

Historical Research on the Holocaust in Ukraine: Achievements and Agendas

Dr. Wendy Lower¹

Ukraine was home to the largest population of Soviet Jewry to perish in the Holocaust and on the eve of the Nazi invasion in June 1941 this territory, which encompassed the former Pale of Settlement, was home to the largest Jewish population in Europe. Until the early 1990s, that is before the Iron Curtain fell, we simply did not know the scale of destruction there. Pioneers of Holocaust historiography Philip Friedman and Raul Hilberg could not calculate the number of Jews who died in Ukraine, but it was clear that it was the bulk of Soviet Jewry based on prewar population statistics. Hilberg estimated that 700,000 Jews died in the USSR. Friedman approximated that “3 million Jews lived among 40 million Ukrainians prior to the invasion.”² In the late 1990s, scholars including Dieter Pohl estimated 1.2 million Jews, now the number has increased to 1.5-1.6 million. Numbers matter. These are the individual lives that the Germans deliberately concealed in their reports or did not bother to record. As of 1943, published Soviet accounts subsumed the Jewish death toll under the general category of all “peaceful citizens who perished.”³ On average less than 2 percent of the Jewish population caught in Nazi-occupied Ukraine survived the war. Few Jewish eyewitnesses were alive to provide detailed accounts of what happened (although their testimony was collected by Ilya Ehrenburg and others only to be suppressed in the banned Black Book).⁴ The many indigenous collaborators just wished that the history would go away. Other eyewitnesses were not encouraged to speak about what they saw happened to their Jewish neighbors, or chose not to speak for a number of reasons. The collapse of the Soviet Union not only opened up the archives but also access to the mass murder sites. It

¹ This paper was presented on September 11, 2009 at the conference, “The Holocaust by Bullets in Ukraine: A Conference for Researchers and Educators,” Landgoed Huize Bergen, Vught, Netherlands. Part of the text was published in the Introduction (co-authored by Wendy Lower and Ray Brandon) to The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization eds. Lower and Brandon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009). Thanks to Ray Brandon for his critical comments and corrections.

² This figure is based on borders that included Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Galicia, Volhynia, Polessia and Soviet Ukraine. Philip Friedman, Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust (New York, 1980), 193.

³ As of summer 1941 Soviet intelligence about atrocities against Jews in Ukraine was substantial, however the uniqueness of the Nazi genocide targeting Jews and Roma was obscured in official reports from Moscow during and after the war. See Karel Berkhoff’s “*Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population*” The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941-1945,” Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 10, 1 (Winter 2009): 61–105. Also see Yitzhak Arad’s Epilogue, “The Holocaust and the Soviet Governing Authorities, in The Holocaust in the Soviet Union (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 532-544.

⁴ On the story of Ehrenburg’s collection of testimony and its censorship, suppression and eventual publication, see Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman, eds. The Unknown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German Occupied Soviet Territories (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

also allowed for the flow of information out of Ukraine, from diligent scholars such as Alexander Kruglov who has devoted many years of research calculating more precisely the number of Jews who were killed on Ukrainian soil during the war.

So what general narrative have we been able to piece together about Ukraine's Holocaust history, thus far? What have we achieved? I must stress piece together, because the basic challenge in writing the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine is dealing with a country that was not a country, but divided historically into regions with various imperial influences: Russian, Polish, Austro-Hungarian, Soviet and Nazi. Jews in Ukraine experienced the Second World War under Soviet, German, Hungarian, and Romanian occupation. The Jewish inhabitants of Ukraine did not form a cohesive Jewish community. Nor did the Jews of Ukraine form a culturally Ukrainian Jewry. The Jews of Ukraine were greatly influenced by whichever occupying country or empire they found themselves a part of. The great mass of Ukraine's Jews fell under Nazi rule in territories under military and civilian administration, while a smaller share ended up under Romanian occupied territories. Despite the size of Ukraine's Jewish population, academics and laypersons alike have for over two generations tended to talk about the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, or Hungary, but not about the Holocaust in Ukraine.⁵

In all of these various regions, the majority of the population was Ukrainian, and regardless of the nature of the regime in place, large numbers of the co-perpetrators, the rescuers, the bystanders, and of course the fellow victims were Ukrainian. And no matter who held these territories in early 1939, 1940, or late 1941, these lands now make up one country: Ukraine. Thus speaking today of the Holocaust in Ukraine is an achievement, but we have a way to go. Because in Ukraine itself perhaps most would prefer to speak of the Holocaust and Ukraine, the Holocaust in Europe, not in Ukraine, or of the 1932-33 Holodomor (famine) in Ukraine, not the 1941-1944 genocide of Jews.

The newness of the topic and the practical challenges of its regional variations account for the fact that a single monograph on the Holocaust in Ukraine does not exist. Publications such as Shmuel Spector's excellent regional study concentrated on western Ukraine.⁶ The recent volume

⁵ Brandon and Lower, "Introduction," *Shoah in Ukraine*, 2.

⁶ Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941-1944* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990). Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien, 1941-1944: Organisation und Durchfuehrung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996). Thomas Sandkuehler,

that Ray Brandon and I edited is telling. Each author dealt with the Holocaust by addressing a particular angle within a geographic area: interethnic relations in Volhynia (Tim Snyder), the county commissars in Zhytomyr (Wendy Lower), the Nazis' Romanian ally in Transistria (Dennis Deletant), forced labor in central Ukraine (Andre Angrick); ethnic German collaboration throughout Ukraine (Martin Dean), Ukrainian collaboration in Galicia (Frank Golczewski), Babi Yar testimony (Karel Berkhoff) and postwar memorialization, or the lack thereof, in Galicia (Omer Bartov). Dieter Pohl's overview in the aforementioned volume is the closest we have to a synthesis, but his contribution while extremely detailed and foundational is limited. His chapter is not enough. If we piece together the various chapters and articles that have been published in the last fifteen or so years with standard works that had included Ukraine (usually as the site of the pogrom in Lviv summer 1941, and the largest mass shooting at Babi Yar September 1941) we can begin to *sketch* a picture.

The genocide began in the summer and fall of 1941 during Operation Barbarossa when Jews were first assaulted in a wave of pogroms that broke out in borderlands of the Nazi-Soviet empires, specifically eastern Galicia and Volhynia-Podolia. The largest pogrom occurred in the city of Lviv (Lwow, Lemberg), where an estimated 3-4,000 Jews were brutally massacred in July 1941 (without the actions of the Einsatzkommandos). This popular violence was neither entirely disorganized nor spontaneous. It was largely orchestrated by nationalist expeditionary forces attached to the Ukrainian nationalist movement, local intelligentsia, militia, and antisemitic marauders, with the approval or direct oversight of German military and SS-police occupation officials. On these events I would like to draw your attention to an excellent article on the pogrom recently published by John-Paul Himka in the Ukrainian journal, *Holocaust and Modernity*.⁷ In many locales, such as Lutsk, the discovery of victims of Soviet atrocities was presented as the pretext for inciting "revenge" against Jews who were branded Bolsheviks. According to historian Dieter Pohl, as many as 12,000 Jews died in about 100 pogroms in eastern Galicia in summer 1941. But this number of pogrom-related deaths has also recently gone up,

"Endloesung" in Galizien: Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiative von Berthold Beitz, 1941-1944 (Bonn: Dietz, 1996).

⁷ John-Paul Himka, "The Veracity of Testimony: Roza Wagner's Story of the Lviv Pogrom of the Summer of 1941," 2 (4) *Holocaust and Modernity* (Голокост і Сучасність) Kiev, 2008: 43-80.

ranging from 13,000 to 35,000.⁸

Meanwhile German military and SS-police forces advanced eastward and conducted their own “security” and “ethnic cleansing” actions that targeted adult male Jews, then expanded to entire Jewish communities during August 1941. In a multi-pronged coordinated assault, units of the Wehrmacht security divisions, Einsatzgruppe C and D, Command Staff of the Reichführer-SS (Waffen-SS), and six battalions of Order Police penetrated the major towns and fanned out to small villages by horseback, motorcycle and bicycle in the hunt for Jews who were branded communist agents, partisans, saboteurs and racial threats. They carried out a large number of the mass shootings in August and September 1941, at Kamianets- Podilskyi and Babi Yar where more than 55,000 Jews were gunned down in a few days. The increase in mass killings can be traced through the hierarchical command structure as the combined result of clear orders from above, especially from Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police Heinrich Himmler and Chief of the Security Police Reinhard Heydrich, and energetic ideological support and antisemitic “problem-solving” at the ground level. Jewish refugees who fled to areas under Romanian rule did not fare better in the summer and fall of 1941. Romania’s dictator, Marshal Ion Antonescu followed Hitler’s lead in promoting “ethnic purification” by approving the mass shootings of 15,000-20,000 Jews in Odessa in October 1941, while another 50,000 Jews died in massacres in Bohdanivka around Christmas time.⁹

By the end of 1941, 450,000- 500,000 Jews had been killed mostly in mass shootings, but also in gas vans (in Poltava and Kharkov) and in pogroms. Over one million remained, concentrated in Right Bank Ukraine but also scattered across the entire country in transient ghettos and labor camps. Military and SS-police forces involved in the warfare had neither the manpower, nor the time to occupy, register and administer territories as they advanced eastward. Most territory west of the Dniepr River was transferred to civilian rule between September and November 1941. It fell within the Nazi administrative borders of the Reich Commissariat Ukraine and the General Government. In 1942, the civilian administration of the “Final Solution” began another wave of registration, ghettoization, property confiscation, and forced labor that coincided with mass shootings and deportations to Belzec where half of Lviv’s Jews

⁸ Dieter Pohl, “Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Western Ukraine- A Research Agenda,” Shared History-Divided Memory. Jews and Others in Soviet Occupied Poland, 1939-1941 eds, Barkan, Cole and Struve (Leipzig, 2007), 306.

⁹ See the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, <http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/presentations/features/details/2005-03-10>.

were gassed. The dozens of ghettos established in 1942 were short-lived, most were transformed into forced labor camps by 1943. A second wave of deportations to Belzec started again in August 1942, prompted by Himmler's orders to finish off all non-laboring Jews and destroy all ghettos in occupied Poland and Ukraine by the end of 1942. The remnant population of Jews in the labor camps and forests of western Ukraine faced yet another wave of assaults in 1943. The largest camp in Ukraine, near Lviv (Janowska) was liquidated. Upon the liberation of Ukraine by the Red Army, about 100,000 Jews emerged from the war torn landscape of Ukraine. In the testimonies of those traumatized survivors, Jews expressed as much shock over the brutality of the Germans as that of their neighbors, whose behavior was "vile," according to Soviet investigators.

You will notice that my summary is focused on the agency of German perpetrators, the regional and chronological waves of the Nazi implementation of the "Final Solution," and mostly events in western Ukraine. Ukraine also featured in an interpretive debate on the role of the center and periphery in initiating the mass murder. I should mention that there is also a growing body of Jewish testimony that has not been fully integrated into this picture. And until recently, few had delved into Soviet sources to the extent we are beginning to see now.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN THEMES BEING EXPLORED NOW?

1) The Holocaust by Bullets

The fact that most Jews in the Soviet Union, and therefore in Ukraine died at gunpoint has been well known among prosecutors and historians. The fact that most were shot by Order Police battalions and Waffen SS, and not the Einsatzgruppen, has been the focus of research over the past 15 years. This theme of mass shooting is being reexamined at the scenes, as Extraordinary Commission investigators did in 1943-45, historians began to do in the early 1990s, and Father Patrick Desbois is doing now systematically. Desbois' work is extremely important, not only for its symbolic, Christian-Jewish reconciliation with the past, but more practically and empirically for its collection of testimony and evidence. The mass murder was done in the open and involved the local population to a greater extent than was grasped or appreciated before and this fact raises new questions about Ukrainian and Soviet history. As the details of these local killing actions emerges, we are challenged intellectually to redefine the terminology and concepts of collective

violence, collaboration, bystanding, participation, and witnessing.

2) Neighbors and Interethnic Violence

The local, intimate nature of the killing in Ukraine has in light of Jan Gross's Neighbors (2001) also set off another line of research about interethnic violence. How does the history of pogroms fit into the history of the Holocaust? Scholars such as Kai Struve speak of the almost ritualistic response of Ukrainians who responded to incendiary calls to persecute and attack Jews in summer 1941 and in eastern Galicia especially. News that actions against Jews would occur in the towns was enough to cue peasants to arrive in town with carts, ready to load up the plunder. Memory of or rumors about pogroms in the wake of the First World War and earlier times provided a precedent to follow, a pattern of response. While the history of pogroms in Ukraine is providing another angle for understanding local participation in the Holocaust as of summer 1941, and the regional variations of the local reactions and forms of violence at that time, attention is also shifting to the end phase of the occupation. Scholars such as Jeffrey Burds and Alfred Rieber are looking at the plight of Jews within the maelstrom of Ukrainian-Polish violence, or the civil war that erupted in Volhynia and Galicia. Thus the topic of interethnic violence and the Holocaust has a specific geographic and chronological focus of 1941 and 1943-44.

3) Collaboration as Social and Political History

In the historiography of Ukraine during the Second World War, well before the millions of records on Ukrainian police, regional administrations and postwar trials became available to researchers in the 1990s, the theme of collaboration was at the center of accusations, denials, and scholarly debate. Often Ukrainians were portrayed in broad brush strokes as Hitlerite fascists, guards at camps, as serving the colonial power in special units (*Askaris*) in the liquidation of the ghettos, and as *Waffen SS* men. Much of this earlier work was fueled by a combination of developments: Soviet persecution of Ukrainian nationalists who were branded collaborators; Jewish survivor testimony that described Ukrainians as the "worst"; and the fact that many Ukrainians including *Trawniki* men who resettled after the war in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the US were spotlighted in war crimes investigations and deportation proceedings. On the other hand, some western scholars such as John Armstrong in the U.S.

explained away Ukrainian collaboration within the context of the weaknesses of the nationalist movement; he argued that collaboration of Ukrainians could not be judged with the same moral yardstick applied to those residing in independent nation states, the logic being that acts of treason did not apply to non-nation states.¹⁰ The recent growth in Holocaust studies has changed studies of collaboration from a concentration on notions of national treason to specific acts that contributed to the mass murder, the identification of accomplices to this crime and the varied contexts in which this collective violence occurred.

In the German reports, one often reads that “the more gruesome tasks were given to the local population.” But what exactly were these “tasks”? Desbois’s work is filling in the spectrum of willing and forced participation. At recently uncovered mass murder sites, local eyewitnesses have explained how regional German officials and Ukrainian or ethnic German village elders, the *starosta*, requisitioned local women, youth and any available men to assist them in a variety of roles: as pit diggers; as “Jew carriers” to bring the elderly to the killing site; as “corpse carriers” picking up the dead off the street; as “packers” young peasant girls assigned to walking over the bodies in the pit; as collectors of hemp, placing it in the pits to burn human remains; as clothing sorters; as menders (women who sewed tattered clothing that was distributed to ethnic Germans); and as cooks to feed “the shooters” during long shifts.¹¹ Aside from the indigenous policemen, most local helpers did not volunteer for this work, though to be sure there were certainly participants who showed up because of greed, anti-Semitism, curiosity and other motives.

Another gray area in the history of collaboration concerns the history of Ukrainian nationalists during the war. Did the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists organize the persecution and even murder of Jews? Franziska Bruder’s research has pointed to the role of expeditionary forces, the *pokhidny hrupy*. Karel Berkhoff and Marc Carynyk’s work has elucidated the antisemitism of the leadership who were allied with Germans in 1941 on the issue of avenging Jews as the alleged source of Muscovite-Bolshevism. The involvement of self-identifying Ukrainian patriots, those seeking Ukrainian autonomy, must be understood within the framework of Nazi Realpolitik whereby Ukrainian nationalists were potential allies in the war

¹⁰ John Armstrong, “Collaborationism in World War II: The Integral Nationalist Variant in Eastern Europe,” *The Journal of Modern History* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Sep., 1968), pp. 396-410.

¹¹ For Father Desbois’s work, see *The Mass Shooting of Jews in Ukraine 1941-1944: The Holocaust by Bullets* (Exhibit Catalog) Mémorial de la Shoah, May 20-Nov 30, 2007. Also see *New York Times*, “A Priest Methodically Reveals Ukrainian Jews’ Fate,” October 6, 2007 and his recent book, *The Holocaust by Bullets* (Palgrave, 2008).

against “Judeo-Bolshevism” and Poland, but Slavs in general were an “inferior” race to be fully exploited. Indeed, German attitudes and policies toward Ukrainians were often ambivalent. Ukrainians’ future as Slavic “Untermenschen” was certainly not bright; during the war over 4 million Ukrainians died, and more than 2 million were enslaved by their Nazi overseers.¹² Advocates of a Ukrainian state who coalesced around the OUN were themselves divided into two factions, though both were anti-communist and had formal dealings with the Third Reich.¹³

4) Holocaust Education and Memory in Ukraine.

A critical approach to Ukraine’s Holocaust history has been hampered by political agendas in Kiev, Moscow and within the North American diaspora. The imbalanced or obscured treatment of the Holocaust in Ukrainian textbooks has been convincingly analyzed by Johann Dietsch in his study comparing the Holodomor and Holocaust in Ukrainian discourse, in Elena Ivanova’s surveys of university students and Anatoly Podolsky’s research on Holocaust memory and education in Ukraine. John-Paul Himka has also shown how Ukrainian collaboration in the Holocaust or “war criminality” is a blind spot in the diaspora. Current politicized Ukrainian approaches to nation-building focus on Ukrainian martyrdom or glorification of designated heroes with shady wartime pasts. The persistence of antisemitism in Ukraine and Russia certainly does not help foster research and a self-critical exploration of participation in the Holocaust. The antisemitic stereotype of the Jewish Bolshevik or Jewish GPU/NKVD official persists. We should, as Himka argues, “move beyond a rhetoric of denial and victimization” promote more reflective, critical constructions of collective memory and national identities that allow the good stories and the shameful ones to coexist, “an understanding of the past that can be shared by Ukrainians, Jews, and Poles.”¹⁴

Most of the research and publishing on the Holocaust is occurring outside of Ukraine itself.

¹² Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, 638.

¹³ Franziska Bruder, “*Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!*“, 113-175. The Germans welcomed Ukrainian help in the fight against “Judeo-Bolshevism,” but Hitler would not tolerate a sharing of political power with Slavic “Untermenschen.” During the “Petliura Days” in late July 1941, thousands of Jews in Lviv were massacred in an orgy of violence that was organized and promoted by the German occupiers, local thugs and nationalist radicals. When the nationalist expeditionary forces pushed eastward in summer 1941, they discovered a less receptive local population. Sovietization had stifled, discredited the nationalist movement and the local population was more suspicious of the Nazi occupiers. Fewer pogroms could be ignited though there were important regional exceptions requiring additional research.

¹⁴ John-Paul Himka, “War Criminality: A Blank Spot in the Collective Memory of the Ukrainian Diaspora,” *Spaces of Identity* 5.1 (2005): 17, 9-24.

Emerging centers in Kiev, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk are encouraging more scholarly exchange and the mission of improving Holocaust education. The journal, *Holocaust and Modernity*, published by the Kiev-based Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies is a notable achievement for its peer-reviewed articles, book reviews and primary sources. In Ukraine itself, most publications consist of document collections, for example, Faina Vinokurova's three volumes on the Jews and Jewish resistance in Vinnytsia, Dr. V.P. Schetnikov's collection on Odessa, and Ilya Levitas's on Babi Yar.¹⁵ There is a scarcity of interpretive monographs.¹⁶ Since 1991 five Ukrainian doctoral dissertations and one habilitation have in some way dealt with the topic of the Holocaust.¹⁷ This is a new field, and there is little support for scholars in Ukraine to work on it, or most other subject areas for that matter. There are material and financial constraints there for building up a research field on the Holocaust, not to mention a climate that does not always nurture critical, open discourse on the topic.

AGENDA: POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I have mentioned some blind spots and gaps in knowledge but would like to draw your attention now to areas where I think more work can be done, empirically and conceptually.

We need to revisit the occupation structure. We have Alexander Dallin's early study and recently Karel Berkhoff's on the Reich Commissariat Ukraine. Dieter Pohl's work on the German military administration has filled in the picture in the eastern zones occupied by the

¹⁵ *Katastrofa ta Opir Ukraïns'kogo evreïstva (1941-1944): Narysy z istorii Holokostu i Oporu v Ukraïni*, ed. S. Elisavetsky (Kiev, 1999); *Pamiat' Babiego Yara: Vospominania u Dokumenty*, ed. Ilya Levitas (Kiev, 2001).

¹⁶ Maxim Gon's (Rivne) work focused on Jewish-Ukrainian relations before the war. A few studies have examined the occupation newspapers and their antisemitic themes, work by Kiril Fefermann (who emigrated to Israel from Ukraine) and Mikhail Tyaglyy's "Антисемитская пропаганда на оккупированных нацистами советских территориях: историография и методика изучения вопроса," which was published in the journal *Holocaust and Modernity*.

¹⁷ Thanks to Mikhail Tyaglyy and Anatoly Podolsky for helping me identify recent Ukrainian studies related to the Holocaust. In 1996 Anatoly Podolsky completed his doctoral dissertation, "Nazi Genocide Against Ukrainian Jews (1941-1944)." In 1997, Felix Levitas successfully defended his dissertation, "Jews of Ukraine in the Second World War Period." In December 2003, Faina Vinokurova defended her dissertation, "The State Archive Funds (Vinnytsya region) as source of Jewish history during German-Roman occupation in 1941-1943." Natalia Sugatska wrote a dissertation on Holocaust in Southern Ukraine, and it was critically reviewed by Vladimir Solonari in the journal *Holocaust and Modernity*. Oleksii Honcharenko's dissertation on the Kiev region was also reviewed by Alexander Prusin, with some generally favorable comments but criticisms about the lack of material and analysis on the topic of collaboration. Oleg Surovtsev's dissertation on the Holocaust in northern Bukovina has just appeared and not been reviewed yet. Mikhail Tyaglyy's doctoral research on Crimea has appeared in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*.

Wehrmacht and to some extent other Axis forces, but there is little on the Ukrainian role in the civil and military administrations. Details about Ukrainians and ethnic Germans in the rural areas who served as starosta have not been brought out. Desbois has hit upon this gap in research as he has learned how the labor system contributed to the implementation of the Holocaust. Dr. Marcus Eikel's work on the administration is also important in this regard, though the continuities and breaks between the Soviet and Nazi structures and practices remain unclear.

We must tap the archives of the other Axis powers present in Ukraine. The Romanian (see Jean Ancel and Radu Ioanid's work), and to some extent Hungarian Labor Service (see Randolph Braham's and Kristian Ungvary's research) have been examined, but there is next to nothing on Hungarian occupation officials and their involvement in the Holocaust, and even less on Slovakian and Italian forces. I recently completed a book chapter on this theme of Axis participation in the Holocaust during 1941, but much more work needs to be done on this. The challenge here is not only access to archives but that researchers must possess multiple languages to conduct the research.

What are the interconnections among anti-Jewish policy, the war and other occupation policies and security actions, for example, the economic exploitation, and use of labor? Did Nazi anti-Jewish policy contribute to more violence against other non Jewish inhabitants? How did Nazi perpetrators combine their campaigns of anti-partisan warfare with the war against the Jews? We must put the war back in the picture, connect the Holocaust to military events and understand, as Raphael Lemkin wrote, that genocide is a form of war by other means. For example the anti-partisan campaigns engulfed entire populations including the Roma, and impacted entire regions that became civil war zones that in some cases the Germans avoided. Germans did not report the losses of Jews that occurred in the context of Polish-Ukrainian clashes, for example. Jews who survived the Nazi massacres and fled to forests and swampy regions of Ukraine were often killed in 1943-1944 anti-partisan and internecine warfare among Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian and Ukrainian factions.

More field work should be done before the last witnesses perish and the scenes of the crimes including mass graves are further obscured by the passage of time and economic development in Ukraine. Of course the testimony collected today is largely from individuals who were children or youths during the war, and their memories of events must be corroborated with other sources. But given the enormity of the crime and the fact that the massacres of so many

Jewish communities in the smaller towns were not documented, often these testimonies are the only possible evidence available to establish or initiate research on those events. In towns such as Myrhorod (near Poltava) or Narodychi (near Korosten) where I recently conducted research there are Jews who were born just after the war, who grew up in these locales and learned the history from relatives (fathers who returned after serving in the Red Army) and from Ukrainian eyewitnesses including members of the Nazi occupation administration and local police.

This field work makes possible more regional and micro studies. Such studies are in process or have been recently published: Micheala Christ is working on Berdychiv, Alexander Prusin on Kiev, Eric Steinhart on Transnistria, Jared Mc Bride on Olevsk, Omer Bartov on Buczacz (Buchach), Tanja Penter on the Donbass and Mikhail Tyaglyy on Crimea. But there are gaps in the geographic coverage, such as central and eastern Ukraine, and parts of Podolia.

Regional and micro studies need to be placed in broader interpretive and chronological contexts that consider the prewar and postwar periods. In addition to thick descriptions of the mass murder that are properly contextualized, we should look closely at the individual actors in a biographical stream of analysis, considering the interaction of victims, bystanders and perpetrators, that the collective violence is a form of social history. Biographical depth will help us better understand the influences of wartime circumstances versus individual agency and motive. How did local circumstances influence individual and group behavior? Furthermore biographies illuminate the resonance of participation in, witnessing and experience of mass violence on individual lives and communities, and across eras.

Analytically I would also make a plea for historical explanations that have comparative elements. Comparison is basic to how historians analyze events. It is unavoidable, but can be counter-productive when it is used as an instrument of denial and or employed in the politics of competitive martyrdom. What kinds of comparisons can be explored? Linkages in the broader history of genocide can be explored by comparing patterns of implementation and the repercussions of the mass murder. Did one period of mass violence, such as the 1930s Stalinist years lead to another one, and shape perceptions and actions in WWII era? Did both overlapping totalitarian systems create a culture of mass violence in Ukraine? One can compare events in Ukraine with what happened in other parts of Europe at that time. How do the camps and ghettos in Ukraine compare with those in Poland (a topic of Martin Dean's new research)? Given the neighbor against neighbor intimacy of the violence, Ukraine can be compared with other cases

historically and globally such as in the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda. But the global comparisons are in many ways jumping ahead. First we need to do the groundwork and microstudies to figure out precisely who, what, where, and when. Then perhaps we can study the why in these different analytical comparative contexts, drawing from useful theoretical tools across disciplines.

I know I am asking a lot here. No single scholar can accomplish this in a lifetime, but I would not have such a large agenda if there was not an emerging field of dedicated scholars who have and continue to do this work. The existence of this emerging field of scholars is the kind of fundamental achievement worth recognizing now, but we have a lot more work ahead of us.

Thank you for your attention.