Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies
https://esaanz.org.au/anzjes/
Vol14(4)
ISSN 1837-2147 (Print)
ISSN 1836-1803 (Online)

To find Ukrainians and their stories: E-archives and e-databases as a source for the history of Nazi prisoners at Auschwitz

Olesia Isaiuk
"Prison on Lonts'koho" (Łącki Street) National Memorial Museum
Liberation Movement Research Centre
isaiuk.o@gmail.com

Abstract
This text is dedicated to the topic, not yet widely researched, of Ukrainians in Auschwitz. It presents newly discovered and previously invisible facts concerning Ukrainian prisoners in Auschwitz and reflects on three questions concerning the history of select Ukrainian regions during the Nazi occupation of 1941-44: the deportation of peasants from the so-called Zakerzonnia region; the possible fate of forced labourers from the Vinnytsia region who worked on the construction of Hitler's "Werwolf" headquarters; and the problem of correlating the places of capture of Soviet POWs who were imprisoned in Auschwitz in October 1941 with the locations of key battles of the Kyiv offensive of July-September 1941. In all three cases, discoveries were made as a result of work with large e-databases in which data concerning former Auschwitz prisoners are collected. I show how the relevant correlations were observed and report on the documentary basis of the study.

Keywords: Auschwitz, e-databases, forced labourers, Lemkos, POWs, Ukraine, Zakerzonnia

Introduction

The Ukrainian experience of the Second World War is highly specific for several reasons, the main one being that the territory inhabited by Ukrainians as an ethnocultural unit was, before the war, divided between different states. (In this article the term "Ukrainians" is understood to mean persons who lived on territory which correlates with Ukraine within the 1991 borders, including territories occupied by Russia at the time of writing, as well as persons who, living on Ukrainian ethnic territories which were part of other states, displayed signs of Ukrainian identity – for example, persons of the Greek Catholic confession in Poland).

The presence of Ukrainians on the territories of various states also meant that they were subject to different bureaucratic systems and served in different armies. Additionally, during the Second World War numerous groups of persons displaying different characteristics and consisting, in part, of non-Ukrainians were located on Ukrainian territory. Examples of such groups include Soviet prisoners of war captured on Ukrainian territory, some of whom were not Ukrainians, or prisoners who were Transcarpathian Jews and not ethnic Ukrainians but are counted here as "Ukrainian" because of the short-lived existence of the Transcarpathian Ukrainian state in 1939 and of the fact that the Transcarpathian region is today part of Ukraine.

Some documentary artefacts moved together with people and ended up in different countries. Others were created for Ukrainians in the countries to which they were dislocated. These documents were put to use by different bureaucratic systems. Later they remained in a variety of archives in different countries. Thus, the study of Ukrainians who became victims of Nazi incarceration in concentration camps is one of the most complicated tasks in the entire complex undertaking of writing the history of Ukrainians as victims of the Second World War. One of the significant lacunae in research into this history results from the difficulty of collecting personal stories of Ukrainian victims of the Nazi punitive system who are not specifically identified as Ukrainians in the documentary record, but nevertheless may be recognised as such with the help of documents relating to Soviet POWs and escapees from forced labour in Germany.

The topic of Auschwitz has an extremely rich historiography, as does the topic of the victims of the Nazi occupation policy in Ukraine. However, most of this literature gives only a general idea of Ukrainians who were prisoners in Auschwitz. Exceptions include Mykhailo Marunchak's *Ukrainian Political Prisoners in Nazi Concentration Camps* (Marunchak, 1996) and the major collective publication titled *Struggle for a Ukrainian State* (Marunchak, 1992). In recent years, both have been supplemented by the publication *Words of a Political Prisoner* (Romaniuk, 2019), which combines reprints of periodicals issued by associations of former prisoners of Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, with scholarly analyses of the topic. *Prisoners from Ukraine in the Mauthausen Concentration Camp: History and Memory* by Ruslana Berndl, Tetiana Pastushenko and Matthias Kaltenbrunner (Berndl et al., 2020) is a methodologically notable example of research on the topic of Ukrainians in Nazi concentration camps. Another recent comprehensive study of the topic was the collection of articles titled *The Auschwitz Concentration Camp: The Ukrainian Dimension* (Lehasova et al., 2019).

At the same time, it would be unfair to claim that researchers of the general topic of concentration camps in the Third Reich completely bypass the issue of Ukrainians among the prisoners of Auschwitz. The topic of Ukrainians in Nazi concentration camps already appears in Eugen Kogon's classic work *The SS State: The System of German Concentration Camps* (Kogon, 1946; 2017). It should also be remembered that when writing about "Soviet" or "Russian" prisoners in general, authors generally include Ukrainians in their number. Compendiums devoted to the factual side of the history of Auschwitz are extremely valuable in research that requires the use of a large mass of sources of the same type. One of the best examples of this genre is the work of Danuta Czech (Czech, 1992).

Ukrainians were imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps as representatives of different social and political groups, including Soviet army POWs, forced labourers who had fled home from Germany, and members of the Ukrainian nationalist underground, particularly the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists' Bandera faction, or OUN(b). If under the rubric of "Ukrainians" among the prisoners of Nazi camps we consider residents of what today is Ukrainian state territory, Transcarpathian Jews need to be included. Usually, Ukrainians were subsumed into bigger prisoner groups, imprisoned OUN members being the single community recognised as specifically "Ukrainian" in the ethnic sense.

The key consequence of Ukrainian statelessness in the context of Nazi concentration camps was that the nationality of Ukrainians was registered in their incarceration documents *according to their citizenship*. This meant that Ukrainians were counted as Polish, Soviet, Czech, Romanian or German citizens, or citizens of other nation-states (Marunchak, 1996, pp. 90–91). After the war's end their documents found themselves in the archives of a number of different states – mainly the Ukrainian SSR (today Ukraine), the Soviet Union and Russian SFSR (today the Russian Federation), as well as the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (today's reunified Germany). The dispersion of Ukrainians' documents among numerous archives is itself another complicating factor. Finally, the total volume of documents is so great that precise research and analysis of them by researchers has been a seemingly insurmountable task. In this light, the transformation of standard paper archives into e-archives and e-databases has opened new opportunities to illuminate blind spots in the Ukrainian historical experience and incorporate this experience into the general European one.

It should be noted that the methodology of studying monotypical mass sources in e-databases is not entirely unfamiliar or new in relation to working with such data on traditional media in ordinary archives. Indeed, the electronic databases usually consist of masses of scanned documents systematically ordered according to rules established for paper archives. But the form of the document as it is offered in e-databases, combined with the application of document grouping principles, provides the necessary conditions for carrying out high-quality investigations of groups such as the Ukrainian prisoner populations in Auschwitz, including rapid organization of retrieved information, identification of disputable identities and motivations, and also verification of data provided by the preserved sources.

Before reviewing of the capabilities and features of some of the extant e-databases, I should specify the types of document that are able to serve as sources for identifying, compiling and analysing information about Ukrainian prisoners at Auschwitz as a coherent group. The list of arrivals, the so-called *Zugangsliste*, contains the given names, surnames, and birth dates of new prisoners, besides, of course, their dates of arrival. Within the camp itself the main prisoner document was the prisoner card, which recorded the greatest amount of data about a prisoner, including given name, surname, date and place of birth, information on the prisoner's parents, physical description, reason for incarceration, and information about any transfer from other concentration camps. Sometimes these cards included unique additional data – for example, for military prisoners the type of army, military title, and date and place of capture were added; and if the prisoner was a Jew, the top of the card was stamped in blue with the word *Jude*.

Depending on the circumstances, the prisoner could also be listed among the patients in the camp hospital, in so-called *Revier* (area) lists (e.g., for the camp jail or the political section [*Politische Abteilung*]), or elsewhere; usually such lists included only the given name, surname and camp number. Prisoners who died had their name and number recorded in the list of the deceased; and if prisoners were transferred to another camp, their names appeared on a corresponding transport list.

Source: e-databases

The main e-databases dedicated to Nazi victims are ITS Bad Arolsen and "Pamiat' naroda," which include masses of personal documents pertaining to Ukrainians who were imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps. These databases include prisoner cards, numerous prisoner lists, and other personal records. Their great number makes it possible not only to reveal a whole population of Ukrainians among the aggregate population of prisoners, but even to identify separate groups among the Ukrainians with their own stories and specific features.

The most important and largest database is the International Tracking System Bad Arolsen, known as ITS Bad Arolsen (Arolsen Archives). It comprises collections of documents about persons who were forcibly displaced, imprisoned, or deported during the Second World War. On the ITS site there are different types of prisoners' documents, including prisoner cards, lists, daily reports, and a book of prisoners in solitary confinement, the so-called *Bunkerbuch*. Thanks to such a diversity of documents it is possible in many instances to reconstruct stories of individual persons from the first days of their imprisonment until their death or liberation.

A good example is the story of Josyf Kozak,[1] a son of Galician migrants who was born in the USA but had returned to Western Ukraine with his parents in the early 1930s. He was arrested in 1943 in Podorozhna, a small village near Stryi in Lviv oblast. From autumn 1943 until autumn 1944 he was imprisoned at Auschwitz and then transferred to Mittelbau. A similar case is that of Wolodymyr Fomkin. He was arrested on 5 July 1941, likely captured as a Red Army soldier. According to ITS documents he was imprisoned at Auschwitz from autumn 1943 and later transferred to Buchenwald and Mittelbau. According to data presented by Danuta Czech, he came to Auschwitz as part of a "transport" from Flossenburg whose members were being transported to die in a gas chamber. But something changed and the entire transport, nearly 1000 people, was abandoned outdoors, as was also the case with prisoners of Soviet POW subcamps in the years 1941-42. The following night part of the Flossenburg group, including Fomkin, was taken to barracks by "old" prisoners (persons who had been imprisoned for a comparatively long time). During the next day Fomkin was "legalised." (In camp jargon "legalisation" meant non-official agreement between a group of prisoners and the barracks leader named by the concentration camp administration to include a non-listed prisoner into the list of barracks prisoners.)

Furthermore, thanks to the great volume of documents held by post-war German local authorities and occupying Allies authorities, it is also possible to obtain information about events in the lives of interesting subjects during the first years after the war. Thanks to this circumstance, ITS Bad Arolsen creates the opportunity to reconstitute the stories of *Ostarbeiter* escapees – the most numerous and least studied group of Ukrainian prisoners in Auschwitz. Additionally, post-war documents in ITS Bad Arolsen make it possible to trace the precise fate of imprisoned OUN(b) members during the first years after liberation.

Next in importance is the e-database "Pamiat' Naroda" (People's Memory), which is located in Moscow and consists of collections of documents pertaining to the Second

[1] Names are given here in the form in which they appear in the archival record. Where it is necessary to reconstruct the Ukrainian-language form of the name, the Library of Congress system of Romanisation (without ligatures) is used together with the reconstructed form in Cyrillic, and the reconstruction is marked with an asterisk.

World War (Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii, *Pamiat' Naroda*). Due to the nature of its mandate, this database contains soldiers' documents, including documents of POWs who were imprisoned at Auschwitz. Especially important is the fact that it preserves a significant number of prisoner cards filled out with personal data including time and place of capture and incarceration in previous POW camps before the Auschwitz imprisonment.

The third and last database considered here is Auschwitz.org, which contains data from personal prisoner documents in the archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau National Museum in Poland (Miejsce pamięci i muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau). This is a compilation of various books and lists of prisoners which were prepared by the camp administration for particular needs. These sources are useful for information-checking against the documents of other databases. But this database does not contain complete sets of documents, only those that made their way into the hands of Soviet troops that liberated Auschwitz on 27 January 1945 and then were transported to Moscow. Some of these documents were published by the "Memorial" NGO during the 1990s, a period of partial liberalization of access to Russian archives, and thus are also part of the "Memorial" database.

An additional possibility afforded by the above-mentioned databases is the opportunity to check them against the data from so-called "wild" databases, including "Auschwitz Death Certificates 1941-1943" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), a list of dead Auschwitz prisoners that was scanned by an unknown researcher and uploaded under this name to the Internet. Any such list that does not disclose obligatory metadata about archives of origin must be regarded as doubtful, but this one appears to be reliable, its information having been verified against the Auschwitz.org database. A similar list was compiled by researchers of the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War and published in a collective work titled *Auschwitz Concentration Camp: The Ukrainian Dimension* (Lehasova, 2019). This list, grounded in data from Ukrainian regional archives and lists of communities of Nazi concentration camp survivors collected over the past decades, contains names and surnames and, rarely, dates of birth of former prisoners.

These circumstances make a deep cross-sectional analysis between the ITS Bad Arolsen and the search system at the Auschwitz-Birkenau National Museum essential for purposes of researching Ukrainians in Auschwitz. My proposal aims to document the process of identifying the Ukrainian prisoner population among the selected e-database entries and analyse the result, a task which has heretofore been attempted in regard to only a few cases.

The identification conundrum

The most difficult part of the research was to identify Ukrainians among the mass of Auschwitz prisoners. None of the databases mentioned above provides the possibility of identifying Ukrainians based on specific criteria. This is hardly surprising, given that prisoners were registered according to their citizenship, not their ethnic nationality – except for Jews and Sinti. Ukrainians, stateless during the Second World War, were registered as Poles, Russians, or Czechs. Mykhailo Marunchak recollected,

> We witnessed the funny situation where our Ukrainian group, consisting of seven persons, had four different classifications. Two of our friends from

> Transcarpathia were marked 'Ch' (i.e., as Czechs), three from Galicia were registered as 'P' (i.e., Poles), one received a camp number without a description (because his father lived in Warsaw and had a Nansen passport), and the seventh received a black triangle with an "R" because he was of East Ukrainian origin (Marunchak, 1996, pp. 91-92).

The records contain no precise universal markers referring to culture, religion or profession. Ethnic Ukrainians could be Orthodox or Greek Catholic; they could come from within the borders of Poland, the Soviet Union or the Czechoslovak Republic; and they could be workers, peasants or intellectuals. Separate subcommunities among the Ukrainians had their own territorial origins and specific pre-war collective experiences dissimilar from those of other groups. This circumstance accounted for the presence of different cultural patterns among Ukrainian prisoners and the different stances they adopted in the concentration camp. Members of OUN(b) tended to be nationally self-aware and bellicose. Soviet prisoners of war might display pro-Soviet inclinations or regret the loss of the hopes they had when they surrendered *en masse* in the summer of 1941 as a passive protest against Stalin. Passive fatalism characterised many peasants from the territory known as the Zakerzonnia – the Ukrainian-settled territories to the west of the Curzon line.

Ukrainians were divided according to social and cultural patterns as well. Prisoners from Central and Eastern Ukraine generally called themselves "Orthodox," while Ukrainians from Western Ukraine generally reported themselves as Greek Catholics. Additionally, in particular subcommunities of Ukrainians different age and social groups prevailed. Only the Transcarpathian Jews demonstrated an entire palette of ages and professions, while ethnic Ukrainians were strongly stratified. The OUN(b) group comprised mainly young people with a university education; peasants from the Zakerzonnia were mostly aged people of both sexes, and Soviet prisoners of war were generally young boys, mainly from rural locations in Central and Eastern Ukraine. It is very rare to find POWs from the Western Ukraine among the Ukrainian prisoners of Auschwitz and there are almost no OUN(b) sympathisers from Central and Eastern Ukraine.

Researchers dealing with data concerning prisoners from border regions encounter serious difficulties. While it is possible to be relatively certain that peasants from Central Ukraine or Greek Catholics from Western Ukraine would have a Ukrainian identity, it is easy to confuse Ukrainians from Eastern Ukraine with Russians, and Ukrainians from northern regions of Ukraine with Belarusians. The problem becomes especially acute when few identification markers are to hand.

For example, educated Ukrainian prisoners identified as "their own" the state from which they were deported. In doing so they followed the precise meaning of the German word *Staatsangehörigkeit* (state citizenship). In fact, one often sees the situation where educated Ukrainians from Lviv or Kyiv with a profoundly developed national identity defined themselves as "Poles" or "Soviet Russians," while poorly educated peasants who understood the question to refer to their country of origin in a more general sense often replied with formulations that included the (non-state) descriptor "Ukrainian." In the identification documents of Nazi concentration camp prisoners it is possible to find the country of origin given as "former Poland," "Ukraine under Russia," "Russian Ukrainian" and the like. There are no grounds to doubt the authenticity of the entries on the both sides, whether given by the prisoner or recorded

by the camp secretary, because the data were fixed and restored mechanically. Nevertheless, the sheer diversity of data relating to prisoners from Ukraine, combined with Nazi rules governing prisoner registration and loss of documentation during the last stage of the war, make the specific identification of Ukrainians extremely difficult.

The most reliable indicator for this task is language of everyday communication. It is generally possible to identify the native language of prisoners by analysing idiosyncratic deformations in the spelling of their surnames. The way that the German (or sometimes Polish) clerks wrote given names and surnames followed the rules of their own native language; therefore, even where there are few proven markers of Ukrainian identity, it is often still possible to identify Ukrainians by the spelling of their given name and surname.

Ukrainian is written in Cyrillic characters. In the German-run concentration camps Ukrainian names were recorded in Latin script, and given names often in their Latinised variants. As a result, *Andrii Nezera (Андрій Незера) became Andreas Nezera and *Mykhailo Kravtsiv became Michael Krawciw, etc. Thus, a Slavic-sounding surname and combined with a Latin given name can be a marker of Ukrainian ethnicity.

Below are listed the most widespread indications of Ukrainian being the likely native language of a given prisoner:

- For Ukrainian speakers, surname endings of the masculine adjective type (*-ий*) are written as *–yj* or *y* (while corresponding surname endings for Russian speakers are written as *-ij*). For example, Dmytro Lisowyj, Jakob Wischniewskyj and Jakiw Dobrowolskyj are likely to be Ukrainian.[2]

- The vowel combinations *iя* and *iє* in the names of Ukrainian-speaking prisoners names were written as *ija*, *ije* by German scribes, while the corresponding sounds in the names of Russian speakers were written as *ia* and *ie*. Thus *Ivan Korniienko (Іван Корнієнко) became Iwan Kornijenko, *Mariia Piliarenko (Марія Піляренко) became Marija Pilarenko, *Nadiia Khondusenko (Надія Хондусенко) became Nadija Chondusenko and *Ol'ha Musiienko (Ольга Мусієнко) became Olga Musijenko.[3] Some scribes, on the other hand, writing according to the rules of Polish orthography, rendered such female names as, for example, Mariia (Марія) and Iuliia (Юлія) as Maria and Julia. In some cases, when other identity markers and information are absent, it is still possible to identify a prisoner's origin on the basis of the transliteration of their names. For example, two women with cognate surnames – the Ukrainian *Anna Polishchuk (Анна Поліщук) and the Russian Elena Poleshchuk (Елена Полещук) – were registered under the surnames Politschuk [4] and Poleschtschuk. [5] The first variant shows that this prisoner probably spoke

[2] Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *OBD "Memorial."* The corresponding records are at https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774356, https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83773941 and https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774034.
[3] Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *OBD "Memorial."* See, respectively, https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=300174660, https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774563, https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774808 and https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=84473875.
[4] Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *OBD "Memorial."* See https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774547.
[5] See Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *OBD "Memorial"* https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=583774551 and Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *Pamiat' naroda*

Ukrainian as her mother language and language of everyday communication, while the second shows that the prisoner probably used Russian as the language of her everyday communication.

- In the case of Russian speakers, the vowels *o* and *u* in some positions were often transcribed by Polish or German clerks as *-a* and *-i*. As a result, for example, a Ukrainian speaking their surname as Maksymenko (Максименко) would have it written as Maksymenko, while a Russian speaking the same surname would have it written as Maksimienko. From time to time we encounter cases when a Ukrainian-speaking prisoner evidently gives their obviously Ukrainian name while speaking in Russian. For example, *Vasyl' Horynchenko (Василь Горинченко) appears as Wasylyj Horyntschenko.[6] This is understandable, given many Ukrainians' experience of using Russian as the official language.

Given sufficient experience, this analytical method also provides the possibility of determining the identity chosen by ethnic non-Ukrainians who lived in Ukraine and were deported from Ukrainian territory. A characteristic case illustrating this point is that of two Jews, possibly relatives, with the same surname. Both men had emigrated from the Kyiv region in Ukraine to France and were deported to Auschwitz from France. One of them gave his surname with the typical Russian ending (Szkliarewskij), while the other pronounced it with the Ukrainian ending (Szklarewsky). In another example, reviewing the documentation concerning Transcarpathian Jews, we have seen instances where Jews from rural localities gave their names in their typical Ukrainian variant (e.g., "Moshko" rather than "Moshe").

Database discrepancies

When comparing data from the ITS archives database with lists based on data from Ukrainian and Russian archives, it is possible to observe something that may be a "footprint" of the Cold War period. The information pertaining to Auschwitz prisoners in ITS is almost completely different from that in the Memorial database. Only 9-15% of the total number of persons are noted in both databases. The only link that is able to unify both archives and help obtain a full picture is Auschwitz.org.

The most plausible explanation of this state of affairs is that the Nazis withdrew part of the Auschwitz documents to elsewhere in Germany, while the Soviets took another part to Moscow. During the Cold War the latter documents were stored in the USSR's central archives, where researchers had no possibility of working with them. The "Iron Curtain" applied not only to politics and economics but also to archives.

---

https://pamyat-naroda.ru/heroes/memorial-chelovek_plen83774551/?backurl=%2Fheroes%2F%3Fadv_search%3Dy%26last_name%3D%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%89%D1%83%D0%BA%26first_name%3D%D0%95%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0%26middle_name%3D%26date_birth_from%3D%26static_hash%3D9c6591067e09036121fff75618cb7669v7%26data_vibitiya_period%3Don%26group%3Dall%26types%3Dpamyat_commander%3Anagrady_nagrad_doc%3Anagrady_uchet_kartoteka%3Anagrady_ubilein_kartoteka%3Apdv_kart_in%3Apdv_kart_in_inostranec%3Apamyat_voenkomat%3Apotery_vpp%3Apamyat_zsp_parts%3Akld_ran%3Akld_bolezn%3Akld_polit%3Akld_upk%3Akld_vmf%3Apotery_doneseniya_o_poteryah%3Apotery_gospitali%3Apotery_utochenie_poter%3Apotery_spiski_zahoroneniy%3Apotery_voennoplen%3Apotery_iskluchenie_iz_spiskov%3Apotery_kartoteki%3Apotery_rvk_extra%3Apotery_isp_extra%3Asame_doroga%26page%3D1%26grouppersons%3D1&

[6] Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. *OBD "Memorial."* See https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=83774830.

Case studies

The first case discussed below concerns Ukrainians from the Zakerzonnia zone who were deported to Auschwitz and killed there in 1942; the second reflects the presence among the prisoners of a great number of young boys from Vinnytsia region who may have been forced labourers building Hitler's headquarters near Vinnytsia; and the third involves Soviet POWs, including those of Ukrainian origin, who were imprisoned in autumn 1941. A significant number of them had been captured in the 1941 battle for Kyiv.

The Zakerzonnia case

During my work with the database Auschwitz.org I encountered many cases of Lemkos – peasants from the Zakerzonnia, the Ukrainian ethnic territories west of the Curzon line that were incorporated in 1944 into Polish state territory – who were deported to Auschwitz during the winter and spring of 1942. What was most interesting was the frequent occurrence in this group of three surnames: Ondycz, Bladycz, and Siwak. After further observation it became clear that very possibly they were members of three families who had lived in neighbouring villages. What was still unclear, however, was the reason for such a mass deportation from there in the first place. The Ukrainian partisan movement in these localities began later, in 1943-44. Thus, the most probable reason would seem to be that they had provided help to local Jews.

The Ondycz family was the first to be deported to Auschwitz in February 1942. It consisted of seven people, including two women, Fenna and Marta. Only two of them were born in the twentieth century (in 1904 and 1909); the dates of birth of all the others varied between 1875 and 1897. Analysis of their ages suggests that the four eldest – Tomasz, Jozef, Fenna and Marta – could have been two couples, and that Leszek (born in 1897), Jozef and Jurko were the sons of the two couples, although, of course, these inferences cannot be tested.

The Siwak family, brought to Auschwitz in February 1943, comprised a total of 20 people of both sexes. Their birth dates ranged from 1887 for the eldest in the group, Klara Siwak, to 1927 for the youngest, Petro Siwak. Unlike the previous example, the Siwaks' dates of birth are evenly spread, with intervals of only two or three years between them. This prevents us from making even a theoretical attempt to work out possible family ties among them. However, the fact that they share the same surname and the proximity of the villages from which they were deported make the hypothesis of family deportation quite plausible.

The Bladycz family, like the Siwaks, was deported to Auschwitz in February 1943. It consisted of only ten people, mostly women. Their dates of birth range from 1885 to 1927.

The reason for the deportations remains unclear. The coincidence of the names of the deportees and the proximity of the villages from which the unfortunate people came indicates that they were most likely punished for the participation of family members in something that, in the view of the occupying power, was a violation. It is very unlikely that this was because of participation in a resistance movement. Soviet guerrillas appeared in the Carpathian region only in the summer of 1943, and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was there no earlier than in the autumn of 1944. Participation in Polish

national underground structures also seems unlikely, as taking part in the national undergrounds on the Polish-Ukrainian border was rather strictly regulated by the principle of "birds of a feather flock together." Religion has often been an additional marker of national belonging, and in this case the Greek Catholic affiliation of all of the people in question almost excludes the possibility of their having participated in the Polish underground. On the other hand, the forested mountain regions of the Carpathians and the Beskydy were used by both the Polish national and the communist undergrounds as bases for illegal border crossings; theoretically this could have been the reason for such "family" punishment. It is also possible, given that there were almost no young men of conscription age among those deported, that their deportation was an example of the practice of hostage-taking, perhaps for failing to deliver the required contingent of *Ostarbeiter*. It should be noted that the cards of some of those taken out were not found in the "People's Memory" database, which means that chances of clarifying the probable reasons for the deportations are slim.

Forced labourers (Ostarbeiter) from the Vinnytsia region

Working with prisoner lists of so-called *Ostarbeiter*, I observed that larger numbers of people from the Vinnytsia region were imprisoned in April-May 1942 and July-August 1943 than at other times. These strange increases were also noted in memoirs about Auschwitz by two Ukrainians who had no direct connection to Vinnytsia: the OUN(b) members Mykola Klymyshyn and Petro Mirchuk, who were imprisoned in 1942-44 (Mirchuk, 1957). The first of these memoirists records the arrival in the summer of 1943 of a large number of prisoners from Central and Eastern Ukraine, including prisoners from Haisyn district, which is administratively part of Vinnytsia region:

Mostly young boys from villages came to Auschwitz; they were frightened because of being brought to the concentration camp, where everyone tested their stick on them from the moment they entered the camp. So they were all frightened, nervous and depressed … A Pole would ask such a frightened newcomer:

"What is the name of your district?"

"I told you already – Haisyn district," he would reply.

"Okay," the Pole would say again, "but what is the name of the city in which the centre of the district is situated?" (Klymyshyn, 1998, p. 116)

According to Klymyshyn and Mirchuk, the Auschwitz administration was forced to include Ukrainian prisoners in the so-called *Aufnahmekommando*, the reception team, in order to register prisoners from rural regions of Ukraine who did not understand any language other than Ukrainian. Most commonly these prisoners were young boys born between 1920 and 1923 from villages in the northern part of the Vinnytsia region.

On investigation of possible associations with other events it became clear that there was a correlation between the arrival of these young prisoners from the Vinnytsia region and the end stages of the construction of Werwolf, Hitler's headquarters near Vinnytsia. Other than this, the only other hypothesis that might explain these boys' presence is that they were mass escapees from this region, but it is doubtful that a mass escape by young boys from a particular region could have occurred simultaneously.

Both Jews from the Vinnytsia Ghetto and people referred to in Nazi documents as "Ukrainian labour" were used to build the Führer's headquarters. These could be prisoners of war or specially recruited strong young men from nearby villages. The last documentary trace of this "Ukrainian labour force" is a telegram dated 11 July 1942 from the Chief of Security Police and the *Sicherheitsdienst* in Zhytomyr instructing his colleague in Vinnytsia "immediately to order the Ukrainian labour force which is being laid off to be sent to work for the Reich. In future the same should be done with any labour force that is released. For security reasons these measures should be extended to all Ukrainian workers involved in the facilities in any way. At the conclusion of these specific actions, as well as any actions of a general nature, you must immediately report, indicating the number of people involved in such events" (Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchykh Orhaniv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukrainy, fond 3676, opys 4, sprava 116, arkush 56).

Based on the fact that there is a correlation between the completion of the first and the second stages of the construction of Werwolf and the appearance in Auschwitz of significant numbers of prisoners with similar parameters – young men born in 1919-24 from villages adjacent to the district centres of Vinnytsia region, we can conclude that, probably, "sent to work for the Reich" meant "sent to Auschwitz." On the other hand, Auschwitz was not located in the pre-war territory of the Reich, so there are still doubts.

The list of villages in the Vinnytsia region from which prisoners were brought to Auschwitz in April-May 1942 and July-August 1943 is as follows: Viitovtsi, Babyntsi, Kolybabyntsi, Litynka, Sandraky, Iazvynky, Kachanivka, Selyshche, Vyshcha Kropyvna, Ziatkivtsi, Antonivka, Andrushivka and Mitlyntsi.

It is important to note that the total number of these prisoners was relatively small and scarcely reached the hundreds. (This is an estimate: the research project, and the search for names, is still ongoing.) Local youths accounted for only a part of the total number of Werwolf's enslaved builders, and many died on the construction site. Relatively few survived to reach Auschwitz.

Soviet POWs

The issue of Soviet prisoners of war and their tragedy in Nazi captivity is rather well described in the literature. However, the case of the Soviet prisoners of war, some 14,000 in number, who were brought to Auschwitz in October 1941 is particularly noteworthy. On 7 October 1941, 2014 Soviet prisoners of war were brought to Auschwitz from Barracks 308 in Neuhammer am Quais (Czech, 1992, p. 92). Immediately upon arrival at the concentration camp, the prisoners were ordered to undress completely and dive into a container of disinfectant for the sake of sanitation, after which they were driven to barracks in a designated part of the camp.

From then on, Soviet prisoners of war were systematically brought to Auschwitz. Over the next two days another 2145 prisoners were brought in, and only then did construction of a separate sub-camp for prisoners of war begin (Czech, 1992, pp. 93-94). These barracks were unheated; they were separate from the main camp and fenced with barbed wire. On 14 October 1941 another 900 prisoners of war were brought from the same Barracks 308, and on 19 October almost two thousand more arrived. The next batch, a total of 986 prisoners, was brought on 20 October and another 1908 people

came on October 25 (Czech, 1992, pp. 94-98). At the beginning of November, there were almost 14,000 in the sub-camp.

In early November a special Gestapo commission headed by Mueller, the head of the Gestapo in Katowice, arrived at the camp. Its task was to sort the inhabitants of the sub-camp in accordance with a special order of 17 July 1941 which regulated the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war (Czech, 1992, pp. 101-02). The result of the commission's work was the division of the prisoners into four categories: "fanatical communists" (about three hundred), "politically suspicious" (about seven hundred), "not politically suspicious" (naturally, most of them, eight thousand), and "suitable for re-education (approximately thirty).

However, this "sorting" did not greatly affect the fate of the unfortunates, as by the spring of 1942 almost none had survived. The prisoners, many of whom were wounded and sick, found themselves in a terrible situation. They were kept in cold barracks, practically not fed, given no medical treatment and severely beaten for the slightest offence. They died in the tens and hundreds: on 29 October the camp bureaucracy recorded the death of 161 prisoners and of 186 the next day. Those still alive, but already exhausted, were killed. By April 1942, when the special camp ceased to exist, only 800 of the almost 14,000 had survived.

Although the dramatic history of the Auschwitz POW camp is well documented in the literature, it usually serves to illustrate the Nazis' inhuman treatment of prisoners or their violation of the customs and laws of war. A detailed examination of what this group of Soviet prisoners of war was like has not been undertaken in the literature so far, probably due to the fact that documents which provide direct information able to be analysed by comparing numerical and statistical data are scattered over various locations.

Such a comparison immediately leads to the correction of several commonly accepted stereotypes. First of all, it is widely believed that the main inmates of this sub-camp were officers and that they were there on the basis of the infamous "Commissar Order" of 6 June 1941 under which Soviet political officers taken prisoner were to be executed. Even a rough analysis completely refutes both theses, as about 98% of the victims in the Auschwitz POW camp were rank and file soldiers and sergeants, so it is unlikely that they could end up in a concentration camp for belonging to the Red Army officer corps. Another stereotype, less commonly encountered, is that the vast majority of these prisoners were of Jewish descent and it was this that led to their terrible fate. This, again, is not true, since the information on the cards clearly shows that more than 90% of the Soviet prisoners of war were Ukrainians, Russians or Belarusians.

Another myth, generated by the memoirists from the Ukrainian emigration, in particular Petro Mirchuk (1957) and Mykola Klymyshyn (1998), is that Ukrainians comprised a high percentage of these prisoners of war. Analysis of the records of the state citizenship of the prisoners of war does not confirm this opinion, for the number of prisoners of war who came from Ukraine does not exceed one and a half thousand. The bulk came from Russia and a very small group of several hundred from Central Asia. However, careful analysis of the regions the prisoners of war came from sheds light on circumstances that may have given the impression that Ukrainians outnumbered other ethnic groups among these prisoners of war. The fact is that among prisoners of the Auschwitz sub-camp in 1941-42 who were natives of the RSFSR there

were many from the territories that either bordered Ukraine or whose population consisted largely of Ukrainians, among them the Krasnodar Territory (the Kuban) and the Ordzhonikidze, Belgorod and Voronezh regions. It is clear from the names of such prisoners that they were most likely Ukrainian-speaking in their daily lives. This assumption is also confirmed by 1926 census data on the ethnic structure of these regions, which shows that Ukrainians constituted the majority of the population there. It is probable that the natives of Kuban or Stavropillia, being Ukrainian by origin, continued to speak Ukrainian in captivity and created the impression that there were many Ukrainians among them.

Analysis of the cards and lists related to the registration of prisoners of war also makes it possible to draw a generalised portrait of such a prisoner: the average Ukrainian Soviet prisoner of war in Auschwitz from 1941 to 1942 was born between 1907 and 1920 and was a peasant who came from the Kyiv, Zhytomyr or Vinnytsia region. If we analyse the areas of capture, it becomes clear that the majority were captured in the Kyiv region during the last two weeks of its defence.

Analysis of the Auschwitz prisoner cards further demonstrates that, for the most part, the Soviet POWs who were deported to Auschwitz had been captured in the territory between Lviv and Minsk during August and September 1941. This included:

Kiew (Kyiv)	68 captured
Borispol (Boryspil)	49
Desna	20
Browary (Brovary)	13
Bjelaja Cerkow (Bila Tserkva)	18

Moreover, a few hundred prisoners were captured in various villages of the Kyiv region. It is tempting to suppose on the basis of these figures that the real reason why this group of prisoners of war was in Auschwitz was the overcrowding of Nazi prisoner-of-war camps after the encirclement of Soviet troops in the so-called Kyiv Cauldron. However, in the absence of documents that could confirm or refute such a conjecture, it remains hypothetical.

Conclusion

All three cases discussed above demonstrate both the potential and the limitations of electronic archival databases and the monotypical mass documents that comprise their content. It is unlikely that a better instrument exists for the ordering of masses of data on whose basis one can both analyse a given situation overall and identify quantitative trends within it. In particular, working with such databases is practically the only means by which some “blank spots” pertaining to Ukrainian subject matter in the history of the repressive systems of the Third Reich can be illuminated. In some cases, myths and stereotypes can be refuted. Contrary to widespread assumption, Soviet prisoners of war in Auschwitz were not predominantly political officers or Jews, but rank and file soldiers, while officers constituted a small, almost insignificant group among them. Likewise, such research sheds light on the ethnic composition of these

Soviet POWs. Many who came from territories bordering Ukraine, especially the Kuban, were identified and registered as Russians, but analysis of their likely everyday language on the basis of spellings in their personal files suggests that they were Ukrainians.

In other cases, the research discloses phenomena to which it is difficult to ascribe plausible causes, as in the case of the deportation to Auschwitz of Lemko families from the Zakerzonnia region. In other instances, however, such research produces correlations that do indirectly suggest processes or events. Documents showing a concentration of arrivals in Auschwitz in two distinct time periods of young men from the Vinnytsia region suggest that they may have been sent to Auschwitz once they were no longer needed for the construction of Hitler's Werwolf headquarters. But both of these instances vividly demonstrate that in such situations correlations present no more than an opportunity to put forward hypotheses. Certainty, ultimately, depends on direct documentary evidence.

References

Arolsen Archives. *Arolsen Archives*. https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/search

Berndl, R., Kaltenbrunner, M., & Pastushenko, T. (2020). *Viazni z Ukrainy v kontstabori Mauthauzen: Istoriia ta pamiat' [Prisoners from Ukraine in the Mauthausen Concentration Camp: History and Memory]*. Feniks.

Czech, D. (1992). *Kalendarz wydarzeń w KL Auschwitz [Chronology of Events at Auschwitz Concentration Camp]*. Wydawn. Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu-Brzezince.

Klymyshyn, M. (1998). *V pokhodi do voli [On the Way to Freedom]*. Vol. II. Nakladom avtora.

Kogon, E. (1946). *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager [The SS State: The System of German Concentration Camps]*. Karl Alber Verlag. Polish trans.: Kogon, E. (2017). *Państwo SS. Organizacja i funkcjonowanie niemieckiego obozu koncentracyjnego*. Replika.

Lehasova, L., Smolii, V., Koval'chuk, L., Lysenko, O., Patryliak, I., Simperovych, V., & Bilous, O. (Eds.) (2019). *Kontstabir Aushvits: Ukrains'kyi vymir. Doslidzhennia, dokumenty, svidchennia [Auschwitz Concentration Camp: The Ukrainian Dimension. Research, Documents, Testimonies]*. Natsional'nyi muzei istorii Ukrainy u Druhii svitovii viini. Memorial'nyi kompleks.

Marunchak, M. (Ed.) (1990). *V borot'bi za ukrains'ku derzhavu: Esei, spohady, svidchennia [Struggle for a Ukrainian State: Essays, Memoirs, Testimonies]*. Svitova liga ukrains'kykh politychnykh viazniv.

Marunchak, M. (1996). *Ukrains'ki politychni viazni v natsysts'kykh kontsentratsiinykh taborakh [Ukrainian Political Prisoners in Nazi Concentration Camps]*. Svitova liga ukrains'kykh politychnykh viazniv.

Miejsce pamięci i muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau [Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau]. *Informacja o więźniach [Information about Prisoners]*. https://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/informacja-o-wiezniach

Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation]. *Pamiat' naroda 1941-1945 [People's Memory 1941-1945]*. https://pamyat-naroda.ru.

Ministerstvo oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation]. *OBD [Obobshchennyi bank dannykh] "Memorial" ["Memorial" Generalised Data Bank]*. https://obd-memorial.ru/html/.

Mirchuk, P. (1957). *V nimets'kykh mlynakh smerti: Spomyny z pobutu v nimets'kykh tiurmakh i kontslaherakh 1941-1945 [In the German Death Mills: Memoirs of Life in German Prisons and Concentration Camps 1941-1945]*. Ukrains'kyi soiuz politychnykh viazniv.

Romaniuk, M. (Ed.) (2019). *Slovo politviaznia: Periodychni vydannia Lihy ukrains'kykh politychnykh viazniv 1946-1947 rr. [Words of a Political Prisoner: Periodical Publications of the League of Ukrainian Political Prisoners 1946-1947]*. Instytut ukrainoznavstva im. I. Krypiakevycha Natsional'noi Akademii Nauk Ukrainy.

Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchykh Orhaniv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukrainy [Central State Archive of Higher Organs of Government and Administration of Ukraine].

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database. Auschwitz Death Certificates 1941-1943 (ID: 49478)*. https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/source_view.php?SourceId=49478