

February 5, 2012

The photograph below portrays people in a forest, among them several men in dark uniforms, several in lighter uniforms, as well as civilians.



My mother, Zahava Tauber (née Zofia Zorn; born in Boryslaw, 1927; a resident of Rehovot from 1951; deceased in 1987), showed me this picture more than 40 years ago. According to her, it was taken in a forest near Boryslaw: it features German officers and Ukrainian policemen gathering Jews who had been hiding in bunkers in the woods. My mother, a Holocaust survivor, recognized herself (as a 17-year old woman) in the picture. To the best of my understanding, most of the Jews in the photo were transported to Auschwitz a few days after they were captured in the forest.

The photo was used as evidence in a trial against a Ukrainian collaborator, accused and sentenced in Poland in the 1950s or early 1960s. Yocheved Zobel (Chevka; née Eidman-Weiss; born in Boryslaw; a resident of Walbrzych, Poland, after the war), the wife of my mother's father, Chaim Zobel, was one of the prosecution witnesses in that trial. After the trial, she sent this photo to my mother in Israel.

My aunt, Wanda Wincygster (née Fanka-Wanda Zobel; born in Boryslaw, 1934, a resident of Holon; passed away in October 2010), in her recorded testimony to Yad VaShem (July 19, 2009), described an event in which Jews were captured in a forest near Boryslaw, as follows:

"We were rather deep in the forest; we had some hiding place there too—another bunker, which my father began digging and building, but it was still open on top. It wasn't long after we fled from the first bunker to the second, that a farmer, from whom my father had bought food, turned us in together with other Jews hiding in the area. He arrived at our hiding place with the Germans and the Ukrainian police,

accompanied by dogs. The Germans and the policemen took us. We thought we would be led directly to the Boryslaw slaughterhouse, where they would shoot us, but to our surprise, we were led to the *Lager* which had previously served as a labor camp."

I assume this was a few days prior to the departure of the last transport of Boryslaw Jews to Auschwitz (on July 21, 1944, to the best of my knowledge), approximately 3 weeks preceding Boryslaw's liberation by the Red Army (on August 7, 1944).

Since the photo served as evidence in a trial against a Ukrainian collaborator (who, after the war, pretended to be Polish and, probably through the procedure of repatriation, emigrated from Ukraine [Galicia – Boryslaw-Drohobycz] to Poland, where he was captured, charged, convicted, and sentenced), I believe that his face is clearly recognizable in the picture. According to Dr. Daniel Uziel, Director of the Photo Archives at Yad Vashem, the uniformed man on the left is an SS-Mann. To my understanding, the soldiers in (relatively) light uniforms were in the *Schutzpolizei*, and those in dark uniforms (at the right side of the picture) were Ukrainian policemen, Nazi collaborators.

In April 2011, Ms. Daniela Mavor sent this picture to members of the Organization of Drohobycz, Boryslaw and Vicinity Survivors and Descendants. Mrs. Bronya Halmut (Halpern), currently a resident of Holon, recognized herself clearly in the picture – the woman in the front (center-right). Her husband, Mr. Gershon-Gustak Halmut (Halpern), who was also captured during the same incident, yet managed to flee and hide again, confirmed the identification. Mr. Chaim-Harry Segal (currently a resident of Toronto), who as a 13-year old boy hid in a bunker with the Halmut (Halpern) couple, identified Mrs. Halmut in the picture as well.

Zvi Tauber