

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies

NIOD Archives, diary 1073, fols. 6-7

The Holocaust in Ukraine – The Pogroms of 1941

Translation: *A05 Dutch ;Member of the Wiking Division of the Waffen-SS Approves Pogroms, 1, 2 and 4 July 1941*

The population is very accommodating. Everywhere Heil Hitler sounds to us. Every village and every town has formed a "Committee of Nat.Ukrainische people" and made welcome signs at the village and town entrances.

July 1, overnight at 2:00 a.m. it continues. Now it was direction Lemberg, which was taken 24 hours earlier. At 7:00 a.m. we were in Lemberg. Ukrainian irregulars had already restored order [.] They were armed with rifles and their sign was a blue-yellow armband. Here we were first introduced to unmasked Bolshevism. Thousands of men, women, and children had been tortured to death in the most vile way. Everywhere there are people crying. In the middle of town we heard stories from the people about what had transpired here during the last ten days. After a short break we again drove out of town. At about 12:00 noon we received word that Russian Cavalry was approaching. We quickly went down the street to march on a hill in formation, and soon we saw through our binoculars the approaching Russians. They were met with artillery fire, then with fire from our heavy m.g. [machinegun] and grenade launcher. After about 10 minutes of shooting from all weapons, the Russians tried to regroup in a village to our left. The village now came under fire from all heavy weaponry. After half an hour, the village was burning on all sides. Then, our infantry entered the attack, and after a struggle of three hours the Russians were defeated completely. On our side, there were no losses in the Battalion and only two wounded. Thus the first day passed by favorably, and our officers were therefore quite pleased with us. In this way we received our baptism of fire, exactly one year after our regiment was founded. We have destroyed two Russian cavalry squadrons.

2 July. Today is a very difficult day for us. Our Regiment Commander Wächkerle has fallen after being shot by a franc-tireur [armed resistance fighter]. The sense of dismay is great. For a year we have shared with him joys and sorrows, and when he can finally lead his Regiment into battle, he is among the first to fall. For the Russians, who today fell into our hands, no pardon will be made until a command calls us back to order. Wherever we are, we comply with this order, albeit reluctantly, and capture the next Russians and send them back.

July 3. This day passes without any fighting. The whole day we marched motorized. All along the street are burned-out armored tanks and vehicles of all sorts. Our pilots and artillery have carried out work here 100%.

July 4. Today we arrived at 3:15 in Tarnapol. Here, the Russians had again behaved like animals. Just as everywhere, the Jews had gotten hold of everything and vented their passions on the people.

It will be clear to everyone that we as SS men act mercilessly against the Jews. It was a most welcome thing that the civilian population drove the Jews together into a prison, where they received their deserved punishment. Hundreds of Ukrainians had been murdered in this prison. Mainly the Jews

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had played a great role. In the same place they receive their punishment [...] An eye for eye, and a tooth for a tooth!

July 7. I am writing in my journal now in a house, where we are mobilized. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July we had an alarm at 7:00 in the evening and left immediately. We were the flank coverage for our division. The 5<sup>th</sup> of July started early. We had a very tough fight. Our machinegun squad has been in the attack in a very brave way. We were within direct shooting range of tree shooters. We also met the Russian heavy grenade launchers. These covered us constantly with their salvos. After a battle of two hours, during which we took a village, we were put into action in a village alongside a "Zug" [military unit] from the third Company. According to statements from the local population, the Russians were entrenched there. After having moved forward for about a kilometer, we were fired on from all sides. It was thanks to our good training that we had nobody fall back; we went forward in sharp leaps and bounds, always one or two men at a time, 4 or 5 steps and then taking cover again. In such a way the enemy has no chance to aim well, and so they shoot indiscriminately. When we reached the outskirts of the village, we were reinforced by an armored "Pak" anti-tank gun. That's a fine weapon – it shoots twice, three times at a house and it is on fire. I just heard from a reporter that we are at two kilometers from the Russian border, that is, the old border of Poland and Russia.

The Lieutenant of the Pak artillery is a real Draufgänger [daredevil]. At one point, his artillery did not reach him quick enough. Even though enemy fire forced us to not even dare raise our heads, he went and stood in the middle of the street and screamed just as long for his artillery, until it came to him.

translated by Jeremy Schreiber