

THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
FOR THE COMMEMORATION
OF THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS LESSONS

WORLD HOLOCAUST FORUM

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION
NEWS
PHOTO GALLERY
PAST EVENTS
WORLD HOLOCAUST
FORUM DECLARATION
DOCUMENTS, PUBLICATIONS, LETTERS
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES
UPCOMING EVENTS
HISTORICAL DATA
THE HOLOCAUST IN FACES

[Anne Frank Diary](#)
[From the Testimony of I. Minkina-Egorycheva, on How the priest Aleksey Glagolev Saved Her Life in Kyiv](#)
[Jews Rescued by Janis Lipke, Resident of Riga](#)
[Uman. Memoirs of Manie Feinholtz](#)
[Extract From the Judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals](#)
[From the Testimony of Hefer, a German Truck Driver, on the Extermination of Jews at Babi Yar in September 29-30, 1941](#)

Excerpts From the Diary of 16-year Old Schoolboy Roman Kravchenko (Town of Kremenets, 1942)

PREVENTING NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST
LINKS
CONTACT US
SEARCH

THE HOLOCAUST IN FACES

Excerpts From the Diary of 16-year Old Schoolboy Roman Kravchenko (Town of Kremenets, 1942)

July 27.

...Now to local events. Recently they have all been about the Jewish question. Persecution of Jews is becoming more and more intense. People in the ghetto are panicking and expect a pogrom any day now. Last night two Jews were shot – they were trying to make their way back to ghetto, probably left it to find food somewhere.

It's evening. They say the Jews are armed, they are shooting back; they say a gendarme was killed. If this is true (which I strongly doubt), I am only sorry that they only got one of them. The firing stopped during the day but now it's escalating again; we'll see what will happen at night. These bastards dare to call themselves Christians; it's written on their belt buckles: "Gott mit uns" (God with us). So if that's how it is, how great is this God if he can look down calmly on what is going on. I am sitting on my porch and hear gunfire. I wonder what these people doomed to death feel, hiding in their houses. What a sinister silence, and then the sound of revolvers, a string of machine-gun fire and the heavy blows of schutzmann rifles are all that I can hear. The night is going to be hard. Still, it was their decision to protect themselves, to fight. The whole thing may as well last for a week – it's not that easy to take them out of all the cellars in their dirty block, all the lanes and corners.

August 11.

The last anti-Jewish action in our town is coming to its end.

I'm writing today about what happened yesterday. I couldn't write yesterday since I was exhausted. It was just a fairytale that the Jews were going to protect themselves. They were all humble, walking to meet their death as sheep to slaughter. About 5,000 people were shot yesterday. There is an old trench outside the town, made by a Yakut regiment that stayed in town. The execution took place there. They started to cart Jews from the ghetto about 3 am and didn't finish till late at night. What a horrible sight! The ghetto gates are wide open, and a queue of doomed people is behind them. They are waiting, two in a row. A car pulls up, and the queue moves slowly: the first pair is put on the bottom of the van, the next row lies on top of them, and so on, in several layers. There is complete silence, not a word, a cry, a groan. Policemen, drunk as a fiddler, hurry those who move slowly with their gun-butts; they also use their gun-butts to tamp down the people lying in the van. The van pulls off, speeds up and races to the suburbs, meeting similar vans with high wooden barriers – they are filled with clothes. A policeman is sitting on top, looking all happy and hiding under a lady's umbrella. No wonder he is so glad – he's got his pockets full of watches, five fountain pens are stuck in his pocket, and one can only imagine how many suits and astrakhan coats he has hidden along the way in a safe place. Besides, he has already drunk at least a liter. The van rushes out of town. Every now and again the four policemen standing at its corners curse and hit the lying people on the back with their guns. So here is the destination. The van stops. The victims get out and start undressing right away – everyone, men and women – and move, one by one, to the trench. The trench is filled with dead bodies powdered with chloride. Two Gestapo soldiers are sitting on the embankment, their torsos naked, guns in their hands. People step into the trench, lie down on the dead bodies, and a shot is fired. It's over. Next!

I have no idea what a human being can feel at the last minute, and I don't want to think about it, or I will go mad. There were those who tried to resist, they didn't want to undress, they didn't want to step into the trench. They were killed on spot and thrown into the trench. So now the trench is full and the policeman covers it with soil. The queue moves to another trench – there is room for everyone! One man, already naked, is running along the field, crouching to the ground. The Gestapo soldiers are watching him and grinning. He is already about 200 meters away. Now the soldiers aim carefully and start the fire. In a few minutes the dead body is thrown into the trench. One man, heading towards the trench, was eating bread. The policemen, the only eyewitnesses of the whole thing, sober up in a few minutes after staying there. So then they get their next dose of alcohol and once again lose every semblance of a humanity. Until they sober up again. The Gestapo soldiers don't need to get wasted – it's not their first time after all. They threw grenades at people in Rovno, they saw the soil moving under the pressure of living bodies – and it didn't have any effect on them; they shot endless lines of people standing over the ravines in Kyiv. Finally, when they brought out all the specialists from Dubno before the pogrom, they offered to let them each choose one of their children to save. They were outraged, absolutely incensed, when the desperate creatures refused to work and begged to be shot with their families.

The vans move one by one. It is evening already, and the vans are overcrowded. There are women, girls, children sitting on the bottom. One of the girls is smiling senselessly; another one is fixing the shawl on her head. You all are going to be killed in ten minutes, do you realize that? So go fight for yourself! But no. People have lapsed into apathy, all they want is to put an end to their sufferings, to be put to death as soon as possible. That is the result of starvation and constant beatings.

The 1,500 people who were moved to Belokrita yesterday were shot as well. They were shot because they dared to set out their demands.

August 19.

They took F. today. I can't understand my feelings, but it's so hard, so shameful. I'm not ashamed of myself. I'm ashamed of the people who watch all this indifferently or with a ghoulish joy. They wouldn't understand me. What's wrong with him – does he feel sorry for Yids (Jews)? What an idiot! Why is F. any worse than you or anybody else? She is ten times better than you in every respect. She is the only girl I have been quite sincere with in everything, and it's so wonderful and encouraging to have a friend who understands you and agrees with you. She was a good girl and a very brave one. She was standing in the van with her head held high. It was half an hour ago, at 6.35 on August 19, 1942. I'm sure that she won't bow her head even when dying.

F., please know that I remember you, and I'll never forget you, and maybe one day I'll get revenge. You are my first love, and I have the sweetest and purest memories of you. You were my ideal, and I'm sure I will never find anyone like you. Take this last salute from Romka!

Several vans go to the prison each day. They carry the people found in cellars. I don't know when they will be executed. Today a dead Jewish woman was lying on Shirokaya (name of the street). She tried to save her life – thus bringing her end closer. She paid because she dared to want to live! As I am writing, I can hear the shots from the prison. So here it goes again. Maybe that shot was for F.? If so, she is better off now. No, "better" is the word for "religious old ladies." I say that now she is nothing. I can't imagine F. naked, chlorine all over her body... Deep wounds, and her body is under a pile of another bodies. What a horror!

August 21

I'm writing in bed, so this will be short. Yesterday all the Jews who were gathered in the prison were shot. I'm not sure about the number, but after the execution was over, a five-tonne van left the prison, fully loaded with shoes. As I estimate, that's about 700-800 people. So, F. died yesterday. If I were a believer, I would commemorate her with fancy sounding words. Today I heard only several random shots.

August 31 {...}

After the Jews were executed for the last time, 600 more people were caught and sent to prison. So it started today at 5 in the morning. Pow! Tra-ta-ta! I listened to these sounds for two hours non-stop, until it was time for me to go to work. If someone survives after all this, it will definitely be a miracle. By the way, the order making robbery in ghetto a death penalty offence was not enough. Now they've hung out another order saying that every person found in the ghetto without permission to stay there will be shot on the spot.

I went to the river. The path runs by the trenches where most of the Jews were buried. Now this place is a flat white area because of all the chalk. It's hot, the corpses are decaying, swelling, so hands and feet appear at the surface, and dogs pull them off and run around the neighborhood with them. The stink is awful and it has spread to half a kilometer away.

September 2.

One more event, and what an event! It's enough to discuss for the whole week. Someone set the ghetto on fire today. Now it is half past five. About 400 houses were burned by three. Now, I think, less than a quarter of them remain! A motor pump has been working since morning, supplying water from the stream.

But what can one motor pump do, anyway?

There is no doubt that the Jews committed the arson, and they must have thought it through. The weather was perfect for it. An unexpectedly strong wind came up from the east in the evening.

The ghetto went up in flames all of a sudden. The fire ran along in a strip, engulfing the houses on the eastern side. It appears that fuel was spilled, since a shootout erupted near the fire. The police must have noticed movement in the ghetto and opened fire. It was about 1 in the morning. I was awoken by the shooting and was very surprised, as the nights had been more or less calm for a week.

Immediately after that – at about half past one – the fire started, but I was already sleeping. When the shots awoke me, the sky was glowing and thick smoke was rising. I realized what had happened at once, rejoiced and fell asleep again.

... About 300 Jews were led through the burnt gates. Some of them were wearing red bands around their waists. Some say that's how the Nazis marked the people who are supposed to clean the ghetto, others say it was a demonstration. The motor pump is roaring, and here comes more smoke again. Let's see more!

September 18.

Organized looting is going on in the ghetto. Women with bags are on watch in front of the ghetto the whole day, to say nothing of the night. What people! Look at those heroes! They are shot, they are caught, they are beaten, but they won't give up. When they smell gain, there is no stopping them. Peasants from distant villages come to the ghetto, and very few of them don't have a watch these days. A gold five-piece that cost 1,200-1,400 rubles before the fire and the executions now costs just 200-500 rubles. The police give 3 fives for a liter of vodka. I'm not in the mood to day, so that's it for today.

September 21.

The Jewish massacre has been going on for more than a month and a half, and there is no end to it. Starting in the early morning today, I could hear the rattling of rifles and gunshots from the prison. They say there are about 200 Jews left in the prison – they are craftsmen who will be relocated to the part of the ghetto that was not burnt and has already been fenced in. I have already seen the fence, as to the rest – we'll see

October 26

There was a junk sale for the workers today – they sold the clothes of the dead Jews. And there are people who can buy them! There are a lot of them, a whole queue. We didn't work at the factory today because of the junk sale – everyone was in the queue.

Copyrighted material of the owners of <http://holocaust.ioso.ru>

