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8 Forced Labour in Nazi Germany in the Interviews of the Former Child *Ostarbeiters*

GELINADA GRINCHENKO

Nazi Germany's vast forced-labour program has been a key topic in Second World War history for the past twenty-five years. There are several reasons for this, including the launching of negotiations over compensation for this category of victims fifty years after the end of the war and the broad social and political discussion this has produced. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the Nazis' use of forced labour, and these allow for a multidisciplinary analysis of how these labourers were "recruited," be it as prisoners of war or civilians of all occupied countries, including the Soviet Union. These same sources analyse how forced labour was used throughout the Nazi economy and how these workers were treated. Many of those workers – *Ostarbeiters* – were children from Ukraine, Russia, and Poland.¹

In this chapter, I analyse two stories about childhood years spent in Germany.² We recorded these stories while working for "Memory, Responsibility, and the Future," a project launched by a German foundation that is dedicated to collecting the oral testimonies of people who were forced labourers or slaves on the territory of the Third Reich.³ This project involved research teams from twenty-seven countries, including the United States, South Africa, and Israel. Ukraine was represented in this project by two organizations, the Centre for Educational Initiative (Lviv) and the Kowalsky Eastern Ukrainian Institute (Kharkiv), in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Our team conducted interviews in central, eastern, and southern Ukraine (although not Crimea). We recorded half the interviews in large and small cities and the other half in rural townships and villages. Of the 40 interviews we recorded, 23 were with women and 17 with men. The mean age of informants was between 82 and 84. Most of the informants were born in the years 1924 to 1926 and thus represented the

largest cohort of forced labourers. We also recorded one interview with a female *Ostarbeiter* who was born in 1914, and three with people who were younger than twelve at the time of their forced deportation (born in 1933, 1936, and 1937). For the presentation and analysis in this article, I have chosen two interviews: one with Aleksandra Georgievna Gorova, born in 1936, and the other with Yevgenii Nikolaevich Rudnev, born in 1937. Both informants are native Russian speakers currently residing in Kyiv.⁴

My approach to these oral histories is based on the following. First, on Alessandro Portelli's understanding of the unique features of the oral historical narrative as a particular genre with a particular type of plot.⁵ Second, on the sequential and reconstructive approach to the thematic field of the interview as developed by Gabriele Rosenthal.⁶ Third, on the understanding that an oral interview is a conversational narrative, as set out in the works of Ronald Grele.⁷ Integrating these three approaches is the principal that only narrative can give meaning to human actions and that this narrative is achieved by organizing the individual's elements of existence into a whole. I also see oral autobiographic narrative as a result of the verbalization of autobiographic recollections, the analysis of which must take into account contemporary approaches dedicated to researching personal autobiographic memory.⁸

In this chapter, I focus on several things. First, I attempt to identify thematic priorities within the narratives; then I analyse the main plot lines, the motifs of the stories, and the "narrator's place," which may be located *in* the story or *outside* it, within the character or not. Another goal of this chapter is to ascertain what place the memories of being in Germany occupy in the autobiographic narratives, as well as what meanings our respondents invested in the events they described and what influence those memories and meanings have had on their subsequent lives. With this in mind, I concentrate on the narrative efforts of informants to create images of events *and* of themselves as participants. I also focus on the general model of self-presentation and the thematic interview field. Finally, I identify and discuss the particularities of the articulation of specifically childhood memories that were related to participation in forced labour in Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

Historic Note

During the Second World War, Ukraine was the largest Soviet republic to be fully occupied by the Germans, and it was held longer than the areas of Russia under German control. In the course of the conflict, 6.8

million people were killed; 1.4 million of them were military personnel who perished either at the front or as prisoners of war.⁹ Estimates made in the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1948 indicate that from the territory of today's Ukraine, 2.4 million people were transported to Germany as forced labourers.¹⁰ Thus they constituted the largest group of forced labourers and those with the fewest rights among all foreign labourers who worked in the Reich.

In the Reich territory, Ukrainian forced labourers worked in all spheres where forced civilian labour was used: in plants and factories, on railways and construction sites, in agriculture and in households. According to the Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs, presented in the works of Gisela Schwarze, on 20 July 1944, the Third Reich also employed 75,000 child *Ostarbeiters* – 58,000 Polish children and 8,300 other children.¹¹ However, Russian researcher Pavel Polian suggests that if we take into account non-registered children under twelve years old, the real number must be at least two times larger.¹² Most often, children ended up in Germany with their parents, and when they worked, it was as part of the forced labour force at the same location as their older family members. This might include menial work such as cleaning the labour camp that was attached to a factory or a plant, or hard labour in agricultural sector, where children were expected to work alongside the adults. From the end of 1943 on, children were often sent to clear away rubble and to take down buildings that had been destroyed during air raids. Regarding the age of employed children, until the end of 1943, only children older than fourteen were employed. Their work day was limited to four hours.¹³ After 29 November 1943, according to a Gestapo directive, it was permitted to employ children older than ten, and another directive (6 January 1944) prescribed for them the same food rations as adults. A directive of the Labour-Use Deputy General of 2 May 1944 prescribed the use of Soviet and Polish child labourers for more than four hours a day.¹⁴

Interview with Aleksandra Georgievna Gorina

Biographic information. Aleksandra Goreva (maiden name Dvornichenko) was born on 1 April 1935 in Kyiv, to the family of Georgii Ivanovich Dvornichenko and Yelena Teodorovna Gertz. The family had three children: daughters Lidia (b. 1931), Aleksandra (b. 1935), and Liudmila (b. 1937). After being drafted into the army, in the summer of 1941,

Aleksandra's father went missing in action. (It was learned only in 1990 that he died in 1942 in the Kremenchug POW camp.) She was transported to Germany with her mother and sisters in October 1943. Until March 1944, she and her mother and sisters were in the Soldau labour camp,¹⁵ where her mother and older sister worked on the railway. From the spring of 1944 until the spring of 1945, the family stayed in the city of Luckenwalde in the *Land* of Brandenburg, where lived a maternal relative. Throughout her time in Germany, Aleksandra did no forced labour. After the war, the family returned to Kyiv. In 1957, she married Vladimir Gorev. Their daughters (Liudmila and Svetlana) were born in 1958 and 1960 respectively. Between 1952 and 1990, she worked at the "Arsenal" plant as an engineer-dispatcher at a optical-mechanical college affiliated with the plant. Her husband, Vladimir Gorev, died in 2000. Today, she is retired and living on her own.

In general, her interview is a chronologically consistent story built around a single plot line: the story of her family. She devotes the main narrative – that is, the part of the interview that was not interrupted by questions – to her childhood years and the experiences of being in Germany as part of a forced labour group. She presents her post-war life quite briefly and with little detail. This is characteristic of all the interviews we recorded for the project: past knowledge of the topic oriented our narrators towards a thematic rather than autobiographic presentation. While preparing for the analysis, I divided the text into narrative episodes. The criterion for defining their boundaries was the transition from one theme to another. This part of the interview, then, has been presented as a sum of the following thematic modules: pre-war childhood, the war's beginning and life in occupied Kyiv, the stay in Germany, resettling in Kyiv after the war, and the autobiographic summary.

The house "at Kozlovka,"¹⁶ where five generations of Aleksandra's family were born and lived, served as the main organizing or compositional element of the interview's first part. At the beginning of the interview, she related that the house does not exist anymore. This drew the temporal boundaries of the main narrative as well as its main thematic component:

But, unfortunately, it doesn't exist anymore. At this place ... ours ... exactly in the place of our little house, so beautiful, so wonderful. Because

everyone was admiring, they visited us. We had this little front yard [sighs], there. [short pause]. Now, this [short pause], precisely on the land where were our little houses, they built two or three monsters [with indignation]. The architect, probably, is not Ukrainian, because he spoiled the landscape of our beautiful wonderful Mariinsky park.¹⁷ Because these monsters, they have detrimental effect on everyone, not only on me. When I saw, I thought I would have a heart attack. Well, this ... God be their judge!¹⁸

During the interview, Aleksandra several times digressed towards continuing to tell the story of her house. Her family on her mother's side twice returned to live in that house after leaving it. The first time, before the war, they left to stay temporarily in a small town in Kyiv *oblast*. The second time, they were in Germany as forced labourers. This motif of return carries the main structuring and plot-forming functions in the first part of the interview, which, as noted earlier, our narrator limited to the story of her childhood years, war, Germany, and the return home.

Before the war, Aleksandra's father had been dispatched to the town of Zdolbuniv. He was soon followed by his wife and daughters. Aleksandra says very little about life in that town. This, however, was the sole theme of her spontaneous narrative in the first part of the interview, during which she recounted an episode related to her childhood memories of her father. This episode was about meeting her father after work when she was four years old and had wandered out to the street. This caused panic among her family and delight and amazement among her neighbours: "Wow, look here, what an adventurous girl! On her own, she went to meet her father!" This episode contrasts with one that follows, about a final parting with her father: "We then left, said our goodbyes to father quickly, at the train station, here. That was it. After that, we never saw him again."

In Kyiv, besides the family on her father's side, before the war Aleksandra had a maternal grandmother and great-grandmother. These were the people whom she, her sisters, and her mother were going to visit when they parted with her father at the train station in the previous episode. They were going to visit them during the summer school vacation, on 18 June 1941. Structurally, the subsequent story about the occupation of Kyiv is organized around the family's return "to Kozlovka" and their life there until they were transported to Germany.

She confines her childhood memories about the German Army's entry into Kyiv to a single comment – "as they marched along the Khreshchatyk."¹⁹ Her first emotionally charged memory of the occupation is related to the escape from the destroyed city centre to her grandparents' house:

After a while ... after some time ... well ... Khreshchatyk began to explode ... And so mama, well, she's packing some stuff so that ... one takes one bag, another one, another. Milochka, the youngest one, grabbed her Jonik, we had a doll, Jonik [short pause], a negro. Here. Lidochka grabbed a pack, me, too – another pack, and so we went running down, running, because everything is exploding, all Khreshchatyk is exploding.²⁰ [Sighs]. Mama also ... some wrapped pack ... because she knew that everything would perish. Yes [sighs] ... So we run out. We are running out, and, here we also have this house, the one where we lived, number 38, it had an arch and the iron gate. And, you see, Germans closed this gate at once. People are pleading, let us go, Khreshchatyk is exploding, and they are not letting. Panic! People are wailing! Children are crying! We, too ... Mother is holding us three, like this. "Stay by me! Stay by me!" So we all stay, stand there. All this in such a terrible state, I cannot even express. But, later, well, these gates open. So, they opened the gate and, well ... and people [short pause] were throwing those packs, were dropping everything only to get out, to escape. Because what if all this explodes. [sighs] Our mama, too ... running, running, along Khreshchatyk, towards the square [short pause] Stalin's square ... So we make it, running, to grandma Katya. Grandma Katya is home, grandpa Vanya [too]. Well. So we came running, that is, all of us, and poor grandma Tanya also limped along ... limping ... because ... she's old. But everyone was running, and so we arrived to Kozlovka. And, of course, grandma Katya took us all in. Well, this is a private house, she has there three or four rooms, that's why she took us all in. So we began to live [there], and Germans were blowing up Khreshchatyk and we were at Kozlovka. All of us started living at Kozlovka. [pause] Well. And then, of course, such horrible times began, that it is impossible to convey, so horrible!²¹

Aleksandra assembles the story of her subsequent life in occupied Kyiv from much less developed and detailed episodes. She tells about the "traditional" survival practices of urban dwellers in the occupied cities, such as forays to the countryside to barter, the difficulties and

dangers involved in these forays, the hunger, illnesses, and deaths of her relatives and friends. She barely mentions her participation in these episodes. This part of her narrative focuses on her mother's experiences. It seems that these, which her mother told her about, rather than her own experiences, formed the foundation of this part of the story. It was her mother who went to the countryside to trade things for food, who saved children from dying of hunger, and who eventually buried Goreva's grandmothers, who died during the occupation. This feature of the story – that it is told through her mother's experiences rather than her own, continues in the thematic module of the narrative that focuses on forced labour in Germany. In terms of analysis, her choice of narrative strategy is noteworthy: she tells the story in the first person and allows herself to be its main character.

The thematic module about German forced labour camps begins with three short episodes: the failed attempt to escape from Kyiv, the raid during which she, her mother, and her sisters were caught, and their transportation to Germany. This last is followed by a description of the Soldau camp, which is offered very briefly and schematically: barracks, guard towers, barbed wire, a distant railway, and big piles of sand, which in her initial explanation were there for protection from fires. A few episodes later, she adds that children played on those sand piles: "We had no toys so we were making something there, some sort of houses."²²

An emotionally charged episode in her account of the labour camp is about the illness of Aleksandra's younger sister. Like the story of the occupation, this is presented through her mother's emotions:

There were cases when children would fall ill, but they did not return to the barracks. That's all, nobody knows. Maybe Germans liquidated them, maybe because [short pause] nobody treated them and they died. But there were [such] cases. And mama was very afraid that she would lose Milochka. But God gave us, He did what he did – ... all three children survived.²³

In this thematic module, the motif of the mother's anxiety (as opposed to a particular act, as was the case with the subtheme of occupation) serves as the narrative's main plot-forming component. Aleksandra continues this strategy as she builds five short episodes that describe the camp in terms of her mother's feelings and anxieties, even though

she also participates in them. In terms of the narrative structure, the first episode of these five carries the central meaning and is the most symbolically and emotionally charged. This episode and its “sequel” conclude the chronologically ordered sequence of the narrative segments of the interview. Each of those segments possesses its own complete plot, with nine-year-old Aleksandra as the main character:

But children²⁴ still bullied us. Children, I remember, one boy ... [short pause], there was this one [sternly], perhaps he was SS, no, not “perhaps,” he was in the SS for sure. So he shouted all the time, like this [threateningly]: “Russische Schweine! Russische Schweine!” – like this, with such contempt. And I ... Well, our Lidochka, she was in general a very tender girl, she was afraid of everything. The oldest daughter. Oh, “daughter” – my sister! She was afraid because mama would say: “Don’t touch anybody, don’t tell anybody anything! Nobody, nothing ...” And I was so boisterous, was a very boisterous chick. I was afraid of nothing. I thought: “If ours come, I’ll do you in!” [angrily] Like that I felt, you understand. Like that.²⁵

In that passage, having marked herself as part of this episode, she stresses her mother’s instructions and her own emotions, which she “lets out” in the final part of this episode. She returns to this episode later in the interview:

And so I met him once on the street. He was a big boy though. He was ... Well, if I was nine – ten years old. No, I wasn’t yet ten, not yet in 1945, when we had already returned to Kyiv, then [I turned] ten. Or was I eight then ... So, well ... I looked at him like this and said ... “Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles ... *Dralis, dralis*”²⁶ [laughs] ... And, I said this word²⁷ entirely, you understand? And then he – at me ... he went all white. And he looked at me like that ... He would have killed me right then and there [loudly]. But I told him all I wanted [calmly]. And I felt so at ease. At ease, because, [it was] as if I had my revenge, for his bullying [weeps]. Oh [sighs], well, these are children – this is just natural. Like that.²⁸

This two-part story, which is central in the narrative about forced labour in Nazi Germany, carries symbolic weight in several ways. First, it carries symbolic meaning, invested by the narrator in the episode and in her experience of being in Germany in general. For the climax

of her story, she chose a succinct and punchy term that children aren't supposed to know or use (the author was too shy to complete the term during the interview). With that term, she summarized her experience not just of forced labour but of the entire war. The "constructed" anti-hero's image also carries a lot of significance. On the one hand, he is a "big boy" (i.e., also a child), whose bullying is somewhat absolved by Aleksandra in her final utterance in this episode: "Well, these are children – this is just natural."²⁹ On the other hand, the description that "he was in the SS for sure" and "would have killed me right then and there" alludes more to the constructed image of the Nazi enemy than to a particular teenage bully who, given his age, might have been a member of Hitlerjugend but could not have been SS.³⁰

The story's significance is found in its functional peculiarities. A structure-forming meaning is carried by the motif, a theme of justice restored. Its cathartic manifestation completes the thematic module of Goreva's story that is dedicated to the war and its place in the autobiographic narrative. The utterance that brings the feeling of ease compensates for the bitterness of the child's hurt and serves as symbolic amends for all her trials of wartime.

Finally, this story is typical from the perspective of the general strategy of self-presentation – namely, the author's compensatory attempt to present herself as a brave, "boisterous" child who could disobey her mother (although this disobedience may have been based on some sort of assurance that she would be able to get away with it, since the episode ends with the arrival of "ours").³¹ Most psychologically significant for the narrator is the justification of her own childhood bravery (let us recall the episode of meeting her father after work, presented earlier, which also took place in the context of transgressing her mother's proscription, but in Aleksandra's narrative resulted in everyone's amazement). Within the framework of the presented narrative, this is the only episode in which the narrator implicitly seeks the audience's approval (one can clearly see and hear in the recording the narrator's expectation of the audience's reaction and the approving laughter of those present). This confirms the episode's emotional and psychological significance.

As was the case with other participants in the project, Aleksandra's preliminary knowledge of the research topic (the experience of forced labour in Germany) led her to conclude her story with the episode of returning home. Although the researchers tried to explain that we wanted to hear about their *entire* lives, the overwhelming majority of our interviewees saw their German experience as our main interest.

This, we think, makes all the more interesting the presence or the absence of evaluations the narrators make of this period of their lives. In Aleksandra's case, these evaluations were entirely absent. She did not characterize her stay in the camp in any way except "very terrible." Conspicuously absent from her main story is any talk of how her time in Germany affected her subsequent life. The difficulties related to settling back in Kyiv after the war she "assigns" to her mother than herself. Only in response to a direct question did she tell a story that indicated her own attitude towards this part of her autobiography. This story that is rich with meanings. In concentrated form, it contains not only a personal but also a societal evaluation of her wartime years in Germany. We will present this story in its entirety.

INTERVIEWER: Had you any incidents? That you were in Germany, sort of ... in your childhood, with *Komsomol*,³² for example ...

ALEKSANDRA: I had. I had. I had lots of incidents. I was kicked out of *Komsomol* [pause] one day.

I: Well, please tell this story.

A: One day, I was kicked out of *Komsomol*. Why was I kicked out? Well, in our house lived this ... [short pause] woman. I know her name, Natalia Ivanovna Kush. [short pause] She was this total *parteika*³³ [with contempt]. She was a *parteika*, you understand, there were different party [short pause] members of the party. There were communists, there were party people, there were workers, there were ... [short pause] there were different people. And she was from those. She came from the evacuation³⁴ and said: "I'll make order here." [pause] She herself was not a Kyevan, she never saw in her life Kyiv or ... [short pause] Ukraine, did not know what it was. [short pause] Such a *katsapura*³⁵ [angrily] ... from those faraway [short pause] places, you understand. But she decided to create her order here. And so [pause]. Well ... this was something like that [short pause]. She had a son. And I, with her son, I told you, that I have a little explosive character. You understand, like that [short pause]. And when I was a girl, and when I was a child, I always wanted to see more and something, and I always paid attention to conversations. If something was not just, I would argue with people – like that I was. Not to get into conflict, but to defend somehow – I am like that. And so this young man, he was several years older than me. And, I think, there was something, that I and he [short pause] we had a fight. There was a physical fight: he and I. Well, naturally, he was two or three years older, and naturally, he punched me in the face real good. But I also gave him a few.

And so they filed a complaint [short pause]. That I, so and so, came from Germany and also started a fight ... And, you know [with the sense of hurt] – they called me up for a trial.³⁶

I: Tried at school?

A: Tried and said that this was petty hooliganism [short pause]. And, really, she has to be punished for such petty hooliganism. [short pause] But he was a man. Well, he was a boy, but he was a future man, and I was a girl, a future woman. Could I have yielded or not, something like that ... No. I was punished. But I, of course, I was in such ... in such a terrible state ... *Komsomol* – it was, it was something [short pause]. My Lord! It was [short pause] a miracle when we were joining *Komsomol* [emotionally]. We were such happy people ... that I was a *Komsomol* member! I was very proud of it [emotionally]. But [sighs] [now] I was in such a state that once I thought: “I’ll jump off the bridge!” And then I thought: “My Lord! My mama, who survived Gestapo, Germans, what has she not survived! Hunger, cold, deaths – and she did nothing like this. And I, only because they kicked me out ... Well, it means that I have to prove [short pause] that you are not that person! Indeed, I have to prove that I am a real *Komsomol* member!” And so I started going to the offices. They took interest. That’s what I am saying – the world has some good people. One woman took interest. She was also a party member, obviously, because it went further, not to the District Committee, but to the City Committee.³⁷ She called up everyone. And, right when I was present, I remember, she said the following: “When you chop wood, splinters fly.³⁸ What are you doing, why are you torturing the child!” [short pause] Well, I already was a teenager then.

I: How old were you, fourteen?

A: Yes. Maybe even fifteen. [short pause] And so my membership was restored. [short pause] I still have, still keep this party card, this *Komsomol* card. As a memento. I proved that I was still a normal person. Obviously, normal people interceded for me. Because the not normal ones, abnormal ones, they [short pause] well ... kicked me out, you know. Kicked me out. “Well, you are not worthy of being a *Komsomol* member, because you are like this and like that.” That’s how it was [short pause]. So, all kinds of things happened.³⁹

What draws attention in this story is that Aleksandra chose a similar narrative logic for her stories about her German experience and its influence on her later life. The main motif of the story of her expulsion from *Komsomol* and restoration of her membership, presented above, is the restoration of justice. This links the story to the episode in which

our character told the German boy “all she wanted.” In both cases, the narrator began by describing the hurt or injustice inflicted on her and concluded with the satisfactory (for her) resolution of the situation.

Both stories reflect the “typical mood” of their time: the “common unofficial” attitude towards the defeat of Germany, and the “solemn-official” attitude towards *Komsomol*. It is known that an individual’s significant autobiographic memories carry the social stereotypes that dominated a given society at the time the event was imprinted in memory. Later, though, people may slightly “correct” their evaluations of their past.⁴⁰ Aleksandra did not re-evaluate either of the described events. But at the personal emotional level, both events were still very important to her. She included in her discourse her own words and thoughts “from that time” in the same form as she uttered them right when the events were taking place, thus stressing their profound psychological importance. Given the features of these recollections, we might regard them as flashbulb memories,⁴¹ or, using the terminology proposed by Veronika Nurkova, as “bright moments of life” that maintain a special “space metric” that corresponds to the age of the person at the moment of the event and to the circumstances of the perception of the situation, in which the “world of experiences” taking place during the event’s “imprinting” is actualized.⁴²

Both events are also important as elements of the narrator’s constructed self-image. Aleksandra describes the features of her character that are important for her self-representation as something that had been formed in her childhood: “boisterous character,” “a little explosive.” These features manifest themselves in situations related to her desire to restore justice: “If something was not just, I would argue with people – like that I was. Not to get into conflict, but to defend somehow – I am like that.”⁴³ At the same time, in the story about the expulsion from *Komsomol*, the motif of “restoration of justice,” serving as the imperative that actualizes her feelings and actions, is manifested by the narrative of the happy ending, that is, her restoration in *Komsomol*. From our perspective, the same imperative determines her unethical utterance regarding the nationality of the mother of the boy with whom she got into a fight. She stresses her ignorance of Kyiv and Ukraine – in other words, her incorrect and unjust treatment of her motherland – and thereby allows herself to use the politically incorrect term *katsapura* (remember here the evaluation of the architect at the beginning of the interview, who is “not our Ukrainian, because he spoiled the landscape of our beautiful wonderful Mariinsky park”).

Both analysed episodes also refer to the narrator's mother, another typical feature of Aleksandra's story. In the story about her expulsion from *Komsomol*, it is quite noticeable how her own experiences in overcoming difficulties track those of her mother. The yearning to be worthy of her mother, who survived the war as well, prompted Aleksandra to start "going to the offices" to prove she was "still a normal person."

In most of the situations related to her life's difficulties, Aleksandra acknowledged the people who helped her resolve them. Regarding her expulsion from *Komsomol*, this help was provided by a woman who "took interest" in her case. However, her importance to the story is not simply that she helped. The narrator invested her benefactor's statement – "When you chop wood, splinters fly. What are you doing, why are you torturing the child!" – with her own attitude towards the German experience as well as with the desired view of the Party institutions on that experience. Thus, her benefactor came to represent this ideal. Like all of our interviewees, she absolutely did not see her time in Germany as a crime or as something that might bring accusations of the type, "So and so came from Germany and also started a fight." In her view, all "normal" people who interceded for her must have seen her stay in Germany just like she did – as something for which a person should not be blamed. It seems that this episode played a decisive role in determining her subsequent behaviour regarding "the fact that she had been on German territory during the war."⁴⁴ She mentioned it in the forms and questionnaires, yet she had thoroughly concealed it from her acquaintances, limiting the "circle of the initiates" to her husband and children:

From my husband I did not conceal. We concealed this from all our acquaintances ... Well, you would tell this to some person, and he would understand this wrong. Other people were saying: "But you went voluntarily. Nobody took you away. You were going, in these, SV, or, what's they are called, coupes."⁴⁵ Try to prove to them that you did not go in a coupe! ... That's why, of course, even my acquaintances, with whom I later was friends, from the "Arsenal" plant – nobody knew that we were in Germany. Only the forms and questionnaires knew that.⁴⁶

Summarizing our observations and discussion about the Aleksandra's autobiographic narrative, we note the following. The main thematic horizon, against which background evolved her autobiographic narrative, was her family, constructed around her family home and the

city of her birth. Her self-representation was oriented towards images of a daughter, wife, and mother; her work or career biography was much less informative. Our narrator assigned to these latter a secondary place in her life's priorities. Throughout the autobiographic material, we can trace her powerful emotional attachment to her mother. Many of her childhood as well as "adult" memories were connected to her mother; indeed, she also represented her mother's point of view on the events she described. This particular feature determined the construction of her story about forced labour in Germany: her personal experience was "mediated" by her mother's anxieties and other feelings.

All of this found concentrated expression in the story about the "big" German bully: both the perception of the event and the overcoming of the hurt appeared in the form of child's "space" so as to actualize "the world of experience" of a child and to demonstrate the logic not of an adult but of a little person. In the main part of the interview, she did not interpret or evaluate her German experiences in terms of their impact on her subsequent life. In a sense, this experience remained "locked" in childhood until the moment she specifically proposed to "work it through." We suggest that this avoidance of any discussion of the consequences of her German experience can be explained by the conflict between this experience and the "family" model of the narrator's self-presentation. Her adult life, in which the actualization of her family roles had been a priority, was not influenced by her stay in Germany. In other words, this experience did not result in any rejection among the narrator's family and her other closest and most significant people. But at the same time, in her interactions with the people beyond her family circle, until recently she had concealed this fact of her biography quite successfully, revealing it only to "forms and questionnaires." This inclusion of traumatic experience in one's shared family story, where such experience is not judged but on the contrary finds compassion, acceptance, and support, represents one way to construct the story of being involved in forced labour in Nazi Germany.

A different strategy of coping with a "German" past and a different form of narrative about it will be examined in the next interview.

Interview with Yevgenii Nikolaevich Rudnev

Biographic information. Yevgenii Nikolaevich Rudnev (Kreizburg) was born in 1937 in the town of Mironovka in the Kyiv region into the family of a professional officer, Nikolai Fiodorovich, and a housewife,

Polina Aleksandrovna Kreizburg. He had an older sister, Liudmila, born in 1930. In 1937, Nikolai was stripped of his rank, but later he was rehabilitated and continued serving in the medical corps. Before the war, the family was living in Kyiv. After a raid on 3 November 1943, Yevgenii, together with his mother and sister, was transported to Germany. A year previous to this, his father had been taken prisoner and shipped to Germany as a POW. In the transit camp in Frankfurt (Oder), the mother was separated from Yevgenii and Liudmila and sent to work at a chemical plant. Her children were sent to a labour camp in Köpenick, then later to Kölnische Heide (both near Berlin).

During their time in Germany, Liudmila worked as manual labourer at the post office and on the railway. Yevgenii cleaned the camp grounds and train station and helped clean away rubble after air raids. After the Soviet Army liberated them, Yevgenii and his sister walked to the city of Landsberg,⁴⁷ where they found their mother again in the filtration camp there. The family returned to Ukraine in September 1945 but were barred from Kyiv and were deported to Mironovka. In 1947, on his parents' advice, Yevgenii changed his last name, Kreizburg, to his mother's maiden name, Rudnev. After graduating from school in 1955, he entered Kyiv Geological Surveyors' trade school. Later, he graduated from the Department of Geology of Kyiv University as an hydro-geologist. He worked in geological surveying expeditions and wrote several works of fiction about his professional experiences. These books brought him public acclaim. Since 1982 he has been a member of the Writers' Union of the USSR. He has been the recipient of several prestigious awards. Since the mid-1990s, he has been a member of the Writers' Union of Ukraine. He defended his Candidate (PhD) Dissertation in 1982 and his DSc Dissertation in 2002, both in hydro-geology. Currently, he works in a research institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He is married and has a son. Since 2000, he has been publishing memoirs about his experiences in Germany in various Ukrainian periodicals.⁴⁸

Like Aleksandra, Yevgenii dedicated the first, free part of the interview mainly to his childhood and to the experience of forced labour in Germany. He began with the story about the "little town of Mironovka in the south of Kyiv region," where he was born and spent the first years of his life. In the mid-1930s, the Kreizburg family ended up in Mironovka as a result of "notorious Army purges," during which the narrator's father was kicked out of the army. According to Yevgenii, his

father's discharge happened not in the least because of his German last name. But in 1939, the elder Kreizburg was reinstated in the army:

He was reinstated ... Reinstated, but! But! Reinstated, alas! Alas, alas – as a private. Here, in 1939, there is a photo, father in military uniform – he has three triangles,⁴⁹ this is senior sergeant. He did not get his rank back! Only when he returned from the Finnish [campaign], mother told, only then he had one triangle. He was sort of starting from scratch. What is most important, he was not allowed to serve in the troops that were connected with military equipment, there. Do you understand? Well, in that form, let's say, is written that he defended Kyiv as a part of the nurse battalion, and he was in charge, mama told, of the company that was responsible for supplies. They were supplying machines and equipment and so on. Yes, and, for example, with the artillery or tanks or motorized infantry, for example, he still was not allowed to deal. Obviously, again, because of his last name. There. Well, now, father ... obviously, he had some connections, yes ... He, that is, again began serving in the Army.⁵⁰

This episode is very important in the following story, which Yevgenii tells about himself. His father, who “was sort of starting from scratch,” and the reason for his repression – a German last name – serve as the foundations for structural and symbolic parallels of the narrator's self-presentation. In this respect, the logic of self-presentation of our two interviewees is similar. Both establish implicit or open parallels with their parents' experiences, which structure their stories about themselves and serve as thematic backdrops for articulating their childhood memories. This is especially so in Aleksandra's interview: the “anchoring” in her mother's experience not only determines the entire autobiographic narrative but also serves as the underlying theme of the post-war stories, which she spent with her mother. Five-year-old Yevgenii parted with his father at the very beginning of the war. In his story about the war years, in two thematic episodes, he attempts to transmit his father's experience while keeping to his own story's chronological order. The first episode he presents from his own experience; the second is based on his mother's words. Only one memory of his father has remained from the beginning of the war:

Remember, that father visited us then in July, several times. Linden trees were blooming already. Yes. Over there ... yes. And he would come in the black *emochka*.⁵¹ That I also remember, yes. And that is what he then

said: "Here, build a special cellar dugout to hide from shrapnel, because Germans may bomb." And so in the yard[s] of these military houses we together dug – well, other families gathered there, yes, and we had dug them, the cellars like that, we had lots of firewood and could saw it, adults did everything and we also helped some. So we made some sort of dugouts, or something, I don't know ... There ... I remember how we sat in them sometimes, and above us, over our heads, the airplanes would fly, they were humming, humming, yes, and they were with crosses, yes ... Yes, this was imprinted, this most likely was, by the smell of blooming linden, which I remember, this most likely was July or beginning of August. After that we never saw our father. Yes. We never saw him. Here, at this stage. There ...⁵²

This way of verbalizing his own recollections constitutes a peculiar feature of Yevgenii's autobiographic narrative. The unification of the narrative and the description are typical. The description – the story about the remembered image, about the bright episode from the past – is the dominant component of all episodes. In Yevgenii's stories, the images are not only visual but also auditory, kinaesthetic, and olfactory, and this lends the picture volume and substance. This approach is exemplified by an episode from the thematic module centred on his time in Germany:

And so, later, that is, when we were liberated, and this was on April twenty-sixth, yes, of 1945. I remember, well, smoke is crawling all over the camp. And our soldiers are running, yes, pulling a machine gun. One is pulling, and more running behind and shouting: "Hide, children, hide!" Yes. And we are not hiding, we are looking at them. And ahead, well, ahead the bridges over the Spree are visible. Well, something like ... from a point of view of a today's geologist I can say, that that was about five, maybe six kilometres away. Yes. It had to be, because I was seeing these outlines. Visually, we can determine the distances. We were taught as geologists how to do this. So ... And also everything ... smoke was coming ... This I remembered, yes ... And ... Well, when, they, this wave has gone, here comes another wave of our soldiers, more than before, yes. And then we rushed towards them, started kissing them, kissing their boots. Yes, exactly, these boots smelled with clay, tar and something unusual, unpleasant, something German. Yes, this I remember, is, like, imprinted. This third smell has imprinted. This smell I have never sensed again. It is a very peculiar, sharp, unpleasant smell. And not only one soldier's [boots],

but the other one's, and the third one's. Where were they, I don't know. But this smell – yes, it stays in memory. There ...⁵³

The second peculiar feature of Rudnev's childhood recollections is their thorough "space organization": he places every episode-snapshot into a precisely drafted space of geographic and material objects/markers such as streets, houses, forests, rivers, buildings of all kinds. In determining the location of different objects as he remembers them, he draws from his present-day professional knowledge and skills:

From a point of view of a today's geologist I can say, that that was about five, maybe six kilometres away. Well, generally, as I see it now, as I flew, as a geologist, all over the Soviet Union, that was not that far. But then, we perceived it as being very far, the Frankfurt (Oder) ... And we had to make it through the east of Germany, from Berlin it was, I looked on the map, already now, it was something like a hundred and twenty – a hundred and sixty kilometres from Berlin to Landsberg.⁵⁴

He tries to provide both the past and the current names of buildings and streets where the described events took place:

Well, and ... this is how I remembered September. Especially that arrival of Germans in Kyiv ... Yes, this was September 19. So we stood with my sister ... then went to Khreshchatyk and so ... here, at Kalinin Square,⁵⁵ where now is the Nezalezhnost' Square, I think this is how it is called now, there then was the Ginzburg house,⁵⁶ the tallest house ... and there gathered ... I think, now there is a fountain ... gathered a huge crowd of people. There. A huge crowd of people gathered there. And I recall, that the Germans were moving in from here, from the Philharmony,⁵⁷ on motorcycles. On motorcycles, and all the asphalt was covered with flower bouquets. Flowers, flowers, flowers – they were covered with flowers. I remember priests in black robes and also, for some reason, women, also in black robes. Why, I don't know. Such a thing [laughs] got carved into my memory. I remember this. And flowers, the sea of flowers ... Yes, these motorcyclists rode, and people threw flowers at them. All their motorcycle sidecars, they were covered with flowers, it was like some blooming field. Yes, this ... I recall how Germans were greeted. Yes. But let's say "Babii Yar"⁵⁸ in Kuznetsov's novel – it is different about that [chuckles] ... But still, this I remember clearly, my sister also remembered ... yes.⁵⁹

Besides localizing the event in a particular space, the presented episode has other organizational features of a “snapshot story” – features of the sort that are also present in other episodes and stories in the interview. For example, there is the narrator’s reference to an “authoritative source” (a well-known book by Anatolii Kuznetsov,⁶⁰ and, later in the interview, to the popular in Soviet times *Memories and Thoughts* by Georgii Zhukov⁶¹), and also to the similar or corroborating recollections of other people (in the presented episode, to his sister’s memories; in other episodes, to those of his mother). These references support the narrator’s own recollections with those of other people who witnessed the events in question (besides bringing these people into a story as characters); they also expand the meaning-forming aspect of the event by including “official” and “expert” testimonies and evaluations, which help legitimize the narrative. In general, Yevgenii’s narrative draws a clear line between his own memories and those of other participants in the events. He often inserts utterances that specify the “authorship” of a given passage: “this I did remember,” “this is what I remember,” “this got imprinted into my memory,” “from mama’s words,” “mother has told me,” “this was told by my sister,” and so on.

The memories of other *Ostarbeiters* occupy a special place in his narrative. Quite often, these people’s stories refer to the stories of other forced labourers whom they knew, for the purpose of corroborating and “factually” supporting their own narrative. Such references are especially typical of introductions to a story or corrections of details such as daily schedules, working conditions, daily life, and so on. This indicates his desire to integrate his personal experience with the experiences of others and thereby turn individual experiences into collective ones. And these references to others’ memories play yet another role. To show what that is, in the concluding episode of the interview, Yevgenii borrows the “other’s” memory in order to facilitate the construction of his own narrative and articulate his own experience:

YEVGENII: She tried never to touch these topics, nothing, to no one ...

INTERVIEWER: Even to you she never told how she worked at this plant?

Y: Only, like, in passing. Yes. It was hard ... only general phrases, air raids, humiliation, rapes ...

I: Even such things happened? By the German guards?

Y: Yes. Yes.

I: Or by our own?

y: Well, she said that there were rapes. Yes. So, she says, God forbid to live through something like that. But she did not like the details, would start crying right away, would start shaking just like Liudmila.

i: Liudmila seems to be holding up pretty well.⁶²

y: Well, because she is not telling everything. I can feel that she would cry, for sure. This is like ... this one should not tell about, especially a woman, for her it is really hard, any woman suffers from it, this is an offence to her feminine dignity. Because Germans, Germans, I know it well, that's what they were doing to girls. They were turning them into animals. They were stripping them naked, it is not even comfortable to talk about this, I remember that.

i: This was when they have medical exams ...

y: What medical exams! This is a joke! What medical exams, it's a camp ...

i: So, the guards?

y: Yes. They had a separate room. They would take them there and harass them, they did to them anything they wanted. Then, they [women] would hang themselves. So you wake tomorrow morning, and two are already hanging. Hanged themselves. Well, of course. Because not every person, not every girl can survive such tortures ... yes. This I remember clearly. It happened many times ...⁶³

In this episode, Yevgenii focuses not so much on the events as on the lives of the former women-*Ostarbeiters*, on his knowledge of harassment and rapes in the camp. He possesses this knowledge, but it is very hard for him to articulate. On the one hand, this is the "other's" knowledge, because he himself did not go through this torture personally. On the other, as indicated by the story, remarks about rape are present in the recollections of his mother, who is a deeply private person for Yevgenii. To help construct the narrative about this experience, he has invoked a third "event carrier," a woman he knows who also participated in forced labour in Germany as a child.

Returning to Yevgenii's story about the beginning of war, note that as a plot, this part of the narrative is organized around stories related to finding food for the family. As in Aleksandra's story (and those of the overwhelming majority of our interviewees), descriptions of barter (*menka*), during which household items, cloth, matches, and so on were traded by the city dwellers for food in the countryside, are prominent.

A notable feature of Yevgenii's story is his desire to examine the war from different angles without concealing the experiences of those who

were close to him. For example, he could have omitted mentioning that his uncle, his mother's brother, went to Germany voluntarily:

Well, naturally, we did not want to go to Germany ... But Nikolai, mom's brother, the Khvorostenko one, born in 1924, he and Shurka Khamaza, there was a third one, I forgot his last name, these three guys. They decided to go. To go voluntarily, yes. Well, this can be explained simply. First of all, there was very strong propaganda, that it was Western Europe, that this is "class," that this is German order, German culture and so on, and so forth ... And all the time they showed films where they showed how well, ostensibly, those Soviet guys and girls who went, lived there. There. And this played its role, I remember that clearly ... Nikolai died in '69, when he was forty-five, and he told me that ... well ... "We went there voluntarily!" There. Voluntarily, well. So, there were [people] like that. Yes, so he, well, went.⁶⁴

With this example of voluntary departure to Germany, which he contrasts with a description of his own forced deportation, Yevgenii begins the second part of his narrative, which focuses on his stay in Germany. In the organization of this module, the short and succinct "snapshot" episodes that are typical of an interview's beginning occupy a much less important place. Yevgenii builds this part of his story in a different way, alternating detailed descriptions of living conditions (the camp's organization, food, clothing, and so on) with elaborate and "complete" stories.

In the organization of these "complete" stories about his time in Germany, the role the narrator allots for himself as a participant draws our attention. Most often, this role is passive. He conveys his own participation in the context of the described events either as determined by external circumstances or as a non-autonomous element within the framework of a collective initiative – together with his sister or with other forced labourers. Against this backdrop, the following story, in which the narrator presents himself as active, acquires a special significance:

There were about six of our soldiers walking in a file and I was the last and, so, we came into this, into this greenhouse, or how should I call it, a flower one or something. So we are walking looking at things, yes. Here, soldiers are talking something among themselves ... and so over there by these vases with flowers, yes ... Everything was so beautiful, aromas everywhere,

sun shines through the glass ... Standing the photos of German soldiers, German officers in these beautiful frames, not just in places, everywhere. Well, I don't know, maybe women worked here and these were husbands, sons, but, still, our troops had gone through here before then, they liberated this [place]. Even Zhukov writes how they stormed Landsberg, his troops ... yes, in his memoirs. But, nonetheless, everything remained. For some reason, somewhere, all this was still standing. Maybe because there was a lot of these flowers, or something. Well, nonetheless. And when I saw these photographs, yes ... I began to crush all this. Crush, yes. Well, Germans, German photos, German officers ...

I: And you, a child, then hated ...

Y: Yes! Terrible hatred, big hatred I had. Yes.

I: It remained from back in Kyiv ...

Y: And in Kyiv, I forgot to tell about this kitchen. But I will.

I: Yes, please, later.

Y: Yes, remind me about this kitchen that [is?] by the Zoo. This is where the hatred comes from, this kitchen and when we were coming back, how a Gestapo car ran over, over here, by the Kerosinnaia, a boy. This I forgot to tell, this I will tell later. Yes. And I started to crush it all. And there, some soldier says: "Kid, stop it! Stop crushing good stuff!" And another says: "Let him let his feelings loose, let him! At least here he'll get even with frites!"⁶⁵

The peculiarity of this story consists in the specific way the narrator conveys his own experience, which has deep emotional importance. In articulating this experience, he uses the "help" of other participants in the event, whom he includes in his narrative: the line, which explains his action as well as his feelings, is expressed not from his own narrative perspective, but through the words of the soldier who observes the event. Yevgenii quite often uses the present tense. This allows both him and the audience to "live through" the narrative, to feel as if it is happening again. But in this case, the direct speech carries another meaning: the narrator conveys his point of view as one that is shared by other people. Also in this episode, we can see clearly the help provided by the interviewer: the words about enormous hatred are a response to the interviewer's prompts. The same with the reference to a later part of the story about the cause of this hatred, the cold-blooded murder of a boy, about which Yevgenii would go into more detail later. This appeal for the interviewer's help, the construction of the story in the form of answers to questions, was noted earlier during the analysis of the story

of the cases of rape. As before, this reflects the narrator's difficulty in articulating these memories.

The beginning of the episode, where Yevgenii says that "everything was so beautiful, aromas everywhere, sun shines through the glass,"⁶⁶ is presented as symbolically important. Here, we are not trying to evaluate Yevgenii's act. For us, the importance lies in how the narrator uses language to articulate his memories. By describing his own hatred towards Germans and how he "let his feelings loose," he is attempting to convey his attitude towards the war in general. To that end, he contrasts the "beauty" with the subsequent destruction. This resort to contrast carries an important compensatory function: the narrator-character symbolically acts the same way that the ones he hates acted, that is, the ones who destroyed the "beauty" of a peaceful life.

Yevgenii's narrative of the post-war years, like Aleksandra's, was largely directed by the interviewer's specific questions. Those questions, in line with the main research topic, returned the narrator to his recollections of wartime Germany. In this part of the interview, in response to a specific question, Yevgenii for the first time talked about his own participation in forced labour, in the context of compensation payments:

Sister worked, yes, and she has received her first [money] transfer, she got it, because she worked, something like a thousand four hundred euros, she told me. She still has to get something in the order of nine or eight hundred euros. But she ... the second one her sons have gotten, in my understanding, because she has died already. So ... I got something like four hundred ninety-nine, and the second one, with addition, something like four hundred and twenty, something like that, yes. She worked, well, as I have told already, at the railway station, she sorted parcels for Germans, German soldiers. There ... In Berlin ... Later, she worked at some sort of factory in Berlin. Yes. But she did not work there for long, she stole something there and this situation was somehow remedied, but she was kicked out. There. And, also, usual work, the clearing of ruins and rubble after the air raids, everybody was forced to do. Everyone, small and old.

I: You, as well?

Y: Yes. Everyone. Absolutely everyone. What they say – that according to German laws of the Third Reich, children younger than twelve did not work. Possibly there was such law! But children worked. Worked. Yes. At the cleaning of the camp, and harvesting turnips, carried those turnips, [they] always gave assignment. There. Turned the piles [of turnip] so that it wouldn't rot. Well, and in taking apart the ruins, of course, children

there ... there ... they did this lightest work. Swept there, if ... there was cleaned, there they swept. Well ... and so on. And adults? Adults [did] harder work: took apart those blocks, carried on stretchers ... There.⁶⁷

As noted earlier, in most cases Yevgenii did not personalize his own experience in Germany. His narrative about himself oriented mainly towards generalizations, that is, towards collective rather than individual experience. In this, and in many other episodes, he showed his interest in modern perspectives on the events in question. He tried to introduce details and corrections to these interpretations; it seems that this is why, in his approach, he followed the logic of generalization rather than personalization. The episode in his narrative that immediately follows the one above, is quite representative:

Well, and about whether or not *Ostarbeiters*, these prisoners, struggled against Nazis? Yes. It took place. This Liudmila told, and I also remember a little myself. Because, say, they put sand in railway carriages' brakes, and they would start to smoke, and, basically, the carriages would break. This has been known for a long time. And this happened, I know, I saw guys doing that. There ...

Let's say, these parcels, as Lyuda told, there they switched. So she worked sorting the parcels that went to the East. To the Eastern Front. Yes. These parcels were switched very often. [They were] asked to switch. Through a chain [of orders]. Where did this come from, from what organization? About this, naturally, nobody asked, but anyway, who would answer there this question? But still, yes this clearly [coughs]. Then, information would come that there and then a carriage blew up. Yes. And generally, [we] calculated, that the cart, in which there was this parcel, blew up. Yes. Naturally, nobody asked what was inside of this parcel. If it needs to be switched, so be it, everyone did it. There ... Well, it is certain, that the majority of these, those who in one way or another were complicit in these acts of sabotage, Germans either would execute right away, or would hand to the Gestapo. Well, this, of course, was also a sure death [short pause]. But this is what everybody took for granted, because everyone knew that the Red Army would be in Berlin any day. There. And it was impossible to live differently, to act differently. Only like that.⁶⁸

This episode contains the peculiarities of Yevgenii's story-building style that were discussed earlier – namely, his intention to provide further, more up-to-date details and to give clear information about the

“author of the recollection,” with corroborating reference to other participants in the event (“This Liudmila told, and I also remember a little myself”). Another noteworthy aspect of this episode is the material that constitutes not so much its factual but rather its “narrative truth,”⁶⁹ which presupposes additional ways to understand the lived event and its importance in Yevgenii’s life. In this episode, the narrative truth, as the episode’s organizing principle, determines the appearance of “*Ostarbeiters’* struggle against Nazis.” Yevgenii here means to demonstrate the courage of the Soviet forced labourers and to imply that an “organization” existed that directed their “struggle.” It also shows the general mood among the *Ostarbeiters*: they knew they would soon be liberated by their own Red Army, and meanwhile, “it was impossible to live differently, to act differently.”⁷⁰

In this, as in other episodes of the interview, Yevgenii proceeded from the contemporary discourse about forced labourers in Nazi Germany, a discourse that revolved semantically around two key images: the fighter and the victim.⁷¹ This episode was one of the narrative’s focal points: in conditions of extreme danger, *Ostarbeiters* struggled against the enemy by all means available. The fighter obviously takes priority in his story, and this is the main difference between his story that of Aleksandra, which is organized mainly around the experience of privation, suffering, and fear, notwithstanding the “fighting spirit” that seems to dominate in her narrative. Another distinctive feature of Yevgenii’s narrative is that he invests his episodes with highly generalized meanings. He strives to present the totality of experience of all *Ostarbeiters*, not just that of himself and his family (as was the case with Aleksandra). Comparing these two autobiographic narratives, we can talk about two distinct strategies of coping with the “German” past, which simultaneously determine the form and the content of the interview. Aleksandra integrated this past into her family history; Yevgenii, into the experience of *all* forced labourers.

In this chapter we have tried to demonstrate how an attentive listener, by analysing the form and structure of the texts of oral historical interviews, can access subsurface networks of thoughts, feelings, and self-presentations of the narrators. Drawing on just two autobiographic narratives, we can discern two distinct strategies of coping with a “German” past. Aleksandra wove her experience fully into the family history; Yevgenii projected his experience as shared by *all* forced labourers.

This might suggest distinct female and male self-representational styles; however, these two styles do not exhaust all of the approaches that former forced labourers took to discussing their lives. Our observations

and speculations here also do not claim to provide an all-encompassing interpretation of the meanings to be found in oral histories. By focusing in depth on the stories of two individuals who experienced forced labour first-hand, we hope we have provided English speakers with an opportunity to follow the experiences of Ukraine's former *Ostarbeiters*, to step into the world of their memories and to witness their skills at reconstructing their personal past.

NOTES

- 1 For a large, detailed, and systematized bibliography on forced labour, see Kühnel and Sydow, "Bibliographie." For oral history about forced labour, see the articles in von Plato, Leh, and Thonfeld, *Hitlers Sklaven* (translated into English as *Hitler's Slaves*). For oral histories of Ukrainian *Ostarbeiter*, see also: Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters"; Grinchenko, "The Shaping of Remembrance"; Grinchenko, "Zwangsarbeit."
- 2 This essay is the revised version of earlier analyses that appeared in Ukrainian and Russian in 2009 and 2010. See Grinchenko, "Prymusova pratsia" and "Prinuditelnyi trud."
- 3 For more on this initiative, see von Plato, Leh, and Thonfeld, "Einleitung."
- 4 The interview with Goreva was video recorded on 22 December 2005. The interview with Rudnev was audio recorded on 22 April 2005. Copies of these materials are in the archive of the Kowalsky Eastern Ukrainian Institute, entry codes FL005 (Goreva) and FL027 (Rudnev). Both interviews were conducted and transcribed by Tetiana Pastushenko. The Goreva interview is 2 hours 30 minutes long, the Rudnev interview, 3 hours 10 minutes.
- 5 Portelli, "Oral History as Genre."
- 6 Rosenthal, "Biographical Research"; Rosenthal, "Reconstruction of Life Stories."
- 7 Grele, "Oral History as Evidence"; Grele, "Movement without Aim."
- 8 For example, see Hoerl, "Episodic Memory"; Curci and Lanciano, "Features of Autobiographical Memory"; Nurkova, "Avtobiograficheskaia Pamiat."
- 9 Krawchenko, "Soviet Ukraine," 15.
- 10 Nazarenko, *Ukrainskaia SSR*, 153.
- 11 Schwarze, *Kinder*, 125.
- 12 Polian, "Ne-pe-re-no-si-mo!," 8.
- 13 Polian, "Ne-pe-re-no-si-mo!," 8.
- 14 Schwarze, *Kinder*, 127.

- 15 The modern city of Działdowo in north-central Poland. In the winter of 1939–40, in Soldau, a *Durchgangslager* for POWs was organized. It was turned into a civilian *Arbeitserziehungslager* in the summer of 1941.
- 16 Name of a street in the Pecherskii district of Kyiv.
- 17 Kyiv's Mariinsky Park, on the Dnieper, is a popular spot for both tourists and residents. It is named after the wife of Emperor Alexander II, Empress Maria Aleksandrovna.
- 18 Goreva (born 1935), interview.
- 19 Khreshchatyk is the main street of downtown Kyiv, as well as the city's oldest street.
- 20 The girls were running "down," because the street goes downhill (translator's note).
- 21 Goreva, interview.
- 22 Goreva, interview.
- 23 Goreva, interview.
- 24 Goreva is referring to local German children, probably members of the Hitler Youth (translator's note).
- 25 Goreva, interview.
- 26 The first part of the quote is, of course, the first line of the Nazi anthem ("Germany, Germany above all"). In the second part, "*dralis, dralis*," which rhymes with "*alles*," means "they brawled, they brawled." This is part of a children's "teasing song" about Nazis. A drunken bully who gets beaten up has been the most popular representation of the enemy both in Soviet "official" satire and in folklore (translator's note).
- 27 This word in Russian is *obosralis* – in English, "shit their pants." The Russian *obosralis* also rhymes with *alles*.
- 28 Goreva, interview.
- 29 Goreva, interview.
- 30 *Schutzstaffel*: the SS, a powerful military organization under Hitler's Nazi Party.
- 31 For example, the Soviet Army.
- 32 The youth branch of the Communist Party (Communist Youth Union), of which everyone had to be a member.
- 33 A career Communist, "apparatchik."
- 34 Deep in the homefront.
- 35 This is a peculiar reference. In Ukraine, "katsap" is a pejorative word for a Russian. Thus, this term, the way she uses it, refers not so much to the ethnicity, but to a complex socio-political status (as if Manitobans or New Brunswickers were to call other Canadians "feds") (translator's note).

- 36 Not a court trial. *Komsomol* had its own system of “comrade trials,” which had no direct (i.e., legal) repercussions but could result in indirect ones, such as expulsion from school, loss of career, and so on (translator’s note).
- 37 Either of the Communist party or of the *Komsomol*.
- 38 This proverb has the same sense as “you can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs.” Here, besides genuine Nazi collaborators, Goreva was referring to innocent people who had been punished after the war.
- 39 Goreva, interview.
- 40 Wallace, “Reconsidering the Life Review,” 120.
- 41 For more on “flashbulb memories,” see Brown and Kulik, “Flashbulb Memories.”
- 42 Nurkova, *Avtobiograficheskaia Pamiat’*, 88–90.
- 43 Goreva, interview.
- 44 This phrase has been placed in quotation marks because it conveys an irony that only (former) Soviet citizens can understand: it is the formula from a much feared mandatory document/questionnaire that all Soviet citizens had to fill out several times in their lives (translator’s note).
- 45 *SV* and *coupe* are relatively expensive and luxurious sleeping accommodations on a train (translator’s note).
- 46 Goreva, interview.
- 47 Present-day Gorzów Wielkopolski in Poland, one of two municipal centres of Województwo Lubuskie.
- 48 See, for example, Rudnev, “Plennoe Detstvo.”
- 49 Until 1942, rank marks were worn on the lapel (translator’s note).
- 50 Rudnev (born 1937), interview.
- 51 *Emochka*, or *Emka*, was the nickname for the Soviet pre-war “people’s car,” the MK-1. At the time most Soviet citizens had never ridden in a car. Thus, any car trip was an event – exciting, or foreboding (translator’s note).
- 52 Rudnev, interview.
- 53 Rudnev, interview.
- 54 Rudnev, interview.
- 55 The main square in Kyiv – now Independence Square (*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*) – in different periods had different names: *Kreshatitskaia*, *Dumskaia*, *Sovetskaia*, and, from 1935 to 1977, Kalinin Square. Before it was renamed Independence Square, it was October Revolution Square.
- 56 Ginzburg House was the first twelve-storey building in Kyiv. It was built in 1912 near Khreshchatyk Street and was named after its owner. In the autumn of 1941, during the retreat of the Soviet Army, it was blown up, along with almost all of Khreshchatyk.

- 57 The building formerly known as the Traders' Club, which was home to the Kyiv State Philharmonic Orchestra before the Second World War. It was one of few buildings in Khreshchatyk that remained standing.
- 58 A mass grave, a place of mass executions of civilians during the Nazi occupation of Kyiv.
- 59 Rudnev, interview.
- 60 Kuznetsov, *Babii Yar*.
- 61 Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i Razmyshleniia*.
- 62 Liudmila Nikolaevna Tarasenko-Zalevskaia, an acquaintance of Rudnev's, who helped collect oral testimonies about forced and slave labour in Nazi Germany.
- 63 Rudnev, interview.
- 64 Rudnev, interview.
- 65 Rudnev, interview. Slang for "Germans" that emerged during the war and is still sometimes heard.
- 66 Rudnev, interview.
- 67 Rudnev, interview.
- 68 Rudnev, interview.
- 69 On "narrative truth," see Benezet, *The Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, 44–5.
- 70 Rudnev, interview.
- 71 For discussion of specific features in the construction of the image of forced labor in Ukrainian Soviet and post-Soviet commemorative culture, see Grinchenko, "The Ostarbeiter."