



The German Occupation

ETERNAL ECHOES

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The German Occupation

A German Civil Administration

In early July 1941, the German army conquered the region where Dąbrowica is situated. Soon after the arrival of the Germans, the Ukrainians initiated pogroms and looting in Jewish homes. In Dąbrowica, Jews were robbed, beaten and seriously wounded.

In the nearby town of Sarny, several Jews were killed. The Jews organized committees of self-defence and in some towns and villages the damage was limited. When the Germans settled in the town, the looting was stopped.



Jews being abused by Ukrainians in Lwów.

In September 1941 Dąbrowica and Sarny had come under German civil administration, and became part of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* (RKU). A Ukrainian auxiliary police was recruited to help the German civil administration, and many of the mid-range and lower personal were locals. These collaborators were important to the Germans.



Reichskommissariat Ukraine (RKU).



Ukrainian auxiliary police.

Actions Against Jews

Soon after the German invasion the first mass killings of Jews and political enemies took place in the region, executed by *Einsatzgruppen*. In the first wave around 15,000 people, mostly military-aged men, were killed. In a second wave of mass executions, in winter 1941/42, about 30,000 women, children and elderly were killed.



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Jews prior to their execution by the Germans, Zdobunov, Ukraine.

Jews Forced to Wear Star of David

Already from July 8th 1941 Jews had to wear a white armband with a Star of David, in September a new order said that Jews in the Volhynia region had to wear a yellow badge. Hence the Jews were marked and clearly distinguishable from the others as a first step to exclusion. There was also a curfew and a ban against moving to a different place.



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Bogdanovka, Ukraine, A 16 year old ghetto survivor, Leonid Markewicz Dashewski.

After the Jews were labelled and separated, the Germans started to rob them of their property – for example their livestock, vehicles, technical equipment and winter clothing. The Jewish communities were also forced to pay “contributions”. Usually they delivered the contributions, no matter at which cost, as the Jewish leadership was convinced that this would prevent the Germans from worse measures. Orders were given to kill those who disobeyed.



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Confiscated Jewish property.

Jewish Council

Wherever Jews lived the Germans created a Jewish Council and also a Jewish security staff, usually called Jewish Police. The Council and the Jewish police had to make sure that the Jewish population followed German orders. As intermediary between the German occupier and the Jewish population, they always had a very difficult standing.

Among other things the Jewish Council had to supply the occupiers with workers. All Jews above the age of 14 were forced to work. The Jews of Dąbrowica and Sarny were for example working at the railway, loading and unloading freight, as well as working at sawmills and with log cutting. Women had to do agricultural or cleaning work.

One day in January 1942, eighty men from Dąbrowica did not show up for work. The Germans caught them, arrested them and sentenced them to death. But the Jewish Council saved their lives by bribing the Germans. Still, the men were punished by flogging for eight nights in a row.



Jewish police (with white armband) in a ghetto in Poland.



Mogilev Jews kidnapped for forced labour, July 1941.

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The Ghettos

The ghettos of Dąbrowica and Sarny were formally established in April 1942. In fact they came into existence already during the autumn of 1941. Shortly after the Germans had occupied the towns, Jews were banned from moving and concentrated in one area. In addition, several other restrictions were introduced.

The Ukrainian auxiliary police guarded the ghettos, and Jews who tried to flee were shot. Within the ghettos, a Jewish police was created.

In the end of April 1942, Jews from surrounding villages were forced to settle in the Dąbrowica ghetto. The living conditions were very poor, and the space extremely limited; up to 15 people had to share a room.

The Jewish Council was ordered to make sure that all who moved into the ghetto handed over all their belongings to the Germans.

The food supply in the ghettos did not cover the needs of the people. On average, Jews in the Volhynia region got 200-300 grams of bread if they worked and 100-150 grams if you did not work. After the official ghettoization in April 1942 the rations were reduced to 100-150 grams for workers and less than 100 grams for non-workers. In Dąbrowica, the Judenrat gave working Jews 500 grams of bread a day, since Jews employed at a local mill managed to bribe the German inspectors and smuggle flour into the ghetto. Because of that, starvation was not as big a problem in the Dąbrowica ghetto as in many other ghettos.



Jews in Mogilev (Belarussia) are forced to leave their homes.



Lwów Ghetto.

Massacres

In spring 1942, Jews deported to Sarny from the ghetto of Davidhorodok 80 kilometres north of Dąbrowica confirmed that news of mass killings were true. Because of this, Jews in Sarny started building hideouts. In summer 1942, young people in Dąbrowica started developing escape plans after they heard of the massacre of thousands of Jews in nearby town of Kowel.



Einsatzgruppen activity in the Ukraine.

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