

From Danek Gerhner's Memoirs on How the Local Priests Took Part in Inciting Ukrainians Perpetrators

We received reports from villages in the high mountains that initially struck us as hard to believe. The Hutsuls in the village of Jablonica, part of a mountain-dwelling Ukrainian group that had always lived in peace and harmony with the Jews, had seized the Jews in the village, locked them in a cellar on the pretext that the Romanians were coming to exterminate them, and herded them into the torrential Cheremosh River, where they all drowned. The man who had instigated this crime was reportedly the village priest. Only one Jewish woman survived; she fled to Kosov after the culprits had gone away. The next day the Hutsuls entered the neighboring village. To assure that no one would escape, they bound the Jews in barbed wire, in groups of three, before they tossed them into the rushing waters. There were seventy-four victims. The murderers looted everything they had left behind.

Having completed their slaughter in the neighboring village, they went on to nearby Hriniowa. The Hutsuls who lived there, however, would not let them enter the village, maintaining that the killing of Jews was a matter for those native to the village, not for outsiders. In Hriniowa, no Jews were murdered; the local Hutsuls merely drove them from the village to Zabie and then looted their possessions.

In Kosov, Hutsuls recounted what their priest had said about this in his sermon: those from Jablonica were much liked in the eyes of God, because they had both dispossessed *and* drowned the Jews; they would certainly be rewarded with Paradise. But the Hutsuls from Hriniowa, the priest intoned, would not enter the Garden of Eden. Yes, they had totally dispossessed the Jews but, for having been so neglectful as to spare their lives, would surely go to hell.

At this time, the Ukrainian militia herded together all the Jews in the village of Richka and locked them up in the Kosov jail. Engineer Kahane and I visited the militia commander, Koshok, and asked him to release the captives immediately. Enraged, he shouted at us: "You interfere everywhere! We'll take

care of you people! What's happening here is our political affair. If you meddle in this matter just once more, we'll deal with you the same way."

Until then, no one had dared to speak to us in this tone of voice. So we appealed to the Hungarian officer, who immediately had the Jews released. In response, the Ukrainians complained to the Germans that the Hungarians were supporting the Jews and, thereby, undermining the process of their destruction. The upshot was that the Germans replaced the Hungarians with military police of their own.

From: **Gerthner J, Gerthner D, *Home is no More, the Destruction of the Jews of Kosow and Zabie*, Jerusalem, 2000 pp.72-73**