

I was a Practical Girl - The Ukrainian Diary of my Mother

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SUMMARY

I WAS A PRACTICAL GIRL – The Ukrainian Diary of my Mother For the Jewish Rogosa family, living in the small Southern Ukrainian town Kakhovka, the fateful relationship with Germany began as early as the First World War. German soldiers were quartered in the parents' house in 1918. The parents had such a good relationship with these men that they did not flee from the Nazis in 1941. Their daughter Irina Rogosa, the author's mother, however, entered Berlin in 1945 as a military doctor with the victorious Red Army. In 1974 she emigrated from the Soviet Union to Cologne. She never felt like a victim. She wrote: "Now that I am concluding my life story, I would like to emphasise that I was left completely alone at the age of 22; I lost my father, mother, two brothers, home. But I had my medical profession, which saved my life." A Ukrainian-German search for traces through a life as tragic and eventful as the century itself. The author, Mark Zak, was born 1959 in Ukraine and came to Germany together with his family at the age of 15. In 2002, he recorded a long interview with his mother. When she died, a few years later, he found her diary. On this base he tells the story of the mother as a young woman whose hopes, dreams and ambitions were overtaken by a sudden brutal war - a story that is frighteningly topical today, as tanks are rolling through Kakhovka again.

Speaker



Radio Play Feature Radio Art

The Radio Documentary

I Was a Practical Girl My
mother's Ukrainian diary

Original sound 1 **Dr. Irina Rogosa (I-2.20-2.35)**
(Children's poem, jiddish) That was when I was a toddler:
"Good day Mrs. Meier, how much are the eggs? 8 Pfennig. 8 Pfennig the
eggs? Oh, come on, Mrs. Meier, that's too expensive!" (Laughs)

Music

Speaker **I was a practical girl.**

Original sound 2 **Rogosa (II-5.15-5.40)**
If I could write... I could make so many chapters of my life:
before the war, childhood years, the student years, before the war, after
the war, in the war.

Announcement **My mother's Ukrainian diary.**

A Documentary by Mark Zak.

Author

In 2002, I had recorded a conversation with my mother. Five years later she died at the age of 87. When I was clearing out her flat in Cologne, I discovered, next to old letters, postcards and notes, two writing pads, front and back densely written with her curved handwriting.

Speaker 1 (from the diary)

Мои воспоминания.

AuthorDiaries **Diary and and notes of Irina Rogosa, which I translated from**
Russian into German.

1 Жаль что нет способности описать мой жизненный путь в
литературной форме и всё же попробую писать сухо, хронологично,
позабыв очень, очень многое, но пусть остатки памяти, обрывочно,
только для себя.

Speaker

С чего начать? Может быть с крошечного эпизода, когда мне было 2 года.

Speaker 2

(translation, German)

I am unfortunately not talented enough to describe my life's journey in a literary form and yet: even though I have forgotten much, very much, I would like to write down the rest of the remaining memory, fragment by fragment, just for me, dryly and chronologically. What should I start with? Maybe with a tiny little episode when I was two years old (my mother always told it later with tears in her eyes).

I would say when mother left the house "Mum, you go away. Bring me a piece of bread". That was the famine year of 1921. Millions of people were suffering from hunger in the cities, but in the villages there was still food that could be exchanged for valuables. Mother exchanged her linen headscarf for two kilos of flour.

Speaker 3

3.5 million people were affected by the 1921-22 famine in southern Ukraine alone, caused by civil war, drought and, above all, the economic policies of the Bolshevik dictatorship.

Speaker 2

Our family survived; we rolled cigarettes - father, mother, my three brothers and even me. I took the scissors from one to the other. My mother told me all this.

Original sound 3

Rogosa (I-12.52-13.48)

I was born in a small town, it's not a village, it's a city and it's called Kakhovka. It's not far from Odessa and is on the Dnepr. And the town was... was of course smaller than Cologne, for example. (Laughs) But a location, a health resort. In the summer, many guests come, many tourists. It was beautiful. But it was all before the war...

Interlude Music 1

**The (very well-known) revolutionary song about Kakhovka
(<https://youtu.be/z0sMqkC9FuM>)**

Original sound 4 Rogosa (II-14.47-14.57) (sings a verse) Kakhovka Song.... I have already forgotten.

Author Kakhovka...When she told me about her hometown in 2003, it was unimaginable that after the turmoil of the October Revolution and the devastation of the Second World War, Kakhovka would be occupied once again in March 2022, this time by Putin's army, and Ukraine would once again become the scene of a cruel war.

(Music up)

Speaker 3

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kakhovka was quite a prosperous little town by Russian standards. Situated on the lower Dnepr in the vast steppe of southern Ukraine, it increasingly developed into a prosperous commercial and industrial centre. There were factories for agricultural machinery, steam mills, a brewery and a sawmill. Kakhovka was the largest grain transshipment point on the way to the port of Odessa. In the town there was a hospital, a cinema, two grammar schools, a library. In 1919 around 8000 people lived in Kachowka, more than a third of them Jews.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary
Но вот наступил 1924 год. Из глубины памяти вырисовывается образ плачущей матери и слова отца: "тебе твои сестры дороже твоей семьи- я иду топиться."

2

Then came the year 1924. In the deepest layers of my memory emerge the image of the weeping mother and the words of the father: "Your sisters are dearer to you than your family - I will drown myself."

Speaker

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary И я вижу себя и Борика бегущими за ним с плачем и криками: "папа не надо, папа не надо!"

Speaker 2

And I see me and my brother Boris running after him crying and screaming, "Papa no, Papa leave it!" It all happened because of the cancellation of the visa to America. Mother was desperate, for weeks. All her sisters, four in number, had already emigrated, she was to join them with the family. We were already sitting on the suitcases and even had the so-called "Schifkarta", a large sheet of paper with a picture of an ocean steamer on it. I can still see it clearly in my mind's eye. But then the US passed a new law that stopped immigration from the Soviet Union. "America closed the gates for fear of Bolshevik plague." These words of the father remained in my mind. So did a portrait of Trotsky on some wall and the day Lenin was buried.

I still remember the move to the new house a few years later.

Original sound 5

Irina Rogosa (I-14.34-16.05)

It was a stone house. A stone house, a small one, not so big. Not directly on the street, but in the courtyard.... My father... He makes his own wine from grapes. And then we had a cow... I was afraid of this cow (Laughs) I did everything at home that you have to do. But I couldn't go to the cow. I was afraid... I also had pigs. My father made everything himself. This sausage and Salceson. And everything, everything. Sold half a one and bought new little pigs....

Author

My grandfather, Jakob Rogosa, was a craftsman, worked as a glazier and miller.

Original sound 6

Rogosa (II-0.20-0.43)

From my father the father, the interesting thing is, he has 20 children with 3 wives and all girls, only my father was the smallest and a boy. Otherwise all girls, 20 children.

Author

As a young man, my grandfather was politically active for the Social Revolutionaries, as my mother told me, a left-wing nonMarxist party. After the outbreak of the revolution, he unlocked the mill where he had worked and distributed flour sacks to the population. My mother always told this story with a certain mischievousness; because this mill belonged to his brother-in-law, his sister's husband. After the Bolsheviks came to power, he withdrew from politics.

Original sound 7

Rogosa (II-1.24-2.25)

The father, when he was 9 years old, sat on a pig and went straight to the synagogue with the pig! And that was so terrible. Then the grandfather threw him away. And he was brought up by the older daughter, by my aunt. That was something terrible back then, to go to synagogue with a pig.... My parents were not religious, my father only goes to the synagogue to find an accomplice to play chess with.

Interlude Music 2

(Funny Russian Jewish song about a rabbi from Kakhovka)

<https://youtu.be/yEg4nntB4Sk>

Author

In 1973, my mother was able to leave the Soviet Union with me and my older brother and ended up in Germany more by chance than by choice. She worked for several years as an internist in a hospital in Bavaria before retiring in Cologne. She is also buried here. Her grandchildren were born in Cologne and have German mothers. But the Rogosa family's fateful relationship with Germany and the Germans began during the First World War, when German soldiers were quartered in my grandparents' house in 1918.

3

After the Bolshevik coup in October 1917, later called the "Great October Revolution" by the Soviets, the Ukrainian People's Assembly in Kiev - the Zentralna Rada - declared state independence.

In February 1918, it signed the so-called "Bread Peace" with the Central Powers in Brest-Litovsk. Germany and Austria-Hungary recognised

Speaker

Ukraine as an independent state and undertook to provide military assistance against the Bolsheviks. But the price was high. In return, Ukraine had to deliver one million tons of grain, 50 000 tons of cattle, 400 000 eggs and various raw materials within 6 months. 750 000 German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers marched into Ukraine. On the second of March 1918, the German troops reached Kiev, and a few weeks later Kakhovka. For the Ukrainian peasants, the German occupation was a disaster. The seething mood in the countryside was summed up by the writer Mikhail Bulgakov in his novel THE WHITE GUARD.

Citator

(Bulgakov)

There were 400 000 Germans and around them 40 times 400 000 peasants in whose hearts burned boundless rage. Oh, much, very much had accumulated in those hearts: Cane blows to the face, shrapnel fire against unbending villages, and also certificates on scraps of paper written by the hand of the majors and lieutenants of the German army: "The Russian pig gets 25 marks for the pig bought from him." And the good-natured, disdainful laughter at those who came to the Germans' staff in the city with such certificates. And the requisitioned horses, the confiscated grain....

There was all that.

Speaker 3

Responsible for German policy in Ukraine was the later Minister of the Interior of the Weimar Republic, Lieutenant General Wilhelm Groener. As Chief of the General Staff, he was responsible for political and economic issues. At a lecture in Kiev to German officers, he spoke unequivocally about German war aims.

Citator

(Groener)

We need to create a large economic area from which we can draw food. But not only grain. That is not the only thing, but tremendously much else is added. In this sense, Ukraine is a country occupied by us.... At present, Ukraine is nothing more than an increased German economic territory.... So why we are here is quite clear. Because we use the products for warfare.

Speaker 3

But the Germans also brought law and order to Ukraine to a certain extent. Their presence protected the Jews - in the majority craftsmen and merchants, from pogroms, which were a daily occurrence in those years. It was mainly roving gangs, the tsarist White Army and the Ukrainian nationalists who were responsible for over 1000 pogroms in which up to 150 000 Jews were murdered between 1918 and 1920.

When the German troops finally withdrew from Ukraine in December 1918 after the surrender on the Western Front, the writer Mikhail Koltsov wrote in the newspaper "Svobodnye mysli":

Quoter

(Koltsov) We bid the Germans a silent farewell. There will be no shouts of homage; they were gloomy and unfriendly guests. But neither will there be vituperations; for though they took away our bread with one hand, with the other, the armed hand, they protected our homes and purses, guarded our peaceful sleep in the quiet streets. We promise only one thing: we will remember them for a long time.

Author My grandparents remembered the Germans for a very long time, 23 years. It was a good memory. The billeted soldiers in their house had been simple people who behaved very kindly and correctly. That's why my grandparents didn't flee during the Second World War when the German troops advanced on Kakhovka.

Original sound 8 Rogosa (II-5.46-6.57)
Yes, they don't want to evacuate... because in 1918 there were also Germans from Germany and they were also quartered... stationed... And they were so nice and so good and my parents said why should we evacuate. We are not communists, we are simple people. And the Germans are nice and we don't need to evacuate. And we children were not there. And nobody could say exactly what was coming later, and they stayed.

MUSIC

Speaker 1 (Rogosa (R.) from the diary).
Помню ещё, Боря уговорил меня записаться в еврейскую школу. Аргумент: "если тебя будут бить, я буду тебя защищать." Это на меня очень подействовало.

Speaker 2 Rogosa (D.) from the diary
I remember how my brother Boris persuaded me to enrol in the Jewish primary school. His argument: "If you get beaten up, I can defend you." That sounded very convincing, and I went there with him and was immediately accepted into the second class.

Speaker 3 There was a brief window of opportunity in the young USSR where national minorities were promoted. For example, the Jewish school in Kakhovka was established in 1926 and closed again in 1938.

- Speaker 1 (Rogosa (R.) from the diary).
Часто по дороге со школы сидела девочка с мамой и продавали семечки. Проходя мимо она дразнила нас.
Жидовки, жидовки!
- Speaker 2 (Rogosa (D.) from the diary) On my way to school there was often a girl and her mother sitting selling sunflower seeds. Whenever we passed them, the girl would tease us and shout, "Saujuden! (Swine jews!) Saujuden!" One day she was sitting there without her mother and I took the opportunity to run up to her and beat her up. She started screaming and calling for her mother. But by the time she came running, I was already far away. The feeling of happiness at the small revenge remained in my memory forever.
- Paper*
1928. In front of the house my cousin is sitting on the suitcases, a girl my age. They have been expropriated and are being deported somewhere. Why? Because they belonged to the bourgeoisie.
- Paper*
Summer 1931. Father has been arrested. A neighbour swore at him for allegedly possessing gold (citizens had to hand over their gold to the state). Thanks to Moissey (my second eldest brother) who did military service and spoke to his commanding officer, father was released.
- Paper*
1933: Another famine (artificially induced, as it turned out later). Mother was working at the grain elevator in the harbour. I can see it before my eyes, how she comes home in father's trousers and takes off the trousers that were tied together at the feet beforehand. Corn falls out of them, which father later ground in the mill. Mother cooked polenta from it. The aversion to maize remained with me for life. Food parcels from America saved us from starvation.

Speaker 3 According to calculations by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, excess mortality during the Holodomor, the famine catastrophe in 1932-1933, which occurred partly as a result of forced collectivisation, amounted to almost 4 million people. More than 10% of the total population died of hunger, especially in rural areas.

Speaker 1 Rogosa (R.) from the diary
1933 год. Окончила еврейскую 7-летку с отличием. Получила от дирекции подарок- собрание сочинений Тараса Шевченко и очень гордилась этим. Было материально очень трудно, пошла работать на элеватор.

Speaker 2 Rogosa (D.) from the diary
In 1933 I finished the Jewish seven-class school with honours and received a book by Taras Shevchenko as a gift from the management. I was very proud of it. Financially we were doing very badly and I started working at the grain elevator. Proudly brought home my first wage. But then mother happened to meet my teacher on the street. The teacher was very disappointed, "What?! Your daughter is so talented. She really needs to keep studying." Which I did. I went to the eighth grade at the Ukrainian school.

MUSIC

In 1936 I finished the ten grade school. I would have liked to go to a drama school, but there was no money to go elsewhere and set up there, and besides, none of the adults took any interest in my fate.

Original sound 9

Rogosa (I-6.28-7.00)

I was still a practical girl when I was very young and then I thought ... I wanted to be a singer. But I thought a singer had to be extra beautiful and I wasn't so extra beautiful. And then my mother also wanted me to be a doctor, "woman-doctor", she says. And that's practical and I'm very happy that I was a doctor....

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

1936 год. Это был первый выпуск десятилетки в Каховке. Было очень трудно готовиться к экзаменам так мама уехала к Сене в Луганск и на мне осталась всё хозяйство (свинья, корова, куры и братья).

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

1936: We were the first graduates of the Ukrainian Ten Class School. I had great difficulty preparing for the exam; mother visited Moissey in Luhansk and the whole household (the pig, the cow, the chickens and the brothers) was left to me, even though father helped, of course. And still I had "excellent" in all subjects (except physics and drawing).

MUSIC

When I took the exams for medical school, Boris helped me with physics. I remember the joy when I found my name in the list of accepted applicants. Out of 4000, 1000 were accepted, and of the 1000, only 250 graduated. So I became a student at the Odessa Medical School in 1936, without a kopeck in my pocket.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

Учёба в институте давались легко, получала стипендию 250 рублей. Один раз в месяц разрешала себе стакан сельтерской с пирожное.

Speaker

2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

It was easy for me to study. I got a scholarship - 250 roubles. Once a month I afforded myself a lemonade and a piece of cake. I went to the theatre and the opera, at the expense of lunch, and usually with a clique of fellow students. I had many "admirers", but I bought my tickets with my own money.

They say the best years of life are the student years. And that was true. I had no worries, lots of friends and acquaintances, performed at student nights. My voice was very strong, but it was not trained, I would have had to work on it. For a while I attended the conservatoire on my days off, but soon stopped; for affairs of love and heart, plus my studies, took up all my time.

One evening, when I was very hungry (the small scholarship had already been used up), I wrote a letter home: "You are probably eating a roast and I am sitting there hungry..." I was immediately sorry and wanted to get the letter out of the post box again, but it was too late. The result: three days later my mother came, bought me a school bag and a scarf, gave me some money and life was fun again.

MUSIC

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

1939 год был для меня самым счастливым- я влюбилась (первый и последний раз) . Он приехал из Ленинграда.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

The year 1939 was the happiest in my life. I fell in love (for the first and last time). He came from Leningrad.

Author

I know from stories that the young man, a Russian-German, an

Speaker

1 engineer by profession, travelled around Ukraine on his motorbike.
Rogosa (R.) from the diary
Мы познакомились в Каховке на пляже. Я приехала на каникулы
домой. Это было самое лучшее для меня время.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary
We met on the beach in Kakhovka (I spent the holidays at home). That
was my most beautiful time. He went away again, but our love did not
cool down. He visited me in Odessa (I didn't go home for the winter
holidays). He wanted me to continue my medical studies in Leningrad, but
I was afraid that studying there would be more difficult and decided to
stay in Odessa to finish my studies there in
1941. But then the war began. There was no more correspondence. After
the war I looked for him, but in vain.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary
Война - и всё пошло вверх тормашками. Вся жизнь, мечты, всё пошло
собаке под хвост.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary
The war began and everything went haywire. All life, dreams, everything
went down the drain; no emotions, everything inside me froze, I didn't
care about anything.
Evacuation, conscription into the army, work in the military hospitals,
fleeting encounters, towns, villages, later Germany.

Sound

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary
6 часов утра, 22 июня 1941 года. Лежу в постели и хочу посмотреть
конспект по хирургии- последний экзамен.

Speaker

2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

6 a.m., 22 June 1941. I am still in bed, but want to get up and continue preparing for my last exam - surgery, on 26 June. The girls who share my room in the dormitory are still asleep, but the loudspeaker of the radio is turned on softly. And suddenly Levitan's voice is heard: " ...German troops have invaded our country without a declaration of war..."

Recording 6

Original voice of Levitans: Start of the war
<https://youtu.be/kCpHy4HAYcc>

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

Никакого страха Практические мысли: надо отправить посылку с вещами домой, не забыть попрощаться с Манечкой и Бертой.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

I feel no fear. I have practical thoughts: sending a parcel home with my things, not forgetting to say goodbye to Manja and Bertha. The next thought: "To hell with surgery, I'm going to the beach. And I have to invite Ljusik, my fellow student, for breakfast, he has no money at all. The next few days - a feeling of uncertainty. But I already have an assignment to a hospital in the Donbass, in the small town of Krasnyj Lutsch.

Original soundtrack 10

Rogosa (I-7.56-8.41) The last exam was already on 29 June and the war started on 22 June. The last exam was already during the war. Then I went to Donbass for another three months. I was already working there as a doctor.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

29 июня- последний экзамен в хирургической клинике на Слободке.

2 Rogosa (D.) from the diary

Speaker

On 29 June the last exam takes place at the surgery clinic. I just manage to pick up my diploma and the travel permit to the workplace from the secretary's office and send the parcel with my belongings to Kachowka. With a small suitcase in my hand, I leave for Krasnyj Lutsch on 1 July.

MUSIC

Write a letter to Semyon to help the parents to come to him and also go to him. No mail from Boris and Moissej, I don't know what's going on with them. No information comes from Kakhovka either.

I learn from the director of the hospital that our hospital is to be evacuated immediately. I still have the presence of mind to take a glass balloon with spirit, which should save our lives later, and drive to Semyon in Lugansk. You can already hear the bomb explosions clearly. Irina Borisowna (his wife) slaughters another piglet to take home. The last train heading east had already left. But we make a deal with a lorry driver who takes us as far as the Volga. There we continue by ship, but after 24 hours the ship was frozen in the river ice. We continue by train. Spend the night at the railway station (good that we have blankets with us). In the morning, while we are putting our things on the train (in the cattle cars), my bag is stolen in all the confusion, with all the documents and photo albums.

I only own what I have on, coat, boots. With the trucks going in that direction (thank spirit!) and in the cattle cars, we finally reached Tashkent. The public health authority ordered me to Tash-Kumir as head of the sanitary-epidemiological station. Semyon stayed behind in Tashkent in the hope of finding a job. Because of his eye weakness, he could not be called up for army service. Irina Borisovna and I went to Tash-Kumir. There we were received by the head of the settlement - a sympathetic Kyrgyz (or Uzbek) who personally escorted us to a small kitchen where we settled (there were no flats). But we were happy, so much, so that in the evening we laughed heartily over trifles.

Original sound 11

Rogosa (I-8.48-9.15)

And in '43 I was mobilised into the troops. I was in a hospital for surgery.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

Мобилизация в 1943 году. Направили в Москву на курсы усовершенствования хирургией.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

1943 Advanced training course in surgery in Moscow and being called up for military service at the front. I remember the nettle soup, the hospital, the encirclement. We escaped on foot at night; the horse-drawn carriages only transported the sick and wounded. 1943 Start of the campaign to Germany, Poland (Peremyschl, Krakow).

Original sound 12

Rogosa (I-9.37-10.43) Yes, yes, we were in Germany, in East

Germany. From Krakow, from Poland, we went to Dresden. We were in Dresden. Let's see old Dresden, such a beautiful city.

And Berlin, East Berlin. And then we were in the Reichstag.

O-Tone

13Irina Rogosa (I-11.10-11.58) And with us were the German troops, the German officers and soldiers were with us as wounded. And I had been on duty once and suddenly they called me to these soldiers. One of them was sick, an officer was sick, I was on duty then and I come. And suddenly: "Attention" and I was so frightened! Yes, yes. (Laughs)

Music

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

Новое увлечение: майор разведки. С ним встречала новый 1946 год. С ним и приехала во Львов после демобилизации.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

A new passion: a major in the Military Intelligence Service. I celebrated the New Year 1946 with him. I also came to Lviv with him in 1946 after demobilisation. He was married, but he wanted a divorce and went to his wife. I had thought he would stay with his family and met another man (also a major) and married him. But the other man came back after he divorced his wife. And that's when I saw a man cry for the first time in my life. He was in despair because I was married. (If he had written a few lines at least once, I would have waited for him, of course. But nothing came from him. And when he returned, it was too late.)

(CEST)

In 1946 I wrote many letters to Kakhovka without getting an answer.

Original sound 14

Irina Rogosa (II-7.31-8.15)

My parents, they were... an old well without water, very deep, and then they threw them into the well alive...

Typewriter

Speaker 3: Testimony of Police Sergeant Richard Tögel, member of Police Battalion 9, member of Einsatzkommando 10a.

Citator (Richard Tögel)
Another incident I remember was a large-scale shooting at a well near Kachowka. We Schutzpolizisten were driven to this well in the squad car. The victims - there were several hundred of them, it could even have been a thousand men and women - were driven there in lorries. I can't remember any children at the moment. The people who were brought in had to lie or kneel in a hollow washed out by the rain about 100 metres away from the well and had to take off their outer clothing there. At any one time about 10 people were placed at the edge of the well and shot in the back by a firing squad of equal strength, including myself. After being shot, the people fell forward into the well. It also happened that some jumped in alive out of fear. The firing squad was changed several times. Because of the mental strain to which I too was subjected, I can no longer say with the best will in the world how often I stood at the pit and how often I was allowed to step back. One can imagine that these shootings did not take place as calmly as they can be discussed today. The women screamed and cried, as did the men. Sometimes there were attempts to escape. The herders shouted just as loudly. If the victims did not want to be beaten as they should, they were beaten. I particularly remember a redhaired SD man who always had a piece of cable with him, and if the action didn't go as it should, he hit people with it. In many cases, however, they came to the execution site voluntarily. They had no other choice. [...] The execution site looked horrible. There was a lot of blood on the edge of the well, and there were probably also parts of the brain lying on the ground. The victims had to step into it when they were led to it. But it was not only there that they realised what was

about to happen to them; they could already hear the shooting and the screams from their campsite. [...]

The shooting lasted barely an afternoon until the last victim was in the well. I remember very well from this execution that the SD men were drunk afterwards and therefore had to be given a special allotment of schnapps. We Schutzpolizisten got nothing, and I remember that we were very upset about it.

Author Richard Tögel was never prosecuted for his crimes. The case against him was dropped on 19 May 1965.

Original sound 15 **Irina Rogosa (II-8.24-9.57)**
Behind the city, behind the city, but I wasn't there, I couldn't....

Speaker 2 Rogosa (D.) from the diary
1946. Together with my husband I go to Kakhovka, both of us still wearing our uniforms. First I go to our neighbour Uncle Kostja - that's what we called him as children. He worked as a ticket inspector at the open-air cinema in our yard and always let us children go to the screenings without money.
He told us that the Ukrainian policeman who had picked up my parents had been killed in a punishment battalion in the meantime.

Original sound But his family was now living in our house.
15Irina Rogosa (II-8.24-9.57) ..
. I still come to Kachowka and I still see the family of this policeman living in our house.

Speaker 2 (from the diary)
After they heard about my arrival in Kachowka, they quickly hung our family photo above the bed.

Original sound **16Irina Rogosa (II-8.24-9.57)**
And I was so angry that I wanted to, I say I already live in Lvov, but I say I stay here in my house (and threw everything away through the window)....

Speaker 2 I did not cry. The desire for revenge overwhelmed me.

Original sound 16

...and then I threw everything I could pick up, I threw everything off the bed and I threw the chair through the window.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

It was drizzling and I was incessantly throwing things on the street and saying that I was now staying here. After I explained that I was going to set fire to the house where I had found our things, my husband got scared and went to the jetty.

Original sound

17Irina Rogosa (II-8.24-9.57)

And the mother screams and she tells the daughter;" Call the police!" I thought, you have to drive away, this can't be good, then I drove away (laughs)

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

I calmed down a bit and also went to the landing stage. We left and I never returned to Kachowka.

Music accent

Speaker 3

20 November 1941. Order of Field Marshal Erich von Manstein to the 11th Army, which was in action in southern Ukraine, i.e. also in Kachowka.

Citator

(von Manstein)

Since 22.6. the German people have been engaged in a struggle for life and death against the Bolshevik system. This struggle is not being waged in the traditional manner against the Soviet Wehrmacht solely according to European rules of war. Fighting continues behind the front as well.... The Jewish-Bolshevik system must be eradicated once and for all. The German soldier therefore has not only the task of smashing the military means of power of this system. He also acts as the bearer of a völkisch idea and avenger for all the cruelties inflicted on him and the German people.... For the necessity of the hard atonement on Jewry, the spiritual bearer of the Bolshevik terror, the soldier must have understanding. It is also necessary in order to nip in the bud all uprisings, most of which are instigated by Jews."

Speaker 3

Von Manstein was sentenced to 18 years in prison as a war criminal in 1949, but was released as early as 1953. Afterwards, he worked as an unofficial advisor to the German government on the formation of a new army for the Bundeswehr. Von Manstein died in 1973 and was buried with military honours.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

Борис был у дяди Кости ночью, они его накормили, переодели и ушёл. С тех пор о нем ничего не знаю.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary Uncle Kostya told us that Boris came to see them one night. They gave him new clothes and food, then he left.

That was the last I heard about my brother. His fate remained unknown.

Author

In 2008, a year after my mother's death, I travelled to Kakhovka with my older brother Boris, who is named after this uncle. We found out that Boris Rogosa was shot there by the fascists in the autumn of 1941 with some other captured Red Army soldiers. What was he doing there?

Had he deserted from his unit to save his parents? They had already been killed by then. Did a neighbour watch him and betray him? Did he come across a patrol in the night? These questions can no longer be answered.

My uncle Moissey did not survive the war either. He was drafted into the Red Army and is considered missing.

Speaker 2 Now that I am concluding my life story, I would like to emphasise that I was left completely alone at the age of 22; I lost my father, mother, two brothers and home. But I had my medical profession, which saved my life.

Steppe wind

Author There was a memorial plaque at the well where my grandparents were killed with about 1000 other people. My brother and I, following a Jewish tradition, laid small stones on the mass grave and read from a leaf Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, accompanied by a fierce steppe wind. Two non-believing Jews read a prayer at the place where their non-believing grandparents were killed. According to religious rules, this prayer may only be said in the presence of at least 10 other Jewish men. The Jewish God, if he exists, this God who allowed the Second World War to happen, will certainly not be angry about this.

Speaker 3 2022, tanks are rolling through Kakhovka again. Putin's army is invading Ukraine, bombing towns and villages and waging a merciless battle against the civilian population. Once again, countless innocent people find their deaths.

Mikhail Bulgakov, a native of Kiev, writes in his 1923 novel THE WHITE GUARD:

Quoter

(Bulgakov):

"Girls' braids dragging in the snow, bullet wounds, wild animals howling in the night, frost... Yes, all that had been. But what had it been for? No one can say. Will anyone pay for the blood spilt? No, no one. The snow will thaw, the green Ukrainian grass will grow and cover the earth, the seeds will spring up luxuriantly, heat waves will flicker above, and no blood will be seen. Blood is cheap in these red-gold fields, and no one will pay for it. No one.

Speaker 1

Rogosa (R.) from the diary

1946 год, работаю в 7-ой поликлинике. Мы с мужем расстались так его направили в Ростов на работу.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

In 1946 I was working in Lviv (Lemberg) in polyclinic No.7. My husband was transferred to Rostov and we separated. So within a year I managed to lose two people close to me, but it didn't make me very sad; I was young and had no deeper feelings for them.

After that I had some fleeting encounters, but no love.

The main thing was: I sang. And I sang well - or so they said. I started taking lessons from a Polish actress. She claimed that in three years I could swap being a doctor for being a professional singer. But she soon emigrated to Poland.

Author

As a small child, I remember my mother singing Russian, Ukrainian and Yiddish songs at parties and celebrations. This song, especially the first verse of it, she sang particularly soulfully.

Music

Russian Rowboat Song

Author

"We went for a ride in a little gold-coloured rowboat, but we didn't row, we kissed," the song says.

Her eyes took on, for me as a child, an enigmatic, yearning, dreamy expression when she sang the song. Only when I read her notes did I understand what and who she was thinking of when she sang this song.

Speaker 2

Rogosa (D.) from the diary

Above all, I remember the negative very clearly and distinctly. And only one beautiful moment has burned itself into my memory in a similarly strong way: Kakhovka. I am 20 years old. My first (and last) love. We want to get into a rowing boat and he lifts me, as if I weighed nothing, into his arms (he was tall and strong) and lowers me down in the boat. I was happy with him, but that moment, that moment was the happiest of my whole life

Music

Russian Rowboat Song

Cancellation

I was a practical girl
My mother's Ukrainian diary
A documentary by Mark Zak

Original sound 18

Rogosa (I-9.37-10.43) And Berlin, East Berlin. And then we were in the Reichstag and then the soldiers take me upstairs and I still write my name and first name, at the Reichstag, I was still there... and.... Now, of course, everything is gone (laughs).

Cancellation

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