

Stenogram

Of citizen Vera Petrovna Rukosueva year 1892, native of the city of Wilno.¹
Witness at the trial regarding German-fascist atrocities across Ukraine in the case of
Gebietskommissar² Heinisch.³

My husband and I are elementary school teachers.

Since 1939, I have lived in Ukraine in Melitopol.⁴ In 1936, I taught German language. On October 4, 1941, we evacuated with the teachers but the Germans grabbed us in Mariupol⁵ and we had to stay in Mariupol. We lived there until the Ukrainian police started checking passports. After that, denunciations began against us as evacuees, and we returned to Melitopol.

Having arrived in Melitopol, we found a ransacked apartment. On the day after our arrival, policemen showed up at our apartment and said they were going to bring us to the German Gestapo. [At the Gestapo] there was already a certificate of my husband as a shock worker,⁶ clippings from newspapers. All of this had been kept by us in the book "History of the civil war in Ukraine."

They offered us to work as teachers, ~~to teach the German language~~, but we refused. Then they threatened us and offered us to work as registrars at the labor exchange. At the labor exchange I would see scenes of recruitment of people to Germany. A ~~doctors-recruitment~~ commission would gather, with the ~~officers~~ fascists Fischer and Ebert, and Baroness Duehlfin,⁷ who was notable for horrific cruelty, at the head.

I remember an episode, where two elderly mothers, of which one was blind and the other a legless cripple, came before the commission. [1.1] They implored, crawled on the floor, begged for them to not take their only daughters to Germany. But Duehlfin said to them that since they were healthy, they had to go. The girls wept and fainted before the commission. Then Duehlfin ordered them to lay the

¹ Wilno was the name of Vilnius, capital of present-day Lithuania, in the interwar period when it was part of the Second Polish Republic.

² A Gebietskommissar (regional commissar) oversaw a German-designated region in many occupied German areas.

³ Georg Heinisch was Gebietskommissar of German-administered Melitopol region from September 1941 to September 1943. He was tried in January 1946 in Kiev and hung, along with other Nazi figures of the occupation at the same trial.

⁴ Melitopol is a city in southeastern Ukraine. It was captured by the Germans on October 6, 1941.

⁵ Mariupol is a city about 190 km east of Melitopol, on the Black Sea coast. It was captured by the Germans on October 8th, 1941.

⁶ A shock worker (udarnik) was a super-productive worker in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. There was also an honorary title Shock Worker of Communist Labor in the Soviet Union, rewarded with a badge, certificate, and cash prize.

⁷ It is unclear who Baroness Duehlfin was.

weeping one on the floor by the wall. The Germans themselves called her a bestial person. No tears or pleas had an effect on her.

The recruitment was carried out thus: at first an order was issued saying that people of a certain age will be recruited for work in Germany for 6 months. Nobody believed this. Many, to avoid forced labor work in Germany, would turn to self-mutilation. So, for example, Vasya Zhivoglyadov wounded his leg, dirtied the wound, and lay in bed for two months. In this way he escaped being taken to Germany. Nadya Panchenko - a beautiful young girl - drank a tincture of poisonous herbs, from which she is ill even now. There were many cases of damaging the eye. They would let essence⁸ into the eyes and show up like this before the commission.

They would bring people before the commission by force, via roundups. A detachment of SS-men would go from house to house and arrest those who were subject to the roundup. But, seeing as the majority of the youth hid, they also had this roundup method. An order would be issued under the signature of Gebietskommissar Heinisch, which said that one born in such and such a year must show up at the exchange for registration. They did not allow those who showed up to return home. They would drive them into the courtyard, and then they took them by truck to the train terminal or to the camp, which was in the village of Konstantinovka.⁹

There was also a third roundup method, when the commission would go out to the countryside. There, they engaged in horrific lawlessness during recruitment. They would take not only the ages indicated in the order, but also those of older ages and 14-year-old teenagers. This is why columns of many hundreds of recruited, [1.2] tear-stained and pale people, thoroughly guarded by the police, would stretch from the countryside to the city, in the direction of the train terminal. From there, they would send them to Germany in sealed trains.

After the shooting of the Jews in Melitopol, it was announced that everyone who had children from mixed marriages had to give them up. But, seeing as not one mother was consenting to this, they were shot together with the children. So, Dora Zhevnoval, being a Russian, her husband a Jew, was shot together with her child.

Working at the exchange, I tried to help the recruited in every way. But this was difficult since ~~there was always a German present~~ *I only participated two times as a registrar* on the commission.

I worked at the exchange from April 1942 to the middle of August 1943. I got leave, then got sick, and did not come to the exchange again.

⁸ For example, acetic acid, an essence of vinegar. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acetic_acid

⁹ Konstantinovka/Kostyantynivka is a small town just outside of the city limits of Melitopol today.

On September 22, evacuation was announced across the city via an order. The entire population was supposed to leave the city together with the Germans, while those insubordinate to the order, as the order said, will be shot.

Universal roundups began. They drove men into Nova-Nikolaevka.¹⁰ They sent some to work digging trenches and shot the rest. This was how Nikolai Gorkusha, 28, and Nikolai Sukhanov, 28, were shot. Their corpses were discovered in a well. 7 more corpses were discovered there. On one of them there were no signs of violence, nor of battery, nor of gunshot wounds. He was thrown into the well alive.

People tried to run from the convoys, and would hide in stacks of straw, but when the Germans would find them, they would shoot them right away.

3 people, who had hidden in a field in a combine, were shot before my eyes. I left the convoy two times. And then returned to Melitopol.

Zolotareva conducted the stenogram
Zaleskaya stenographed [1.3]

¹⁰ Novonikolaevka/Novomykolaivka is a village 18 km west/northwest of the center of Melitopol.