

THEY SAVED JEWS

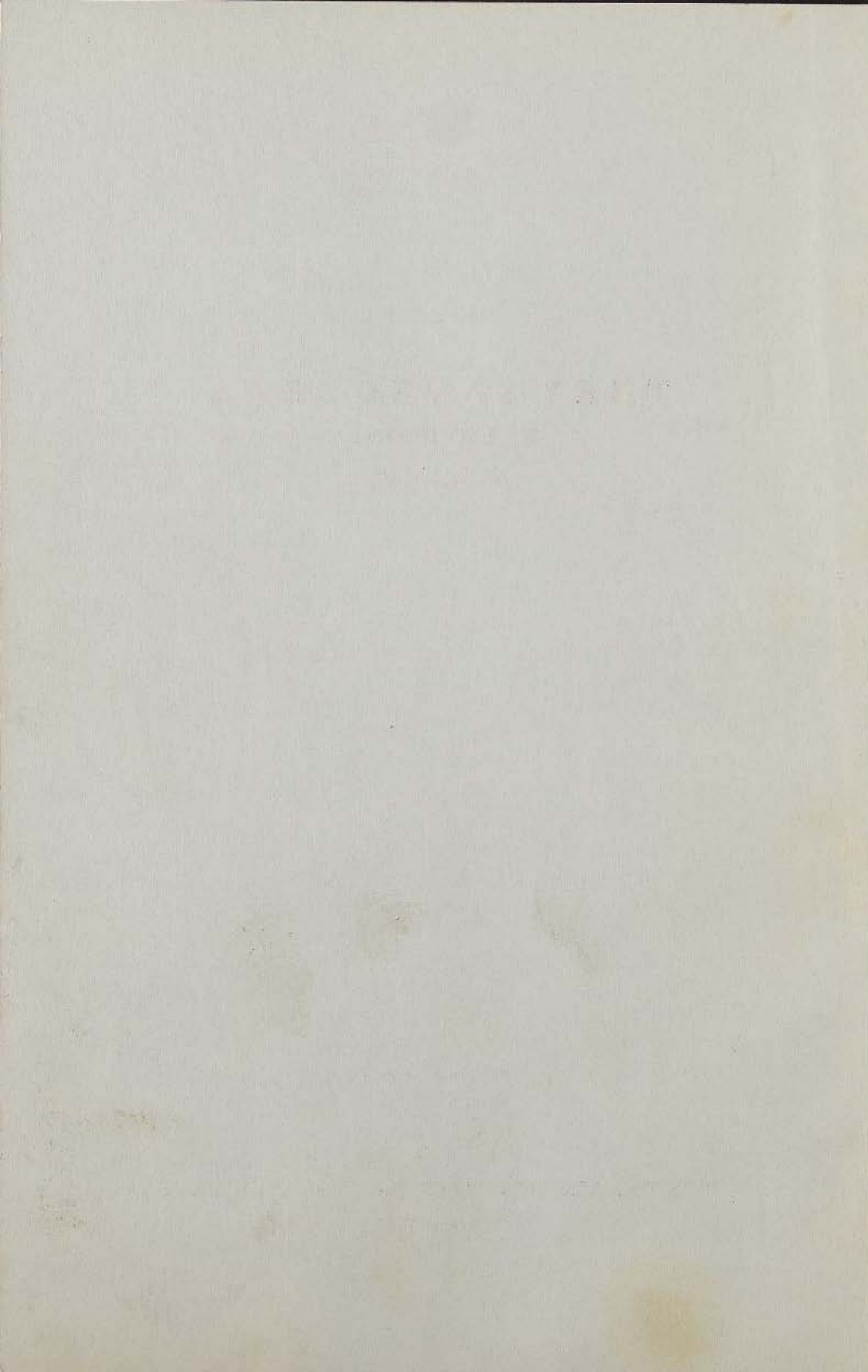
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UKRAINIAN PATRIOTS DEFIED NAZIS

By LEO HEIMAN

Communist propaganda, skillfully disseminated from Moscow, attempts to portray all Ukrainian nationalists as Nazis, or at least as willing helpers of Hitler's Jew-killing goon squads. Special efforts are being made by top Russian Communist propagandists to blacken both the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the late Count Andrew Sheptytsky, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Church and a shining symbol of all that was pure and noble in the Ukrainian people's struggle for national liberty and freedom. Thus one of the top Soviet writers, Vladimir Belyaev, was instructed by the Kremlin to devote all his time and talent to gathering documentary proof against the Ukrainian national liberation movement and the Ukrainian Catholic Church and its leaders.

Now no one will deny that criminal elements, big-city hoodlums and village riff-raff, bereft of honesty and moral conscience, flocked to the Nazi-organized police in Ukraine.

Inasmuch as Hitler's regime, especially his SS, Gestapo and SD commanders in German-occupied countries, were bent on bringing out the worst in men and degrading their victims before destroying them, they put a premium on cruelty, sadism and senseless bestiality. Nazi-organized police in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Byelorussia, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Croatia, even Laval's "Milice" in France, and Degrelle's "Rexistes" in Belgium—all attracted professional gangsters, sex maniacs, notorious anti-Semites and other elements who joyously greeted the Hitler-given opportunity to loot, rape, torture and kill in the name of a Nazi-ruled "New Europe."

German-occupied Ukraine was no exception. Every nation has its quota of renegades, thieves, lunatics and degenerates. The Jews themselves produced a significant number of renegades and traitors who collaborated with the Nazis in killing their own people. One needs only mention the Jewish police of the Warsaw and Lviv ghettos, the notorious "Kapo" tyrants of concentration camps, and the Jewish agents of the German Gestapo in Lviv, Cracow and Warsaw,

who denounced their own people, hunted down Jews attempting to hide in Christian homes and sold out the non-Jewish Ukrainians and Poles who befriended fugitive Jews. The Nazi regime elevated gangsterdom to power, and the period of the German occupation during World War II was a crazed, blood-filled era.

But even if we assume that as many as 100,000 Ukrainians served in the Nazi goon squads and security police (and some merely guarded bridges, railroads, airfields, and other military objects), this still makes less than one per cent of the Ukrainian people. In other words, 99½ per cent of the Ukrainian people either did not collaborate with the Nazis against the Jews or actively opposed the German rule. How they did so, at the risk of their own lives, will be described in this article.

But first let us consider several historical fallacies which are as unfair to the Ukrainian national liberation movement as they are dangerous to the Jews themselves. Generalizations are often misleading. There was a time in the Soviet Union, before Stalin embraced a policy of active anti-Semitism (this facet of the Stalinist era was wholly inherited by Khrushchev), when Jews were allowed to serve in the secret police, communist espionage agencies, local organs of administration and other positions of power.

They persecuted, prosecuted, exiled, and killed millions of innocent people between 1929 and 1939. Their victims included Ukrainians and Jews, Poles and Lithuanians. The percentage of Jews in the Communist secret police at that time was larger than the percentage of Ukrainians in the Nazi security forces during World War II. But, of course, all Jews objected to being branded as "Bolsheviks." They pointed out that the small percentage of goons who served as Stalin's torture-cellar killers were not representative of the Jewish people, and that the slogan of "Judeo-Communism" and "Jewish-Bolshevik Commissars" was a favorite propaganda gimmick of the Nazis and other assorted anti-Semites.

History proved how right the Jews were. No sooner had Stalin won the war against Hitler (largely by default of the Western Allies and thanks to the Germans' own stupidity and lack of foresight) than the Reds turned against the Jews, executing all leading Jewish intellectuals, religious community leaders, writers and artists, exiling hundreds upon thousands to Siberia, and sacking from their posts all Jewish officers and officials of the armed forces, secret police and diplomatic service. Many of these ended up in their own torture-cellars. Not even the most psychopathic anti-Semites trouble to connect Jews with Soviet communism nowadays.

It is too much to expect a fair approach to Ukrainian nationalism as well? Only the Communists are interested in promoting indiscriminate linking of the entire Ukrainian national liberation movement to Nazi bestialities and war crimes. The Jews who parrot the Soviet charges are doing themselves a great disservice. No one wants to forget, of course, the Nazi-organized *pogrom* mobs in Lviv or the part played by certain units of Ukrainian police in exterminating Jews. All war criminals must be caught and punished, no matter what their nationality or present political affiliation. But above all one must not be duped by communist dialectics.

Who were the *pogrom* mobs? Human scum, riff-raff and criminal elements recruited by the Nazis and lured by promises of a free hand with raping, torturing and looting, attracted by visions of sadistic orgies against defenseless Jews. Not a single Ukrainian intellectual or national liberation movement leader took part in these brutal excesses.

And who were the Ukrainian police or militia, organized and recruited by the Nazis? In addition to pimps, thieves, sadists and hoodlums, they included a substantial number of former Soviet militiamen who deserted to the Nazis *en masse* as soon as the German armies overran Western Ukraine.

Belyaev's motion picture *Ivanna* and prize-winning book *Unmasking* drew great praise from Khrushchev himself and fat bonuses from the Kremlin. We shall not discuss their literary or cinematic merit. We shall not even deal with the standard communist charge that "all Ukrainian nationalists served the Nazis." But where Belyaev commits a fatal blunder is in lumping together wild and insane accusations against the late Count Sheptytsky, Jewish rabbis, the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Jewish national liberation movement (i. e. Zionism).

According to Belyaev's "documentary" screenplay and book, Metropolitan Sheptytsky and other Ukrainian Catholic churchmen, monks, nuns and lay leaders were Nazi collaborators, Gestapo agents, and worse. Belyaev could not possibly deny the well-known fact that Andrew Sheptytsky, his brother, and all leading Ukrainian priests, monks, nuns and intellectuals saved hundreds of Jews—despite the penalty of certain death if the Nazis caught them. But the Soviet author presents "documentary proof" that this unprecedented large-scale rescue action was part of a "criminal conspiracy" between Ukrainian and Jewish nationalists. By saving Zionists and rabbis, the two Sheptytsky brothers were taking out a "respectability insurance" against the future. The dialectical conclusion is that the State of Israel, by maintaining friendly relations with Western Germany and

selling weapons and ammunition to the West German Army, continues the pro-Nazi policy of the "Zionist bourgeois counter-revolutionary elements and Jewish religious reactionaries" who sought refuge with the Ukrainian nationalist leaders and the Ukrainian Catholic Church. *Ergo*—to satisfy the present-day demands of communist propaganda—the doomed Jews had to choose death in Nazi extermination camps or lime-filled pits rather than accept the safe haven and asylum so graciously offered by Ukrainian leaders.

Finally, before going on with the dramatic eyewitness accounts of Israeli Jews who were saved by Ukrainians from the Nazis, let us address a few words to all those dupes who knowingly or unknowingly cooperate with the Kremlin's "Agitprop" section. The moment a Jewish journalist, especially if he happens to be an Israeli, dares to say one word in favor of the Ukrainian national liberation movement, or at least some of its contemporary aspects, he is immediately showered by angry, insulting and even threatening letters, the gist of which is: "How can you forget Khmelnytsky's massacres of innocent Jews, the *Haydamak pogroms*, Petlura's blood bath and the Ukrainian pro-Nazi anti-Jewish attitude in World War II? Anyone who speaks in favor of Ukrainian nationalism is a traitor to the Jewish people!"

There is one answer to all these complaints and whining protests: "No one forgets anything. We Jews have a long memory and still celebrate our victories over our ancient enemies, like the Pharaohs in Egypt, Amalek in the Holy Land, and Haman in Persia. But we Israelis have freed ourselves from the whining, moaning and plaintive ghetto mentality which still marks some Jews abroad. We are realists, we do not drag up horrors of the past but try to avoid horrors of the future. Bemoaning the victims of the *Haydamak pogroms* won't help us if the Arabs, armed and assisted by Communist Russia, invade Israel and wipe out the Jewish State in one big *pogrom*. Yesterday, Nazi Germany was the biggest enemy of the Jewish people. Today, Western Germany is one of the Jewish state's staunchest friends. But for German financial and technical aid, the Arabs would have attacked us a long time ago. In 1648, Khmelnytsky's Kozaks killed Jews. But in 1948, Stalin's goons killed all leading Jewish writers, actors, poets and publicists. Moreover, if Israel and world Jewry boycott every nation which misbehaved towards the Jews throughout history, we shall have to sever all ties with the world and live for a few months in splendid isolation, until the Arabs kill us. France and England of the Crusades, Spain and Portugal of the Inquisition, Germany and Austria of the Hitler era, Russia, Poland and Lithuania at all times — why, there is hardly a civilized country in the world where Jews were

not persecuted, oppressed, hunted and killed in the past. Why single out Ukraine—just because it suits Russian propaganda?

As a matter of fact, at the same time that Khmelnytsky killed Jews in Ukraine (during a war of liberation against the hated Polish feudal lords, who employed Jews as tax-collectors and saloon-keepers), the Polish warlord *Hetman* Czarniecki massacred more Jews in Poland than the Kozaks ever did. But his crimes are "credited" to Khmelnytsky's account by gullible historians. If some of Petlura's commanders let their troops run amuck in anti-Jewish *pogroms*, so did Polish commanders of General Haller's army which advanced across Ukraine. And both were innocent babes by comparison with General Denikin's Russian Volunteer Army which slaughtered Jews as the Nazis did 20 years later.

In short, there is no need to forget anything, but to reopen old wounds and to resurrect the ghosts of the Crusades, Inquisition and *Haydamak pogroms* will not gain us anything in today's cold war and tomorrow's hot conflict.

The resurrection of a Jewish State in Israel, its gallant military record against a numerically-superior enemy, and its present inflexible stand against world communism, the giant Soviet empire, and 50 million Arab enemies—all have earned us the admiration of the world.

To survive, we must be realists. And realism dictates cooperation with the Ukrainian national liberation movement in order to weaken Moscow's sinister intrigues in the Middle East, to help Soviet Russia's captive Jews and to liberate the 840,000 Jews at present in Ukraine, returning them to the fold of their people in the State of Israel.

STORY OF COLONEL KAHANA

Now let us return to wartime Lviv, where Nazi officers, strutting about in their polished jackboots, amused themselves by tearing Jewish children apart.

In the austere concrete-and-steel building which houses the headquarters of the Israeli Air Force, I met Colonel David Kahana, the famous Chief Chaplain of the IAF who is known as the "fighting rabbi" throughout the Israeli armed forces. The tough-looking colonel, who ran a Zionist underground organization in Communist Poland while serving as the Chief Jewish Chaplain (with the rank of colonel) of the Polish Army, was gripped by visible emotion when I brought up the name of Count Andrew Sheptytsky. He took out a white silk handkerchief, dabbed at his eyes, and got up to close the

door of his office. He did not wish the young officers and sergeants in the adjoining office to see him in tears.

Col. Kahana then placed his hand on the Holy Bible. "It is possible that I am emotionally prejudiced in favor of the late Metropolitan," he said. "Believe me, there is no such thing as complete historical objectivity. The historians themselves are only human and must treat their work subjectively, whether they want to or not. But I am willing to swear on the Bible that Count Sheptytsky was one of the greatest humanitarians in the history of mankind, certainly the best friend the Jews ever had. And I am saying this not only because he saved my wife, my child and myself, and not only because he was instrumental in rescuing other Jews from certain death. Please understand me and examine not only Count Sheptytsky's deeds, but also his motives. When I met him, he was already an old man, broken in body but not in spirit. Well over 80 years old, paralyzed and on the verge of death, he certainly did not seek any "respectability insurance" or political gain. He was well past that. If the Nazis found Jews hiding in a church or monastery, they shot all the priests and monks and either burned the building or turned it into a barracks for their troops. And if the Metropolitan was willing to risk his priests, nuns and churches, he was moved by true undiluted Christianity, by love of our Jewish people, and by a sense of national responsibility. He realized that enemies of the Ukrainian people would lose no time in blaming the actions of *pogrom* mobs and militia scum on the entire Ukrainian nation. It was therefore the holy and sacred duty of every nationally-conscious Ukrainian intellectual and priest to save as many Jews as possible. Count Sheptytsky was a Zionist himself. He was a firm believer in the Messianic mission of the Jewish people and had a vision of an independent Jewish State in the Holy Land. Unfortunately, he died four years before this dream came true."

I asked Col. Kahana to tell me about his wartime experiences in Lviv. "Well, life in pre-war Poland was no picnic. The Polish regime was reactionary, anti-Semitic and very oppressive with regard to all national minorities. Most Jews and Ukrainians suffered Polish oppression and discrimination silently. Those who did not were mostly people with a strongly developed national consciousness—Zionists among the Jews and Nationalists among the Ukrainians. I held three jobs in pre-war Poland: Jewish Military Chaplain of the Lviv Garrison, rabbi of the Syxtus Street Synagogue, and Jewish theology teacher in the city high schools. My colleague and good friend was a Ukrainian priest named Dr. Gabriel Kostelnik. Together we used to go and complain to the Polish authorities, who ridiculed our "Ukrainian Jewish alliance."

"Then came war, Soviet occupation and German invasion. The Nazis first tried to kill the 200,000 Jews of Lviv and nearby hamlets with the aid of *pogrom* mobs, besotted peasants from the villages and locally-recruited militia units. But when they saw that there was more looting than killing, and that the criminal elements (joined by Polish felons from the slums) fought each other over the spoils, instead of killing Jews, the Nazis brought in the notorious *Einsatz-Kommando Lemberg* and got down to business with typical Teutonic thoroughness.

"Right off I perceived the weakest point of the Ukrainian people, their Achilles' heel and a principal contributory cause of their national tragedy and loss of independence. The Ukrainians were either high-level intellectuals in the best Western European tradition or ignorant, semi-literate farmers and city proletariat. This was no fault of theirs, to be sure. Long centuries of oppression and colonialist exploitation at the hands of Poland, Russia, and sundry other powers had prevented the formation of an effective middle class in Ukraine. Now, the intellectuals, church leaders and nobles were on our side almost without exception. But the poor and backward segments of the populace were easily swayed by pernicious Nazi propaganda. They believed the most fantastic Nazi lies and fabrications, such as that Jews use Christian children for ritual purposes, and the like. By the summer of 1942, after one year of *pogroms* and massacres, we realized that the Nazis would not rest until they had murdered the last surviving Jew. Together with Rabbi Hamaydess, a famous leader of the Polish Jewry, I went to see my friend, Dr. Gabriel Kostelnik, and asked him to introduce us to Metropolitan Sheptytsky.

"But that time, we were herded in a ghetto, forced to wear yellow badges and forbidden to enter the non-Jewish parts of the city on pain of death. Since Rabbi Hamaydess could not pose as a Christian, I left him in the ghetto and went alone to see the Metropolitan. Climbing the hill towards the Metropolitan's Palace on Mt. St. George, I prayed to God that no police patrol would encounter me and demand to see my identification documents. I knocked at the gate, a monk opened a small barred window and asked my business. When I mentioned Dr. Kostelnik, he let me in at once. Another monk took me to the Metropolitan's office . . ."

Here Col. Kahana paused to wipe his tears once again. "I experienced a strange emotion as soon as I stood in the office. The Metropolitan was pushed in in his wheel-chair, grasped my hand in his two hands and gazed at me with his kind eyes. I never saw such good, clever and penetrating eyes. He was the only true Christian saint I believe in.

“‘I see trouble brings you to me, my son’ — he said gently — ‘please sit down and tell me about it . . .’

“I felt as if I had left a stormy sea to enter a haven of safety and peace. Crippled, paralyzed and old as he was, Metropolitan Sheptytsky made a great and lasting impression on me. When I told him of the massacres, sufferings and pain inflicted upon my people, Count Sheptytsky broke down and cried. ‘I know all about it’—he told me quietly—‘and I have sent out several letters to all priests with orders to have them read to their congregations in all churches. I have warned my people that any person helping the Nazis to persecute or kill Jews will be doomed to eternal damnation and his soul will burn in hell forever . . . But I am sorry to say that there is little more I can do than protest. I have also sent notes to all German officials, *gauleiters* and Himmler himself, protesting the use of Ukrainian volunteers in anti-Jewish actions. The answer I received was insulting, and the German officer who brought me Himmler’s reply intimated that but for my age, I would have been shot for daring to intercede on behalf of the Jews. Well, my son, I can only pray for you and your people. Tell me how I can help, and I’ll do everything in my power . . .’”

Col. Kahana was interrupted again by two junior officers who wanted printed copies of a special prayer for Israeli pilots and paratroops. He opened a steel-filing cabinet in the corner of his office and extracted a stack of yellowing folio pages, written in Yiddish and Hebrew. This was his wartime diary. He opened it to the page describing his meeting with Metropolitan Sheptytsky and showed it to me. “It has imprinted itself upon my memory so that today, about 20 years later, I can quote it to you word by word. The Metropolitan showed me a copy of the protest note he sent to Himmler, and the insulting answer he received. He also showed me the draft of his new appeal to all Ukrainians, which ended with the following words: ‘. . . unfortunately, some Ukrainian communities contain a number of sinful people, whose hands are covered with innocent Jewish blood. These people are not representative of the Ukrainian nation. They are criminals without any nation. They are doomed to suffer in hell for eternity . . .’

This appeal was sent out to all priests on August 19, 1942, and read to church congregations. In fact, although most priests were afraid to mention the word “Jewish” and deleted it, the people understood the message in its entirety.

“I asked the Metropolitan to help save all that was most precious to the Jewish people. First, the Holy Torah Scrolls from the synagogues, and next the children whose parents had been killed by

the Nazis and who were due to die themselves. The Metropolitan called in his brother Clement, who was in charge of all Ukrainian monasteries, and the *Ihumena* Josefa, the Mother Superior who headed all convents. Both declared themselves ready to help Jews. But since the Nazis were raiding Christian orphanages and ordering all boys to undress to see whether any of them were circumcised, I was asked to select mostly Jewish girls for the first rescue operation. 'Bring the Torah Scrolls as soon as you can and don't forget about the rabbis, including yourself. We shall find a way to help you,' Count Clement Sheptytsky declared.

"This meeting took place on August 14, 1942. We organized 200 Jewish children, including the sons of Rabbi Hamaydess, Rabbi Levin, and my own daughter. All the children were smuggled to one or another monastery, concealed in the crypt, given false certificates of baptism, Ukrainian-sounding names, and dispersed throughout convent schools and orphanages in and around Lviv. All of them survived the Nazi occupation and the war. Had the Nazis found only one Jewish child in a Ukrainian monastery, the consequences would have been catastrophic. But the priests, nuns and monks involved took the risk. The greatest satisfaction in my life was to gather these Jewish children after the war, transfer them to Israel via the underground Zionist escape route and watch them grow up, serve in the armed forces, get married and raise families of their own.

"After hiding my daughter in a safe place, *Ihumena* Josefa asked me to bring my wife to her convent. She took my wife to the priest in charge of parish administration registers. Old records were forged to show that my wife is, was, and had always been a 100 per cent Ukrainian Catholic, and that her parents and grandparents on both sides of the family tree were good Ukrainian Catholics from way back. The priest then issued her with a false birth certificate and took her to an official of the Municipal Population Registry Office. She received a Ukrainian identification card, food-ration tickets, domicile permit and all other documents without which people were thrown into jail or shot by the Nazis.

"Thanks to *Ihumena* Josefa and the priest, my wife was thus able to pose as a Ukrainian and move freely about the city. She was the contact agent between the ghetto and the monasteries, and after the ghetto's liquidation she maintained contact between fugitive Jews and the Ukrainian church leadership. She slept in *Ihumena* Josefa's cell at the convent, went to church so as to avoid suspicion and avoided exposure and capture for two years. At that time, I went out with slave-labor gangs to the notorious Janowski camp, where each day thousands of people were killed. Every morning's head-count

resulted in a bloody massacre. The Nazi captain of the guards would amuse himself by ordering every fifth or every seventh man to step out of line and shooting him in front of the massed prisoners. Other slaves were hanged, burned, strangled or ordered to keep their heads in buckets of water until they drowned. Sometimes dogs were set upon us to tear us apart. Somehow I survived all these terrible weeks. I did not wish to escape before the children's rescue operation was completed, because once I had entered the Metropolitan's palace, I would not have been able to direct things from the outside. So I prayed and hoped that the killers would not hit on me during their daily games.

"And do not believe anyone who tells you that the Ukrainians are more anti-Semitic than the Poles. The Ukrainian clergy helped us, and some Polish intellectuals saved Jews, too. But you had to see Christmas Eve in 1942, when our dejected-looking slave-labor gang marched past a Polish congregation in front of the St. Anna Church on Janowska Street. Now Christmas Eve, when everybody sings *Silent Night, Holy Night*, is supposed to spread the message of brotherly love and peace on earth. But when the Poles saw the German guards beating us with rifle butts, they forgot about Christmas, they forgot that the Germans were occupying Poland and killing Poles, too. What the entire congregation did was to taunt us, sing an anti-Semitic song, *Why Don't We Break Some Jewish Bones*, and throw mud and stones at our heads. And as soon as we had passed by, they went back to their praying. The same thing happened after the war, when a Polish pogrom mob at Kielce slaughtered the Jewish survivors who had trickled back from Nazi concentration camps, including women and children. And the Communist Polish militia helped the mob to kill the Jews . . . So let's not put the stigma of anti-Semitism on any single nation. All were in the same boat.

"Meanwhile a group of Count Clement Sheptytsky's monks organized a secret escape route across the border. Carpatho-Ukraine at that time was occupied by the Hungarians, who had not yet started killing Jews. In fact, the massacres in Hungary got under way only with Eichmann's arrival in the summer of 1944. Back in 1942 and 1943, it was still possible to live in Hungary and even cross the border into Rumania. Groups of Jews, mostly men who could not hide in Ukrainian convents, were guided by Ukrainian monks from monastery to monastery. They then crossed the mountains by a secret path winding its way among unguarded ridges, and contacted representatives of Jewish underground movements.

"Things became progressively worse in Lviv, and I decided to escape. Shortly after midnight I slipped away from the barracks,

crawled across the wires and pushed uphill towards the Metropolitan's Palace on St. George Hill. I knocked at the night gate and after what seemed an eternity, it was opened by a sleepy monk. He looked at me, ragged and dirty, emaciated, bleeding from wounds and scratches, crossed himself and disappeared within. I stood at the gate, shivering from cold and fright. Suddenly the loud jackbooted steps of Nazi patrols sounded nearby. I heard them coming nearer and nearer. Their flashlights and burning cigarettes already were visible when the gate opened and the monk dragged me inside. My body was crawling with lice and covered with ugly sores, but the Metropolitan embraced and kissed me, wretched as I was. He then ordered his secretary to take me to a hot bath, burn my rags and dress me in a monk's robes. Despite the late hour, the Metropolitan was waiting for me in his room when I came out of the bath. He wept again, and asked me to tell him of my life in the Nazi camp and of the situation in general.

"I remained hidden in Count Sheptytsky's private library. Food was brought to me there, and only at night did I go out for a walk in the garden. When spring came, the Metropolitan was taken down in his wheelchair to the garden at dusk. He then sent away the monk who usually guided him, and I pushed his chair for an hour through the flower-rimmed garden paths. Needless to say, the Metropolitan never tried to convert me, but once he gave me an old book to read. It had been published in 1902 or 1903 by a Ukrainian priest and was entitled, *Koly Rus' Khodyla Slidamy Danyla (When Ukraine Followed in Danilo's Footsteps)*. Danilo had been a famed Ukrainian priest who made an adventure-filled pilgrimage to the Holy Land hundreds of years ago; the book spoke of another Ukrainian pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the turn of this century. At that time there was no Zionist colonization in Palestine to speak of, and the Jews the Ukrainian priest saw were mostly elderly people who spent their time moaning and crying at Jerusalem's Wailing Wall.

"The book ends with a passage describing Jewish sufferings throughout the ages, and pointing out that the Jewish Temple was destroyed and doomed to weep forever because they had rejected Jesus Christ and turned Him over to the Romans for execution. I read the book with great interest although, naturally, did not agree with its concluding chapter. The next day Count Sheptytsky asked me whether I had finished the book. When I said yes, he suddenly kissed my hand, and apologized. I was stunned. Everybody kissed the Metropolitan's hand, and he himself had to kiss only the Pope's hand, certainly not mine, that of a fugitive Jewish rabbi. And what was the apology for? The Metropolitan explained that at a time when the Nazis were butchering Jews, it was a tactless mistake on his part to let

me have a book which would deprive Jews of all hope unless they accepted Christianity. He insisted that I accept his apology. When I say that Andrew Sheptytsky was a saint, I do not exaggerate. I am an officer in the air force, a rabbi, and a doctor of philosophy and theology. I know that the qualities which make a real saint are so rare as to be almost non-existent. But Count Sheptytsky possessed all.

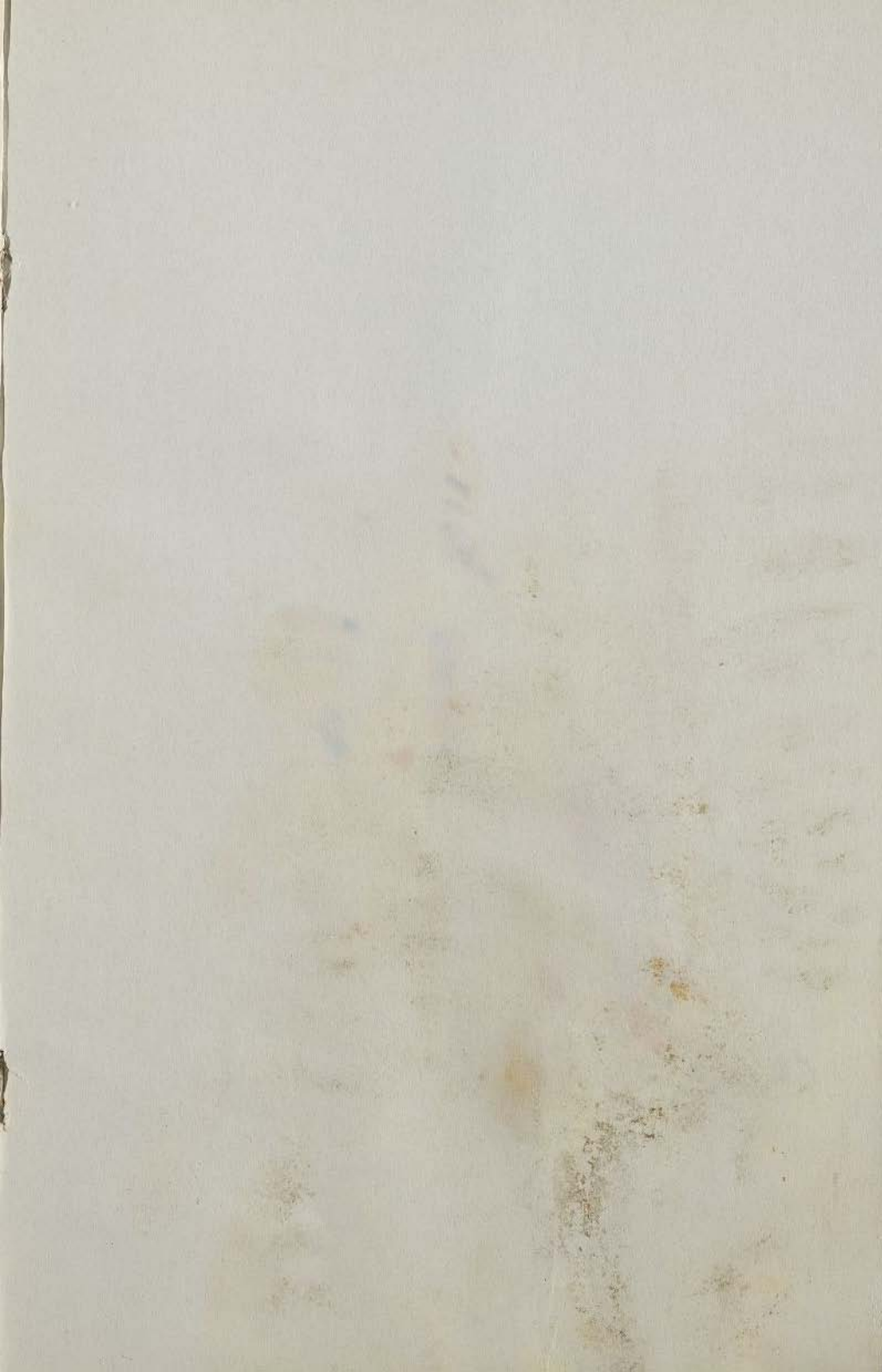
"I have already mentioned his brother Clement, the *Ihumena* Josefa, and the hundreds of monks, priests and nuns who risked their lives to save Jews. There was also Father Marko, a Ukrainian priest who personally saved over 40 Jewish children. Later on, I helped him escape to the United States. After the war, when I became a colonel in the Polish Army, the Ukrainian Catholic priests were persecuted by the Soviet authorities who executed and imprisoned most of them, banished the monks and nuns to Siberia after Metropolitan Sheptytsky's death and the anti-Soviet uprising of Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas.

"The fugitive Ukrainian priests crossed the San River into Poland, made their way to Warsaw and contacted me. Now I was able to help them and repay their kindness. I lived next door to Wladyslaw Gomulka, today Poland's ruler. No one suspected my ties with an underground Zionist organization. The wheel of history had turned another 180 degrees, and the same priests who helped me pose as a Ukrainian had to masquerade now as Jews. I gave them false Jewish identification cards, and the Zionist underground smuggled them out of Poland with transports of Israel-bound Jews. When the transports passed through Western Germany, the priests and monks were guided to Ukrainian DP camps, where they received new documents and entry visas for the United States and Canada. I compiled a list of over 240 Ukrainian priests and monks who saved Jews. But this list is not complete. And not only the clergy helped us in our darkest hour. There was Omelyan Maslak, director of the Ukrainian City Library in Lviv, who hid eight Jews behind false-front book-filled shelves at the library, stole books and sold rare volumes on the black market to buy food for the hidden Jews. Denounced by a traitor, Maslak was able to transfer the Jews to the attic of his home and keep them there until the end of the war. The Gestapo searched the library several times, following a tip by an informer, but found nothing. Had they searched Omelyan Maslak's home, they would have killed him and his wife and children, as well as the Jews. Other Ukrainians, in charge of the city's sewer-pipe network, hid four Jewish families in sewers, supplying them with food which they stole from

the market. A Ukrainian farmer named Ivan Solovey hid an entire Jewish family in his barn. And only God knows how many Ukrainian peasants were denounced to the Nazis by informers, and burned alive, together with their families and the hidden Jews.

"The lowest point in my life was reached at that moment when I passed the Janowska Street church on Christmas Eve in 1942. I lost then all faith in humanity and life. My next meeting with Metropolitan Sheptytsky gave me back the power to survive and face the future confident that good will always triumph over evil, right over wrong. As I remember Andrew and Clement Sheptytsky, the *Ihumena* Josefa, Father Marko, Dr. G. Kostelnik and all the other Ukrainian patriots who helped us, I must quote a saying of our Biblical sages: 'He who saves one human soul—saves the world.' I also remember another passage, this time from the Talmud, which says that 'He who saves a Jew—is a true lover of the world and all humanity.' And let me tell you that there was no greater lover of humanity than the late Metropolitan Sheptytsky . . ."

Col. Kahana accompanied me to the headquarters gate on the way out of his office. Silvery supersonic Israeli jet fighters zoomed through the sky. Perhaps some of their pilots were the very Jewish children saved by Metropolitan Sheptytsky and his heroic assistants . . .



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