The Palace on the Ikva

Dubne, September 1939 – June 1941

Marco Carynnyk

1.

Mist from the marshy flood plain of the Ikva River was blanketing Dubne when the first tank trundled toward the town at five o'clock in the morning on Monday, September 18, 1939. An officer dressed in a leather jacket poised in the tank's open turret. Two small boys with flowers in their hands clung to the sides. The Ukrainian who surveyed the spectacle noted that the tanker had a swarthy complexion and that the boys were Jews. The nameless menace, the abomination that so many people in Poland's eastern borderlands, the fabled *Kresy Wschodnie*, had both dreaded and craved, was bodying itself in flesh. The slant-eyed barbarians were breaching the walls, and Jews, themselves a treacherous alien race, were inching the gate open from within and sending their children out to herald the invaders.[1]

All that morning mechanized columns – 236 tanks and 24 armored cars from the Thirty-sixth Tank Brigade of the Ukrainian Front's Fifth Army – clanked and belched their way through Dubne. Behind them tramped the foot soldiers of the Eighth Rifle Corps. Arrayed four abreast, accoutered in pointed caps, tattered greatcoats, and canvas boots, marching out of step, their Mosin-Nagant rifles slung over their shoulders on straps crafted from wire, twine, or strips torn from sheets, the infantrymen broke ranks when their officers weren't looking to beg for bread at the nearest house.[2]

The soldiers were weary as well as hungry. They had set out before dawn on September 17 from their base near Shepetivka, thirty-five kilometers east of the Polish-Soviet border, with orders to cross it at five o'clock, traverse another sixty or so kilometers to Dubne, and take the town that day. But at midday a reconnaissance patrol reported strong Polish forces in Dubne, and the tank brigade and rifle corps paused to let other units catch up with them and join in the advance. Late that afternoon the Fifth Army's chief of staff, Major-General Dmitrii Pisarevskii, drove over to his troops to dress them down for not obeying orders and to demand that they seize the town the next day. And to make sure that they

1 Earlier versions of this article appeared in *Shared History – Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941*, eds. Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, and Kai Struve (Leipzig, 2007), [263] – 301; and in *Iehupets'*, trans. Khrystyna Chushak, *Iehupets'* 18 [2009]: 295-342. I am grateful to Karel Berkhoff, Ray Brandon, Tamara Dmytrenko, the late Christopher Gladun, Volodymyr Ishchenko, Maciej Siekierski, Ostap Smerek, and Andrzej Suchcitz for helping to obtain some of the documents I cite and to Omer Bartov, Karel Berkhoff, Ray Brandon, Jonathan Brent, Marta Daria Olynyk, and the late Bishop Cornelius Pasichny for commenting on my drafts. And to Marta Horban for suffering over them with me. K. Surmach, "17. veresnia 1939 roku v Dubni," *Krakivs'ki visti*, 17 and 18 September 1942; Jan Woskrybicki, Dubno powiat, 3677, box 209, folders 1-2. Poland, Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (hereafter cited as HI); Wincenty Lewicki, ibid., 6901; Czeslaw Grzelak, *Dziennik sowieckiej agresji: Wrzesień 1939* (Warsaw, 1994), 131.

2 Surmach, "17. veresnia"; J. A. Kawka, "Czas śmierci," *Wiadomości*, February 2, 1964; Ivan Iashchyshyn, *Odyn rik u Chervonii Armiï: Spohady v rozpovidi Ivana Iashchyshyna*, ed. Zynovii Knysh (Toronto, 1982), 59; Antoni Mitręga, "Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami 17 września 1939 r." in Krzysztof Rowiński, ed., *Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami we wrześniu 1939 roku* (London, 1986), 106; Janina Sulkowska, "Memoirs, 1939-1951," unpublished ms., 23; Karel Kosek, "Od wyzwolicieli zachowaj nas Panie," II/1332/2k, 9, Archiwum Wschodnie, Warsaw (subsequently AW), also in *Dissent in Poland: Publications and Manuscripts from the Karta Center Foundation Archives in Warsaw, Poland* (Woodbridge, CT, 2005), reel 83; Irena Grudzińska and Jan Tomasz Gross, eds., *War through Children's Eyes: The Soviet Occupation of Poland and the Deportations, 1939-1941* (Stanford, 1981), 11; Tomasz Bereza, "Obraz czerwonoarmisty na okupowanych ziemiach polskich (1939-1941) w dokumentach, wspomnieniach i relacjach," in Piotr Chmielowiec, ed., *Okupacja sowiecka ziem polskich 1939-1941* (Rzeszów, 2005), 13-16.

did so, he directed them to be ready to move out at two in the morning.[3]

But Dubne was defenseless. The Polish high command had assumed that the Red Army was entering Poland to keep the Wehrmacht away, and at nine in the morning on the 17th General Piotr Skuratowicz, the commanding officer of the Polish army's Dubne operational group, had sent the town garrison orders to avoid conflict with the Russians and to negotiate safe-conduct to the Romanian frontier. At two that afternoon the soldiers had formed a column and marched off to the southwest. During the night Red Army machine gunners surrounded the Poles and took them prisoner. Shots rang out as the men laid down their arms. Some soldiers were seeking to save their honor by killing themselves.[4]

By half past six the next morning the Red Army had ended the skirmishing with stragglers from the Polish army and police, and Dubne was in its hands. By midmorning, a banner with an inscription hailing Stalin and the Red Army was bobbing over a lane that led to the marketplace. The shops were empty – looters had stripped the shelves as soon as the Polish authorities fled – but at the town hall officers were milling about, and soldiers were stuffing leaflets, pamphlets, and newspapers into the hands of passersby. Ever since Germany had attacked Poland from the west and north, some two hundred thousand refugees with knapsacks on their backs and bundles in their hands had been worrying to the east. Dubne had suffered less from the war than other places, and a goodly number of the wanderers had made the town their destination. Now, as volunteer militiamen flourished rifles and red armbands, both local people and itinerants, many of them young and poor, thronged the streets to welcome the liberators with red or blue-and-yellow flags, church banners, offerings of bread and salt, and medleys of hymns and Communist standards.[5]

Well-to-do Poles watched the celebrations from curtained windows, muttered that Jews and Ukrainians were all Communists, nationalists, or criminals and had played Poland false, and laid plans to follow the army to Hungary or Romania. Zionists set out south in the hope of reaching Palestine. Ukrainians who had belonged to non-Communist parties wondered how they could make their way west to the regions that the Wehrmacht had overrun.[6]

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3 N. S. Lebedeva, "Chetvertyi razdel Pol'shi i katynskaia tragediia," in V. G. Bushuev and Iu. N. Afanas'ev, eds., *Drugaia voina: 1939-1945* (Moscow, 1996), 247; Grzelak, *Dziennik*, 101, 103, 131; Czeslaw K. Grzelak, *Kresy w czerwieni: Agresja Związku Sowieckiego na Polskę w 1939 roku* (Warsaw, 1998), 181, 207, 301.

4 Lebedeva, "Chetvertyi razdel Pol'shi," 250; Zygmunt K. Dąbrowski, "Moje zderzenie z Bolszewikami we wrześniu 1939 – Unik przed którymś z Katyniów," in Krzysztof Rowiński, ed., *Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami*, 189; Wiktor Krzysztof Cygan, *Kresy w ogniu: Wojna polsko-sowiecka 1939* (Warsaw, 1990), 86. 88; "Relacja Stefana Strzemińskiego" in Czeslaw K. Grzelak, ed., *Wrzesień 1939 na Kresach w relacjach*: *Agresja Związku Sowieckiego na Polskę w 1939 roku* (Warsaw, 1999), 427-41; Czeslaw Grzelak, "Możliwości obrony Kresów Wschodnich w 1939 roku przed Armią Czerwoną," Krzysztof Jasiewicz, ed., *Europa nieprowincjonalna: Przemiany na ziemiach wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej (Białoruś, Litwa, Łotwa, Ukraina, wschodnie pogranicze III Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej) w latach 1772-1999* (Warsaw, 1999), 930; Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 2002), 261; Helena Janina Gladkowska, "Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami we wrześniu 1939," Rowiński, ed., *Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami*, 220.

5 Surmach, "17. veresnia"; Hashomer Hatzair, *Youth amidst the Ruins: A Chronicle of Jewish Youth in the War* (New York, 1941), 74, 77: Mykola Syvits'kyi, *Zapysky siroho volyniaka*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv, 2000), 205; Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Przemiany narodowościowe i ludnościowe w Galicji Wschodniej i na Wołyniu w latach 1931-1948 (*Toruń, 2005), 188, 196; Jan T. Gross, "Jewish Community in the Soviet Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust: A Social View," *East European Politics and Societies* 6 (1992) no. 2, 193; Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 262; V. A. Hrynevych, "Chervona Armiia u viinakh i viis'kovykh konfliktakh 1939-1940 rr.: Viis'kovo-politychni, ideolohichni ta sotsial'no-psykholohichni aspekty," *Problemy istorii Ukraïny: Fakty, sudzhennia, poshuky* 10 (2003): 348.

6 Hashomer Hatzair, *Youth amidst the Ruins*, 91; Jakub Elbirt, "Mój Luck," in Jasiewicz, ed., *Europa nieprowincjonalna*, 1104; Roman Syrota, "Brytans'ki vahannia, ukraïns'ki zvistky i dolia L'vova v pershi misiatsi Druhoï svitovoï viiny (veresen' – zhovten' 1939 roku)," in Henryk Żaliński and Kazimierz Karolczak,

Shortly after midnight on September 19 rifle fire erupted in the town. The bulk of the Red Army recruits were reservists who had left behind unharvested crops and hungry families on their collective farms. Ill-equipped, inexperienced, and angry at having to go to war, they shot before they knew who was in their sights so often that almost a fifth of their casualties were "non-combat losses." In Dubne the soldiers stormed houses from which, they claimed, shots had been fired at them and killed the people inside. At dawn infantry soldiers mounted machine guns at intersections and raked nearby buildings. A few minutes later a teenaged girl raced to the Roman Catholic rectory to beg the priest to come administer extreme unction. Two Red Army men had burst into her family's apartment and shot her parents.[7]

Later that day the authorities imposed a curfew from six in the evening until six in the morning and put up posters ordering everyone to surrender cameras, radio transmitters, firearms, and explosives and urging Polish soldiers to give themselves up. The Red Army had captured five hundred officers and five thousand eight hundred soldiers while it was taking Dubne. Now it began picking up policemen, priests, and government officials, taking away their belts, laces, penknives, razor blades, notebooks, pencils, and photographs, and herding them into a hop-processing plant and an army barracks at the town's southern edge. The plant and barracks were too small to house all the detainees, and four and a half thousand of them slept outdoors. Some people in Dubne patched together a committee to provide the prisoners with food and clothes. Others tried to take advantage. In the weeks before the prisoners went to work felling timber, quarrying stone, and building roads and bridges, or rode off in cattle cars to camps in the east for execution, profiteers would press up against the fence to offer a cup of water, a bit of bread, or a pinch of tobacco in return for a shirt, a pair of pants, or a gold tooth. Even so, the inmates were starving. Fifty-eight died in three days in early October.[8]

The fatherland, the Polish literary critic Maurycy Mochnacki had argued more than a hundred years before, was "the great idea of political independence and the hope that someday, under the leadership and help of God, we will join in one indivisible whole, that we will be the fortress of Europe, an affliction on our evil neighbors and the chosen people of Slavdom."[9]

The first days of the Soviet occupation gave Karol Kosek all the proof he needed that Ukrainians were among the evil neighbors he had been taught to loathe. Sixteen years old, Karol had fled with his parents to a forester's cottage when a German plane dropped a bomb on Dubne, killing a Jewish woman and her five children. Three days later, Karol would write in his memoirs, half an hour after someone rushed over to report that the Red Army was approaching, Ukrainians crowded into the yard, looking for Poles to kill. As the boy and his mother and their dog walked the ten kilometers back to Dubne, Ukrainians streamed along the road. Karol was certain that they were all armed with pitchforks

eds., *Lwów, miasto, społeczeństwo, kultura: Studia z dziejów Lwowa* (Cracow, 1996), 4:380.

7 Piotr Szeremeta, 3817, HI; Hrynevych, "Chervona Armiia u viinakh," 347; Surmach, "17. veresnia"; August Zawoł, 1108, HI; Czeslaw Jurkiewicz, 10766, HI; Sulkowska, "Memoirs, 1939-1951," 44; Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 40; Wacław Śledziński, *Swastyka nad Warszawą: Dwa i pół roku pod okupacją w Polsce* (Edinburgh, 1944), 7; Waclaw Sledzinski, *Governor Frank's Dark Harvest* (London, 1946), 11.

8 Rudolf Dembowski, 8205, HI; Mitręga, Moje zderzenie z bolszewikami, 107; Edmund Bosakowski, "In the Clutches of the NKVD in Krzemieniec," http://www.geocities.com/chrisgladun/krzemjail.html (accessed May 1, 2001); Iurii Shapoval, *Ukraïna XX stolittia: Osoby ta podiï v konteksti vazhkoï istoriï* (Kyiv, 2001), 147; "Zeznania naocznego świadka," unnumbered testimony, HI; Sulkowska, "Memoirs, 1939-1951," 66; Jan T. Gross, "Polish POW Camps in the Soviet-occupied Western Ukraine," in Keith Sword, ed., *The Soviet Takeover of the Polish Eastern Provinces, 1939-41* (London, 1991) , 47; Zbigniew Schneigert, "Obozy NKWD jeńców polskich w Malopolsce Wschodniej w latach 1939-1941," *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny* 37 (1992), no. 4, 118-28; Lebedeva, *Chetvertyi razdel Pol'shi*, 254; Grzelak, *Kresy w czerwieni*, 302; Albin Głowacki, "Sowieci wobec Polaków na ziemiach wschodnich Il Rzeczypospolitej 1939-1941," 1997, 246; Kosek, "Od wyzwolicieli zachowaj nas Panie," 10.

9 Maurycy Mochnacki as quoted in Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York, 2000), 21.

and axes and were determined to exact revenge for the wrongs they had suffered at Polish hands.

In Dubne Karol ran into a schoolmate. They had always spoken Polish with each other. This time the fellow addressed Karol in Ukrainian.

Karol asked him why.

"Because now we have an independent Ukraine," the boy said. "Poland is finished!"[10]

Danuta Jaroszewska was living in Wola Piłsudskiego, a military settlement near Dubne, when the Red Army arrived. She, too, had been taught that the people in the surrounding villages were all wicked. Ukrainians, she would recall, put up a triumphal gate to welcome the army. At a rally in Wola the speakers urged people not to harass Poles, but the next day neighbors raided Danuta's family. "They took our cattle for the army; they took furniture and shipped it to Russia," she would complain. "The Ukrainians robbed the Polish army and killed a captain. The Bolsheviks took a pair of horses and four cows from us and gave them to Ukrainians. At school we were not allowed to study in Polish. The militia was made up of Ukrainians."[11]

Tadeusz L. also knew what to expect from Ukrainians: they would seek revenge on Poles. When the Red Army was drawing up to his village, Ukrainians armed with rifles led him and his family to an archway through which the columns would pass and ordered them to lie flat. Then Tadeusz heard a rumble. Tanks were nearing. The women and children wept. A Soviet officer stopped the tanks and told the people to get up. He asked who had made them lie down and arrested the village head. "The next evening," Tadeusz would recall, "the Ukrainians took away our horses, pigs, and even small things, even my rabbits."[12]

For Zdzisława Hadler, the fourteen-year-old daughter of Polish colonists in a settlement near Kovel', 120 kilometers northwest of Dubne, what rankled most was the way Ukrainians swaggered when Poland collapsed. They were all blood-thirsty and full of hatred. Everywhere in the region they were murdering both refugees from the west and Poles who had long lived there.[13]

As the "voivode," or governor, of Volhynia in the 1920s and 1930s, Henryk Józewski had dedicated himself to overcoming Polish-Ukrainian animosity by drawing Ukrainians into the political and cultural life of the country. If he couldn't assimilate the Ukrainians, make them into proper Poles, he could at least try to persuade them to act as loyal citizens of Poland. The Soviet occupation changed all that. Ukrainians, Józewski wrote in a pamphlet that the Polish underground published in 1943, were guilty of "massive treason" against Poland. They had ambushed Polish soldiers who were retreating from the Red Army in September 1939. They had incited the Bolsheviks to arrest Poles. They had helped carry out the deportations that had decimated the Polish population. The Poles of western Ukraine, Józewski opined, were convinced that Ukrainians had authored all their adversities.[14]

The certainty that Jews were disloyal, that they had shown themselves to be wicked neighbors, was even stronger. Wacław Śledziński, a journalist who had fled east from Warsaw when the Germans invaded, was drinking tea in a café in Dubne when a Soviet soldier came in and made a speech. Russia, he said to the Jews who crowded around him, was a perfect paradise and they would all get jobs as commissars of factories and cooperatives. The Jews, Śledziński would recall, lapped up his words.

And Śledziński was certain that Jews enjoyed the opportunities to humiliate Poles that the occupation was giving them. The next day he saw two Jewish militiamen lead two Polish officers, a colonel and a lieutenant, out of a house. At the marketplace, surrounded by more militiamen, stood a commissar, a young fellow with a "markedly Semitic cast of countenance." The commissar said a few words

10 Kosek, "Od wyzwolicieli *za*chowaj nas Panie."
11 Danuta Jaroszewska, 9127, HI.
12 Grudzińska-Gross and Gross, eds., *War through Children's Eyes*, 169.
13 Zdzisława Hadler, 11/133/ł, 1, AW; *Dissent in Poland*, reel 73.
14 Tadeusz Wyrwa, "Z dziejów polsko-ukraińskich stosunków," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 135 (2001), 47.

to the colonel in Russian and then slapped him in the face. The colonel hung his head.[15]

Stefan Radziszewski, a sergeant in the Polish air force, was of the same opinion. Jews were traitors to Poland. The Red Army had confined him in the barracks in Dubne. When a guard escorted him to a co-op to buy sugar for himself and his mates, the Jewish official there said in Russian that he had no sugar. Radziszewski asked him whether he had forgotten his Polish. "l don't want to be in Poland as long as I live," the official answered, "and I will never speak Polish."[16]

The Poles in Boremel', a small town, little more than a village, forty kilometers west of Dubne, were of like mind. The Red Army marched in on September 20. People pressed together to watch the soldiers trudge along the dusty road. A tall fellow named Lerner stood out in the crowd.

"Hey, old man, how old are you?" a soldier called out.

"Four days old," Lerner replied.

"Four days old? You must be kidding!"

"Not at all," Lerner insisted. "I was born the day the Red Army arrived."[17]

In Velyki Mezhyrichi, a small town a hundred kilometers north-east of Dubne, more than half the population was Jewish. The rest was Polish and Ukrainian.

The Soviet soldiers who walked in on September 17 were scruffy, dirty, and smelly. Their rifle straps were twisted twines.

The Ukrainians in the town erected a triumphal gate. Tables with white cloths appeared, and sausage, bread, and vodka were set out for the officers outside a Jewish shop in the marketplace. The enlisted men had barrels of herring at their disposal. It was obvious that they were hungry.

A Jewish Communist by the name of Berek Don put on a red armband and pointed out people the NKVD should arrest. While the Red Army officers were carousing in the marketplace, he went over to a little group of Poles. "Your shitty Poland is over now," he sneered.[18]

Back in Dubne, an NKVD informer was working his way into the confidence of two brothers. Franciszek Bach had served as a lieutenant in the Polish border guards. Władyslaw Bach had been a cadet. Five weeks after the Soviets arrived, the brothers confided to the informer that they had cached machine guns and ammunition and were thinking of staging a sortie against the Red Army and then escaping over the border. "If Polish authority were restored even for fifteen minutes," Władysław added, "I'd settle scores with a lot of people. Particularly Jews."[19]

2.

Are these stories true? Was the light in Dubne the morning of September 18 too dim, the distance between the observer and the observed too great, for the observer to determine the hue of a skin or the identity of two little boys? Did Jews and Ukrainians parade through the streets as they welcomed the Red Army? Did a Jewish commissar slap a Polish colonel? Was the fellow in Boremel' a Jew? Did the informer in Dubne embellish his account for his paymasters, put words in the young cadet's mouth?

It hardly matters. All over Volhynia and Galicia, Poles believed that the Kresy were their birthright. They might constitute a minority in this land, but they had cultivated it with their sweat; they had defended it with their blood; they had civilized it with their libraries, schools, and museums. Now an alien army was making the Kresy into "western Ukraine" and "western Belarus." It was the realization that they were no longer the chosen people that made Poles furious at Jews. Before the Soviets

15 Śledziński, *Swastyka nad Warszawą*, 5-7; Sledzinski, *Governor Frank's Dark Harvest*, 10.

16 WW2 People's War, "The Long March," http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/25/a8401925.shtml (accessed November 21, 2006).

17 Apoloniusz Zawilski, *Znów ożywaja kurhany* (Wrocław, 1997), 82.

18 Marek A. Koprowski, *Wołyń: Epopeja polskich losów 1939-2013* (Zakrzewo, 2013), 2: 343-48.

19 Wiktor Komogorow et al., eds., *Polskie podziemie na terenach Zachodniej Ukrainy i Zachodniej Bialorusi w latach 1939-1941* (Warsaw, 2001), 1:242.

came you had to speak good Polish and be a practicing Roman Catholic to get a job in the railways, the post office, or the police force. Now Jewish thugs were putting on armbands, shouldering rifles, and patrolling the lanes. Before the war, most teachers had been Poles. Now Jews were staffing the schools and punishing Polish children for wearing crosses around their necks. The guards who convoyed Polish POWs down the street were Russians, but the throngs that pranced after them, jeering and spitting, were all Jews. The NKVD officer who came to take you away in the middle of the night was a Russian, but his assistants, fellows with whom you had kicked a ball around after school, were Jews. Moscow and Kyiv were limiting the public use of Polish, but the sign painter who balanced on a ladder to white out the old lettering on the shops was a Jew. The editor-in-chief of *Czerwony Sztandar*, the Polish-language daily in L'viv, was a bald, red-faced Ukrainian NKVD man who mangled Polish, but the assistant editor, the secretary, and the writers were all Jews. "Only the most reliable comrades could have been offered jobs on the newspaper of an occupying army and an occupying party," observed a Pole who lived through the Soviet takeover of L'viv. "And only exceptional swine could have accepted such offers."[20]

Yes, these swine were denouncing Jewish, Ukrainian, and Polish "nationalist reptiles" and "counterrevolutionary elements" with equal fervor, but how they dealt with their fellow Jews was their business. What they did to Ukrainians, if they were doing anything other than working hand in glove with them, could only weaken the Ukrainian claim to this land. The way they were treating Poles was collaboration with the enemy, treason against the Second Republic. Russians, with their boorish manners and imperialistic proclivities, were Poland's bane. Russian Communists, with their bayonets, machine guns, and tanks and their secret police officers and Siberian camps, were a scourge. Jews, with their determination to impose Communist Eurasia on civilized Poland, were a pestilence.

3.

On September 8, 1939, nine days before Moscow sent its army into Poland, Lavrentii Beriia, the Soviet commissar of internal affairs, had instructed his counterparts in Ukraine and Belarus to prepare for the invasion by setting up five NKVD operational groups for the Kyiv military district and four for the Belarusian. Each group would consist of between forty and seventy agents and would receive revolvers, ammunition, and enough cash for a month's expenses. A battalion of three hundred border guards would back up each group, and an additional battalion would provide a reserve. The groups would move with the army into western Ukraine and western Belarus, then break up into smaller detachments and set up operations in the cities and towns of the region.[21]

The detachment that had been assigned to Dubne descended on the town on September 20. Its head was a young man from Kyiv whom people came to know as Chief Vynokur. The NKVD officers requisitioned a handsome villa on the outskirts for their headquarters, fortified it with a high wooden fence, and set about reviewing lists – compiled from the reports that local informers had provided and the Polish police files that the army had seized – of the counterrevolutionaries and bandits they would have to arrest.[22]

20 Janusz Kowalewski, *Droga powrotna* (London, 1974), 161; Bohdan Urbankowski, *Czerwona msza czyli uśmiech Stalina* (Warsaw, 1998), 1:70.

21 Shapoval, *Ukraïna XX stolittia*, 144-46; S. V. Stepashin et al., eds., *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, 1995), 1, 1:79; Ihor Il'iushyn and Oleksandr Pshennikov, "Diial'nist' operatyvno-chekists'kykh hrup NKVD u zakhidnykh oblastiakh Ukraïny (veresen' – zhovten' 1939 r.)," *Z arkhiviv VUChK-HPU-NKVD-KHB*, 2000, no. 2:1-10; V. Danylenko, "Likvidatsiia Pol's'koï derzhavy ta vstanovlennia radians'koho rezhymu v Zakhidnii Ukraïni," *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal,* 2006, no. 3:114.

22 lakov Vinokur, "Avtobiografiia," April 3, 1940, Derzhavnyi istoryko-kul'turnyi zapovidnyk m. Dubno (hereafter DIZ); Szczęsny Nadrowski, 9641, HI; Piotr Szeremeta, 3817, HI; Surmach, "17. veresnia."

Valentyna Kreshchenko's turn to face the NKVD came in Rivne on August 23, 1940. She was twenty-two years old, had worked as a theatrical director's assistant, and was married to a Pole who had owned a bookshop. The charges against her? She was a Petliurite. In 1919, when she was less than three years old, the Bolsheviks had executed her father and uncle as officers in the army of Symon Petliura, the socialist journalist turned military leader who had fought for Ukrainian independence against both Soviet Russia and Poland. And she and her husband possessed weapons that they would use against the Russians if the Germans started a war.

The NKVD interrogated Valia for three months, ignored her for another three, and then freed her. In the meantime, her husband had received a sentence of eight years' forced labor in Siberia. Valia never saw him again. And while they were both in prison Valia's mother-in-law, crippled and bed-ridden, died from neglect. Two weeks after freeing her, the NKVD arrested Valia again.

On June 14, 1941, guards led Valia to the exercise yard in the Rivne prison and told her to squat. The yard was a bare patch of earth enclosed by high walls. Other prisoners were already sitting on the ground. Their bundled belongings – a change of underwear, a scrap of soap, a letter from home, a few cigarettes – lay beside them. The guards began to lead the prisoners away. When only Valia was left, they took her out to a truck. Two guards with rifles and police dogs on leashes clambered in behind her.

The truck rattled along an ochre-colored road over emerald hills. In the distance, on a hill overlooking the valley of a swampy river, spires and steeples sparkled above crooked streets. The truck crossed a bridge and stopped before a gray building. "Get out!" the guards shouted. Valia jumped down. She had arrived at the prison in Dubne.[23]

4.

Dubne was one of the oldest towns in Volhynia and was already a sturdy settlement when the Hypatian Chronicle first mentioned it in 1100. Its name – Dubenka, Duben, Dubno, Dubne – may have come from the oaks in the surrounding forests that were used to build stockades. Over the centuries Dubne

23 Valia Petrenko, "Spravzhnie oblychchia bol'shevykiv: Trahediia Dubens'koï tiurmy," *Za samostiinist'*, March 1947, 24-30; Valia Petrenko, "Trahediia Dubens'koï tiurmy," *Samostiina Ukraïna*, 1948, no. 5-6: 16-19; Valia [Petrenko], "Zhyttia u viaznytsi – 1941 r.," *Visti UKO*, November 1986 – May 1987; Valentyna Kreshchenko, *Velykden' u v"iaznytsi: Spomyny v"iaznia* (Dubne, 1997); "Trahediia Dubens'koï tiurmy: Spomyn," *Litopys Volyni*, no. 17-18 (1992), 117-23; Valentyna Kreshchenko, "Svoï strilialy svoïkh," *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, June 21, 2002; Valentyna Kreshchenko, "Velykden' u v"iaznytsi," in *Reabilitovani istoriieiu: Rivnens'ka oblast',* ed. P. T. Tron'ko et al, 236-48 (Kyiv, 2006); Barbara Haddad, "Pysanky a Reminder of Russian Prison," *Denver Post*, March 27, 1964; Walentyna Medwetzky, interview by author, September 12, 1995. Additional details come from Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 28, July 20, 1941, and particularly the appended "Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno und über das Blutbad vom 24. und 25.6.1941," R5S/214, 256-63, Bundesarchiv, Berlin (hereafter BAB); also at T 175, roll 233, frames 2721604-1 1, National Archives, Washington, DC; Leutnant Graf Magnis, Bericht über das Gefängnis in Dubno, June 28, 1941, RH 21-1/148b, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (hereafter BA-MA); "Greueltaten in Dubno," in Auswärtiges Amt, *Bolschewistische Verbrechen gegen Kriegsrecht und Menschlichkeit*, I. Folge (Berlin, 1941), 63-65; S. M. Arndt, *Berliner Illustrierte Nachtausgabe*, no. 155, 1941, translated as "Masakra u viaznytsi NKVD v Dubni," *Krakivs'ki visti*, July 10, 1941; Oleksii Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi (na tli perezhytoho)* (Buenos Aires, 1947); Alfred M. de Zayas, *Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungstelle: Deutsche Ermittlungen über alliierte Völkerrechtsverletzungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 4th ed. (Munich, 1984), 328, and de Zayas, *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945* (Lincoln, 1989), 211; Mykola Ruts'kyi, *Koly vy vmyraly, vam dzvony ne hraly: Dokumental'na literaturna mozaïka* (Netishyn, 1994), and Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa: Dokumental'na istorychna rozpovid'* (Rivne, 1996); Sławomir Abramowicz, "Więzienia NKWD w Dubnie i Łucku w czerwcu 1941 r.," in Andrzej Skrzypek, Izabella Borowicz, and Antoni Galiński, eds., *Zbrodnicza ewakuacja więzień i aresztów NKWD na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej w czerwcu-lipcu 1941 roku* (Warsaw, 1997), 111-21; Bogdan Musial, *"Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschießen": Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941* (Berlin, 2000), 119-22; Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht: Dimensionen des Vernichtungskriegs 1941-1944* (Hamburg, 2002), 123-27.

acquired a fortress, a castle, a Roman Catholic cathedral, several monasteries and convents, and five Orthodox churches. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the month-long fair that opened in the town on Christmas Day made it prosper. Then in 1794 the fair moved to Kyiv, and Dubne began a slow decline. In the nineteenth century twelve thousand people lived there. In 1941, its population swollen with refugees from western Poland, the town had eighteen thousand inhabitants.

Dubne was also a substantial Jewish settlement. It prided itself in eleven synagogues, some of which dated back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The three-story synagogue in the center was the most imposing structure in the town. The surrounding countryside, as elsewhere in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, was Ukrainian. A census conducted in 1931 showed that 69.8 percent of the people in the district had declared their native language to be Ukrainian or Ruthenian, 15 percent Polish, 7.7 percent Hebrew or Yiddish, 4.9 percent Czech, 1.2 percent Russian, and 1.2 percent German. But in Dubne itself three quarters of the inhabitants were Jews.[24]

In July 1920, Isaac Babel rode over the green and yellow hills that circle Dubne. The Russians and Poles were fighting to take possession of Volhynia and Galicia, and he had joined the Red Cavalry as a war correspondent. Babel did not like what he saw. “Dubno synagogues. Everything destroyed,” he noted in his diary.

> Two little vestibules left, centuries, two tiny rooms, everything full of memories, four synagogues, close together, then pasture, plowed fields, the setting sun.... I go into the Hasidic Synagogue. It’s Friday. Such misshapen little figures, such worn faces, it all came alive for me, what it was like three hundred years ago, the old men running about the synagogue, no wailing, for some reason they keep moving from corner to corner, their worship could not be less formal. Of all the Jews in Dubno the most repulsive looking seem to have gathered here.... Religion? There are no adornments in the building, everything is white and plain to the point of asceticism, everything is fleshless, bloodless, to a grotesque degree, you have to have the soul of a Jew to sense what it means. But what does the soul consist of? Can it be that ours is the century in which they perish?[25]

In addition to its churches, synagogues, and fair grounds, Dubne had a prison. It was old and small, and in 1935 Warsaw decided to put up something bigger and more modern. The architect patterned it on Sing Sing in New York State, though on a smaller scale. The site, in a bend of the meandering Ikva River, was the foundation of a mill that had been bombed during the First World War. Soviet propaganda had ridiculed Poland for putting up more prisons than any other country in Europe. Instead of tearing down the building, the NKVD finished the interior work, installed searchlights and guard towers, assigned a hundred men and women to staff it, and put it to use as a transit prison, a place to assemble prisoners before deporting them to the east. The people of the town called it the palace on the Ikva.[26]

The prisoners at the palace wore what they had on when they were arrested, but without buttons, belts, or laces. At six in the morning guards escorted them to the lavatory so that they could empty the slop pail in a corner of the cell and wash. The two sinks were too small for everyone to clean up in the allotted ten minutes. The toilet was a board over a hole. The prisoners took showers once a month. Breakfast was five hundred or six hundred grams of bread – seven hundred for those who hadn’t been convicted yet – and half a liter of cold “coffee” made from burnt bread or barley malt. The midday meal was millet gruel or the smelly little fish known as sardelles or a broth made from bones and offal.

24 Petro Smolin, ed., *Dubno, kniazhyi mii hrade! Kraieznavchyi narys* (Luts'k, 2005), 5; Oleksander Tsynkalovs'kyi, *Stara Volyn' i Volyns'ke Polissia* (Winnipeg, 1984), 1:370-77; Hryciuk, *Przemiany narodowościowe*, 139.

25 Isaak Babel', *Dnevnik 1920* (Moscow, 2000), 48; Isaac Babel, *1920 Diary*, ed. Carol J. Avins, trans. H. T. Willetts (New Haven, 1995), 33.

26 A. Myroliub, “Rika krovi: Rozprava bil'shovykiv nad v"iazniamy Dubens'koï v"iaznytsi u chervni 1941 r.,” *Nashe dzerkalo*, May 6, 2004; Kosek, “Od wyzwolicieli zachowaj nas Panie,” 67; Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 112; Smolin, ed., *Dubno, kniazhyi mii hrade!*, 20.

The evening meal was more gruel or broth. Many detainees suffered from scurvy.

Bedtime came at ten o'clock, but the lights stayed on, and if the inmates covered their faces or turned away from the door the guards banged their keys on the heating pipes. The prisoners slept on the floor – the Polish authorities had had the good taste to lay parquetry over the concrete – with only a blanket and a pillow for bedding. Menstruating women were not given pads or rags. Pregnant women received the same treatment as everyone else.[27]

Like all the prisons in the annexed regions, the one in Dubne was crowded. Under Polish rule the 112 cells in the prison had housed 120 inmates. The Soviet authorities thought that too generous – in late September 1939, only a week or so after the NKVD went to work in the district, the prison held 500 prisoners – and set the capacity at 572. But in January 1941 there were 932 inmates, in June 816, and at other times several thousand. In Rivne Valia had shared a cell with thirty-three inmates. In Dubne, cell no. 3 on the second floor was holding seven when she arrived.[28]

A peasant woman of sixty who complained that she had been there for a year and a half and still didn't know why.

Olia, eighteen years old.

The wife of a Polish army officer, aged forty-five or fifty.

Stefaniia, or Stefa, Kiliars'ka, a big-boned peasant woman, nineteen years old, who had spent time in the punishment cell in the cellar. The water rose to her waist and then dropped to her ankles, and after standing in it for three days, she was unable to walk.

Nineteen-year-old Nadia Orlovs'ka, who had spurned a Red Army officer's advances. The NKVD arrested her husband and deported her and her baby to Kazakhstan. The baby died. Nadia escaped and made her way home. Neighbors turned her in, and now she was in prison.

Twenty-three-year-old Pevoroniia, or Frosia, Pindviuk.

And Teresa Trautman, twenty-three years old, who had joined a Polish underground group and had tried to slash her wrists with a piece of glass when she went to prison. A fellow conspirator who had also been arrested listened from her cell as the guards dragged Teresa away for interrogation and her head thudded against each step of the stairway.

Teresa wanted to be a poet. She couldn't get paper and when she wasn't being interrogated scratched out poems with her fingernail on a bar of soap.[29]

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27 *Besiada Krzemieniecka* (London, 1977), 37; Syvits'kyi, *Zapysky*, 209; Taras Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," interview by Ihor Lozov"iuk, *Rivne*, November 10, 1990; Taras Zavads'kyi, "Tse treba bulo perezhyty," interview by I. Lozov"iuk, *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, November 13, 1990; Sulkowska, "Memoirs, 1939-1951," 50, 64, 72.

28 Außenkommando GFP beim 48. A.K., Erschiessung von NKWD-Kommissaren und Funktionären, sowie Bericht über die von der NKWD durchgeführten Erschiessung von etwa 400 Volksdeutschen und Ukrainern im Staatsgefängnis von Dubno, July 1,1941, RH 24-48/198, BA-MA; "Dislokatsiia, limit i napolnenie tiurem Ukrainskoi SSR na 10 iiunia 1941 goda," Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow (hereafter GARF); "Iak ide rozsliduvannia?" *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, September 5, 1990; Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno, 2; Kawka, "Czas śmierci"; "Do podii u Dubens'kii v"iaznytsi v 1941 rotsi," *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, September 12, 1990; Krzysztof Popiński, Aleksandr Kokurin, and Aleksandr Gurjanow, *Drogi śmierci: Ewakuacja więzień sowieckich z Kresów Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej w czerwcu i lipcu 1941* (Warsaw, 1995), 84; losyp Patsula, "Pro zlochynnu diial'nist' KPSS-KPU proty naselennia Rivenshchyny," *Chas*, June 14, 1996; lhor IIjuszyn and Grzegorz Mazur, "Utworzenie i działalność czekistowskich grup operacyjnych NKWD w zachodnich obwodach Ukrainy w latach 1939," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 135 (2001), 49-74; Il'iushyn and Pshennikov, "Diial'nist' operatyvno-chekists'kykh hrup NKVD," 6; Oleh Romaniv and Inna Fedushchak, eds., *Zakhidnoukraïns'ka trahediia,* 3rd ed. (L'viv, 2002), 338-41; Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków*, 645.

29 "Bericht über Sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno," 4; Janina Sułkowska-Gładun, "Nie wolno nam zapomnieć," *Głos Polski*, June 21, 1991; Janina Sulkowska in Chris Gladun, "Holocaust: A Family Chronicle of Soviet and Nazi Terror," http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/6764/Pagethree.html (accessed March 20, 2001); Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, "Z dziejów konspiracji wojskowej na

But Teresa did get hold of a scrap of paper once. "Dear Ones, Dearest Mother," she scribbled.

> Thank you very much for your help and for thinking about me. I feel fine, and it would be better if you didn't worry about me. I received everything you sent me. I'm sorry that I've become a burden to you, but everything will come to an end. I don't need any clothes, and I still have lots of cigarettes. I'd like very much to know how your health is and how you're getting along, so please send a letter to Prison No. 2 by mail. If it's no trouble for you, please send me a parcel of food. Greetings and kisses to all, Teresa Trautman.[30]

5.

The prisoners lifted their heads from the bundles they had placed under their heads as pillows when they heard rumbling in the sky at twenty to five in the morning on June 22, 1941. The chatter of machine guns and automatics a few seconds later made them spring up. Planes were strafing the towers, and the guards were returning the fire. The inmates guessed – no one told them anything – that Germany had attacked the Soviet Union.[31]

The guards were confused. Their chief, twenty-two-year-old Anatolii Stat'in from Vologda in northern Russia, had seven years of schooling under his belt. He had been promoted to his position three days before, and he was convinced that the prisoners he was guarding were all bandits.

Stat'in picked up the phone and called his commanding officer. The Wehrmacht was advancing, he said, and war had broken out.

The Soviet news agency TASS had reported that "responsible circles" in Moscow were calling rumors of a German invasion clumsy propaganda. The Wehrmacht would soon withdraw from the Soviet Union's western border. The Red Army took the announcement as a command from Comrade Stalin himself. Anyone who mentioned war was a scaremonger.[32]

"What do you mean?" Stat'in's superior shouted. "You've forgotten Stalin's order! You'll be arrested immediately!"

The officer phoned back fifteen minutes later. "I've made a report to the garrison commander. He says that it's impossible."[33]

Confirmation that hostilities had begun reached the prison only two hours later. The chief officer put his staff on standby and posted guards in the corridors, on the towers, and at the gate. Orderlies coated the light bulbs with blue paint to make the prison harder for aircraft to spot. In the town the party issued weapons to government and party officials and set up a defense staff. Its job was to evacuate the families of officials and to send out NKVD and militia operatives to round up "bourgeois nationalists." That same night agents fanned out into the district and started picking up suspects.[34]

The next day one of the great tank battles of the Second World War began to rage in the rolling hills around Dubne. German intelligence had detected a fifty-kilometer gap in the Soviet defense line, and Field Marshall Paul von Kleist threw his First Armored Group into the breach. His orders: to take Dubne and make it into a staging point for the attack on Kyiv. The Red Army responded with a pincer's movement from north and south. It deployed 2,803 tanks against the Wehrmacht's 585. German

Wołyniu 1939-1944," in Janina Snitko-Rzeszut, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Wołyniu* (Warsaw, 1994), 11; Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 32-34; Jedrzej Tucholski, "Polskie podziemie antysowieckie w województwie wołyńskim w latach 1939-1941 w świetle materialów NKWD," in Jasiewicz, ed., *Europa nieprowincjonalna*, 679-88.

30 Teresa Trautman to her family, October 10, 1940, in the author's possession.

31 Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," and "Tse treba bulo perezhyty."

32 "Soobshchenie TASS," *Pravda*, June 14, 1941, 2.

33 Anatolii Vasil'ievich Stat'in, "Ia pomniu," http://www.iremember.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&d=405&Itemid=2 (accessed October 17, 2006).

34 Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 112; Kislashko, "Spravka o sobytiiakh nachal'nogo perioda voiny na territorii goroda Dubno i Dubnovskogo raiona," DIZ; Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 13.

troops watched in amazement as their armor-piercing shells bounced off the behemoth Soviet KV-1 and KV-2 tanks. In Dubne houses shook, and the superstitious thought the world was coming to an end. The battle lasted eight days and extended two hundred kilometers along the front and a hundred fifty kilometers to the rear. A German officer who took part in the fighting called it "a grim struggle of giants." But the Wehrmacht pressed on and by June 24 was nearing Dubne.[35]

Vasyl' Manyliuk was in a bind. As the warden of the Dubne prison, he was responsible for the detainees. When Germany and the Soviet Union had attacked Poland in September 1939, the Polish authorities had thrown open the doors of their prisons and let the inmates leave. The NKVD had allowed them to make their way home without hindrance. Their stories would help persuade people to overthrow the rotten Polish regime. And the Ukrainian and Jewish Communists among them could fill, at least for the time being, until more trustworthy cadres arrived from the east, the vacancies that the arrests of Polish functionaries were creating.

This time the Moscow center wasn't willing to set prisoners free. The common criminals were of no great concern, but the counterrevolutionaries were a different matter. Calling them up into the Red Army was out of the question. Even their relatives couldn't be trusted to fight in defense of the Motherland. And releasing them was unthinkable. They would tell the Germans about what they had lived through and try to subvert the Soviet state again.[36]

A day after the war started, Deputy NKVD Commissar Vasilii Chernyshev threw together a plan to evacuate twenty thousand inmates in western Ukraine, fifteen thousand in western Belarus, and two thousand in Lithuania to prisons in the interior. The 738 prisoners in Dubne would travel in twenty-four railway cars to the Rostov region of Russia.

The next day Captain Andrei Filippov, chief of the Ukrainian NKVD prison department, cooked up a second plan. The inmates in Dubne would go in twenty cars to Omsk in Siberia.[37]

Neither plan had any chance of success. The Germans were advancing; telephone and telegraph lines were breaking down, and Soviet officials were commandeering every train they could get their hands on to evacuate themselves, their families, and the goods they had acquired in the twenty-one months that they had occupied these regions. "The main difficulty in evacuating the prison inmates," Filippov would report, "was the shortage of railway cars."[38]

Despite the shortage, at ten o'clock in morning on June 24 the NKVD transportation department

35 Paul Carell, *Hitler Moves East, 1941-1943* (Boston, 1964), 31; Albert Seaton, *The Russo-German War 1941-1945* (London, 1971), 135; *SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945* (Moscow, 1970), 25; *Sovetskaia Ukraina v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941-1945: Dokumenty i materialy v trekh tomakh* (Kyiv, 1980), 1:502 n19; V. A. Zamlinskii, ed., *Leto 1941 Ukraina: Dokumenty, materialy, khronika sobytii* (Kyiv, 1991), 467; N. K. Popel', *V tiazhkuiu poru* (Moscow, 2001), 134, 414; Howard Reich, "Prisoner of Her Past," *Chicago Tribune*, November 30, 2003, http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/chi-031130soniareichfulltext-story,1,1442225.story (accessed December 4, 2003); Peter Neumann, *Other Men's Graves* (London, 1958), 122.

36 Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 30; Mykola Pshenychnyi, introduction to Kreshchenko, *Velykden' u v"iaznytsi*, 5; Surmach, "17. veresnia"; Mykola Klymyshyn, *V pokhodi do voli: Spomyny*, 2nd ed. (Detroit, 1987), 1:227; Bohdan Kazanivs'kyi, *Shliakhom Legendy: Spomyny* (London, 1975), 84, 87; Grudzińska-Gross and Gross, eds., *War through Children's Eyes*, 10; Ryszard Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II Wojny światowej na terenie Il Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1993), 26; Stepashin et al., eds., *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti*, 1, 1:79-81; Nadrowski, 9641, HI; Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven, 2005), 175; *Drogi śmierci*, 86; Romaniv and Fedushchak, *Zakhidnoukraïns'ka trahediia*, 343; Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków*, 299; Ivan Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema v Ukraïni, 1917-1953: Suspil'no-politychnyi ta istoryko-pravovyi analiz* (Kyiv, 1994), 1:28, 2:223.

37 Popiński, Kokurin, and Gurjanow, *Drogi śmierci*, 86-88; Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:223.

38 Andrei Filippov to Deputy NKVD Commissar Chernyshev and Chief of the USSR NKVD Prison Department Nikol'skii, July 12, 1941, R9413/1/23/147-153, GARF; translated in Popiński, Kokurin, and Gurjanow, *Drogi śmierci*, 98-104.

phoned Manyliuk to say that twenty-four cars would arrive in Dubne. But by five o'clock, when they pulled into the station, the Germans were bombing and shelling the town and artillery and 127 small tanks were advancing from the southwest. To make matters worse, Manyliuk had neither the vehicles to transport his prisoners the five kilometers to the station nor enough guards to keep them from escaping if he marched them on foot.

The NKVD had expanded so much in the late 1930s – it controlled the militia, the border guards, the internal troops, the labor and concentration camps, and sizable segments of industry and the transportation system – that in February 1941 Moscow had assigned secret-police work to a new commissariat, the NKGB. Manyliuk phoned Ivan Cherevko, the district NKVD head, and asked him to detail some of his troops for guard duty. Cherevko begged off. His men, he said, were busy repelling the enemy. Manyliuk turned to Major Vynokur, the officer who had headed the district NKVD and was now in charge of the district NKGB, and again asked for help. Vynokur replied that his staff was also busy. Manyliuk picked up his phone a third time and dialed party headquarters in Rivne.[39]

State Security Lieutenant Klimov, the deputy chief of the Rivne region NKVD, had a solution. NKGB Commissar Vsevolod Merkulov had sent out an order the day before: "Review the cases of all those arrested by the NKGB and compile lists of those whom you deem it necessary to shoot."

Then Beriia's deputy Vasilii Chernyshev issued similar instructions for the NKVD: "In accordance with L. Beriia's orders, execute, according to lists confirmed by a procurator, all persons who are under investigation, have been convicted of counterrevolutionary crimes, or have committed large-scale embezzlement." It was too late to find a procurator to approve a list, but that was a nicety. Klimov ordered Manyliuk to release the prisoners who had been sentenced on minor charges and to shoot those who had been convicted of counterrevolutionary crimes.[40]

The NKGB was responsible for secret-police matters and had little interest in common criminals or convicted counterrevolutionaries. Political prisoners who had not been tried yet were a different matter. Further investigation into their cases might bring out information about saboteurs, spies, and terrorists. Earlier that day Merkulov had issued a directive in which he stressed the importance of evacuating these prisoners, and NKGB Major Vynokur had instructed his staff to ship to the east the 250 inmates at the Dubne prison who were facing political charges.[41]

Manyliuk released 170 prisoners who had received short sentences and allowed Vynokur's men to march the 250 inmates who had not been convicted yet to Rivne. The guards "left behind" – probably shot – twenty of them along the way because they were ill or crippled. The rest joined 420 inmates from the other prisons in the Rivne region and at eight o'clock in the evening on June 24, escorted by twenty-five guards and fifteen militiamen, set off by train for Nizhen, 440 kilometers to the east. At a small station midway through the journey German planes attacked the train, killing five inmates and the wife of a prison official who was traveling with the convoy and wounding twelve others.[42]

39 N. V. Petrov and K. V. Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934-1941: Spravochnik* (Moscow, 1999), 23; John Barron, *KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents* (London, 1974). 340; Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:233.

40 Petro Kulakovs'kyi, "Rozstriliani na pochatku viiny," *Z arkhiviv VUChK-HPU-NKVD-KHB* 1 (1994), 192; Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 1:128; Patsula, "Pro zlochynnu diial'nist'"; Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków*, 299; Musial, *"Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschießen*," 101. Bilas, who appears to be the only one of these authors to have seen the original of Chernyshev's order, does not quote it in its entirety or give its archival location and date (he says only that it was written "shortly after" June 23). Głowacki and Musial add in quotation marks phrases that are not in the brief passage Bilas offers and assume that Beriia, rather than his deputy, signed the order.

41 *Sovetskie organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow, 1985), 2:54; V. Dianov, [Kratkaia annotatsiia svidetel'skikh pokazanii], DIZ.

42 Filippov to Chernyshev and Nikol'skii, August 12, 1941, 9413/1/231147-53. GARF; Gur'ianov and Kokurin, *Evakuatsiia tiurem*; Popiński, Kokurin, and Gurjanow, *Drogi śmierci*, 97, 103, 175; Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:233, 237.

But these inmates were no longer Manyliuk's concern. His job was to deal with the three hundred or so prisoners who were still in his custody.

6.

On June 24, the city of Rivne, forty kilometers northeast of Dubne, remained in Soviet hands, and all that day the wives, children, and parents of party activists, NKVD and NKGB officials, and militia officers piled their possessions into cars and trucks and rumbled off to safety. Bank officials loaded currency into a truck and drove it away. Another vehicle left Dubne with a load of documents and blank identity cards. At the district NKVD and NKGB headquarters employees burned as many of their files as they could and then sent what remained to Rivne.[43]

But the prison itself, set apart from the town and the roads by its high walls and surrounding swamps, was quiet, and the inmates heard only muffled footsteps and jangling keys. Valia clambered to the window and scratched away a bit of paint on the glass to see what was going on.

A woman guard – Valia was certain that she was Jewish – opened the door. "What are you doing?" she screamed.

Valia said that she wanted to open the window because the cell was stifling.

"Get down! Don't you dare try anything! You'll all find it stifling tonight!" the guard shouted and slammed the door.

That evening supper came earlier than usual. The inmates were surprised to see meat and kasha in their bowls. Then the guards ordered the prisoners to go to sleep. The guards always counted their wards before ringing the bell for lights out. This time they skipped the procedure.[44]

The men in cell 43 on the third floor – some forty nationalists, members of the now banned and persecuted Communist Party of Western Ukraine, and common criminals – had also scraped paint off their window and were keeping a watch over the road. At eight o'clock, as the sun was setting, they saw two trucks pull up to the prison. Several dozen armed men jumped down from the backs. Their footsteps echoed in the cobbled yard. The party leaders had rebuked Vynokur for refusing to help Manyliuk, and he had sent some of his staff to the prison.[45]

An hour after the bell rang and the women in cell 3 had settled in for the night as best they could, gunshots and screams brought them to their feet.

Valia tried to reassure her companions. The shooting, she said, was going on outside and was meant to make the inmates stay quiet.

Cries were coming from the cellar. The inmates had heard that the cells there held children up to the age of fifteen.

The women threw their clothes on. Five of them set about praying. Valia, Stefa, and Teresa chain-smoked.

Footsteps clomped in the corridor. The guards had finished their job in the cellar and were opening the door to cell 1. Shots rang out. Then cell 2. Ninety minutes had passed since the killing had started.

The lock squeaked; the door swung open, and the senior block guard came into cell 3. Half a dozen

43 V. Dianov, "Spravka," DIZ; Kislashko, "Spravka," DIZ; Dianov, [Kratkaia annotatsiia], DIZ.

44 Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 50; Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," and "Tse treba bulo perezhyty"; Oswald Zenkner, "Das Blutbad von Dubno," R60762, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (hereafter PA); excerpt in Hamburger Institut fiir Sozialforschung, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*, 124; Oswald Zenkner, "Greueltaten in Dubno," in Auswärtiges Amt, *Bolschewistische Verbrechen gegen Kriegsrecht und Menschlichkeit* (Berlin, 1941), l:63-65; Vasyl' Levkovych, "Storinky z perezhytoho kombatantom UPA," in Petro I. Potichnyi and Volodymyr V"iatrovych, eds., *Spohady voiakiv UPA ta uchasnykiv zbroinoho pidpillia L'vivshchyny ta Liubachivshchyny* (Toronto, 2003), 16.

45 Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 120; Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," and "Tse treba bulo perezhyty"; Ruts'kyi, *Koly vy vmyraly*, 10, and Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 31.

men, several kneeling, several standing, blocked the exit.

The guard pointed his semi-automatic at the women. “Stand in the corner! Quick!”

Valia – we all make ourselves the heroes of the stories we tell; we all place ourselves at the center of events – stood still. The other women ran toward her.

The guard opened fire with dumdum bullets. They expand on impact to produce large wounds. The women dropped like clods of earth from the blade of a plowshare.

The guard left the cell and locked the door.

7.

Valia opened her eyes. Blood was crimsoning on the floor beside her, and Olia was lying athwart her. Valia had survived because her cellmate had fallen on her.

She lifted her head. Teresa’s chest was ripped open. Stefa’s head was blown apart. The peasant woman was lying face down, clutching her bundle of belongings.

Valia pushed Olia’s body away and tried to stand. She could feel a burning sensation, and her right arm and leg would not move. She crawled to the other women. “Answer me if you’re alive!” she breathed.

The silence seemed interminable. Then Nadia responded. She had taken bullets in the stomach and leg.

Frosia spoke up. She got to her feet and stumbled over Valia’s wounded leg to the door. Her right forearm was hanging from the elbow by ligaments and skin.

“Why did you shoot me?” she screamed. “I’m a Communist! I was working for you!”

A mess tin containing water was sitting on the floor in the cell. Frosia wobbled over to it and picked it up but dropped it before she could bring it to her lips. The water spilled down her chest and turned the blood that was spurting from her arm a paler shade of red.

In the corridor the gunmen were continuing their job. Each of the women’s cells held no more than a dozen inmates, but some of the men’s cells held forty or fifty. Afraid of being overpowered, the killers ordered the men to stand before the feeding slot and shot inside and then opened the door and threw in grenades. When they finished on one floor, they moved to the next one. But they had not forgotten Valia’s cell. From time to time a guard peered in and shouted, “Anyone who’s alive, call out!”[46]

The inmates in cell 43 had leaped to their feet when the shooting began. The only furnishings in their cell were a slop pail and a small table. Using a board from the table as a lever, the men rocked the radiator back and forth until they could unscrew the nuts with their fingers. Once the radiator was free, they rammed the bars on the window. They wouldn’t give way. The prisoners started battering the door, not to get out, the guards were nearby, but to jam the bolt and lock.

When the guards arrived at the cell, the men inside jumped away from the line of fire through the slot. The guards tried to force the door open, and then the senior guard ordered them to go on to the next cell. He was rushing to finish the job. The Germans had taken the Dubne train station, and Ukrainian guerrillas were attacking the Red Army and NKVD.[47]

At ten o’clock a man in an NKVD officer’s uniform ran up to the prison gate. Germans were ap-

46 Zenkner, “Greueltaten in Dubno,” 63.

47 Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 56, 108; Orest Dziuban, ed., *Ukraïns'ke derzhavotvorennia: Akt 30 chervnia 1941, Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (L’viv, 2001), 116; l. K. Patryliak, “Natsionalistychnyi partyzans'kyi rukh na terytoriï Zakhidnoï Ukraïny vlitku 1941 r.,” *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal,* 2000, no. 4:116; Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:234; Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 34; Zavads'kyi, “Rozstrily v Dubni,” and “Tse treba bulo perezhyty”; Oleksandr Hon'chuk, “Za myt' do rozstrilu,” http://aaaaaan.narod.ru/voboroni.files/3.htm (accessed December 9, 2007). Ivan Klymiv, the “homeland leader” of the OUN, reported to Stepan Bandera in mid-July 1941 that three thousand members and supporters of the OUN had taken part in fighting with Soviet forces in Dubne, 3833/1/45/3, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady Ukraïny, Kyiv.

proaching, he reported. As he spoke, gunfire rang out behind him.

The Germans were not nearby. Ukrainian nationalists had taken up positions in a marshy offshoot of the Ikva two kilometers from the prison. Their plan was simple. If the NKVD tried to execute the prisoners, they would assault the prison. When the shooting began, the insurgents set off along the road, but the sight of Red Army vehicles forced them to detour through the marsh and delayed their arrival.

A guard dashed inside when the nationalists reached the prison. "That's enough, boys!" he shouted. "Get out! A German patrol is here!"

Manyliuk and his staff scurried down to the yard, crowded into their trucks, and raced off to Rivne. They had shot all but sixty or seventy prisoners.

When the guards left, a Jewish inmate named Berko crawled out from a pile of corpses and made his way to cell 43. He had spent time in the cell and had befriended one of the inmates.

Berko pressed his face to the feeding slot. "Zavads'kyi, are you alive?" he called.

"I am," Taras Zavads'kyi replied, "but I can't get out."

Berko ran off, came back with a crowbar, and passed it through the slot. The men inside pried the lock open. In a desk in the corridor they found a pistol, two boxes of ammunition, and a set of keys. They began unlocking the cells.[48]

In the small hours of the night, Valia detected a new sound, as if someone were smashing something. Then she heard running feet and a muffled voice. "Where's the key? Give me the key!"

Valia cowered in silence. The guards had come back.

The lock turned, and men came into the cell. "My God, all these women have been killed!" one of them cried.

Valia let out her breath. They were the inmates from cell 43.

The prisoners rushed to the three survivors, pulled away the bodies around them, and carried them in blankets to another cell, away from the corpses of their cellmates and the smell of blood.

They tried to reassure the women. As soon as they got out, they said, they would go to Dubne and bring help. Valia urged them to flee. No, they replied, some inmates had tried to escape over the wall, but guards were hiding in the marsh and shooting at anyone who came into sight.

The prisoners were mistaken. All the guards had fled. Red Army soldiers had become separated from their units and were wandering about the countryside. Afraid of both the Germans and the local people, they were firing at anyone who looked the least bit menacing.

Then voices came from outside. The women covered themselves with their bloodied blankets. The men rushed to the door. Bullets cut them down.

At dawn, the fifty-four guards who had been making their way to Rivne had met a party of NKVD and party officials. The party bosses had rebuked them for running away – Lieutenant-General Riabishev's Eighth Mechanized Corps, they insisted, would push back the Germans – and ordered Major Vynokur to add ten of Manyliuk's guards to his own men and go back to the prison to finish the killing.[49]

8.

No one knew his given name or his rank. Avraam, Iakiv, Khaim? Lieutenant, major, colonel? He was Chief Vynokur, head of the Dubne district security service. Nor did anyone know what to make of the rumor that "Vynokur," for all its good Slavic roots, was a pseudonym. That his real name was Bronstein. Or of the whispers that he had two wives, one here in Dubne and one in Kyiv. Only one thing was certain. The great Vynokur was a Jew. Living proof that Jews controlled the secret police and held

48 Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," and "Tse treba bulo perezhyty."
49 Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:234; Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 35.

all power in the Soviet Union.[50]

Janina Sulkowska met Major Vynokur when the NKVD arrested her in March 1940 – an informer had penetrated Teresa Trautman's underground group, for which Janina had been carrying messages – and brought her to his office in Dubne.

Credenzas, chests of drawers, a sofa, a radio, tapestries, paintings, and a glass case stocked with preserves crammed the room. The major had arranged himself behind a large desk. He asked Janina to sit down in a plush chair across from him. He treated her as if she were a friend who had dropped in for tea. He inquired about her university studies. He impressed her with his knowledge of Polish literature. He disconcerted her by mentioning names and dates that only friends could know.

As they talked, NKVD officers came in, sat down, and observed Janina. Vynokur introduced one of them as her interrogator. Lieutenant Sergei Titov and his two assistants had come from Moscow to handle her case. Janina was struck by Titov's appearance and smell. Soviet officials were fond of cosmetics and scents, and the lieutenant had dyed his eyebrows, put on a dab of eye shadow, and doused himself with talcum powder and cologne.

Vynokur and Titov pelted Janina with questions, but she shrugged her shoulders. She had never heard of such and such a person; she had never been in Dubne; she knew nothing.

The session was going nowhere, and Janina was tired. Vynokur wheeled his chair away and fiddled with the radio. Music filled the room. Janina was gazing at a tapestry hung upside-down on the wall when the NKVD chief turned back. He had been phrasing his questions in Ukrainian. Now he switched to Polish.

"And how is Pius Zaleski's health?" he asked.

"Oh, better now, thank you," Janina replied. Then she shuddered. Pius was a fellow conspirator who was recovering from frostbite. The NKVD had seized her friends.

Vynokur fixed his eyes on Janina. "So, you do know Pius!" He switched off the radio and waved his hand. "Take this Polish whore away!"

During another interrogation Vynokur rose from his desk and went to a locked cabinet. His back was to Janina, but she could see that he was assembling a syringe and stabbing himself in the forearm. She didn't know what he was injecting – it could have been insulin – but fellow prisoners confirmed her suspicion. Vynokur was a drug addict.

During yet another session Janina was dismissing the endless questions with shrugs and denials when Vynokur emerged from the background, spun her chair, and brought her face to his.

"You don't think I could kill you like a dog?" he barked.

He narrowed his eyes. A muscle in his face twitched. He undid his holster and took out his black revolver.

Vynokur brushed Janina's cheek and temple with the barrel. The click of the trigger hitting an empty chamber thundered in her ear.

Vynokur pulled the trigger a second and third time. "You're lying, you Polish cunt!" he screamed. "We know everything!"

Back in her cell, nursing a bad tooth, Janina told herself that the gun hadn't been loaded. Vynokur had a job to do and wouldn't risk losing her as a source. But she still shivered when she remembered the muzzle against her temple.

50 Mykola Pshenychnyi, interview by Ostap Smerek, Dubne, August 2005, in author's possession; see also Stefan Racšek, 289, no. 3685, and kol. 138, Wincenty Bąkiewicz, Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. Generala Władysława Sikorskiego, London; Außenkommando GFP beim 48. AK, Erschiessung von NKWD-Kommissaren und Funktionären; Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno, 2; Zenkner, "Das Blutbad von Dubno"; Zenkner, "Greueltaten in Dubno," 64; Bolesław Orlowski, 4173, HI; Surmach, "17. veresnia"; Kawka, "Czas śmierci"; Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 122; *Istoriia mist i sil Ukraïns'koï RSR: Rovens'ka Oblast'* (Kyiv, 1973), 213; Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 343 n90; Abramowicz; *Więzienia NKWD*, 15; Syvits'kyi, *Zapysky*, 206.

The tooth was throbbing, and Janina couldn't sleep. She told a guard that she needed to see the dentist, but two days dragged on without a response. Guards came for her only when she began screaming and pounding on the door.

The dentist, a Jewish woman from Dubne, had her office in the bowels of the prison. She had lived all her life in Poland, she had had her practice here, but she spoke in Russian and, Janina would recall in her memoirs, did not hide her contempt for everything Polish or her love for everything Soviet.

The dentist told Janina that she had no material for a filling and would have to extract the tooth. What was worse, she had no painkillers, not even aspirin. She was saving them, Janina said to herself, to coddle her beloved NKVD officers.

"Can you stand the pain and not faint?" the woman asked.

"Oh yes!" Janina replied.

The dentist yanked the bad tooth, and with a minimum of probing and pain at that, but she hit a nerve, as she wielded her pliers, by humming a tune. The one from the film a few years back about three tractor drivers, stout fellows all, who fend off fiendish samurais in the Far East and then travel home by train, singing and raising toasts, to work their collective-farm fields.[51]

9.

Day was breaking, and Valia was lying motionless, as if bound and offered up on an altar, when Major Vynokur stepped over the dead bodies, pulled her blanket away, and pressed his revolver to her temple. "You're alive," he said.

Valia looked up at him. "Yes. Don't shoot me. I don't have much time left anyway."

The NKGB chief looked around the cell, went over to the other women to examine them, then came back to Valia and aimed his gun at her temple.

Valia urged Vynokur to shoot her in the chest. That would be faster and more certain, she said.

Violence had held Isaac Babel spellbound. He worked, if only for a time, if only as a translator, for the Cheka, the security service that became, after several changes of name, the NKVD. He yearned, he confessed to a fellow writer, to write a big book about Chekists and worried that he couldn't do them justice because the ones he knew were all saints. And he longed, as he moved through Volhynia and Galicia in the summer of 1920, to be like the men he was riding with. He wanted, he wrote in his short story "After the Battle," to be a killer.

> The village floated and bulged, crimson clay oozing from its gloomy wounds. The rain whipped the willow trees and dwindled. The evening soared into the sky like a flock of birds and darkness laid its wet garland upon me. I was exhausted, and crouching beneath the crown of death, walked on, begging fate for the simplest ability – the ability to kill a man. [52]

Major Vynokur aimed his revolver in turn at Valia's chest and forehead. Then he lowered his weapon, turned on his heel, and walked out.

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51 Chris Gladun, "Poland's Holocaust," http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/ParIiament/6764/intro.html; Sulkowska, "Memoirs, 1939-1951," 44-48, 63; Albin Głowacki, "Sowiecki aparat represji w Malopolsce Wschodniej i na Wołyniu, 1939-1941," *Pamięc i Sprawedliwość,* 40 (1997-98), 288; Rafal Wnuk, "ZWZ na Wołyniu 1939-1941," in Chmielowiec, ed., *Okupacja sowiecka*, 21-51. For a transcript of Sulkowska's interrogation see *Polska i Ukraina w Iatach trzydziestych-czterdziestych XX wieku*, 3:1: Serhij Bohunow et al., eds., *Polske podziemie 1939-1941 od Wołynia do Pokucia: Nieznane dokumenty z archiwów służb specjalnych* (Warsaw, 2004), 214-33. Mosfilm released Ivan Pyr'ev's *Traktoristy* ("Tractor Drivers") in 1939.

52 A. N. Pirozhkova, *At His Side: The Last Years of Isaac Babel* (South Royalton, Vt., 1996), 90; Charles Rougle, "Isaac Babel and His Odyssey of War and Revolution," in Charles Rougle, ed., *Red Cavalry: A Critical Companion* (Evanston, 1996), 7; Sergei Povartsov, *Prichina smerti – rasstrel: Khronika poslednikh dnei Isaaka Babelia* (Moscow, 1996), 6, 18; *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, ed. Nathalie Babel, trans. Peter Constantine (New York, 2002), 327.

Covered in blood, unable to move, Valia sprawled on the floor. Her wounds were burning, fever was racking her body, and all she could think about was the water in the mess tin.

She was groping for the mess tin when a soldier loomed in the door.

"Why are you twisting about?" he bellowed.

"I'm thirsty," Valia said. "Give me the water."

"I'll give you water!" he said.

Valia looked up at him. He was young and had big blue eyes. Under different circumstances she would have flirted with him. Even now she managed a faint smile. Surely, he would help her.

Valia had not expected the stab to her head and did not groan or cry out. The man struck her in the neck with the bayonet on his rifle. It slipped off when he pulled it back. He bent down, picked it up, and fixed it in place, then strode over to Nadia and thrust it into her chest. She rolled up into a ball and died without making a sound.

The man moved on to Frosia, who was unconscious, and pierced her neck.

10.

Valia woke, then dozed, then woke again. The sounds of gunfire drifted over the marshland. It was Wednesday, June 25, and she had been lying on the floor, first shot, then stabbed, with only a mess tin of water and a blanket to ease her pain, for more than twelve hours.

In midafternoon Valia heard footsteps and voices. Someone was crying. Someone was swearing. Someone was pounding down a door. The motorcycle soldiers of the Wehrmacht's Eleventh Panzer Division had skirled into Dubne at two o'clock and were handing out chocolates to children. Civilians had seized crowbars and scrambled to the prison. Some of them poked their heads into Valia and Frosia's cell and went on. Rescuing survivors was not the only thing on their minds.[53]

In September 1939 townspeople had taken to plundering as soon as the Polish government fell apart. This time, too, looters roamed the streets. They carried out beds, mattresses, tables, and flacons of perfume from the flats that Soviet functionaries had abandoned. They jimmied the windows and doors of shops and storehouses, took what they fancied, and laid waste to the rest. They broke off the necks of vodka bottles and drank until they dropped. Even at the prison, as some people removed the remains of their relatives, others hauled away everything they could move. "While they were doing so," observed a lieutenant from a Wehrmacht propaganda company, one of the units that provided newspaper, radio, and newsreel reports about the fighting, "the people thought it particularly important to show me the prison in order to convince us Germans of the barbarity of the Soviet system."[54]

The lieutenant's concern for propriety was out of place. In the town soldiers had pinned an elderly Jew to an armored car, hung a portrait of Stalin around his neck, and cudgeled him to death.[55]

53 B 162 ARZ 5900255, Bd. l, Bl. 174, 258, Bundesarchiv Außenstelle Ludwigsburg (hereafter BALB); G. W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland: Geschichte des Panzer-Regiments 15 (11. Panzer-Division)* (Munich, 1976), 131; Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941-1944* (Jerusalem, 1990), 45; Kurt Mehner, ed., *Die Geheimen Tagesberichte der Wehrmachtführung im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939-1945*, 3: *1. Marz 1941-31. Oktober 1941* (Osnabrück, 1992), 154; *Knyha pam"iati Ukraïny: Rivnens'ka oblast'* (L'viv, 1994), 12; Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*, 123; Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Relacje z Kresów* (Warsaw, 2000), 513 (Archiwum Ringelbluma; 3); A. V. Isaev, *Ot Dubno do Rostova* (Moscow, 2034), 154-56; Kosek. "Od wyzwolicieli zachowaj nas Panie," 67; Mykola Pshenychnyi, "Bil′shovyky v Dubni u 1939-1941 roky," DIZ.

54 Surmach, "17. veresnia"; Kawka, "Czas śmierci"; Kosek, "Od wyzwolicieli zachowaj nas Panie"; Howard Reich, *The First and Final Nightmare of Sonia Reich: A Son's Memoir* (New York, 2006), 157; Iu. Pasichnyk, "Na pochatku viiny," undated clipping from unidentified newspaper, DIZ; Leutnant Graf Magnis, "Bericht über das Gefängnis in Dubno," June 28, 1941, RH 21-11148b, BA-MA; reprinted (with errors) in Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*, 124.

55 Reich, *The First and Final Nightmare*, 131.

Other soldiers proceeded to the prison. Local people had hastened to report the killings to the general who had taken charge of the region when the Wehrmacht arrived, and he had sent a detail to the prison to investigate.

At the entrance building the soldiers in the unit saw heaps of spent cartridges lying outside the cells. When they entered the yard, a stench assailed them. With handkerchiefs to their noses, they went looking for survivors. Women, children, and old men were lying in the crowded cells. In their attempts to escape from their killers the victims had hidden behind overturned tables.[56]

"One can hardly find words," wrote a Wehrmacht soldier who had passed through the Dubne prison, "for something like this."[57]

And a company commander in the Eleventh Panzer Division who spent two days in the town before his unit moved east could not sleep at night. He and his men were quartering near the prison, and the smell of the corpses was carrying over the marsh.[58]

At seven in the evening. two women burst into Valia's cell.

"I can't breathe here! Take me outside!" she cried.

"She's alive!" the women shouted.

They rushed off, called over several people to help them, found benches, placed Valia and Frosia on them. and carried them outside.

As Valia and Frosia's rescuers shuffled to the nearest house, German warplanes flew over. The rescuers dropped the benches and ran for cover. Then they came out, and the procession resumed. Valia felt as if she were taking part in her own funeral.

People gave Valia hot coffee, but she couldn't swallow it because of the wound in her throat. She asked for a cigarette and managed to take a few puffs. The women who had found her, Czech nurses from the Dubne hospital, set off to find a horse and wagon, came back in an hour, and drove Valia and Frosia to the hospital.

Wounded survivors of the massacre were lying on every operating table, and the nurses placed Valia and Frosia on the floor in the hall. A doctor came out and ordered that Valia be brought in. Frosia was worse off and should go first, Valia would claim to have said.

The doctor and nurse shook their heads when they saw Valia. She needed blood. Several people were ready to donate theirs, but bombs had left the lab in shambles. She wouldn't live, the doctors concluded.

Valia asked them to clean her up. Medics gave her morphine and bandaged her wounds.

At five in the afternoon on June 26, Group 626 of the Geheime Feldpolizei, or Secret Field Police, arrived in Dubne. The GFP was the security and counterintelligence force of the Wehrmacht, the Gestapo of the German army, and only the Einsatzgruppen outdid it in the ferocity with which it killed civilians on the Eastern front. People in Dubne had already informed the commanding general that the NKVD had slaughtered its prisoners. Now they made sure that the GFP also knew.[59]

The field police officers set out for the prison the next morning. People were carting their kin away

56 Erwin Krombholz, Letter to the editor, *Ostpreußenblatt*, June 9, 2001, http://www.webarchiv-server.de/pin/archiv/01/2301ob26.html (accessed February 27, 2007).

57 Letter by W. Sonnenberg in Wolfgang Diewerge, ed., *Deutsche Soldaten sehen die Sowjet-Union* (Berlin, 1941), 16.

58 Edel Lingenthal, "Impression of the Border Battles," in David M. Glantz, ed., *The Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front, 22 June – August 1941: Proceedings of the Fourth Art of War Symposium. Garmisch, FRG, October 1987* (London, 1993), 337.

59 Klaus Geßner, "Geheime Feldpolizei – die Gestapo der Wehrmacht," in Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-1944* (Hamburg, 1995), 344; Paul B. Brown, "The Senior Leadership Cadre of the Geheime Feldpolizei. 1939-1945," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17 (2003), 282; Aussenkommando GFP beim 48. A.K., "Erschießung von NKWD-Kommissaren und Funktionären," RH 24-48. XXXXVIII. Armeekorps (mot.) / Panzerkorps, 1940-1945, BA-MA.

for burial, but more than a hundred dead were still lying in the cells. The killers, the GFP reported, had first shot and then raped one woman – her clothing was in disarray, her legs were spread, and her vagina contained semen – tortured others – the skin on their hands and feet had been peeled off – and shot or stabbed the rest. Women who recognized relatives were so distraught that they smashed their heads against the walls.

One man had escaped execution because he had been working in the locksmith shop and had hidden himself as soon as he heard the gunfire. Two other inmates, a man and a woman, had survived by crawling under the bodies of dead cellmates.[60]

In its sketchy and contradictory reports on its retreat from Dubne, the NKVD calculated that of the 696 inmates at the prison on June 23, 1941, it had released 170, evacuated 250, and marked 230 or 260 for shooting. Of these, the NKVD said, 46 had survived the killings. The German army, by contrast, cited 400, 450, 500, or 550 victims of the NKVD in Dubne. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists thought there were 800. The newspapers of the day bruited 527 to 1500. Eyewitnesses later inflated these figures to thousands.[61]

Group 626 set itself two tasks in Dubne. One was to make the prison usable again by bringing the corpses down into the yard, scrubbing the cells, and fixing the broken doors. The Poles had needed a prison; the Soviets had needed a prison; the Germans would need one, too.

The other task was to hold someone to account for the killings. The NKVD and party officials who had had anything to do with the slaughter had all fled from Dubne a good two hours before the Wehrmacht arrived, but that didn't matter. Any commissar or Jew would do. To find them, Group 626 turned to informers.

"From the very first day," observed a Jew who survived the war in Dubne, "Ukrainians pointed out to the Germans Jews who had worked for the Soviets. Each one pointed out those against whom he had a grudge. The Germans took them away, and they never came back."[62]

But it was not only Ukrainians who engaged in denunciations, and it was not only Jews who fell victim. When the Red Army arrived in Volhynia in September 1939, Ukrainians and Jews had hurried to complain to the new powers that be about their treatment at Polish hands. As the German-Soviet war approached, Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians had scurried to report fellow townspeople as spies for the Germans. And when the Wehrmacht occupied the region, Ukrainians and Poles – often those who had

60 Leutnant Wilhelm Felber, "Bolschewistischer Massenmord in Dubno," June 29, 1941, R60762, PA; Ivan Pavliuk, "Strilialy stalinisty, strilialy fashysty," *Prapor peremohy*, September 11, 1990; Mykhailo Oliinyk, "Zostalas' zhyvoiu pid trupamy," *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, December 12, 1990.

61 Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:233, 267: Romaniv and Fedushchak, eds., *Zakhidnoukraïns'ka trahediia*, 63, 326, 394; Dziuban, ed., *Ukraïns'ke derzhavotvorennia*. 91, 291; Gur'ianov and Kokurin, *Evakuatsiia tiurem*; Popiński, Kokurin, and Gurjanow, *Drogi śmierci*, 17, 32, 97, 103, 175; telegram from Captain Hellenthal at AOK 6 to the Auswärtiges Amt, June 29, 1941, in Dziuban, ed., *Ukraïns'ke derzhavotvorennia,* 91; Heeresgruppe Süd, lc, "Morgenmeldung vom 1. Juli 1941," RH 20-6/515/575, BA-MA; AOK 6, 1c, Abendmeldung vom 1. Juli 1941. RH 20-6. 6151S/SSI, BA-MA; Aussenkommando GFP beim 48. A.K., "Erschiessung von NKWD Kommissaren und Funktionären," 1; "Greueltaten in Dubno," 64; Hans-Wolfgang Schoch, "Eidestattliche Erklärung," June 17, 1946, IMT document 1689, Archives of the International Military Tribunal as entrusted to the Court pursuant to a decision of that Tribunal dated October 1, 1946, Peace Palace, The Hague; "Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno"; Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków*, 654; "lak skazhenily katy v Dubni," *Krakivs'ki visti*, July 10, 1941; Jerzy Węgierski, *Lwów pod okupacją sowiecką 1939-1941* (Warsaw, 1991), 279; Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 112, 115; Pawel Lisiewicz, "Bal czerwonych upiorów: 57 lat od Norymbergii," http://free.of.pl//wolyn/pano_004.html (accessed April 11, 2007); Krombholz, *Ostpreußenblatt*, June 9, 2001. For more newspaper accounts see *Zlochyny komunistychnoï Moskvy v Ukraïni vliti 1941 roku* (New York, 1960), 30, and Iaroslav Lial'ka, ed., *Litopys neskorenoï Ukraïny* (L'viv, 1993), 1:40, 48.

62 Pinches Fingerhut, 301/2168, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, Warsaw, printed in Michal Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939-1945: Relacje świadków* (Warsaw, 2003), 558.

curried favor with the NKVD – lost no time in fingering Communists and Jews. People were handing neighbors over to a certain death, noted a schoolteacher from a village near Dubne in his diary.[63]

It was these informants who helped the GFP arrest seven men. Six of the seven, to judge by their names, were Ukrainians or Russians, one – described as a post office guard and an activist in the Communist youth movement – was a Jew. The field police did not bother to find evidence that the seven had helped the NKVD kill prisoners. That they had been in Dubne and "must have known about the prison murders" was sufficient.[64]

During the fighting for Dubne the Wehrmacht had captured two thousand Red Army soldiers. Some of them had been called up just a day or two before and had not seen action, let alone received training or uniforms and weapons. The GFP decided that it would use these POWs to clean the prison. A German officer ordered forty of them to step forward. They put on masks and white overalls, marched off under guard to the prison, and lugged out the corpses, then burned the blood-soaked blankets and clothing and disinfected the floors and walls.[65]

The next question, once relatives had taken their dead away, was what to do with the corpses that no one had claimed. The GFP had thought at first that when more German units came it would post guards and order the seven commissars and some of the POWs to bury these victims. On Monday, June 30, the 111th Infantry Division stopped over at Dubne and assigned twenty of its men, armed with automatic pistols, to serve as guards. But the POWs had been shipped out by then. Seven men could not dig a pit to hold a hundred corpses. The police obtained the additional workforce they needed by calling on their informants again and rounding up forty Jews. That afternoon the commissars and Jews dug a pit in the prison yard two meters wide and a meter and a half deep and buried the remaining victims. Afterwards a priest conducted a requiem.[66]

In March 1941 Adolf Hitler had addressed two hundred of his senior officers at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. The coming campaign against the Soviet Union, he explained to his audience, would be not just another military operation, but a "struggle between two opposing ideologies." Soviet commissars, Hitler said, were "the bearers of ideologies directly opposed to National Socialism. Therefore, the commissars will be liquidated. German soldiers guilty of breaking international law... will be excused." The "commissar order" that the Armed Forces High Command issued on June 6 reflected Hitler's thinking: the Wehrmacht was to shoot Red Army political officers as soon as it captured them.[67]

When the seven commissars and the Jews who had been dragooned from the streets of Dubne had buried the slaughtered inmates, they dug a second pit, at a distance from the first one, in the prison yard. At six in the evening on June 30, infantry soldiers shot the seven commissars into the grave they themselves had dug. Then the Jews "who were still present," as the writer of the field police report put it, shoveled earth on their bodies.[68]

63 Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 23, 42; Oleksander Povshuk, Dennyk Povshuka Oleksandra vid 17/IX. 1939 r., 57/4/344/102, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob"iednan' Ukraïny, Kyiv.

64 Aussenkommando GFP beim 48. A.K., Erschiessung von NKWD-Kommissaren.

65 Petro Druchenko, "lak tse bulo," interview by I. Lozov"iuk, *Visnyk Dubenshchyny*, December 12, 1990; Kawka, "Czas śmierci."

66 Josef Taller (who stated that twenty-four Jews were shot), B 162 ARZ Bd. l, Bl 175, BALB; Raja Mantwer (who testified that twenty-five Jewish men were shot at the prison "about two weeks after arrival of the Wehrmacht"), B 162 ARZ 5900255, Bd. 1, Bl. 259. BALB; Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, 73 (who reports that Soviet activists were killed in Dubne on June 30, 1941); L. Bakun and others, "Prosymo rozpovisty pravdu," November 8, 1989, DIZ.

67 William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York, 1960), 830; Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekutionen sowjetischcr Kriegsgefangener," in Martin Broszat et al., eds., *Anatomie des SS-Staates* (Olten, 1965), 2:163-283; Pavel Polian, "First Victims of the Holocaust: Soviet-Jewish Prisoners of War in German Captivity," *Kritika* 6 (2005) 763-87.

68 Aussenkommando GFP beim 48. A. K., Erschiessung von NKWD-Kommissaren; Heeresgruppe

The GFP located the builder of the prison and had him repair the doors. Some cell doors were still broken, but each floor could now be locked, and the Wehrmacht herded Soviet POWs into the prison. A little girl went there one day to pass bread to them. A German soldier collared the child. If she did it again, he cautioned, he would put a bullet in her head.[69]

When the POWs were gone – starved to death or shipped to other killing fields – the German army put the Dubne prison to use as a place to hold lawbreakers and deserters. Men in shabby uniforms goose-stepped around the courtyard. The clatter of their clogs on the cobblestone – they were prisoners and had no need for boots – echoed beyond the walls.

The Wehrmacht executed men from the lower ranks without fuss. It gave higher ranks a military ceremony. A retinue of military judges and an execution squad would escort the condemned man at dawn to a nearby waste. A coffin on a wagon would come at the rear. The convict would stand against a post; the judges would read their sentence, and the squad would pump bullets into him. Then the procession would head back to the prison, and the bloody corpse would lumber along in the coffin.[70]

"Everything will come to an end," Teresa Trautman had assured her family. Six of the eight women in her cell at the Dubne prison – Stefa Kiliars'ka, Nadia Orlovs'ka, Olia, the peasant woman, the Polish army captain's wife, and Teresa herself – did not survive the killings. Frosia Pindviuk did. She settled in Luts'k after the war and, although her right arm had been amputated, became a seamstress.[71]

Valia survived as well. She remarried, came to the United States, and took up residence in Denver. She talked about how the doctors had removed bullets from her back without anesthesia and how they had given her up for dead and sent her to the morgue because she had no pulse. She carried six bullets in her body, and her bayonet wounds ached at night the rest of her life. She swore that Christ had appeared in her cell and bestowed a blessing on her. She accused a Polish priest of refusing to hear her confession because she was Orthodox. She was certain that Jewish doctors and nurses had tried to poison her because she was living proof of Jewish perfidy. And she had no doubt that Jews ran the NKVD.

Süd lc-Morgenmeldung vom 1. Juli 1941, RH-20/6/515, BA-MA; Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*, 123-27. Critics of the Vernichtungskrieg exhibit have argued that the organizers did not offer any evidence of Wehrmacht involvement in these killings. Meinrad von Ow, *Fragen und kritische Anmerkungen zur Ausstellung "Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941-1944": Eine Handreichung für die Besucher der Ausstellung* (Reinbek, 2003), implies that if the killings took place, they were justified because the executed men may have been "NKVD executioners." Götz Aly, *Rasse und Klasse: Nachforschungen zum deutschen Wesen* (Frankfurt, 2003), 127, insists that the documentation of the killings in the exhibit catalogue is "unequivocal," but says – wrongly – that they took place on June 25. Einsatzgruppe C, which reported on the situation in Dubne several weeks later, may have had this incident in mind when it wrote that the hundred people who had been executed in the town included a Ukrainian who by his own admission had helped the NKVD deport or kill Ukrainians, two Communist officials and informers for the NKVD, a Communist who had helped exile families of Ukrainian nationalists from his village, and two Russians who had been found in possession of parts of German uniforms. The report said nothing about complicity in the prison killings. See Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 28, July 20, and the appended Bericht über das sowjetrussische Gefängnis Dubno und über das Blutbad vom 24. und 25.6.1941 Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 28, July 20, 1941, and particularly the appended "Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno und über das Blutbad vom 24. und 25.6.1941," R5S/214, 256-63, BAB). Kawka, "Czas śmierci," recalls that eighty Jews were executed immediately after the occupation.

69 Reich, *The First and Final Nightmare*, 104, 159.

70 Jerzy Piotrowski, "Tragiczne Dubno, w latach II wojny światowej," *Życie Krzemienieckie* 9 (January 1995), 25.

71 Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 114, writes that Władysława Rapacka claimed that Teresa Trautman survived the NKVD killing and told her about a woman guard named Kasan who killed women prisoners, but this is an antisemitic fantasy.

11.

And what about Major Vynokur, the wizard of Dubne, the Jew who had spared Valia's life, but who had imprinted himself on her mind long before she laid eyes on him and then overshadowed all that his Ukrainian and Russian confrères had done?

In their dispatches on the NKVD massacre, the German security police officers and propaganda company reporters repeated what their informers had told them. The main perpetrators, the GFP said, were NKVD Commissar Vynokur and the prison secretary, a woman named Bronstein. A reporter described Vynokur as a "flat-footed Jew" with a hooked nose and bandy legs and declared that he oversaw the massacre. Still another writer related that Vynokur supervised the prison and that Bronstein was his private secretary and authorized representative. The writer added that one survivor described the killers who came to his cell as a Jew and two Jewish women, Bronstein and Geifler. Another survivor intimated that in his cell the killers were the two Jewish women.[72]

That pageant of sadism and depravity plays on in the stories Ukrainians and Poles tell. Someone saw Vynokur at the prison just before the shooting began. He and his two women assistants raced around shooting prisoners with revolvers. Someone else saw Khana Berenstein, a dumpy dark-haired woman who had worked as a guard at the prison, killing women inmates. She would tear into a cell, seize a woman by her hair, and put a bullet in her head. Still other survivors are certain that Vynokur carried out the slaughter with the assistance of a young Jewish woman named Kagan.

From the prison, according to the stories, Vynokur dashed over to the church at the Bernardine monastery. The monks had prostrated themselves in the shape of a cross in front of an icon that they brought out only in times of great misfortune. Vynokur stomped over their backs, but did not shoot anyone, then vented his spleen by speeding to the castle, where young Red Army conscripts had been assembled, and shooting them with his revolver. Afterwards he washed his hands and sat down to breakfast.[73]

And people relate how Vynokur met his end. In their flight east the security service chief and several government and party officials mounted two motorcycles and roared off for Rivne. They commandeered a train at a station several kilometers from Dubne, but before the train could move off, Ukrainian insurgents surrounded it, took its occupants prisoner, and drove it north to Luts'k. There a German unit intercepted the nationalists, relieved them of their captives, and killed Vynokur and his confederates.

Other people claim that German soldiers surrounded Vynokur as he was escaping to Rivne. He shot his driver and woman assistant, and then a German bullet cut him down as he ran across a field.

As if that weren't enough, there is the story that when Vynokur realized he couldn't escape, he killed his wife and daughter and then turned his gun on himself.[74]

12.

So, who was Major Vynokur, and what became of him?

72 Aussenkommando GFP beim 48. AK., Erschiessung von NKWD-Kommissaren und Funktionären; Zenkner, "Das Blutbad von Dubno"; Bericht über das sowjetrussische Staatsgefängnis Dubno.

73 Petrenko, "Trahediia Dubens'koï tiurmy"; Valia, "Zhyttia u viaznytsi"; Kreshchenko, *Velykden' u v"iaznytsi*, 24; Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 115.

74 Satsiuk, *Smertonostsi*, 122; Mykola Boryshkevych, "Movchazni svidky," http://aaaaaan.narod.ru/voboroni.files/7.htm (accessed June 13, 2007); K. Myroshchuk and O. Pavlenko, "Rozstrily u Dubnivs'kii tiurmi," *Chervonyi prapor*, June 17, 1990; Kawka, "Czas śmierci"; A. V. Mialovyts'kyi, ed., *Rovens'ka oblast'* (Kyiv, 1973), 213; Ruts'kyi, *Koly vy vmyraly*, 12, and Ruts'kyi, *Holhofa*, 37; Do podii u Dubens'kii v"iaznytsi v 1941 rotsi; Pshenychnyi, interview by Ostap Smerek; Pshenychnyi, foreword to Kreshchenko, *Velykden' u v"iaznytsi*, 5; Zavads'kyi, "Rozstrily v Dubni," and "Tse treba bulo perezhyty"; Abramowicz, *Więzienia NKWD*, 115.

His name was Iakiv Davydovych Vynokur in the Ukrainian spelling, Iakov Davidovich Vinokur in the Russian, and he was born in Kharkiv in 1909. His father had worked as an apprentice and salesman before the revolution and as a planner at a textile syndicate afterwards. Iakiv's mother died of tuberculosis when he was fifteen. The Red Army called him up for a tour of duty in 1931. He served a year in artillery units and then worked as a clerk in the procurator's office of the GPU border guards. In 1933 he moved over to the GPU. In 1934 he married a woman who had also been working for the security service. Their only child, a daughter, was born in 1937. In September 1939 Vynokur's superiors dispatched him to western Ukraine. He had been a candidate for membership in the Communist party since 1933. In November 1939 he became a full member. He mentioned in his autobiography that in all his years with the Young Communist League, the party, and the security services he had never received a reprimand. When he was up for promotion to the position of chief of the Dubne district NKVD in July 1940, the party bosses gave him a solid reference: they said that he was politically aware and disciplined and was working to raise his ideological level. When the NKGB split off from the NKVD in early 1941, Vynokur became chief of the new department. By June 1941 he had risen to the rank of major. His papers identified him as a Jew.[75]

Late in the morning on June 25, Vynokur was at party headquarters in Dubne. The families of the town's officials had fled for Rivne the day before. Now the Wehrmacht had taken Luts'k, forty-six kilometers to the northwest – there, too, the NKVD had abandoned a prison crammed with corpses – and tanks, armored cars, and motorcycles were rolling along the highway toward Dubne. And when Vynokur sent a reconnaissance patrol to the western edge of the town, it came back to report that it had sighted a column of tanks. It was time for the officials who were still in Dubne to decamp. Vynokur, who had been appointed head of the district defense staff the day the war began, was responsible for organizing their escape.[76]

At noon, all the party and government officials, NKVD and NKGB officers, and militiamen who had not left for Rivne yet assembled at the Spartak stadium near party headquarters. Vynokur counted off forty of them for a breakthrough group. They would try to get through the German lines, and then the rest of the activists would follow.

The forty men piled into cars and trucks and sallied out. They had reached the western edge of Pantaliia, a village five kilometers northeast of Dubne, when Vynokur ordered a halt to assess the situation. A villager reported that a German tank and machine gunners had taken up a position at a fork in the road on the other side of the village. Vynokur divided his group into two. The first force, equipped with a truck on which a machine gun was mounted and made up of four or five officials, several bank employees, and a dozen NKVD soldiers, would circle around the Germans and attack them from behind, thus giving the second force a chance to move forward.

The first force had traveled two kilometers and was a hundred fifty meters from the fork when the Germans opened fire. The vehicles burst into flames. The men inside jumped out, took cover in ditches and behind bushes, and started sniping at the Germans.

The battle – pistols and rifles against machine guns and a tank – was uneven. Two men said that they would get to Rivne on their own and waded off into a swamp. The remaining men started out across a hay field. They would make their way to a village that lay two kilometers north of the highway and then follow country roads to Rivne. They were arguing about the direction they should take when they saw a car and two trucks racing toward the fork. Vynokur was in one of them. One of the men in the

75 Vinokur, "Avtobiografiia"; Begma, "Kharakteristika na tov. Vinokurova [sic] lakova Davidovicha," copy made on July 15, 1981, from a copy made in April 1965; Dianov, "Spravka," DIZ; e-mail from A. L Kokurin, GARF, to the author, August 9, 2005.

76 Mykola Kudelia, *Pid muramy Luts'koï tiurmy: Spohady kolyshn'oho v"iaznia* (Luts'k, 2001), 55; T. Prysiazhnyi, "Masovi vbyvstva v Luts'ku," *Litopys Volyni* 1 (1953), 69; Ryszard Szawlowski, *Wojna polsko-sowiecka 1939* (Warsaw, 1997), 229; Pshenychnyi, *Bil'shovyky v Dubni*; Kislashko, "Spravka," DIZ; M. Pidlypnyi, "Nazavzhdy u pam"iati," *Chervona zirka*, June 30, 1981.

field darted out into the road and hailed the vehicles. Danger lay ahead, he said, and it would be best if the second force abandoned its vehicles and joined the first one.

"We'll get through," Vynokur replied and motioned to his men to move on.

The other men heard machine-gun fire as they forged across the field. The German emplacement was volleying Vynokur's force.

At half past one an eight-year-old boy came running to Anna Burdylo's house in Dubne. Her husband was a militiaman and had left with Vynokur for Rivne. The boy knew Anna because his father had worked with her husband. German soldiers, the boy said, had killed his parents. He had escaped by hiding in a field of rye. Anna's husband and other men, he added, had also been killed.

Anna raced to Pantaliia. Her husband was lying in the open. Several other militiamen lay nearby. They had been stabbed with bayonets and shot point-blank in the head. One of the dead was Vynokur.[77]

The next day soldiers rounded up eight men from Pantaliia, told them to pick up spades, and led them to a spot a hundred meters from the fork.

Disabled vehicles and bodies were scattered across the field. The villagers recognized Vynokur. He was lying on his back and held a small pistol in his right hand. A part of the grip and two fingers on the hand had been shot away.

"I have spent my life," Isaac Babel scribbled on a photograph of himself that he was autographing for a friend, "in struggle with this man." Would Iakiv Vynokur have understood these words? Would he have felt a kinship, an unspoken affinity, if only as a twinge deep within his gut, with the writer whom NKVD agents led away from his book-filled study one morning in May 1939 and then, after a trial that lasted all of twenty minutes late one night in January 1940, dragged out of his cell to an underground chamber and shot in the back of the neck?[78]

The eight men dug a pit at the cemetery at the fork for the fourteen or fifteen Germans who had been killed in the skirmish. They dug two more pits at a short distance and laid the Soviet dead beside them. The soldiers rifled their pockets, and then the villagers lowered the bodies of Vynokur and his men into their graves.[79]

"The hatred is the same... the cruelty the same," Babel had written in his diary in 1920. "It's nonsense to think one army is different from another."[80]

And who was responsible for the slaughter at the prison the night of the 24th and the morning of the 25th? Did Vynokur take part in it? Did he sprint along the corridors calling out orders to the killers and dispatching prisoners with his own hand? Did he meet a just end when he lay bleeding in a field of rye and German soldiers shot his fingers away and put a bullet in his head?

Everything suggests that Vynokur was nowhere near the prison the night of the slaughter. He may have been a brutal interrogator, but he did not gun down defenseless prisoners. He may even have tried to stop the killing.

At five in the afternoon on June 24, Manyliuk, the warden of the Dubne prison, had called Vynokur to ask for his help in convoying the prisoners to the railway station. Vynokur had refused him. Manyliuk then turned to Klimov, the deputy chief of the Rivne region NKVD, who instructed him to execute those prisoners who could not be released. Shortly afterwards the party leaders of the region phoned Vynokur and upbraided him for refusing to help at the prison. Vynokur had been able to resist Manyliuk. If he said no to the party, he himself might get a bullet. And his wife and daughter had left for the east. They, too, would be in danger.[81]

77 Quoted in Dianov, [Kratkaia annotatsiia], DIZ.

78 James E. Falen, *Isaac Babel, Russian Master of the Short Story* (Knoxville, 1974), 1.

79 Dianov, "Spravka," DIZ; Dianov, [Kratkaia annotatsiia], DIZ; Kislashko, "Spravka," DIZ; I. Kuznetsov, "Informatsiia," DIZ.

80 Babel', *Dnevnik 1920 god*, 83; Babel, *1920 Diary*, 84.

81 Pshenychnyi, interview by Ostap Smerek.

The ten men whom Vynokur delegated for the job arrived at the prison at eight o'clock. The killing began shortly after. But by then Vynokur and a detachment of party activists and militiamen had driven off in several vehicles to Rivne. They stopped near the village of Varkovychi, a little less than halfway to Rivne, and Vynokur continued the trip alone except for a driver. He came back to the village late that night, and the whole detachment returned to Dubne the next morning. Vynokur then went to the prison, came into Valia's cell, and left without shooting her and her two surviving cellmates.[82]

Why had Vynokur gone to Rivne the previous evening? Was he hoping to persuade Klimov to retract his order or, if that failed, to find a superior with enough authority to countermand him?

13.

"All of us, even when we think we have noted every tiny detail, resort to set pieces which have already been staged often enough by others," remarks W. G. Sebald, the German writer whose novel *Austerlitz* deals with some of the most difficult issues of recent decades. "We try to reproduce the reality,"

> *but the harder we try, the more we find the pictures that make up the stock-in-trade of the spectacle of history forcing themselves upon us: the fallen drummer boy, the infantryman shown in the act of stabbing another, the horse's eye starting from its socket, the invulnerable Emperor surrounded by his generals, a moment frozen still amidst the turmoil of battle. Our concern with history... is a concern with preformed images already imprinted on our brains, images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere as yet undiscovered.*

The questions I ask have no place in the spectacle. In Volhynia and Galicia in 1939 and 1941 you were not held to account for what you had done. Were you a Jew, a Russian, a Pole, a Ukrainian? No one needed to know more about you.

That war is long past, but the paradigm holds. Suffering, say the survivors and their heirs, is collective, not individual. You are starved, beaten, or shot not as a man or a woman, a person, but as a Ukrainian, a Jew, a Pole. What becomes of other breeds is trivial, hardly worth mentioning. What happens to your own is part of the burden you must shoulder. Your life may be your own. Your demise belongs to the collective that claims you.

In 2003, twelve years after the collapse of the regime that built a public toilet on the graves of the men and women whom the security service slaughtered, the people of Dubne put up a black granite plaque. "To the blessed memory," the inscription read, "of the victims of Communist repression by the NKVD at the Dubne prison in June 1941." The tablet said nothing about the Jews and Soviet and German soldiers who had lost their lives there. These deaths are still shrouded in history's blue mist.[83]

82 Mikhail Nikulin and Anna Burdylo, as quoted in Dianov, [Kratkaia annotatsiia], DIZ. Filippov reported to Serhiienko on July 5, 1941, that throughout western Ukraine only prison staff carried out sentences and the NKGB offered no help. Bilas, *Represyvno-karal'na systema*, 2:245.

83 L'vivs'ke tovarystvo "Poshuk," "Memorial'na doshka pam"iati zhertv NKVS Dubens'koï v"iaznytsi," http://www.poshuk-lviv.org.ua/pomnik/volyn/dubno_prison_htm (accessed December 19, 2006).