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**Отношения между соседями евреями
и неевреями в довоенной Одессе
в видеопереговорах людей,
переживших Холокост**

**Relationships Between Jewish
and Non-Jewish Neighbors
in Odesa Before the War in Video
Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors**

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Abstract. This article is based on oral history video interviews of the Holocaust survivors from the city of Odesa collected by the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation. The study shows the potential of oral history to reconstruct and analyze Jewish-non-Jewish relationships in Odesa in the 1920–1930s at the micro level and particularly at the level of neighbor relations. There are almost 55,000 oral history interviews in the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, including more than 7,000 interviews in the Russian language. Interviews of the Holocaust survivors from Transnistria, a Romanian-occupied Soviet territory between the left bank of Dniester River and the Southern Bug where the city of Odesa was the administrative center, comprise a significant part of the Russian-language collection. According to the USC Shoah Foundation methodology, about 25–30 % of an interview is about the survivor’s pre-war life. The survivors’ accounts about their life before the war and their everyday relationships with neighbors let us analyze those relationships, social norms in yard communities, and emotional ties between neighbors. The combination of data from the 1897, 1926, and 1939 censuses, and the information about the interviewees’ home address, occupation, birth place, and year they moved to Odesa, which was mentioned during the interviews or indicated in the pre-interview questionnaires, helps to reveal some patterns of distribution of Jewish population in the city neighborhoods. Those factors played an important role to survive the Holocaust. While it is usually difficult to reconstruct and analyze them using traditional historical sources, oral history has a potential for that.

Keywords: Holocaust; Jews; non-Jewish population; Odesa; video interview.

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Аннотация. В статье, написанной на основе видеопереговорах людей, переживших Холокост в Одессе, из коллекции фонда «Шоа» при университете Южной Калифорнии, показаны возможности устной истории для реконструкции и анализа отношений между евреями и неевреями в Одессе в 1920–1930-е гг. на микроуровне, а именно на уровне отношений между соседями. В Архиве визуальной истории фонда «Шоа» хранится почти 55 000 интервью, в т.ч. более 7 000 интервью на русском языке. Значительную часть русскоязычной коллекции составляют интервью людей, переживших Холокост в Транснистрии, оккупированной Румынией территории между левым берегом Днестра и Южным Бугом, администра-

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тивным центром которой была Одесса. В соответствии с методологией архива, примерно 25–30 % интервью посвящены довоенному периоду пережившего. Рассказы участников интервью о довоенной жизни и повседневных отношениях с соседями позволили глубже проанализировать характер этих отношений, действовавшие внутри дворовых сообществ социальные нормы и эмоциональные связи между соседями. Дополненные результатами переписей населения 1897, 1926 и 1939 г. данные о домашнем адресе, месте рождения, годе переезда в Одессу, упомянутые во время интервью и в предварительной анкете, помогли проследить тенденции распределения еврейского населения Одессы по различным районам города. Эти факторы, имевшие большое значение для выживания во время Холокоста, зачастую трудно реконструировать при помощи традиционных исторических источников, тогда как устная история предоставляет такую возможность.

Ключевые слова: Холокост; евреи; нееврейское население; Одесса; видеоинтервью.

One of the main paradoxes that puzzle many researchers is a statement repeated in many oral history interviews that there was no antisemitism in the prewar Soviet society and many children were not even aware about the ethnical identity of themselves and their friends. The researchers cannot help but wonder if this statement was true, how it was possible that the next day Germans or Romanians came to a place almost everyone knew who was Jewish and some were ready to share this information with perpetrators. Though it is unlikely that this article will help solve this paradox, it is aimed at creating a complex picture of the relationships rather than a dichotomous representation discussing the relations between Jews and Gentiles in the Soviet city of Odessa in the 1920's – 1930's.

Traditionally, ethnical relationships in the Soviet Union have been studied from their political aspect and the response of the society and its various groups to the state ethnical and national policy mostly using official sources and Soviet press. Even public and individual opinion and attitudes are mostly studied based on official sources for lack of possibilities to present one's opinion in the USSR and lack of oral history projects on the Soviet history. While the political approach makes a lot of sense for the history of ethnic relationships of the country, which government set a goal of forced social transformation and took measures to change and sculpt ethnic relationships, it often leaves uncovered everyday relationships and emotional ties between neighbors and colleagues. Besides, these kinds of studies are often focused on direct and immediate results of the policy while ethnic relationships cannot be changed immediately and it requires at least one-two generations before significant changes become noticeable. However, recent studies based on oral history sources proved their big potential in reconstructing everyday interactions and emotional ties between Jews and non-Jews within the communities of neighbors, colleagues, classmates, relatives, etc.¹

The pattern of Jewish-gentile relations in Odesa before the war was distinct from many other Soviet cities. Partially, this pattern was inherited from pre-revolutionary Odesa realities. Founded in 1794 on the coast of the Black Sea, Odesa quickly became the second largest Russian port attracting merchants, entrepreneurs, artisans, workers, and people in liberal professions of different nationalities. According to the 1897 census, Odesa was one of the most ethnically diverse cities of the Russian Empire. In Odesa, Jews comprised 34.4 % by religion and 30.8 % by mother tongue, which was slightly higher than the average percentage of Jews in large cities inside the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland. Besides Jews, Russians and Ukrainians (who together made 58.8 % of the Odesa population),

¹ *Shternshis A. Between Life and Death // In Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History. 2014. Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 477–504; Shternshis A. When Sonia Met Boris: An Oral History of Jewish Life under Stalin. New York, 2017; Solonari V. On the Persistence of Moral Judgment: Local Perpetrators in Transnistria as Seen by Survivors and Their Christian Neighbors // Microhistories of the Holocaust. New York; Oxford, 2016. p. 190–208; Walke A. Memories of an Unfulfilled Promise: Internationalism and Patriotism in Post-Soviet Oral Histories of Jewish Survivors of the Nazi Genocide // The Oral History Review. 2013. Vol. 40, No. 2, p. 271–298; Walke A. Pioneers and Partisans: An Oral History of Nazi Genocide in Belorussia. New York, 2015.*

there were Poles, Germans, Greeks, Tatars, Armenians, French, Italians, Bulgarians, and others mostly with a higher concentration than the average in the country². During the pre-war Soviet era, Odesa remained one of the cities with the largest Jewish population and kept its ethnic diversity, despite of some evident consequences of the Soviet social and national policy (table 1).

Table 1

Population of Odesa and the USSR by ethnicity, 1926 and 1939

	1926		1939	
	Odesa, %	USSR,%	Odesa, %	USSR,%
Russians	38.68	52.91	30.88	58.39
Jews	36.41	1.77	33.26	1.78
Ukrainians	17.45	21.22	29.60	16.48
Poles	2.38	0.53	1.46	0.37
Germans	1.31	0.84	1.39	0.84
Armenians	0.44	1.07	0.38	1.26
Greeks	0.33	0.15	N/D	0.17
Bulgarians	0.28	0.08	0.82	0.07
Moldovans	0.25	0.19	0.43	0.15
Others	2.47	21.24	1.78	20.49

Sources: Всеобщая перепись населения 1926 г.: национальный состав населения по республикам СССР; всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 г.: национальный состав населения по регионам республик СССР; всесоюзная перепись населения 1939 г.: национальный состав населения по республикам СССР; всесоюзная перепись населения 1939 г.: национальный состав населения районов, городов и крупных сел союзных республик СССР. Available at: URL: http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97.php (date of access: 29.07.2020).

The war and the Holocaust in Odesa also differed from most Ukrainian cities. Odesa was occupied after over two months of the siege in the mid-October of 1941, i.e. almost four months after the German invasion into the USSR. Therefore, Odesa's inhabitants had more time to evacuate or prepare for hiding, though people might be misled in inevitability of occupation and urgency to fly. The city was occupied by Romanian armed forces as a part of Transnistria, a Soviet territory between the left bank of Dniester River and the Southern Bug given by the Nazi Germany to Romania for its participation in the aggression against the USSR. In October 1941 – March 1942, Romanians killed about 30,000 Jews from Odesa and its vicinities and deported other 65,000 to Transnistrian camps and ghettos where many of them died of starvation and illnesses³. At the same time, unlike Germans, Romanians did not set a goal of extermination of Jews, their anti-Jewish actions usually were not well planned and organized, and often there were possibilities to bribe Romanian police and soldiers. In March 1942, they stopped mass anti-Jewish actions in Odesa and Transnistria. Therefore, those Jews who stayed in Odesa during the occupation had more options for their survival tactic. Most of these options relied on their relationships with non-Jewish neighbors, friends, and relatives.

This study focuses only on relations between neighbors accessing the solidity of emotional ties between them. It is based on testimonies and pre-interview questionnaires from the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. The history of the Holocaust in Odesa is presented in the archive with dozens of testimonies of Holocaust survivors, aid givers, and other witnesses of World War II. Most testimonies were collected in the second half

² Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г. Т. 47: город Одесса. Санкт Петербург. 1904; Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.: распределение населения по родному языку, губерниям и областям // Demoskop Weekly. Available at: URL: http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97.php (date of access: 29.07.2020).

³ Ancel J. Transnistria, 1941–1942: The Romanian Mass Murder Campaigns. Tel-Aviv, 2003. Vol. 1. P. 185.

of the 1990s in Ukraine, United States, and Israel. A testimony usually includes an account of interviewee's life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Most interviewees, whose testimonies were selected for the study, were at least ten years old when the war started, i.e. were born no later than 1930. However, there are only few interviewees who were born before 1920 because the Shoah Foundation started collecting testimonies starting in the second half of the 1990s. It created a certain limitation for the study because there was not enough evidence from people who had fully developed social ties and relationships with their neighbors and were able to assess them. All, but one interview, are in Russian and the author of the article translated all fragments cited here.

Usually, researchers use oral history sources to find individual stories or personal accounts of certain events and attitudes toward them. However, if there is a substantial number of interviews (and this is a case for the USC Shoah Foundation collection of testimonies from Odesa), it is also possible to collect some microdata that would allow to observe certain patterns. The data about the interviewees' home address before the war, occupation, birth place and year they moved to Odesa was extracted from the pre-interview questionnaires and the testimonies. Whenever it was possible, we collected the same information about their parents, grandparents, and other relatives that helped mitigate the limitation related to the interviewees' age. The biographical character of this information, often documented in interviewees' personal papers, makes it less vulnerable for memory errors, individual perception of the events, and the influence of later events.

As it was mentioned above, according to the 1939 census Jews comprised 33.26 % of Odesa population, but their distribution in the city was not even (table 2). In the central part of the city, Jews constituted more than 40 % of the population, while in Peresyp', an industrial neighborhood in the northern part of Odesa, less than 8 %.

Table 2

Distribution of Jewish population in Odesa historical parts and districts in 1897 and 1939

Historical parts of Odesa	1897				1939			
	<i>Police districts</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>% to total population</i>	<i>% to Jews</i>	<i>City districts</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>% to total population</i>	<i>% to Jews</i>
Centre	Bul'varnyi	14,671	30.65	10.62	Stalinskii	30,349	46.62	15.10
	Aleksandrovskaia	43,200	54.77	31.28	Kaganovichskii	54,664	42.51	27.20
	Khersonskii	10,615	14.85	7.69	Voroshilovskii	60,703	36.58	30.21
	<i>Total in Centre</i>	<i>68,486</i>	<i>34.55</i>	<i>49.60</i>	<i>Total in Centre</i>	<i>145,716</i>	<i>40.52</i>	<i>72.51</i>
Moldavanka	Petropavlovskii	33,365	39.70	24.16	Il'ichevskii	40,006	31.18	19.91
	Mikhailovskii	31,727	42.60	22.98				
	<i>Total in Moldavanka</i>	<i>65,092</i>	<i>41.07</i>	<i>47.14</i>	<i>Total in Moldavanka</i>	<i>40,006</i>	<i>31.18</i>	<i>19.91</i>
Peresyp'	Peresypskii	4,511	22.22	3.27	Leninskii	6,423	7.82	3.20
Bol'shoi i Srednii Fontany	N/A				Vodno-Transportnyi	8,816	25.86	4.38
Total		138,089	36.63	100.0		200,961	33.26	100.0

Sources: Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г. Т. 47: Город Одесса. Санкт-Петербург, 1904. С. 34–35; Всесоюзная перепись населения 1939 г.: национальный состав населения районов, городов и крупных сел союзных республик СССР // Demoskop Weekly. Available at: URL: www.demoscope.ru/weekly/pril.php (date of access: 29.07.2020).

The prerevolutionary city administrative division does not exactly match its division in the 1930s. Most importantly, the prerevolutionary districts listed in table 2 did not include most peasant outskirts of Odesa, which in the 1930s became a part of the city. This is the reason why the total percentage of Jews in 1897 is higher than in 1939 and different from the number mentioned above. However, the table shows the main trends in the dynamics of the Jewish population in Odesa in 1897–1939. The significant decrease of the percentage of the Jewish population in Moldavanka, which was perceived as a Jewish neighborhood, and especially in Peresyp', can also be explained by the city expansion and the inclusion of the peasant outskirts in the city's boundaries, but there were also other reasons for that. For example, before the revolution Moldavanka was known as a center of wholesale trade, and particularly grain trade, through the port of Odesa. In the 1920s, wholesale private trade and soon all other kinds of private trade disappeared, and the occupation of Moldavanka's inhabitants had changed. Another important reason was the character of geographic mobility in the USSR and in Odesa particularly. The industrialization and depeasantization brought many former peasants to cities in the 1930s. In the case of Odesa, they mostly came from villages and small towns of the Odesa region and neighborhood regions no further than 450 kilometers. Even though, there were many predominately-Jewish towns and villages in that radius, newcomers were mostly Ukrainians. As a result, from 1926 to 1939, the Ukrainian population of Odesa increased 2.4 times in absolute value and 1.7 times in percentage to the total population (table 1). Most newcomers settled in remote developing parts of the city.

There is a correlation between this statistics and the microdata collected from the testimonies. 73.3 % of the Jewish interviewees lived in the center before the war, 20.0 % – in Moldavanka, and in Peresyp' – 6.7 %. Many of those who lived in the center were born in Odesa and at least one of their parents was born in Odesa or moved in Odesa no later than in the 1920s. There were few exclusions to this pattern: one is when the move to Odesa was related to promotion for a high level position⁴, another is when the newcomers joined their relatives in Odesa and lived together⁵, and the third is when they were able using some workarounds to buy a house⁶. At the same time, the occupation and socio-economic status of the interviewees from the central part of the city varied. Therefore, the duration of living in Odesa was likely one of the dominant factors, which defined if one would live in a prestigious central city district or settle in a remote neighborhood. The same pattern applies for the interviewees who lived in Moldavanka (excluding the outskirts incorporated in the Il'ichevskii district in the 1930s): at least one of their parents was born in Odesa or moved there a long time ago. Among the interviewees from Peresyp', there are more who moved to Odesa a few years before the war, like Iosif Shtof's parents who came in Odesa in 1936 from a neighboring village invited by their relatives⁷.

Housing arrangements and conditions significantly depended on the part of the city where the interviewees lived. Despite the accelerated urbanization, the Soviet government did not invest much in housing projects. In Odesa, one of the main solutions for this problem was overcrowding apartments and houses built earlier, mostly before the revolution. In the late 19th – early 20th centuries, Odesa saw a boom when a lot of two and three story brick and stone houses were built predominantly in the central part of the city, but also in Moldavanka and occasionally in Peresyp'.

⁴ For example, a family of Atom Morozov moved in Odesa around 1930 because his father was appointed a commander of an aviation school. – Atom Morozov, interview 47507, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 2, 2018.

⁵ For example, Borukh Cherkasskii, interview 51883, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 2, 2018; Aleksandr Sokolovskii, interview 47050, segments 9–12, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 10, 2018.

⁶ Like a family of Lena Sherman who moved in Odesa in 1935 from a village Krivoe Ozero, 180 km north from Odesa. – Lena Sherman, interview 23840, segments 8, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 2, 2018.

⁷ Iosif Shtof, interview 44890, segments 10–12. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 20, 2018.

Many of these houses were apartment houses⁸. After the revolution, these buildings were nationalized and the local Soviet administration distributed and redistributed available housing. Some people were able to stay in their pre-revolutionary apartments, but the Soviet administration took a part of their apartment, which they considered as extra. Others in the 1920s had a chance to move from poorer housing and the city outskirts to a more prestigious and comfortable place. This was one of the reasons why the settlement in the central part of the city heavily depended on duration of living in Odesa.

Most of the interviewees who settled in the central part of the city or Moldavanka lived in the houses built before the revolution. According to the interviewees, housing conditions there varied and depended on occupation, duration of living in a particular place, and the size of the family (including extended family members if they lived together). For example, the extended family of nine of Aleksandr Sokolovskii, whose father was a manager of a small state enterprise, occupied four rooms⁹. A family of five of Avraam Khasin, whose parents were an engineer and a teacher and both were born in Odesa at the turn of the 20th century, lived in two small rooms¹⁰. At the same time, many families who lived in apartment houses had only one room for four – six family members and shared a kitchen and a bathroom with another four-five families in the same communal apartment or rather had an outside toilet. In any case, such housing by the Soviet standards of that time was considered as good comparing to conditions in the remote parts of the city. For example, the family of Iosif Shtof who moved in Odesa in 1936 did not have its own place to live for a while. Only after his mother wrote a letter to Stalin, the local administration gave the Shtof family of four a former forge, which Iosif's father rebuilt to use it as a house¹¹.

Based on the pattern of the distribution of the Jewish population in Odesa and their housing conditions, we can make several conclusions. The settlement of Jews in the city before the war was not determined neither by discrimination of Jews, nor by any privileges for them. Also, there is evidence that it was not significantly related to their occupation or socio-economic status. However, a high percentage of Jews in the more desirable, central part of the city, which usually also meant that they had better housing conditions, might contribute to the popular perception of Jews as Soviet regime's favorites. Besides, the ghetto in Odesa during the war was established in a remote part of the city, Slobodka, which was within the borders of the Leninskii district with the least Jewish population (table 2) and situated 2–5 kilometers away from Moldavanka and Center. There, ghetto inhabitants felt estranged making it more difficult for them to ask for help.

An important phenomenon of the Soviet prewar and immediate postwar urban history had a significant impact on the relationships between Jews and non-Jews in Odesa. That was a phenomenon of the communities of neighbors with everyday intense interactions, close relationships, and its own code of behavior formed in yards of some Soviet cities. The historians fairly recently began to study this phenomenon. In her article about the “yard” culture in Leningrad in the 1930s–1950s, Aleksandra Piir analyzed how the prevalence of apartment houses, built before the revolution, and certain social changes determined the development of this culture¹².

The description of a yard and the relationships between the neighbors within the yard community are common for the testimonies about the life in prewar Odesa. A yard often included the inhabitants of only one apartment house and, therefore, the interviewees often used the words “house” and “yard”

⁸ Одесса: / ред. А. Сандлер и Antique // Домофото: архитектурная фотобаза [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://domofoto.ru/cities/4/> (дата обращения: 25.09.2018). Some interviewees also mentioned that they lived in a former apartment house. See, for example, Liubov' Patsula, interview 23732, segments 12, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: October 3, 2018.

⁹ Aleksandr Sokolovskii, interview 47050, segments 4, 5. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 10, 2018.

¹⁰ Avraam Khasin, interview 49333, segments 3-6. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 10, 2018.

¹¹ Iosif Shtof, segments 11–12. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 20, 2018.

¹² Пиур А. «Утраченный Двор» (К описанию феномена ленинградской дворовой культуры). URL: www.persee.fr/doc/casla_1283-3878_2010_num_11_1_1095 (дата обращения: 29.07.2020).

interchangeably. In his testimony, Aleksandr Danilov gave a detailed description of the yard in Moldavanka on Raskidailovskaia Street where he used to live with his parents and brother. His account is rather critic, which is unusual for mostly nostalgic accounts about the lost yard culture¹³, but it contains many details that help to reconstruct and understand this phenomenon,

Our yard had two floors. The first floor was as a usual one and the second floor was a shared wood balcony. Our yard was small and very dirty because there was an open [sic] toilet. There was also an open trash bin and there were always flies. So, it was not nice. [...] There were three or four fruit trees in the yard. The concierge always chased us because we broke off the branches and the leaves. [...]. There was a laundry near the toilet. The laundry had the attic and we often climbed and fell from there right into the toilet¹⁴.

Since most interviewees were children before the war, they focused on their games and other activities they shared with their friends. At the same time, they also talked about their neighbors' ethnicity and the relationships between them usually prompted by the interview's question about the Jewish-gentile relationships. Many interviewees narrowed down this question to the relationships between the neighbors within the yard. It demonstrates the significance of those communities. In addition, many interviewees remember and talk more about their yard friends and activities with them than they remember their school friends and activities. However, we should have in mind that children's experience was limited and did not include workplace and everyday public places (e.g. stores, services, governmental and local agencies, etc.).

The interviewees give different accounts about the ethnicity of their neighbors. Some interviewees told that almost everyone or even everyone in their yard was Jewish¹⁵. Others remember that Russian and Ukrainians also lived in their yard besides Jews and often mention other ethnicities. For example, Liubov' Patsula remembered, "In our house, there were – if I only name them – Armenians, Poles, Germans, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews. Probably, I forgot somebody yet. Maybe, there were also Greeks. We all lived together as one family and didn't care who was who¹⁶". Many interviewees said they were not aware about their own ethnicity and the ethnicity of their neighbors and yard friends or did not pay any attention to it, and most of them considered it as a proof of the absence of antisemitism and other ethnic stereotypes or prejudice. In her testimony, Ekaterina Kanevskaia emotionally answered on the interviewer's question if she felt different among her peers because she was Jewish,

There was never even talks about who is Jewish, who is Georgian... Only after the war, we realized that some of our classmates were Bulgarians and others were Armenians... We were never aware of one's nationality and nobody asked which nationality were you and why. We did not even understand the meaning of this word [Jew? – S.U.], and that it would sound completely different later [...] We never felt it. My friends were always Russian girls, and especially my best friend – my neighbor from my yard¹⁷.

It is difficult to tell how accurately the testimonies assessed the ethnic structure of their neighborhoods. Generally, it should correlate with the statistics, but certain places might have the ethnic structure significantly different from the average. However, the testimonies definitely reflected interviewees' experience and their current perception of Jewish identity and attitudes toward the Soviet past. The social network of those who said that their neighbors were mostly or exclusively Jewish (one interviewee even said that she never met non-Jewish person in Odesa

¹³ Пиур А. «Утраченный Двор»... 154.

¹⁴ Aleksandr Danilov, interview 45513, segment 4, 14. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 15.08.2018.

¹⁵ See, for example, Arsenii Moknovskii, interview 25082, segment 4, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 29.09.2018; Rukhama Grodskaia, interview 27146, segment 2, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 29.09.2018; Mara Lewkowicz, interview 57103, segment 4, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 29.09.2018; and others.

¹⁶ Liubov' Patsula, interview 23732, segments 12, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: October 3, 2018.

¹⁷ Ekaterina Kanevskaia, interview 27489, segment 21, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: July 28, 2018.

before the war¹⁸) might be limited at that time with Jews. It was a sign that many Jews in Odesa in the 1920s-1930s were well aware of their identity, did not try to conceal it or assimilate, and tended to keep their personal contacts within the Jewish community. This pattern of communication was maintained by a large size of the Jewish community in Odesa and the fact that for many Jews Yiddish remained their native language¹⁹ and many women staying at home as housewives.

When analyzing the comments about not being aware about their own ethnic identity and others' identity, it is necessary to remember that these comments came from the interviewees who were children or teenagers before the war. Due to their age and activities, they were the most integrated part of the Jewish population at that time. They and their non-Jewish peers were most susceptible to a pervasive influence of the Soviet ideology, which by the mid-1930s completely switched to promoting the idea of a nation of the Soviet people rather than a union of individual ethnicities. A. Walke also noticed that Holocaust experience of Jewish survivors in a great degree had defined their positive perception of prewar Soviet reality and especially ethnic relations²⁰. Nevertheless, with a great deal of confidence we can say that the most Jewish children in Odesa did not experience antisemitism in school or their neighborhood before the war. At the same time, it is unlikely that adults were not aware of their neighbors' ethnicity because of the day-to-day life in a communal apartment, which left almost no privacy, and the yard culture.

Many other private events and personal matters became public for neighbors because of the way of their everyday life. This aspect of the yard culture influenced people both negatively and positively, but it definitely contributed to developing strong emotional ties between the neighbors based on shared experience. One of such events was arrests of so-called anti-Soviet elements in the late 1930s. The arrests affected many families, and it was practically impossible to conceal the arrest of a family member from the neighbors. The testimonies demonstrate the significance of the yard community's opinion on the matter. For example, Sergey Sushon remembered how after the arrest of his friend's father, the mother of his friend said to the neighbors that if her husband had been arrested then it meant that he was guilty²¹. According to Lidiia Luchenetskaia's testimony, her family had to move to another apartment house after her father was arrested in 1936. Lidiia thought that her mother had decided to move because she wanted to avoid side looks from their neighbors²². It was not, probably, a real or main reason for their moving because the eviction of the family after its head's arrest was a common practice at that time, but the mere fact that the interviewee remembered it as the reason points to the significance of the yard community's opinion.

In both examples, the behavior of the victims' families assumed a negative reaction from their neighbors. Overall, it contradicts the reaction described from the neighbors' point of view, but both accounts are related to the early stage of the mass political repressions when bystanders might see some explanation for single arrests. According to the testimonies, the neighbors often could not understand reasons behind the arrest and sympathized the family of the arrested person. The accounts about sympathy toward arrested neighbors and their families may be influenced by the later revelations about the Soviet political repressions and negative attitude toward Stalin and his policy, which dominated in the public opinion in the 1990s when most interviews were recorded. Nevertheless, the researchers on the Soviet social history highlight the dominance of the "we" and "they" dichotomy where "they" were authorities and other privileged groups and "we" were everyone else with little regards to ethnic and social difference. The feeling of being equally oppressed contributed significantly to the development

¹⁸ Mara Lewkowicz, interview 57103, segment 4, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: September 29, 2018.

¹⁹ According to the 1926 census, 54.0 % and 45.4 % of Odesa Jews indicated respectively Yiddish and Russian as their native language. – Центральное Статистическое Управление СССР, Отдел Переписи, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 г. М., 1929. Т. 13. С. 28.

²⁰ Walke A. Memories of an Unfulfilled Promise: Internationalism and Patriotism in Post-Soviet Oral Histories of Jewish Survivors of the Nazi Genocide // *The Oral History Review*. 2013. Vol. 40, no. 2, p. 273–274.

²¹ Sergey Sushon, interview 21610, segment 25, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 15.07.2018.

²² Lidmia Luchenetskaia, interview 49449, segment 10, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 15.07.2018.

of this dichotomy²³. In her interview, Ekaterina Kanevskaia made a sarcastic comment, “Stalin was a big adept of internationalism: he deported people of all nationalities²⁴.” The shared experience of being a victim (including indirect victims, such as relatives and friends) or potential victim might help develop emotional ties between the neighbors. At the same time, this experience might contribute for the development of the bystander behavior pattern when the neighbors tried to either stay aside or take advantage of other people’s difficult situation.

To organize the everyday life in the yard, neighbors had to follow an unwritten code of conduct²⁵. As it was described in Aleksandr Danilov’s testimony cited above, there were several vital common places in the yard – toilet, laundry, sheds, firewood storage, garbage bins, etc. – where the neighbors had to interact every day and solve possible misunderstanding and conflicts. No clear example of the code of conduct was found in the testimonies again probably because most of the interviewees were children, but it is likely that it existed in some form. At the same time, several interviewees mentioned a concierge, an important member of any yard community of that time who often enforced the code and other rules. Mikhail Zaslavskii remembers the name of their concierge and that she was Austrian; in Aleksandr Danilov’s testimony the concierge chased the children who broke off branches of the trees; Sergey Sushon, describing the night when his father was arrested by the Soviet police, said that when he woke up that night he saw two people in civilian clothes and the concierge²⁶. Soviet police often used concierges during the arrests: a concierge helped to find the apartment or room of the arrestee, identify him or her and participated in the home search as a witness. The responsibilities of a concierge, besides cleaning, included the enforcement of timely registration of everyone who lived in the house even temporarily and opening and closing the gate at nighttime. Both, the yard community and local authorities, considered a concierge as an agent of local authorities responsible for enforcement of rules (official and non-official) and providing information about the residents.

The testimonies presented an image of the concierge who was always ready to collaborate with authorities and police and, therefore, who belonged rather to “them” than “us.” This characteristic became much more evident in the description of the events after Odesa was occupied. According to the testimonies, concierges usually were happy about German and Romanian occupation of the city, they provided the authorities with the information about the Jews living in their yard, and denounced those who were in hiding²⁷. The official documents of the Romanian administration prove that the occupation authorities relied on concierges to provide the information about Jews. In November 1941, the governor of Transnistria Alexianu, unsatisfied with the results of the census of the Jewish population based on personal declarations, ordered a new census “to be conducted by the Odessa municipality through the concierges, who became individually accountable for relaying information about all Jews living in their buildings”²⁸. Apparently, the Romanian authorities considered concierges in the same way as the Soviet authorities and used the already existing channel that connected them to the community of neighbors.

²³ Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, 2001, P. 388–391; Davies S. *Us Against Them: Social Identity in Soviet Russia // Stalinism: New Directions* / ed. Sh. Fitzpatrick. London; New York, 2000. P. 47–70; Fitzpatrick Sh. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York, 1999. P. 221–223; and others.

²⁴ Ekaterina Kanevskaia, interview 27489, segment 99, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 28.07.2018.

²⁵ Пиур А. “Утраченный Двор...”, С. 156, 157.

²⁶ Mikhail Zaslavskii, interview 23913, segment 22, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: June 5, 2018; Aleksandr Danilov, interview 45513, segment 14, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: August 15, 2018; Sergey Sushon, interview 21610, segment 30, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 15.07.2018.

²⁷ Aleksandr Danilov, interview 45513, segment 38, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: August 15, 2018; Borukh Cherkasskii, interview 51883, segment 69, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 2.09.2018; Dina Bol’shova, interview 37391, segment 99, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 18.04.2018.

²⁸ Ancel, *Transnistria, 1941–1942: The Romanian Mass Murder Campaigns*. Vol. 1. P. 207.

Conclusion. This study did not provide a clear answer to how the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors in Odesa in the 1920-1930's affected the chances to survive the Holocaust. However, the selected aspect of the research – relationships within the yard community – helped understand the nature of the relationships and everyday face-to-face interactions, the role of social norms and informal agents of social control, and the strength of emotional ties between Jews and non-Jews before the war.

Jews constituted a significant part of yard communities in Odesa, especially in the center and Moldavanka. In some communities, they comprised about 50 % of all residents. While most Jews were well integrated into the Soviet society, their neighbors were usually aware about their Jewish identity because of the day-to-day life in the yard community and communal apartments and the fact that many people who lived in the center and Moldavanka had settled in Odesa for a while. This awareness was an important factor during the Holocaust because the neighbors were the first ones who helped to reveal or conceal the identity of the Jews. The nature of the relationships between neighbors before the war had a potential for both outcomes.

The everyday face-to-face interactions between the neighbors in the yard community were more intimate than in other kinds of urban neighborhood and villages. Those interactions had developed in strong emotional ties. There are several examples in the testimonies when strong emotional ties and friendship helped to survive the Holocaust. Beba Lerman, talking about how all neighbors in her yard were friends and “loved each other,” remembered that during the anti-Jewish roundups in October 1941, the neighbors closed the gate and did not let Romanians in under the pretext that all Jews from the yard left the city²⁹. Ekaterina Kanevskaiia emotionally talked how her yard friend Tamara Maksemiuk and her mother Valentina brought her food to the Odessa ghetto and the Domanevka concentration camp and helped Ekaterina when she returned home replacing her the family that she lost in the Holocaust³⁰.

Everyday life and relationships within the yard community was organized according a certain set of values, social norms, and written and non-written code of behavior. In extreme conditions of the war and occupation, some of those norms were suppressed with self-preservation and self-preservation itself became a norm enforced by the community. Several interviewees mentioned that attempts or intentions of a neighbor to hide them in the house met or would meet strong negative reactions of other neighbors who were afraid of a possible reprisal³¹. However, there is evidence that after the war these norms came back. Liubov' Patsula thought that good relationships with her neighbors helped her to get back her possessions after the liberation, “my neighbors not only brought me some their utensils, but also told me that this thing was taken by Rotikha and that one is kept by the Bykovs, and another one is somewhere else – go there and take it back. And because of peer pressure they couldn't do anything, but return my stuff³².”

While there is no evidence in the testimonies of significant antisemitism in the relationships between the neighbors before the war, the bystanders' reaction to the discrimination and violence against Jews by Germans and Romanians during the war proves the conclusion made by other researchers that antisemitism among certain groups was not eradicated by the Soviet policy and propaganda, but rather was suppressed with a fear of punishment³³. The experience of Soviet political repressions contributed to the development of the patterns of reaction to discrimination of other people, which not only gave guarantees of personal safety, but also might have brought some benefits.

²⁹ Beba Lerman, interview 40433, segments 13, 19, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 30.09.2018.

³⁰ Ekaterina Kanevskaiia, interview 27489, segments 48, 74–76, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 28.07.

³¹ Ekaterina Kanevskaiia, interview 27489, segment 48, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 28.07.2018; Dina Bol'shova, interview 37391, segments 92-102, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 14.05.2018.

³² Liubov' Patsula, interview 23732, segments 13, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, date of access: 03.10.2018.

³³ *Shternshis A. Between Life and Death... P. 497.*

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