. 17.

⁷² Demant F. The many shades of bystanding... P. 93-94.

Semitism against Jews existed, but this factor was marginal in the 1920s, and it somewhat intensified in the second half of the 1930s due to the strengthening of the positions of Nazism in Europe. Children of Jews and non-Jews reacted the least to those negative changes and were guided in their relationships by age and personal interests rather than political changes: they attended the same schools, made friends, played, and celebrated holidays together.

World War II and the Holocaust destroyed the framework of interethnic interaction and tolerance. Being a friend to a Jew during the Nazis' 'new order', where Jews were given the status of outcasts, had become not only unprofitable but also dangerous. The Holocaust not only destroyed the social life of Jews, but also brutalized those who witnessed it. Such changes were most traumatically felt by Jewish children, who did not understand why yesterday's friends shunned, bullied, beat them, or tried to turn them in to the Nazis. The answer to these questions should be sought in many factors. Among them was not only the Nazi anti-Semitic policy, where Jews received the lowest status in the cohort of other nationalities but also the behavioural reactions of local residents – 'bystanders' to the Jewish problem. The theory of baiting (bullying) can help understand the relations between Jewish and non-Jewish children during the Holocaust, where the latter used baiting and violence against their peers, who, in social terms, had become an unprotected and weak link in the children's society. The perpetrators knew that not only would they not suffer any punishment, but they would also have the opportunity to enrich themselves financially at the expense of their peers.

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