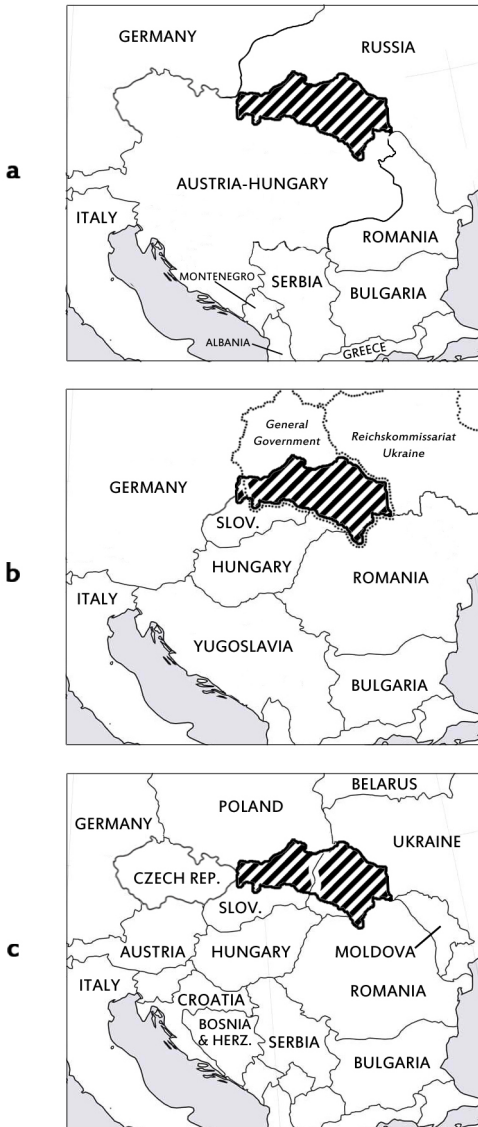


INTRODUCTION

Omer Bartov



The importance of Eastern Europe as the site of genocide in World War II has only come into focus in the last few decades, especially following the collapse of the communist system.¹ In the intervening years many scholarly works have appeared on various aspects of violence in what has been described as “the lands between,” “the bloodlands,” or the “shatterzone of empires.”² Some studies took the long view, examining the formation of states, nations, and ideologies in a region that had been ruled for extensive periods by vast, multiethnic and multi-religious empires, which then splintered into often belligerent and unstable nation states with significant ethnic and religious minorities.³ Other scholars concentrated on national histories, whether of majority or minority nations, and national struggles for self-assertion or survival in a century marked by unprecedented violence.⁴ Still other scholars chose to undertake local studies, examining coexistence and violence in specific regions or towns, and highlighting the extraordinary demographic, cultural, social, and political transformations that occurred there, invariably to the detriment of their previous rich diversity.⁵ Looking at the more recent past and our own time, a number of studies have examined the politics of memory in a region whose heavy reliance on history as an anchor of identity was matched by a remarkable facility to erase vast chunks of the past from its practices of education, commemoration, and political discourse.⁶ Finally, and at times reaching into their own personal recollections and family traumas, some authors have delved into the lost and, at times, regained memories of a vanished world.⁷



Map 0.1 Galicia in a changing Europe: a. as part of Austria-Hungary, 1914; b. under German occupation, as part of the General Government, 1942; c. divided between Poland and Ukraine, present-day.

My own recent contributions to this rich scholarship have been in two areas. In 2007, while conducting research for a monograph on the town of Buczacz, now located in West Ukraine and previously part of interwar Poland and pre-1914 Austria-Hungary, I published a study on the politics of memory in the region. Surveying the history of several cities and towns in what was known before World War I as Eastern Galicia, I briefly described their thriving, if increasingly fraught,

interethnic communities prior to 1939; the violence, both external and internal, that eradicated these towns' Jewish populations and subjected their Polish inhabitants to ethnic cleansing during World War II; the silence over that rich past and its violent termination that descended on the region, whose population had become by then almost exclusively Ukrainian, following its absorption into the Soviet Union; and, finally, the post-Soviet politics of memory in independent Ukraine's western regions, which both glorified the freedom fighters previously vilified by the Soviet authorities, and denied or ignored these same resurrected national heroes' collaboration with the Nazis in the mass murder of the Jews and, following their own agenda, their concerted effort to expel the Polish population from what they hoped to remake into an independent, Jew- and Pole-free Ukraine.⁸

As I traveled in West Ukraine/Eastern Galicia in the 2000s, I was struck by the abandonment and neglect of the remnants of a Jewish civilization that had existed and thrived in the region for four centuries. Ruined synagogues, some of them empty shells in which little forests had grown or local garbage was dumped; Jewish cemeteries, many of whose more useable tombstones had been carted off and where cows and goats led by local children were grazing; unmarked mass graves that surrounded each of these towns, where vast numbers of their previous Jewish inhabitants had been dumped during the German occupation; and an almost total absence of commemoration or any kind of local memory of these communities and their destruction, let alone of their neighbors' participation in the genocide, compounded by newly erected local memorials, at times built directly on or near Jewish cemeteries and sites of mass shootings, to the martyrs of the Ukrainian struggle for liberation.⁹

Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine, the book I wrote on the region's politics of memory, was largely about a void: it spoke of emptied spaces, forgetting of the past, and covering up misdeeds; in other words, it was literally about Galicia's depopulation and West Ukraine's amnesia. But as noted above, *Erased* was conceived while I was researching a very different study, whose very goal was in fact to repopulate one Galician site, the town of Buczacz, in order to understand the dynamics of relations in a single interethnic community.¹⁰ The case of Buczacz, I argued, was representative not only of the reality of life in Galicia as a whole, but also in many ways of hundreds of towns throughout the vast swath of Europe's eastern borderlands, stretching from the Baltic to the Balkans. Specifically, the recently published *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz*, was an attempt to reconstruct, on the local level, how a

community of Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews, who had lived side-by-side since the 1500s, ended up turning against its own members, whereby neighbors, colleagues, and friends took part in denouncing, rounding up, deporting, and massacring each other, in actions both orchestrated by foreign invaders and locally initiated.

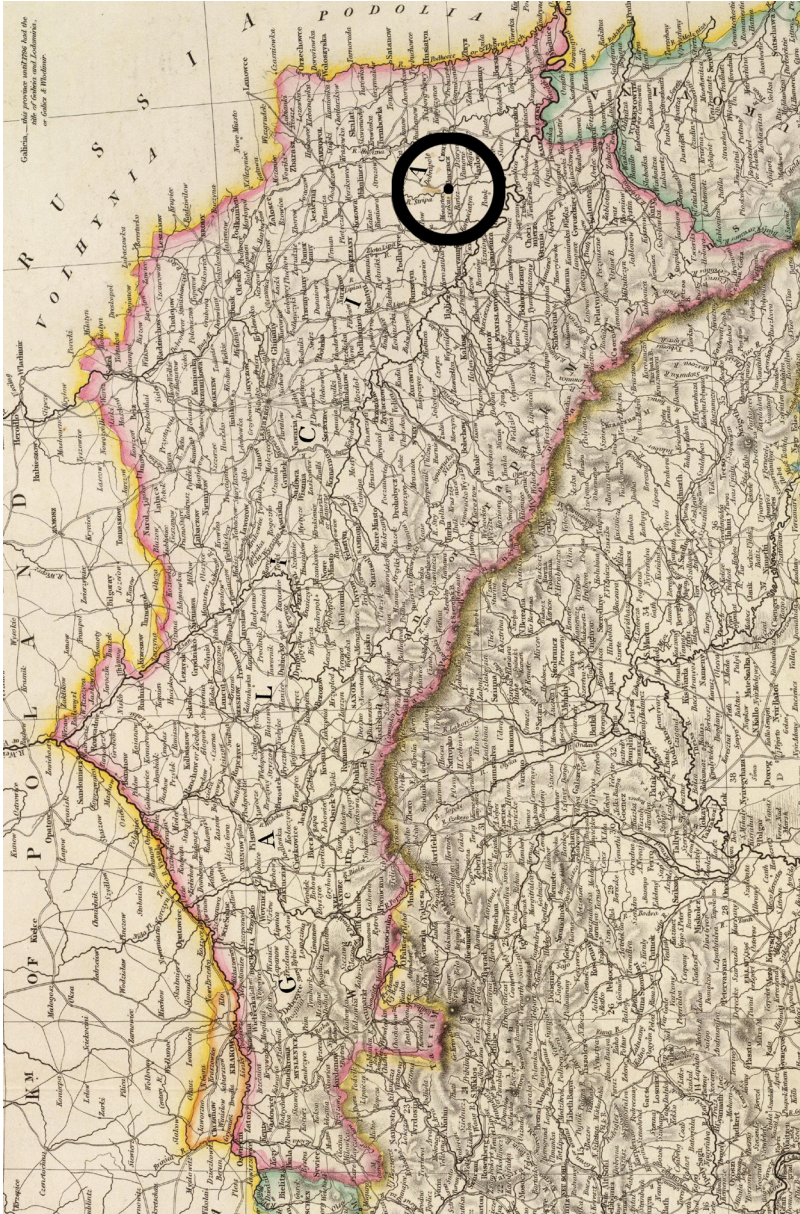
Several insights I gained from researching the monograph on Buczacz are especially pertinent to the present volume. First, it quickly became clear to me that one cannot grasp the dynamic of interethnic relations by beginning at the end, that is, when the killing actually starts. Rather, one has to go back in time in order to find when interethnic relations began to deteriorate and living together, which had been seen for centuries as the only possible way of life, appeared to increasing numbers of people as unbearable and unacceptable, thereby facilitating, first rhetorically and then through violent action, the transformation of a community of coexistence into a community of genocide. As I argue, this process began with the rise of nationalism in Galicia in the latter part of the nineteenth century, whereby Polish nationalists presented themselves as carrying out a civilizing mission geared to transform Ruthenians (as they preferred to call Galician Ukrainians in order to differentiate them from their brethren in Russian-ruled Ukraine) into Poles; Ukrainians presented themselves as the indigenous population colonized, enserfed, exploited, and brutalized by the Poles and their Jewish lackeys, and both groups agreed that in the distinct, future nation states they aspired to create there would be no room for Jews.

This increasingly violent rhetoric did not translate into physical violence until the outbreak of World War I. But as the second relevant insight of *Anatomy of a Genocide* demonstrates, the extraordinary violence of the war, both in terms of remarkably bloody battles between multiethnic armies, and as expressed in widespread brutality against civilian populations, and especially against Jews by the invading Russian armies, transformed people's perceptions of each other and of what they perceived as the boundaries of ethics, morality, and law. Moreover, the Great War in this region did not end in 1918 but transmuted into a brutal civil war between Poles and Ukrainians over control of Eastern Galicia, accompanied by many massacres of local Christian civilians as well as anti-Jewish pogroms by both sides. Hence the central point to be made here is that we cannot comprehend events two decades later under Soviet and German rule without taking into account that the license for internecine bloodshed and brutality had already been given in World War I and its aftermath and that the experience of living through those years of mayhem had a profound impact on the youngsters of the time, those who became the activists of the 1930s and 1940s.

Perhaps the most important and pertinent insight I gained from researching *Anatomy of a Genocide* was that in trying to understand the changing dynamics of an interethnic local community, one must literally listen to voices of its members and strive to see and present reality through their own eyes. What these eyes saw was in large part ethnically determined, in that Galician Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews perceived the same reality very differently (and have continued to do so many decades after the demise of that world); at the same time, each individual also had his and her own unique perception of events and twist on reality. In writing the book, I tried to eschew imposing my understanding of the logic of events and then merely illustrate it through selective citations from personal accounts; instead, I wanted to let those first-person accounts, especially in the latter parts of the period, speak for themselves, even if admittedly I could not avoid ultimately orchestrating them in order to fit this cacophony of voices into the framework of a readable text of reasonable proportions.

To some extent, as I wrote elsewhere,¹¹ this methodology rejected the convention practiced in particular by many historians of the Holocaust, namely, that eyewitness testimonies and other personal accounts had to be treated with great circumspection because of their alleged “subjective” nature; and that consequently, archival documents, albeit usually produced by the perpetrators, must be preferred thanks to their supposed greater “objectivity” and accuracy, certainly as far as dates and geographical locations were concerned.¹² My own view, which has been further strengthened since writing the book, was that in reconstructing events in a small community or region, especially at times of crisis, it was essential to listen to all protagonists, both because that enables us to gain a richer, three-dimensional picture of events that are seen radically differently by particular groups and individuals, and because so much of what actually occurs, as well as how such occurrences are experienced, was entirely missing from the official documentation favored in conventional historiography.

And yet, as I hinted above, it remained very difficult to give personal accounts their due place in a monograph that encompassed a long historical period and relied on hundreds of first-person accounts, be they letters, diaries, postwar testimonies, courtroom depositions, interviews, or memoirs. Indeed, I was torn between wanting to let these witnesses tell the reader more about their experience as a whole, thereby making them into complete individuals rather than illustrative and often disembodied voices, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the need to produce an accessible text that would respond especially to the Jewish witnesses’ demand that we historians tell their often chaotic



Map 0.2 Location of Buczacz within Galicia. Source: Map of Austrian Empire by J. Arrowsmith, 1842, via Wikimedia Commons.

and seemingly unbelievable stories, juxtaposed with their neighbors' no less traumatized and at times contradictory accounts, rather than choose the orderly, bureaucratic, and essentially deceptive accounts of the organizers of genocide.

It is for this reason that I was glad to have the opportunity to publish three extensive and previously unknown accounts from Buczacz covering events there in both world wars. It should be emphasized that these are particularly rare and therefore highly valuable accounts that give us a personal glimpse into the daily life of a Galician town at times of crisis from three very distinct perspectives. While I have somewhat abridged them, mostly taking out sections that would be of lesser interest to the reader, they remain substantial, detailed, and insightful accounts. Each account provides us with a very personal narrative of the events experienced, including sufficient information for us to familiarize ourselves with the writer's character and personal circumstances. As we get to know these writers, we therefore not only follow the events they describe but also empathize with their fate and acquire an intimate knowledge of their opinions, prejudices, hopes, and disillusionments. In other words, the three authors allow us to observe a world far removed and very different from our own through a unique personal prism, thereby enabling us to understand how people not much unlike ourselves responded to mass violence and destruction.

A few lines from these accounts are cited in *Anatomy of a Genocide*; but as will become clear from reading this volume, there is a vast difference between limited selections from such narratives and reading them in full. All three writers intended their accounts to be read by others, and took care to compose them as records of what they had seen, as articulate ruminations on their personal experiences, emotions, and views, and as accusations of those they perceived as the makers, facilitators, and beneficiaries of the catastrophes that befell their town. These three voices, therefore, are both manifestly personal and representative of larger communities of fate and experience; they tell us much that we would otherwise not know and provide us with very different views and perspectives of those events we thought we knew. The authors wanted us to read their accounts, yet for many decades their meticulously written narratives remained unknown and unread. To my mind they remain valuable today not only because they shed light on a murky past but also because they highlight the importance of first-person history and enlighten us as to the experience of individual human beings in times of crisis.

The first account is by the teacher and school principal Antoni Siewiński. Born in 1858, Siewiński was a Polish patriot and nationalist, a dedicated teacher, a keen observer, proud and loving father to his four sons, a faithful Roman Catholic, and an antisemite. As he explains in the opening of his diary, he began writing it when World War I broke out, by which time he was fifty-six years old. Both the original manuscript and the one that followed it were lost or destroyed, but Siewiński did not give up, and the final manuscript, parts of which were reconstructions of the original and other parts written in real time, provides an unparalleled picture of a Galician town under the Russian occupation of 1914–15 and under Ukrainian rule in 1918–19. Deposited in a Polish manuscript collection, presumably by Siewiński's sons following his death on the eve of World War II, the account remained unread, collecting dust for many decades. If we know far less about events on the eastern front than on the western front of the Great War, we similarly know much less about what happened in these parts of Eastern Europe in World War I than during World War II. Most especially, what we lack are detailed accounts of how things transpired on the local level, of the kind offered by Siewiński.

Possibly the only competitor, which has only recently been translated into English, albeit in a much-abridged version, is the extensive account of the fate of the Jews in Poland, Galicia, and Bukovina (a province just south of Galicia) under the Russian occupation by the author, playwright, and ethnographer S. An-sky. Remembered today mostly for his play "The Dybbuk," An-sky recorded his experiences as he followed the Russian armies occupying these regions and tried to help the devastated Jewish communities there in a Russian-language diary. After the war he rewrote and expanded the diary into a multivolume account in Yiddish, which was soon thereafter translated into Hebrew. But while his account remains of great value, it provides largely a bird's-eye view by an outsider coming from Russia, rather than an insider's account of events as they unfolded in a single town, which is precisely what Siewiński gives us.¹³ Indeed, reading Siewiński's account of events in Buczacz, we conclude that the manner in which World War I and the Polish-Ukrainian War that followed were experienced by the local population constituted a crucial precondition to people's subsequent conduct in Buczacz, as in many other towns in the region, in the decades that followed, not least under the Soviet and German occupations of 1939–41 and 1941–44, and most specifically during the genocide of the Jews and the ethnic cleansing of the Poles.

Siewiński had very clear opinions about his Buczacz, the role that Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians played in it, as well as its place in Polish

history and its necessary and inevitable future. For him, the Jews were always a malign influence. Although he repeatedly asserts that there were some highly admirable individuals among them, he just as often stresses that the exception only proves the rule. And while he similarly believes that the Jews could and would be transformed, were they to take up the Roman Catholic faith and become part of the Polish nation, he does not expect that to happen. As for the Ruthenians, or pseudo-Ukrainians, as he calls them especially during the civil war of 1918–19, Siewiński firmly believes that they are a sister nation that belongs by ethnicity, religion, and history to the greater Poland of which he dreams, a sort of reenactment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that had ceased to exist at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ For Siewiński, as for many other nationalist Poles of his generation as well as their sons, World War I was not at all about preserving the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to which he bitterly referred as one of the “ignominious partition powers.” Rather, it was about reestablishing Poland. For this reason, too, he detested the Jews, since they were in fact the only group in Galicia that hoped to preserve the empire, rightly fearing that the nation states that might inherit its territories would be much less tolerant of them as a stateless national minority.¹⁵

Siewiński lived to see the success of Polish nationalism in resurrecting the Polish state and taking over Eastern Galicia despite the fact that its majority Ukrainian population vehemently opposed Polish rule. But he was also aware that the six years of mayhem in the region had brutalized people, not least the youth, and looked to the future with a fair amount of trepidation. Perhaps fortunately for him, he did not live to see the end of Polish rule in Buczacz and the destruction of Polish presence in Galicia in World War II.

One of the men who fought for his own national cause rather than the survival of the empire in World War I, and then served in the ranks of the Ukrainian Galician Army that fought against the Poles, was Viktor Petrykevych, the author of the second account. Born in Drohobycz (Ukrainian: Drohobych, 170 km west of Buczacz), in 1883, Petrykevych spent most of his life as a teacher of Latin, German, and Ukrainian. After the war and a period of internment in Czechoslovakia, he served for a few years as the principal of a private Ukrainian gymnasium in Czortków (Ukrainian: Chortkiv), where he also married and had two children. In the late 1920s Petrykevych took up a teaching position in the state gymnasium of Buczacz (Ukrainian: Buchach, 36 km west of Czortków). He bought a house and intended to spend the rest of his life there, but in 1938 the Polish authorities transferred him to a teaching position in the bigger city of Stanisławów (Ukrainian: Stanyslaviv, now

Ivano-Frankivsk). It was there that he experienced the outbreak of World War II and decided to write a diary. Just like Siewiński, he was fifty-six years old at the time.

Similarly to his Polish counterpart, Petrykevych was a patriot and a nationalist; he perceived Poland as a colonizer of Ukrainian lands and had a poor opinion of Jews, whom he saw as enthusiastic facilitators of Bolshevik rule. Yet he too was a keen and critical observer of the events he experienced during the war and in its aftermath. His diary, which, following his death in 1956, remained in his son Bohdan's possession, is an especially valuable document, since such extensive accounts of Soviet and German rule in Galicia by members of the local Ukrainian intelligentsia are exceedingly rare. Petrykevych describes in detail the entry of the Red Army and the establishment of Soviet rule in Stanisławów in September 1939, as Poland was divided between the USSR and Nazi Germany according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Delighted about the end of Polish rule, Petrykevych, over time, grew increasingly critical of the new Bolshevik masters, both for pedagogical-ideological and material reasons, as is reflected in his entries on the organization of fake elections meant to legitimize Soviet rule as well as his frequent references to the growing impoverishment of the population.

Petrykevych's presumably more critical comments on Soviet power were deemed too dangerous by his son when he came into possession of the diary and were torn out. Similarly, the entries covering the first months of German rule in the region were also seen as too compromising, likely because of Petrykevych's enthusiasm about the end of Soviet rule as well as his initial participation in the local Ukrainian administration. Hence, we are missing the parts of the diary describing events between early July 1940 and late June 1941, as well as between 5 July and the end of 1941. As Viktor's son Bohdan recalled in 2006, Petrykevych was dismissed from his teaching position in Stanisławów in the second half of 1940. He then moved back with his family to their house in Buczacz but was unable to secure a position in the town and had to earn his living teaching in the nearby town of Jazłowiec (Ukrainian: Yazlovets, 17 km south of Buczacz). In early July 1941 Buczacz was taken over by the invading German forces, and Petrykevych was appointed director of the district education department by the short-lived Ukrainian nationalist administration in Buczacz. By October this self-rule apparatus was dissolved by the Germans and Petrykevych was relegated to the position of an ordinary schoolteacher in Buczacz without any further engagement in local politics.¹⁶

The bulk of Petrykevych's diary is devoted to the entire period of German rule in Buczacz, while the latter parts depict his rather wretched

postwar life under the reinstated Soviet administration in the town of Kołomyja (Ukrainian: Kolomyja, 75 km southwest of Buczacz)—to which his family evacuated in mid-March 1944—until his death at the age of seventy-three. What is remarkable about this diary is that it provides an almost day-by-day account of an older Ukrainian nationalist's view of the extermination of the Jews, the lives of the Christian population of the town, and the Polish-Ukrainian conflict toward the end of German rule. Although Petrykevych does not devote a great deal of space to the mass murder of his Jewish neighbors, and does not express particular glee about their fate, he appears remarkably detached and hardly empathic. He is also quite worried about the continued presence of Jews in the town and its vicinity even after it is declared "Judenrein" (clean of Jews) and wryly notes that the inhabitants expect "Jewish revenge" once the Soviets return, thereby reflecting the notion that Jews and communists are synonymous. Conversely, Petrykevych both increasingly bemoans the material circumstances of such civil servants as himself and the general privations entailed in living ever closer to the front, and, at the same time, harshly criticizes those who profit from the suffering of others, not least from the property of the Jews and the job and business opportunities created by their murder. Finally, as a veteran nationalist fighter, Petrykevych is loath to criticize the massacres of Polish civilians in the ethnic cleansing operations conducted by Ukrainian militias in 1944, but eventually concedes that both sides have descended to barbarism.

Just as Petrykevych is ambivalent about the first period of Soviet rule from 1939 to 1941, because it liberated Ukrainians from Polish rule and united them with their brethren in Soviet Ukraine, on the one hand, but on the other hand imposed an ideologically rigid and economically inefficient system on the population, he remains similarly ambivalent about the benefits and failures of postwar Soviet rule. What his diary lacks entirely is any sense of regret, remorse, or grief about the murder of the Jews and the "removal" of the Poles from West Ukraine. Like many other Ukrainians of his generation, who recalled the injustices of Polish rule in the interwar period and the suppression of Ukrainian national aspirations, and who had internalized strong antisemitic sentiments, Petrykevych was glad to be finally living in an ethnically homogeneous land, even if his own postwar daily existence was quite miserable in this devastated region. He suffered from the severe lack of even the most elementary food items and was troubled by the imposition of the Russian language to the detriment of Ukrainian. Yet he could also look forward with some hope to the eventual recovery of Ukrainian culture and identity. From this perspective, while this diary is unique, the

sentiments it expresses during and after the war can be said to reflect those of a significant proportion of Petrykevych's generation, as well as younger cohorts of Ukrainian patriots.

The third account is similarly singular, even as it provides an entirely different picture of events in Buczacz under German rule. Its author, the radio technician Moshe Wizinger, was twenty-one years old when the Germans marched into his hometown of Buczacz in 1941. At the time he was living with his mother and younger brother in a small house on the outskirts of the town, near the Christian cemetery on the slopes of Fedor Hill, which eventually became a main killing site of Jews. Wizinger's older brother and sister had already immigrated to Palestine, and he too was inclined toward Zionism. A tough and resourceful young man, obviously also with some literary aspirations but lacking the higher education of Siewiński and Petrykevych, Wizinger gives us a vivid and colorful description of Jewish life under German rule in Buczacz until the city was declared "Judenrein" in June 1943, following the mass murder of most of its Jewish inhabitants.

In the second, fascinating part of his account, Wizinger depicts a world that we rarely hear about in Jewish testimonies and memoirs from this region. After his mother and brother are murdered, Wizinger, along with a few other surviving young Jews, joins a local Polish resistance group, which fights both the Germans and Ukrainian collaborators and militias, and subsequently joins forces with a Soviet partisan formation operating in the area. Eventually the leader of the Polish resistance group is killed (by a local ethnic German), and only Wizinger and a few other Jews survive to see the first liberation of Buczacz in March 1944. Buczacz was in fact reoccupied by the Germans a couple of weeks later, and only taken over again by the Red Army in July, by which time most of the original eight hundred survivors were murdered, but Wizinger apparently retreated with the Soviets in April and later fought in a Polish formation during the last phases of the war. He sought to immigrate to Palestine in 1947, but the ship on which he was traveling was intercepted by the British and he found himself incarcerated in an internment camp in Cyprus for several months before finally reaching his destination. It was during that period of enforced detention that he wrote his account, based on notes he had written and preserved during the war.

Several aspects of this account stand out. First, even as he is hunted down as a Jew, Wizinger always relies on various Christian friends and helpers, both Polish and Ukrainian, whom he not only trusts but who, on a number of occasions, literally save him. He appears to interact with local non-Jews freely, both in Polish and in Ukrainian;

he has no dietary restrictions and often mentions eating pork; and he never shies away from a fight and other types of violence, be it against the Jewish police, which he despises (even as he is obviously connected to the Jewish council), local Christians, Ukrainian police, or, when the occasion presents itself, Germans. Second, from the very beginning of the German occupation, Wizinger is engaged in various forms of resistance, together with his band of friends, most of whom are Zionists, and along with non-Jewish locals. Most importantly in this early phase, he builds a radio with which they can listen to news from the outside, which they then disseminate among the population to boost their morale.

Third, Wizinger consistently distinguishes between both Jews and Christians that can be trusted and are behaving as decently as they can under the circumstances, and those who collaborate with the Germans or act brutally and greedily of their own accord. In many ways then, Wizinger represents a local community of young working-class Jews (including both Zionists and communists), not all completely secular (he celebrates the Sabbath with his mother and brother) but able to easily overcome religious restrictions for reasons of survival, who respond to the calamity of German occupation with energy and determination, and repeatedly find men and women, Jewish and Christian, who help and at times participate in small acts of resistance and desperate attempts at survival.

This is not to say that Wizinger shies away from condemning the general indifference of the Christian population and the collaboration of some, especially Ukrainian policemen, in the mass murder of the Jews. He also eventually almost succumbs to despair when one of his Christian friends refuses to offer him shelter, just after his brother is murdered in the last roundup. But in what is perhaps the most remarkable part of this account, once Wizinger joins the Polish resistance group, the relations he depicts there between Jews and non-Jews, at the height of the Holocaust, in their forest hideout, and during perilous partisan operations, are not merely utilitarian or comradely but nothing short of deep mutual compassion and love. In this small band of brothers and sisters, they are all dedicated to the cause of revenge, retribution, and liberation from German rule, and most of all, to each other. And in the process, not least thanks to the encouragement of his admired Polish leader, Wizinger is transformed from a desperate young man hunted down as one of the last survivors of his community into a fierce, long-bearded, merciless partisan. And yet, after all the power and the glory of the resistance, Wizinger ends his account by acknowledging, just before the Soviet tanks roll in, that he and the few other starving

Jewish comrades hiding in a cave next to their murdered town are the “last of a dying nation.”

It is my hope that these three extended accounts of the violent events in one Eastern European town during the first half of the twentieth century, will provide readers with a greater understanding of the complexity and nuances of communal relations at times of war and genocide. First-person narratives suffer from the limitations of subjectivity: they tell us how specific individuals saw and experienced the tiny segment of a historical event in which they played a role. But this is also their strength, since they draw us in and help us empathize with the historical actors in a manner that historical studies often fail to accomplish. These three men saw the same world and each other through different eyes, and readers may well have more sympathy with one view than with another. But the study of history is not simply an undertaking in establishing what happened, or in taking sides as to who was right and who was wrong, who tells the truth and who lies. It is, ultimately, about understanding human motivation: why people acted as they did at other times and under different circumstances. Such understanding also helps us decipher the world in which we live and may dispel the fog of prejudice, opinion, media representations, and political bias that cloud our vision. Just as we might have all found ourselves in a little town like Buczacz had we been born at another time and place, so too our own neighborhoods, towns, cities, and countries may at some point, perhaps not so far from today, be transformed into sites of violence and social disintegration. Reading the accounts of Siewiński, Petrykevych, and Wizinger about their own struggles with chaos and mayhem should help prepare us for what may be in store for our own communities sooner than we would like to believe.

Acknowledgments

In finding, transcribing, and translating these accounts I was immensely helped by several research assistants, friends, and colleagues. Frank Grelka, who helped me beyond measure in researching *Anatomy of a Genocide*, found Siewiński’s diary in the recesses of the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow, where it had lain untouched for decades. He then expertly transcribed the handwritten notes and provided me with an initial translation. Sofia Grachova, who traveled with me throughout West Ukraine and provided endless help and advice during the years of working on both *Erased* and *Anatomy of a Genocide*, found Petrykevych’s diary in the possession of his son Bohdan, transcribed

the handwritten manuscript, and provided an initial translation. In the latter stages of editing the translation and translating some extra passages, I was also greatly helped by Elena Medvedev, who read through the entire manuscript and made important corrections and suggestions. Moshe Wizinger's account, which I found at Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem, was initially translated exceedingly well by Eva Lutkiewicz. In the latter stages of editing it, I was given some valuable suggestions and corrections by Adam Musiał, who has now also beautifully translated *Anatomy of a Genocide* into Polish.

Notes

1. Omer Bartov, "Eastern Europe as the Site of Genocide," *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 3 (September 2008): 557–93.
2. Alexander Victor Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870–1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
3. See Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
4. See Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Brian A. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Paul Robert Magocsi, *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Joshua M. Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
5. For example, Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzeżany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919–1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Natan Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Charles King, *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011); Theodore R. Weeks, *Vilnius Between Nations, 1795–2000* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015); Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2016); Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

6. For example, David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007); Omer Bartov, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, eds, *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City Between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).
7. For example, Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
8. Bartov, *Erased*.
9. Since the publication of *Erased* there have been some efforts, both by Jewish and other groups from outside Ukraine, and by some local activists, to change this situation, preserve or even restore some Jewish edifices and cemeteries, identify sites of mass murder, and erect local memorials. Such attempts have often been hampered by the local authorities' indifference or even hostility to such efforts, as well as by the persistent poverty of the communities in question. Local populations are also generally indifferent to or resentful of outsiders' intervention in their lives, and local schools provide children with little knowledge of their own towns' multiethnic past; there are also very few Jews in the region who might have otherwise promoted preservation or rekindled Jewish life there. Foreign Jewish visitors, mostly from the United States and Israel, tend to travel in their own buses, insulated from the population, and are focused on recalling the Jewish past and local anti-Jewish violence rather than seeking to establish a dialogue over dignified restoration and commemoration. For two major exceptions, see the work of Jewish Heritage Europe director Ruth Gruber at: <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2018/12/26/listen-to-or-read-an-interview-with-jhe-director-ruth-ellen-gruber/> and the work of Father Patrick Debois's Yahad in Unum at: <https://www.yahadinunum.org/patrick-desbois/> (last accessed 24 January 2020). For recent commemoration and preservation work in Buczacz, see <http://jgaliciabukovina.net/183010/cemetery/buczacz/>; <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2017/08/22/ukraine-ancient-buchach-jewish-cemetery-documented/>; <https://www.esjf-cemeteries.org/fencing-completed-at-historic-buchach-jewish-cemetery-in-ukraine/>; https://ukrainianjewishencounter.org/en/category/sponsored-projects/other-programs/agnon_literary_centre/ (all last accessed 24 January 2020).
10. I was animated by the great author Shmuel Yosef Agnon, who once described writing his vast, unfinished biography of his extinguished hometown of Buczacz with the words: "I am building a city." See Alan Mintz, *Ancestral Tales: Reading the Buczacz Stories of S. Y. Agnon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 1.
11. Omer Bartov, "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish-Christian Relationships in Buczacz, 1939–44," *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (August 2011): 486–511.
12. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this perpetrator-centered scholarship is Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). But see also Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer, "A Controversy about the Historicization of National Socialism," in *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians' Debate*, edited by Peter Baldwin, 77–134, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).
13. S. An-sky, *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I*, translated and edited by Joachim Neugroschel

- (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003); S. An-sky, *The Destruction of the Jews in Poland, Galicia, and Bukovina*, 4 vols., translated by Samuel Leib Zitron (Tel Aviv: Shtibel, 1929); S. An-sky, *1915 Diary of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Writer at the Eastern Front*, translated and edited by Polly Zavadiwker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); S. An-sky, *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader*, translated and edited by Joachim Neugroschel (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). For the most recent research on the national struggle that followed the end of World War I, see Jochen Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918–1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
14. In this he shared Polish leader Józef Piłsudski's vision. See, e.g., Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
 15. See, e.g., Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
 16. Sofia Grachova's interview with Bohdan Petrykevych in Ivano-Frankivsk, May 2006, in Sofia Grachova, "The Diary of Viktor Petrykevych: A Gymnasium Teacher's View of the Soviet and German Occupation of Eastern Galicia (1939–1944)," unpublished paper, Herder Institute, University of Marburg, 2007.