



Polish-Jewish
STUDIES

Polish-Jewish STUDIES

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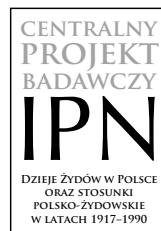
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INTRODUCTION

As in the previous two volumes of Polish-Jewish Studies, the subject of Polish-Jewish relations appears in this third volume. This time, most of the texts deal with the period of the German occupation. German anti-Jewish policy, the Holocaust and its consequences – these are issues that continue to absorb many researchers around the world. The texts collected in this volume are included in four sections: Studies, Sources, Reviews/Polemics and Chronicle. The Polish and English versions differ slightly from each other. Two articles previously published in Polish have been included in the English volume.

The Studies section opens with Michał Przybylak's article, "Following a Polish Trail. Poland's Military Cooperation with the Movement of Revisionist Zionists Before World War Two." The author presents a little-known storyline in the history of Polish-Jewish relations concerning Polish material and training aid given to the Revisionist Zionist movement, which took the form, for example, of training in the Kocierska Pass and exercises in Trochenbrod, organised for Jews by the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training. Pre-war military cooperation and the experience gained proved invaluable in the post-war Jewish struggle for their own state in Palestine.

Wojciech Wichert's article "The Political and Administrative System of the General Governorate in 1939–1945" introduces to the occupation theme. The author draws attention to the place of the General Governorate in German plans for the Polish lands and describes the structure and competences of the German administration in the General Governorate, including that of Governor General Hans Frank and the policy of exploitation and extermination of the conquered population. Another text deals with the destruction of Jewish identity and culture by the Germans during the Second World War. In his sketch "The Autumn of Burning Synagogues. One of the Consequences of Germany's Invasion of Poland in 1939", Grzegorz Berendt draws attention to the fate of Jewish places of worship in occupied Polish territory. The core of Nazi hatred of the Jews and, consequently, anti-Jewish violence was, as this researcher states, "hostility to their religion and, consequently, to the institutions that were its carriers," i.e. synagogues and houses of prayer. The historian complements this correct argument with another equally important statement that only the destruction of the Polish state enabled the Germans to eliminate Jewish material culture physically. According to Berendt's findings, between 15 and 30 per cent of synagogues were burnt down between September and November 1939. In addition, about 25 per cent of the buildings were demolished without first being burnt. In total, more than 50 per cent of the buildings were destroyed, mostly between 1939 and 1941.

The issue of the participation of collaborators with the Germans in the extermination of Jews in the former Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland is the subject of articles by Tomasz Gonet, "The Participation of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (*Ukrainische Hilfspolizei*) in the Extermination of Jews in the Municipality of Łysiec in Stanyslaviv County in 1941–1943," and by Wojciech Hanus "Activity of the *Volksdeutsche* Władysław Seredyński and his Son Roman in Light of the Surviving Files from a Criminal Case Tried under the August Decree. A Contribution to the History of the German Occupation of the Lubaczów Land." Tomasz Gonet's research shows that "the participation of Ukrainian policemen in the various phases of the extermination of the local Jewish community was significant." Based on available archival material, the author meticulously describes the involvement of Ukrainian Auxiliary Police officers in the Holocaust and the scale of the tasks they carried out. Wojciech Hanus takes up a similar theme in

a case study from Lubaczów. He mainly describes the attempts to bring the two *Volksdeutsche* (Seredyński father and son) to justice and their trial.

The historical analysis of Jewish recollections of the Holocaust, undertaken in the second volume of *Polish-Jewish Studies*, is referred to in this volume by Roman Gieroń in his article “The Story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s Rescue During the German Occupation. A Reconstruction Attempt.” The researcher, investigating Grossfeld’s fate and confronting it with the available sources, concludes that his wartime story often raises significant doubts about the objectivity of the reported facts.

Maciej Korcuć’s article “The Real Price of Helping Jews under German Terror. A Few Family Histories from the Environs of Cracow” reflects on the horror of the German occupation. It discusses the hiding of the Kołatacz family by Poles near Cracow. The author discusses the legal conditions imposed by the German authorities and demonstrates how they played a decisive role in Polish-Jewish relations. Korcuć describes his research position as follows: “This is not a text about Polish-Jewish or Jewish-Polish relations. It is a story about the fate of the citizens of the Republic of Poland subjected by the German occupier to a policy of terror and racial segregation. About the fate of people subjected to totalitarian enslavement. About the attempted survival and heroism of entire families during the inhumane practices of the German terror apparatus. It is a story about ordinary inhabitants of villages near Cracow who became criminals according to the Reich’s imposed laws.”

The subject of post-war Polish-Jewish relations is reflected in Jakub Tyszkiewicz’s sketch “The Pogrom in Kielce as Reported by Opinion-Making US Newspapers in 1946 (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*).” By reading the three American newspapers mentioned in the title, the author was able to conclude that “the events, especially those that happened in the first days after the pogrom, were reported from the point of view of the communist authorities in Poland.” Primate August Hlond’s speech was also vividly discussed.

Dominik Flisiak’s text “Attempt at a Political Biography of Shlomo Nahum Perla. The Activity of Revisionist Zionists in the First Years of Post-War Poland” it’s the penultimate article in the Studies section. Against the background of the activities of the Zionist movement, the author presents the figure of Shlomo Perla – one of the most important activists of the Zionist right in Poland. This section concludes

with a text by Magdalena Semczyszyn, dealing with the actions of the security apparatus directed against the Jewish community after the war.

This volume also includes three documents subjected to scholarly study, preceded by extensive introductions outlining the historical background. Tomasz Domański publishes sentences from two criminal cases before the Regional Court in Kielce from the period of the German occupation. The defendants in these trials were Jews. In the text “Jews in Criminal Cases Before the Regional Court in Kielce Between 1939 and 1941 – Contribution to Polish-Jewish Relations During the German Occupation,” which introduces the documents, Tomasz Domański proves that examples of anti-Jewish tendencies were rare to find in the case law of the Regional Court in Kielce (known as the ‘Polish’ court). Most often, the court analysed individual cases on their merits and with objectivity.

Alicja Gontarek continues her discussion of aid activities for Jews provided by Polish diplomats. In this volume, she presents two documents (“Letter from the Polish envoy in Athens, Władysław Günther, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, dated 27 May 1941” and “List of names of Polish passport holders at the disposal of the Department for Foreigners of the Greek police,” seized by the German secret service in 1943). Both refer to the diplomatic activities of Władysław Günter-Schwarzburg, the Polish envoy in Athens during the Second World War. The text published by Damian Sitkiewicz, “The Testimony of Elżbieta Kowner vel Wanda Bieńkowska on the Activities of Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska – A Source for the History of Poles Who Were Saving Jews” takes us to the occupied Polish territory – to Mińsk Mazowiecki. In the wave of post-war settlements of those suspected of collaborating with the Germans, a Jewish woman, Elżbieta Kowner vel Wanda Bieńkowska, stood up for two accused female officials of the *Polnische Kriminalpolizei* in 1945 and gave an extensive account, detailing the help she and others received from these two Polish women.

The Reviews/Polemics section contains Tomasz Domański’s reply to the polemics by authors and editors of *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* with his review of this book “Correcting the Picture.” Wojciech Wichert, in turn, undertakes a discussion of the important work by Bogdan Musiał *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...* [Who will come to help a Jew...]. The reviewer refers in

detail to the most important issue raised by the author, namely the German policy of criminalising aid to Jews. The starting point is the Order of 15 October 1941, first stipulating the death penalty for giving shelter to Jews and then, after amendments, the death penalty for any assistance.

The Reviews/Polemics section of *Polish-Jewish Studies* concludes with Roman Gieroń's text "Reflections on the Margins of an Exhibition about German Anthropological Research on Jewish Families in Tarnów in 1942." It discusses the exhibition *The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów ghetto* (*Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów*), presented at the Berlin Museum Topography of Terror (*Topographie des Terrors*). Gieroń analyses the substance of the exhibition and the exhibition catalogue as well as the accompanying publication by Margit Berner *Letzte Bilder...* Although the reviewer appreciates the exhibition for its museum and educational value, he draws attention to specific shortcomings and mistakes of its authors in presenting certain aspects of Poland's occupation history.

The Chronicle section, which ends this volume, contains Maciej Korcuć's report on the exhumation and funeral of the Książek family – Polish victims murdered by the Germans for helping Jews.

Tomasz Domański

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STUDIES

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FOLLOWING A POLISH TRAIL. POLAND'S MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE MOVEMENT OF REVISIONIST ZIONISTS BEFORE WORLD WAR TWO

Introduction

The recovery of Poland's independence in 1918 and the proclamation of Israel's independence in 1948 are almost thirty years apart. However, the roads to these two events started under comparable circumstances and followed a very similar course until the end of the First World War. For both nations, the turn of the twentieth century (albeit for radically different reasons) saw the almost complete demise of ideas of armed action and an unprecedented surge in political activity. For both Poles and Jews, the breakthrough came in 1914 with the formation of the first armed units, both commanded by leaders named Joseph: Józef Piłsudski's 1st Cadre Company and Trumpeldor's Zion Mule Corps. There were similarities in the years that followed as well – the Polish Legions and the Jewish Legion fought on the fronts of the Great War. Their patrons and strongest personalities (though no longer commanders) were Józef Piłsudski and Vladimir Jabotinsky. Moreover, both Poles and Jews tried to seize all possible opportunities on their way to their hoped-for independence. Therefore, from 1914 to 1918, smaller and larger armed formations were established alongside almost all the belligerent great powers. The shared path was separated by the caesura of 1920,

when the army, called to life from the Polish Legions and commanded by the Head of State, rescued the young nation at the gates of Warsaw. At the same time, a small, two-company Jewish force led by Jabotinsky – as far as their very modest capabilities permitted – successfully repelled Arab attacks during the Nabi Musa riots.¹ A few months later, the British disbanded the last subdivisions of the Jewish Legion, with Jabotinsky and his closest associates ending up in a British prison.

After 1921, when all hope for establishing the “Jewish national headquarters” promised in Lord Balfour’s declaration² had been dispelled, Zionist activists began to divide over the question of choosing a path towards building their own state. The trend for political action continued to dominate, with Chaim Weizman taking the lead. Socialist Zionists, among whom David Ben-Gurion was a leading figure, also postponed the question of sovereignty until the future, concentrating on expanding the *Yishuv*³ and its economic capacity (not forgetting also the implementation of socialist ideology). Other currents of Zionism either abandoned the issue of independence or treated it as a challenge for future generations. It is worth mentioning that the majority thought the same way about using armed struggle – in the pacifist world after the First World War, representatives of the dominant current of Socialist Zionism were the vanguard of the anti-militarist movement.

One of the few Jewish politicians who constantly took both the issues of the army and the creation of their own state as their goal was Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880–1940). In 1925, he began to form his political base, establishing the Union of Zionists–Revisionists at a convention in Paris. Initially, it was a party within the Zionist movement. The Revisionists participated in successive Zionist congresses, actively joining their deliberations. At the 14th Congress in 1925, the Revisionists were represented by five delegates; at the 15th Congress in 1927, there already were ten, and at the 16th Congress in 1929, they won twenty-one seats. The peak of their popularity came with the 17th Congress held in 1931, at which the Revisionists were represented by fifty-two delegates, accounting for 21% of the total number. At

¹ D.K. Heller, *Jabotinsky’s Children: Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionism* (Princeton–Oxford, 2017), pp. 32–34.

² B. Regan, *The Balfour Declaration: Empire, the Mandate and Resistance in Palestine* (London–New York, 2018), pp. 49–81.

³ *Yishuv* – a term used to describe a Jewish community in Palestine before the proclaiming of Israel’s independence.

the 18th Congress in 1933, a trend of departing from the ineffective World Zionist Organisation, in the view of the Revisionists, was already evident – 45 revisionist delegates attended, accounting for 14% of the participants, against 138 socialist envoys (44%).⁴ However, due to growing conflicts, contradicting aspirations and, above all, the conservatism of the General Zionists and Socialists, in 1935, the Revisionists ceased cooperating with other groups within the World Zionist Organisation altogether.⁵ In August 1935, they organised autonomous elections for the New Zionist Organisation. The active right to vote was given to all Jews of both sexes who had reached the age of eighteen and had signed the following declaration: “I demand a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River. I demand social equality without *Yishuv*’s class struggle.”⁶

Even before the revisionist movement became independent, it sought allies in the struggle to establish a Jewish state. Jabotinsky looked for the possibility of forming armed units even at the side of Ataman Symon Petlura, who had a reputation for being a bloody persecutor of Jewish communities in Ukraine.⁷ As it turned out in the following years, the natural and very good choice for him was the Second Republic of Poland. A large part of the supporters of Jabotinsky’s ideas came from Poland. The Revisionists made no secret that they wanted to emulate the Polish road to independence; the insurgent tradition and the Polish culture influenced a large part of their elite. Revisionist leaders – especially Jabotinsky – were also heavily influenced by the legend of Józef Piłsudski.⁸ Most important, however, was that the Polish government had the same goal as the Revisionists: the voluntary exodus of the Jewish population from Poland. Both sides could base their cooperation on these grounds, which Laurence Weinbaum splendidly summarised as a “marriage of convenience”⁹

By far, the most interesting page of the history of Polish-Jewish cooperation is one that remains basically unknown – strictly military cooperation. The Repub-

⁴ Y. Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925–1948* (Tel Aviv, 2005), p. 384.

⁵ R. Medoff, C.I. Waxman, *The A to Z of Zionism* (Toronto–Plymouth, 2009), p. 221.

⁶ W. Żabotyński, *Nowa Organizacja Syjonistyczna* (Cracow, 1935), p. 1.

⁷ B. Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism: How Its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy* (New York, 2002), p. 124.

⁸ Heller, *Jabotinsky’s Children*, p. 146.

⁹ L. Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience. The New Zionist Organization and the Polish Government 1936–1939* (New York, 1993).

lic – mainly for political reasons – was careful not to publicise its participation in the training and arming members of revisionist organisations. Their main goal was to create a Jewish state in the Middle East, which had to happen at the expense of the British colonies in Palestine and Jordan. The covert nature of this cooperation means that both sources and studies on this subject are scarce and incomplete. Weapons exports to Palestine before 1939 have been covered by such authors as Jerzy Łazor,¹⁰ Marek Deszczyński and Wojciech Mazur,¹¹ while Poland's participation in the training of members of the Haganah, Betar and Irgun can be read about in studies by Laurence Weinbaum,¹² Eliyahu Lankin,¹³ Łukasz and Mateusz Sroka,¹⁴ Aleksander Klugman,¹⁵ Edward Kossoy,¹⁶ Daniel Kupfert Heller,¹⁷ and Colin Shindler,¹⁸ among others, as well as in contributory studies authored by young Polish researchers.¹⁹ In addition, because of its sensational aspect, the subject often appears in articles published in popular history magazines.²⁰ Also helpful in delving into the topic of Polish-Jewish military relations are the memoirs

¹⁰ J. Łazor, *Brama na Bliski Wschód. Polsko-palestyńskie stosunki gospodarcze w okresie międzywojennym* (Warsaw, 2016).

¹¹ M. Deszczyński, W. Mazur, *Na krawędzi ryzyka. Eksport polskiego sprzętu wojskowego w okresie międzywojennym* (Warsaw, 2004).

¹² Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*.

¹³ E. Lankin, *To Win the Promised Land. Story of a freedom fighter* (Walnut Creek, 1992).

¹⁴ Ł. Sroka, M. Sroka, *Polskie korzenie Izraela* (Cracow, 2015).

¹⁵ A. Klugman, "Pomoc Polski dla żydowskiego ruchu narodowego w Palestynie," *Więź* 5/463 (1997), pp. 133–151.

¹⁶ E. Kossoy, "Żydowskie podziemie zbrojne w Palestynie i jego polskie powiązania," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 3/157 (2006), pp. 62–100.

¹⁷ Heller, *Jabotinsky's Children*.

¹⁸ C. Shindler, *Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream. Power, Politics and Ideology from Begin to Netanyahu* (London–New York, 1995); *idem*, *The Land Beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream* (London, 1995); *idem*, *The Rise of the Israeli Right. From Odessa to Hebron* (New York, 2015); *idem*, *The Triumph of Military Zionism* (London–New York, 2006); *idem*, *Ploughshares into Swords? Israelis and Jews in the Shadow of the Intifada* (London–New York, 1991).

¹⁹ D. Flisiak, "Ideologiczne podstawy organizacji młodzieżowej Betar działającej w II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej," in *Endecja wczoraj i jutro. Studia z zakresu myśli nacjonalistycznej XX i XXI*, ed. by K. Kofin and M. Kofin (Lodz, 2017); D. Flisiak, "Memorandum organizacji Irgun Cwai Leumi dotyczące stworzenia państwa żydowskiego w Palestynie: przyczynek do badań nad działalnością syjonistów-rewizjonistów w powojennej Polsce," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 7/8 (2018), pp. 143–158; *idem*, "Polityczna działalność Włodzimierza Żabotyńskiego do lat dwudziestych XX wieku: ideologiczne podstawy syjonizmu rewizjonistycznego," *Almanach Historyczny* 19 (2017), pp. 109–120; A. Sołtysik, "Uwagi na temat koncepcji politycznych Bejtaru," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 6/6 (2016), pp. 45–56; J. Ochman, "Polski rodowód 'wojowniczości' syjonizmu," *Res Polticae* 7 (2015), pp. 163–197.

²⁰ *Uważam Rze, wSieci Historii, Uważam Rze Historia, Polska Zbrojna Historia* etc.

of Menachem Begin,²¹ Wiktor Tomir Drymmer,²² Melchior Wańkiewicz,²³ and General Władysław Anders.²⁴ Some sources can be found in archives and museum institutions: the Central Archives of Modern Records and the Central Military Archives, as well as in Israel's Jabotinsky Institute, the Begin Center in Jerusalem, the Beit Lohamei Ghetto Fighters Archive and the Lehi Museum in Tel Aviv. It is worth noting that the subject of the Second Republic's relations with the revisionist movement is receiving increasing interest from researchers and even artists, both Polish and foreign. Two excellent examples of this are the award-winning documentary film directed by Jan Grzyb, *Izrael zaczął się w Polsce* [Israel began in Poland]²⁵ and *Betar* [The Betar] by Robert Kaczmarek.²⁶ Also, in Israel, museums presenting the Revisionists' achievements display Polish exhibits proudly, for instance, documents bearing a Polish seal with a crowned eagle or Polish weapons.

Based on these sources and studies, I will try to formulate an answer to questions concerning the forms of Polish military support for Jewish independence aspirations and how it influenced Israeli irredentism. The main limitation, I assume, is to focus on the revisionist movement and only mention the support provided by the Second Polish Republic to representatives of other Zionist currents. Therefore, starting from the general contacts of the Polish government with the Revisionists, I will move on to Polish material aid and then training aid. The final part of this analysis will attempt to identify Poland's influence on Israel's independence process.

A Marriage of Convenience – the Republic's Cooperation with the Revisionist Movement

As mentioned earlier, the author of the term "marriage of convenience," coined to describe the informal alliance linking the Second Republic with the Revisionist-Zionist movement, was Laurence Weinbaim. In his pioneering book of 1993, *Marriage of Convenience. The New Zionist Organization and the Polish Government*

²¹ M. Begin, *Czas białych nocy* (Cracow, 2006).

²² W. Drymmer, *W służbie Polsce* (Warsaw, 1998).

²³ M. Wańkiewicz, *Ziemia za wiele obiecana* (Warsaw, 2011).

²⁴ W. Anders, *Bez ostatniego rozdziału* (London, 1950).

²⁵ *Izrael zaczął się w Polsce*, dir. J. Grzyb, TVP, Warsaw 2018.

²⁶ *Betar*, dir. R. Kaczmarek, TVP, Warsaw 2010.

1936–1939,²⁷ he was the first to successfully attempt to describe the relationship between the two entities. Importantly, neither side lacked the rationale for cooperation.

The search for allies and protectors in the form of governments of external powers had been one of the most important policies of the Zionists (later defined as political Zionists) since the First Zionist Congress. Theodor Herzl tried to convince the Kaiser's Germany, as well as Britain and Turkey, of his vision to create a Jewish state. Subsequently, Zionists knocked on French, American, Italian and many other doors.²⁸ Vladimir Jabotinsky also believed that, without external help, the project to revive Israel stood a poor chance of succeeding. However, he thought it was worth talking primarily to governments of European countries with large Jewish minorities – Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Baltic States. After the establishment of the Trumpeldor Union (Betar, an acronym for Berit Josef Trumpeldor – 1923), the Union of Zionists-Revisionists (1923) and then the New Zionist Organisation in 1935, he gained serious arguments in the form of a mass social movement, which meant he could start negotiating independently with the governments of Central and Eastern European countries.

In Poland, these aspirations coincided with the return to power of Marshal Józef Piłsudski after the May coup of 1926. From a Jewish perspective, this was a perfect change – Józef Piłsudski was widely regarded as a protector of religious and national minorities. In addition, the Revisionists were undoubtedly fascinated by the Marshal's character. Jabotinsky wrote of him as follows:

For Piłsudski, patriotism was an austere and ascetic religion, far removed from any emotions [...], for Poland, Piłsudski had none of that nonsense that makes a man a slave, none of those golden dreams of prosperity for all, none of those mystical cries that sound like thunder but are in fact just a dull snore. His Poland was to be neat, clean, punctual, efficient, decent, simply “Western.”²⁹

The first official contacts between the Polish government and the Revisionists were established in 1936. Admittedly, as early as 1927, Kazimierz Młodzianowski

²⁷ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*.

²⁸ S. Beller, *Herzl* (London, 2012), p. 182.

²⁹ W. Żabotyński, *War and Jew* (New York, 1942), pp. 83–84.

(then Pomeranian Voivode) pledged support for the Zionists on behalf of Poland, and in 1933 Jabotinsky proposed an anti-Hitler alliance to Warsaw. Still, these were only verbal assurances that did not entail any serious attempt to start any actual cooperation.³⁰

Mutual contacts definitely accelerated and took institutional form from 1935 onwards. At that time, all undertakings concerning “Jewish matters” began to be coordinated by the Consular Department of the MFA, whose director from 1933 was Viktor Tomir Drymmer.³¹ He was responsible for organising emigration, internal and foreign policy towards Jews and, most importantly, for contacts with Jewish organisations. As early as 1935, Drymmer’s department worked vigorously to find new emigration destinations for Poles and minorities in the Republic.

In April 1936, Jabotinsky and Jakob Damm met with the Polish Ambassador in London, Edward Raczyński, while members of the New Zionist Organisation (NZO) paid a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. The outcome of both meetings was the opening of the NZO office in Warsaw in June 1936.³² At the opening ceremony, on 9 June 1936, Jabotinsky met with Józef Beck for the first time to present his Ten-Year Plan (which assumed mass Jewish emigration to Palestine) as a solution to Poland’s overpopulation problems. The Zionists maintained regular contact with Raczyński in London, and Jabotinsky met with Beck again in July of that year, this time in Geneva during a League of Nations session. Evidence of Beck’s lively contact with Jabotinsky can also be found in two letters that the NZO chairman sent to the Polish foreign minister on 21 June and 1 July 1936 concerning Jewish emigration (or, as Jabotinsky called it, evacuation) to Palestine and the Revisionists’ cooperation with Poland.³³

The Revisionists were surprised by the pace of the cooperation with the Polish government and even more by the fact that it produced tangible results. Against the backdrop of the previous attempts to cooperate with the British or Italian

³⁰ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 60.

³¹ Z. Trębacz, *Nie tylko Palestyna. Polskie plany emigracyjne wobec Żydów 1935–1939* (Warsaw, 2018), p. 56.

³² Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 61.

³³ Jabotinsky Institute Archive (hereinafter JIA), Jabotinsky Ze’ev, Letters to Various Individuals, A 1-2/26/1, Ze’ev Jabotinsky to Jozef Beck, 21 June 1936; *ibid.*, Jabotinsky Ze’ev, Letters to Various Individuals, A 1-u2/26/2, Ze’ev Jabotinsky to Józef Beck, 1 July 1936.

governments, the Poles were proving to be much more verbal and eager to represent the interests of the Revisionist Zionists in a real way. In September 1936, Ambassador Raczyński met with the British Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, to communicate to him that Poland attached great importance to emigration to Palestine.³⁴ That same month, Jabotinsky attended two important meetings. On 9 September, he participated in a dinner with dignitaries from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mainly from the Consular Department) – Michał Łubieński, who was present at the meeting, explained this “downgrading” of contacts in the following way: “Ministers come and go, but these officials are almost a permanent feature of the ministries, cooperation with them is just as important as with the ministers themselves.”³⁵ In addition to Michał Łubieński and Vladimir Jabotinsky, the dinner was attended by Wiktor Tomir Drymmer, Apoloniusz Zarychta, Jan Wagner, Jan Kowalewski (the chief of staff of the National Unification Camp [*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*, OZN]), Meir Kahan, and Jakub Spektor. It was then that, as Edward Kossoy writes, “the crossovers were set.”³⁶ Two days later, Jabotinsky met with the Prime Minister of the Polish Government himself – General Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski.³⁷ During the meeting, Składkowski declared his support for the Revisionists: “The Polish government would like to help the Zionist cause, not because it would like to get rid of Jews, but rather because Zionism is a noble and humanitarian idea.”³⁸

Jabotinsky wanted to induce Poland to apply more pressure on Britain to revoke its emigration restrictions to Palestine. He knew it was in London and not in Warsaw, where the key to the restoration of the Jewish state lay. However, the successes the Revisionists undoubtedly enjoyed in their talks with the representatives of a foreign government, and the spontaneous surge in activity in Poland, meant that the heart of most revisionist organisations began to beat specifically on the Vistula. Not surprisingly, the Revisionist-Zionists began to see in the Republic of

³⁴ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 61.

³⁵ J. Schechtman, *Fighter and Prophet: The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story*, vol. 3: *The Last Years* (New York, 1961), p. 354.

³⁶ Kossoy, “Żydowskie podziemie zbrojne.”

³⁷ JIA, Jabotinsky Ze’ev, A 1–4/35, Meeting between Jabotinsky and Polish Prime Minister, General Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski – Minutes in Polish, 1936.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Poland the possibility of creating a substitute for their own armed forces, so Poland was to become the Piedmont of the Jewish state.

The Polish view of cooperation with the Revisionists finds a perfect reflection in the words of Viktor Tomir Drymmer:

Our position coincides in its entirety with that of the Revisionist-Zionist Jews and organisations close to them. It was contained in the sentence: a Jewish independent Palestine, as large as possible, with access to the Red Sea. [...] the efforts of the independence organisations should be supported comprehensively, with money and combat training.³⁹

In September 1938, a meeting of the leadership of the revisionist movement was convened in Warsaw. The main topic of the discussion was the rumours that the British would bow to Arab pressure and set up a government in the Mandate for Palestine composed of Palestinian Arabs. At the time, Jabotinsky made a statement to the effect that such a step on the part of the Mandate administration would force an unprecedented increase in revisionist military activity in Palestine, dubbed by the revisionist leader as a “war against the British.” The Revisionists also decided to intensify their work on the military preparation of Jews, and to do so both in the Mandate and the Diaspora. One consequence of this decision was the establishment of close combat training cooperation between the Revisionist organisations and the Polish Army.⁴⁰

The contacts initiated in 1936 were maintained until September 1939. Over time, the two sides began to work together with great fondness and goodwill. The Revisionists were fascinated by Piłsudski’s ideology of action (Abraham Stern was known to quote whole passages from the Marshal’s works by heart). In contrast, the Polish side approached its Jewish partners’ plans with friendliness and understanding of the Jewish partners’ plans. Moreover, Jabotinsky himself received recognition and became an object of fascination – Michał Łubieński recalled that he greatly admired Jabotinsky’s works and criticised him at every

³⁹ Drymmer, *W służbie Polsce*, p. 141.

⁴⁰ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, pp. 123–164.

opportunity for abandoning Kalliope for politics.⁴¹ These ties survived the catastrophe of September 1939, with Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski recalling with a sense of nostalgia the semi-secret meetings of the decrepit remnants of the revisionist organisations in Palestine in 1942,⁴² in which he had the opportunity to participate. In addition, the Revisionists tried to revive the idea of creating their own armed forces alongside the Polish Armed Forces in the East, known as the Anders Army.

Polish Material Support

The intensification of Jewish-Arab antagonism in the second half of the 1930s forced Jewish organisations to hastily rearm self-defence units in the Mandate for Palestine. Between 1936 and 1939, an Arab uprising took place in the Middle East, during which more than 250 English, 300 Jews, and 5,000 Arabs were killed.⁴³ The Jews also needed armaments and equipment to fight the British, who in the 1930s were no longer a support but an obstacle to the work of rebuilding Israel. Polish supplies were twofold: illegal and legal. Weapons and ammunition were smuggled in, whereas aircraft and gliders were imported into Palestine legally and were then used to train future aviation cadres, even being used in combat during the First Israeli-Arab War of 1948.⁴⁴

The first attempt to purchase armaments was made by Jewish organisations back in 1933, when the Polish SEPEWE Defence Industries Export Company⁴⁵ received an offer to sell 1,000 rifles, 100 hand-held machine guns, 1,000 defensive and offensive grenades and 1.2 million cartridges to Jewish sports unions.⁴⁶ This

⁴¹ M. Łubiński, "Włodzimierz Żabotyński," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 8 (1968), pp. 165–167.

⁴² F. Sławoj-Składkowski, *Kwiatuszki administracyjne i inne* (Łomianki, 2001), p. 325.

⁴³ M. Hughes, *Britain's Pacification of Palestine. The British Army, the Colonial State and Arab Revolt, 1936–1939* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 24.

⁴⁴ P. Rapiński, "Polsko-czechosłowackie początki Sił Powietrznych Izraela," in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku. Badania – kontrowersje – perspektywy*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Warsaw–Kielce, 2021), pp. 105–126.

⁴⁵ The SEPEWE Eksport Przemysłu Obronnego (Defence Industries Export Company) dealt with the export of armaments from Poland; in 1937 it became a joint stock company and changed its name to SEPEWE Eksport Wytworów Polskiego Przemysłu SA.

⁴⁶ The members of Bejtár consciously referred to the Polish history of the Riflemen's Unions formed before the First World War, which became the nucleus of the reborn Polish Army. Jabotinsky wanted to follow the same path.

transaction did not occur for unknown reasons, although it had even received the approval of Poland's state authorities.⁴⁷

Another attempt, this time successful, was undertaken in 1939. Jabotinsky and Abraham Stern, supported in their endeavours by Henryk Strassman and his wife Lili, asked the Polish government, on behalf of the Revisionists, for a loan to purchase weapons and organise military training. Interestingly, at the same time, representatives of the Haganah, linked to the World Zionist Organisation, applied for a loan.⁴⁸ The Polish government decided it would support the Revisionist-Zionists, with whom it had been developing cooperation since 1936. Besides, the Poles believed that the Haganah, a larger organisation with a more extensive network of foreign contacts, would manage without Polish support.

The loan was granted in 1939 and amounted to 212,000 zlotys. Jabotinsky confirmed this in a letter to Apoloniusz Zarychta dated 11 May 1939.⁴⁹ At the same time, the Revisionists were also given a grant of 125,000 zlotys by the Romanian banker Klage Markovici.⁵⁰ Both subsidies were used to purchase arms and organise combat training in Poland. Some historians have alleged that the Israelis never repaid the "Polish loan" – and this is true, but it is also true that the Polish government never demanded its repayment, treating it from the start as a grant rather than a loan.

The total value of the arms orders, both those from the Revisionists and those carried out for the Haganah, had totalled 1.5 million zlotys by 1939. It should be noted, however, that much of the arms purchased for this amount of money did not reach Palestine due to the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵¹ In 1936, Jews purchased 1,677 Mauser carbines *kbk wz. 29* and 20,000 7.92 mm calibre cartridges. In 1937, 126 Browning hand-held machine guns *rkm wz. 28e* were sold to Palestine, together with 7.92 mm calibre ammunition and spare parts. In

⁴⁷ Deszczyński, Mazur, *Na krawędzi ryzyka*, p. 260.

⁴⁸ Haganah (Hebrew: "Defence") – a Jewish paramilitary organisation, active in the Mandate for Palestine from 1920 to 1948. Initially a self-defence organisation, it gradually expanded its operations to include retaliatory actions against attacking Arab gangs, eventually evolving into a typically military organisation. After the Second World War, it organised the illegal immigration of Holocaust survivors. In 1948, in its activity it also used terrorist methods. After the creation of the independent state of Israel, it became the foundation of the Israel Defence Forces.

⁴⁹ JIA, N.Z.O., Presidency, London, Correspondence with Various Individuals, G 4-5/13, A Letter of V. Jabotinsky to A. Zarychta, 11 May 1939, p. 17.

⁵⁰ S. Katz, *Jabu. Biography of Ze'ev Jabotinsky* (Jerusalem, 1993), p. 1005.

⁵¹ Deszczyński, Mazur, *Na krawędzi ryzyka*, p. 195.

1938, exports included 40 *rkm* Browning hand-held machine guns and 250,000 cartridges. The largest batch of armaments was ordered by the Zionist organisations for 1939. This order included 20,000 Berthier rifles *wz. 16* with bayonets, 250 heavy machine guns 14 Hotchkiss and 20 million French 8 mm cartridges (for French rifles and heavy machine guns) – all these armaments came from military stocks (warehouses with obsolete, unused weapons and equipment), so this did not deplete the mobilisation potential of the Polish Army.⁵² In addition, several hundred Nagant Model 30 revolvers were ordered.

All the Zionist purchases accounted for less than one per cent of Polish arms exports by 1 September 1939. Certainly, the Polish side did not make money on these transactions – the political support of the Zionist organisations was far more important to it than the economic consideration. All of the arms transferred (some of which did not go to Palestine) could have armed (not equipped):

- 18 complete rifle companies;
- or 28 rifle companies without support weapons (without hand-held machine guns);
- or 144 rifle companies without carbines and support weapons;
- 13 heavy machine gun companies (without mortars);
- or 20 heavy machine gun companies (without mortars, armed with a machine gun instead of a carbine).⁵³

Polish aircraft also entered Palestine, importantly by a legal route. Between 1936 and 1939, three RWD-8s, two RWD-13s, and one RWD-15 found their way to Palestine. In addition, Jewish organisations received an unknown number of Wrona-bis training gliders, which were later built under a Polish licence in Palestine. At the outbreak of the Second World War, half of the aircraft in Palestine came from Poland. The Polish RWDs were used in combat during the 1947–1949 War of Independence as the first Israeli aircraft. All the purchased planes were machines designed for sports and tourism, but they made it possible to train the first generation of Israeli pilots.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁵³ For more, see M. Przybylak, “Polsko-żydowska współpraca w przygotowaniu działań nieregularnych przed rokiem 1939,” in *Działania nieregularne w dziejach wojskowości polskiej*, ed. R. Parafianowicz (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 193–216.

Weapons, however, were smuggled to Palestine illegally. The atmosphere of secrecy surrounding this venture meant that problems with the weapons began already in Poland. Kossoy, citing Kahan, gives an example of a shipment from Gdańsk:

During this period, the attitude of the military leadership turned out to be very positive. One day a parcel from Gdansk, declared to be candy, was found to contain several dozen revolvers. Thanks to the intervention of the alerted Kahan, the recipient, Dawid Król, a non-commissioned officer of the Polish Army and a member of Brit Hahayal, was only symbolically fined twenty zlotys, but the revolvers were confiscated. Kahan reported the event to Marshal Rydz-Śmigły's adjutant, Colonel Strzelecki. Following a brief conversation and duly briefed by Strzelecki, Rydz-Śmigły ordered the return of the confiscated weapons. Upon receiving it, Król found the addition of a generous gift – the latest Polish heavy machine gun model and two hand-held machine guns with spare parts and a considerable amount of ammunition, including for the returned revolvers.⁵⁴

Apart from the inaccuracies that are apparent at first glance, this story may contain a grain of truth – it is possible that Polish customs officials once found arms shipments to Palestine, but this discovery was swiftly and discreetly deleted from the official reports thanks to the intervention of the military authorities.

The Poles realised that, without arms, Jews would not win independence. By deciding to support the Revisionists, Warsaw was indirectly undermining the *Pax Britannica* maintained in the Middle East. Sooner or later, Polish arms exports to Palestine were bound to be involved in the British-Jewish fighting. The question arises whether the British were aware of the existence of a Polish-Jewish agreement. According to the version presented by Jerzy Łazor – they definitely were.⁵⁵ From London's perspective, the supplies from Poland were small (London supplied the Haganah with weapons itself) and consistent with a policy of balancing Jewish and Arab potential, especially since, at the same time, the Arab insurgents were

⁵⁴ Kossoy, "Żydowskie podziemie zbrojne," p. 70.

⁵⁵ Łazor, *Brama na Bliski Wschód*, p. 196.

supported with arms supplies and funds by the Third Reich.⁵⁶ It must be admitted that, before the Second World War, the Polish government was much more aware of the divisions within the Zionist movement and consciously gave more support to one side, while the British treated the Jews almost *en bloc*.⁵⁷

Polish Support in Terms of Training

Military relations between Poland and Jewish organisations were complemented by combat training organised by the Polish Army, including Division II of the General Staff.

Generalising, it can be pointed out that military training covered three groups:

- members of the Polish Betar units,
- members of the Haganah, whose fighters came to Poland for the training period; an agreement with the Haganah having been concluded in 1937,
- members of the Irgun (treated as independent of the Polish Betar and the Haganah).

From the perspective of supporting Jewish independence aspirations, the most important part of the training assistance was that of the Irgun. The fighters of the National Military Organisation had already participated in the battles against the British and the Arabs, and constituted the strict organisational leadership at a local and regional level in Palestine. In addition, they were subject to strict selection by the command, so they were not only the best of the candidates but also had the highest hopes. In hindsight, it can be pointed out that this was not a miscalculation.

For the Betar, the training carried out by the Polish Army was only a minor part of the training and education activity. It was organised at a central level, as a special training, singling out selected Betar members. The entire training activity in the Trumpeldor Union was based on Polish models, and in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the organisation was already trying to prepare future military and civilian cadres for the reborn Jewish state.⁵⁸ The daily work with young people fol-

⁵⁶ F.R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (Austin, 1985), pp. 168–192.

⁵⁷ B. Golany, *Statehood and Zionism. What the Herut-Revisionist Movement Stands for* (New York, 1958), pp. 3–4; Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, pp. 54–60.

⁵⁸ D.K. Heller, *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922–1935* (Stanford, 2012), p. 150.

lowed the instructions and documents such as the *Podręcznik Przysposobienia Wojskowego* [Manual of Military Training],⁵⁹ *Terenoznawstwo i kartografia wojskowa. Podręcznik dla organizacji wojskowych i drużyn skautowych* [Terrain Science and Military Cartography. Handbook for Military Organisations and Scout Teams],⁶⁰ *Sygnalizacja. Podręcznik dla harcerzy* [Signalling. Guide for Scouts],⁶¹ and *Harcerz w polu. Ćwiczenia w terenie* [Scout in the Field. Field Exercises].⁶² In addition, the Betar produced its own publications covering mainly the ideological and spiritual sphere; in Polish, these included: *Regulamin Bejtaru* [Regulations of the Betar],⁶³ *Zarys nauki o państwie* [Theory of State. An Outline],⁶⁴ and *Praca kulturalno-wychowawcza w Bejtarze* [Cultural and Educational Work in the Betar].⁶⁵ The training practice did not differ from other youth organisations operating in Poland at the time. Furthermore, it is worth adding that the Betar, and more broadly, the entire revisionist movement, was primarily pro-state. It advocated allegiance to the states in which it was active until the establishment of reborn Israel. This is exemplified by the above photograph from the Central Betar Training Camp organised in Łódź in 1938. Zionist ideology is represented by the organisational uniforms, while the state ideology is represented by the Polish flag and the portraits of Marshals Józef Piłsudski and Edward Rydz-Śmigły, as well as President Ignacy Mościcki.

When training the Betar members, a breakthrough came in 1927 when the organisation established mainly local cooperation with the State Office for Physical Education and Military Preparation (*Państwowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego*, PUWF i PW, hereinafter PW). The PW aimed to create cadres for the new, healing state – youth education was crucial in this area. In December 1927, a convention in Warsaw approved the idea of the Betar members joining the PW cells. The greatest gain was the opportunity to participate in training organised by soldiers of the Polish Army at shooting ranges. Learning how to use

⁵⁹ *Podręcznik przysposobienia wojskowego*, ed. L. Kolbuszewski (Warsaw, 1928).

⁶⁰ J. Lewandowski, *Terenoznawstwo i kartografia wojskowa. Podręcznik dla organizacji wojskowych i drużyn skautowych* (Warsaw, 1916).

⁶¹ W.J. Śliwiński, *Sygnalizacja. Podręcznik dla harcerzy* (Warsaw, 1921).

⁶² Z. Wyrobek, *Harcerz w polu. Ćwiczenia w terenie* (Lvov, 1926).

⁶³ J. Chrust, *Regulamin Bejtaru* (Lvov, 1939).

⁶⁴ T. Staending, *Zarys nauki o państwie* (Lvov, 1933).

⁶⁵ J. Schelles, *Praca kulturalno-wychowawcza w Bejtarze* (Lvov, 1934).



A Central Training Camp of the Betar, Lodz, 1939. Source: Jabotinsky Institute Archive in Tel Aviv, PH-5221, <http://en.jabotinsky.org/archive/search-archive/>

weapons and shoot live ammunition (partly financed by the Polish state budget) was as attractive to the organisation as a whole as it was to most of its young members. Another benefit was the possibility to carry weapons during patriotic ceremonies and official addresses – not only Polish ones. From the perspective of a young and unknown NGO, it would be hard to overestimate the propaganda impact on the Jewish community in Poland of the sight of armed and uniformed members appearing under Jewish national symbols – the menorah and the Star of David – of an organisation whose authority was further strengthened by the protection of the governmental leadership.⁶⁶ From Warsaw's perspective, supporting the Betar in the Borderlands was particularly important – this is where most of the camps and training sessions were organised. The army and the administration trusted that this would make it possible to convince the second-largest minority in these areas to support the Polish state. The Betar strongly emphasised loyalty to Poland, so cooperation almost automatically strengthened the links between these lands and the rest of the country. In part, the Betar passed this loyalty test in September 1939, when they cooperated with the army in maintaining the internal order undetermined by Ukrainian gangs and communist subversive activity.

⁶⁶ Heller, *The Rise of The Zionist Right*, p. 167.

The next step towards closer cooperation came in 1936. In July of that year, the Polish government agreed to military training for one hundred Betar candidates, most of whom came from Poland (the Polish foci of the worldwide organisation). Subsequent training courses in Rembertów, Zielonka and Międzyrzec Podlaski were held in October 1937 and January 1938, with about fifty participants each.⁶⁷ In August 1938, exercises were held in Trochenbrod (Polish: Zofiówka) in Volhynia, where some instructors and trainees had travelled from as far away as Palestine. This was the first officer (higher level) course organised for the Irgun members outside the Mandate territory.⁶⁸ In February 1939, the Revisionists, in cooperation with the Ministry of Military Affairs, began a series of courses lasting four to six weeks. These succeeded in training some 1,000 Betar members.⁶⁹



A Summer Training Camp for Members of the Betar, Pinsk, 1939. Source: Jabotinsky Institute Archive in Tel Aviv, PH-15226, <http://en.jabotinsky.org/archive/search-archive/>

⁶⁷ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 79.

⁶⁸ A. Bendavid-Val, *The Heavens Are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod* (New York, 2010), p. 213.

⁶⁹ Klugman, *Pomoc Polski*, p. 145.

By far the most important, most commented upon, and one of the most mythologised training ventures was the camp in March 1939 at Kocierz. It is this camp that Piotr Zychowicz⁷⁰ and Jerzy Ochman⁷¹ write about in sensational tones, often preferring this sensationalism to facts. However, it should be emphasised that the story is indeed a fascinating and unique one. The participants in the training were not “commandos” but specially selected members of the Irgun operating in Palestine. In addition, the entire camp was organised at the sports centre of the Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Association Makkabi (Makkabi Warsaw) at the Kocierz Pass, so not in Andrychów itself, as studies often state. Also false is the claim that the camp was visited by Vladimir Jabotinsky or even Józef Beck.

The training at the Kocierz Pass was the most tangible evidence of Polish-Jewish military cooperation.⁷² Contrary to appearances, it was also fraught with enormous risks the Polish state took to train the first (and, as it later turned out, also the last) group of young Revisionists. The training began in March 1939, during a dramatically heightened international tension following the German occupation of Prague. Reacting to these events, on 31 March 1939, Britain announced unilateral guarantees for Poland. While Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared in London that Britain and France would run to Poland’s rescue in the hour of trial in the Carpathian Mountains, Polish officers were teaching young Jews to blow up trains and organise irregular actions. Sooner or later, these actions had to be directed against the British ruling in the Mandate for Palestine – the biggest obstacle to an independent Israel at the time. Despite the goals of London’s grand policy, the discovery and publicity of such a fact could become grounds for withdrawing British guarantees to Poland. By training the Revisionists, the Second Republic of Poland was risking (admittedly, to a small extent) diplomatic and military solitude in the face of the imminent war with Germany.

The camp at Kocierz was organised in the then-existing infrastructure already at the disposal of Makkabi Warsaw (photo below). Eliahu Lankin describes it as follows:

⁷⁰ P. Zychowicz, *Żydowscy komandosi z II RP*, <https://dorzeczy.pl/55236/1/zydowsky-komandosi-z-ii-rp.html> (accessed 2 March 2021).

⁷¹ J. Ochman, “Polski rodowód ‘wojowniczości’ syjonizmu,” *Res Polticae* 7 (2015), pp. 163–197.

⁷² Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 148.

This isolated villa was ideally located for us – there was plenty of open space to organise military activities nearby, it had a weapons store and was under the tutelage of regular army officers. It was hard to believe our luck. The villa had a lecture hall, a dining hall, bedrooms, instructors' quarters and an armoury. There was a kitchen, a pantry and staff rooms in the basement.⁷³

In addition to the amenities, geographical factors also played a considerable role in the choice of the location. The centre was far from a nearby village, let alone larger towns. Moreover, the terrain in this part of the Carpathian Mountains resembled the Irgun's future area of operation – Galilee and Judea.⁷⁴

Twenty-five mid-and senior-level commanders from the Irgun operating in Palestine were selected to participate in the training. The participants certainly included Szlomo Ben-Szlomo, Jakow Polani, Cwi Meltzer, Michał Rabinowicz, Eliahu Lankin, Jakow Eliaw, Dow Rubinstein, Jakub Melzer, Jakow Meridor, and



The Villa of the Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Association Makkabi at the Kocierz Pass, 1939. Source: Archiwum Gminy Andrychów (Andrychów Municipality Archive) (Portal AGA – www.aga.edu.pl, accessed on 7 March 2021), CC-BY-NC

⁷³ Lankin, *To Win the Promised Land*, p. 35.

⁷⁴ W. Drymmer, *W służbie Polsce*, p. 194.

Mordechaj Sterlitz. They were selected during a clandestine meeting in Tel Aviv by David Razi'el, the then commander of the organisation in Palestine.⁷⁵ The participants came from Palestine to the Carpathian Mountains by several routes – from the Mandate to Romania or Greece and from there by train to Cracow. Two – Melzer and Rubinstein – flew to Warsaw from Lodz. All the course participants were deeply undercover, moving about only in civilian clothes and strictly forbidden to communicate with anyone. The letters they sent went first to Switzerland and only from there to Palestine.

The training began in February 1939,⁷⁶ though there is no consensus as to the exact date of its completion. According to most accounts, it lasted four months and ended just before Jabotinsky arrived in Warsaw, i.e. before 14 May 1939. The classes were conducted by Polish officers – no names of instructors have survived in either Polish or Israeli archives. However, the practice of previous training courses for Jewish organisations, and especially the use of local human resources, leads us to assume that they may have been conducted by officers of the nearby 12th Infantry Regiment with a garrison based in Wadowice. What is certain, however, is that the training itself and the trainees were supervised by officers from Detachment II of the Border Guard: Colonel Tadeusz Pełczyński, Colonel Józef Smoleński, and, from 15 March 1939, General Kazimierz Fabrycy, who was responsible for the southern border section.⁷⁷

The training programme was based on the *Program Kursu Szkoły Podoficerskiej Piechoty* [Programme of the Infantry NCO School Course] issued in Osowiec in 1938 for the Central NCO School of the Border Protection Corps. This is shown primarily by the duration of the course – assumed to take four months in the programme – and the classes mentioned by the participants in their memoirs. The original programme from Osowiec has also been preserved in the collection of the Jabotinsky Institute in Tel Aviv.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Lankin, *To Win the Promised Land*, p. 34.

⁷⁶ *The Irgun Abroad*, <http://www.etzel.org.il/english/ac16.htm> (accessed 10 April 2018).

⁷⁷ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, pp. 150–151.

⁷⁸ JIA, K 7 b-2/17, Z.Z.W. Warsaw Ghetto, Program Training Course for Non-Commissioned Infantry of the Polish Army, [1938]. Interestingly, the staff of the Jabotinsky Institute raised an argument that the programme at their disposal was used to train fighters of the Jewish Military Union in the Warsaw Ghetto (as the title given to the folder containing the programme states). However, the

Professor Laurence Weinbaum managed to reach two participants and partially reconstructed the course's curriculum based on his interviews with them. His findings show that the course was divided into two main parts, which in modern military language can be described as regular and irregular training.⁷⁹ The first part was undoubtedly based on the Border Protection Corps programme and included the following subjects: combat training, training in shooting, weapons and equipment training, pioneer training, terrain studies, drill, bayonet and grenade combat training, anti-aircraft, anti-gas and anti-tank defence training, observation and communication training, internal service training and information on the organisation of the army. The manual allocated a total of 240 training hours to all these subjects, with a maximum of five hours each day (in addition to classes, trainers were required to follow the course of duty and to fit meals into their schedule).

Regular military training took up about 60% of the time. The remaining days were dedicated to the irregular part, i.e. to fighting in conspiracy conditions. The programme has not been preserved, but from the testimonies of the participants of the training at Kocierz, it is possible to extract at least some of the issues, such as working in underground organisations, the principles of creating secret structures, sabotage and attacks on the enemy's live forces, the technical aspects of preparing explosives, communication in conspiracy conditions and the problems of using the force in a clash with the occupying army during a planned armed uprising.⁸⁰ Added to this were daily classes at a shooting range.⁸¹

The participants themselves spoke highly of the training:

The officers' course in Poland was a turning point in Irgun's instruction and training practice. Its impact was still evident long after the end of the training. I made very intensive use of the knowledge on the preparation of mines with an electric fuse and methods of planting them. In addition, we used manuals on the construction of clandestine communication networks, the organisation of track-

description of the folder already states that it was probably a booklet used for training in the establishment of new Irgun cells.

⁷⁹ Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience*, p. 151.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Lankin, *The Story of Altalena Commander* (Tel Aviv, 1954), p. 61.

ing, etc. At a later stage, we used skills such as platoon operations, urban warfare, engineering work and even capturing and controlling a building. The practical and theoretical aspects of training in Poland helped us in all these matters.⁸²

Eliahu Lankin declared: “The Polish officers tried their best to teach us the most important things. The training with them was the best I have ever taken part in. Later, I took part in courses in British and Israeli armies, and I honestly have to say that the Polish training was more in-depth and intensive than all the others.”⁸³

An unquestionable advantage (especially from the participants’ perspective) was the variety of issues discussed. The Polish Army did not make a mistake – admittedly one very commonly made while training paramilitary or underground organisations – and did not teach its charges methods of combat solely on the modern battlefield. Such a solution would not have made the slightest sense. The Irgun could not count on air or artillery support in its operations, nor could it openly fight against an opponent many times stronger – this is not how irregular operations work. This is also the reason for the positive opinions about the training at the Kocierz Pass expressed by its participants. The Polish experience from before 1918 fit perfectly into the specifics of the operation of underground revisionist organisations in Palestine in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and it was the part of the training devoted to irregular actions that was most appreciated by the trainees. Jakow Eliaw wrote admiringly of the instructors: “These were officers of the Polish army, some of them still veterans of Pilsudski’s Legions, some former members of the pre-war underground organisations, and the rest were professional officers. A few lecturers were high-ranking officials or officers at such an age that they could take part in the underground struggle for the freedom of their homeland themselves.”⁸⁴ The young Jewish conspirators looked with awe at the teachers who had been able to win their fight for independence. They certainly also put themselves in their place, wanting to repeat this success.

At the end of the entire training course, Abraham Stern himself paid a visit to Kocierz and, together with Polish officers (including General Kazimierz Fabrycy,

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸⁴ Y. Eliaw, *Wanted* (New York, 1984), pp. 62–63.

the future commander of the 'Carpathian' Army), participated in the examinations and graduation ceremony. The Polish instructors stressed that it had been a long time since they had encountered such enthusiasm in their charges and wished them good luck in their fight for Israel's independence. Eliahu Lankin states that he and the others were particularly impressed by Stern's speech – delivered first in Polish and then in Hebrew.⁸⁵ He spoke of the Polish-Jewish alliance that had just been formed, of the need to win independence with arms in hand and the plans for an uprising in Palestine.⁸⁶

After the training, some of the participants returned to Palestine, while a few stayed in Poland to take part in events related to Vladimir Jabotinsky's next visit – including his speeches in Warsaw (photo above).

The camp at the Kocierz Pass is the best documented Irgun training venture conducted in Poland before the outbreak of the Second World War. Training camps for the Betar or Irgun members were also organised in the following towns: Tro-

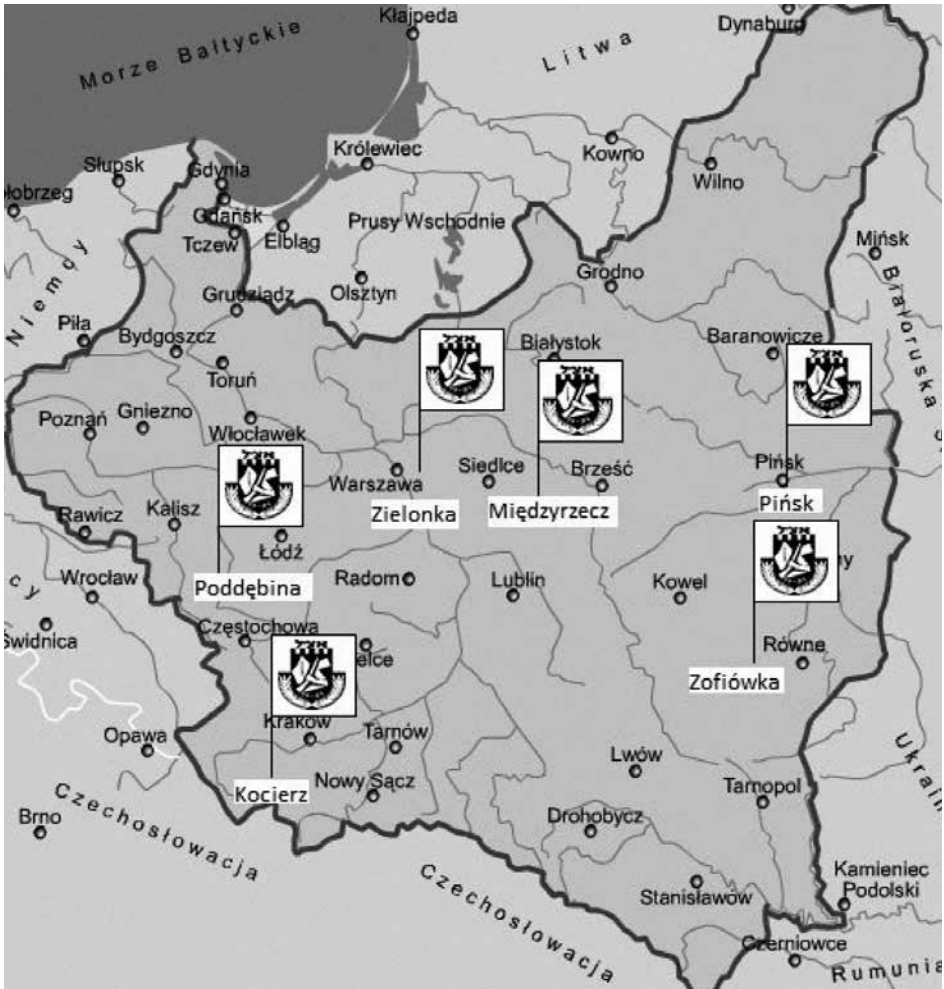


The Speech of Vladimir Jabotinsky, Warsaw, 14 May 1939. Source: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (National Digital Archive)

⁸⁵ Lankin, *To Win the Promised Land*, p. 38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

chenbrod (Zofiówka in Volhynia), Zielonka near Warsaw (neighbouring Rembertów), Poddebie near Lodz (probably the village of Poddebice, which now lies within the boundaries of Tuszyn), Pińsk and Międzyrzec Podlaski.⁸⁷ Apart from these, many studies mention other locations: Warsaw, Rembertów, Lodz and Cracow. A thorough examination of this subject is not easy, primarily due to the conceptual and organisational chaos among the Revisionists themselves. Even



Places of Training Organised by the Polish Army in which Members of the Betar Participated. Source: own study

⁸⁷ J. Reinhartz, Y. Shavit, *The Road to September 1939. Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* (Boston, 2018), p. 322.

before the war, training for the Betar or other organisations was often confused in accounts given with the Irgun activities. Therefore, this issue requires further in-depth research. The places where the Polish Army organised or participated in the Irgun training (apart from Kocierz, the Irgun appeared as part of the Betar) are shown on the map above.

The Impact of Polish Support on Jewish Independence Aspirations

September 1939 ruled out the possibility of further Polish military cooperation with the Revisionists. However, even this small amount of support proved the greatest that the Irgun and the Lehi could have hoped for. No other country chose to provide such comprehensive assistance to Jewish irredentism. Assessing the real impact of this support on the struggle against the British and Arabs is extremely difficult. For example, the author – despite strenuous efforts and searches in Israel and Britain – was not able to find even a single photograph of Polish weapons in Palestine, in particular the characteristic 28e hand-held machine gun, while such weapons certainly made their way to Palestine – after all, single copies of them are still on display in both the Jabotinsky Institute, the Lehi Museum and the Israel Defence Forces Museum (Cahal, IDF).

It is even more difficult to assess the impact of the training courses organised for Revisionist-Zionists by the Polish Army. The participants themselves claimed that these were the best courses where they had had an opportunity to learn the military craft. Moreover, they thought that they represented a turning point in the Irgun's activity: "The effects [of the training] were evident even at the later stages. At the beginning of the operation against the British, electric mines and contact mines were widely used. The knowledge [acquired from Poles] was also used in the preparation of secret broadcasts, the organisation of intelligence activities and in other techniques related to underground operations."⁸⁸ Indeed, the Irgun's activity definitely increased after May 1939. In the earlier months, the organisation carried out one or two operations per month, but from mid-1939, their frequency grew markedly. In June, there were seven, in July, six, and in August, Jewish militants succeeded in carrying out a successful attack on the British, killing two police-

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

men (including Ralph Cairns, accused of torturing captured Irgun members) in an improvised roadside explosion.⁸⁹

Cooperation with Poland was just an element of the military training of the Revisionists. Similar courses were also organised in other countries: in Italy (naval courses in Civitavecchia), Lithuania and Latvia. However, Poland was the Revisionists' largest and most important partner. The Revisionist Zionists constructed their military, political and economic plans in connection with the Second Republic. It was from Poland that the revisionist group's planned naval invasion of Palestine was to be launched. The idea for this specific insurrection probably came from Stern, captivated by the Polish Romantic tradition. Vladimir Jabotinsky, having learnt of his idea in June 1939, called it outright illusory.⁹⁰ Nor were the Poles positively disposed to the plan. In fact, the plan for a naval invasion can be read as an act of desperation and a high-profile attempt to break the British White Paper's immigration restrictions to get as many Jews as possible out of Europe ahead of the war.⁹¹ However, some traces survive that show that the concept was seriously considered by at least a part of the elite of the Zionist movement:

In his talks with Polish authorities, Stern assured them that the Irgun would train 40,000 young Jews from all over Europe to conquer Palestine in a one-day invasion. They would seize control of Palestine from the British hands and fly the Zionist banner over Jerusalem, thus proclaiming an independent Jewish state. We will decide the fate of Palestine in one action.⁹²

Abraham Stern was also confident of Italian support for his cause – a calculation he based on the Italian-British colonial rivalry in the Mediterranean. In reality, however, Mussolini's support was limited to helping train the Betar members in

⁸⁹ S.B. Wagner, *Statecraft by Stealth. Secret Intelligence and British Rule in Palestine* (London, 2019), p. 250.

⁹⁰ Archiwum Akt Nowych [Central Archives of Modern Records], MSZ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 9918, Notatka z rozmowy Jana Wagnera z Włodzimierzem Żabotyńskim [A Memo from a Conversation between Jan Wagner and Vladimir Jabotinsky], Warsaw, 14 April 1939, pp. 107–108: "Mr. Jabotinsky found that all forms of Jewish conquest of Palestine by force were an illusion."

⁹¹ Eliav, *Wanted*, pp. 178–179.

⁹² G. Frank, *The Deed* (New York, 1963), p. 79.

Civitavecchia. 'Il Duce' already had a plan for an Italian empire in the Mediterranean – in 1940, it did not envisage a Jewish uprising in Palestine.⁹³

Conclusions

The Polish campaign of 1939 ended any possibility of Poland helping the independence plans of the Revisionist Zionists. After 1940, when Polish emigrants also found their way to the Middle East, they became a minority among the Arab-Jewish population. Between 1940 and 1947, units of the Polish Armed Forces – first the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade, then the Second Corps – were stationed in Palestine. The Polish military authorities in the Middle East, under pressure from the Supreme Commander and the government in London, turned a blind eye to the desertions of Jewish soldiers who wanted to fight for their own homeland.⁹⁴ Polish servicemen and civilians also participated in the political and social life organised by the Revisionists in Palestine. The good relations established in the Second Republic thus stood the test of time. Both groups (especially Piłsudski's supporters) were brought together by a similar situation – the loss of the elite and seemingly complete powerlessness amid a neutral or even hostile majority of compatriots who thought otherwise. Although relations remained strained, and the sense of injustice on both sides grew steadily⁹⁵ (as exemplified by the work of Klemens Nussbaum – a witness to the formation of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR⁹⁶), a platform for Polish-Jewish understanding and cooperation had been built.

It is worth emphasising that the Polish contribution to building an independent Israel was by no means decisive – it was the Jews who won and built their state,

⁹³ M. Przybylak, "Imperium włoskie po II wojnie światowej według Mussoliniego," *Obronność – Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania i Dowodzenia Akademii Obrony Narodowej* 3/15 (2015), p. 107.

⁹⁴ The subject of desertion of Jewish soldiers from the Polish Army in the East and the attitude of the Polish military and civilian authorities towards this phenomenon was discussed in depth in an article by Józef Smoliński: "Sprawa dezercji Żydów z Armii Polskiej na Wschodzie w latach 1942–1944," in *Żydzi i Wojsko Polskie w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 265–279.

⁹⁵ The reasons and sources of mutual resentment between Jews and Christians fighting in Polish uniforms in the armies subordinate to the legal government in London and those formed in the USSR after the evacuation of the Anders Army are analysed in depth on the basis of K. Nussbaum's work by Przemysław Benken, "Dzieje Żydów w polskich strukturach wojskowych w Związku Socjalistycznych Republik Sowieckich na podstawie *Historii złudzeń... Klemensa Nussbauma*," in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku*, pp. 225–251.

⁹⁶ K. Nussbaum, *Historia złudzeń. Żydzi w Armii Polskiej w ZSRR 1943–45* (Warsaw, 2015).

essentially without anyone's help. IDF soldiers trained in Poland or by Poles were not the majority during the First Israeli-Arab War. Polish doctrinal solutions were overshadowed and superseded by experiences drawn primarily from the British (for example, by the soldiers of the Jewish Brigade). Nor did the supply of arms from Poland satisfy even a fraction of the Irgun's needs in Palestine. However, from the Israeli and especially the revisionist perspective, it was Poland that had proven to be the most serious partner. Not only as a military ally but also in a political and, above all, ideological sense.

However, cooperation with Poland touched on a sensitive and, as time has shown, decisive issue: irregular operations. Thanks to the skills acquired in Poland, among other things, Jews were finally able to force the British to withdraw from the Mandate for Palestine. Polish support was thus key to the creation of the Israeli way of conducting irregular operations. A large part of the clashes in the 1948 War of Independence were also fought in this form. In this area, cooperation with Poland was invaluable to the Israelis. Of the organisations fighting in the 1948 war, the Irgun and the Lehi were best prepared to carry out operations using this form of combat, and their members participated in the training organised by Polish officers. The effectiveness of attacks on the forces and means of the British security formations inside and outside the Mandate is also (though not exclusively) the result of the assimilation of knowledge acquired in Poland. The methods of conducting specific actions overlap with the issues discussed during the course organised in 1939 at the Kocierz Pass. The most important example is the use of improvised explosive charges – as Eliahu Lankin recalls, he learnt how to prepare them specifically in Poland.⁹⁷ And even though both the Irgun and the Lehi were weaker in terms of numbers, they imposed their way of fighting the enemy on the stronger Haganah, which also joined (albeit only temporarily) the campaign of attacks against the British and Arabs. The most famous terrorist attack – the attack on the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946, prepared by the Polish Army corporal officer cadet Menachem Begin (Mieczysław Biegun) – also had the approval of the Haganah.

While talking about the support that Poland gave the Revisionists, we cannot forget the material and humanitarian aid. The Irgun and the Lehi basically lost

⁹⁷ Lankin, *The Story of Altalena Commander*, p. 52.

their power base in the Diaspora after 1939. It was primarily the Revisionists who dominated Central and Eastern Europe, and who later perished in the Holocaust. Those small supplies of arms from Poland that reached Palestine before 1939 were therefore worth their weight in gold. Equally important were the ‘reinforcements’ that arrived in Palestine with the Anders Army, i.e. Polish-Jewish soldiers who joined underground organisations between 1940 and 1947.

The history of the Polish support for Jewish independence aspirations is not widely known, even among established scholars researching Polish-Jewish relations in the 1930s. Training, or even military cooperation, is not mentioned, for example, by Zofia Trębacz in her otherwise very good book *Nie tylko Palestyna* [Not Only Palestine], devoted to the Polish concepts of Jewish emigration.⁹⁸ Perhaps, indeed, these isolated cases of excellent, cordial and mutually respectful cooperation between Poles and Revisionists are unable to change the picture of the pre-war “Polish aversion to Jews”. Moreover, so much Revisionist-Zionist enthusiasm and militarism emphasised at every turn can shatter the image of the pre-war pacifism and alienation of the Jewish population, not only in Poland but also throughout Central and Eastern Europe. In the author’s view, it is this military cooperation that both sides can be proud of. For, to use Krzysztof Jabłonka’s words, in relation to the Revisionists, the Republic of Poland played the role of a beacon bringing the Jews out of the darkness of centuries of slavery. In this case, it was exactly what Józef Piłsudski and the Promethean movement had wanted it to be. On the monument dedicated to the memory of the Jews who fought in 1939–1945, located on the Herzl Hill in Jerusalem, there is an inscription in Polish – *Za wolność naszą i waszą* [For Our Freedom and Yours] – these words perfectly describe the small slice of Polish-Jewish history presented above.

⁹⁸ Z. Trębacz, *Nie tylko Palestyna. Polskie plany emigracyjne wobec Żydów 1935–1939* (Warsaw, 2018).

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SUMMARY

Polish-Jewish contacts have lasted more than 1,000 years. One of the most interesting yet least-known episodes is the military cooperation before and during the Second World War. Poles, who managed to win independence in 1918, became a role model for a group of Zionists gathered around Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the revisionist movement.

The Revisionists, whose main aim was to rebuild an independent Jewish state on the territory of the British Mandate for Palestine, thereby creating a place for the mass emigration of Jews from the European Diaspora, were dream partners for the Polish government. The same goal – the emigration of Jews from Poland – was reinforced by an ideological community based on similar values.

Building on the Polish experience from before the First World War, the Revisionists in the Diaspora established a mass youth movement called the Betar. The task of the organisation, very similar to the Riflemen's Union, was to create a new model of a Jew and to prepare the Diaspora for gaining and maintaining its own state. The foundation of this work was an agreement with the Polish government allowing Polish officers and soldiers to participate in training the young Betars. As part of the developing training cooperation,

in 1938, members of the Irgun, the armed arm of the Revisionists in Palestine, began to come to Poland.

In addition to training, Poland provided the tools necessary for the fight for independence – weapons and ammunition smuggled into Palestine. Poland thus became a natural and, most importantly, a reliable power base for Jewish independence plans. This was confirmed by the project advanced by the Revisionists in 1939 – the idea of a naval invasion of British Palestine. However, the only real way for Jewish organisations to fight against the powerful British empire remained irregular actions, for the preparation of which cooperation with the Polish side was indispensable.

KEYWORDS

- Irregular actions • Polish-Jewish cooperation • Zionism
- Revisionist Zionists • Betar • Irgun-Ecel • New Zionist Organisation
- Second Polish Republic • Vladimir Jabotinsky

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THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF
THE GENERAL GOVERNORATE
IN 1939–1945

The General Governorate or General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Region (German: Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo dla Okupowanych Ziemi Polskich, GG) was a peculiar Nazi formation established on the lands of occupied Poland at the end of October 1939. It was to be a kind of temporary colony, which the Third Reich authorities, particularly Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, had from its creation treated as a reservoir of raw materials and a “racial dumping ground” to which the Nazi regime planned to resettle, among others, all the Jews living on the National Socialist-controlled lands. From 1942 onwards, the GG became the main area of extermination of European Jews, where the largest genocidal operation in the history of humanity was carried out (the “Reinhardt” Operation), during which, between 1942 and 1943, approximately 1.5 million Jews were exterminated in the German extermination camps at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, as well as at Majdanek (in addition to thousands murdered during the execution and pacification of ghettos that

accompanied the deportations).¹ Ultimately, however, this “racial laboratory” of the regime was destined for Germanisation once the local population under the *Generalplan Ost* had been deported beyond the Urals, with those who remained working as slaves of the “master race” for the German war machine.² The General Governorate was also an important point on the map of Nazi terror and ethnic cleansing, especially in the context of the extermination of the Polish socio-political elite, to mention as an example, the Extraordinary Pacification Action (*Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*) in 1940.³ The GG was also one of the projected sites for German settlements, a precursor of which was the unsuccessful “Zamość” Operation, carried out from November 1942 to August 1943.⁴

Not only did the leadership of the Third Reich play a strategic role in putting into practice the plans of the National Socialist “national struggle,” i.e. the Germanisation and demographic transformation of these lands, but, above all, the local civil administration headed by Governor General, Hans Frank, and the extensive SS and police apparatus, meticulously supervised by Himmler. Frank’s brutal and corrupt regime, which treated his subordinate territory as a “fringe state” of the Reich (*Nebenland*), made the tragic history of the GG stand out even against the background of the mass crimes and atrocities of German rule in occupied Europe.⁵ The purpose of this article is to present the political and administrative system of the General Governorate and, above all, the Nazi concept of the governance of the

¹ For more, see *Akcja „Reinhardt”. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2004); S. Lehnstaedt, *Czas zabijania. Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka i akcja „Reinhardt”*, transl. B. Nowacki (Warsaw, 2018).

² See H. Heiber, “*Der Generalplan Ost*,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1958), pp. 281–325; *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, ed. C. Madajczyk (München, 1994); *Der „Generalplan Ost”. Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, ed. by M. Rössler and S. Schleiermacher (Berlin, 1993); B. Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940–1944* (Basel, 1993).

³ For more, see *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion 1940. Akcja AB na ziemiach polskich. Materiały z sesji naukowej (6–7 listopada 1986 r.)*, introd. and ed. Z. Mańkowski (Warsaw, 1992); J. Pietrzykowski, *Akcja AB w Częstochowie. AB-Aktion* (Katowice, 1971).

⁴ See e.g. A. Jaczyńska, *Sonderlaboratorium SS. Zamojszczyzna – „pierwszy obszar osiedleńczy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie” 1942–1943* (Lublin, 2012); *Zamojszczyzna – Sonderlaboratorium der SS. Zbiór dokumentów polskich i niemieckich z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej*, ed. C. Madajczyk (Warsaw, 1979).

⁵ See M. Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo. Mroczne serce Europy Hitlera*, transl. T. Fiedorek (Poznań, 2015), pp. 29–30, 33–34, back side of the cover.

area, the characteristics of the various institutions of public authority, the scope of their competences and the relations between them.

The biography, style of government and political position of Hans Frank, first as the head of the civil administration (Chef der Zivilverwaltung, CdZ) and then in the position of Governor General, who took over full power in his “appanage principality” on 26 October 1939, i.e. after the period of Wehrmacht military administration, will be analysed. This will be followed by a presentation of the organisation and functioning of the GG government (Regierung des Generalgouvernements), which emerged in December 1940 from the Office of the Governor General (Amt des Generalgouvernements), as well as the boards of the individual districts headed by the governors. The structure of the local NSDAP will also be described, as well as the lower levels of the GG administration, which consisted of the offices of rural and urban district chiefs (Kreis- and Stadthauptmannleute), or rural and urban commissars (Land- und Stadtkommissare), mayors, aldermen and village heads. Finally, the problem of agencies of the German security apparatus, i.e. the SS and police structures subordinate to the higher SS and police commander in the GG (Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer, HSSPF), including auxiliary police formations, whose ranks were also supplied by the local population, will be examined. The text is based on Polish, Anglo-Saxon and German historiography produced after 1945, which deals with the occupation of the Republic of Poland by the Third Reich in the broadest sense, particularly with the German political and administrative institutions established in these lands during the Second World War.

The areas occupied by the Wehrmacht after Germany’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 were placed under military administration (Militärverwaltung) on 25 September that year, under a decree from Hitler. The territory of the future General Governorate was divided into the military districts of Lodz and Cracow, which fell under the responsibility of the 8th, 10th, and 14th Armies. Initially, Hitler appointed Hans Frank as the senior head of the administration (Oberverwaltungschef) for the entire territory of Poland occupied by the Wehrmacht; the intention was that Frank would uniformly direct the various civilian administrations and issue guidelines for dealing with the population in the occupied areas. At the same time, he performed a similar function at the Lodz Military District (under the command of Colonel-General Gerd von Rundstedt). In turn, Arthur

Seyss-Inquart, formerly Reich Governor in Austria, became the head of administration at the Cracow district (Col. Gen. Wilhelm List).⁶ Frank and Seyss-Inquart, whose task it was to form the foundations of the future administration, create the conditions for the development of economic life and establish order in their respective districts, were formally subordinate to the Army High Command in the East (Oberkommando Ost, Ober-Ost) headed by General Walther von Brauchitsch (from 3 October to 20 October 1939 – Lt. Gen. Gerd von Rundstedt and later Gen. Johannes Blaskowitz) and the individual military district commanders.⁷ Looting, requisitions, and deportations characterised the period of *Militärverwaltung* in the lands of the later GG. All industrial goods that could serve the war machine were exported *en masse* to the Reich. Although there were numerous executions, the violent and immediate removal of Jews was refrained from for the time being, as this would have caused serious disruption to economic life.⁸

Frank got down to setting up the CdZ organisational staff only at the end of September 1939, when he chose Poznan as his headquarters. On 3 October, he convened a meeting at which he outlined the radical task set for him by Hitler: “the use of the country by ruthless exploitation; the export of all resources important for the war economy, including natural resources, machinery, production equipment, etc.; the acquisition of manpower for use in the Reich; the suppression of the entire Polish economy to the minimum necessary to allow the population to stay alive [...]” Frank stressed that closing schools and universities would make it impossible “to recreate a stratum of Polish intelligentsia.” At the same time, he added, “Poland is to be treated like a colony” and “an agricultural country,” which must be made dependent on the import of industrial products from Germany,

⁶ See J. Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940–1945)* (Köln–Wien, 2015), pp. 61–68.

⁷ See B. Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden, 2011), p. 13; H. Umbreit, *Deutsche Militärverwaltungen 1938/39. Die militärische Besetzung der Tschechoslowakei und Polens* (Stuttgart, 1977), pp. 85 ff.; M. Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–1945* (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 27.

⁸ M. Mitera, *Zwycyżajny faszyzm. Położenie prawne obywateli II Rzeczypospolitej w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1944* (Warsaw, 2017), p. 39. See also J. Böhler, “Prześladowanie ludności żydowskiej w okupowanej Polsce podczas trwania zarządu wojskowego (od 1 września do 25 października 1939 r.),” in *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy*, ed. A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2008), p. 48 ff.

and “the Poles will become slaves of the Greater Germanic Reich.”⁹ Without going into the details of the official and semi-official enunciations of the regime’s leaders, allegedly announcing the creation of some residual buffer state (Reststaat), this is how the basic features of Germany’s plans for the Polish people and lands can initially be presented.¹⁰

It should be underlined that Frank lacked any competence to manage the territories he was entrusted with. His administrative experience was limited to the establishment of party institutions. He did not know much about the functioning of the economy or about financial matters. Moreover, he did not speak Polish, and his pre-war contact with Poland was limited to cooperating in a “working group on German-Polish legal relations”. The later political reservations, resentments and aversions to the Polish nation had not yet surfaced.¹¹ How was it then that this undistinguished Nazi politician, side-lined from public life in the Third Reich before 1939, was appointed the Governor General by Hitler? Who was Hans Frank, and how did his political career develop up until the outbreak of the war?

Hans Frank (born 23 May 1900 in Karlsruhe) grew up in a respectable middle-class family living in Munich. Like many young people of his generation, he joined the ranks of the German extreme right after the end of the First World War, joining first the Freikorps and then, in 1923, the assault troops of the NSDAP (SA). At the same time, he finished studies in law and political economy at the universities of Kiel and Munich. He was so fascinated by Hitler that in November 1923, he

⁹ D. Schenk, *Hans Frank. Biografia generalnego gubernatora*, transl. K. Jachimczak (Cracow, 2009), pp. 141–142.

¹⁰ According to Frank’s notes in his diary, which numbered as many as 38 volumes, even until the beginning of October 1939, Hitler assumed that the area of the future GG was to remain “a kind of a residual state [Reststaat], which would be returned to the Poles in the future.” However, the Führer soon withdrew from these plans and began to treat the General Governorate as a quasi-colony, a sort of a free “labour pool” and a resource base for the Reich. See Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 48–50 (review of this book: W. Wichert, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 3 [2017], p. 352); L. Dobroszycki, J.B. Garas et al., “Wstęp,” in *Okupacja i ruch oporu w „Dzienniku” Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, ed. by S. Płoski, and L. Dobroszycki et al., vol. 1: 1939–1942, transl. D. Dąbrowska and M. Tomala (Warsaw, 1972), p. 24; W. Wichert, “Niemiecki system okupacyjny na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945. Zarys problematyki,” in *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa*, ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek (Warsaw–Kielce, 2022), p. 37; C. Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia w planach hitlerowskich. Studia* (Warsaw, 1961); L. Herzog, “Czy Hitler chciał utworzyć buforowe państewko polskie?,” *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny* 4 (1962), pp. 295–316.

¹¹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 142.

participated in the Munich putsch, which proved unsuccessful for the National Socialists. In the second half of the 1920s, he became the party's chief legal adviser and lawyer. He represented its members, including Hitler himself, during numerous trials. In 1928, he formed the National Socialist Lawyers' Association, and in 1929 was appointed the head of the NSDAP's legal office. After the Nazis came to power in Germany on 30 January 1933, he was entrusted with the position of the Bavarian Minister of Justice and, shortly afterwards, Reich's Commissioner for the unification of justice in the Länder and the reform of the legal order, which amounted to the *de facto* abolition of the local court systems. In 1933, Frank founded the Academy of German Law,¹² which was to create a new interpretation of law based on the principle of chieftainship (Führerprinzip¹³), and at the same time, secure for him the prestigious position of the Hugo Grotius of Nazi Germany. However, as Hitler held both lawyers and the law itself in open dislike, not to say outright contempt, this quasi-academic think tank's influence on the nascent totalitarian regime was utterly irrelevant. A year later, Frank was appointed a minister without portfolio in the Reich's government, but in this position, he had little to do apart from the rare occasions that pandered to his vanity.¹⁴

Moreover, Hitler lost some of his confidence in Frank when, during the Night of the Long Knives (29–30 June 1934), the brutal liquidation of the SA leadership and the Führer's other political opponents, Frank expressed his opposition to the arbitrary actions and terror campaign unleashed by Himmler's SS. In any case, as Frank himself not unreasonably admitted, he had been "since 1934, a slowly but steadily declining political greatness." Hitler no longer needed the law for anything as soon as he took the dictatorial helm of the government in Germany. Frank's attempts to halt the loss of his influence were expressed after 1934 primarily in an almost religious cult of the leader, whom he praised to the skies in numerous written and oral tirades. However, this did not help him regain the favour of the dictator. Until the outbreak of the Second World War, Frank remained a somewhat

¹² See H. Hattenhauer, "Die Akademie für Deutsches Recht (1933–1944)," *Juristische Schulung* 26 (1986), pp. 680–684; H.R. Pichinot, *Die Akademie für Deutsches Recht. Aufbau und Entwicklung einer öffentlich-rechtlichen Körperschaft des Dritten Reichs* (Kiel, 1981).

¹³ See "Führergrundsatz," in H. Kammer, E. Bartsch, *Begriffe aus der Zeit der Gewaltherrschaft 1933–1945* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1992), pp. 71–72.

¹⁴ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 63.

secondary figure in the political life of the Third Reich. In this situation, it must have come as quite a surprise to him when in mid-September 1939, following Germany's aggression against Poland, Hitler dismissed him from his service in one of the Potsdam military units to entrust him with the post of the head of civil administration at the Supreme Command of the Army in the East.¹⁵

One may presume that Hitler intended to test Frank's abilities in this way, with the intention to write him off in the event of a failure finally. Some believe that the Führer was putting him on a side-track by electing him to this office. After all, given Hitler's intentions for the province, the General Governorate was hardly an attractive assignment. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that the dictator was filling key positions with "old combatants" whom he considered to be unconditionally devoted and compliant, and this pattern of appointments was to be repeated frequently in the German East.¹⁶ He also applied this principle to the selection of gauleiters. This is not to underestimate Hitler's ability to appreciate Frank's intelligence and mental flexibility.¹⁷ He also knew that he could count on his complete subordination and loyalty.

On 6 October 1939, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Wilhelm Stuckart, the Secretary of State at the Reich's Ministry of the Interior, attended by Frank and the gauleiters of Danzig, East Prussia, Silesia and Poznan, to divide up the German-occupied territory of Poland. The following zones were then designated: the part subject to Germanisation and incorporated into the Reich, and the zone of isolation and the exploitation of Poles and Jews (the General Governorate).¹⁸ Importantly, due to the energetic action of Arthur Greiser, the future governor of the *Reichsgau Wartheland*, and protests from the local Germans, the Lodz region did not remain within the borders of the General Governorate. The results of this meeting were reflected in Hitler's decree concerning the division and administration of the eastern territories of 8 October 1939. According to this decree, Pomerania, Greater Poland, Silesia, part of Mazovia and Kuyavia, as well as a fragment of the Lodz Voivodeship and a fragment of the Białystok Voivodeship (Suwałki County and

¹⁵ J.C. Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, transl. E. Werfel (Warsaw, 1970), p. 354.

¹⁶ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 64.

¹⁷ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 142.

¹⁸ See Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, p. 22.

a part of Augustów County, excluding the city) became parts of the Reich. The fate of the remaining portion of the country occupied by the Wehrmacht was sealed four days later when, on 12 October, Hitler signed a decree concerning the administration of the occupied Polish lands, i.e. the creation of the General Governorate. This decree entered into force on the day of its promulgation, i.e. 26 October of that year.¹⁹

The established General Governorate was not a state but a kind of protectorate, since the Reich exercised supreme power. At the same time, it was not part of Germany, like the annexed territories. The GG was often referred to as an area of German interests. In later years, there were several attempts to abolish it and incorporate it into the Reich.²⁰ A prelude to this was the removal of the phrase “for the occupied Polish territory” from the titles binding in the General Governorate by Frank’s secret decree of 31 July 1940 (the relevant decision was made by Hitler himself through a decree of 8 July 1940). The GG then ceased to be the national headquarters of the Polish element and became a peripheral appendage country. Despite attempts to bring it closer to the Reich, a customs, currency, foreign exchange and police border existed between them until 1945.²¹ In one of his first decrees on administrative structure, Frank established the division of the GG into four districts: Cracow, Radom, Lublin, and Warsaw. As of November 1939, Cracow became the seat of the authorities of the General Governorate (earlier, from 26 October to 1 November, Frank had resided temporarily in Lodz, where the first GG offices were located).²²

¹⁹ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 142–143; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” pp. 30–31; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 20–21; “Erlaß Adolf Hitlers vom 12. Oktober 1939 über die Verwaltung der besetzten polnischen Gebiete,” in *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz. Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Polen (1939–1945). Dokumentenauswahl und Einleitung*, ed. W. Röhr (Berlin, 1989), p. 130.

²⁰ The GG, despite its links with the Reich, had a certain independence. The concept of the General Governorate was a peculiar novelty that could not be described using the existing legal categories. Hitler used the expression “Reich’s foreground,” while Frank referred to the GG not only as the “seat of the Polish nation,” but also as a “Polish reserve,” claiming, however, that it was not part of Germany, but remained under its authority. See Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia*, p. 45; D. Majer, „Narodowo obcy” w Trzeciej Rzeszy. *Przyczynek do narodowosocjalistycznego ustawodawstwa i praktyki prawniczej w administracji i wymiarze sprawiedliwości ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem ziem wcielonych do Rzeszy i Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, transl. T. Skoczny (Warsaw, 1989), p. 69; Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 30.

²¹ See C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1970), p. 109; A. Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Cracow, 2016), pp. 25–26.

²² See “Pierwsze rozporządzenie o odbudowie administracji okupowanych polskich obszarów. Z dnia 26 października 1939,” *Dziennik rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla okupowanych pol-*

At the time of its creation, the GG covered an area of approximately 95,000 square kilometres, including the pre-war voivodeships of Kielce, Lublin, most of the Cracow Voivodeship (excluding the western districts), a fragment of the Warsaw Voivodeship (excluding northern Mazovia) and a fragment of the Lodz Voivodeship. Shortly after the German invasion of the USSR, on 1 August 1941, the south-eastern territories of the Second Polish Republic were incorporated into Frank's "appanage principality" as the fifth, and territorially largest, district of Galicia (a part of the pre-war Lwowskie voivodeship, and Stanislaviv (Polish: Stanisławów) and Ternopil (Polish: Tarnopol) Voivodeships in their entirety. The total area of the GG then grew to 142,000 square kilometres. Determining the exact population of the General Governorate poses some difficulties. According to official German data from 1940, the population of this occupation unit was then approximately 12 million, including 90 thousand Germans (*Volksdeutsche* – Polish citizens of German nationality until 1939), 750 thousand Ukrainians, 9 million 600 thousand Poles, 80 thousand Highlanders (sic!) and 1.5 million Jews. Taking into account the loss of population as a result of the extermination policy of the occupying forces and, last but not least, the war migration, which was not included in any statistics, it should be assumed that in 1943 the GG had a population of approximately 16.8 million, of which Poles accounted for ca. 70%, Ukrainians for 27%, Germans for 2%, and Jews for about 1% of the population.²³

Hitler's decree of 12 October concerning the administration of the occupied Polish territories placed almost unlimited power in the hands of Hans Frank. Seyss-Inquart became his deputy (he remained in office until May 1940, when he was replaced by Frank's protégé, Dr Josef Bühler). The Governor General reported directly to Hitler. All areas of administration were assigned to him, and he could "legislate by regulations". Frank was furthermore to create the GG budget, though this required the approval of the Reich Minister of Finance. According to the decree's provisions, the administration costs were ceded to the occupied

skich obszarów 1939, pp. 3–4; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 43; D. Schenk, *Krakauer Burg. Wawel jako ośrodek władzy generalnego gubernatora Hansa Franka w latach 1939–1945*, transl P. Zarychta (Cracow, 2013), pp. 52–53.

²³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 31; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 143; K.M. Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie „prawo” okupacyjne w Polsce, Part 2: Generalna Gubernia. Wybór dokumentów i próba syntezy* (Poznan, 1958), pp. 20–22.

area. The provisions concerning the interference of the Minister of the Interior and the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan were also a specific limitation of Frank's authority since, according to Hitler's decree: "The Chairman of the Council of Ministers for the Defence of the Reich, the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan and the highest authorities of the Reich may issue orders that are necessary for the planning of German living and economic space, including for the areas subordinated to the Governor General." The Reich Minister of the Interior, in turn, constituted "the central authority for the occupied Polish areas." Such provisions must have inevitably led to conflicts between those involved, especially as Frank had no intention of sharing his authority with anyone. He was formally subordinate to Hitler and accountable to him.²⁴ Later, after various jurisdictional frictions started to appear, Frank repeatedly invoked the contents of the Decree of 12 October to secure his political position against the growing influence of other regime agencies. Nevertheless, as he correctly observed, the "anarchy of powers" (Anarchie der Vollmachten) characteristic of the Third Reich often prevented him from effectively governing the GG. Whether this "polycracy of ministries" was a central element of the *divide et impera* strategy or an expression of the quasi-Darwinist 'official chaos' resulting from the 'parasitic' breakdown of traditional administrative structures already initiated in the old Reich remains an open question.²⁵ In any case, Hitler never made a definitive decision on the future status and distribution of political forces in the GG, with the result that the area remained an arena for fierce competence disputes between the various instances of the dictatorship throughout the whole period of the occupation.²⁶

Nonetheless, towards the end of October 1939, Frank was immensely pleased that, after several years of annoying political marginalisation, Hitler had finally recognised his boundless loyalty by entrusting him with the post of the Governor

²⁴ See Mitera, *Zwyczynny faszyzm*, pp. 32–33; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 143.

²⁵ For more, see K. Hildebrand, *Das Dritte Reich* (München, 1991), pp. 178 ff.; P. Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches. Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (München–Wien, 1991), p. 10; M. Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung* (München, 1992), pp. 423 ff.; M. Ruck, *Führerabsolutismus und polykratisches Herrschaftsgefüge – Verfassungsstrukturen des NS-Staates in Deutschland 1933–1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, ed. by K.D. Bracher, M. Funke, and H.A. Jacobsen (Bonn, 1992), pp. 36 ff.

²⁶ Ch. Kleßmann, "Frank: Parteijurist und Generalgouverneur in Polen," in *Die braune Elite: 22 biographische Skizzen*, ed. by R. Smelser and R. Zitellmann (Darmstadt, 1990), p. 45.

General. The office even seemed created to accommodate Frank's bombastic lust for honours. With the splendour of an oriental despot, he soon moved into Wawel Castle, where he furnished his residence amidst a costly ceremonial that suited his nature so well, and in "audacious romantic delusions saw himself as a fief, set by Hitler on the royal throne of Poland." He was a master of life and death, as incalculable in his magnanimous gestures as he was in his cruelty. The Italian journalist Curzio Malaparte assessed that Frank's nature was "incredibly complex, a bizarre mixture of intelligence and cruelty, finesse and vulgarity, brutal cynicism and refined sensitivity."²⁷ In his very first conversations with Hitler, he discussed individual actions that would at the same time determine the future political line towards the GG, such as the demolition of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the deportation of art treasures and the liquidation of the Polish intelligentsia. Hidden behind this as a goal was a "process of re-Germanisation," which Frank sometimes described as "the absolute imbuing of this space with Germanness," cleansing it of "unnecessary foreign tribal elements." In this vein, he heralded that "the greatest hour of Germanness" was coming and that the General Governorate "had an enormous historical task to fulfil." In Berlin government circles, the GG soon began to be referred to as the "Frank-Reich," i.e. the "Frank state" in the East, and the Governor General himself became known as "King Stanisław," who does not rule but reigns.²⁸ While he presented himself as an Enlightenment-era ruler and a sophisticated intellectual who wanted to develop culture and civilisation in these lands at all costs, Frank was also extremely sensitive to prestige and passionate about luxury.²⁹ With his family, he occupied sumptuous palaces, including the residence of the Potocki family in Krzeszowice, and he willingly plundered the property of the occupation zone entrusted to him, appropriating numerous collections of works of art.³⁰

Hitler's terror, oppression, and exploitation policy in occupied Poland contained guidelines that Frank shared and zealously implemented. Hitler reportedly even

²⁷ Quoted in C. Malaparte, *Kaputt*, transl. B. Sieroszevska (Warsaw, 1962), pp. 149–150.

²⁸ See Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, p. 355; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 160; Ch. Kleßmann, "Der Generalgouverneur Hans Frank," *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1971), p. 255; Malaparte, *Kaputt*, p. 69.

²⁹ P. Wiczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna Polski 1935–1945* (Poznan, 2014), p. 228.

³⁰ See N. Frank, *Mój ojciec Hans Frank*, transl. E. Kacprzycka, J. Kwiatkowski (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 94 ff.

said to him at the time: “You, my dear Frank, go and carry out the devil’s work in Poland well.”³¹ Encouraged by the dictator, Frank initially drew the mistaken conclusion of his independence from the central ministries in Berlin. Moreover, according to the decree of 12 October 1939, anyone who did not fall in line with Frank had to appeal to Hitler, and this was not easy since only the triumvirate: Heinrich Himmler, Martin Bormann (head of the NSDAP Chancellery after Rudolf Hess fled to Britain in May 1941) and Dr Hans Heinrich Lammers (head of the Reich Chancellery), had regular direct access to him, while otherwise contentious issues rarely reached the last instance. In his calculations, however, Frank underestimated the influence of powerful rivals. Heinrich Himmler, who regarded the ‘theatricality’ and the ‘intellectual sophistication’ of the governor with contempt, demanded a prominent role not only in using the SS and police in the GG.³² On 7 October 1939, Himmler was given greater powers as the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. With the help of his local representative, the Higher SS and Police Commander, he claimed the right to shape racial policy in occupied Poland. Initially, Himmler intended to resettle all the Jews living in areas controlled by the Reich to the GG. However, this plan was never brought to fruition.

From 1941 onwards, especially in the wake of the German aggression against the Soviet Union, Frank and Himmler, who had been at odds with each other for years, unanimously decided that undesirable groups of the *Fremdvölkische* (foreign tribes or peoples) would no longer be sent to the GG, but that these lands would, in the future, be subjected to Germanisation.³³ To this end, the organisation of ghettos for Jews there was also accelerated, and their property was at the same time systematically plundered by the occupation regime, above all by the Main Trust Office East (Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, HTO). This institution was established on

³¹ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 124.

³² See Wieczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna Polski*, p. 229; Malaparte, *Kaputt*, p. 155.

³³ Frank, however, wanted to spread these plans over time to be able to reap the various political and material benefits of his rule for a longer period of time. In a conversation with Frank in March 1941, Hitler declared, “that he was determined to make this country a purely German state within 15–20 years,” to the extent that the Rhineland was then. To achieve this far-reaching programme, it was envisaged at the time that some 4–5 million Germans would settle in the GG, but this was not to happen until after the victorious end of the war. See Wieczorkiewicz, *Historia polityczna polski*, pp. 232–233; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 125; Wichert, “Recenzja,” p. 352.

19 October 1939 by Hermann Göring, who was also the Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan. The purpose of the Trust Office in Cracow (Treuhandstelle für das Generalgouvernement), which was the name of the HTO's branch in the General Governorate, was to coordinate the economic exploitation of the territories and, more specifically, to supervise the confiscation of Polish and Jewish property. The General Governorate was to "export all raw materials useful in the war economy, secondary raw materials, machinery, etc." Frank did not accept the total economic drain of the General Governorate, just as he did not accept the unrestricted deportation of Poles and Jews under his jurisdiction, which inevitably gave rise to numerous conflicts within the Nazi leadership. Nonetheless, Frank quickly came to terms with Göring (in a decree of 4 December 1939, Göring appointed Frank the general plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan in the GG), while other ministers, such as Albert Speer (from 1942 Minister of Armaments and War Production) and Fritz Sauckel (General Plenipotentiary for the Use of Manpower), always came across his resistance when they wanted to interfere in the affairs of his "mini-state".³⁴

In this context, it should be noted that there were permanently eleven plenipotentiaries of various Reich authorities and offices under the GG government.³⁵ There were Reich Government delegations and NSDAP outposts. These included: the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, the Supreme Command of the Land Army in the GG, the Supreme Command of the Luftwaffe, a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a representative of the Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production, a representative of the Plenipotentiary for the Regulation of the Construction Industry and the Reich Youth Leader, the German Red Cross, the Plenipotentiary for Securing Works of Art and Culture, and the Party Chancellery.³⁶ The role of the NSDAP in the GG cannot be compared with that in the areas incorporated into the Reich, where its structures were more developed and it had greater scope for action, especially in the sphere of the Germanisation policy. The Party's central department in the General Governorate was the Delegation of the Party Chancellery – the Arbeitsbereich Generalgouvernement der NSDAP, headed by Frank (as a member of the NSDAP's highest collective body, the Reichsleitung),

³⁴ See Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 33; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 144–146.

³⁵ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 33.

³⁶ Mitera, *Zwycząjny faszyzm*, p. 46.

which was only established at the beginning of May 1940. The district governors, who led the party at this level of administration (Distriktstandortführer), sought to obtain powers in the NSDAP delegation equal to Frank or his deputy but were denied.³⁷ The county starosts, on the other hand, who were almost one hundred per cent recruited from the ranks of the NSDAP, also held the position of local party chairmen (Standortführer).³⁸ The Arbeitsbereich Generalgouvernement der NSDAP also supervised the activities of the Volksdeutsche Gemeinschaft (Ethnic Germans' Community), established on Hitler's birthday in 1940, which was transformed a year later into the Deutsche Gemeinschaft (German Community). The *Volksdeutsche*, of whom there were not many in the GG, were assembled into 34 local groups (*Ortsgruppe*) by the Department of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in the government of the General Governorate,³⁹ which organised, among other things, festivals and mass party-state events in the area.⁴⁰ The German Community kept records not only of the *Volksdeutsche*,⁴¹ but also of Germans coming to the GG from the old Reich, who generally arrived as staff supplies for the clerical corps, local trade or service companies and were not members of the NSDAP.⁴²

The structure of the German administration in the General Governorate did not undergo any major changes in its basic form from the time of its establishment until the end of the occupation. This system was based on the principle of unity

³⁷ See Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 113; K. Leszczyński, J. Gumkowski, "Generalne Gubernatorstwo w oczach Niemca (sprawozdanie dra Blaschka, szefa biura przydziałnego protektora Rzeszy na Czechi i Morawy, z podróży służbowej do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w dniach 21–26 sierpnia 1942 r.)," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 15 (1965), pp. 126 ff.

³⁸ I. Haar, "Polityka ludnościowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie: polityka narodowościowa wobec Żydów i polityka osadnictwa a inicjatywy regionalne i centralne," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2009), p. 164.

³⁹ For more, see L. Jockheck, *Propaganda im Generalgouvernement. Die NS-Besatzungspresse für Deutsche und Polen 1939–1945* (Osnabrück, 2006), pp. 69 ff.

⁴⁰ The most pompous and ceremonial fetes were the NSDAP day (24 February), Hitler's birthday (20 April), National Labour Day (1 May), the anniversary of the occupation of Cracow (6 September) and the anniversary of the establishment of the GG (12 October). Hitler's youth – the male youth organised in the Hitlerjugend and the female youth organised in the Bund Deutscher Mädel, both organisations having their headquarters in occupied Cracow – held an extraordinary place in the Nazi festivities. See Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 78–81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

⁴² For more about the NSDAP apparatus in the General Governorate, see A. Nolzen, "Die Arbeitsbereiche der NSDAP im Generalgouvernement, in den Niederlanden und in der besetzten Sowjetunion," in *Die deutsche Herrschaft in den „germanischen“ Ländern 1940–1945*, ed. R. Bohn (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 253–261.

of administration (Verwaltungseinheit) and chiefdom. In terms of its design, it could be said to have been more consistent than the organisation of administration in the old Reich and in the territories incorporated into it, where parallel forms of the old Prussian administration (provinces and regions) and the Reich districts (Reichsgauen) introduced by the Nazis existed. Frank, as Governor General, had full legislative and executive powers. The executive body was initially the Office of the Governor General and, from 1 December 1940, was known as the GG Government.⁴³ The head of this body, accountable to Frank for all his work, throughout the occupation remained Dr Josef Bühler (a former prosecutor, from 1933 a loyal charge of Frank in successive government institutions), using the title of Secretary of State from February 1940. From the end of May that year, following Seyss-Inquart's appointment as Reich Commissioner in occupied Holland, Frank also entrusted Bühler with the function of his deputy. He headed the occupation bureaucracy from his headquarters in the building of the Academy of Mining in Cracow, which had been closed by the Germans.⁴⁴ The government of General Governorate consisted of an extensive state secretariat, twelve departmental departments called *Abteilungen* and, from March 1941, main departments (*Hauptabteilungen*), as well as central level establishments, such as the president of the GG Emission Bank and the General Office of Fiscal Control. The heads of the main departments were given the titles of presidents (*Präsidenten*) by Frank's order of July 1940.⁴⁵

The organisation of the government was laid down in detail in the third decree on the "reconstruction of the administration" of the GG of 16 March 1941. The state secretariat consisted of the Governor General's office, the government office with its five subordinate departments, the legislative office, the price formation office, the land management office, the personnel office, the administrative office and the GG archives directorate.⁴⁶ The *Hauptabteilungen*, on the other hand, consisted of the departments of the interior, treasury, justice, economy, food and agriculture,

⁴³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 32; Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik*, p. 70; Madajczyk, *Generalna Gubernia*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 32–33.

⁴⁶ Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, p. 45.

forests, labour, propaganda, science and education, construction, railways and the post office. More significant changes towards simplifying the administration took place in March 1943, when, among other things, the State Secretariat dissolved the Government Chancellery, transferring most of its departments to the relevant main government departments and incorporating the zoning office into the Department of the Interior.⁴⁷ The cabinet was to be a professional advisory body to the Governor General.⁴⁸

The middle and lower levels of administration were, in terms of structure, a diminished and simplified copy of the higher instance, respectively. Each of the five districts of the GG was headed by a governor (Gouverneur des Distrikts), who, until 25 September 1941, was called the district chief (Distriktschef). A district governor's office was headed by the head of the office (Amtschef), also the deputy governor. The internal organisation of this body corresponded to the bureaucratic structure of the GG government, meaning that the district governor was like a miniaturised version of Frank. The latter liked to surround himself with his henchmen, which was confirmed by the fact that two of his appointed governors had previously worked with him at the Academy of German Law. The director of this academy, Karl Lasch, whom Frank ironically referred to as a 'blond scoundrel', took over the Radom District, while Dr Ludwig Fischer was sent to Warsaw. Fischer was to prove to be the only German governor to remain in his post until the end of the occupation. The other governors were distinguished veterans of the NSDAP. Frank entrusted the Cracow District to Baron Otton von Wächter, a doctor of law and Austrian Nazi who had played a leading role in a failed putsch in his country in July 1934.⁴⁹ The first governor in Lublin was Friedrich Schmidt who, like Wächter, had been an SS man but was quickly replaced by Ernst Zörner, former mayor of Dresden and an old comrade of Hitler and propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels.⁵⁰ With the exception of Zörner, the district chiefs, and later the

⁴⁷ See Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie "prawo"*, pp. 51, 63–64.

⁴⁸ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 34.

⁴⁹ See also M. Ogórek, *Lista Wächtera. General SS, który ograbił Kraków. Gdzie zniknęły polskie dzieła sztuki?* (Warsaw, 2017).

⁵⁰ See Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 70; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 34; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 22–23; Schenk, *Krakauer Burg*, p. 72; M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und*

governors and district chiefs at a lower level, also headed the local administration of the NSDAP. Under their authority, party affairs were handled by the internal affairs departments; in practice, this was done, albeit to a lesser extent, by other departments as well.⁵¹

Districts were, in turn, divided into rural and urban counties. Authority in the county was exercised by the village or town starost (Kreis- or Stadthauptmann). The structure of this office, which roughly coincided with that of the district governor, was somewhat simplified in comparison.⁵² Towns that were not county seats or urban counties were given a district office (Verwaltungsstelle) in the form of municipal commissariats headed by a commissioner (Stadtkommissar). In contrast, rural counties with larger areas received similar rural commissariats, which were managed by a rural commissar (Landkommissar). It should be noted here that the districts in the GG did not overlap territorially with the area of the districts existing before the war. The district chiefs (the starosts), like the district governors, were appointed by the Governor General, while the heads of offices and heads of departments were appointed by the Secretary of State. All these functions were held by Germans from the old Reich (most often from Dresden, Leipzig, Munich and Silesia), and at a county level also by the *Volksdeutsche*. The administration, which was supposed to fully implement Frank's policy and deal with all public activities, was unable, if only because of the lack of sufficient personnel, to function without the participation of the local Polish administration. As a result, Polish pre-war municipal boards and local administrative bodies in municipalities and settlements were left in place. Mayors and aldermen were appointed by district governors, and mayors of towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants by the Governor General. In practice, this meant in many cases that people who had already held these positions before the war remained in office. Of course, wherever possible, an attempt was made to place a *Volksdeutsche* or Ukrainian in the position of mayor or a village leader – the latter usually in all cases where the

Nachgeschichte (Göttingen, 2007), pp. 57–58; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 384, 388–389, 399–400.

⁵¹ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 110.

⁵² For more, see S. Biernacki, J. Stoch, "Działania władz okupacyjnych (policji i administracji) w dystrykcie warszawskim przeciwko ruchowi oporu w latach 1939–1944," *Najnowsze Dzieje Polski. Materiały i studia z okresu II wojny światowej* 10 (1966), pp. 47–76.

Ukrainian population was predominant or in equal proportion to the Poles. The newly-appointed German starosts or commissars had an absolute right to supervise the local representatives of lower-level authorities and unlimited possibilities to interfere in their decisions. They could suspend any decision of the local mayor, for example, and issue their orders.⁵³ Certain positions at the county level, defined as office branches (*angeschlossene Dienststellen*), could be held by Poles, such as the office of a county doctor (*Kreisarzt*) or a county veterinarian (*Kreistierarzt*).⁵⁴

According to the intention of the GG occupation authorities, the entire administrative management and supervision were carried out by German outposts. In reality, however, the whole network of German administration, which in each district was administered by a maximum of 100-200 German officials, was too loose to allow close control of the Polish population. To mobilise economic production in the General Governorate and its labour force for the Reich, Polish municipality officials and village chiefs had to be used. Their loyal cooperation could not be counted on as long as the plan to subjugate the Polish element was in place. Hitler and Himmler's idea that it was possible to successfully both exploit the country and enslave its inhabitants very quickly proved to be a fatal miscalculation. However, because this basic concept, based on criminal ideological premises, was not abandoned, the GG authorities floundered constantly between attempts at an organisational and efficient use of Polish resources and manifestations of police-like arbitrariness and terror. This led to contradictory moves and intrigues on the part of Frank, the administration, the Wehrmacht and the police apparatus, often causing chaos. The governors of the individual districts often competed for influence with Frank himself, for whom the "unity of administration" was a hobbyhorse. By delegating powers downwards, the higher authorities were supposed

⁵³ M. Broszat, *200 lat niemieckiej polityki wobec Polski*, transl. by E. Kazimierczak and W. Leder (Warsaw, 1999), p. 341.

⁵⁴ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 34-35. However, for example, in the Cracow City Board, which from 1 April 1941 to 30 April 1943 was headed by Rudolf Pavlu as the city mayor, as a result of staffing difficulties, Poles were permanently employed in certain managerial positions as "acting officers." All of them, as well as the rank-and-file clerks, had to provide a police-verified clean criminal record and sign a so-called "service obligation," i.e. a kind of a declaration that they would conscientiously fulfil their duties. On the face of it, a signed pledge looked like a renunciation of one's own country; a failure to sign it entailed the risk of repressions. Almost everyone therefore signed it, and the Polish underground believing that signing under duress, in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1907, had no value, did not oppose this. See Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 30.

to be relieved of routine administration and to concentrate on 'governing'. In line with this concept, Frank planned to strengthen the county and town starosts and, at the same time, to bind them together in such a way as to weaken the intermediate instances. He wanted to effectively prevent district governors from seeking independence through this means. This plan ultimately failed to materialise due to a lack of staff and departmental selfishness. Moreover, contrary to these ideas, the government in Cracow became so bloated that the rules and regulations it produced flooded the lower instances, the end result being that the norm in the operation of local authorities turned out to be nothing more than improvisation.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, attempts were made to conceal this organisational disorder by exercising strict control over the activities of Polish administrative bodies in the field.⁵⁶

This supervision is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Warsaw, at the time a city of one million inhabitants and the largest city in the GG, which was subjected to the "high care" of the district governor himself, Ludwig Fischer, residing in the Brühl Palace. The day-to-day supervision of the city was exercised by the plenipotentiary of the district chief for the city of Warsaw, who was Ludwig Leist, throughout almost the entire occupation period. The same "privilege" was enjoyed by Cracow – a city with a relatively new tradition of German-Austrian presence, scheduled for rapid Germanisation, where a plenipotentiary also held office. In the eyes of the Germans, Cracow was also perceived as more predictable in terms of the behaviour of its inhabitants than the "fickle" and "perverse" Warsaw, which was engulfed by "chauvinistic" ideas that were supposed to create there an atmosphere of "cold hatred". Hitler himself stated in one of his conversations with Frank that "Warsaw must be demolished as soon as an opportunity comes up." Goebbels had a similar opinion of Warsaw, calling it "already Asia" and "a city of horror."⁵⁷ Nonetheless, due to the extensive administrative and economic issues of the great city, the occupant retained a Polish municipal administration there.

⁵⁵ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 158–159; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, pp. 69 ff.; T. Sandkühler, „Endlösung” in Galizien: der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz, 1941–1944 (Bonn, 1996), p. 35; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 77; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ Broszat, *200 lat niemieckiej polityki*, pp. 341–342.

⁵⁷ See J. Goebbels, *Dzienniki*, vol. 2: 1939–1943, introd., ed., and transl. E.C. Król (Warsaw, 2016), p. 27 (14 October 1939); Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, pp. 42–43.

Consequently, there were three instances in Warsaw: the district governor, the plenipotentiary of the district chief and the Polish city administration. German supervision was exercised according to the principle of unity of administration. Thus, Governor Fischer issued orders to Leist, or to Fischer's deputy, the head of the office, Dr Herbert Hummel – to Leist's deputy, Dr Hermann Fribolin, who in turn issued orders to the Polish commissariat mayor, who, until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, was Stefan Starzyński's pre-war deputy, Julian Kulski.⁵⁸ In addition, each department of the city administration had its supervisor in the form of the appropriate German functionary of the office of the plenipotentiary, and from 1 October 1941, simply in the form of the town starost (Stadthauptmann), i.e. Leist. In this way, Warsaw became *de nomine* a county town, stripped of all the attributes of a central city. This provides yet further proof of how much attention the occupants paid to Warsaw, and how much they sought to completely erase the role of this city from the history of the Polish nation and the state.⁵⁹

In a relatively short period, Frank completed the work of building the administration in the GG, so that in the summer of 1940 he could submit an appropriate report to Hitler. On 1 September 1943, 22,740 men and 7,184 women were employed, of which the railway and postal administration alone accounted for 15,880 men and 2,980 women. About two-fifths of the staff were given civil servant status. The government had 1,900 co-workers. However, according to entries in Frank's diary of 22 February 1943, the Warsaw District had only 200 German officials, Radom – 240, Cracow – 200, Lublin – 160 and Galicia – 230 functionaries of that nationality.⁶⁰ The dizzying pace of building the foundations of the new administration cannot, however, obscure the fact that its shape left room for numerous abuses and mistakes, which limited its effectiveness.⁶¹ Moreover, the lack of transparent power structures in occupied Poland incentivised some officials, especially starosts at the local level,

⁵⁸ See G. Piątek, *Sanator. Kariera Stefana Starzyńskiego* (Warsaw, 2016).

⁵⁹ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 35–36. See also B. Lachert, "Zamierzenia Niemców w stosunku do Warszawy w aspekcie opracowań urbanistycznych z 6 lutego 1940 r. 'Warschau die neue deutsche Stadt,'" in *Ekspertyzy i orzeczenia przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym*, ed. C. Pili-chowski, vol. 9 (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 306–308; N. Gutschow, B. Klain, *Zagłada i utopia. Urbanistyka Warszawy w latach 1939–1945*, transl. E. Dappa *et al.* (Warsaw–Frankfurt am Main, 1995).

⁶⁰ Dobroszycki, *Garas et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 37.

⁶¹ See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 158; Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*, p. 87.

to take independent action.⁶² The more energetic and independent county starosts literally became “little Hitlers” on whose whims the life or death of the people under their rule depended. Most of these officials used their positions to push for radical measures, especially in areas such as policies towards the Jews or the collection of compulsory food quotas. In terms of radicalism, they often outdid even the SS itself.⁶³

Almost all county starosts were “active National Socialist fighters,” as Frank put it, i.e. they belonged to the NSDAP, and many of them (more than 54%) had already joined the party before 1933.⁶⁴ In the course of the recruitment, in addition to the knowledge of administration, it was, above all, the “pioneering spirit” and the desire to achieve a “historic mission” in the East that were important. The majority, such as Dr Heinz Gustav Albrecht – the starost of Końskie County – came from the middle class, the bourgeoisie, although there were also aristocrats among them, such as Hans Werner von Bülow, Mogens von Harbou und von der Hellen, and the head of the Lvov District, Joachim Freiherr von der Leyen. As a rule, these officers had studied law (more than half even held doctoral degrees).

Others, however, before 1939, had worked as lawyers, in the Gestapo, in various Nazi organisations or in the economy. The Kreishauptleute considered themselves the elite and representatives of the “master race”; they got rich and wallowed in luxury at the expense of the local population. Away from their homeland, in addition, surrounded by a hostile and, they claimed, primitive “ethnic mass,” they even behaved like rulers and often took criminal actions at their own initiative, without any order from above.⁶⁵

⁶² See P. Rogowski, E. Wójcicka, “Kielce i powiat kielecki pod rządami Eduarda Jedamczika i Huberta Rottera na przełomie 1939 i 1940 roku,” *Świętokrzyskie Studia Archiwalno-Historyczne* 8 (2019), pp. 143–162.

⁶³ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 77–78.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁶⁵ The mentality of the “master race” prevailing among the occupiers was perhaps best summarised in December 1939 by the first head of the Lublin Municipal County, Fritz Cuhorst: “we decided to behave, we officials, exactly the opposite of what we do at home, that is, like the last scoundrels.” The racism with which the occupation regime was imbued, on the other hand, was best seen in relation to the Jews living in the General Governorate. Thus, Ernst Gramß, a member of the administration of the Warsaw District and later the head of the Sokołów County, wrote in one of his letters to his wife that the Warsaw Jewish quarter was a “disgrace” full of “thuggish faces” and the thought that “extermination would be a blessing for the mankind” came to mind all on its own. As a county starost, Gramß ordered the hanging of Jews on the pretext of practising illegal trade. In his county, he exercised a hard-handed rule to which many Poles also fell victim. In particular, this qualified agrocultura engineer set himself

The recruitment of administrative cadres did not quite go as expected by the Governor General. It was particularly difficult to find officials willing to work in rural counties offering few amenities to compensate for the monotonous service, often performed in a hostile environment. As time went by, the GG actually became a place for the deportation not only of people who were “racially undesirable” in the Reich but also of German officials unwanted elsewhere, who were usually incompetent. In addition, the situation was further aggravated later by the relatively high turnover of staff, caused primarily by conscription into the Wehrmacht or simple disillusionment with the living conditions in the East. Complications were further added by the habit of the central GG administration in Cracow to keep the best officials, especially numerous lawyers, for themselves. The pervasive corruption among public and party functionaries, some of whom even had a criminal background, also created difficulties in management. As a result, in Berlin, the General Governorate came to be known by the vivid term “gangster’s Gau” or “Wild West,” synonymous with an area of unlimited opportunity, where a menagerie of corrupt, mediocre and degenerate brawlers, draft dodgers and upstarts flocked in large numbers. They mostly wanted to get rich and achieve a higher socio-professional status, hoping for an easier existence than in the old Reich (higher rations and wages, ample opportunities for extortion and abuse, etc.) and that their former misdeeds would be forgotten there.⁶⁶

up for the brutal exploitation of the Polish peasantry, forcing them to deliver unrealistic quotas of agricultural produce. When the mass deportation of Jews to extermination camps began in the spring of 1942, the SS and the police apparatus served the starosts eagerly. Walter Gentz, the starost of Jasło in the Cracow District, was particularly zealous in this field. Gentz, a Doctor of Law and a financial expert from Karlsruhe, was consumed by his morbid ambition and a lust for power. He wanted to be the first to “purge” his district of Jews. He even personally selected his victims and executed them with his own hands. Gentz and his companions were also in the habit of throwing lavish parties at which they sexually abused Polish, Jewish and even German women. Friedrich von Balluseck, a paedophile who served successively as the head of the Tomaszów and Jędrzejów counties was no stranger to sexual abuse, having – with impunity – molested Polish children. The aforementioned Heinz Gustav Albrecht, on the other hand, consistently refused to grant even reduced rations to Jews living in the Końskie County. This was because he believed that starvation was their “just punishment” for causing the World War and that they were already allegedly “responsible for the death by starvation of hundreds of thousands of German men, women and children” during the First World War. See Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen*, p. 175 ff.; *idem*, I. Metzner, *Ciemieńczy Polaków nie potrzebowali rozkazów*, <https://www.dw.com/pl/ciemi%C4%99%C5%BCcy-polak%C3%B3w-nie-potrzebowali-rozkaz%C3%B3w/a-4608037> (accessed 8 October 2019); Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 78–79, 81.

⁶⁶ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 36; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 79–80; Wichert, “Recenzja,” pp. 353–354; Chwalba, *Okupacyjny Kraków*, p. 84.

The actions of the German administration functionaries, who inflicted their punishment on the Polish population, were actively supported by the SS and police formations in the GG. Without close cooperation between the various branches of the administration and the security apparatus, it would not have been possible to carry out “*łapanki*” or “seizures of hostages in the street,” and deportation to the Reich for forced labour, to collect quotas, to secure the harvest, to fight fiercely against clandestine trade, the black market and smugglers. Particularly operative in this respect were the gendarmerie in the villages and small towns, as well as the protection police (Schutzpolizei, Schupo) in the cities, i.e. formations that the starost had the right to deploy at his discretion. In addition to the pre-occupation organisational forms, there were new ones in the police structure introduced by Himmler, the most significant of which was the hierarchy of the SS and police commanders; this was headed by the Higher SS and Police Commander in the General Governorate.⁶⁷ Already on 4 October 1939, Himmler appointed the SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger as the Higher SS and Police Commander East, who was to be the head of all SS and police forces in what would become the GG. He was a rather colourless figure compared to other National Socialists of equal seniority. He initially held senior positions in the SA, but after the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, he switched to the SS and continued his career there. Apart from his blind obedience to Himmler, which he also categorically demanded of his charges, and from reporting his employees, and his pedantry, there was nothing special about him. Krüger remained in the GG until 9 November 1943, after which he took command of the SS in Finland.⁶⁸

Formally, Krüger reported personally and directly to the Governor General; not initially part of the GG government, he was Frank's second adviser. In reality, however, Krüger, as Himmler's extended arm, recognised himself as the representative of the Reichsführer SS and took orders exclusively from him.⁶⁹ He commanded the

⁶⁷ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 37.

⁶⁸ See Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 112; R. Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer. Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten* (Düsseldorf, 1986), p. 340; Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, p. 73; E. Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 2007), p. 343; L.V. Thompson, “Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger – Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Ost,” in *Die SS: Elite unter dem Totenkopf*, ed. by R. Smelser and E. Syring (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 320 ff.

⁶⁹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 177.

General SS (Allgemeine SS) units stationed on-site and coordinated the activities of both police divisions (security and order police), simultaneously the superior of the commander of the order police and the commander of the security police in the GG. With the establishment of the State Secretariat for Security in the Government of the General Governorate, Krüger became Frank's deputy for security matters. He was also able to perform the duties of the Governor General in his absence and the Secretary of State, Bühler, the first ex-officio deputy of Frank under Hitler's decree of 7 May 1942. In time, Krüger even created subordinate administrative bodies within his office as the Secretary of State for Security and took over several Interior Department agencies. From the outset, Himmler wanted to use Krüger as a tool in his showdown with Frank for influence in the GG. This undoubtedly was further enhanced by the Higher SS and Police Commander's own ambitions, which prompted him to embark on a persistent power struggle with the Governor General, ending in short-lived success.⁷⁰ To Bühler's face, the nonchalant and conceited Krüger even dared to call Frank a "clown" who was impossible to work with. Roughly up to September 1941, the two sides made appearances and tried to maintain good relations, but then a sharp conflict arose. Frank even spoke of "mortal personal hostility."⁷¹

Frank could see, almost daily, that Himmler and Krüger had set up a kind of parallel government in the GG, as he experienced numerous petty humiliations and repeated defiance of his orders regarding the security and population policy.⁷² While Frank invoked his exclusive right to issue directives with increasing desperation at government meetings, Krüger, covered by Himmler, pursued an unabashedly brutal SS policy towards Poland. The Governor General tried alternately to counteract this policy, taking the line of relative gentleness and reasonableness (for example, by calculated attempts to increase food rations for

⁷⁰ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," pp. 37–39.

⁷¹ Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 177–178.

⁷² These included the subordination of the Sonderdienst, the German auxiliary police set up by Frank in May 1940 from members of the disbanded Selbstschutz (a paramilitary organisation of the Volksdeutsche in occupied Poland); a failure to inform Frank of major police actions, and the form of pacification and eviction from the Zamość region. See Schenk, *Hans Frank*, p. 178; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 40; Ch. Jansen, A. Weckbecker, *Der „Volksdeutsche Selbstschutz“ in Polen 1939/40* (München, 1992), pp. 71 ff.; Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111.

the Polish population), only then to compete with the SS line in cruelty and acts of terror, not least to gain a reputation in Hitler's eyes as a man capable of being effective in the East. Constantly tossing himself from left to right and aware of his own weakness, the Governor General resigned fourteen times until the end of his activity, each time in vain. However, outwardly, he continued to boast of the special confidence Hitler allegedly had in him.⁷³ As a result of constant conflicts of competence, the lack of clout and allegations of corruption, especially in the context of his family's enrichment, in the summer of 1942, Frank's position seemed to be seriously upset, which benefitted his SS adversary. As Himmler's plenipotentiary, acting as the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood, Krüger was entrusted with the leadership of the planned large-scale resettlement operation in the Zamość region, which was carried out on his behalf by the fanatical SS and police commander in the Lublin District, SS-Gruppenführer Odilo Globocnik. The increasingly fierce rivalry reached its climax in the summer of 1942, when Frank gave four fiery speeches at German universities, in which he condemned the arbitrariness of the SS and cynically appealed for the 'observance of the law.'⁷⁴ Following these speeches, he was removed from all party posts on the personal orders of an enraged Hitler. Under these circumstances, his dismissal from the GG, which Himmler and Bormann, in particular, had been seeking, seemed only a matter of time. However, quite unexpectedly, Hitler decided to get rid not of Frank but of his opponent Krüger, especially after the failure of the "Zamość" operation in August 1943, which only intensified the resistance of Poles against the occupant's actions. Although Frank's relations with Krüger's successor, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Kopp,⁷⁵ who had previously been the Higher SS and Police Commander in the Reichsgau Wartheland, were admittedly bearable, behind the scenes, various disputes continued. These stemmed more from structural reasons and the lack of the regime's binding policy concerning the GG than from prestige or psychological motives.⁷⁶

⁷³ Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, p. 360.

⁷⁴ Kleßmann, "Frank: Parteijurist und Generalgouverneur in Polen," pp. 47–48.

⁷⁵ See Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren*, p. 339; S. Datner, *Wilhelm Koppe – nieukarany zbrodniarz hitlerowski* (Warsaw–Poznan, 1963).

⁷⁶ See Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, pp. 356–360; Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 329–330.

Regarding the organisation of the police apparatus in the General Governorate, it should be emphasised that the SS and police commanders (SS- und Polizeiführer, SSPF) at the district level also played a major role in the implementation of the policy of mass terror. They were at the same time the superiors of the local commanders of the order police (Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei, KdO) and the security police (Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, KdS), even though these commanders were subordinate to the commanders of both these formations in the GG. In addition to their authority over all police formations in the field, the SSPF were also Himmler's local plenipotentiaries as the commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and thus had authority over resettlement, deportation, extermination and repression.⁷⁷ The most notorious SS and police commander was Globocnik mentioned above, who displayed a "truly dogged loyalty" to Himmler. This archetypal Nazi torturer was united with his master by fanatical racism and a penchant for the use of violence, which 'Globus' (as Himmler called Globocnik), unleashed in the Lublin District between 1939 and 1943 with devastating and tragic consequences.⁷⁸ As an aide-de-camp to the Reichsführer SS, in addition to *Operation Zamość*, he also organised and supervised *Operation Reinhardt*, the extermination of the Jewish population in the GG. Rudolf Höss, the commander of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, said meaningful words about him after the war: "Jews, if they were not needed for his work, he wanted to liquidate on the spot."⁷⁹

In the General Governorate there were specific differences in the creation of the police apparatus compared to the Polish lands incorporated into the Reich. In the annexed territories, inspectors (Inspekteur) were appointed according to the model of the old Reich: an inspector of the protection police (Schutzpolizei, Schupo) and an inspector of the security police (Sicherheitspolizei, Sipo) and the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD), i.e. Himmler's intelligence agency. In the GG, on the other hand, these were the respective commanders (Befehlshaber), to whom the commanders corresponded at the district level. By empowering the

⁷⁷ Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 38.

⁷⁸ For more, see J. Sachslehner, *Zarządca do spraw śmierci. Odilo Globocnik, eksterminacja i obozy zagłady*, transl. M. Kilis (Warsaw, 2016); B. Rieger, *Odilo Globocnik. Twórca nazistowskich obozów śmierci*, transl. J.S. Zaus (Zakrzewo, 2009).

⁷⁹ Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 73–74; Wichert, "Recenzja," p. 353.

territorial commanders, both the SS and the police became largely independent as institutions.⁸⁰ The SS and police commanders controlled both the Sipo and the order police (*Ordnungspolizei*, Orpo), although both were subordinate to their headquarters in Berlin. The Sipo, whose outposts in the GG developed from the managerial and executive staff of the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads, included the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei) and the criminal police (Kriminalpolizei, Kripo). The involvement of these institutions in German crimes is well-known, but it was the Orpo that played a much more important role in the General Governorate, mainly due to its numerical superiority.⁸¹ As late as November 1942, there were only 2,000 Sipo and SD officers in the entire GG, while Orpo members numbered

⁸⁰ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111. When writing about the SS and the police in the GG, it is also necessary to mention the judicial power given to these entities. By the term police judiciary we mean the police ad hoc courts (Polizeistandgerichte) and the SS and police courts, which were not subordinate to the Ministry of Justice of the General Governorate. The basis for the functioning of the former was Hans Frank's regulation of 31 October 1939. They took over the powers from the military ad hoc courts that had been abolished after the end of the military administration. The Polizeistandgerichte can hardly be regarded as courts in the usual sense of the word, as their activities were virtually no different from ordinary repressive police actions. They tried persons carrying out activities against the Reich, its citizens and the authorities of the General Governorate. The police ad hoc court, consisting of the chief of the security police and two assessors appointed by him from his charges, ruled on every case that came into the hands of the Gestapo. The most common penalty was death or exile to a concentration camp, which usually took place without a hearing and in the absence of the accused. Ad hoc courts were also set up by the police. Their competences were constantly expanded, including the scope of the death penalty, imposed in order to "combat attacks on the German work of reconstruction." Surprisingly, the SS and police courts had a slightly better reputation, sometimes providing the accused with basic procedural guarantees. Their activities, in addition to various misdemeanours of the SS and police officers, also included the "criminal acts" of the *Fremdvölkische*. In this situation, the civil "justice system," including the general (first and second instance) and special courts (*Sondergerichte*), was marginalised in the GG and did not play the same role as in the areas incorporated into the Reich. It is worth noting that a three-tier organisation of the Polish judiciary was maintained in the General Governorate, which dealt with cases that did not fall under the competence of the German judiciary. The structure of the Polish courts consisted of municipal courts, district courts and courts of appeal. They were under the direct supervision of the district chief. After the creation and incorporation of the Galicia District into the General Governorate in 1941, a non-German judiciary was established, in which the basic normative acts creating the organisation of the Polish judiciary in the original territory of the GG were to be applied accordingly. Most of the managerial functions there, however, were performed by Ukrainian judges. For more, see A. Wrzyszczyk, "Nadzór Hansa Franka nad sądownictwem w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945," *Miscellanea Historico-Iuridica* 2 (2015), pp. 379 ff.; *idem*, "Sądownictwo SS i policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie (stan badań)," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 19 (2013), pp. 361–370; E. Kurkowska, "Procedura karna na ziemiach polskich okupowanych przez Niemcy w czasie II wojny światowej," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 17 (2012), pp. 158–165; Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, "Wstęp," p. 50; Mitera, *Zwyczajny faszyzm*, pp. 179–208.

⁸¹ For more, see W. Curilla, *Der Judenmord in Polen und die deutsche Ordnungspolizei 1939–1945* (Paderborn, 2011), pp. 333 ff.

as many as 12,000. Of the permanent, uniformed formations, the most prominent were the protection police in larger cities and the much more numerous gendarmerie (Gendarmerie), operating in municipalities, settlements, smaller towns and in the countryside. Most of the police forces, however, were militarised police battalions composed of professional policemen, volunteers and reservists called up to the Wehrmacht. These battalions were redeployed from place to place as required, and they accounted for about 80% of all the Orpo personnel in the GG.⁸² Various flying operational detachments (Jagdkommandos, Rollkommandos or Einsatzkommandos) were separated from them as needed, mainly to carry out pacification actions and mass executions (e.g. in Bochnia, Wawer and Palmiry).⁸³ The position of the SS and police in the GG weakened somewhat, at least in formal terms, after Frank concluded an agreement with Himmler in June 1943. Frank then gained the subordination of the local police authorities to the general occupation administration.⁸⁴

However, these police forces were still insufficient to ensure order or carry out repressive actions, and so they had to be supplemented by various auxiliary formations recruited from the local population. Thus, the *Volksdeutsche* living in Poland were reinforced by, among others, the Selbstschutz (and later the Sonderdienst), auxiliary police (Hilfspolizei), border police (Grenzpolizei), and special sapper units (Technische Nothilfe), responsible, among other things, for the complete destruction of Warsaw after the Warsaw Uprising, as well as the National Socialist Motor Corps (Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps, NSKK) and the various “departmental” kinds of police (e.g. forest, water, post, railway, etc.). Other supporting police units in the GG included, in particular, some 11,000–12,000 officers of the Polish blue police,⁸⁵ 3,000 employees of the Polish Criminal Police and

⁸² Winstone, *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, pp. 74–75.

⁸³ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” p. 45; M. Wardzyńska, *Był rok 1939. Operacja niemieckiej policji bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Intelligenzaktion* (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 239–243.

⁸⁴ Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, p. 111.

⁸⁵ For more, see A. Hempel, *Policja granatowa w okupacyjnym systemie administracyjnym Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (1939–1945)* (Warsaw, 1987); *idem*, *Pogrobowcy kłęski. Rzecz o policji „granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1990); M. Getter, “Policja Polska w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945,” *Przegląd Policyjny* 1/2 (1999), pp. 74–91; *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2019).

some 6,000 members of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (Ukrainische Hilfspolizei), reporting to the local order police commanders. The Ukrainian and Polish police participated in all kinds of actions carried out by the Orpo – from traditional forms of external service, through the pursuit of smugglers and the forcible collection of quotas to participation in mixed operational groups (Gemischte Einsatzkommandos) used to fight partisans. The blue police did not enjoy the trust of the occupying authorities. The attitude of Polish society towards the blue police was decidedly negative, and the underground killed many of its officers who collaborated with the Germans. A form of auxiliary police was also the Jewish Order Service (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), which operated in the ghettos and ruthlessly carried out all orders and decrees of the occupier up to participating in the action of deporting their inhabitants to extermination centres.⁸⁶ The ghettos in the area were also guarded by paramilitary units of Lithuanian ‘Shaulis’, who actively collaborated with the Germans. According to German data, the numerical strength of all police formations in the GG on 1 December 1944 was 42,229, though this figure seems underestimated.⁸⁷

In conclusion, it should be stated that the area of the General Governorate was characterised by a high accumulation of competence conflicts between Frank and various agencies of the regime, in particular the SS and the police apparatus. These disputes, which were also characteristic of other Polish territories under German occupation, were also visible at the lower levels of administration if only in the form of the aspirations of the district governors, but also of the county and town starosts to gain greater independence and decision-making freedom. In this chaos of competing views and goals, all possibilities for any effective management, principles of common sense, and simple humanism were irretrievably bogged down. This was compounded by the lack of an established line of Nazi leadership in governing the GG. The thought of a residual state, which had originally

⁸⁶ For more, see E. Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności. Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2006), pp. 130 ff.; *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst in Enzyklopädie des Holocaust – die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*, ed. by I. Gutman, E. Jäckel, P. Longenrich, and J.H. Schoeps, vol. 2 (München–Zürich, 1998), pp. 700–702.

⁸⁷ See Dobroszycki, Garas *et al.*, “Wstęp,” pp. 45–47; J. Sehn, “Organizacja policji niemieckiej w Rzeszy i Generalnej Guberni,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce* 3 (1947), p. 183.

been contemplated, was quickly abandoned, and the concept of some kind of a “protectorate status” fell through, as did the admittedly nebulous idea “of a multinational German empire,” a symptomatic example of a delusion born in Frank’s fired up the imagination. Throughout the occupation, Hitler evaded a definitive policy towards the GG, while Frank had to content himself with a vague formula of “a fringe state of the Reich.” The assumptions of a two-track strategy towards the General Governorate, consisting of the simultaneous ruthless subjugation of the Polish element, the extermination of the Jews and the economic exploitation of these areas (e.g. through the supply of agricultural products and labour force), soon proved to be contrary to the mechanics inherent in any orderly administrative activity and only intensified the resistance movement among Poles. The far-fetched policy of ‘humanisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’ proposed by Frank at the end of the war, and his attempt to rally the Polish population, found no understanding either with Hitler or with those concerned. On 18 August 1944, the Governor General informed Berlin of the “total shattering of the authority” of his administration, which only lasted another six months. “The great hour of Germanness in the East,” of which he once spoke so pompously, came to an end with the Red Army’s Vistula–Oder Operation in January 1945, and Frank himself later shared the fate of German war criminals, sentenced to death by hanging by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Fest, *Oblicze Trzeciej Rzeszy*, pp. 356–363. See also Schenk, *Hans Frank*, pp. 318 ff.

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SUMMARY

The General Governorate was a peculiar German political formation established on the territory of occupied Poland at the end of October 1939. It was to be a form of a temporary colony, which from its birth was treated as a reservoir of raw materials and a "racial dumping ground," to which the Nazi regime planned to resettle, among others, all the Jews from the lands it controlled. Governor General Hans Frank treated the territory as a kind of feudal duchy and a "fringe state" of the Reich. The occupation apparatus under his authority was disorganised, and there was a fierce rivalry between the various institutions of power, especially between the civil administration and the SS and police. A shortage

of professional staff and corruption among public and party officials further hampered management. As a result, the GG was nicknamed in the old Reich the “gangster’s Gau” or the Wild West, known as an area of unlimited opportunities, where a patchwork of inept adventurers and various parvenus came in large numbers to profit from the extermination and looting of Poles and Jews.

KEYWORDS

Third Reich • German occupation • General Governorate

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THE AUTUMN OF BURNING SYNAGOGUES.
ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF GERMANY'S INVASION
OF POLAND IN 1939

As a national community, Jews survived outside Palestine for nearly two thousand years, thanks to their monotheistic religion. When the Romans expelled them from that land after suppressing the Bar Kochba uprising in 135 AD, the followers of Judaism united around religious worship and books, from where they drew knowledge of their past and guidance on the rules they were obliged to follow. For many centuries, people who carried the knowledge of God and knew all the rituals required by religious law were surrounded with respect and protection. However, it did happen, especially in small Jewish communities, that there was nobody professionally engaged in nurturing religious worship, in which case spiritual practice allowed for the full-fledged activity of the Jewish community.¹ On the other hand, the *sine qua non* for maintaining a community was the membership of at least ten male members who had had the rite of *bar mitzvah*, i.e. admission to the community on a full basis. A prayerful gathering of these people was called a *knesija*. It could gather in any place. However, only places specifically designated for the celebration of the most important rituals of

¹ B. Mark, *Di geszichte fun jidn in Pojln* (Warsze, 1957), pp. 163–243.

Judaism could be called the house of the congregation – the *beit kneset*. The Greeks, in turn, called these buildings synagogues, and thus the Greek term, rather than its Hebrew equivalent, took root in European languages.

It was the ambition of every local Jewish community to build a synagogue the size, workmanship and wealth of the furnishings that would reflect the founders' wealth.

Before the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century, it was home to the largest Jewish community in the world. Since the fourteenth century, it had been protected by state officials through the will of successive Polish rulers.² The privilege of the Duke of Greater Poland from 1264 already guaranteed the Jews state protection over their houses of prayer. The Christian feudal elite not only protected Jews for hundreds of years, but it also happened that magnate families financially supported the construction of synagogues and smaller houses of prayer. The unwavering recognition by Christian theologians of the momentous role assigned to the Jews by God in the work of salvation meant that the plan and practice of exterminating the Jews did not emerge in Europe. As long as the Christian rulers decided the fate of their Jewish subjects, tolerance for Jews was a norm. The acts of expulsion in the Middle Ages in many countries on the continent cannot be put on par with the tragedy that befell the Jews between 1939 and 1945.

After the period of partitions and the turmoil of war, the borders of independent Poland took several years to form properly – from 1918 to 1922. There were 81 large and 737 small Jewish religious communities in Poland,³ most with one synagogue along with several houses of prayer. There were also cities where numerous houses of prayer existed – for instance, on the eve of the Holocaust, Warsaw and Lodz were home to 440 and 250 Jewish houses of prayer, respectively. In total, there were several thousand synagogues and houses of prayer throughout the Second Polish Republic. They served a community still the most numerous in Europe, although no longer the most numerous in the world.⁴ With the invasion of Poland by the Third

² *Ibid.*, p. 246.

³ *Polski słownik judaistyczny. Dzieje – kultura – religia – ludzie*, vol. 1, ed. by Z. Borzymińska and R. Żebrowski (Warsaw, 2003), p. 493.

⁴ On the eve of the Second World War, the largest Jewish community existed in the United States.

Reich, the whole of Polish society became the victim of an attack unprecedented in its scale and manifestations of cruelty. The blow that fell on the Jews, however, was the strongest and had the most tragic consequences. This article deals with one aspect of the drama of the time. The text aims to outline its causes and scale.

Just over ten per cent of the former German empire belonged to the Republic between 1919 and 1922. By 1918, tens of thousands of Jews lived in this area. After the Treaty of Versailles was signed, thousands of them, not wanting to be Polish citizens, left for the Reich, with a smaller number going to the Free City of Danzig. More than a million Jews were Habsburg subjects in Galicia and were familiar with the Imperial Austro-Hungarian administration. For them, a German-speaking official, policeman or soldier was nothing new. In contrast, the approximately two million Jews who had previously been subjects of the Russian tsars and found themselves in the reborn Republic came into contact with the Germans and Austrians as occupants between 1914 and 1918, an experience that was often difficult but not fundamentally different from what the inhabitants of the occupied territories who belonged to other national and religious communities used to face. During the First World War, the German-Austrian occupants respected the right of the local population to cultivate their religion. There was no authorisation from the political or military superiors to profane houses of worship to destroy the buildings and their equipment. If synagogues were damaged or destroyed, this was due to the dynamics of military action rather than anti-Judaic prejudice. Jews continued to be protected as a community by representatives of the old regime, largely heirs to the old feudal elites. On the territory of the occupied Kingdom of Poland and the Russian Empire, in many places, the status of Jews in public institutions was even elevated – representatives of the Jewish community either became members of the representative bodies of the population for the first time, or their percentage was significantly increased. This was because the Germans and Austrians, seeking the support of the Jews, agreed that they should have representation in proportion to their numbers on civilian municipal committees set up to represent the local population in their dealings with the military occupation administration.⁵

⁵ The head of the First World War German army intelligence recommended recruiting Jews as valuable agents, as people in possession of information useful from a military point of view. See S. Lewicki, *Canaris w Madrycie* (Warsaw, 1989), p. 15. For more on the German policy towards the Jews

By contrast, the tactic of equal treatment of Jews was not present in the actions of the German occupation authorities when the Wehrmacht and Nazi special forces crossed the border into Poland on 1 September 1939. Why? The main reason was the views of Adolf Hitler and his closest associates on Judaism and Christianity. Both religions were considered harmful to the German national community. Judaism was to disappear completely from the space controlled by the Third Reich as soon as possible. According to National Socialists, Jews were shallow and unproductive. They had come out of the desert and therefore had nothing of value to offer the peoples of the north, above all, the Germans. The meanderings of Nazi reasoning led to the assertion that Jesus Christ was not born of a Jewish mother. The place of traditional Christian Churches was to be taken by the Church of the German Christians (*Deutsche Christen*). On the other hand, it was accepted that instilling a new quasi-religious belief system into German Christians would take longer and require different methods than those envisaged for Jews. As long as Adolf Hitler's geopolitical goals were not realised in the form of a superpower that the planners called the Greater Germanic Reich of the German Nation (*Das Großgermanische Reich Deutscher Nation*), German Christians were to be tolerated in their masses. Overall, though, those who openly expressed their dislike of Nazism were repressed. As far as the Jews were concerned, all their traces were to disappear from public space as quickly as possible. In the Reich, the plan was to leave only selected relics of Jewish culture to be used for future research into the question of Jewish influence on the history of Europe, including Germany. Such a radical approach resulted from the progressive evolution of German nationalist thought from the 1870s onwards. Anti-Judaist views were used as an additional justification for racist anti-Semitism. Judaism was seen as a destructive, even degenerative factor for Christianity and, through it, for the nations that embraced it.⁶

in the occupied territories of the tsarist state during the First World War see E. Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1969), p. 121; J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, "Die jiddische Schule der Erwachsenen: Warsaw Yiddish Press and German-Jewish Contacts in 1915–18," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 113 (2016), pp. 91–92.

⁶ The evolution of the German national ideology (*volksism*) towards a version characterised by strong anti-Semitism has been described, among others, by the historian of ideas George L. Mosse: *idem, Kryzys ideologii niemieckiej*, transl. T. Evert (Warsaw, 1972).

Already in the second half of the nineteenth century, the ideologues of Volkism negated the ability of the people of Jewish origin to act positively for the German nation and state. Such thinking also affected those who belonged to one of the Christian Churches in the first or subsequent generation. Under National Socialism – a bloodthirsty variety of German nationalism – when judging who was a Jew and who was not, the benchmark was whether a person and his ancestors belonged to a Jewish religious community.⁷ This was a fixed point to which party or state officials and functionaries could relate. Paradoxically, such a system made it possible to consider both a militant atheist of Jewish nationality and an orthodox rabbi or Hasidic tzaddik as an enemy. Thus, both the offices of left-wing or liberal political organisations and houses of worship became targets. Since Judaism was recognised as a carrier of dangerous values, it was assumed that institutions and places where its essence was explored and disseminated should cease to function.

Speaking at the NSDAP Congress on 12 September 1938, Alfred Rosenberg presented a paper entitled *Bolshevism – the Invention and Work of the Jews*. In it, he attributed the evils he attributed to the Jews to their faith:

This characteristic of parasites, who, knowing no creative work, live on the blood and juices of other organisms, is a peculiar characteristic of the Jewish people and even has its interpretation in the prescriptions of its faith. The Jewish Talmud, which has moulded the Jewish soul for centuries, reveals its being to the eyes of even a superficial researcher. According to the principle of the Talmud, one who wishes to possess wisdom must devote himself to financial transactions. For they are the basis of the Torah (Old Testament) and an ever-beating source (Baba, Batra F 173 b.). In another place, the Talmud mentions a great rabbi who, walking among the grain, stroked its ears: “Rush higher up,” he whispered. – The interests of money, however, will always be worth more than you” (Jebamoth F 63 a.). The Talmud goes on to explain the proper meaning of the commandment: “Thou shalt not steal” and states that God only forbids stealing from people as such (Sanhedrin 86 a.). Another provision states: Canaan recommended four

⁷ In the first regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, in par. 2 we read: “Als volljüdisch gilt ein Großelternteil ohne weiteres, wenn er der jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft angehört hat”; *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. 27 (Nürnberg, 1948), p. 214.

things to its sons: “Love one another, love robbery, love promiscuity, and do not speak the truth” (Pesachim F 113).

The perfect conclusion to the moral-political testament of this parasitic theory is a religious prescription: “If you must necessarily go to war, avoid the first line, keep at the end to return as soon as possible. Combine your forces with those who are fortunate” (Pesachim F 113 a).

Anyone who has become acquainted with the immutable Jewish soul – for it was not the Talmud that formed the Jews, but the Jews who created the Talmud – will easily recognise the immensely destructive impact that the Jews are causing with their actions in the economic, political and cultural fields. All that we have experienced in recent years and in recent decades, which has had the characteristics of cultural decay, economic corruption and political spin – the Jewish rules of faith justify all this, even when the Jews speak of their assimilation. In its general outline and worldly significance, Bolshevism is the last consequence of the Jewish attack on the culture and politics of the European states.⁸

The words of this pseudo-theological analysis, which was an amalgam of anti-Judaism and racist anti-Semitism, were uttered three months before the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, when on 9/10 November 1938, Nazi militias attacked the premises of Jewish institutions and businesses belonging to people of the Jewish faith, causing mass destruction and vandalism of Jewish houses of worship. On the other hand, the theories put forward by Rosenberg had already been propounded for many years, not only by him but also by Julius Streicher, Joseph Goebbels and other Nazis responsible for shaping the consciousness of their compatriots. Speaking to young people on 22 June 1935 and on many other occasions, Streicher claimed that Jesus Christ had pointed at the Devil as the father of the Jewish people. The propagandist denied the Jews the right to speak of themselves as the chosen people. He pointed out that when they accept baptism, they do so only to enslave other nations more effectively. He promoted the theory of a separate ‘God of the Jews’ (*Gott der Juden*), who is not a God of love, but a God of hatred. Evil was also to be the essence of the message of the Talmud. This content was included, among other

⁸ Quoted in *Gazeta Lwowska*, 23–24 November 1941.

things, as a rhyme in a lavishly illustrated brochure for young readers from 1936, incorporated as a supplement to Streicher's propaganda weekly *Der Stürmer*.⁹ The newspaper, whose pages were filled with anti-Semitic texts, was published from 1935 onwards in editions of 600,000 copies, and its impact was increased by the presentation of the paper in thousands of showcases set up in widely accessible public places.¹⁰ It should be added that the publisher, Streicher, was responsible for the arson at the Nuremberg synagogue on 10 August 1938 and that he supported the nationwide anti-Jewish pogrom of November of that year.

The Nazis' acts of aggression against Jewish houses of worship are not shown in the context of the fight against the Jewish religion. We do not encounter this theme in descriptions of *Kristallnacht*. SA militiamen were ordered to set fire to all synagogues in the Reich.¹¹ But authors of historical studies do not bother to explain why these very buildings were to disappear from the German landscape completely.¹² According to information that came to the head of the Security Police within hours, 191 synagogues were set on fire, and another 76 were utterly demolished. In addition, 11 other types of buildings and cemetery chapels belonging to synagogue communities were set on fire, and three were destroyed.¹³

When one reads descriptions of actions such as setting fire to synagogues located in densely built-up quarters of German towns and cities, the question arises as to what factors unleashed this rage. Why would the inhabitants, most of whom were not Jews and some of which were Nazis, endanger their own property in this way? The conclusion is that, like with communism, where ownership of means of production was seen as the root cause of evil, so in Nazism, the core of the hatred

⁹ *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. 38 (Nürnberg, 1949), pp. 110–114, 124, 127.

¹⁰ *Das Urteil von Nürnberg 1946*, introd. L. Gruchmann (München, 1977), pp. 194, 206.

¹¹ The orders issued to the SA brigade commanders imposed on them the duty to blow up and burn down all synagogues in the area under their authority so that neighbouring buildings belonging to Aryans were not damaged. The operations were to be carried out in civilian clothes. See *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, vol. 27, pp. 487–490.

¹² H. Eschwege, *Die Synagoge in der deutschen Geschichte* (Dresden, 1980), p. 171; R. Hilberg, *Zagłada Żydów europejskich*, vol. 1, transl. J. Giebułtowski (Warsaw, 2014), pp. 38–41; L. Poliakov, *Historia antysemityzmu*, vol. 2: *Epoka nauki*, transl. by A. Rasińska-Bóbr and O. Hedemann (Cracow, 2008), p. 426.

¹³ *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. 32 (Nürnberg, 1948), p. 2.

for Jews was hostility towards their religion, and thus also towards the institutions that were its carriers.

In my opinion, the reference to the German *Kristallnacht* is salient, for it was then that the Nazis crossed the Rubicon. The anti-Semitic theories developed in Germany over some 70 years previously were not followed by cumulative acts of aggression against the objects of Jewish religious worship. Those who had already participated in such acts once in November 1938 and on their soil displayed no reluctance to carry the embers of destruction beyond the borders of the Reich.

In the history of Polish Jews, there was no time when any Polish state authority would carry out a large-scale action of closing or even destroying synagogues and smaller houses of prayer. This only became a reality after the German aggression of 1 September 1939. By 5 October of that year, the Germans had established their authority over 48% of the Polish territory, inhabited by some 70% of Polish Jews, i.e. approximately 2.2 million people. Based on Hitler's decree of 8 October 1939, the occupied territories were divided into areas that varied in status. Vistula Pomerania and Greater Poland became external districts of the Reich as the Reich District of Danzig-West Prussia (Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen) and the Reich District of Wartheland (Reichsgau Wartheland). On the other hand, part of northern Mazovia was incorporated into the province of East Prussia (Provinz Ostpreussen) and the areas of Polish Upper Silesia into the province of Silesia (Provinz Schlesien). From the remaining areas, the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo, GG) was formed.¹⁴ Before the war, some 582,000 Jews lived in regions later incorporated into the Reich.¹⁵ However, this number gradually decreased as a result of the migration movements.

An analysis of the situation of the Jewish communities in the incorporated areas and in the GG reveals basic regularities in the treatment of Jews and

¹⁴ There were 10,568,000 Polish citizens living in the annexed areas on the eve of war, and 10,610,000 in the GG; H. Roos, *Geschichte der polnischen Nation 1916–1960* (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 173.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178. As the historian wrote, “43.9 thousand square kilometres and 4.5 million inhabitants were incorporated into the Reich in the Wartheland District, 21.2 and 1.5 in the Danzig–West Prussia District, 10.6 and 2.6 into the Upper Silesia District, and 16.2 and 1.0 into the province of East Prussia.” In total, some 92,000 square kilometres and 9.6 million people were annexed into the Reich from the pre-war Polish lands; J. Deresiewicz, *Okupacja niemiecka na ziemiach polskich włączonych do Rzeszy (1939–1945)* (Poznan, 1950), p. XVI.

their private and communal property. Throughout the area occupied by the German army, they were killed, individually and in groups, and experienced humiliation, physical violence, robbery and expulsion. Houses of worship were attacked, as they were places that helped integrate the religious community. They were profaned, vandalised, set on fire and demolished using various means, including by explosives. The drive to remove synagogues and houses of prayer from public spaces was particularly intense in the areas incorporated into the Reich. I have analysed the fate of Jewish religious buildings in the 183 towns located there.

To date, no sources have been published to show that there was a single document regulating the treatment of Jewish houses of prayer on Polish territory. The descriptions of the activities in individual localities lead to the conclusion that, both during the occupation of the area and in the first months of the German administration, whether military or civilian, decisions remained in the hands of the local German military commanders, functionaries or officials. One of the most anti-Jewish Nazis was Udo von Woysch, who in September 1939 commanded a Special Operations Group sent to the Silesian Voivodeship, where it committed crimes against Poles and Jews and was responsible, among other things, for burning down the synagogue at Będzin.¹⁶

The buildings of former synagogues, which had already ceased to perform their original religious functions before the war, were generally left in peace. A diametrically different approach was taken towards active houses of prayer. Between September and November 1939, between 15 and 30% of the synagogues in the areas annexed to the Reich were burnt down. Buildings in the centre of a village were set on fire, as in November 1938 in Germany, also exposing neighbouring buildings to fire. It has not been established to what extent the dynamics of these actions were influenced by Hitler's decree of 7 October 1939, which appointed Heinrich Himmler – the head of the SS and police in the Reich – as the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Nationhood (*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*).

¹⁶ A. Namysło, *Po drugiej stronie był również człowiek. Mieszkańcy przedwojennego województwa śląskiego z pomocą Żydom w okresie II wojny światowej* (Katowice–Warsaw, 2021), p. 48.

Around 25% of the buildings were demolished in various ways without first being set on fire. In total, more than 50% of them were destroyed, mainly between 1939 and 1941. This happened both when the military administration exercised power in the area and after the civil administration took over. The demolitions were very often carried out by the hands of Jews who still resided in their hometowns.

The fate of one-eighth of the synagogues and houses of prayer could not be determined. The others were used as warehouses, garages and stables or were left abandoned.

I cannot determine whether the Nazis, even the decision-makers at the county, *Regierungsbezirk* or provincial level, realised that Jews could perform their religious duties without synagogues.

The destruction or closure of houses of worship was one of the many harassments to which Jews were subjected from the beginning of the German occupation. On the other hand, these were undoubtedly actions that they had not encountered on such a scale in the entire history of their existence in Polish lands. They fell victim to them because one of the components of Nazi anti-Semitism was a hatred of the Jewish and Christian religions.

Table 1. Synagogues on Polish Territory that were Incorporated into the Reich in October 1939

Reich District	Area in sq. km	Total population in millions	Number of Jews in thousands	Number of locations	Synagogues burnt down	Synagogues dismantled or blown up	Buildings that survived the war	Undetermined condition in 1945
Danzig–West Prussia	21,200	1.5	8	31	9	12	5	5
East Prussia	16,200	1	80	20	5	6	8	1
Wartheland	43,900	4	400	100	22	27	37	14
Upper Silesia	10,600	2.6	80	32	13	8	10	1
Total	91,900	9.1	568	183	49	53	60	21

Source: *Own calculations*

Table 2. Synagogues on Polish Territory Incorporated into the Reich in October 1939

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Reich District of Danzig–West Prussia	
Brodnica	Burnt down on 29 September 1939; the ruins were dismantled during the war.
Bydgoszcz	Set on fire in October 1939; the walls were dismantled in January 1940.
Chełmno	Blown up in 1939.
Chełmża	Dismantled during the war.
Chojnice	Destroyed in the autumn of 1939.
Fordon	Converted into a cinema hall.
Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą	Synagogues dismantled in October and November 1939.
Dobrzyń nad Wisłą	Burnt down on 24 September 1939.
Grudziądz	One dismantled during the war; the main synagogue was devastated in 1939 and destroyed during the fighting in 1945.
Kartuzy	Burnt down on the day the Wehrmacht entered the town in 1939.
Koronowo	The building was sold in May 1938 to a Polish association and was used during the war as a warehouse.
Kościerzyna	Dismantled in 1939.
Lidzbark	Dismantled during the war.
Lipno	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Lubicz	?
Nakło nad Notecią	Burnt down.
Nieszawa	Burnt down in 1939.
Starogard Gdański	Turned into a jail; later it became a warehouse.
Puck	Destroyed during the war.
Rypin	Burnt down on 27 September 1939.
Sępólno Krajeńskie	The building was dismantled in 1940.
Skępe	Probably burnt down in late 1941 or early 1942.
Solec Kujawski	?
Świecie	Burnt down in September 1939.
Tczew	Dismantled in 1939.

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Torun	Dismantled between November 1939 and February 1940.
Tuchola	Dismantled in 1939.
Wejherowo	Devastated and dismantled during the war.
Wąbrzeźno	Dismantled in the autumn of 1939.
Wyrzysk	Devastated in 1939, it was used as a jail.
East Prussia District	
Chorzele	Dismantled during the war.
Ciechanów	In 1939 it was turned into a garage, and in 1942 the building was dismantled.
Działdowo	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Maków Mazowiecki	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Mława	Burnt down in 1939.
Nasielsk	Devastated in 1939; the walls were dismantled after the war.
Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	Dismantled between 1939 and 1943.
Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki	Bombarded in September 1939; the ruins were dismantled in 1941.
Ostrołęka	Burnt down towards the end of September 1939.
Płock	Devastated in September 1939; turned into a garage; the building survived the war.
Płońsk	Ruined during the war; dismantled in 1956.
Przasnysz	Destroyed in 1939.
Pułtusk	Devastated in September 1939; turned into a warehouse; the building survived the war.
Raciąż	Devastated in 1939, it was converted into a food warehouse.
Serock	Dismantled during the war.
Sierpc	Set on fire on the night of 28/29 September 1939, it burnt to the ground.
Strzegów	Devastated; the building survived the war.
Wyszogród	Dismantled in 1939.
Zakroczym	Burnt down in 1939.
Żuromin	Burnt down in 1939.
Wartheland	

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Aleksandrów Łódzki	Burnt down on 11 September 1939; the walls were blown up.
Barcin	Devastated in 1939 and used as a jail; thereafter used as an orphanage; the building survived the war.
Bełchatów	Devastated; the building survived the war.
Błaszki	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Brześć Kujawski	Burnt down in 1939.
Brzeziny	Burnt down on 9 September 1939; the walls were blown up in 1940.
Burzenin	A brick building unfinished before the war.
Chełmno	Blown up in 1939.
Chodecz	A building dismantled in 1939.
Chodzież	Dismantled in 1941.
Ciechocinek-Służew	?
Czarnków	Dismantled in late 1939 and early 1940.
Dąbie	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Działoszyn	?
Gębice	Devastated in 1939?
Gniezno	Dismantled in 1940.
Golina	?
Gostynin	Burnt down in 1939; the walls were still standing in February 1940.
Gostyń	Dismantled in 1940.
Grabów	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Grodzisk Wielkopolski	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Inowrocław	Dismantled in 1939.
Izbica Kujawska	Devastated in 1939; destroyed in 1943; the walls were dismantled after 1945.
Jarocin	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Kalisz	Devastated in 1939; the building was dismantled in 1940.
Kcynia	Burnt down on the night of 16/17 September 1939.
Kępno	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Kielczygłów	Devastated in 1939?
Kleczew	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.

Location	The fate of houses of worship
KłECKO	On 24 September 1939, Germans burnt down the buildings of two synagogues.
KŁODAWA	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
KOŁO	The larger synagogue burnt down on 20 September 1939; the smaller one was turned into a resettlement point.
KONIN	Devastated in October 1939; turned into a warehouse; the building survived the war.
KONSTANTYNÓW	Destroyed during the war.
KOŚCIAN	The Jewish community was dissolved in 1922.
KOŹMIN WIELKOPOLSKI	?
KROŚNIEWICE	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
KROTOSZYN	Destroyed in 1939; the ruins were dismantled after 1945.
KUTNO	Dismantled in 1942.
LESZNO	Devastated in October 1939; turned into a warehouse; the building survived the war.
LUBIEN KRAJEWSKI	Burnt down on 16 September 1939.
LUBRANIEC	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
LUTOMIERSK	Devastated in 1939?
LUTUTÓW	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
ŁABISZYN	Dismantled during the war.
ŁASK	Devastated in 1939; turned into a horse slaughterhouse; the building survived the war.
ŁĘCZYCA	Plundered in September 1939; burnt down in 1940; the walls were dismantled before 1943.
ŁOBŻENICA	?
ŁODZ	Two hundred and fifty synagogues and houses of worship devastated in 1939.
MIASTECZKO KRAJEŃSKIE	Dismantled in 1940.
MIĘDZYCHÓD	Since 1924 the building was in Polish hands; devastated in 1939, it survived the war.
MOGILNO	Blown up together with the faithful inside on 18 September 1939.
MROCHA	The building had no religious function on 31 August 1939.
OBORNIKI	Dismantled between 1940 and 1943.
ODOLANÓW	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
OŚIĘCINY	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Ostrów Wielkopolski	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war. It was turned into a warehouse.
Ostrzeszów	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Ozorków	Burnt down in 1939.
Pabianice	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Pakość	?
Piątek	?
Piotrków Kujawski	Burnt down in September 1939; the walls were dismantled.
Poddębice	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Poznań	Seven synagogues were devastated in 1939; one building was turned into an indoor swimming pool; the others were destroyed during the fighting for the city in 1945.
Praszka	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Przedecz	?
Pyzdry	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Radziejów Kujawski	Burnt down on 8 November 1939.
Rawicz	The building was converted into a church before 1 September 1939; it was dismantled in April 1941.
Rychwał	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Ryczywół	The interior devastated after 1 September 1939; the building survived the war.
Sanniki	?
Sieradz	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Słupca	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Sompolno	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Stawiszyn	?
Stryków	Burnt down in December 1939; the walls were blown up in the autumn of 1941.
Strzelno	Demolished in 1939.
Szadek	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Szamotuły	Dismantled in October 1939.
Szczerców	It was burnt down as a result of fights for the city in September 1939.
Strzelno	Dismantled in 1939 or 1940.

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Szubin	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Śrem	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Środa Wielkopolska	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Trzemeszno	Burnt down in 1939.
Turek	The building was set on fire on 22 September 1939, but the fire was extinguished to prevent the neighbouring buildings from being affected; it survived the war.
Warka	Burnt down in September 1939.
Wągrowiec	Devastated in 1939; the building was dismantled in 1940.
Widawa	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Wieluń	Destroyed on 1 September 1939 as a result of a bombing raid.
Wieruszów	Burnt down in early September 1939.
Włocławek	Burnt down in October 1939; the walls were dismantled in 1940.
Wolsztyn	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Września	Used as a jail in the autumn of 1939; blown up in 1940.
Wysoka	?
Zagórów	Burnt down in September 1939.
Zduńska Wola	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Zelów	The wooden synagogue was destroyed; the brick one was turned into a warehouse; its building survived the war.
Zgierz	The synagogue was set on fire on 10 September 1939 and burnt to the ground during the second attack on 27 October 1940.
Złoczew	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Żnin	Burnt down in late November/early December 1939.
Żychlin	Devastated in 1939; the building was used as a warehouse; it survived the war.
Upper Silesia District	
Andrychów	Burnt down on 24 September 1939; the ruins were dismantled in 1940.
Będzin	Burnt down on 8 September 1939.
Biała	Burnt down on 14 September 1939.
Bielsko	Destroyed on 13 September 1939.
Bieruń	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.

Location	The fate of houses of worship
Brzeszcze	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Chorzów	Burnt down in the autumn of 1939; the ruins were dismantled in 1940.
Chrzanów	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Cieszyn	Burnt down on 13 September 1939.
Dziedzice	Devastated in 1939.
Jaworzno	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Katowice	Burnt down on 8 September 1939; the ruins were dismantled after 1945.
Kłobuck	Devastated in 1939 and turned into a stable; the building survived the war.
Krzepice	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Libiąż	Devastated in 1939.
Lubliniec	Burnt down in 1939.
Milówka	Destroyed during the war.
Mysłowice	Burnt down in September 1939.
Oświęcim	Burnt down on the night of 29/30 November 1939; the ruins were demolished in 1941.
Ruda Śląska-Wirek	Burnt down on 3 or 4 September 1939; the walls were blown up in 1940.
Rybnik	Burnt down at the beginning of 1940.
Skoczów	Dismantled in 1939.
Sosnowiec	Three synagogues burnt down on 9 September 1939.
Sucha Beskidzka	Devastated in 1939, the building was dismantled in 1940 or 1941.
Tarnowskie Góry	Burnt down in 1939; the ruins were removed in 1943.
Trzebnica	Devastated in 1939; the building survived the war.
Ustronie	Burnt down on 15 September 1939.
Wadowice	Blown up in October 1939.
Wodzisław	Devastated in 1939; the building was used as a warehouse; it survived the war.
Zawiercie	The interior was devastated; the building survived the war.
Zator	Destroyed in 1939.
Żywiec	Dismantled during the war.

Source: *Own calculations*

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SUMMARY

The article deals with the mass destruction of Jewish houses of worship by the German aggressors in the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich in October 1939. In the course of several months, they disappeared from over fifty per cent of the locations in the area in question. The author links this activity of the German occupants with the widespread hatred of the Mosaic religion among the Nazis.

KEYWORDS

Jews • Germans • synagogues • war

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THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UKRAINIAN AUXILIARY POLICE
(UKRAINISCHE HILFSPOLIZEI) IN THE EXTERMINATION
OF JEWS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ŁYSIEC IN STANYSLAVIV
COUNTY IN 1941–1943

Introduction

The subject of the activity of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (Ukrainische Hilfspolizei) in the Galicia District of the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo, GG) has yet to be comprehensively researched. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the issue of Ukrainian cooperation with the German occupiers has come to the attention of many researchers. This has been the case, particularly with the participation of Ukrainian auxiliary formations in the extermination of Jews. Many historians have dealt with this topic, including Dieter Pohl,¹ Franek Golczewski,² Martin Dean,³ Grzegorz

¹ D. Pohl, "Ukrainische Hilfskräfte beim Mord an den Juden," in *Die Täter der Shoah: Fanatische Nationalisten oder normale Deutsche?*, ed. G. Paul (Göttingen, 2002), pp. 205–234.

² F. Golczewski, "Shades of Grey. Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia," in *The Shoah in Ukraine. History, Testimony, Memorialization*, ed. by R. Brandon and W. Lower (Bloomington, 2008), pp. 114–155; *idem*, "Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine," in *Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der "Kollaboration" im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*, ed. by Ch. Dieckmann, B. Quinkert, and T. Tönsmeier (Göttingen, 2003), pp. 151–182.

³ M. Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust. Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine 1941–1944* (New York, 2000).

Rossoliński-Liebe,⁴ Grzegorz Motyka,⁵ John-Paul Himka,⁶ Yuri Radchenko,⁷ and Taras Martynenko,⁸ as well as Gabriel Finder and Alexander V. Prusin.⁹ However, they presented the results of their research in broad terms, rarely discussing specific cases. On the other hand, no publications in Polish historiography have analysed this issue locally by showing the activities of individual Ukrainian Auxiliary Police stations.

The text presented here does not exhaust the complex and multidimensional topic of the participation of Ukrainian policemen in the extermination of Jews. It is only an attempt to outline the problem from the perspective of the activity of one of the posts of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. In this way, the article takes on the form of a case study, with the purpose being to indicate the role of Ukrainian policemen in the extermination of the Jewish community of Łysiec, a community that was part of Stanyslaviv (Polish: Stanisławów, now Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine) County before the war. The author of this article also intends to illustrate the scale of their involvement in actions against Jews and to answer the question of the extent to which members of the Ukrainian formations acted independently.

The source base for this article is essentially the files from the investigation conducted in 2002–2004 by the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Katowice, looking into the crimes committed against Jews in the Łysiec area during the German occupation by a Ukrainian policeman Bohdan Kozij.¹⁰ It was opened on 23 September 2002 at the request of the direc-

⁴ G. Rossoliński-Liebe, "Ukraińska policja, nacjonalizm i zagłada Żydów w Galicji Wschodniej i na Wołyniu," *Holocaust. Studies and Materials* 13 (2017), pp. 57–79.

⁵ G. Motyka, "Kolaboracja na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1941–1944," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2008), pp. 183–197.

⁶ J.P. Himka, "Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów, Ukraińska Policja i Holocaust," in *OUN, UPa i zagłada Żydów*, ed. A.A. Zięba (Cracow, 2016), pp. 453–468.

⁷ J. Radchenko, "Policja pomocnicza, OUN a Holocaust na terenie obwodu sumskiego (1941–1943)," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, 1/29 (2017), pp. 413–446.

⁸ T. Martynenko, "Ukrayins'ka Dopomizhna Politsiya v okruzi L'viv-misto: shtrykhy do sotsial'noho portreta," *Visnyk L'viv's'koho universytetu. Seriya istorychna* 48 (2013), pp. 152–167.

⁹ G.N. Finder and A.V. Prusin, "Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej. Policja ukraińska i Holocaust," in *OUN, UPa and the Holocaust*, pp. 361–385.

¹⁰ Bohdan Kozij aka Bohdan Koziy, born on 23 February 1923 at Pukasowce near Halicz, Stanislaviv County, son of Ivan and Maria née Sowiuk, Ukrainian nationality, Greek Catholic religion. A member of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists. From 1 April 1942 to 31 January 1944, he served in the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police at Łysiec. Upon hearing of the approaching Red Army, he left for Germany. In December 1949, he emigrated to the United States and changed his name to Koziy. On

tor of the Simon Wiesenthal Center¹¹ – Efraim Zuroff – who had been seeking punishment for that war criminal for many years. The investigation ended on 11 March 2004, with a discontinuance due to the perpetrator's death.¹²

The investigators collected unique source material comprising 18 volumes of files. Among other things, it included documentation acquired through international legal assistance from an ongoing trial before the US judiciary to strip Bohdan Kozij of US citizenship, as well as that produced during attempts to launch the procedure for Kozij's extradition to the USSR in the 1980s. The source material includes the minutes of more than fifty interrogations of more than a dozen Łysiec residents. The witnesses included Poles, Ukrainians and one Jewish Holocaust survivor. The American, Soviet and Polish administrations of justice interviewed the witnesses. The extremely voluminous (often dozens of pages long) and detailed witness interrogation minutes prepared by the US investigators are of particular

9 February 1956, he was granted American citizenship. In 1977, the US Department of Justice opened an investigation against him in connection with his concealment in his visa application of the information about his service in the Ukrainian police and membership in the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). On 29 March 1982, he was stripped of his US citizenship by a ruling of the US District Court for the Southern District of Florida. On 19 March 1982, the US Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization initiated deportation proceedings against him. On 1 October 1984, a US court passed a ruling that he could be deported to the USSR. In September 1984, he left the United States and went to Costa Rica. The Soviet authorities unsuccessfully sought his extradition. On 23 September 2002, the Institute of National Remembrance – Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*, hereinafter OKŚZpNP) in Katowice opened an investigation into the perpetration of an offence by him under Article 1.1. of the Decree of 31 August 1944 concerning the punishment of fascist-hitlerite criminals guilty of murder and ill-treatment of the civilian population and prisoners of war, and the punishment of traitors of the Polish Nation and Article 123.1.4 of the Penal Code in conjunction with Article 11.2 of the Penal Code. On 7 November 2003, the IPN in Katowice issued a request for his arrest and extradition. On 26 November 2003, the Alajuela High Court issued a warrant for his arrest. On 30 November 2003 Kozij died in the San Rafael Hospital in Alajuela due to a cerebral haemorrhage. See Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Katowicach (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Katowice, hereinafter AIPN Ka), S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the investigation into the 1943 murder of three persons of Jewish nationality in Łysiec, Stanislaviv County, Decision to discontinue the investigation, 11 March 2004, pp. 3640–3643.

¹¹ The Simon Wiesenthal Center is a non-governmental Jewish organisation based in Los Angeles, whose activities focus primarily on preserving the memory of the Holocaust. Since 2001, the centre has issued an annual report with a list of wanted Nazi criminals, see <https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/about-the-simon-wiesenthal-center/> (accessed 17 June 2022).

¹² AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Files of the investigation into the 1943 murder of three persons of Jewish nationality in Łysiec, Stanislaviv County, Decision to discontinue the investigation, 11 March 2004, pp. 3640–3643.

value. On their basis, it is possible to precisely reconstruct the participation of Ukrainian policemen in the extermination of the Jews of Łysiec. Also of interest in the context of this research are documents produced by the State Security Committee (KGB) of the USSR for the Ivano-Frankivsk region, including minutes of interrogations of two Ukrainian police officers serving at the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police station in Łysiec.

Characteristics of the Research Area

The research area was limited to the precinct of the operations of the Łysiec Ukrainian Auxiliary Police station, which included, in addition to Łysiec itself, the villages of Łysiec Stary, Drohomirczany, Iwanikówka, Krechowce, Posiecz, Radcza, Stebnik and Zabereże. It thus overlapped with the pre-war municipality of Łysiec. On the eve of the Second World War, the municipality was located in Stanyslaviv County, Stanyslaviv Voivodeship of the Second Republic of Poland. It occupied an area of over 138 sq. km. The village of Krechowce, which was part of it, was directly adjacent to Stanyslaviv from the north. The province's capital was about 8 km in a straight line from Łysiec. From the north, the Łysiec municipality also neighboured the Piaseczna municipality; from the east, it neighboured the Czernijew municipality; from the south, in a small section, it neighboured the Lachowce municipality and a sliver of the Starunia municipality, which was part of Nadwornia County, while from the southwest it neighboured the Bochorodzany Stare municipality. To the west of the Łysiec municipality was the Łysiec Forest, which was a part of the vast Czarny Las forest complex that separated the Stanyslaviv County from Kaluga County. The border between the Łysiec municipality and the municipalities of Podmichale and Nowica, which were in Kaluga County, ran through the forested area.

After the Third Reich and the USSR invaded Poland in September 1939, the area of the Łysiec municipality was occupied by the Red Army and incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In January 1941, the Soviet authorities established the Łysiec region within the Stanyslaviv region.¹³ After

¹³ G. Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej. Położenie ludności, polityka okupantów, działalność podziemia* (Cracow, 1994), pp. 30, 32; G. Hryciuk, *Przemiany narodowościowe i ludnościowe w Galicji Wschodniej i na Wołyniu w latach 1931–1948* (Torun, 2005), p. 38.

the Third Reich's aggression against the Soviet Union in June 1941, the area came under German occupation, after a brief episode of Hungarian military administration. The German authorities created a rural municipality (Landgemeinde) of Łysiec, which existed within the boundaries of the county starosty (Kreishauptmannschaft) of Stanyslaviv located in the Galicia District of the General Governorate.¹⁴

Łysiec and its environs, like the rest of the Eastern Borderlands, were known for the diverse social fabric. The village was a cultural, ethnic and national melting pot. The religious and nationality structure of individual localities can be reconstructed in detail by analysing the 1923 *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Index of Localities of the Republic of Poland], based on the results of the 1921 census. This states that 11,188 people inhabited the area under study at that time, of which 86.76% were Ukrainian,¹⁵ 8.75% were Polish and the Jewish population was just 4.27%.¹⁶ Łysiec itself had 1,560 inhabitants. Religiously, it was the most diverse of all the villages that, during the German occupation, were part of the precinct of the Ukrainian police station in question. The town had a predominantly Ukrainian population – more than 58%, with Poles accounting for 23% of the local population. It was also home to 275 Jews, numbering nearly 18% of the population.¹⁷ There were also some Armenians, but by the beginning of the twentieth century they had already largely been assimilated with the Polish population.¹⁸ The table below presents a detailed breakdown of the population of the various villages comprising the Łysiec municipality by religion.

¹⁴ *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsbestandsaufnahme am 1. März 1943. Herausgegeben vom Statistischen Amt des Generalgouvernements* (Cracow, 1943), p. 12.

¹⁵ Aware of the far-reaching simplifications resulting from such a choice, in assessing nationality I have adopted the criterion of religion as declared in the census.

¹⁶ *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, vol. 14: *Województwo stanisławowskie* (Warsaw, 1923), pp. 3, 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ L. Eagle, P. Hawryłyszyn, "Ormiańskie miasteczko Łysiec," *Nowy Kurier Galicyjski* 8/372 (2021).

Table 1. Residents of the Łysiec municipality in 1921 by religion

Locality	Total population	Religion			
		Greek Catholic	Roman Catholic	Mosaic	Other
Drohomirczany	1122	786 (70.05%)	296 (26.38%)	39 (3.47%)	1
Iwanikówka	1210	1188 (98.18%)	4 (0.33%)	18 (1.49%)	–
Krechowce	1304	1099 (84.28%)	139 (10.66%)	58 (4.45%)	8
Łysiec	1560	916 (58.72%)	359 (23.01%)	275 (17.63%)	10
Łysiec Stary	2132	2005 (94.04%)	81 (3.80%)	46 (2.16%)	–
Posiecz	969	919 (94.84%)	37 (3.81%)	13 (1.34%)	–
Radcza	1649	1594 (96.66%)	34 (2.06%)	21 (1.27%)	–
Stebnik	424	407 (95.99%)	12 (2.83%)	5 (1.18%)	–
Zabereże	818	794 (97.06%)	17 (2.08%)	5 (0.61%)	2

Source: *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, vol. 14: *Województwo stanisławowskie* (Warsaw, 1923).

According to the next census of 1931, 14,657 people inhabited the area of interest.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the compiled and published results of the second census do not contain detailed data allowing us to reconstruct the nationality structure at the level of individual localities in the municipality. It is also impossible to determine precisely how many people resided in the area on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War or what changes occurred in the social fabric during the Soviet occupation. According to estimates by the German occupation authorities, there were 13,664 people in the rural municipality of Łysiec on 1 March 1943 (including 1,467 people in Łysiec itself).²⁰

In 1921, the area in question was home to 478 Jews.²¹ As can be seen from the list presented here, they mainly lived in Łysiec. In the other villages, they constituted

¹⁹ *Skorowidz gmin Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Ludność i budynki oraz powierzchnia ogólna. Województwa południowe* (Warsaw, 1933), p. 11.

²⁰ *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis*, p. 12.

²¹ By comparison, the percentage of Jewish population was more than twice as high in the entire pre-war Stanislawiv Province.

only a trace part of the population.²² Assuming with a high degree of probability that the nationality structure of the municipality's population did not change much over the next ten years, we can estimate that, in 1931, the municipality may have been inhabited by some 600 Jews.

Analogous to the situation in the entire pre-war Stanisławów Voivodeship, the vast majority of the Łysiec Jews made a living from trade and crafts. They also ran small enterprises, such as a sawmill or a bakery. They also performed freelance work.²³

The local Jewish population lived mainly in the Jewish community of Łysiec.²⁴ It maintained cultural distinctiveness and total freedom of religion. As in smaller urban centres throughout the pre-war eastern Lesser Poland, and especially in the villages, many Jews maintained only economic relations with the non-Jewish environment, preserving its relative isolation.²⁵

What emerges from the investigation files is a picture of good relations between Jewish and non-Jewish residents of Łysiec during the interwar period. Witnesses emphasise that, until the outbreak of war, there were no major nationality-based conflicts.²⁶ Undoubtedly, however, events during the German occupation and the attitude of Ukrainian policemen toward Jews were influenced by the Ukrainian-Jewish antagonism, which intensified in the second half of the 1930s. Its echoes must have reached Łysiec as well. It is worth noting that the conflict occurred primarily at an economic level. It stemmed from the emancipation tendencies that prevailed among Ukrainians, especially from Ukrainian aspirations to become economically independent and increase their presence in non-agricultural sectors of the economy, hitherto controlled by Poles and Jews.²⁷

²² *Skorowidz miejscowości*, pp. 3, 17.

²³ *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931 r. Województwo stanisławowskie*, Series C, fasc. 65 (Warsaw, 1938).

²⁴ For a more extensive discussion of the functioning of Jewish religious communities in the Second Republic of Poland, see T. Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej. Studium historyczno-administracyjne* (Bydgoszcz, 2014).

²⁵ P. Eberhardt, "Liczebność i rozmieszczenie ludności żydowskiej na Kresach Wschodnich I i II Rzeczypospolitej w pierwszej połowie XX wieku," in *Świat niepożegnany. Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku*, ed. K. Jasiewicz (Warsaw–London, 2004), p. 72.

²⁶ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Berezowski before the OKŚZpNP in Katowice, 23 October 2002, p. 230; Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jadwiga Spilarewicz before the OKŚZpNP in Katowice, 16 January 2003, p. 246.

²⁷ For a more extensive discussion of the Ukrainian-Jewish conflict, see M. Hon, "Konflikt ukraińsko-żydowski na ziemiach zachodnioukraińskich w latach 1935–1939," in *Świat niepożegnany*, pp. 244–258.

The outbreak of war in 1939 led to a further exacerbation of nationality relations and a deterioration of the situation of basically all the region's inhabitants. The Red Army occupied the area in question, and the Soviet Union incorporated it into the Ukrainian SSR. The rapid unification of the political, social, economic, cultural and economic systems with those of the USSR followed. From the very first moments of the occupation, the repressive Soviet policy was directed mainly against representatives of the broadly understood elite of the Polish state and all those whom the communist authorities defined as enemies of the new order – nearly two years of Soviet rule led to the pauperisation of the local community.²⁸

It is worth noting that although the local population perceived Jews as allies of the Soviet power, which mainly contributed to the tightening of nationality relations in later years, some of them were also victims of Soviet repression. This particularly applied to representatives of the Jewish elite, including local elites, who were marginalised and deprived of their property through the nationalisation of enterprises by the Soviet authorities.²⁹

Organisation of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police at Łysiec

After the Red Army left Łysiec in early July 1941,³⁰ local militias began to form in the town, acting on behalf of the Bandera faction of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN-B). After a few days, they transformed into the Narodna

²⁸ For more on Soviet policy in the Eastern Borderlands, see Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej*, pp. 43–46; W. Bonusiak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna ZSRR na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1941* („Zachodnia Ukraina” i „Zachodnia Białoruś”) (Rzeszów, 2006); *idem*, “Przemiany ekonomiczne w Małopolsce Wschodniej w latach 1939–1941,” in *Okupacja sowiecka ziem polskich 1939–1941*, ed. P. Chmielowiec (Rzeszów–Warszawa, 2005), pp. 94–110; A. Głowacki, “Formy, skala i konsekwencje sowieckich represji wobec Polaków w latach 1939–1941,” in *Okupacja sowiecka*, pp. 126–138; *idem*, “Unifikacja Galicji Wschodniej i Wołynia z ZSRR (1939–1941),” *Studia Rzeszowskie* 3 (1996), pp. 53–66; G. Mazur, “Z dziejów sowietyzacji tzw. Zachodniej Ukrainy 1939–1941,” *Studia Rzeszowskie* 3 (1996), pp. 67–84; A. Sudoł, *Początki sowietyzacji Kresów Wschodnich Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (jesień 1939). Wybrane problemy polityczne i organizacyjne* (Bydgoszcz–Toruń, 1997); A. Głowacki, *Sowieci wobec Polaków na Ziemiach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1939–1941* (Łódź, 1998); M. Wierzbicki, “Sowiecka polityka okupacyjna na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1941,” in *Kresy Południowo-Wschodnie Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941*, ed. by P. Chmielowiec and I. Kozimiała (Rzeszów, 2014), pp. 12–23.

²⁹ Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej*, pp. 43–46.

³⁰ On 4 July 1941, Hungarian troops allied with the Third Reich occupied Stanisławów/Stanylaviv. Certainly, Łysiec, eight kilometres away, was captured at the same time. See *ibid.*, p. 62; W. Komar, “Miasto Stanisławów pod sowiecką i niemiecką okupacją,” *Scripta Historica* 21 (2015), p. 191.

Militsiya (National Militia). Such structures, established in eastern Lesser Poland when a kind of political vacuum appeared between the evacuation of the Soviet administration and the establishment of German rule, manifested the state-forming aspirations of Ukrainian nationalists.³¹ Ukrainians created militia formations in parallel with local government bodies as an attempt to seize power in the area.³² The National Militia played a vital role in the anti-Jewish acts and pogroms that occurred in eastern Lesser Poland in the initial days after the evacuation of the Soviet authorities.³³ Unfortunately, little information is available about the functioning of the National Militia in the Łysiec area at that time. It is also impossible to reconstruct its structure.³⁴

During Operation Barbarossa, Łysiec found itself in the area of operations of the Hungarian troops allied with the Wehrmacht. On 7 August 1941, the Hungarian troops handed over the area to the German administration.³⁵ The Germans dissolved the National Militia formed by the OUN-B in late August and early September 1941. In practice, however, they reformed it and created the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (Ukrainische Hilfspolizei) on its basis.³⁶ Units of this type came into being under Heinrich Himmler's order of 25 July 1941. In it, the SS Reichsführer referred to the earlier practical cooperation of the Einsatzgruppen with local militia units. In the occupied eastern territories, the Germans approved the creation of auxiliary police units from selected and accepted ethnic groups (including Ukrainians) subordinate to the German security apparatus. Recruitment for these units was to be conducted among local Ukrainians and prisoners of war who were not communists.³⁷ While in other regions of occupied Poland and the

³¹ Finder, Prusin, "Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej," pp. 368, 372.

³² Martynenko, "Ukrayins'ka Dopomizhna Politsiya," p. 155.

³³ Rossoliński-Liebe, "Ukraińska policja," pp. 78–79. On the pogroms that took place in 1941 in the former Soviet occupation zone, see W.W. Mędykowski, *W cieniu gigantów. Pogromy 1941 r. w byłej sowieckiej strefie okupacyjnej* (Jerusalem, 2018).

³⁴ In his testimony, Antony Waceb indicates that militia units were formed three days after the Soviet withdrawal. According to him, about 12 militiamen served in them. See AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Translation of the Minutes of the interrogation of Antony Waceb of 20 March 1981, 19 March 2003, p. 2155.

³⁵ Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej*, p. 65.

³⁶ Rossoliński-Liebe, "Ukraińska policja," pp. 70–71; Himka, "Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów," p. 460.

³⁷ Finder and Prusin, "Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej," p. 373; AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Translation of the Minutes of the Interrogation of Prof. Raul Hilberg, 14 April 1982, undated, p. 1626.

USSR, representatives of other nationalities (including Russians, Tatars, Poles, and *Volksdeutsche*) were admitted to the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police, in the Galicia District, the formation consisted exclusively of ethnic Ukrainians.³⁸ It is worth noting that the creation of the Ukrainian police was beneficial to the Germans, who in this way gained units that could relieve the burden of the German occupation in the field and was in the interest of the Ukrainian nationalists. From their perspective, the establishment of a Ukrainian police apparatus was essential for the creation of a future “Ukrainian autonomy”. It was also a vital step for building Ukrainian statehood.³⁹

The Ukrainian Auxiliary Police was subordinated to the German Order Police (*Ordnungspolizei*), while in the villages, it came under the supervision of the commanders of local German gendarmerie posts.⁴⁰ In the case of Łysiec, the Ukrainian police were subordinate to the German Order Police in Stanyslaviv. In matters of minor importance, the direct supervision of the Ukrainian police units was exercised by the Ukrainian Police Headquarters.⁴¹ A separate rank system distinguished this formation from the German one, and there was a characteristic uniform: black trousers, a navy-blue shirt and a headgear typical of Ukrainian formations – a *mazepynka* with a trident. The policemen’s arsenal consisted of wooden sticks, pistols and rifles.⁴²

The Łysiec Auxiliary Police station was based in a building near the intersection connecting the road from Stanyslaviv to Bohorodczany with the road leading to Radcza. Before the war, this was the headquarters of the Polish State Police. During the Soviet occupation, the District Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine was probably located there.⁴³ As mentioned, the station’s precinct, besides Łysiec itself, covered the villages of Stary Łysiec, Drohomirczany,

³⁸ J. Radczenko, “‘Wystrzelaliśmy do nich wszystkie naboje’. *Ukrainische Hilfspolizei* i Holocaust na terenie Generalbeziirk Charkow w latach 1941–1943,” in *OUN, UPA i zagłada Żydów*, pp. 474–475.

³⁹ Finder and Prusin, “Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej,” p. 370.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Translation of the minutes of Prof. Raul Hilberg’s interrogation of 14 September 1982, n.d., p. 1634.

⁴² Martynenko, “Ukrayins’ka Dopomizhna Politsiya,” p. 156.

⁴³ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Mokłowicz, 18 September 1987, p. 2484; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Berezowski before the Branch Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes against the Polish Nation (*Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*, hereinafter OKBZH) in Wrocław, 19 November 1976.

Ivanikovka, Krechowce, Posiecz, Radcza, Stebnik and Zabereże. It is noteworthy, however, that the police not only secured the areas of individual villages, but also nearby forests and uninhabited areas. The sector of routine patrols extended to the border of neighbouring municipalities.⁴⁴

It is impossible to precisely reconstruct the personnel composition of the staff of the Ukrainian police station in Łysiec, though we know there was a rotation in the personnel. From the testimony of Łysiec police officers, it appears that about five or six police officers served at one time.⁴⁵ The first commander was Lyczaj (first name unknown), who was replaced by Bilanczuk⁴⁶ (first name unknown). Among the policemen serving in various periods at the Łysiec post, Bohdan Kozij, Jurij Irodenko, Semen Witwicki, Nikolaj Karpiniec, Bilogubka (first name unknown) and Dowganicz (first name unknown) may also be mentioned. Moreover, a German gendarme was posted there.⁴⁷ However, we do not have more detailed information about his role in daily operations.

Witnesses particularly remembered Bohdan Kozij, who, in the opinion of many Łysiec residents, was the most diligent in carrying out the Germans' orders. Ivan Paszkiewicz recalled: "By nature, Kozij was a bad and cruel man. He liked to abuse people."⁴⁸ Similarly, Iosif Ilkowski described him as follows: "Kozij was cruel and devoted to the fascist occupants, he was servile to them. In Łysiec, all the inhabitants were afraid of him, he could hose any person down for no reason."⁴⁹ During the occupation period, Bohdan Kozij married the daughter of Łysiec's mayor Wasyl

⁴⁴ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the minutes of Professor Raul Hilberg's interrogation of 14 September 1982, no date, p. 1633.

⁴⁵ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Semen Witwicki dated 12 June 1987, 6 October 2003, p. 2628; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko dated 13 June 1976, 20 September 2009, p. 2615.

⁴⁶ In the source material, there are various forms of writing his name: Bilanchuk, Bileytchuk, Belanchuk.

⁴⁷ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Semen Witwicki dated 12 June 1987, 6 October 2003, p. 2628; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko dated 13 June 1976, 20 September 2009, p. 2615.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of Iwan Paszkiewicz's interrogation report of 16 May 1975, 20 September 2003, p. 2592.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of Iosif Ilkowski's interrogation of 26 November 1975, 16 September 2003, p. 2583.

Ostapiak. Since then, he began to take advantage of his privileged position. Semen Witwicki, who served with him, testified: "Taking advantage of his father-in-law's influential position, Kozij behaved brazenly, nonchalantly, and one could say that the man did not acknowledge any of the policemen. He maintained friendly relations chiefly with the German [...]. He had a bad, explosive character."⁵⁰

The primary criteria for admission to service in the Ukrainian police formation were appropriate political views and physical fitness. The recruited individuals were vetted by the German Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*), among others.⁵¹ The German authorities also conducted training sessions for Ukrainian police officers. During such classes, the lecturers emphasised instilling a Nazi ethos in the students. According to Gabriel Finder and Alexander Prusin, although no direct evidence has been found of anti-Semitic indoctrination of Ukrainian police officers in Eastern Galicia, it can be assumed that, following the example of units operating in Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainian police officers were also "trained to prepare themselves for the 'Jewish danger'."⁵²

It is impossible to unequivocally determine what motivations guided those joining the ranks of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. In addition to ideological issues, practical considerations, including privileges, were undoubtedly important. Ukrainian policemen were relatively well-secured economically. Among other things, they were entitled to wages at the level of a skilled labourer, extra food rations and social insurance.⁵³ Police service also guaranteed relative security for officers' families and protected them from deportation for forced labour to the Reich.⁵⁴ It was the latter motivation that Jurij Irodenko, who served in Łysiec, pointed out in his testimony. He admitted that he joined the Ukrainian police voluntarily because he believed that serving in the police formation would protect him from being deported to perform forced labour.⁵⁵ In addition to ideological

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Semen Witwicki on 15 June 1987, 6 October 2003, p. 2632.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Prof. Raul Hilberg on 14 September 1982, no date, p. 1638.

⁵² Finder and Prusin, *Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej*, p. 374.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁵⁴ Маргиненко, *Українська Допоміжна Поліція*, p. 161.

⁵⁵ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko on 11 June 1975, 20 September 2003, p. 2609.

and social motivations, Taras Martynenko rightly pointed to psychological factors determining entry into police formations. In his opinion, an essential motive for entering the service was the opportunity for officers to gain a sense of limited but power over others.⁵⁶ Finally, it is worth emphasising that some of the officers of the Łysiec post transferred to the police directly from the disbanded structures of the OUN militia.⁵⁷

As Raul Hilberg underlined,⁵⁸ the local police performed many auxiliary functions. "Every duty of the German police was also the duty of the local police."⁵⁹ The scope of duties of the Ukrainian police in Łysiec was precisely set out in the testimony of Semen Witwicki mentioned above:

The primary task of the district police and ours as policemen was maintaining the occupation regime. Policemen were required to unconditionally carry out all the recommendations and orders of the German command. For the slightest disobedience, they risked being shot, or at best arrested and sent to a concentration camp. We, as police officers, were to perform a patrol duty [...], to keep an eye on order, to combat theft, hooliganism, to assist the German-fascist pacification authorities in detecting, detaining, arresting, escorting and shooting Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality, former activists of Soviet power, communists, partisans.⁶⁰

Actions of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police against Łysiec Jews

From the first days of the German occupation, Ukrainian policemen demonstrated anti-Semitic attitudes. They committed acts of individual violence against representatives of the Jewish community. They mistreated and humiliated local

⁵⁶ Мартиненко, *Українська Допоміжна Поліція*, p. 161.

⁵⁷ Antony Vaceb listed Bilogubka and Karpiniec, among others, among the militia officers. On the other hand, he erroneously named Semen Witwicki, who was staying in his hometown village of Piaseczno at the time. AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Antony Vaceb on 20 March 1981, 19 March 2003, p. 2155.

⁵⁸ Prof. Raul Hilberg was appointed by US investigators as an expert witness in the Bohdan Kozij case and was on 14 September 1982.

⁵⁹ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Prof. Raul Hilberg of 14 September 1982, no date, p. 1634.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Semen Witwicki on 15 June 1987, 6 October 2003, p. 2632.

Jews. Karol Koluszko recalled in his testimony that some policemen “displayed terrible sadism.”⁶¹ During the first period of the German occupation, the first commander of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in Łysiec – Nyczaj – showed particular brutality towards Jews. As the quoted witness testified later in the interrogation, when the commandant “met a Jew, he would give him orders – Get down! Stand up! He would jump on his back or chest and beat him with a baton.”⁶²

Violent, degrading and insulting behaviour on the part of the Łysiec Ukrainian policemen towards Jews occurred throughout the occupation. Max Kandler testified that, in September or October 1942, when he worked at a German company for which he collected recyclables in the Łysiec area, he was stopped by a patrol of Ukrainian policemen. After checking his papers, one of the officers wanted to light a cigarette and asked him for matches. When Kandler handed him a lit match, it went out so the officer punched him violently in the face. He was probably saved from further repressions from Ukrainian policemen because he had a German pass confirming that he was working for the Reich.⁶³ Jadwiga Spilarewicz, on the other hand, recalled during her interrogation how she was being transported in a van from Łysiec to the Gestapo headquarters in Stanyslaviv, the escorting Ukrainian policemen from the local police station abused the Jews transported with her. The Ukrainians pushed and beat them and ordered them to pray and sing songs.⁶⁴

As Dieter Pohl rightly pointed out, in the face of the total disenfranchisement and expropriation of the Jewish community by the German authorities, even the “normal” tasks of the auxiliary police, such as combating the black market or smuggling, among others, became part of activities aimed at the destruction of the Jews.⁶⁵ It was also the order of the day for Ukrainian policemen to make individual profits at the expense of the local Jewish community. While on duty, they engaged in various types of extortion, including obtaining valuables as bribes from their

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with the recording of the interrogation of Karol Koluszko on 19 January 1981 by American investigators, 20 January 2003, p. 1415.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from English of the minutes of the interrogation of Max Kandler on 11 July 2003, p. 2235.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Translation from English of the minutes of the interrogation of Jadwiga Spilarewicz, 7 June 2003, p. 2081.

⁶⁵ Pohl, “Ukrainische Hilfskräfte,” p. 211.

victims. It is worth underlining that this type of practice was against the rules of the Ukrainian police.⁶⁶ The officers were also responsible for common theft. As Józef Waclaw Jabłoński testified, during many evenings, Ukrainian police officers would search Jewish homes and take valuables from them.⁶⁷ The liquidation of the Jewish community of Łysiec and the surrounding villages was another opportunity for the Ukrainian police to enrich themselves at their victims' expense. Bohdan Kozij, having married the mayor's daughter, Jarosława Ostapiak, moved into a house previously owned by a Jewish family.⁶⁸ There were rumours among the residents of Łysiec that he decorated his home with items he took from Jewish homes after their owners were resettled to the ghetto.⁶⁹

An essential duty of the local Ukrainian police was supervising Jewish labourers performing forced labour for the Germans. Jurij Radczenko cites the contents of one German instruction from 1941 that emphasised: "The Jewish population should be forced to work under the supervision of the Ukrainian police, primarily in agriculture."⁷⁰

Ukrainian law enforcement forces in the Galicia District also played an auxiliary role in the German authorities' operations to displace and deport the Jewish community to extermination camps. As in other regions of the occupied country, the German authorities, when planning the extermination of Jews, sought to concentrate them. To this end, they placed Jews from villages and smaller urban centres in ghettos established in larger towns and county towns. The Jewish residents of Łysiec were resettled to the largest ghetto in the area, located in Stanyslaviv. The Germans carried out the resettlement action of the Łysiec Jews in the spring of 1942. The Ukrainian Auxiliary Police of Łysiec were also actively involved.⁷¹

When the resettlement started, Ukrainian policemen were responsible, among other things, for identifying and bringing the Jews to the designated place. The

⁶⁶ Himka, "Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów," p. 457.

⁶⁷ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with the recording of the interrogation of Józef Waclaw Jabłoński on 19 January 1981 by American investigators, 10 February 2003, p. 1489.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Władysław Bryndziej, 22 September 1987, p. 2479.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Waclaw Jabłoński, 25 September 1987, p. 2497.

⁷⁰ Radczenko, "Policja pomocnicza," p. 418.

⁷¹ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Justification of the request of the OKŚZpNP in Katowice for legal assistance, July 2003, pp. 2316–2317.

officers went around houses inhabited by representatives of the Jewish faith and forced them to leave their farms. They conducted the entire operation in a highly violent manner. The aggressive behaviour of the Ukrainian policemen increased the terror among the Jews leaving their homes. The Ukrainian policemen led all the Jewish residents of the town, as well as the surrounding villages, to the central square of Łysiec. According to witnesses' estimates, they gathered there about 250 people of mixed genders and ages. Under the guard of Germans and Ukrainian police officers, Jews were held there for more than 24 hours without food or drink. Then in formed columns on foot, the German and Ukrainian escort led them to the Stanyslaviv ghetto.⁷²

Even though the Germans planned, directed and coordinated the action, given the number of auxiliary units, local conditions and good knowledge of the area that the local Ukrainian police structures possessed, it is likely, in practice, that it was the Ukrainian police officers who were mostly responsible for the smooth execution of the operation to resettle the Łysiec Jews.

It is worth mentioning that the local Ukrainian authorities, following an obligation binding throughout the General Governorate, also had to provide means of transportation to secure the action. To this end, letters were sent to individual residents of Łysiec, ordering them to appear with their carts and horses at a designated place on a specific day and to obey all orders of the security forces. Local peasants, under the guard of Ukrainian policemen, were used to transport those Jews who could not walk a long distance on their own.⁷³

The residents of Łysiec knew very well the conditions in the Jewish quarter in Stanyslaviv. In late 1941 and early 1942, the situation was incomparably worse in the ghetto than in the rest of the town. Outside the ghetto, despite the harsh realities of the occupation, people had access to food. For example, even before the deportation of local Jews to the ghetto, Max Kandler, who lived in Łysiec,

⁷² *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski of 26 November 1975, 20 September 2003, p. 2582; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko of 13 June 1976, 20 September 2003, p. 2614.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with the recording of the interrogation of Józef Waclaw Jabłoński on 19 January 1981 by American investigators, 10 February 2003, p. 1481; *ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with the recording of the interrogation of Karol Koluszko on 19 January 1981 by American investigators, 20 January 2003, pp. 1409–1410.

delivered food to his relatives confined in the Stanyslaviv quarter. He secretly went there at night to avoid German and Ukrainian patrols. During such trips, he saw conditions in the ghetto.⁷⁴ In addition, the Łysiec Jews were undoubtedly familiar with the events of Bloody Sunday, which occurred on 12 October 1941 in Stanyslaviv. At that time, the Germans, supported by Ukrainian policemen, killed about 10–12 thousand Jews.⁷⁵ All this meant that Jewish community members could not be sure of their fate, and some had already tried to avoid resettlement at all costs. Those who attempted to escape during the resettlement were shot on the spot. According to witness testimonies, at least a few Łysiec Jews were killed in this manner,⁷⁶ including Abraham Kandler, who was killed on the road in Łysiec because he was unable to maintain a proper marching pace in the column of Jews headed to the ghetto.⁷⁷ However, it is impossible to determine whether these killings were carried out by Ukrainian policemen or Germans escorting the column.

During the action mentioned above, not all the Jews were expelled from Łysiec. A specific group stayed in the town, performing useful functions from the local authorities' perspective. For example, a local doctor – Oskar Singer – stayed in Łysiec for another two months until he was warned of the next, pending action to expel the remaining Jews. Thanks to this information, he found shelter for himself and his family members. He was helped by a Pole – Andrzej Kozdęba – from the nearby Olesiów.⁷⁸ It was extremely tough for Jews to find shelter. The Christian population, fearing repression, was reluctant to help any fugitives. This mainly applied to Ukrainians. Jews who had maintained contact with Polish residents of Łysiec and its surroundings before the war stood a much better chance of finding a hiding place.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Max Kandler, 11 July 2003, p. 2221.

⁷⁵ D. Pohl, *Hans Krueger and the Murder of the Jews in the Stanyslaviv Region (Galicia)*, https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%202292.pdf (accessed 10 November 2018).

⁷⁶ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Józef Frankowicz-Ilkowski of 1981, p. 2189.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, English translation of the minutes of the interrogation of Max Kandler, 11 July 2003, p. 2361.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with the recording of the interrogation of Karol Koluszko on 19 January 1981 by American investigators, 20 January 2003, pp. 1421–1423.

⁷⁹ While researching aid given by Poles to Jewish residents of the Stanyslaviv County, it was determined that at least four Polish families from Łysiec and the immediate vicinity were involved in helping Jews, and together they hid at least 22 Jews.

After the deportation of the Jews to the Stanyslaviv ghetto, one of the most important tasks of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police from the Łysiec post (as was the case with the other UAP posts in the Galicia District) was to search for members of the Jewish community hiding in the town and the surrounding villages – those who had managed to take refuge from deportation and those who had escaped from the ghetto or transports to the Belzec death camp. Ukrainian policemen were tasked with locating where the fugitives hid and then turning them over to the German authorities or shooting them on the spot.⁸⁰ They may have received extra pay from the Germans for spotting those in hiding, which for them, was undoubtedly a specific motivating factor.⁸¹ Cooperation with the local population often proved essential in these operations.

In the summer of 1942, three Ukrainian policemen (station commander Biłanczuk, Bohdan Kozij and Jurij Irodenko), together with a German gendarme, found a Jewish girl in one of the nearby gardens, hiding from being taken to the ghetto. As Maria Ilkowska – an eyewitness to the incident – testified, the policemen “started beating [the girl – T.G.] savagely. They beat her with their hands and with some rubber whips. When she collapsed, a German standing beside her set a dog on her. Then they led this girl away, and I never saw her again.”⁸² Maria Ilkowska also saw how Bohdan Kozij and a German gendarme found her neighbour Lida (last name unknown), who had escaped from the Stanyslaviv ghetto, in a barn near the Jewish cemetery. The witness recalls: “[The two – T.G.] beat her with a whip, and the dog violently attacked her and tore her clothes. They derided her, insulted her.”⁸³ The further fate of the Jewish woman is also unknown; most likely, she was murdered.

There is no doubt that Ukrainian policemen from Łysiec were directly involved in the killing of local Jews. In the fall of 1942, Bohdan Kozij shot Lusia Rosiner, a teenager. Her father had been a militiaman in Łysiec during the 1939–1941 So-

⁸⁰ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation of the Minutes of the Interrogation of Prof. Raul Hilberg on 14 September 1982, undated, p. 1637.

⁸¹ Pohl, “Ukrainische Hilfskräfte,” p. 217.

⁸² AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska on 9 June 1975, 10 September 2003, p. 2562.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Translation from English of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska, 21 May 2003, p. 1989.

viet occupation. She avoided the fate of her parents and managed to save herself from deportation to the ghetto of Stanyslaviv. She led a wandering life for several months, as she could not find permanent shelter with the residents. She spent the nights in barns and other village buildings. Witnesses testified that one day a crowd of dozens of townspeople gathered in the centre of Łysiec, in the farmyard that before the war belonged to Bunia Shulema. In a small shed, the Jewish woman mentioned above was sitting on a pile of hay. One of the townspeople must have found the hiding girl and notified the local Ukrainian police station because, after some time, an armed Ukrainian policeman, Bohdan Kozij, arrived on the spot. He chased away the gathered crowd of onlookers and entered the shed.⁸⁴ It is worth noting that no other Ukrainian policemen or German officers were nearby. In his testimony, witness Iosif Ilkowski described the events that unfolded in the following minutes: “The girl began to ask to be sent back to her father and mother. As I still remember today, Kozij replied, ‘I will take you to your father and mother right away.’ He ordered everyone to disperse, then returned to the shed and shot the girl.”⁸⁵

In the early spring of 1943, the place where the Bredgolc family of four were hiding was also discovered in Łysiec under unknown circumstances.⁸⁶ The family ran a bakery in the town before the war.⁸⁷ After bringing the Jewish family to the Ukrainian police station, the German gendarme and Bohdan Kozij searched everyone. Valuables were found in Bredgolc’s wife’s hair. One of the Ukrainian policemen – Jurij Irodenko – described the events unfolding at the station in his testimony: “The policeman Kozij and the German gendarme began beating Bredgolc and his family savagely. They inflicted blows with their hands and feet. It

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Antony Vaceb, 29 May 1975, 6 September 2003, p. 2549; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of interrogation of Antony Vaceb, 4 November 1975, 8 September 2003, pp. 2555–2556; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska, 14 January 1976, 10 September 2003, p. 2580; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski, 26 November 1975, 16 September 2003, p. 2583; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski, 15 January 1976, 20 September 2003, p. 2589; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iwan Paszkiewicz, 16 May 1975, 20 September 2003, p. 2592.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski, 26 November 1975, 16 September 2003, p. 2583.

⁸⁶ Several variants of the family name notation can be found in the source material: Bredgolts, Bredgolc, Bredholz, and Bergolc.

⁸⁷ AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from English of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska, 21 May 2003, pp. 1987–1989.

was a horrible sight; the children were crying, asking for mercy.⁸⁸ After the Jewish family was escorted out of the Ukrainian police station, Bohdan Kozij ordered the couple to lie down on the ground and get up repeatedly, and he punched them again and again.⁸⁹ The Ukrainian policeman and a German gendarme escorted them then to a nearby Jewish cemetery, where they murdered them. The policeman Irodenko claimed in his testimony that he remained at his post and did not participate in the shooting of this family.⁹⁰ However, according to other witnesses, he was personally involved. There are also inaccuracies regarding the presence of a German gendarme at the execution. According to Maria and Iosif Ilkowski, the gendarme only escorted the Jews to the cemetery and then left the execution site. However, there is no doubt that he gave the Ukrainian policemen a verbal order to shoot the family.⁹¹ Of the locals, Zenowij Ostapiak gave the most accurate and reliable description of the events at the cemetery:

I saw that Bredgolc and his wife held their hands behind their backs; apparently, their hands were tied. They were sobbing loudly, shouting, begging for mercy, and did not want to go to the cemetery. Behind them, with rifles, walked the policemen – Kozij and Irodenko. They beat the Bredgolces, poking them in the back with their rifles, thus forcing them to go to the cemetery. Following Kozij and Irodenko were the Bredgolces' children, two girls about 6 and 12 years old. They were crying, screaming, begging for mercy. Behind them walked two more policemen I didn't know. A German with a sheepdog followed them. [...] The German with the sheepdog and the two policemen I didn't know stood to the side and gave some commands in German. In contrast, Kozij Bohdan and Irodenko Jurij stood at a distance of about five metres from the Bredgolc family. [...] At the German's command, Kozij and Irodenko raised their rifles, aimed

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko, 13 June 1976, 20 September 2009, p. 2615.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski, 15 January 1976, 20 September 2003, p. 2588.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Jurij Irodenko, 13 June 1976, 20 September 2009, p. 2615.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Translation from English of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska, 21 May 2003, pp. 1987–1989; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Iosif Ilkowski, 26 November 1975, 16 September 2003, p. 2584.

at Bredgolc and his wife directly at the back of the head and fired. [...] The shot victims fell straight into the pit. The German moved away after that, and Kozij and Irodenko immediately shot the Bredgolces' children in the same way.⁹²

Also, in the spring of 1943, Bohdan Kozij shot Lonia Nagler, a teenage Jewish boy. The boy came from Stary Łysiec, where his parents probably ran a store before the war. He avoided deportation to the ghetto and hid in nearby villages, performing occasional jobs for local peasants. Among other things, he stayed on Julian Biereznicki's farm for a while. However, the farmer refused to continue hiding him when he learned of a decree by the German authorities that threatened those helping Jews with death. In unexplained circumstances, the boy was detained in the Łysiec area by Bohdan Kozij. The policeman escorted the child to the Jewish cemetery, where he shot Lonia in the back of the head with a pistol. At the time of this incident, no German gendarme or any other Ukrainian policeman was nearby.⁹³

Władysław Bryndziej witnessed the moment when Bohdan Kozij shot a Jewish woman named Kalmus in the autumn of 1943. While working on the farm of a local Ukrainian farmer Dymitr Hudyma, the witness found the wounded Jewish woman near the barn. He testified:

The Jewish woman Kalmus did not tell me who shot her but only asked me to hide her. I complied with her request, pulled her [...] to a shed next to the barn and covered her with straw. Kalmus asked me to notify Doctor Kohutiuk. [...] I told her to be quiet and not to moan and that I would just give the horses some hay and would immediately go to Doctor Kohutiuk. I left the shed and went to the barn to get hay. After a while, Bohdan Kozij came into the barn and asked me: "Where is she?" I asked him: "Who?" to which B[ohdan] Kozij answered: "That Jewish girl." At that moment, B[ohdan] Kozij hit me in the face with his hand and ran out of the barn. It seems to me that he must have heard the moaning of

⁹² *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Zenowij Ostapiak, 26 November 1987, 6 October 2003, pp. 2643–2644.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska on 9 June 1975, 10 September 2003, p. 2564; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Zenowij Ostapiak of 26 November 1987, 12 June 2003, p. 2642; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Maria Ilkowska of 12 June 1975, 10 September 2003, p. 2565.

the Jewish woman Kalmus coming from the shed. B[ohdan] Kozij entered the shed, summoned me to him, told me to uncover the straw, and ordered me to pull Kalmus out into the yard. I told B[ohdan] Kozij that I could not pull her out. At that point, B[ohdan] Kozij grabbed Kalmus by the arm and leg himself and pulled her into the yard. He loaded his rifle, shot Kalmus in the head, and killed her. He also wanted to shoot me, but someone from the Ostapiak family shouted not to kill me. B[ohdan] Kozij [...] kicked me and told me to run away.⁹⁴

Another sequence of events involving Ukrainian police took place in the autumn of 1943. It affected the fate of the remaining Jews still hiding in the village. On the night of 24–25 October 1943, an unidentified Ukrainian armed group broke into the farm of Andrzej Kozdęba in Olesiów (located about 4 km from Łysiec) and searched it.

It was presumably a branch of the Ukrainian Insurrectionary Army (UPA). At the time, nine Jews were probably hiding at the Pole's farm in a specially prepared hiding place in the barn,⁹⁵ including the local doctor, Dr Oskar Singer, with his wife and brother-in-law. Two men managed to escape under unknown circumstances; a Ukrainian unit found the others and took them away. We have no information about their fate.⁹⁶ The next day, two Ukrainian policemen from the Łysiec police station arrived at Andrzej Kozdęba's farm, among them Bohdan Kozij. Perhaps they had been informed that the UPA unit had found Jews there. Also staying at

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Władysław Bryndziej, 22 September 1987, p. 2481.

⁹⁵ Jews were hiding on the farm of Andrzej Kozdęba from November or December 1942. Initially, two men found shelter there: Haller (first name unknown) and Blumenstein (first name unknown), as well as Oskar Singer and his family. In the spring of 1943, the Nagler family of four from Posiecz (a married couple with teenage children) joined those in hiding. However, they stayed in hiding periodically. In the summer, they returned to their hometown. In the autumn, they again took shelter at Andrzej Kozdęba's home. The Jews hid in the barn, in a prepared hiding place covered with hay. See *ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS tape with a recording of Karol Koluśzko's testimony in the "US v. Bohdan Kozij" trial 30 January 2003, pp. 1423–1424; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Karol Koluśzko by the OKBZH in Bydgoszcz, 1 February 1977, p. 1394; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Mieczysław Kozdęba, 22 April 1977, p. 1532; *ibid.*, *Minutes of the interrogation of Karol Koluśzko*, 25 September 1987, p. 2507; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Jadwiga Spilarewicz on the order of the General Prosecutor's Office of the People's Republic of Poland, 24 September 1987, p. 2473.

⁹⁶ Max Kandler testified that he had heard from unidentified residents of Łysiec that a UPA unit had taken Dr Oskar Singer to provide medical assistance to the unit's members. See *ibid.*, Minutes of the Interrogation of Max Kandler, 11 July 2003, p. 2368.

the Pole's farm at the time were the host's son Mieczysław Kozdęba and grandson Karol Kuluszko. As the latter did not live permanently on his grandfather's farm, he was sent back home by Kozij. Andrzej and Mieczysław Kozdęba were arrested by police officers, probably for giving shelter to the Jews mentioned above, and were handed over to the Gestapo.⁹⁷

At this point, it is worth looking at the relationship between the Ukrainian policemen from Łysiec and the local UPA units. The case described above indicates that the Ukrainian police must have received information that a Ukrainian armed unit had found hiding Jews, which initiated further actions against the Polish family giving aid. This information may have been passed to the police station by someone from the unit. Police officers from the Łysiec police station probably maintained regular contact with the UPA units. Although on 17 November 1941, it was forbidden to recruit people associated with the Bandera movement into Ukrainian police structures, the OUN-B consistently tried to infiltrate the local police force.⁹⁸ The same probably happened in Łysiec, as there were sympathisers of the Ukrainian nationalist movement among the local police officers. Bohdan Kozij was a member of the OUN-B before joining the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in Łysiec.⁹⁹ A suggestion of his close relations with the armed units of the Ukrainian nationalists can be found in the testimony of police officer Semen Witwicki.¹⁰⁰ In the final phase of the war, there was also an exodus of police officers to UPA units. It is likely that, in 1944, one of the policemen serving at the Łysiec police station – Bilogubko¹⁰¹ – joined such a unit.

The detection of Jews on the Kozdęba farm set further events in motion. Karol Kuluszko, a witness to the arrest of his grandfather and uncle, warned his parents,

⁹⁷ Andrzej Kozdęba died under unknown circumstances in prison in Stanyslaviv, while Mieczysław Kozdęba was released after three months. See *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Mieczysław Kozdęba, 22 April 1977, p. 1532; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Karol Kuluszko by the OKBZH in Bydgoszcz, 1 February 1977, p. 1394.

⁹⁸ Himka, "Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów," p. 462.

⁹⁹ Finder and Prusin, "Kolaboracja w Galicji Wschodniej," p. 375.

¹⁰⁰ He testified, among other things, that in December 1943, while he was on night duty, an armed unit of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army arrived at the police station and wanted to agree with Bohdan Kozij on "some matters". See AIPN Ka, S 45/02/Zn, Main Files of the Investigation, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Semen Witwicki of 15 June 1987, October 6, 2003, p. 2635.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Antony Vaceb of 29 May 1975, 6 September 2003, p. 2550.

Tomasz and Helena Koluszko, who were also hiding Jews, about the danger. They immediately left Łysiec with their children for fear of repressions from the Germans and Ukrainian police. Hiding in the Poles' farmhouse at that time was the Kandler family of five: Bernard Kandler with his wife and child, Bernard's two sisters and his wife's family (a married couple with two children – last name unknown). Before the war, the Kanders owned a mill adjacent to the Koluszko farm. It is unknown why the Jews did not leave the hiding place with the fleeing Poles. Around 26 October 1943, the Germans showed up at the Koluszko farm with the Ukrainian police. After searching and ransacking the entire farm, they found the Jews hiding in a specially prepared place in the barn. The Jews were taken to the post in Łysiec.¹⁰² That same day, in the afternoon, a German gendarme and Bohdan Kozij led the detained Jews out of the post to the courtyard. The course of events that unfolded in front of the building is described in detail by Józef Waclaw Jabłoński:

Kozij lined up the women in front of the stairs leading out towards the well in the police station's courtyard, and the men on the right in front of the women. I observed this scene closely since I was standing near the gate leading to the police station's courtyard [...]. After lining these women up, Kozij, who was standing on the steps and armed with a rifle, ordered them to turn around so that they were standing with their backs to him. On the other side, a German policeman was also standing on the stairs and holding a pistol, ready to shoot. These women refused to turn around, as they realised what would happen to them, and began screaming and crying terribly. At that point, Kozij took the rifle off his shoulder and started shooting at them. Also shooting at the women with a pistol was a German policeman. At this time, the Jewish men standing beside them fell to their knees and started kissing Kozij's shoes, asking him not to shoot their loved ones. However, these requests did not affect Kozij's and the German's actions. After shooting the women and the child, the German police-

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Karol Koluszko by the OKBZH in Bydgoszcz, 1 February 1977, pp. 1394–1395; *ibid.*, Minutes of the inspection of a VHS cassette with a recording of the testimony of Karol Koluszko in the “US v. Bohdan Kozij” trial, 30 January 2003, pp. 1423–1434; *ibid.*, Report of the interrogation of Karol Koluszki, 25 September 1987, pp. 2507–2509.

man remained on the stairs while Kozij escorted these men – Jews – inside the building.

The German policeman then descended the stairs to the shot women and child to check for any signs of life. After finding them dead, he also went inside the building. Then, after a few minutes had passed, Kozij, the German and a third policeman, Irodenko, led Bernard Kandler and an unknown man out of the post building from the side of the main road. The two Jews – after descending the stairs and walking towards a standing truck covered with a tarp – tried to escape [...]. Kozij, who had a pistol then, ran after Bernard Kandler and, grabbing him by the arm, put the pistol to his head and [shot] him. [...] At the same time, a German policeman ran after the other man and shot him with a pistol as well.¹⁰³

The Kozdęba family's arrest and the discovery of Dr Oskar Singer's hiding place threatened the safety of his little daughter, who had taken refuge with Jadwiga Spilarewicz. Fearing that the location of the little Jewish girl's hiding place would be revealed, the Pole, urged by her mother – Stefania Kotopka – decided to leave with the girl to visit relatives near Cracow. On the way, however, she stopped in Łysiec at the home of her aunt – Agnieszka Sałek. Probably on 27 October 1943, Ukrainian police officers arrived at Sałek's apartment and recognised Dr Singer's daughter. Jadwiga Spilarewicz, her mother and her aunt were detained and, together with the young Jewish girl, transported to the police station.¹⁰⁴ Once there, Bohdan Kozij snatched the crying girl from Jadwiga Spilarewicz's arms, led the child into the yard and shot her there. Kozij did not act on anyone's orders. No German functionary was present at the execution, although it was undoubtedly carried out following general German orders.¹⁰⁵ This was the last murder indicated by witnesses to have been committed by Ukrainian policemen in the Łysiec area.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Waław Jabłoński before the OKBZH in Bydgoszcz, 6 April 1977, p. 1399.

¹⁰⁴ Agnieszka Sałek and Stefania Kotopka were probably released on the same day, while Jadwiga Spilarewicz was taken to a prison in Stanyslaviv that evening, where she stayed for about two weeks. See *ibid.*, Report of the interrogation of Jadwiga Spilarewicz before the OKŚZpNP in Katowice, 16 January 2003, pp. 246–250.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Request of the CID in Katowice for the temporary arrest and extradition of Bohdan Kozij, 6 November 2003; *ibid.*, Translation from Russian of the minutes of the interrogation of Roman Pindus of 18 November 1987, 6 October 2003, p. 2639.

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SUMMARY

The extermination of the Jews of Łysiec, as in the entire pre-war Stanyslaviv voivodeship, was planned, organised and directed by the German occupiers. However, the Germans would not have been able to carry out their criminal plans effectively without the involvement of auxiliary formations whose officers demonstrated better knowledge about the area.

To this end, the Germans included the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in the mechanism of the extermination of the Jews. According to the research, the participation of Ukrainian policemen in the various phases of the extermination of the local Jewish community was significant. They took an active part in the first stage of liquidating the Łysiec Jewish community, during which there were many brutal attacks, physical and psychological humiliation of members of the Jewish community, and the theft and requisitioning of property. They were also involved in the closing action of this stage of deporting local Jews to the Stanyslaviv ghetto, where they either died in the closed-off district or were deported to the Belzec extermination camp.

To no small extent, the officers of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police were also involved in the second stage of exterminating the Jews of Łysiec and the surrounding area, which involved tracking down and murdering Jewish people hiding in the surrounding villages. It was at this stage that they showed more of their own initiative. There is no doubt that in many cases this occurred without the participation and probably without the knowledge of the Germans. The role of UAP officers was, therefore, not limited to the technical support of the German murder machine. Also critical here seems to be the attitude of individual officers, especially Bohdan Kozij, who showed particular zeal and his own initiative in carrying out the goals set for the Ukrainian police by the German authorities. In doing so, he acted with particular brutality.

KEYWORDS

Holocaust • Ukrainian Auxiliary Police • Łysiec • Bohdan Kozij

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ACTIVITY OF THE *VOLKSDEUTSCHE* WŁADYSŁAW SEREDYŃSKI
AND HIS SON ROMAN IN THE LIGHT OF THE SURVIVING
FILES FROM A CRIMINAL CASE TRIED UNDER THE AUGUST
DECREE. A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE GERMAN
OCCUPATION OF THE LUBACZÓW LAND

Nationality policy was one of the key tasks pursued by the administration of the Third Reich on the occupied Polish lands during World War Two. According to Leszek Olejnik, “its goals were to strengthen ‘Germanness’ on eastern lands incorporated into the Reich and to antagonise various groups of Polish society, as well as to attempt to create new nations.”¹ The creation of the German Nationality List (*Deutsche Volksliste*, DVL), or *de facto* the German national community, was undoubtedly a result of this policy. This found its practical expression in the legal and political solutions introduced in annexed, conquered and occupied countries.² During the German occupation, the term *Volksdeutsch* meant a person who was listed as being of German origin and therefore had “considerable privileges over the Polish or Jewish population.”³

On the territories of the Republic of Poland annexed by the Third Reich, the list was introduced by a decree of 4 March 1941. It should be noted that the first

¹ L. Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960* (Łódź, 2003), p. 189.

² *Idem*, *Zdraycy narodu? Losy volksdeutschów w Polsce po II wojnie światowej* (Warsaw, 2006), p. 21.

³ W. Kopaliński, *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych z almanachem* (Warsaw, 2003), p. 533.

measures aimed at national segregation were taken in Wartheland already in the autumn of 1939, but the March decree established legal norms in this area for the entire territory annexed to the Third Reich. This regulation entered into force guided by the aim of not losing “a single drop of German blood.” The inhabitants of the annexed areas were to express their wish to belong to the German nation themselves. The prerequisite for this was the fulfilment of several criteria, such as German origin and “racial adaptation,” or the applicant’s behaviour under the German occupation.⁴

The Regulation of 4 March 1941 on the German nationality list and citizenship also introduced the division of German nationality groups. The first of these groups included people who spoke German on a daily basis in pre-war Poland, were politically active and nurtured German traditions through their activities in various political organisations. The second group consisted of people who were also of German nationality, spoke German daily and promoted German culture but behaved passively in the national struggle. The third group consisted of people of German origin, who had become Polonised over time but were assumed to be able to become full members of the German community in the future. This group also included persons of non-German origin who were married to Germans, as well as individuals with unexplained nationality, who spoke a Slavic language but tended towards German due to their association with the German culture, and who did not acknowledge their roots before 1 September 1939. The fourth and last group included people of German origin who had become Polonised and actively cooperated with the Polish authorities in the interwar period or were involved in Polish social and political organisations.⁵

In the areas annexed to the Third Reich, a total of 2,815,000 people registered on the German nationality list. Of this number, 959 thousand (34.07%) belonged to

⁴ Olejnik, *Zdrójcy narodu?*, pp. 25–26.

⁵ Z. Izdebski, *Niemiecka lista narodowa na Górnym Śląsku* (Katowice–Wrocław, 1946), p. 63; A. Karolak, “Kwestia Niemieckiej Listy Narodowej w audycjach rozgłośni im. T. Kościuszki,” *Białostockie Teki Historyczne* 12 (2014), pp. 184–185; W. Jastrzębski, *Polityka narodowościowa w okręgu Rzeszy Gdańsk–Prusy Zachodnie (1939–1945)* (Bydgoszcz, 1977), pp. 393–395; Z. Boda-Kreżel, *Sprawa Volkslisty na Górnym Śląsku. Koncepcje likwidacji problemu i ich realizacji* (Opole, 1978), p. 14; R. Kaczmarek, “Niemiecka polityka narodowościowa na Górnym Śląsku (1939–1945),” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2004), p. 123; K. Strykowski, “Akta niemieckiej listy narodowościowej i ich pozostałość w Archiwum Państwowym w Poznaniu,” *Poznański Rocznik Archiwalno-Historyczny* 13/14 (2005–2007), pp. 146–168.

nationality groups I and II, while the remaining 1 million 856 thousand (65.93%) belonged to groups III and IV.⁶ About 100,000 people of German origin from the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo, GG) must be added to this figure. The problem of the *Volksdeutsche* in the GG was of much lesser importance. Initially, the occupiers did not envisage a Germanisation of the local population, especially since Poles were overwhelmingly dominant and people of German origin mainly had been Polonised.⁷ This was especially true in the pre-war voivodeships of Lublin and Lvov (the Rzeszow Region). Hence, during the occupation period, the action of restoring Germanness was intensified among the colonists, who were persuaded to sign the German nationality list. Many of them were considered valuable “in racial and hereditary-biological terms.”⁸ Candidates for the *Deutschstämmige* were subject to examination by the SD and the Emigration Headquarters, which divided them into groups A and B, the equivalent of groups III and IV of the German nationality list valid in the territories incorporated into the Third Reich.⁹ Registration on the DVL allowed many people to collaborate openly; it also helped protect them from repressions.¹⁰

This article shows the attitude, behaviour and activity of Władysław and Roman Sereżyński (father and son), residents of Lubaczów, who decided to become collaborators. The article also aims to describe the trial held before the Court of Appeal in Rzeszow at an away session in Lubaczów. Its proceedings aroused considerable interest among the local population. For a broader context, the article also describes the situation of Lubaczów Jews during the occupation.

The activity of Władysław and Roman Sereżyński was established based on the files of the post-war criminal case tried under the August Decree,¹¹ held in the

⁶ C. Madajczyk, “Polityka okupanta wobec narodu polskiego w okresie II wojny światowej,” in *Problemy wojny i okupacji*, ed. by W. Góra and J. Gołębiowski (Warsaw, 1969), pp. 56–57.

⁷ Olejnik, *Zdraycy narodu?*, p. 44.

⁸ C. Madajczyk, *Faszyzm i okupacje 1938–1945*, vol. 2 (Poznań, 1984), p. 242.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ B. Musiał, “Niemiecka polityka narodowościowa w okupowanej Polsce w latach 1939–1945,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2004), p. 29.

¹¹ At the end of the Second World War, in order to punish war criminals and Polish citizens who collaborated with the German occupants, the people’s government passed new provisions in the internal criminal law, covering special occupation crimes. On 31 August 1944, the communist authorities published a decree concerning the punishment of fascist-Hitlerite criminals guilty of murder and ill-treatment of the civilian population and prisoners of war, and the punishment of traitors to the

Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszow (*Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Rzeszowie*) under two call numbers: AIPN Rz, 358/38 and AIPN Rz, 358/39¹² [Court of Appeal in Rzeszow, criminal case file concerning Władysław and Roman Seredyński, accused of collaboration with the Germans and active participation in the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto, i.e. acts under Article 1.2 of the Decree of 31 August 1944.].

To date, no scholarly study has been published that addresses the Seredyński family's involvement in the extermination of Jews. Fragmentary information can be found in Simon Lavee's book *Oddział niezwykniętych*.¹³ The author, based on the testimony of a Lubaczów Jew – Edmund Katz – made for the Yad Vashem Institute,¹⁴ describes in perfunctory terms an event in which Roman Seredyński took part.¹⁵ In addition to this information, the book refers to the Seredyński

Polish Nation (*Journal of Laws* 4 [1946], item 16). Between 1945 and 1949, the decree was amended five times. See A. Skibińska, J. Petelewicz, "Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 1 (2005), pp. 120–123; R. Gieroiń, "Postępowania karne prowadzone w latach 1947–1955 w sprawach przestępstw okupacyjnych popełnianych przez policjanta granatowego Jana Błażeja. Przyczynek do badań nad stosunkami polsko-żydowskimi," *Analecta Cracoviensia* 49 (2017), pp. 219–247; *idem*, *Półmrok. Procesy karne w sprawie przestępstw okupacyjnych popełnianych przez chłopów wobec Żydów w województwie krakowskim* (Cracow, 2020); T. Domański, "Proces z dekretu sierpniowego policjantów granatowych z Wodzisławia oskarżonych o popełnienie zbrodni na Żydach," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), p. 79.

¹² Previous call number of the files: I K. 73/49, K.O. 370/50, K. 331/50, SAR 38, IPN GK 225/38.

¹³ S. Lavee (Łukawiecki), *Oddział niezwykniętych. Drużyna żydowskich partyzantów Armii Krajowej pod dowództwem Edmunda Łukawieckiego w latach 1941–1944* (Rzeszow, 2018).

¹⁴ The author refers to the M49E/3300 call number (the document is also held in the archival resource of the Jewish Historical Institute under the call number of AŻIH 301/3300, a brief history of the search for two Poles – war criminals by Edmund Katz – captain of the American Navy [Krótka historia poszukiwania dwóch Polaków – zbrodniarzy wojennych przez Edmunda Katza – kapitana amerykańskiej marynarki wojennej], 17 January 1948, pp. 1–2). It should be noted that Edmund Katz was not an eyewitness to the events from the period of the German occupation of the Lubaczów region. He learned about the activities of the Seredyńskis from Oskar Meiler, who was connected with Lubaczów and whom he met in Paris. Edmund Katz left Lubaczów in 1928 and settled permanently in the USA, where he served as an officer in the United States Navy. He left his parents and siblings in Lubaczów. After the end of the hostilities, he came to Poland for a time to obtain information about his immediate family. He also visited Lubaczów for this purpose. His parents and brothers died during the German occupation. Only his sister, Barbara Katz, survived the occupation and settled in Wrocław after the war.

¹⁵ The book reveals that Władysław and Roman Seredyński personally killed Jewish people, "boasting that they could not sleep peacefully at night if they had not killed several Jews during the day." We can learn about the killing of Jews by Władysław Seredyński from the testimony of a married couple, Wolf and Henia Remmer, who survived the occupation by hiding in the buildings of Antoni Dorota in Młodów near Lubaczów. In a letter sent to the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court

family as *Volksdeutsche*, who “became hunters of Jews.”¹⁶ The figure of Władysław Seredyński also appeared in the memoirs of Father Jan Jagodziński and Eugeniusz Szajowski.¹⁷

More information about the activity of Władysław and Roman Seredyński is provided by a testimony given by Stanisław Młodziński to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on 10 March 2009.¹⁸ The author, who remembers the German occupation of Lubaczów, gives a lot of detailed information about the liquidation of the local ghetto and also describes the events involving Władysław Seredyński.

Władysław and Roman Seredyński

Władysław Seredyński was born on 10 September 1897 in Surochów (Jarosław County) into the family of Jan and Antonina, née Kmiotek.¹⁹ He arrived in Lubaczów following his wife Anna, née Meder, in 1921. The couple first settled in nearby

in Przemyśl, they wrote: “From 1941 Władysław and Roman Seredyński were a terror to the Polish and Jewish population. From 1941 onwards, the defendants constantly abused the Jews in a beastly manner. During the total resettlement of Jews from Lubaczów in 1943, both defendants, armed with revolvers, and iron sticks, leading a dog with them, without the assistance of the police, dragged out the Jews hidden in burrows and cellars, taking from them on the spot everything they saw, then leading them to the cemetery; they beat the Jews mercilessly on the way, forcing them to hand over their money, while at the cemetery they ordered them to undress, cruelly abused them, and cut off the poor unfortunates’ fingers alive, together with their jewellery [...]. A certain Laji Helpert had her gold teeth pulled out alive, then they made them strip naked, [with] beatings and taunts that they would make a good phosphate, they shot them deliberately in other places, inflicting even greater torments on the unfortunate victims so that they ended their lives in terrible agony. Władysław [Seredyński], who was called upon to carry out the execution, fired 17 shots at a certain Mendel Herzberg [...].” According to the same witness, on 15 March 1943 Władysław Seredyński, in the presence of a Ukrainian policeman, was also supposed to have personally shot two Jewish women from Dachnow captured in one of the houses on Kościuszki Street. See Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Rzeszowie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszow, hereinafter AIPN Rz), 353/38, Letter of Wolf and Henia Remmer to the Prosecutor’s Office of the District Court in Przemyśl concerning Władysław Seredyński, 4 April 1944, pp. 215–217 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁶ Lavee (Łukawiecki), *Oddział niezwykłych*, p. 93.

¹⁷ J. Jagodziński, *Wspomnienia z okazji jubileuszu 60-lecia kapłaństwa* (Zamość, 2014), p. 20; E. Szajowski, “W polskiej szkole w sowieckim Lubaczowie,” ed. J. Grechuta, in *Lwowskie pod okupacją sowiecką (1939–1941)*, ed. T. Bereza (Rzeszow, 2006), p. 155.

¹⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereinafter USHMM), RG-50.488.0273, The testimony of Stanisław Młodziński, 10 March 2009, held by the museum, transcription: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn45093> (accessed 15 January 2021).

¹⁹ AIPN Rz, 00112/1, Card E-14 from the general information card file of the WUSW in Rzeszow concerning Władysław Seredyński, 17 January 1967.

Młodów and Ostrowiec, and then in Lubaczów on Rejtana Street, near the town centre.²⁰ On 25 January 1923, their son Roman was born in Młodów.²¹ Two years later, Władysław Sereżyński was employed by the Lubaczów Municipal Board as a janitor and an undertaker. He continued to work in this profession after the onset of the German occupation.²² He was assisted in his work at the cemetery by his son Roman, who did not have a permanent job after completing seven years of primary school and a bricklaying course. His situation changed after the onset of the German occupation. He was then given the post of a field officer of the volunteer fire brigade based in Lubaczów.²³

According to the memoirs of the regionalist Eugeniusz Szajowski, Władysław Sereżyński became known as a supporter of the authorities of the time already during the Soviet occupation of the Lubaczów area. “During Soviet times,” recalled Eugeniusz Szajowski, “shops operated under the name of a ‘cooperative’ or a ‘mahazin’ [...]. One of the Soviet shops [...] was launched in the pre-war shop of the agricultural circle opposite the St Stanislaus Church [in Lubaczów]. I once stood in a kilometre-long queue to buy sugar [...]. Order in the queue was guarded [...] by Władysław Sereżyński, suitably attired in a pre-war horned cap with a red star. It is difficult to say whether he did this officially or, as it were, on his own initiative.”²⁴

According to surviving records, Władysław Sereżyński and his son Roman signed the German nationality list in 1942 and began collaborating with the German occupiers. They were involved in hunting down and denouncing Jews at the time of the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto early in January 1943. In 1942–1943, according to eyewitness testimonies, Władysław Sereżyński made no secret of his criminal activity in Lubaczów. He felt very secure under the protective umbrella of the German gendarmerie and the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. He manifested

²⁰ J. Tabaczek, *Ulica Tadeusza Rejtana – ulicą rzemieślników* (Lubaczów 2017), p. 24; Jagodziński, *Wspomnienia z okazji jubileuszu*, p. 20.

²¹ AIPN Rz, 00112/1, Card E-14 from the general information card file of the WUSW in Rzeszów concerning Roman Sereżyński, 19 January 1967.

²² According to his testimony, for some time he served in the local fire brigade, where he assisted the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in maintaining order in the city.

²³ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of Roman Sereżyński, 15 January 1948, p. 47 (according to the pdf numbering).

²⁴ Szajowski, “W polskiej szkole,” p. 155.

his belonging to the German nation and his support for the occupying authorities with a swastika pinned to the lapel of his jacket.²⁵

Władysław Seredyński owed his registration on the DVL to his wife, whose ancestors were descendants of German settlers who had settled in the village of Burgau (Karolówka) near Lubaczów.²⁶ The German authorities then classified the family in the third nationality group.

Lubaczów

In the interwar period, Lubaczów was a small town with a population of over 5,000, located in the north-eastern part of the Lvov Voivodeship. According to the *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, in 1921, the dominant nationality in the town were Poles (2,991 people), followed by Ruthenians (1,793 people) and Jews (519 people).²⁷ If we take religion into account, the numbers are entirely different. The majority of the town's inhabitants were Greek Catholic (2,199 people), Mosaic (1,715 people) and Roman Catholic (1,384 people) faiths.²⁸ At the turn of 1938 and 1939, Lubaczów had a population of 6,700, of which about 2,000 were Jews.²⁹

The city was under German occupation twice. The first time was from 12 to 26 September 1939.³⁰ After this period, under the German-Soviet Treaty on Borders and Friendship of 28 September 1939, the Wehrmacht units withdrew and surrendered the area to the Red Army. For the second time, the German occupation of Lubaczów began on 24 June 1941, following the outbreak of the German-Soviet war.

²⁵ German badge worn by *Volksdeutsche*.

²⁶ The village-settlement of Burgau was established in 1783 on the land of the village of Młodów as part of the *Josephinische Kolonisation*. The village was founded by four families from the German Reich, who at that time were awarded perpetual usufruct of 86 hectares of farmland. In 1812, a total of 30 Germans lived in the village. At the turn of the 20th century, some of the German inhabitants of the village emigrated to North America. Their farms were acquired by Poles and Ukrainians. During the Second Polish Republic, the village lost its German origin. In 1938, the German name of the village was replaced by the Polish name Karolówka. See P. Rydzewski, *Ziemia Lubaczowska* (Lublin, 2015), pp. 19–21, 24, 146; "Zmiana niemieckich nazw miejscowości," *Gazeta Lwowska*, 15 March 1939.

²⁷ *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, vol. 13: *Województwo lwowskie* (Warsaw, 1924), p. 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, s. 6.

²⁹ P. Sygowski, A. Trzciniński, "Żydzi lubaczowscy i ich cmentarz," *Rocznik Lubaczowski* 8 (1998), p. 110.

³⁰ Archiwum Parafii pw. św. Stanisława w Lubaczowie (Archives of the St Stanislaus Parish at Lubaczów, hereinafter ApL), Lubaczów Parish During the War (1939–1945), Entry of the Red Army into Lubaczów in September 1939 and the First Months of the Soviet Occupation, part 3, p. 15, handwritten.

From 22 June to 1 July 1941, the German 17th Army was fighting in the district of Lubaczów; then, the district was subject to the actions of the commander of the 13th rear area of the army group, who was responsible, among other things, for the organisation of the military occupation administration.³¹ The city was then governed by the 575th Local Commandery II, which remained in power until 1 August 1944.³²

Adolf Hitler's decree of 1 August 1941 created the Galizien District (also known as the Lvov District), which became part of the General Governorate.³³ According to the administrative division, the districts were divided into counties (Kreis), which were divided into municipalities (Gemeinde).³⁴ Lubaczów lost its county status then but retained its position as an urban municipality (Landkomisariat)³⁵ subordinated to the county office (Kreishauptmannschaft) in Rawa Ruska. This urban municipality consisted of four smaller areas: Horyniec, Krowica Hołodowska, Lubaczów the village and Oleszyce.³⁶ In the spring of 1942, a total of 6,237 Jews lived in the Landkomisariat area. Of this number, 2,276 resided in Lubaczów, 2000 at nearby Oleszyce, 456 at Horyniec, 300 at Krowica Hołodowska and Basznia each, and 905 in the surrounding villages.³⁷

The county starost of Rawa Ruska was at the same time the head of the Lubaczów Landkomisariat. Dr Hans-Walter Zinser held this position until February

³¹ J. Bańbor, "Przewodnik po niemieckich źródłach i materiałach do historii Ziemi Lubaczowskiej podczas niemieckiej okupacji w latach 1939–1944 (wybór źródeł)," *Rocznik Lubaczowski* 13–14 (2008), p. 244.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³³ G. Mazur, J. Skwara, J. Węsierski, *Kronika 2350 dni wojny i okupacji Lwowa. 1 IX 1939 – 5 II 1946 r.* (Cracow, 2007), p. 223; G. Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej. Położenie ludności, polityka okupantów, działalność podziemia* (Cracow, 1994), p. 64.

³⁴ *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 6: *Generalne Gubernatorstwo. Relacje i dokumenty*, ed. A. Bańkowska (Warsaw, 2012), p. 27.

³⁵ Landkomisariat (*Landkommissariat*), i.e. a rural commissariat – a type of a branch office that was created in counties with a larger area, headed by a commissioner. *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, p. 27; Gieroń, *Półmrok. Procesy karne*, p. 29.

³⁶ Z. Kubrak, *Dzieje Lubaczowa. Lubaczów od czasów najdawniejszych do lipca 1944 r.*, vol. 1 (Rzeszow, 2016), p. 697.

³⁷ W. Wierzbieniec, "Formy szukania pomocy i możliwości egzystencji przez Żydów w okresie Holocaustu na terenie obecnego powiatu lubaczowskiego – wybrane aspekty," in *Wojna i pamięć. Przewodnik po miejscach pamięci narodowej na terenie powiatu lubaczowskiego. Materiały z sympozjum naukowego zorganizowanego w dniu 4 września 2009 r. w 70. rocznicę wybuchu II wojny światowej w Muzeum Kresów w Lubaczowie* (Lubaczów, 2009), p. 92.

1942. He was followed by Gerhard Hager,³⁸ who took over and maintained the position until 24 July 1944. The work of the Landkomisariat in Lubaczów was managed in place of the starost by the local Ukrainian lawyer Bohdan Kulczycki. The mayor of the town was Andriy Mytko. There was a German gendarmerie post in the town, commanded by N.N. Strauss,³⁹ as well as a post of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police under the command of Hryhoriy Paczecha.⁴⁰ In addition to the administration and the organs of power, there was also a Jewish Council of Elders (Judenrat) appointed by the occupiers on the basis of a decree issued by Governor Hans Frank on 28 November 1939,⁴¹ whose work was directed by the lawyer Dr Jozef Osterman. The Jewish Order Service (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) operated under the council.⁴²

From August 1941 onwards, the German policy towards the local population was increasingly repressive. A curfew and a ban on assemblies were imposed in the town, and notices were also posted threatening inhabitants with capital punishment for disobeying the imposed order. The occupying authorities set up a detention centre in the former court building. Arrests and the first executions began.⁴³

The Ghetto in Lubaczów

A closed quarter for the Jewish population was established in Lubaczów on 10 October 1942, under the supervision of the head of the Gestapo in Rawa Ruska, Untersturmführer Helmut Späth.⁴⁴ It consisted of two parts. The main ghetto

³⁸ M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen–Wallstein, 2009), p. 450.

³⁹ The name of the gendarme established based on the files of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich*, hereinafter GKBZH). Files lack complete personal data. See AIPN Rz, 191/911, Investigation files on the crimes committed against Jews in the Lubaczów Ghetto by German officers, Report on the investigation, p. 9 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁴⁰ Kubrak, *Dzieje Lubaczowa*, p. 698.

⁴¹ K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje jedno życie Polacy i Żydzi 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 2009), p. 87.

⁴² Kubrak, *Dzieje Lubaczowa*, p. 722.

⁴³ Z. Konieczny, “Straty biologiczne i materialne byłego powiatu lubaczowskiego w latach 1939–1944,” *Materiały i Studia Muzealne (Przemyśl)* 3 (1980), p. 14; R. Ogryzło, “Wybrane zagadnienia demograficzne powiatu lubaczowskiego (1938–1948),” *Rocznik Lubaczowski* 5 (1994), pp. 96–97; Kubrak, *Dzieje Lubaczowa*, pp. 697–698.

⁴⁴ Helmut Späth (1907–1953), SS-Untersturmführer. After the war, convicted of war crimes. See Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), 2188/286; Files on crimes committed in Mińsk and Rawa Ruska. Files con-

occupied the central part of the town. It stretched from the junction of Mickiewicza and Piłsudskiego Streets to the intersections of the Market and Konery Streets, Kościuszki and St. Anne's Streets, Kościuszki and Piłsudskiego Streets and Kościuszki and Tartaczna Streets. This part of the ghetto was fenced off and surrounded by a two-metre-high barbed wire fence.⁴⁵ The other part of the ghetto consisted of a one-storey building built during the Soviet occupation with an adjacent area around it, located just behind Kościuszki Street to the north.⁴⁶ A survey conducted by the Branch Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes (*Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich*, OKBZH) in Rzeszów shows that the number of Jews resettled to the Lubaczów Ghetto varied between 6,000 and 7,000, depending on the period.⁴⁷ It contained Jewish people transported there from Niemirów, Potylicz, and the Lubaczów Landkomisariat.

The cramming of so many people into a small area, deprived of elementary sanitary and hygienic conditions, food and medicine, resulted in the spread of disease and increased deaths. "Several thousand people gathered in the ghetto were exposed to hunger, diseases and despair. They were forced to do torturous work, pulled carts themselves instead of a horse, were beaten with a truncheon to make the cart move faster, to do the prescribed tasks faster. At night, the Jews, like hunted animals, crawled under the wires to get food for the children and themselves,"⁴⁸ wrote Eugeniusz Szajowski in his memoirs.

Still in October 1942, a survey by the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich*, GKBZH) in Poland, showed that about 2,500 Lubaczów Jews were deported to the German extermination camp in Belzec,⁴⁹ others to labour camps in Stary Dzików, Cieszanów

cerning Kurt von Gottberg and Helmut Rudolf Späth; Letter from the prosecutor Dr. Rückerl (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen) to the director of the GKBZH in Poland, 17 November 1970, p. 46.

⁴⁵ Lavee (Łukawiecki), *Oddział niezwykniętych*, p. 90; Kubrak, *Dzieje Lubaczowa*, p. 725.

⁴⁶ E. Szajowski, "Tylko ziemia została ta sama. Lubaczów 1942–1943," *Rocznik Lubaczowski* 9–10 (2000), pp. 277–278.

⁴⁷ AIPN, 2448/871, Results of the GKBZH in Poland poll and the OKBZH (Branch Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes) in Warsaw poll collected in the years 1968–1972. Results of a poll concerning the Rzeszów Voivodeship, Lubaczów County – ghettos – Lubaczów County, Information about Hitlerite crimes in Lubaczów, p. 4 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁴⁸ Szajowski, "Tylko ziemia," p. 277.

⁴⁹ AIPN Rz, 191/358, Polls of the GKBZH in Poland – ghettos – Lubaczów County, p. 3 (according to the pdf numbering).

and Parczew. The following month, about 2,000 Jews from Oleszyce were brought into the Lubaczów Ghetto.⁵⁰ Before the end of November, about a thousand of them, including those suffering from typhus, were deported to Belzec. Still, others were killed on the spot, including in the Jewish cemetery.

On 1 December 1942, based on a decree by the SS and Police Commander in the General Governorate, General Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, a Jewish residential area – a secondary ghetto – was established in Lubaczów, just as in other towns.⁵¹ It housed Jews whom the occupiers had not managed to deport from the primary ghetto or those who had been in hiding and had avoided deportation.

The secondary ghetto in the Lubaczów area existed briefly, a little over a month. The pretext for its liquidation was the progressing typhus epidemic, which took a deadly toll.⁵² About 25 people died there every day. The final liquidation began on 7 January 1943.⁵³ The day before, at 8.00 a.m., a train entered the Lubaczów railway station from the direction of Jarosław, from which German gendarmerie officers from Rawa Ruska got off. In an even line, they headed towards the market square. On the spot, they were deployed in two classrooms of the elementary school. There they spent the night, and in the morning, with the support of the Ukrainian and Jewish police, they set out for the action in liquidation groups of three to four (one Ukrainian and one Jewish policeman assisted by one or two German gendarmes). As the action began, all exit gates at the junction of the streets to the ghetto were closed. Gendarmes and Ukrainian policemen stood at the corners and street exits.⁵⁴

According to Stanisław Młodziński's testimony, after the gates to the ghetto were closed, "Jewish policemen would go inside and chase the compatriots who were there out into the street, where they were lined up in even rows and then escorted

⁵⁰ C. Crisci, A. Kruglov, "Lubaczów," in *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, ed. by G.P. Megargee, M. Dean, vol. 2, part A (Bloomington, 2012), p. 801.

⁵¹ *Dziennik Rozporządzeń dla Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (The Journal of Regulations for the General Governorate)*, no. 98, Regulation concerning the establishment of Jewish housing quarters in the Radom, Krakau and Galizien District, Cracow, 14 November 1942, pp. 683–686.

⁵² Crisci, Kruglov, "Lubaczów," p. 801.

⁵³ AIPN Rz, 191/911, Information about Hitlerite crimes in Lubaczów, p. 104 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁵⁴ J. Mroczkowski, *Obserwator* (Warsaw, 2013), p. 50.

to the local railway station.”⁵⁵ Another witness, Marian Kopf, reported that “cargo wagons were standing there [...]. Everything was organised in such a way that the transport only started at dusk, so that they did not know where they were going, and they were going east, to a camp – a crematorium.”⁵⁶ Adam Bauman described this event in a similar way before the prosecutor of the OKBZH in Rzeszow on 9 November 1989: “after the Jews had been escorted to the railway station, they were placed in a transport and taken to the death camp in Belzec.”⁵⁷

A day later, on 8 January, a search was made in the ghetto for places where Jews might be hiding. Those found were escorted to the vicinity of Dachnow or to the cemetery in Lubaczów, where they were shot and buried. The tragedy of those days is conveyed by the recollections of the already mentioned Marian Kopf,⁵⁸ as well as by the entries in the chronicle of the Lubaczów parish: “Human meanness takes a toll now, and in two forms: either by pointing out to trackers the shelters of the Jews, or by glancing greedily at the abandoned Jewish property [...]”.⁵⁹

Some Jews managed to escape during the liquidation action and hid in the surrounding forests or in nearby Oleszyce. The latter were caught and shot a week later, on 14 January 1943 (a total of 174 people). In the following weeks, more people who were in hiding were caught. Only 19 Jews survived the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto.⁶⁰

The Activity of the Seredyńskis

Władysław Seredyński and his son Roman became active during the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto. They walked around it and exposed the places where

⁵⁵ USHMM, RG-50.488.0273, Testimony of Stanisław Młodziński, 10 March 2009, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn45093>, accessed on 15 January 2021.

⁵⁶ M. Kopf, “Tamten czas,” part 6: “Lubaczów. Rok 1943,” *Rocznik Lubaczowski* vols 13–14 (2008), p. 349.

⁵⁷ AIPN Rz, 191/911, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Adam Bauman, 9 November 1989, p. 49 (according to the pdf numbering). In his testimony, Adam Bauman cites the Belzec death camp as the place where Jews captured during the liquidation of the Lubaczów ghetto were deported. It is known that transports arrived at Belzec until mid-December 1942. From then on, the camp was closed to new transports, and the Germans proceeded to liquidate it. It is most likely that the Jews captured during the liquidation of the Lubaczów ghetto were deported to the Sobibor extermination camp.

⁵⁸ Kopf, “Tamten czas,” part 6, p. 346.

⁵⁹ ApL, Lubaczów Parish During the War (1939–1945), Year 1943, p. 75, handwritten.

⁶⁰ Crisci, Kruglov, “Lubaczów,” p. 801.

Jews were hiding. They continued to do so even after the operation had ended. A Lubaczów resident, Leopold Telca, described them as “human hyenas who played a disgraceful role in the denunciation of Jews.”⁶¹ According to the testimony of a witness Karol Małecki, “Władysław Sereżyński was the caretaker over the ghetto [...], he was its terror, the Jews feared him more than the Germans. He [...] collaborated with the occupiers and, on his own, sought out individual [persons] or entire Jewish families [...], abused them [...], took money and valuables from them and then handed them over to the German gendarmerie or the Ukrainian police.”⁶²

Stanisław Młodziński remembered an event⁶³ from January 1943, already after the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto, involving Władysław Sereżyński. He captured two Jewish children in one of the buildings within the ghetto on Kościuszki Street, and then led them to the Lubaczów cemetery, where they were shot by a local gendarme.⁶⁴ The witness was 12 years old at the time and saw the entire event from a hill right next to the cemetery.⁶⁵

According to the testimony of other witnesses, in the same month, the Sereżyńskis detected and delivered a dozen Jews to the gendarmerie or the Ukrainian police. Władysław captured and turned over two more women named Herzberg (according to the witness Józef Cisowski, one of them was brought by Sereżyński to the gate of the Jewish cemetery in Lubaczów,⁶⁶ the woman tried to escape but was handed over to a gendarme officer and shot there⁶⁷). Another victim (according to the testimony of another witness, Jan Tabaczek) was a 12-year-old Jewish boy

⁶¹ AIPN Rz, 191/911, Testimony of Leopold Telca, 26 August 1969, p. 108 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁶² AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Karol Małecki, 30 July 1946, p. 18 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁶³ The witness does not give an exact day date for this event.

⁶⁴ USHMM, RG-50.488.0273, Testimony of Stanisław Młodziński, 10 March 2009, transcription: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn45093> (accessed 15 January 2021).

⁶⁵ According to the surviving records of the August case, the above event was also seen by the witness Feliks Fusiński. The children were hiding in an abandoned house belonging to the Onyszkiewicz family. They were found there and captured by Władysław Sereżyński and brought to the local cemetery.

⁶⁶ The cemetery at Lubaczów was the place where the German gendarmerie and the Ukrainian auxiliary police carried out mass shootings of the town's Jewish inhabitants. According to an investigation by the OKBZH in Rzeszów, around 1,000 people were shot in the cemetery.

⁶⁷ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Cisowski, 10 January 1948, p. 60 (according to the pdf numbering).

named Gabel, captured on a Sunday afternoon, a week after the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto. Sereďyński stopped him in one of the streets and brought him to the gate of the cemetery, where the child was shot by a Ukrainian police officer.⁶⁸

Other witnesses, Władysław Koś and Mikołaj Pomorski, testified that the victims of Władysław Sereďyński included the wife of the local dentist, Regina Spir and her five-year-old son Ryszard (both of whom were taken by Sereďyński to the cemetery and shot there⁶⁹) as well as a woman called Eichel (she sold newspapers in Lubaczów), N.N., a woman named Hula and Berek Reinfeld, who decided to return to the town after the ghetto was liquidated.⁷⁰

The lack of mercy on the part of Władysław Sereďyński was also experienced by the four-year-old Luncio Mandel (who was hidden by the Górecki family). Feliks Górecki, who worked as a watchman for the *Liegenschaft* in Lubaczów, later testified: “[...] I saw two gendarmes accompanied by Sereďyński from the castle hill. At that moment I said to my wife: ‘hide the child’ [...], my wife grabbed the child by the hands and ran out of the room, wanting to hide with the child behind the manor stables. At that moment, I saw Władysław Sereďyński waving his hand towards my wife and shouting: ‘Don’t hide, don’t hide,’ from which I inferred that he knew a Jewish child was being kept with us and had brought the gendarmes. Seeing the futility of running away, my wife stopped behind the stables. The child was captured and taken to town.”⁷¹

Also linked to the Górecki family case is the tragic fate of the Taube and Schmelke families. They were hiding in a shelter located in one of the manor buildings of the Lubaczów *Liegenschaft*. They had already been helped by the Górecki family. According to the minutes of Feliks Górecki’s interrogation,⁷² Sereďyński leaned

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Jan Tabaczek, 13 January 1948, p. 63 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Władysław Koś, 22 January 1948, p. 72 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Mikołaj Pomorski, 24 January 1948, p. 72 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Feliks Górecki, 27 January 1948, p. 76 (according to the pdf numbering). Based on the surviving records, it is unclear whether Feliks Górecki and his family suffered any repression from the occupying forces for helping Jews.

⁷² The *Liegenschaft* buildings had already been raided by the gendarmerie and the Ukrainian police. The officers had information from which it was clear that Jewish families might be hiding in the building complex. It is not clear from the files who directly was the perpetrator of the denunciation.

over the opening and started calling the persons in hiding to come out: "Come out, I know you are there, nothing will happen to you." Górecki testified: "I was sure that there was no one in the bunker, as I myself had seen the Jews from the bunker escape into the forest. Meanwhile, to my surprise, Abraham Taube, a Jew who was a colleague of Seredyński's, came out, heard his voice, rejoiced and turned to him: 'Władziu, how good that it is you, we need matches and candles.' At these words he handed Seredyński some money."⁷³ It was dollars. Seredyński hid the note and promised to deliver the necessary products. In doing so, he ordered them to stay where they were. He himself, in turn, informed the Ukrainian police. Later that day, the officers arrived at the site. Hiding there with Abraham Taub were his wife and a Liegenschaft employee, Schmelke, with his family. A total of seven people were captured that day. All of them were taken to the town and then most likely shot near Hrynków, not far from Dachnów.⁷⁴

Władysław Seredyński also contributed to the apprehension of the local Jewish lawyer Feiner. We know of his direct involvement in this event thanks to the eyewitness testimony of Michał Szafrński, a lawyer's neighbour. The capture took place during the liquidation of the Lubaczów Ghetto. Having escaped from a gendarmerie patrol, Feiner was hiding in his neighbour's house. However, he was spotted by Seredyński, who captured him, assisted by a gendarme. The execution was swift. The lawyer was led out of the courtyard and shot in Rejtana Street.⁷⁵ Seredyński also had on his conscience a woman named Farber,⁷⁶ who, together with her sister (née Fridman) and daughter Maria, initially hid in an attic in the local mill, and then on the premises of the nearby farm of the Ukrainian Wachnianin family, in a small hiding place next to the stables.

Seredyński's son Roman, in turn, captured and handed over to the gendarmerie two children from the Schmidt family and the Jewish woman Regina Tell.⁷⁷ The

⁷³ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Feliks Górecki, 27 January 1948, p. 77 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Michał Szafrński, 7 February 1948, pp. 87–88 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁷⁶ The person referred to is probably Feigale Farber née Fridman who, together with her husband Moshe Farber, owned a mill in Lubaczów. See O. Heumann-Regev, "I rzeka nadal płynie," in *Wojna i pamięć. Przewodnik po miejscach pamięci narodowej na terenie powiatu lubaczowskiego*, vol. 4, ed. by S.P. Makara, B. Woch, and J. Mazur (Lubaczów, 2009), p. 152.

⁷⁷ Before the war, the woman was the owner of a pastry shop on Mickiewicza Street at Lubaczów.

woman was found on Sunday morning in the house of Eleonora Przybylska on 3 Maja Street in Lubaczów. The course of events was similar to the case of lawyer Feiner. Regina Tell knocked on the door of her house, wanting to hide from a gendarmerie patrol. Przybylska let her in. However, the Jewish woman was spotted by Roman Seredyński and led out into the street. The whole incident was witnessed by several people who were going to the church for a mass on that day. Some knew the young Seredyński and stood up for the woman, but he remained adamant. He seized her by force, put her on a cart, and then headed towards the Lubaczów market.⁷⁸

These were not all the crimes committed by the Seredyńskis. Only those where witnesses recognised the victims are listed. Their testimonies show that Władysław Seredyński captured and handed over to the gendarmerie or the Ukrainian police many other people of Jewish nationality, not only from Lubaczów, but also from the surrounding villages. The cruelty of the Seredyński family, and of Władysław in particular, is shown by the testimony of Julian Bukietyński, who described in detail the capture of a young Jewish woman in the Lubaczów Ghetto. The witness did not recognise the woman. He explained that the incident took place in January 1943, on a Sunday afternoon. Władysław Seredyński captured the woman after a chase between Kościuszki and Sienkiewicza Streets. The captured Jewish woman was shot by a Ukrainian policeman in one of the Jewish backyards.⁷⁹

Further Developments

In the autumn of 1943, both Seredyńskis left Lubaczów. On 2 November 1943, Władysław left for Jarosław,⁸⁰ explaining this fact as a flight from the occupying authorities who wanted to send him eastwards to the vicinity of Żółkiew, where, in line with his previous profession, he was employed to bury the dead.⁸¹ According

⁷⁸ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Feliks Górecki, 27 January 1948, p. 81 (according to the pdf numbering); *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Józef Meder, 26 January 1948, p. 71 (according to the pdf numbering); AIPN Rz, 353/39, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Eleonora Przybylska, 27 September 1949, pp. 30–31 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁷⁹ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Julian Bukietyński, 29 January 1948, p. 80 (according to the pdf numbering); AIPN Rz, 353/39, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Maria Sidorska, 24 September 1949, pp. 24–25 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁸⁰ Seredyński left his former wife, Anna Meder, for a woman who lived in the town of Jarosław.

⁸¹ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Minutes of the main hearing, 30 November 1949, p. 183 (according to the pdf numbering).

to him, that same year, he was sent from Jarosław to work in the trenches in Koło, and from 6 June 1944, he was in Germany, in Frankenstein in the Rhineland. On 25 October 1945, he and his second wife settled in Opole, where he took up a job at a Polish Railways (*Polskie Koleje Państwowe*, PKP) station.

In October 1943, Roman Sereżyński was assigned to the German artillery troops stationed in Baranczyce near Sambor. He stayed there until August 1944. As the front approached, he and his unit headed west towards Cracow. After Red Army units occupied the city, he deserted from his mother unit and joined the Soviet army, concealing his service in German formations. He remained with Red Army units until April 1945, after which he settled in Ujazd in Strzelce County, near Opole, where he initially worked in one of the local factories.⁸² He married and took up service in the Civic Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO).⁸³

Investigation, Trial, and Sentence

Until April 1946, the Sereżyńskis could feel relatively safe. The immediate impulse to take an interest in their activity was a writ from the head of the Municipal Court in Lubaczów, dated 3 April 1946, to the local Municipal Board regarding the investigation of German crimes in the county. The Municipal Court in Lubaczów could have taken an interest in this case on the recommendation of the Prosecutor's Office of the Special Criminal Court in Cracow, Rzeszów Branch, which in turn took action most probably at the initiative of Edmund Katz mentioned above, whose family was murdered during the German occupation in Lubaczów.⁸⁴

On 6 May 1946, the court received a reply containing a description of Władysław Sereżyński and information on his current place of residence.⁸⁵ On 8 June 1946, the

⁸² *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Roman Sereżyński, 15 January 1948, pp. 48–49 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁸³ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej we Wrocławiu (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Wrocław, hereinafter AIPN Wr), 0131/2834, Personal files of the MO functionary concerning Roman Sereżyński, The course of Roman Sereżyński's service, p. 31 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁸⁴ Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute), 301/3300, Brief history of the search for two Poles – war criminals by Edmund Katz – captain of the American Navy, p.1.

⁸⁵ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Reply of the Municipal Board in Lubaczów to the Municipal Court in Lubaczów, 6 May 1946, p. 3 (according to the pdf numbering).

findings made by the Municipal Board were forwarded to the Prosecutor's Office of the Special Criminal Court in Cracow. From then on, Władysław Seredyński's activity during the Nazi occupation became the subject of interest for various authorities and institutions.

As early as 22 June 1946, the Rzeszow Branch of the Prosecutor's Office of the Special Criminal Court in Cracow asked the County Command of Civic Militia in Lubaczów to open an investigation into the case of Władysław Seredyński. The militiamen of the local command immediately took action. Based on his church certificate and witness statements, his personal details and, in part, details of his activity during the German occupation were established. The activity of his son Roman also came out.⁸⁶ In addition to the County Command of Civic Militia (KP MO), the County Office of Public Security in Lubaczów was also involved in the case. In the course of time, the investigation against the Seredyński family was taken over by the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Przemyśl District Court.⁸⁷

Władysław Seredyński was arrested on 19 December 1947 by functionaries of the Civic Militia in Opole, based on a decision issued by the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Przemyśl District Court. The arrest took place at his house at 5 Kolejowa Street in Opole, where he lived with his family. On the same day, he was taken to the Prosecutor's Office at the Przemyśl District Court. The following day he was questioned and placed under pre-trial detention.⁸⁸ The statement of reasons stated that Władysław Seredyński was suspected of an offence under Article 1 of the Decree of 28 June 1946 concerning criminal liability for deviation from nationality during the war of 1939-1945⁸⁹ and under Article 1 of the Decree

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Report by the Civic Militia (MO) from the conducted investigation concerning Władysław Seredyński, p. 20 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁸⁷ By a decree of 17 October 1944, the special criminal courts adjudicating on persons accused of offences contained in the decree of 31 August 1944 were abolished. Since then, the competences of the special criminal courts were taken over by the district courts. In the years 1949–1950, offences specified in the August Decree were dealt with in the first instance by the courts of appeal, and from 1951, by voivodship courts. See Act Amending the Rules of Criminal Procedure of 27 April 1949, *Journal of Laws*, No. 32 (1949), item 238; Act Amending the Rules of Criminal Procedure of 20 July 1950, *Journal of Laws*, No. 38 (1950), item 348.

⁸⁸ AIPN Rz, 358/38, Decision on the temporary arrest of Władysław Seredyński, 20 December 1947, p. 35 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁸⁹ Decree of 28 June 1946 concerning criminal liability for deviation from nationality during the war of 1939–1945, *Journal of Laws*, No. 41 (1946) item 237.

of 31 August 1944 in the wording of the Decree of 11 December 1946 concerning the punishment of fascist-Hitlerite criminals, consisting in acting “to the detriment of persons persecuted on racial grounds [...] he captured and delivered Jewish population into the hands of the German authorities.”⁹⁰

Władysław Seredyński was imprisoned in Przemyśl prison. On 27 December 1947, the deputy prosecutor of the Przemyśl District Court, M. Wiśniewski, sent the KP MO in Lubaczów the files of the criminal case against the Seredyński family with an order to carry out a detailed investigation aimed at collecting evidence confirming their cooperation with the German occupiers. The Public Prosecutor’s Office set a time limit of three weeks in which to complete this task. The county command, acting on the instructions of the prosecutor’s office, issued a public notice on 9 January 1948, which called for eyewitnesses to any criminal activity by the two Seredyńskis during the period of German occupation to appear in person at the headquarters of the KP MO in Lubaczów. On 1 January 1948, Roman, who was then on duty at the KP MO in Ujazd, was arrested. He, too, like his father, was taken to the headquarters of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Przemyśl District Court, where he was interrogated on 15 January and subsequently placed under pre-trial detention in Przemyśl prison.⁹¹

Twenty-eight witnesses responded to the appeal of the county militia and were questioned between 10 January 1948 and 14 February 1948 at the headquarters of the KP MO in Lubaczów. Most of them described in detail the traumatic experiences and situations in which the two Seredyńskis were involved. What emerged from the witness testimonies was a picture of ruthless and cynical informers and denouncers acting out of personal motives to please the occupying authorities. The witness testimonies were crucial for the subsequent court proceedings. It was mainly on their basis that the officers of the KP MO in Lubaczów realised the seriousness of the charges. Some of the testimonies complemented each other. They concerned the crimes committed by the Seredyńskis during the liquidation

⁹⁰ AIPN Rz, 358/38, Decision on the temporary arrest of Władysław Seredyński, 20 December 1947, p. 35 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁹¹ AIPN Rz, 190/284, Personal file of prisoner Roman Seredyński, copy of the death sentence issued by the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów concerning Roman Seredyński, 1 December 1949, p. 11; *ibid.*, Decision on the temporary arrest of Roman Seredyński, 15 January 1948, p. 3 (according to the pdf numbering).

of the Lubaczów Ghetto in January 1943, but also during the later period, when they caught Jews who had managed to outlive the liquidation of the ghetto. This testimony also formed the basis for the later indictment.

Over time, through 1948 and 1949, the list of existing witnesses gradually expanded with new names, mainly people of Jewish nationality who survived the occupation.⁹² Their testimony further incriminated the suspects. Witnesses who settled in Munich after the war said that the Sereďyńskis not only denounced and caught Jews but also killed them personally. However, neither the inquiry nor the subsequent investigation confirmed this thread in the case.

After 20 February 1948, the prosecutor's office extended the first pre-trial detention for Władysław Sereďyński, and the same was decided for his son, Roman, after 15 March 1948. The pre-trial detention was successively extended as the following months passed. After considering the materials collected so far, the Prosecutor's Office of the Przemyśl Regional Court opened an investigation on 15 March 1948 in relation to the arrested.⁹³

On 3 May 1948, Roman Sereďyński started voluntary cooperation with the Special Department of the Przemyśl Prison as an informer under the pseudonym "Rak". He was recruited by Platoon Sergeant Ryszard Drwięga. At that time, the young Sereďyński undertook to "report on noticed offences, crimes and preparations against prison order and state authorities."⁹⁴ In the pledge, he assured that he would continue to cooperate with the Security Office (UB) after leaving prison.⁹⁵ During the period of his imprisonment from 6 May 1948 to 18 August 1950, he made ten reports.⁹⁶

According to a surviving record card, Władysław Sereďyński was also registered as an informer under the pseudonym "Jastrząb" (Hawk). The recruitment

⁹² Testimony in this case was given by, among others, Józef Rygiel (Legnica), Barbara Katz (Wrocław), Leja Meiler (Wrocław), Estera Diana Meiler (Wrocław), Maria Siedliczek (Wrocław), Luba Weiner (Munich), Zanut Weiner (Munich), Samuel Baeker (Munich), Max Schenker (Munich), Meier Schenker (Munich), Singer Gebrüder (Munich), Maria Koch (Munich), Pepi Feber (Munich), Benjamin Kammer (Landsberg), Regina Post (Fürth near Nuremberg), Anchel Bogner (Vancouver), Wolf Remer (Montreal).

⁹³ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Decision to open an investigation regarding Władysław and Roman Sereďyński, 15 March 1948, pp. 184–185 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁹⁴ AIPN Rz, 353/38, Decision to open an investigation regarding to Władysław and Roman Sereďyński, 15 March 1948, pp. 184–185 (according to the pdf numbering).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹⁶ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Decision, 2 October 1950, p. 26.

was supposed to have taken place, as in the case of his son, in a Przemyśl prison. We are unable to establish how the elder Sereďyński's cooperation as an informer proceeded, as his file with reference number 752/I was destroyed.⁹⁷ Undoubtedly, the convicts' cooperation as informers was an attempt to obtain a favourable stand from the justice authorities.

All the witnesses who had testified between 10 January 1948 and 14 February 1948 at the headquarters of KP MO in Lubaczów were interrogated again on 18, 24 and 31 May that same year, this time by a judge of the Municipal Court in Lubaczów. In the following months, further interrogations of witnesses took place to clarify and supplement certain aspects of the investigation. These concerned the case of, among other things, the bringing of two women of Jewish nationality (one named Herzberg) and handing them over to the Ukrainian police and the disclosure and handing over to the gendarmerie of two Jewish families hiding in the building of the palace and castle complex belonging to the *Liegenschaft* in Lubaczów.

With all this extensive evidence at its disposal, the Prosecutor's Office of the Przemyśl District Court, 20 months after Sereďyński's arrest, decided on 10 October 1949 to close the ongoing investigation with an indictment. At the same time, on the same day, the decision was made to exclude the case against Roman Sereďyński for separate proceedings, as it was stated that this would "contribute to its simplification."⁹⁸ This turn of events was requested by the accused himself in an application of 23 August 1949 he made to the prosecution.

The indictment, prepared by the deputy prosecutor of the Przemyśl District Prosecutor's Office, was filed on 25 October 1949 with the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów. It described in detail the acts the defendants were charged with. Władysław Sereďyński was accused in point 1 A of acting "to the detriment of persons persecuted for racial reasons in such a way that he captured and handed over to the gendarmerie or the Ukrainian police N. Herzbergowa called 'Łapcio',

⁹⁷ AIPN, 2911/1, Card E-14 from the general information card file of the "C" Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych*) in Warsaw, concerning Władysław Sereďyński, 13 April 1977. The card lacks the date of the destruction of the file.

⁹⁸ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Decision of the Deputy Prosecutor of the District Court in Przemyśl in a criminal case against Władysław and Roman Sereďyński, 10 October 1947, p. 35 (according to the pdf numbering).

N. Herzberżanka, called 'Prosima', Mejer Gabel, Reigina Spir with son Rysiek, N. Eichl, N. Herzbergowa, the wife of Tuli, N. Reinfeld, N.N. named 'Hula', four-year-old Luncio Mandel, lawyer N. Fainer, N. Ferberowa and N. Fridmanowa, showed to the Ukrainian police the hiding place of N. Taube with his wife and N. Schmelka with his family of a total of 7 people.⁹⁹ In addition, Władysław Seredyński was accused of handing over and capturing several of Jewish people of unknown identity or indicating to the gendarmerie where they were hiding. He was also accused of taking part, under the authority of the wartime occupation authorities, in confiscating food – point 1 B. The prosecutor charged Roman Seredyński “that, in January 1943 in Lubaczów, during an action to destroy the Jewish population, meeting the authorities of the German state halfway, he acted to the detriment of persons persecuted for racial reasons in that he captured and handed over to the gendarmerie two children N.N. Schmidt and N. Tellówna and a whole array of Jewish persons of undetermined names.”¹⁰⁰ The two Seredyńskis also used physical violence against the captured Jews.

The indictment additionally contained a statement of reasons with a list of 35 witnesses; it also indicated the Court of Appeal in Rzeszow as having the jurisdiction to hear the case. The main hearing date was set for 30 November, 1 and 2 December 1949 in an away session at the Municipal Court in Lubaczów.¹⁰¹ The hearing began on 30 November at 9 a.m. The bench was presided over by Judge Zbigniew Klementowski of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszow, in the presence of bench judges Joachim Boruta and Michał Błażej. The prosecutor was the sub-prosecutor of the Przemyśl District Court, Romuald Łabaziewicz. After the judge read out the indictment, the Seredyńskis decided to give explanations as asked by the presiding judge. Just like during the investigation, the defendants did not feel guilty and did not admit to having signed the German nationality list. In relation to these facts, Władysław Seredyński, who was interrogated during the main hearing on 30 November, said: “When my wife registered with the German commission, she gave my name as well. I was referred to the com-

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Deed of indictment, 19 October 1949, p. 38 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ AIPN Rz, 190/284, Writ rejecting the appeal from the Court of Appeal in Rzeszow, 5 November 1949, p. 94.

mission where, on the basis of my certificate of baptism, it was established that I was Polish and I was released.”¹⁰²

Regarding the accusation of crimes committed in the ghetto, he explained that “during the German occupation, I was a gravedigger all the time, and in the ghetto I carried out [as read] activities connected with disinfecting corpses [as read] and places infected with typhus in the company of the Ukrainian police. [...] I did not take part in bringing Jews to the ghetto, I did not see the liquidation of the ghetto.”¹⁰³ Later in the trial, Władysław Seredyński, answering many questions from the panel of judges, began to contradict the previous narrative. He stated: “I was given a pass so that I could follow and take away hiding Jews with the Ukrainian police. One morning I went with the Ukrainian police to the Lubaczów area and one of them shot an old Jewish woman he met. I did not look for the Jews myself, but only with the Ukrainian police and the German gendarmerie.”¹⁰⁴ He presented a version that showed he was only assisting by virtue of his duties as a cemetery caretaker, as his job was to bury the dead. He assumed a similar position when referring to the individual deeds he was accused of. Although he admitted that he had taken part in some of the events, he played down his involvement – he was merely present during the events, and the deeds were committed by others.

Due to the considerable number of charges against the Seredyńskis, I have presented only selected issues relating directly to Władysław below. Regarding the denunciation and surrender to the gendarmerie of the three Jewish women (named Farber, her daughter Maria and her sister named Fridman) found on the farm of the Ukrainian Wachnianin, the accused placed the responsibility for their surrender not on himself but on two other *Volksdeutsche* who were with him at the time – Jan and Adam Reisinger: “I persuaded him [i.e. Adam Reisinger – W.H.] to stop looking for them, but he kept looking and discovered the Jewish women hidden in the hay: Fridmanowa with her sister and daughter. Jan Reisinger and Adam Reisinger, and I led these Jewish women to the gendarme standing on the

¹⁰² AIPN Rz, 353/39, Minutes of the main hearing, 30 November 1949, p. 180 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 181 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182 (according to the pdf numbering).

road,” in turn, regarding Regina Spir and N. Reinfeld, Sereżyński hid behind oblivion or lack of any knowledge.¹⁰⁵

Like his father, during the trial, Roman Sereżyński also pleaded not guilty to the charges. He categorically denied having anything to do with the capture of the two Jewish children named Schmidt and the woman named Tell. The accused only admitted that, after the liquidation of the ghetto, he had taken part “in carrying away [as read – W.H.] the Jews shot by the police.”¹⁰⁶

The Sereżyńskis’ words were contradicted by many eyewitnesses, as well as by the testimony of the defendants themselves. During the trial, Władysław Sereżyński blamed his son for, among other things, taking part in catching and capturing Jews with the gendarmerie. There was no longer any question of any family ties, all that mattered was survival. Roman’s son did not remain indebted. Firstly, he alluded to his father’s alleged opposition to signing the German nationality list, although he initially fully supported his father’s narrative on the matter. The truth turned out to be quite different – it was the elder Sereżyński who hinted to his wife that, having German roots, she should register with the German commission: “First, my father and mother went to the commission, and then I was summoned to it.”¹⁰⁷ Secondly, during the main hearing, Roman Sereżyński testified: “during the German occupation, there were rumours about my father that he should have a sack of gold because he was supposed to have given away a lot of Jews.”¹⁰⁸

As to the guilt of the defendants, the court had no doubts. The charges against them were confirmed by eyewitness testimonies, and Władysław and Roman also partially admitted their guilt. During the trial, a total of 26 witnesses to the crimes committed by the Sereżyńskis were questioned, and the elder of the two admitted (in addition to his participation in the capturing and bringing to the occupiers three Jewish women hiding on the farm of the Ukrainian Wachnianin) also to the capturing of the Jewish woman Herzbergowa, called “Łapcio,” two Jewish children hiding in the house of the Onyszkiewicz family, and to assisting the gendarmerie during manhunts for Jews. He justified his attitude – as already

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 184 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187 (according to the pdf numbering).

mentioned – by the fact that, as the town gravedigger, he was forced to carry out the mayor's orders.

The younger Seredyński, on the other hand, admitted that, as a member of the volunteer fire brigade, he had taken part in capturing a Jewish woman named Tell. It was difficult for him to deny this offence, as her apprehension was witnessed by at least several people. Roman justified his attitude in a similar way to his father – as a firefighter, he followed orders from his superiors (according to him, the volunteer fire brigade was at that time subordinated to the *Landkommissar* and the gendarmerie),¹⁰⁹ and he was threatened with the death penalty for refusing.¹¹⁰

On 1 December 1949, the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, at an away session in the Lubaczów Municipal Court, did not have the slightest doubt about the Seredyńskis' guilt. Władysław was found guilty of at least 20 crimes committed against persons of Jewish nationality, whose names were listed in the indictment, while Roman was found guilty of at least three crimes committed against persons of Jewish nationality, i.e. against two children called Schmidt and a Jewish woman called Tell. The court additionally admitted that the younger Seredyński had also contributed to giving away many Jewish persons of undetermined names.

The Court of Appeal sentenced Władysław and Roman Seredyński to death. Both were also deprived of their public rights and civil rights of honour forever; a forfeiture of all property to the State Treasury was also ordered. In its statement of reasons, the court found that both defendants had taken part in liquidating the Lubaczów Ghetto. In the opinion of the town's inhabitants, they were known for their overt cooperation with the occupiers as people who tracked down and captured Jewish residents of Lubaczów who managed to survive the period of the ghetto's liquidation. "In this activity, both defendants, as being familiar with the

¹⁰⁹ During the German occupation, the fire brigade was subordinate to the police; this was the result, among other things, of a meeting held on 18 September 1940 in the Office of the District Instructor-Commissioner in Lublin. During this meeting, the structure and organisation of fire protection in the General Governorate were established. At that time, in county offices, among others, a county fire instructor was appointed, who was subordinate to the *Kreishauptmann*, while all fire brigades were counted among the fire police, subordinate to the police or gendarmerie. See http://kalinowski.weebly.com/uploads/4/9/1/6/4916495/sraz_ogniowa_pod_okupacja_niemiecka.pdf (accessed 18 January 2021).

¹¹⁰ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Minutes of the main hearing, 1 December 1949, p. 198 (according to the pdf numbering).

local relations, collaborated with the gendarmerie and the Ukrainian police with zeal and utter fondness,” the statement of reasons reads. “This is evidenced by the circumstances surrounding the criminal action of the defendants, in particular, the conduct of the defendants during the capturing and bringing of the victims to their death [...]. In determining the punishment for both defendants, the Court, taking into account the magnitude of the crimes committed by them, of their renunciation – through their conduct – of any human feelings [...], came to the conclusion that the interests of organised society, the norms of compassion applicable between people and the public-state interest require the full elimination of the defendants from society. The Tribunal did not find any circumstances that could speak in favour of the defendants.”¹¹¹

Later that same month, the defendants’ counsels filed an appeal against the verdict with the Supreme Court in Warsaw. The convicts also petitioned President Bolesław Bierut in writing to change the death sentence to a prison sentence – in this petition, they again denied the charges brought against them. Roman Sereżyński stated: “[the imposed death sentence] is a shift of part of the blame from my father to me.”¹¹² He pointed out that the sentence was highly unfair and unjust.¹¹³ Władysław, on the other hand, with regard to the offences named under point 1 A, stuck to the version that he had not taken part in the murder and capturing of Jews, but had only been present at this procedure as a gravedigger – “forced by an order of the mayor.” As for the offences under point 1 B, on the other hand, he stated that he was merely carrying out the orders of his immediate superiors as an employee of the municipal board: “I was to accompany the German gendarmerie in searches, especially at the station, and to collect food from the population, which I took back to the gendarmerie.”¹¹⁴

At a review hearing on 30 May 1950, the Supreme Court in Warsaw upheld the sentence passed by the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów. Roman Sereżyński appealed once again on 1 June 1950 to President Bolesław Bierut for clemency – it

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Conclusion of the judgement, 1 December 1949, p. 221 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Letter of Roman Sereżyński to President Bolesław Bierut, 14 December 1949, p. 229 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Letter of Władysław Sereżyński to President Bolesław Bierut, 6 December 1949, p. 237 (according to the pdf numbering).

was a desperate plea for life. Separate petitions for his pardon were also submitted by his mother Anna (31 May 1950), and his wife Matylda (12 June 1950). On 2 October 1950, President Bierut did not exercise his right of pardon.¹¹⁵ The death penalty by hanging was carried out on 22 October 1950 in a prison in Przemyśl.¹¹⁶

Conclusions

This article contributes to a follow-up research work on the history of the German occupation in the Lubaczów area. The described trial shows the post-war struggle of the justice system in judging the perpetrators of wartime crimes. In the case of the court records concerning the Seredyńskis, a rich body of evidence was collected, based mainly on eyewitness testimonies. These files on the criminal case tried under the August Decree are among the best documented in Lubaczów County.

Based on the surviving case files, we obtain information on the activity of two people in Lubaczów who – during the Nazi occupation – were involved in the denunciation and rounding up of Jews. What is unusual in this case is that the crimes were committed by a father and a son. Their involvement in exterminating the Jewish community gathered in the Lubaczów Ghetto leaves no doubt. Their motive seems obvious – they were trying to buy into the favour of the occupying forces. In the statement of reasons for the verdict, we can read that they both “collaborated with the gendarmerie and the Ukrainian police with zeal and utter fondness.”¹¹⁷ An equally important reason was the greed for profit. Ideological issues were of little importance here, especially as both were able to manoeuvre between the Soviet and German authorities. Władysław Seredyński is also remembered as an ardent collaborator of the Soviet authorities in Lubaczów between 1939 and 1941, while his son Roman, faced with the imminent defeat of the Third Reich in

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter of the Director of the Clemency Bureau to the Court of Appeal in Rzeszow, 5 October 1950, p. 286 (according to the pdf numbering).

¹¹⁶ AIPN, 2449/1, Card from the card file of convicted persons concerning Władysław Seredyński; AIPN, 2882/1, Card from the card file of prisoners convicted under the PKWN Decree of 31 August 1944; AIPN, 2449/1, Card from the card file of convicted persons concerning Roman Seredyński.

¹¹⁷ AIPN Rz, 353/39, Conclusion of the judgment, 1 December 1949, p. 218 (according to the pdf numbering).

1944, deserted from the German army and joined Soviet troops. In June 1946, he joined the Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Parta Robotnicza*, PPR).

During the work on the article, the author has not succeeded in establishing all the victims of the Seredyńskis, nor – apart from a few cases (the name of a gendarme by the name Strauss is mentioned in the files) – the direct perpetrators of the murders of the Jews the accused turned over to the German authorities. The files also show the involvement of other *Volksdeutsche* in this activity, and this issue, therefore, requires research into their attitudes and actions against the Jewish community.

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- "Zmiana niemieckich nazw miejscowości," *Gazeta Lwowska*, 15 March 1939.

SUMMARY

This article presents the participation of the *Volksdeutsche* Władysław Sereżyński and his son Roman in crimes committed against persons of Jewish nationality in Lubaczów (*Kreis Rawa Ruska*) during the German occupation and the post-war criminal case under the August Decree, which took place before the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów at an away session in Lubaczów. Both were sentenced to death by the sentence of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów of 1 December 1949. The sentence was executed on 22 October 1950. Due to its wider context, the article also presents a brief description of Lubaczów, the situation of the local Jews during the German occupation and the liquidation of the ghetto.

The crimes committed by the Sereďyńskis took place in January 1943 in the Lubaczów area, mainly during the liquidation of the local ghetto. They consisted in denouncing and turning over persons of Jewish nationality to the gendarmerie or the Ukrainian police. The criminal activity of Władysław Sereďyński and his son Roman was established based on the surviving files from the Decree of 31 August 1944 concerning the punishment of fascist-Hitlerite criminals guilty of murder and ill-treatment of the civilian population and prisoners of war and the punishment of traitors of the Polish Nation.

KEYWORDS

Władysław Sereďyński • Roman Sereďyński • Lubaczów • *Volksdeutsch*
• trial • ghetto • Jews

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THE STORY OF RUDOLF GROSSFELD'S RESCUE DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION. A RECONSTRUCTION ATTEMPT

Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem, has collected Holocaust survivor testimonies since the 1950s. Initially, their archives collected written testimonies; they began collecting audio testimonies over the years.¹ Among the several thousand archival units stored in the O.3 group of archival material, we find a testimony by Rudolf (aka Reuven) Grossfeld submitted to the Institute in 1995. It is an audio testimony that he gave in Hebrew. In the description of this archival unit on the Yad Vashem website, we read that the author talked about his pre-war life in Nowa Góra near Krzeszowice,²

¹ A. Skibińska, *Źródła do badań nad zagładą Żydów na okupowanych ziemiach polskich. Przewodnik archiwalno-bibliograficzny* (Warsaw, 2007), p. 155.

² Nowa Góra – a village located over 30 km northwest of Cracow, in the Cracow-Czestochowa Upland. As part of the occupation's administrative division, it was in the municipality of Kressendorf (Krzeszowice) in the Kreishauptmannschaft Krakau (Cracow County office). According to German data from 1943, this county covered an area of 2891 square kilometres and had about 416,000 inhabitants (144 persons per square kilometre). It lay within the boundaries of the Cracow District. See *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsaufnahme am 1. März 1943* (Krakau, 1943), p. IX. There were 973 inhabitants in Nowa Góra in March 1943 (*ibid.*, p. 23). The local county administration was headed from October

the period of the occupation, his post-war life in Poland and his emigration to Israel. It is particularly interesting that the testimony also includes information about working at “the headquarters of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK) underground for about two and a half years.” Hence, we are dealing here with a unique testimony.³ This is not the only reason why this story deserves a detailed analysis.

Rudolf Grossfeld was over seventy years old when he recounted events that were already far in the past. It was not uncommon for him not to remember the exact dates or give them incorrectly. In his testimony, he did not mention by name or surname anyone who had helped him, thanks to whom he had survived in hiding until the end of the war.⁴

Reading Grossfeld’s testimony, we see that it consists of individual images of the past that are most firmly fixed in his memory, from which he attempts to create a story. Hence, the subject of this article is an attempt to reconstruct the story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s survival during the German occupation based on his memoirs and other available material. This will help to demonstrate what knowledge the analysed survivor testimony conveys and whether it is objective.

The history of Nowa Góra and the surrounding area during the Second World War has not lived to see extensive literature about it.⁵ Publications deal mainly with armed struggle and martyrdom.⁶ The subject of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish

1939 to 4 February 1942 by Dr Egon Höller, and from 1 June 1942 to 1944 by Albert Schaar. M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutsche Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 444–445.

³ J.D. Zimmerman, “The Polish Underground Home Army (AK) and the Jews: What Postwar Jewish Testimonies and Wartime Documents Reveal,” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 34/1 (2020), pp. 194–220. According to Zimmerman, Jewish testimonies in which we find information about help given to Jews by the Home Army are in the minority (*ibid.*, pp. 214–215).

⁴ Many thanks to Dr Ewa Węgrzyn, who translated Rudolf Grossfeld’s testimony from Hebrew into Polish.

⁵ See, i.a. A. Fujarski, *Kronika miasta Krzeszowic 1939–1945* (Krzeszowice, 1993); J. Pęcowski, *Powiat chrzanowski pod okupacją niemiecką w latach 1939–1945*, ed. H. Czarnik *et al.* (Chrzanów, 2014); F. Ciura, *Gminy Alwernia i Babice pod okupacją hitlerowskich Niemiec 1939–1945* (Cracow, 2014); T. Fałęcki, I. Sroka, “Chrzanów w latach okupacji 1939–1945,” in *Chrzanów. Studia z dziejów miasta*, vol. 2: *Chrzanów współczesny*, part 1 (Chrzanów, 1999), pp. 9–108; B. Rzepecki, *Nowa Góra. Miasto zapomniane* (Nowa Góra, 2020); *idem*, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego* (Nowa Góra, 2020).

⁶ *Armia Krajowa i Szare Szeregi obwodu Krzeszowice. Praca zbiorowa grupy byłych członków Szarych Szeregów „Gęstwina-Miasteczko*,” ed. by T. Gawel and T. Świecimski (Cracow, 2004); *Ruch*

relations appears in them peripherally. Undoubtedly, there is also a lack of studies devoted to the history of the Jewish population in the area.⁷ This is why the article is based on archival material.

The primary sources for learning about the topic of our research include the already mentioned testimony of Rudolf Grossfeld held in the Yad Vashem Archives,⁸ as well as the memoirs of Janina Moskal – the daughter of those who helped Grossfeld.⁹ In both testimonies, the witnesses – both being of an advanced age – recounted the events dating back several decades ago. It is important to emphasise the very late stage at which these sources were produced. Documents from church archives, materials and questionnaires from the legacy of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, other witness testimonies and court records concerning criminal, inheritance and declaration of death cases were also of great importance for the research. They enabled partial verification and completion of the information contained in the testimonies of Janina Moskal and Rudolf Grossfeld.

oporu 1939–1945 Krzeszowice–Zabierzów w dokumentach, ed. W. Skołub (Krzeszowice, 2010); *Ludzie obwodu AK Krzeszowice Z-44*, part 1, ed. by T. Gaweł and K. Klocek (Cracow, 2002); J. Domagała, “Wspomnienia okupacyjne powstańca śląskiego,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Stowarzyszenie Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej) 5 (2002), pp. 72–80. For more, see S. Piwowarski, *Okręg Krakowski Służby Zwycięstwu Polski – Związku Walki Zbrojnej – Armii Krajowej. Wybrane zagadnienia organizacyjne, personalne i bojowe* (Cracow, 1994).

⁷ Partial information about the fate of Jews in the area is provided by the following publications: E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszow, 2014); D. Swałtek, “Listy Gusty Erlich,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 5 (2009), pp. 446–454. One can also consult studies on the history of the Jews of (pre-war) Chrzanów County. See Z. Razowski, *Na cztery światła strony. Losy Żydów chrzanowskich podczas Holokaustu* (Chrzanow, 2017); A. Namysło, “Społeczność żydowska Chrzanowa i jej losy w okresie II wojny światowej,” in *Żyli wśród nas. Chrzanowscy Żydzi*, ed. M. Szymaszkiewicz (Chrzanów, 2016), pp. 243–298; and books of Jewish memory: *Chrzanów. The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl*, ed. M. Bochner (New York, 1989).

⁸ Yad Vashem Archives (hereinafter YVA), 0.3, 8602, Testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁹ We have two testimonies given by Janina Moskal née Kot, daughter of Stanisław and Agata. The first is a 16-page handwritten memoirs of *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, written down in September 2018 in Florida, USA (in the author’s collection). The second is an audio-video recording of an interview with Janina Moskal made by the Institute of National Remembrance research staff member Rafał Pękała (interviewer) and Konrad Starczewski (cameraman) in the presence of Jan and Marcin Mamoń. The interview was conducted on 3 September 2019 in the house at Czerna no. 77, where Jews were said to have been hidden during the war. The recording’s call number in the Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN) is N1387; it is also available online: <https://opowiedziane.ipn.gov.pl/ahm/notacje/24703,Moskal-Janina.html> (accessed 1 December 2021).

The Interwar Period

Rudolf Grossfeld's testimony begins with a description of his childhood in Nowa Góra and his family situation during the interwar period. Grossfeld came from a small family and was the first-born son (we know that he also had a brother who was five years younger). He was born in 1923. In his own words, his family numbered about "50–60 members, including uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers."¹⁰ His grandfather on his father's side was "a pious (orthodox) Jew" and studied the Talmud, while Rudolf's father was his opposite – "he was not religious." Grossfeld recounted: "his father was in Russia during the First World War and was taken prisoner by the Russians. There he was inculcated with communist ideas and was therefore opposed to religion. That was the reason why our relationship with my grandfather weakened. Grandfather resented us for not being religious."¹¹

"I grew up with non-Jewish neighbours and colleagues, I was far from Judaism. I imbibed the spirit of freedom and grew up in an atmosphere of Catholic neighbours. I had a beautiful command of the Polish language, which I learned at school in the gymnasium,"¹² Rudolf recalled and referred to his school years at St Jacek's Gymnasium in Cracow. This, however, could not be confirmed. In the surviving reports of the management of the Second State Gymnasium of St Jacek's in Cracow, the lists of pupils for the school years 1934/1935, 1935/1936 and 1936/1937 do not include Rudolf Grossfeld.¹³ However, it should not be excluded that he attended this gymnasium for the following two years.¹⁴

The author of the testimony stated that his family maintained very good relations with Poles, "we did not suffer from anti-Semitism or other anti-Jewish

¹⁰ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji II Państwowego Gimnazjum im. św. Jacka w Krakowie za rok szkolny 1934/5, 1935/6 i 1936/7* (Cracow, 1937), <http://pbc.up.krakow.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=2721&from=pubindex&dirids=130&lp=2> (accessed 2 December 2021).

¹⁴ In the Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (National Archives in Cracow, hereinafter ANK), where the legacy of the St Jacek's Gymnasium is kept, the class catalogues for 1937/1938 and 1938/1939 have not survived. For information on this school, see A. Bielak, "Państwowe Gimnazjum i Liceum im. św. Jacka w Krakowie (1857–1950)," *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 90/4 (1980), pp. 566–579; M. Stinia, "Rozwój krakowskich gimnazjów państwowych w latach 1867–1918," in *Problemy cywilizacyjnego rozwoju Białorusi, Polski, Rosji i Ukrainy od końca XVIII do XXI wieku*, ed. by P. Franaszek and A.N. Nieczuchrin (Cracow, 2007), pp. 272–274.

displays.”¹⁵ Among his colleagues were many Poles who did not have a Jewish background: “They often were guests at our Jewish home. We hosted them, they hosted us.”¹⁶ From the testimony, we learn that the Grossfeld family ran a large shop in Nowa Góra – “it was such a delicatessen. We had exotic fruit from the East there, we enjoyed a good material status.”¹⁷ The address register of businesses in Poland in 1930 does not record the existence of such a shop, but says that a certain ‘Grossfeld S.’ sold baked bread in Nowa Góra.¹⁸

According to Rudolf, they were an assimilated family: “In our family, we didn’t wear traditional Jewish clothes, so we didn’t feel like aliens, we felt like Poles.”¹⁹ Comparing these recollections with other Jewish testimonies, it must be said that this was a rare case.²⁰ Crucial for assessing the nature and changes in relations between Poles and Jews in the interwar period – as Tomasz Gąsowski wrote – was the category of social distance. Both communities were separated by barriers consisting of a sense of mutual alienation, different customs, a system of values or style of life.²¹ Polish-Jewish relations were significantly affected by economic rivalry and religious dissimilarity. It should be added, however, that the interwar period was also a time of increased assimilation of a specific group of Jews.²² This may also have been the case for Rudolf Grossfeld’s immediate family.

According to the testimony of another resident of Nowa Góra, who was brought up in an Orthodox Jewish family, Bernard Feiler, “10 Jewish families

¹⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Księga adresowa Polski (wraz z W.M. Gdańskiem) dla handlu, przemysłu, rzemiosł i rolnictwa* (Warsaw, 1930), p. 444.

¹⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, Testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁰ A conversation with Shoshan Adler, Maria and Lea Weinfeld, Ryszard Aleksandrowicz, Henryk Bleicher, Józef Bosak, Arie Brauner, Maria Fraenkel, Marcel Goldman, Natan Gross, Leopold Wasserman, Amalia Hofszeter, Erna Holländer, Emanuel Melzer, Zvi Nathan, and Gustawa Stendig: A.D. Pordes, I. Grin, *Ich miasto. Wspomnienia Izraelczyków, przedwojennych mieszkańców Krakowa* (Warsaw, 2004), pp. 19, 53, 69, 71, 85–86, 122–123, 137, 140–141, 152–153, 160–161, 199, 212, 227–228, 254, 261, 267–268, 285–286.

²¹ T. Gąsowski, “Sytuacja ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w przededniu II wojny światowej,” in *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici. Wokół pomocy Żydom w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. M. Wenklar (Cracow, 2021), pp. 37–38.

²² A. Landau-Czajka, *Syn będzie Lech... Asymilacja Żydów w Polsce międzywojennej* (Warsaw, 2006), p. 437.

lived in this village between the two world wars.”²³ Asked if he was confronted with anti-Semitism at the time, Feiler confirmed: “we were verbally insulted. Nothing else, we fought back.”²⁴ Unfortunately, he did not specify what this “fight” consisted of.

The Beginning of the German Occupation

During the German-Polish war in September 1939, the Grossfelds – like many other families – escaped the approaching war front (in a rented car) and headed east.²⁵ The outbreak of the war led to the migration of the population. In the first days of September, refugees from the western Polish lands appeared in the Lesser Poland region, and spoke of the crimes the encroaching German troops committed. At the time of the Rosh ha-Shanah (New Year) holiday – falling in 1939 in mid-September – the Grossfelds arrived in Tarnow.²⁶ There they found shelter with an unknown Jewish family. After some time, they returned to Nowa Góra.²⁷ Faced with the Soviet Union’s invasion of the eastern lands of the Second Republic and the advance of the German army, many refugees made a similar decision.²⁸

Very quickly, the authorities of the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo, GG) began introducing legal acts that eliminated Jews from their social and economic life, robbed them of their property, restricted their freedom and isolated them from society. Later in the testimony, Grossfeld described German anti-Jewish actions and the change in the attitude of parts of the local community: “Now, during the war, when I passed my fellow non-Jews on the street, they turned away from me. Some Polish neighbours said with cynicism: ‘Your end is coming.’”²⁹ His family planned to flee to the Soviet Union; however, this plan was ultimately not realised.

²³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereinafter USHMM), RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980. Many thanks to Maciej Kaproń for his help with this report.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁶ It should also not be ruled out that Grossfeld’s family arrived here earlier. The German army occupied Tarnow on 7 September 1939.

²⁷ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁸ Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 81–82.

²⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

One of the first anti-Jewish regulations was the one concerning forced labour for Jews in the GG, introduced on 16 October 1939. The following year, the Germans began setting up workshops and forced labour camps for the Jewish population.³⁰ Rudolf Grossfeld reported: “In June or July 1941 [sic!], I was the only one in my family taken to the labour camp in Płaszów. I was 19 years old at the time, and my father, mother and younger brother stayed home in the countryside. I worked in Płaszów in terrible conditions.”³¹ It should be noted that the decision to build the camp in Płaszów (*Zwangsarbeitslager Plaszow des SS- und Polizeiführers im Distrikt Krakau, ZAL Plaszow*) was made a year later – probably in October 1942. The author of the memoirs was mistaken (perhaps he linked the date of the camp’s establishment with the year of the creation of the Cracow ghetto).³² He could also have been placed in one of the forced labour camps for Jews, the so-called Julags (Judenlager) established in Cracow by the Germans from 1942 onwards, especially as he took note in his testimony of the establishment of the Julag I – initially called also “Arbeitslager Plaszow”: “We were already in 1941 [sic!] and then things started to happen,” Grossfeld recalled, “Camps were established. Two such camps were set up in our area: one in Płaszów and the other, Julag I, next to Płaszów [...] We worked on the construction of the railway tracks. We were building the railway line from Cracow to Lvov. We worked under terror. Any disobedience was severely punished with beatings. We were guarded by Ukrainian guards. The logistics were handled by the Germans, and the physical guarding of us by the Ukrainians.”³³

Grossfeld stated that he was taken away in “June or July.” The abovementioned Julag I was established in the spring of 1942 on the initiative of the German railway management, which built housing barracks and the necessary facilities. It was located close to Wielicka Street, opposite the main entrance to the later Płaszów camp on Jerozolimska Street. The prisoners brought to the Julags built a railway

³⁰ M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Namysło, *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w okresie II wojny światowej. Kontekst i uwarunkowania* in *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 15–16.

³¹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

³² The Cracow Ghetto was established by an order of the governor of the Cracow District, Otto Wächter, on 3 March 1941.

³³ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

bridge over the Vistula, embankments, viaducts, roads and laid tracks. Initially, the guards in the jugs were railway security officers (Bahnschutzpolizei), among whom were also Ukrainians – mentioned by Grossfeld.³⁴

Rudolf's parents and brother escaped from Nowa Góra after a while and hid in the forests near the villages of Czubrowice and Raclawice.

Unfortunately, at night the Germans surrounded the forests and the village of Raclawice. Poles reported to the Germans that there were Jews in the village of Raclawice hiding with other Poles for money. They also caught my parents, Grossfeld recounted. They sent my father to Płaszów. And the Germans transported my mother and my younger brother to the town of Skala. I know about all this from my father, with whom I met in the Płaszów camp. When I met my father in the camp, I told him that I was going to join the Home Army. My father said: "Yes do it, join the AK, you have little chance of surviving here anyway." I don't know exactly what happened to my father during the war. All I know is that he escaped from his place of work in Płaszów and reached Skala on foot. On the other hand, I was waiting for the AK to let me know that I was to escape from Płaszów. At that time, the Germans took all the Jews from Skala. They loaded them onto trucks and took them to Cracow to the Płaszów railway station. I was working by the railway tracks, and suddenly I see a train with cattle cars without windows. Everyone is shouting and suddenly – this is unbelievable – I hear someone shouting: "Rudek" (because that's what I was called). I look and see my father's face in such a small window of the train. My father threw a piece of paper through this opening, this piece of paper I still keep at home today. It said: "Dear son, me, your mother and your brother are in the car of this train. We do not know where we are going. They tell us we are going to a labour camp in eastern Poland. Supposedly to Pińsk. Such are the rumours. But I don't know that. Be well. I hope we will meet again." He wrote it in Polish, I have kept this letter until today.³⁵ I managed to get this letter, to read it, because my German foreman was a relatively humane man and didn't watch us so much while we

³⁴ For more, see R. Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945* (Warsaw–Cracow, 2009); *idem*, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945. Przewodnik historyczny* (Cracow, 2014).

³⁵ The letter was not found during the research.

were working [...]. As far as my parents are concerned, I suppose they died at Majdanek. Unfortunately, I have no proof of this.³⁶

Did Rudolf's parents really die in the Majdanek camp?

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Grossfeld family lived in Nowa Góra. During the German occupation, the village belonged to the Cracow District. During Operation Reinhardt, most of the Jews from this district were deported to the Bełżec extermination camp. A few transports were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and these were mainly from labour camps or the so-called residual ghettos in 1943. During the deportation operation itself, people deemed unfit for further travel were murdered at the assembly point or in the nearby forests.³⁷

In the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, we find information that Eliezer (Leon) Grossfeld³⁸ and Yokheved Grossfeld³⁹ (née Shtraus) died in 1943 in the Majdanek camp. These entries were based on information provided by Rudolf Grossfeld.⁴⁰ On the other hand, according to the court records from the 1940s, his parents had died the year before in the Cracow District. In the index of records of the Municipal Court in Cracow, held in the National Archives in Cracow, a dossier was found of the case concerning the declaration of the death of members of Rudolf Grossfeld's family.⁴¹ From the decision of the Municipal Court in Cracow on 31 May 1946, it appears that Rudolf Grossfeld's father and mother died in 1942 during the resettlement from Skala.⁴² The Grossfelds were

³⁶ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

³⁷ Some of those able to work were taken to labour camps. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 349–350.

³⁸ Leon vel Eliezer vel Lejzer Grossfeld vel Grosfeld.

³⁹ Yokheved vel Jacheta vel Jeti vel Chawa vel Ewa Grossfeld vel Grosfeld née Strauss.

⁴⁰ On the basis of Grossfeld's testimony, short biographies of 15 people, members of his family, were drawn up and later included in the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. There one can find information about the date, place and circumstances of their death. Digital copies of these documents are available on the website of the Yad Vashem Archives: https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&advancedSearch=true&sln_value=Grossfeld&sln_type=synonyms&sfn_value=Reuven&sfn_type=synonyms (accessed 4 December 2019).

⁴¹ ANK, 29/I3Zg, 432/46, Records concerning the declaration of death of Jacheta vel Ewa Grosfeld née Strauss.

⁴² Eliezer (Leon) Grossfeld was said to have been murdered by German police in August. The court, in its decision, adopted 31 August 1942 as the day of his death. ANK, I3Zg, 432/46, Decision of

supposed to have arrived there from Cracow. The court established this based on the testimony of Barbara Horowitz and Mozes Gewelb. Why did Rudolf Grossfeld give a different place of his parents' death several decades later? We do not know the answer to this question. The declaration of death procedure was initiated at his request, so he must have known the testimonies of the witnesses and the court ruling. Presumably, he needed it for the inheritance proceedings of his parents and relatives.⁴³

Escape to Nowa Góra

In the conversation at the camp mentioned above Rudolf reportedly told his father that he wanted to join the Home Army. He recalled his contacts with the underground as follows:

At that time, the Polish underground, such as the Home Army, began to form. They were quite nationalistic in their attitude, but they were looking for people to join them, including Jews. They were mainly looking for people who spoke good German. Home Army envoys made their way to the Płaszów camp and made inquiries among the Jews as to whether they could join the Home Army, provided, of course, that they knew German. This rumour reached me too. The AK delegates came to me and told me that they were looking for someone who spoke German. After what I had seen happening in the camp, and how the Germans and Ukrainians treated Jews, I decided that joining the AK gave me some chance. I knew they would take me from Płaszów to a concentration camp one day. And that's why I joined the Home Army. In joining the Home Army, I saw my salvation, my chance of survival. I had nothing to lose by join-

the Municipal Court in Cracow concerning the declaration of death of Helena Strauss née Schichtler and Leon Grossfeld, Cracow, 31 May 1946, p. 5. Yokheved Grossfeld, on the other hand, was said to have been killed in September. The court adopted 30 September 1942 as the date of her death. In court records, she appears as Jacheta vel Ewa Grossfeld née Strauss, daughter of Eliakim and Breina. *Ibid.*, Decision of the Municipal Court in Cracow concerning the declaration of death of Abraham Strauss, Ozjasz Strauss, Regina Strauss, Jacheta vel Ewa Grossfeld née Strauss, Anna Juckerowa née Strauss, Sala Strauss, Cracow, 31 May 1946, p. 7.

⁴³ ANK, 29/446/19182, Petition of Rudolf Stanisław Grossfeld to commence probate proceedings for the late Helena Strauss née Schichtler [...], Cracow, 3 June 1946, p. 5. On 1 February 1939, his parents bought from Izaak and Eстера Dunkelblum half of the property located at 11 Celná Street in Cracow. ANK, 29/446/19182, Notarial deed, Cracow, 1 February 1939, n.p.

ing the Home Army. I knew that my chances of surviving the war were very low in percentage terms.⁴⁴

In the next part of the testimony, we learn about his escape from the camp:

Two days before Christmas [1942], I received information from the AK: "It won't be long now." I was given a piece of paper with the name of the Catholic priest I was to go to after escaping from the Płaszów camp. I am looking at it and it says: "Nowa Góra," which is the place where I was born. The Home Army envoy told me to go to the rectory of the church located in Nowa Góra [...]. It was Christmas Eve, an hour or so after two o'clock. And suddenly, we hear singing in Ukrainian. They were drunk. When the Ukrainians were drunk, a Polish army officer, who was Jewish, and who was in touch with the Home Army, having been a prisoner in Płaszów, came to me and said: "Now is the time, get up. Dress warmly and come with me." I was in Płaszów from June 1941 to December 1941.⁴⁵ Luckily for us, everyone was drunk, and we were able to get out. A few people escaped that evening. The Germans were in their houses because it was Christmas Eve after all. We cut the wire running around the Płaszów camp. We crawled on the ground and everyone ran in their own direction. To this day, I have not met anyone of those who escaped then. I knew no one of those who escaped. It was all AK conspiracy.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, other sources could not verify this story – we only have Grossfeld's testimony. As stated earlier, it is not possible that the author of the testimony was in the ZAL Plasow for the entire period mentioned. However, it is difficult to assess the credibility of his testimony regarding his contacts with the AK and his escape, presented here in a rather sensational form.

Grossfeld went on to talk about his wandering and his attempts to get through to his hometown. He mentioned, for example, the help he was given:

⁴⁴ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁴⁵ The actual dates were probably June to December 1942.

⁴⁶ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

I knocked on the window. I asked the lady who looked out of the window: "Please open the door for me." She opened the door. She was a widow. She gave me warm food, gave me some milk, potatoes. She quickly understood who I was and said: "May God take care of you. But I can't help you." She immediately knew that I was Jewish. She gave me a loaf of bread. She crossed herself over me and said: "May Jesus, Mary and all the saints have you in their care. But go away." So I went away.⁴⁷

After some time, the Jewish fugitive reached Nowa Góra. He established contact with people who would lead him to one of the so-called AK hideouts. Grossfeld reported:

The church in Nowa Góra stood near the forest. About 100 m from the big church, there was still a chapel. So at night, I went into this chapel and immediately fell asleep from exhaustion. Suddenly two people came to me. The men had their faces covered. They put a blindfold over my eyes and took me away from there [...]. They led me somewhere; it took about half an hour to get there. Finally, when we arrived, they took the blindfold off my eyes and said: "You are in one of the AK hideouts. You will sit here and then receive orders on what to do." And they went away. I stayed in the bunker where they took me. It was a big bunker. It stood next to a barn with about 20 cows in it. The Home Army underground had built this structure. You went into it through a small opening in this barn's wall. The bunker had a bed, furniture, a transmitter station, a communication device, and two dogs. The dogs would come up to me, and I would stroke them. I was alone in the bunker. I was afraid to go anywhere.⁴⁸

In subsequent excerpts from the testimony, Grossfeld recounted:

Suddenly one woman came and said to me: "Come here." The bunker had one more entrance, and this Polish woman said to me: "Get undressed." I took off all my dirty clothes, and she shaved my head. She put all my clothes in a bag

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

and brought me new clothes. She also brought me warm food. And I fell asleep. I have no idea how long I slept. The next day the same woman came. She said: “soon, you will have a visit from the commander-in-chief of the AK in our area.”⁴⁹

This person was a priest from Nowa Góra whom Grossfeld knew still from the interwar period:⁵⁰

He came to see me in the bunker. When I saw him, I felt that I had a chance, that I would survive the war after all. When the priest saw me, he said: “You know, there are no coincidences in life. It is destiny that we met.” He was delighted when he saw me. “Since you are here, I want to help you survive the war. But, unfortunately, you must let yourself be baptised and convert to Catholicism. The moment you get baptised, you become one of us.”⁵¹

According to Grossfeld, a “ceremony was organised for him inside the bunker. About fifty members of the AK were present. I had a godfather. I learned the catechism quickly; I even learned the Gospels by heart. The priest gave me the name Stanisław at the baptism and the surname Wielkopolański instead of Grossfeld. After the baptism, they gave me a big celebration. I was dressed in white, and they poured holy water on me. I had to cross myself.”⁵²

At this stage of the research, it has not been possible to establish whether such a large bunker existed on the site mentioned or not. However, the witness seems to have missed the truth. Would fifty conspirators have participated in a baptism organised in the “middle of a bunker” during the German occupation? Due to the high risk of exposure, this was unlikely. The baptismal register of the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Parish in Nowa Góra records that Rudolf Grossfeld was baptised only on 30 March 1945⁵³. However, it should not be ruled out that the baptism

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: “The priest from the village of Nowa Góra was a friend of ours. Before the war, the priest often came to our house because he liked the Jewish-style fish made according to my mother’s recipe.”

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Archiwum Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej pw. Zesłania Ducha Świętego [Archives of the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Parish] in Nowa Góra, The Baptismal Register, vol. 10, p. 75, no. 4, Certificate

occurred during the occupation, but the official entry was made later. It is worth recalling that on 10 October 1942, the Germans issued a ban on administering the sacrament of baptism to Jews, with severe penalties for doing so. Consequently, as of that date, it was only done in secret.⁵⁴

The Priest

Who was the priest described in the testimony? “He studied medicine. As his mother asked him to, he suspended his studies to become a priest. He suspended medicine and instead studied theology and philosophy. He knew Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. This priest taught me Hebrew. I know Hebrew precisely because of this priest [...]. This priest was very fond of Nietzsche’s philosophy. He believed that a Jew should not convert to Catholicism, among other things, because it is difficult for a Jew to understand the phenomenon of the Trinity.”⁵⁵ He was probably Father Franciszek Mirek,⁵⁶ the parish priest in Nowa Góra from 1932 to 1946. In 1929, he defended a doctoral dissertation in philosophy (specialisation: sociology) entitled “Ludwik Gumplowicz’s Sociological System,” written under the supervision of Florian Znaniecki. In 1930, he obtained his habilitation based on the dissertation “Sociological method. A contribution based on a critical analysis of Tardé’s and Durkheim’s methods.” He then taught sociology at the University of Poznan in the

of Holy Baptism of Rudolf Stanisław Grossfeld, Nowa Góra, 2005, n.p. The entered date and place of birth: 16 February 1923, Nowa Góra. Also another date of Rudolf Grossfeld’s birth appears in the sources: 12 June 1923. See ANK, 29/446/19182, Copy of a notarial deed of 12 July 2002, Tychy, 12 April 2006, n.p. The baptism witnesses were Anna Wójcik and Stanisław Kot. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019, <https://opowiedziane.ipn.gov.pl/ahm/notacje/24703,Moskal-Janina.html> (accessed 1 December 2021).

⁵⁴ See M. Grądzka-Rejak, “Zapewniają, że szukają tylko Boga i swego zbawienia.” Konwersje wśród Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie w latach 1939–1942,” in *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici*, p. 107; T. Domański, “Konwersje Żydów na katolicyzm w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie na przykładzie diecezji kieleckiej,” *Polish-Jewish Studies* 2 (2021), pp. 211–212.

⁵⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁵⁶ Nowhere has the information that he “studied medicine” been confirmed. Father Franciszek Mirek was born on 20 June 1893 at Naprawa. After completing primary school, he continued his education at St Anne’s Gymnasium. He graduated from it with distinction in 1912. That same year he entered the Cracow Theological Seminary and began studying at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. He completed his theological studies in 1916, but received his certificate of completion of studies on 8 January 1921, and his master’s degree in theology in 1931 at the University of Warsaw. See J. Kościelniak, “Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym jako fundament budowania wspólnoty w ujęciu księdza Franciszka Mirka (1893–1970),” *Studia Socialia Cracoviensia* 2/11 (2014), p. 179.

early 1930s. Between 1933 and 1937, he taught at the School of Political Science at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University. He was undoubtedly a highly educated person who fits the picture of a priest presented by Rudolf Grossfeld.⁵⁷

From 1946, Father Franciszek Mirek was the administrator of St Joseph's parish in Cracow. In 1949, he was arrested by the communist authorities⁵⁸ and falsely accused of collaborating with the Germans during the war when he was the parish priest in Nowa Góra. He remained in prison until 5 May 1951.⁵⁹ Some studies state that his release from prison resulted from a guarantee given by Jews who had benefitted from his help during the occupation (or had been hidden by him).⁶⁰ However, it has not been possible to confirm this information – there is no information about this in the documentation of Father Mirek's case.

Grossfeld, on the other hand, describes in his testimony the post-war help given to the 'priest', but the narrative is entirely different (more sensational). After the war, Grossfeld – according to him – was arrested as a former Home Army soldier but was released thanks to the intervention of an unknown 'colonel' of Jewish origin.⁶¹

⁵⁷ P. Borowiec, "Ks. Franciszek Mirek (1893–1970)," in *Jubileuszowa księga nauk politycznych*, ed. A. Zięba (Cracow, 2015), pp. 309–317; M. Pabich, T. Peciakowski, *Ks. Franciszek Mirek (1893–1970)*, www.kul.pl/ks-franciszek-mirek,art_81065.html (accessed 30 March 2021); J. Kościelniak, "Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym," pp. 179–180.

⁵⁸ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, hereinafter AIPN Kr), 07/2694, vol. 2, Decision of the investigating officer of the WUBP in Cracow to detain Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 9 December 1949, p. 73; *ibid.*, Decision of the military district prosecutor on the provisional arrest of Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, p. 75. The arrest order was issued by the Military Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Cracow, but as the case did not fall within the competence of a military court, it was transferred to the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal in Cracow.

⁵⁹ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Order for the release of Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 5 May 1951, p. 185.

⁶⁰ Borowiec, "Ks. Franciszek Mirek," p. 310; Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*, p. 104.

⁶¹ "When the Russians came, the bunker was demolished and I went to live in the priest's room. And suddenly all the members of the Home Army disappeared. The Russians, on the other hand, were perfectly aware of who belonged to the underground and who belonged to the communist opposition, and they were slowly catching them all [...] They also got to me. The Russians threw me into prison. A Russian officer with the rank of colonel comes to me in prison once and says: 'You are a Jew'. I denied it, and the Russian said: 'Don't tell me fairy tales. You are a Jew'. I renounced my Jewishness because I wanted to be in solidarity with the AK. I had served them for four years, I felt like a member of the AK [...]. But the colonel replied: 'You'd better admit that you are Jewish, I'll be able to protect you and you'll get away with it'. He could, after all, very easily check if I was a Jew, all I had to do was drop my trousers. 'You idiot, said the colonel, after all I am a Jew too, I want to save your life'. Then I came to

All the others from the Home Army who were thrown into prison with me were killed by the Soviets. I was free. I wanted to help the priest, thanks to whom I was alive. The Russians were increasingly targeting this priest; they tried to seize and imprison him [...]. I reported to the Jewish community in Cracow. I told them everything that had happened to me. I asked them: "You must help me save this priest because he saved my life. I owe it to him." I said to the priest: "None of ours is alive anymore. The Russians will come for you too. You must run away quickly." The priest agreed. We disguised him as a woman. The Jewish community helped to disguise the priest as a woman. We convinced him, together with someone from the community, that he had to run away. We dressed him up in a nun's clothes. We smuggled him in a nun's clothes to one of the kibbutzim in Cracow. I belonged to the general Zionist kibbutz (Yitzhak Grünbaum's Ha-Cionim Ha-Klalom). This priest was with me in the kibbutz in Cracow for two months but disguised as a woman, no longer as a nun. He never went outside the kibbutz until Bricha came to the kibbutz,⁶² and we smuggled the priest after two months to Germany, to Munich. He later served as a priest in that city. He made it far in the Munich church hierarchy. We continued to keep in touch. Every year, I sent him crates of oranges from Israel. We were in constant contact, and we sent books. I even invited him to Israel. He came to Israel for a week in 1968, and I took him on a trip all over Israel. A tree was planted in Yad Vashem, named after him.⁶³ He liked it very much in Israel. We wrote to each other all the time until his death. He died at the age of 85. When I was in Germany, I visited his grave. Since I speak German, I asked the priest in whose church my priest served to show me where he was buried.⁶⁴

my senses, I admitted that he was right, that I was a Jew." YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁶² This Hebrew word, meaning "escape" or "sudden departure," was used to describe the mass movement of Jewish Holocaust survivors emigrating illegally to Palestine with the unofficial approval of the authorities, as well as the structures that organised this emigration. See B. Szaynok, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski – 1945–1947," *Przegląd Polonijny* 2 (1995), pp. 31–46; N. Aleksion-Mędrzak, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski w latach 1945–1947," part 2, *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 3 (1996), pp. 39, 42.

⁶³ No information was found in *The Righteous Among the Nations Database*, available on the Yad Vashem Centre's website, to confirm such a distinction honouring the priest.

⁶⁴ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

No documentation has been found to corroborate the story of the priest's escape. Franciszek Mirek died in Poland on 16 March 1970 and was buried in Łętownia.⁶⁵ Also, the two vicars (Fr Stanisław Wcisło and Fr Józef Piotrowski), who worked in the Nowa Góra parish during the occupation period, died in Poland several decades after the end of the war.⁶⁶

Grossfeld stated that the 'priest' helping him was an 'AK commander'. This sentence is also not confirmed by historical sources and studies.⁶⁷ It probably stemmed from Grossfeld's belief that Fr Mirek was influential in the local AK milieu. According to Michał Siwiec-Cielebon, the organiser and commander of the conspiracy in the area of Krzeszowice was Józef Ryłko, during the war of 1939, a company commander of the 12th infantry regiment.⁶⁸ Before him, the first structures were organised by Emanuel Leon Jakubiczka.

During the interrogations at the Voivodeship Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP) in Cracow in December 1949, Father Franciszek Mirek stated that in 1942 he had met Józef Ryłko, who then informed him of the existence of a "military organisation of the Home Army" on the parish premises and asked that "the rectory be used as a place for the organisational contacts taking place."⁶⁹ According to Fr Mirek, "At first, Ryłko was reluctant to say who was the organiser in our area, but finally, he mentioned the name of Lt. Col. Jakubiczka, who was unknown to me personally. At the same time, Ryłko told me that he had come to me for this purpose, to ask me, on behalf of Jakubiczka, to agree, if necessary, to hold a small meeting at the rectory in Nowa Góra."⁷⁰ The priest agreed. Then, at Ryłko's request, he had a conversation with the administra-

⁶⁵ Kościelniak, "Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym," p. 180.

⁶⁶ Father Stanisław Wcisło ministered in the parish of Nowa Góra from 1941 to 1943. He died on 27 October 1983 in a hospital in Bielsko-Biała, and was buried on 31 October 1983 at Hecznarowice. Father Józef Piotrowski worked at the parish in Nowa Góra from 1942 to 1947. He died on 21 February 1998. See Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*, p. 111.

⁶⁷ Under canon law, a Catholic priest could not be a "commander" of the AK. He could, however, minister as a chaplain.

⁶⁸ M. Siwiec-Cielebon, "Pułk Piechoty Ziemi Wadowickiej. (Z dziejów tradycji i nazwy 12 pułku piechoty)," *Wadoviana. Przegląd historyczno-kulturalny* 6 (2001), pp. 63–64.

⁶⁹ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 30 December 1949, p. 44.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, pp. 15–15v.

tor of the quarry in Miękinia, Rudolf Tegel, so that he “could supply explosives for the AK organisation.”⁷¹ Father Mirek testified that his contacts with the AK were limited to making the rectory available for meetings or exchanging documents.⁷² In 1945, he talked with Józef Ryłko about his disclosure: “Ryłko came to me as a liquidation commissioner and stated that the AK no longer existed and that everyone in Krzeszowice would be revealing themselves tomorrow. When I asked him whether I should also reveal myself, he answered that I was not a member of the Home Army and that I did not carry a gun, so I had no reason to reveal myself. Since then, all my contacts with the Home Army have been severed.”⁷³

The surviving sources show that Father Franciszek Mirek also helped other Jews.⁷⁴ According to the testimony of Zygmunt Noworyta, who looked after the Feiler child, in 1945, the child’s father, Bernard, told him that Fr Mirek had helped him while he was in hiding⁷⁵, and: “Fr Mirek, when we didn’t want to give the child back, he made us return it.”⁷⁶ Information about the help given to the Feiler family by the parish priest in Nowa Góra was also confirmed by Jan Gwizdała.⁷⁷

In Hiding

Grossfeld said little about his ‘service’ in the Home Army. He mentioned that he distributed the newsletter *Nasza Polska* (Our Poland).⁷⁸ Instead, he discussed his relations with other AK soldiers: “The attitude of the rest of the AK members towards me was like that towards a Catholic. I felt that I was a member of this big family. To my great surprise, no one denounced me.”⁷⁹ The following testimony is particularly

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 30 December 1949, pp. 44–45. This information was confirmed during his hearing by Rudolf Tegel. See *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Rudolf Fegel (Tegel), 13 December 1949, p. 22–22v.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 20 June 1949, p. 95v.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, p. 16.

⁷⁴ For more on this topic, see the last part of the article.

⁷⁵ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Zygmunt Noworyta, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, p. 102.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Gwizdała, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, pp. 107–107v.

⁷⁸ During the research, it was impossible to determine whether such a periodical actually existed.

⁷⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

interesting: “From 1942 to 1945, I served in the AK. I was one of them. Thanks to them, I am alive. I felt a debt of gratitude to them. The truth is that in the Home Army I found my love, a Polish woman active in the underground. I wanted to marry her.”⁸⁰

In the last part of his testimony, Grossfeld recalled:

Everything was already ready for the wedding with my Polish girlfriend. But after the pogrom in Kielce, everything woke up in me; I started to understand that this was a severe problem. I still felt Jewish. I saw the hatred of Jews among the Poles. I saw what the reality was in communist Poland. And I asked myself if I would be able to live in such a country as a Catholic. I told the whole truth to my girlfriend about how I felt about Poles and about Poland. I said that I wanted to go to Israel. She replied that she wanted to go with me. However, I advised her against going to Israel. I said that I loved her, but she was still young and should not risk her life by going to a foreign country. We even went to her father and told him everything. And we parted with heartache. After parting with my girlfriend from AK, I joined a kibbutz in Cracow.⁸¹

As mentioned in the introduction, Grossfeld did not give any names of the people who helped him. Who were the soldiers he described to whom he “felt a debt of gratitude”? Who was his “Polish girlfriend”? The story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s rescue is completed in the testimony of Janina Moskal (née Kot). According to her, during the German occupation, this young man was hidden on the farm belonging to her parents, Stanisław and Agata Kot, in Czerna⁸² no. 77.

It should be stressed that Janina Moskal did not directly witness the help her parents gave to Jews. She was born on 6 June 1944. Her whole narrative about the period of occupation and aid is based exclusively on her conversations with her mother, Agata Kot,⁸³ conducted a few years after the end of the Second World

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² In March 1943, Czerna was a village of 1,279 inhabitants. *Amiliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichniss*, p. 23.

⁸³ According to Janina Moskal, her mother Agata Kot was born on 26 January 1905, and at the age of nineteen married Stanisław, eight years her senior. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

War. The author of the testimony emphasises that she did not discuss the subject of hiding Jews with her father: “I never discussed this subject with my father; usually with my mother, and only one-on-one.”⁸⁴ Let us add, however, that the fact of Grossfeld’s hiding at the Kot family farm is also confirmed in the questionnaires of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.⁸⁵ In one of the documents found there, we read: “1) Citizen Kot Stanisław – farmer, born 28 April 1897, residing at Czerna no. 77, p[ocz]ta (post town) Czerna, kept Grosfeld Rudolf, aged 20, and Herzig Pelagia, aged 19, at his home from 1942 until liberation, providing them with accommodation and food free of charge and protecting them from being handed over to the Nazi oppressors. After liberation, the citizens of Jewish origin mentioned above left for Cracow and then for Palestine.”⁸⁶

The contemporary route between the Pentecostal church in Nowa Góra (which Grossfeld reached after escaping from the camp) and the Kot family’s house is more than two kilometres long, so the passage between these sites could have taken the “half an hour” mentioned in Grossfeld’s testimony. Moreover, we know that Janina Moskal’s father, Stanisław Kot “Jarząb,” was a soldier of the Home Army, a corporal, serving in a communications platoon in the sub-units of the so-called “Krzeszowice grouping” of the Home Army. Thus, he could have had “some kind of a communication device” – which Grossfeld mentioned years later in his testimony given to Yad Vashem.

Based on the interview with Janina Moskal and her memoirs, we can only answer a few questions about the circumstances of the help given to the Jewish population by the Kot couple in Czerna. When asked when the first Jews came to the farm, Agata Kot’s daughter said that in 1940 or 1941. She estimated that “30 to 40 people” were hiding in their home at various periods.⁸⁷ According to a 2018 testimony, “some people would leave, and others would come, but there

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ After the end of the Second World War, the Main Commission conducted surveys twice. In 1968, the questionnaires addressed to the field administrations also contained a question about the help given to Jews by Poles and the repressions used by the occupier.

⁸⁶ AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

were never more than ten people [at any one time].”⁸⁸ Jews hid in the house’s attic, cellar,⁸⁹ and barn.⁹⁰ Most were kept temporarily. They entered a ‘special tunnel’ or fled into the grain in moments of danger.⁹¹ Agata Kot prepared and brought food to them.⁹² Stanisław Kot arranged for identity documents and baptismal certificates. We read in the memoirs: “He also had a deal with the parish priest in Nowa Góra parish, who would give Catholic baptisms with a document confirming the act.”⁹³ The parish priest at the Pentecostal parish in Nowa Góra from 1932 was – as we already know – Father Franciszek Mirek. Let us add that, according to Bronisław Rzepecki, during the occupation period Stanisław Kot was a member of the church council in this parish.⁹⁴ Thus, Janina Moskal’s testimony of her father’s collaboration with the ‘parish priest’ seems credible and may explain how Grossfeld found shelter on the Kots’ farm. Perhaps Grossfeld remembered the ‘special tunnel’ she referred to as the ‘bunker’.

According to Janina Moskal’s testimony, her father was the village leader during the occupation (this has not been confirmed; it seems that he could have been a sub-leader or become a leader towards the end of the war – witness Jan Maciejowski testified before the court during the post-war criminal proceedings that he was “the leader in the village of Czerna during the occupation”).⁹⁵ Mother Agata was in charge of the farm. Jan Wójcik – Agata’s sister’s son – and Agata’s father, Ludwik Kłeczek, also lived in the house.⁹⁶ Agata Kot’s sister Anna and her

⁸⁸ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 6.

⁸⁹ Janina Moskal only testified about hiding in the basement in her written memoirs (*ibid.*). During the interview she said that the Jews were mainly hidden in the attic and in the stable.

⁹⁰ House no. 77 in Czerna consisted of two rooms, a hallway, a granary, a pantry, an attic and a cellar. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² “Mum baked a lot of bread daily; there was milk, eggs, flour, potatoes and fruit. When there was a shortage of flour (usually before the harvest), mum would go to Golenice, where there was a bakery, and you could buy bread. She carried this bread in a bundle on her back.” Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ See Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*.

⁹⁵ AIPN Kr, 502/1034, Minutes of the main hearing before the District Court of Cracow, 30 October 1947, p. 61v–62. Also the entries in the chronicle of the Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites in Czerna confirm this information. See J.M. Marszałska, *Odnowa i trwanie. Klasztor Karmelitów Bosych w Czernej w latach 1900–1945* (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 168–169.

⁹⁶ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 1; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

husband Romuald Wójcik, as well as – according to Janina Moskal – “perhaps” neighbours, also knew about the hiding of the Jews.⁹⁷ We do not know to what extent other household members and relatives were involved in helping the Jews. Did they accept it? What was their attitude towards the Jews in hiding?

In her memoirs, Janina Moskal recounted the atmosphere of fear surrounding the hiding of Jewish fugitives. She described the dangers to which her parents were exposed and testified that, while carrying bread, Agata Kot was beaten by a “German patrol.”⁹⁸ “One day at the end of 1944, Dad received a message that the Gestapo knew about the Jews hiding in Czerna and planned to send patrols to inspect the houses in the village. Fortunately, that did not happen.”⁹⁹

Considering the analysed sources, it must be concluded that we know little about Agata and Stanisław Kot’s motivations.¹⁰⁰ Was the help selfless? Did the Jewish fugitives pay for the food, the shelter, and the documents they were provided with? We do not know if the Kot couple took other forms of remuneration. We do not know the identity of most of the people hiding with them. Janina Moskal recalled: “three people stayed with us until the end of the war, two young girls named Sala and Pesia and a young boy named Rudolf.”¹⁰¹ The man’s name was Grossfeld. “My mother very often talked about this Rudek, who, at the age of 19, escaped during the manhunt in Krzeszowice [sic!] when the Gestapo took away his parents and his 13-year-old brother.”¹⁰² Let us recall that based on source searches, it was also possible to determine the surname of “Pesia.” It was Pelagia Herzig (b. 1924?), who was one year younger than Grossfeld. After the Second World War ended, she probably migrated to Israel.¹⁰³

Janina Moskal wrote on one page of her memoirs: “I learned then about my parents’ cooperation with the underground – when our house became a life-

⁹⁷ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

⁹⁸ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ “Mum felt sorry for these people,” said Janina Moskal. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰¹ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 7. “Sala, she lived here probably – I don’t know – eight [months] or even up to a year. And there was a person that mum called Pesia, and she stayed probably only five months. And then there was Rudolf, who was here for a longer period, I think, three years, until 1945.” AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal.

¹⁰² Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 7.

¹⁰³ AIPN, 2448/431, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

belt for the drowning.”¹⁰⁴ During an interview given on 3 September 2019, she stated: “my dad had an acquaintance, his name was Jan Maciejowski, he was the previous village leader, and they had contacts through him, I think, but I don’t know what organisation it was.”¹⁰⁵ As written before, Stanisław Kot ¹⁰⁶ “Jarząb” was a soldier of the Home Army,¹⁰⁷ a corporal; he served in the communication platoon¹⁰⁸ in the so-called “Krzyszowice grouping.”¹⁰⁹ After the end of the war, on 13 October 1945, he revealed himself and was registered as a former Home Army soldier.¹¹⁰

It seems that he had already been involved in underground work since 1940. In the memoirs of Władysław Ryński, alias “Don Pedro,”¹¹¹ we read:

On 8 January 1940, I started working as a labourer in the quarries in Miękinia [...]. In February 1940, I met the so-called “qualified worker” Mr Kot (whose name was probably Józef [sic!]), a lance corporal in the Polish Army, who lived in Czerna (on the left side of the road from Father Siemaszko’s plant, in the direction of the water mill). He enjoyed the authority of the workers and willingly discussed the war with them, his patriotism and his attitudes to the Germans. I agreed with Mr Kot and supported his arguments, so a closer acquaintance was made. When he learned from me that I had taken part in defence of Lvov in

¹⁰⁴ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Stanisław Kot, name of father: Florian, name and maiden surname of mother: Maria Razmus, date of birth: 27 April 1897. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow; Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe Wojskowego Biura Historycznego (Central Military Archives of the Military Historical Bureau, hereinafter CAW), 1777/90/728, p. 165. Janina Moskal gave 1898 as the year of his birth. See AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰⁷ According to the registration and verification list of the Liquidation Commission for the affairs of the former Home Army Southern District, Cracow County, Krzeszowice District, kept at the CAW (IX.3.34.47), he joined the Home Army in February 1943 (quoted in http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=956 (accessed 2 October 2020)).

¹⁰⁸ http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=190 (accessed 3 February 2020).

¹⁰⁹ http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=190 (accessed 3 February 2020).

¹¹⁰ AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow.

¹¹¹ Henryk (Stanisław) Władysław Ryński “Don Pedro,” born on 9 June 1922 in Krzeszowice, son of Władysław and Tekla née Gleń. Revealed himself on 6 October 1945 as a soldier of the Home Army. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow.

September 1939 – in the early spring of 1940 (it was still snowmelt), he invited me to a meeting in Czerna on a Sunday at noon. After the meeting, he invited me to his house. Apart from his wife, two men in civilian clothes were there (of military behaviour) aged about 30–40. Mr Kot introduced me to them, and they gave their nicknames and military ranks (as far as I can recall, one was a lieutenant and the other a captain) and added that the officers were interested in the defence and surrender of Lvov in September 1939. At the outset, I learned from these officers that they belonged to the secret military organisation called the Union of Armed Struggle [...]. They asked me if I wanted to join the Union of Armed Struggle. Pleasantly surprised, I naturally agreed. [...] A meeting was arranged with me for the following Sunday, during which I and others were trained to organise intelligence and carry out various forms of diversion and sabotage. The liaison officer between the abovementioned officers and me was temporarily Mr Kot (I do not recall his pseudonym) [...].¹¹²

It seems that the author of the memoirs made contact with Stanisław Kot. The searches did not reveal another Home Army soldier of that name with the rank of a corporal living in the village of Czerna. In the testimonies analysed, Janina Moskal mentioned that her father worked in the quarries in Miękinia,¹¹³ and it was there that Ryński met his future “liaison officer.”

There are, however, difficulties in establishing the details of the “dad’s acquaintance” mentioned by Janina Moskal, namely Jan Maciejowski. He may have been Jan Maciejowski, born on 11 September 1896 in Nowa Góra, the son of Piotr and Małgorzata née Dury. Before the Second World War outbreak, he held the post of the mayor in Nowa Góra; during the occupation, probably from March 1940, he was involved in underground activity – he was an ensign with the pseudonym of “Siekiera,” the commander of the 3rd company.¹¹⁴ After the war, he lived in Nowa

¹¹² *Armia Krajowa i Szare Szeregi*, pp. 174–176.

¹¹³ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹¹⁴ AIPN Kr, 0120/1, Subject card file of the Civic Militia’s Voivodeship Headquarters in Cracow, quoted in: http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=2562 (accessed 29 November 2019). See also AIPN Kr, 010/9296, Summary of material concerning Jan Maciejowski, obtained by investigation, intelligence and agents’ operations, Chrzanów, 4 July 1955, p. 6; B. Rzepecki, *Rody nowogórskie*, Nowa Góra 2020, pp. 194–196.

Góra at number 127. He belonged to the Polish People's Party and was under investigation conducted by the PUBP in Chrzanow.¹¹⁵

However, it seems more likely that this is Jan Maciejowski, born in 1901, the son of Jakub and Anna, who testified in court as a witness during the post-war criminal proceedings that he was the head of the village of Czerna.¹¹⁶ He lived in Czerna at number 92.¹¹⁷ Let us add that, according to the questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, GKBZHWP), he also helped the Jewish population: "Citizen Maciejowski Jan – a Polish State Railways traffic officer – born 9 May 1901, residing at Czerna no. 92, post town Czerna, kept at his home from 15 June 1941 to 1 July 1941, and then, in the house of the St Zyta Association, from 2 August 1941 until liberation, a Jewish woman, Olga Szczepańska, aged 25, with her daughter, Janina Szczepańska, aged 3, providing them with free food and supplying them with the so-called Kennkarte obtained from Polish sources. After liberation, the two Jewish women left for Cracow to join their surviving family residing at 9a Grabowski Street. Then they left for France."¹¹⁸ According to the memoirs compiled by Władysław Bazarnik, alias "Zosik," help to the Jewish women living on the so-called Aryan side under an assumed name, Olga (mother) and Janina (daughter) Szczepański,¹¹⁹ was provided by the Maciejowski mentioned

¹¹⁵ AIPN Kr, 010/9296, Notice, Chrzanow, 6 March 1952, p. 3; *ibid.*, Analysis of a registered case for observation codenamed "Wójt" concerning Jan Maciejowski, Chrzanow, 1 April 1958, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ AIPN Kr, 502/1034, Minutes of the main hearing before the District Court in Cracow, 30 October 1947, p. 61v–62.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Indictment of Agata Kowalska, Cracow, 30 April 1947, p. 33v.

¹¹⁸ AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

¹¹⁹ The website *armiarajowakrzeszowice* reads: "Szczepańska Olga – the mother, and Szczepańska Janina – the daughter, were in hiding from 1939 to 1945 in Czatkowice Górne in the house no. 161, at Mr Stanisław Pawłowski's, with the knowledge of the village leader Żbik Franciszek, the baker Płaczek Piotr, who helped them to survive, saving their lives. Szczepańska Olga – was the wife of a Cracow-based lawyer called Lachs, who disappeared in Lvov in September 1939. Szczepańska Olga and her daughter Janina, born in 1938, left Cracow after the Germans entered, taking refuge in Czerna at the home of, among others, the village leader Maciejowski. As a result of the related dangers, she is moved to Czatkowice Górne. In the meantime, her daughter Janina is baptised at the church in Krzeszowice, obtaining a birth certificate under the name of Szczepańska Janina. Between 1943 and 1944, the fear of danger forced Olga Szczepańska and her daughter to leave Czatkowice. She sought refuge in Cracow, finding no favour or help. Distraught and heartbroken, she met Stanisław Płaczek, a son of Piotr the baker, on the street in Cracow. Riskily evading German patrols and inspections, he brought them back to Czatkowice to the home of Mr Stanisław Pawłowski, supporting them with food. After

above, as well as Stanisław Płaczek “Granit,”¹²⁰ Piotr Płaczek, Stanisław Pawłowski (Czatkowice, house no. 161), Zofia Stachowska and Franciszek Żbik (the village leader of Czatkowice).¹²¹

According to Janina Moskal, other Jewish refugees were also hidden in the nearby Nowa Góra. In her memoirs, we find the following: “His [Rudolf Grossfeld’s] uncle Berek, his mother’s brother, also survived. They were sent home to us, but there was only room for Rudek, and Berek found a place with friends in Nowa Góra.”¹²² Janina Moskal did not give the name ‘Berek’ in her testimony. However, we know that he was Bernard Feiler, hiding in Nowa Góra – together with his wife Bela (Bailla, Lola) Feiler, née Klinger, his brother Chaim (Henryk) Feiler with his wife Sala, née Grosman, and her brother Isaak (Ichak Szaja) Grosman – at the Chucherko family (Zofia and Stefan and their children Eugeniusz, Henryk and Leopold).¹²³ Szaja Grosman probably died in December 1944.¹²⁴ The others survived the period of the German occupation.¹²⁵ In hiding, the Feiler family had

the expulsion of the Germans in 1945, Szczepańska Olga and her daughter moved to Cracow. When she could not find her husband after the end of the war, she and her daughter left for France to look for his family, as that was where he came from. They settled down in Paris. She often remembered the people of Czatkowice with gratitude. Before she died in 1990, she obliged her daughter Janina to visit their whereabouts, their shelter during the war, and to find and thank the people who gave them shelter and saved them from death at the hands of the Germans,” http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 6 October 2020). See also *List Janiny Cohen*, handwritten, http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 6 October 2020). According to the information on this website, Janina visited Poland in the early 1990s.

¹²⁰ Stanisław Płaczek “Granit,” born on 30 January 1921 in Czatkowice, son of Piotr and Wiktoria née Masłowska. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs.

¹²¹ Unfortunately, despite the requests directed to the present owner of the typescript of the memoirs compiled by Władysław Bazarnik, it has been impossible to obtain the original of this source and to verify it, http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 23 January 2020).

¹²² Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, pp. 7–8.

¹²³ AIPN, 392/426, Letter from Eugeniusz Chucherko to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, based in Warsaw, Cracow, 6 April 1984, pp. 3–4. A description of the help given can also be found in the questionnaire of the GKBZHwP, See AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHwP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, p. 373. It is worth noting the significant differences in the spelling of the names of those rescued that appear in the sources.

¹²⁴ During the searches, the records of the court proceedings for the declaration of his death could not be found. See also D. Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vol. 2, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018), p. 117.

¹²⁵ The Chucherko family was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal in 1983: mother Zofia Chucherko née Mazur (1897–1978), father Stefan Chucherko (1900–1970), sons Eugeniusz

a baby, which Father Franciszek Mirek helped to hide in the house of Zygmunt Noworyta (apparently, he placed the baby in a small box or basket and took it to the farm of a childless couple in Miękinia).¹²⁶ The Noworyta family looked after the child for several months until the German occupation ended. Then (probably not without resistance), Zygmunt Noworyta returned the child to his parents.¹²⁷

According to Janina Moskal, 'Berek' was Grossfeld's mother's brother.¹²⁸ During the searches, it was not possible to confirm their relationship. However, it should not be ruled out. Berek and Rudolf came from the same village. They probably knew each other. After the Kielce pogrom, Bernard Feiler, his wife and his son left Poland in late July and early August 1946. That same year they reached France. In 1951, they arrived in Sydney, Australia, on the Italian ship "Soliente."¹²⁹

Conclusions

In the last part of the 1995 testimony, the Holocaust survivor Rudolf Grossfeld described his trip to Israel: "with a priest who was taken by Bricha from a kibbutz in Cracow [*sic!*],¹³⁰ I fled to Germany. We crossed borders with Czechoslovakia, Germany, France,¹³¹ and Israel. There I met my Jewish wife from Lvov. She survived the war in a convent in Lvov. We have been married since 1947. We have one

(b. 1924), Henryk (b. 1927), and Leopold (b. 26 June 1931). See *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu. Polska*, vol. 1, ed. by I. Gutman, S. Bender, and S. Krakowski (Cracow, 2009), p. 96. It is worth mentioning that Józef Kaczmarczyk, Helena Stypulczak, Józef Górecki, and Zofia Górecka-Krzeszowiak, among others, were also honoured for helping the Jewish population in Czerna and the surrounding villages. *Ibid.*, p. 269, 702, 198.

¹²⁶ See: <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/my-father-tried-to-kill-me-to-save-our-family-from-hitler/news-story/589b9484f75a7e9184db8a4420ef2c76> (accessed 6 December 2021).

¹²⁷ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Zygmunt Noworyta, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, pp. 102–102v.

¹²⁸ Bernard Feiler, born on 5 August 1911 in Nowa Góra. USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980. Rudolf Grossfeld's mother, Yokheved Grosfeld, née Shtraus, was born in Krzeszowice in 1895. Her parents' names were Eliakim Shtraus and Breina Grinbaum. YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld; <https://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5627622&kind=1>, accessed on 5 December 2019. In his testimony, Rudolf Grossfeld said: "My whole family perished. I didn't find anyone after the war. I know that I have a distant relative, an uncle, who lives in the USA." YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld. Perhaps he was referring to Bernard Feiler, who lived in Australia.

¹²⁹ USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980.

¹³⁰ As written above, in the light of the available sources, the information about the priest's escape does not seem credible.

¹³¹ USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980.

daughter and a grandson and a granddaughter.¹³² In Israel, Grossfeld worked as an official at the Ministry of Education. He died in 2019. The funeral took place at the Neve Jam kibbutz (north of Israel, next to Haifa).¹³³ According to Janina Moskal's testimony, more than half a century earlier, before leaving Poland, Rudolf Grossfeld still visited Agata Kot.¹³⁴

The story of Rudolf Grossfeld's rescue shows the involvement of the rural population, Home Army soldiers and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in saving Jews. This case illustrates how complicated is the research on Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation, including issues of individual help. Yet, despite acquiring a few sources, many questions concerning the relationship between those who helped and those who were hidden remain unanswered.

Rudolf Grossfeld's testimony, analysed in the article submitted in the 1990s, is somewhat chaotic and of little documentary value on its own. Why does his story contain so many moments passed over in silence? Did the author of the testimony conceal certain information? Janina Moskal reported in her memoirs that when she was twelve years old, her mother told her that she and her brother Leopold were the biological children of Rudolf Grossfeld.¹³⁵ So was the AK girl described by the survivor, with whom he fell in love, Agata Kot? Did the relationship with her influence the content of the testimony Grossfeld gave?

It is also impossible not to draw attention to the reliability of some of the information given in the testimony. Did Grossfeld really – as he claimed – “serve” in the AK? It should not be ruled out that one of the Home Army men could have hidden him. Furthermore, did the fact that Stanisław Kot was a soldier of the Polish Underground State influence his giving aid to Jews? Did the underground organisation support him in this case? We can only conjecture that some of the

¹³² YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹³³ This information is available online in his obituary. See www.facebook.com/misholeyhaim/posts/1427935194016164/, accessed on 31 January 2022. My thanks to Dr Ewa Węgrzyn for this tip.

¹³⁴ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 8; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹³⁵ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 11; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019. According to the passport file, Leopold Kot was born on 1 January 1946. AIPN Kr, 37/120404, Passport file's EAKR call number: Kot Leopold, son of Stanisław. However, Małgorzata Kot said during a meeting with the author of this article on 19 September 2019 that her father was in fact born earlier, probably in autumn 1945.

people mentioned in this material who were involved in helping Jews may have been in contact with each other and supported each other in some form. This was probably the case with Father Franciszek Mirek and Stanisław Kot.

On the basis of available archival documentation, it has been possible to confirm that Stanisław Kot rescued at least two people of Jewish origin: Rudolf Grossfeld and Pelagia Herzig. Nevertheless, this does not mean that more people did not benefit from his help. It is worth adding that the Kot family were not awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medals. Why did the survivors not disclose that they had been helped? Who else tried to hide in the area? What was the later fate of these people? What were the attitudes of the local community towards Jewish fugitives and those who helped them? Perhaps searches in foreign archives and new witness testimonies could help to answer some of these questions.¹³⁶

In conclusion, reconstructing the story of Rudolf Grossfeld's rescue can contribute to further research into the process of post-war documentation of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation.

¹³⁶No testimonies or diaries of Rudolf Grossfeld, Bernard Feiler or Olga Szczepańska (Lachs) were found in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute.

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SUMMARY

This article reconstructs Rudolf Grossfeld's survivor story during the German occupation. The aim was to learn what knowledge is conveyed by the survivor's testimony, being the primary source used for the analysis, and to what extent it is objective. The analyses of the source can contribute to research into the process of post-war documentation of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation.

KEYWORDS

Aid to Jews • Holocaust • Home Army • Catholic Church

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THE REAL PRICE OF HELPING JEWS UNDER GERMAN TERROR. A FEW FAMILY HISTORIES FROM THE ENVIRONS OF CRACOW*

The wartime ordeal of the Kołatacz, Janczarski and Grzybowski families¹ and the tragic story of the Kamrat family from Cracow, appearing in the background, are the stories of people subjected to state oppression by the German

* The text was published for the first time in Polish as: M. Korcuć, “Dwadzieścia sześć miesięcy przestępstw przeciw Rzeszy Niemieckiej. Historia kilku rodzin spod Krakowa”, in *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici. Wokół pomocy Żydom w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. M. Wenklar (Cracow, 2021), pp. 217–277. The author would like to thank all those who helped him to gain access to some of the archival material. Above all, the thanks go to Tomasz Domański, Sebastian Piątkowski, and Roman Gieroń.

¹ The story of help given to the Kołatacz family during the war has already been mentioned in various published studies. In particular, mention is due to Genowefa Janczarska’s testimony of 19 March 1993 [the typescript is available in the Yad Vashem Archives (hereinafter YVA), M. 31/5758]. This testimony has been published as: G. Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” in *Czarny rok... czarne lata...*, ed. W. Śliwowska (Warsaw, 1996). The author will generally refer to the text from the archives (G. Janczarska. The testimony of 19 March 1993). It should be also noted that another testimony of hers, containing ample relevant information, also available at the same place (YVA, M. 31/5758), has not been published. It bears the title *Relacja o pomocy udzielonej rodzinie Kołataczów ze Skąty k. Ojcowa w czasie II wojny światowej* (Cracow, 2 February 1993). Bogdan Janczarski’s testimony of 1985, in this case, has also been published (*Relacje o pomocy Żydom udzielanej przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 2: *Dystrykt Krakowski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, ed. S. Piątkowski [Lublin–Warsaw, 2020], pp. 488–489). It is worth mentioning that the activity of the Janczarski family was described relatively extensively by K. Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” *Ilcusiana* 20 (2018), pp. 49–112. Their help for the persecuted is reflected in the databases on aid given to the Jewish population, e.g. on the Virtual Shtetl website of the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews. See N. Aleksion, *Historia pomocy – Rodzina*

Reich. This is not a paper about Polish-Jewish or Jewish-Polish relations. It is a story about the fate of citizens of the Republic of Poland subjected by the German occupier to terror and racial segregation. It is a story about the fate of human beings subjected to totalitarian enslavement. It is also the story of heroism and attempts to survive made by entire families in the face of the barbaric practices carried out by the German terror apparatus. It is a story about ordinary inhabitants of villages near Cracow who became criminals in accordance with the laws imposed by the German Reich.

The crimes of some consisted in trying to survive the war in defiance of the German Reich. The crimes of others were basic humanity and the fact that they *illegally* gave shelter to people who, according to the German Reich, had been denied the right to life. The forcibly executed regulations imposed by the German Reich, creating a new amoral order for the population of a conquered subjugated though undefeated Poland, are the key to understanding all these events.

Casual Acquaintances

Before the Second World War and the German occupation, Jews and Christians lived side by side in Poland. Jewish families guarded their world against Christians, while Christians were used to Jews being a separate part of a shared society for centuries. Some went to synagogues, others went to Catholic churches. Among Poles and Jews, there were people who concentrated only on themselves and their loved ones, but there were also those who were more sensitive to the needs of others. Among all sides, there were decent, honest people who possessed a well-developed sense of morality often rooted in their respective faiths. There were,

Janczarskich, <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-rodzina-janczarskich>) or on the following webpages: *Mapa Pamięci. Historia Żydów w Małopolsce, Rodzina Janczarskich*, <http://mapapamieci.pl/historie/rodzina-janczarskich-2/> (accessed 22 May 2023). Basic information can be found in the study: *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holokaustu*, ed. I. Gutman (Cracow, 2009). These events were also covered by M. Florek, "Społeczność ziemi miechowskiej/powiatu miechowskiego w akcji pomocy Żydom 1939–1945," in *Pomoc świadczona ludności żydowskiej przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945 ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Kielecczyny*, ed. by J. Gapyś and A. Dziarmaga (Kielce, 2016), pp. 84–85. A pretty biased presentation of this story was given in the study *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, for example D. Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 2018), p. 127. We will return to comments on this subject in further footnotes. For example, the 2014 documentary film *Lisi schron* (dir. A. Lelito) also tells the story of these events.

of course, also dishonest people. There, as everywhere, were rich and poor. Both communities were united by a shared living space populating the same cities and towns. In a manner typical for human relations, there was cooperation as well as disputes and conflicts. Sometimes friendships were born, whereas among others, on occasions, tensions emerged. The lines of disagreement did not, by any means, correlate exclusively around national and religious divisions, although there was no lack of such situations. The most significant field of mutual contact between Poles and Jews was economic exchange and trade. Children could play with each other in the town's streets and at school. Many liked and respected each other here, while others fell into conflicts and quarrels. Again, the lines of the dispute did not necessarily coincide with national or denominational divisions. In terms of the political system, in the Second Republic, everyone was equal before the law – regardless of religion or nationality, irrespective of mutual likes and dislikes.

The Jewish Kołatacz family and the Polish Janczarski and Grzybowski families came from neighbouring localities, the small town of Skała and the surrounding area. Genowefa Janczarska later recalled:

Skała is a small town, which it has remained until today. At that time, it was a trading centre for the surrounding villages. Therefore, there were a lot of Jewish and “Christian” shops, stalls and warehouses. A market was held here every Wednesday, attracting farmers from the surrounding villages. It was possible to borrow money at an interest rate or against a pledge from a Jewish acquaintance. You went to Skała to see the doctor and the chemist. Everyone knew everyone here.²

The Janczarskis and Grzybowskis thus knew the Kołatacz family only rather vaguely. They recognised each other on the street and exchanged pleasantries. Correctness and standard friendliness stemmed from the generally understood politeness and standards for the good upbringing of the time rather than any closer relationship. These contacts had no reason or opportunity to develop into more intimate relations.

² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 1, Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 283.

The Janczarski family consisted of Roman Janczarski, his wife Genowefa, née Makowska,³ and their children. They lived in Wysocice, in a hamlet called Bocieniec, on the edge of the Cracow–Częstochowa Jura Upland. They bought a farm there in 1935,⁴ which was not very far from Skała, some 10 km away. Nowadays, a drive along the voivodeship road takes only a dozen or so minutes. Back then, a horse-drawn carriage ride could take perhaps half an hour.

The Janczarski family had three children. In 1931, their first-born son Bogdan was born; in 1933, Eugeniusz; and in 1935, the youngest child, a daughter, Romana. By the outbreak of war, they had built a small wooden house, a cowshed and stable, and a shed enclosing the courtyard. It was underneath this shed that, after the outbreak of war, a space would be made for a shelter designed as a precaution against any local fighting.⁵

The house was situated on the edge of the village. Roman Janczarski, a former soldier of the Polish Legions, became a forester. Most of the 12-hectare plot was covered with forest and rocks, and only 4 hectares were suitable for cultivation, but this was only possible after a part of the forest had been cleared. “We could not afford any other property,” recounted Genowefa Janczarska years later.⁶ Later, during the war, it turned out that this proximity of the forest and the hilly terrain was conducive to illegal activities the Germans forbade. At the same time, it also caused the appearance of various other uninvited guests.⁷

The family of Icchak (Icek) Shmuel (Shmul, Samuel) Kołatacz⁸ and Bejła (Bajła), née Lewkowicz,⁹ ran a general merchandise shop located on the market square

³ According to a note compiled by Natalia Aleksiu for the Polin Museum, Genowefa Janczarska was “the daughter of a mill owner from the nearby Imbramowice; she attended a secondary school in Olkusz before the war, where she had Jewish friends.” See Aleksiu, *Historia pomocy*.

⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 4, Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” pp. 286–287.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy udzielonej rodzinie Kołataczów ze Skały k. Ojcowa w czasie II wojny światowej*, Cracow, 2 February 1993; YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 4, Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 286.

⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁸ Sometimes an incorrect version of the surname is given: Kołatacz, as in note on Roman, Genowefa and Bogdan Janczarski, and Władysław and Irena Grzybowski in *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 244; Florek, “Społeczność ziemi miechowskiej,” p. 85.

⁹ *Mapa Pamięci*.

in Skała. This is where Icchak came from. He was probably born in 1888, and Bejla was a year older than him. She came from Busko-Zdrój, some 80 kilometres northeast of Cracow.¹⁰

The Kołatacz family had five sons and a daughter. We know little about Aron and Motel (Mordechaj). Aron was born in 1922, and Mordechaj in 1925.¹¹ The daughter Masza was born in 1917.¹² She appears as Miriam in the studies, but she always appears as Masza in the sources, including in letters written by her.¹³ Other sons include Abraham (Adam), born in 1918,¹⁴ Samuel (Sam), born in 1926,¹⁵ and the youngest, Eliezer, born in 1930.¹⁶

Masza Kołatacz described the family business as “a big shop,” in Skała.¹⁷ “I used to buy a lot from them: underwear, stockings, shoes and other things,” recalled Irena Grzybowska, a resident of the nearby Ojców, with whom fate would reunite Masza during the war.¹⁸

Before the war, the Janczarski and Kołatacz families had a nodding acquaintance with each other. They would meet only as customers with vendors.¹⁹ They did not need to enter into any closer contact – because there was no opportunity to do so. “When passing through Skała, we always did some shopping. Most often

¹⁰ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, hereinafter AIPN Kr), 057/1064, Personal file of the UB officer Edward Majos [Salomon Kołatacz] (hereinafter 057/1064), Special Questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 26.

¹¹ *Mapa Pamięci*; Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” pp. 102–103.

¹² Her brother gave the following personal data in a postwar personal questionnaire: Kołatacz Maria, born on 31 December 1917 in Skała. AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Special Questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*; YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*; see Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” p. 127; YVA, M. 31/5758, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

¹⁴ His brother gave the following personal data in a post-war personal questionnaire: Kołatacz Abraham – Kowalski Roman, born on 15 May 1918 in Skała. AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Special Questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 28.

¹⁵ Salomon Kołatacz was born on 20 September 1926 in Skała. AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Special Questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 20.

¹⁶ His brother gave modified personal data in a post-war personal questionnaire: Kołatacz Ludwik, born on 30 March 1930 in Skała. AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Special Questionnaire. Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 28).

¹⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf of 31 December 2017.

¹⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska of 26 April 1993, p. 1.

¹⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

we bought from the Kołatacz shop, because the prices there were not exorbitant. [...] We bought what we needed and set off home.”²⁰

Under the Rule of the Reich

The Germans captured Skała and the surrounding area on 6 September 1939. On the same day, they burnt down several buildings in the town, including the synagogue on Długa Street,²¹ and German soldiers murdered Aron Kołatacz on 5 September 1939 – he was one of the first victims of the German occupation in Skała.²²

The Janczarski family – like most of society – tried to survive the night of the occupation, concerned mainly with the safety of their children. They wanted to survive regardless of the tragic events that were part of the great history. They also suffered from the increasingly difficult living conditions under the occupation, being affected by German regulations ruining the previous economic cycle, forced deliveries imposed on the population, and so on. “We lived through the first months of the occupation relatively peacefully, on the sidelines of the war events, so to speak. We ran our farm [as before], and my husband worked as a forester in the Ojców forestry division.”²³ New household members came under their roof. Two refugees from the western areas of Poland (incorporated directly into the Reich by the Germans) found shelter with them. From there, the German authorities were already expelling both Jews and Poles from their homes and flats in 1939. They resettled them to the area of the just created General Governorate (German: *Generalgouvernement*, Polish: *Generalne Gubernatorstwo*, GG). At the Janczarski family’s home at the time, there were Maria Pytel, a highlander resettled from the vicinity of Żywiec, and Wojciech Kwiatkowski, “a Silesian insurgent who came from somewhere in the Zagłębie region.”²⁴

²⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 1, Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 283.

²¹ I. Cieślak, “Krótka historia pewnego pierścionka,” *Więź* 2–3 (2010), pp. 95–102; <http://wiesz.com.pl/2018/11/01/krotka-historia-pewnego-pierscionka> (accessed 9 July 2019); P. Trzcionka, *Skała. Zarys dziejów miasta* (Cracow, 1994), p. 143.

²² Yad Vashem, Central Database of Holocaust Victims: Aron Kołatacz, born 1922 in Skała – a form filled out by his sister, Masza Kołatacz-Wolf. Central DB of Shoah Victims’ Names (yadvashem.org): Aharon Kołatacz; Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” pp. 102–103.

²³ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 1 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 283).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The Kołatacz family was successively affected by all the restrictions and prohibitions imposed by the occupying forces on Jews in the GG. Despite these circumstances, Icchak S. Kołatacz was undoubtedly one of the active members of the local community. On 30 January 1940, a Jewish Council was established in Skała. Szmul Kamrat became its chairman. However, Icchak S. Kołatacz became a member of the Council and head of the Philanthropic Department. His name appears on various letters from that time when the Germans still allowed Jews limited organisational activities. He was also among the signatories of, for example, letters sent on behalf of the Committee for Aid to Poor Jews at the Board of the Jewish Community in Skała (April 1940),²⁵ to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (2 June 1940). The latter concerned the impossibility of running a kitchen for the poor Jewish population and philanthropic activities: "Such work is only possible mainly through AJDC subsidies, to which we could add our modest donations. We do not lack honest people for social work, and we could carry out exemplary work with the help of the AJDC."²⁶ On 18 July 1940, Icchak S. Kołatacz alarmed the Cracow branch of the Joint as the chairman of the Welfare Committee: "Our forces are completely exhausted. We are facing starvation and disease due to cramped housing. Save us – it is not too late yet!"²⁷

However, the increasingly difficult situation of the Jews in the town in the first years of the occupation turned out to be nothing compared to what the occupation authorities began to implement as part of the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Question and the genocidal Aktion Reinhardt. Dawid Nassan, one of the Jews resettled to Skała from Cracow, describing the dramatically difficult living conditions, stated bluntly: "But all this is a trifle and unimportant given what happened later. In 1942, life was quite tolerable until 1 September [1942]." Then, the Germans set about completely annihilating the Jewish population living in Skała.²⁸

²⁵ Kocjan, "Zagłada skalskich Żydów," p. 58.

²⁶ As cited in: *ibid.*

²⁷ As cited in: *ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁸ The testimony of Dawid Nassan in *Olkusz. Zagłada i pamięć. Dyskusja o ofiarach wojny i świadectwa ocalałych Żydów*, ed. by I. Cieślak, O. Dziechciarz, and K. Kocjan (Olkusz, 2007), pp. 306–309.

The Germans carried out the first action, which began the destruction of the Jewish population in Skała, on Saturday, 29 August 1942.²⁹ Józef Cyra,³⁰ a Home Army soldier who lived in the vicinity of Ojców and Skała (among other things, he drew up reports for the command on the situation in the area), wrote:

The Germans resettled most Jews from Skała, and shot the sick and infirm in their homes. Standing near my family home in Przybysławice, I saw the resettled Jews being driven towards Słomniki on fifty-two carts, which I counted. Some Jews, however, took refuge with Polish families living in Skała and a few Jewish families in the surrounding villages with farmers they knew.³¹

After these events, however, the Germans allowed some of the Jewish population to live in Skała again. They also agreed to the continued activity of the Judenrat and the Jewish Order Service, which was a ploy to bring back some Jews who had managed to hide in and around the town after this first action. The second and final action to destroy the remaining Jewish population in Skała was carried out shortly afterwards: on 10 November 1942.³²

The Jews in hiding began to return to their homes, recalled Cyra. This was the case until 10 November 1942, when Germans, the blue police and the juniors of the so-called Baudienst forced labour surrounded Skała once again so that none of the Jews still in the village could escape. They were herded to the market square, where many were shot on the spot. The others were taken to Wolbrom. There they were held for a fortnight in a swampy suburban area, and then they were taken away to be exterminated in a direction unknown to me. [...] On the following day, [...] the head of the Jewish community, together with a few captured Jews who had not been previously captured, were taken to the local Jewish cemetery, where the Germans shot them. As I have already mentioned,

²⁹ Kocjan, "Zagłada skalskich Żydów," p. 75.

³⁰ The author gives an incorrect date of 26 instead of 29 August 1942.

³¹ *Wspomnienia Józefa Cyry*, quoted in "Adam Cyra, List do redakcji *Gazety Krakowskiej*, 8 lipca 2006 r.," in *Olkusz. Zagłada i pamięć*, pp. 220–221.

³² Kocjan, "Zagłada skalskich Żydów," p. 81.

the surrounding rural population gave shelter to several Jewish families from Skała.³³

The Kołatacz family also belonged to this group. Until the autumn of 1942, the Kołatacz family lived in Skała. They had already been through tragic experiences. Icchak and Bejla had already lost two sons. As mentioned above, the Germans murdered Aron Kołatacz at the beginning of the war, in September 1939.³⁴ Motel (Mordechaj) Kołatacz was killed in the summer of 1942.³⁵ He had already been escorted by the Germans to be shot but managed to escape in unknown circumstances.³⁶ After these events, in 1942, the family consisted of six people: the parents and four children. Two of them were adults: the eldest of the siblings, 25-year-old Masza, and 24-year-old Abraham (Adam). Samuel was 16 years old at the time, and Eliezer was 12.³⁷

The Janczarski family received the news of the tragedy of the Jewish population being murdered by the Germans with horror. “In 1942, news of the annihilation of this small Jewish world from Skała began to reach us. The systematic extermination of the ghetto began the mass shooting of the Jewish population, the robbery of abandoned property.”³⁸ They already knew that the German orders were aimed at the murder of all Jews. They had seen the brutal methods used to find fugitives who, against German orders, managed to hide outside Skała. “Not a day went by without some fugitive being captured, the Polish blue police was involved, the village leaders had to provide horse-drawn carts to transport the convicts. We looked on helplessly,” Janczarska recounted.³⁹

The Kołataczs also joined such fugitives. Eventually, all six of them – albeit in different places – survived the liquidation actions in Skała. They went into hiding.

³³ *Wspomnienia Józefa Cyry*, pp. 220–221.

³⁴ Yad Vashem, Central Database of Holocaust Victims' Names: Aron Kołatacz, born 1922 in Skała – a form filled out by his sister, Masza Kołatacz-Wolf. Central DB of Shoah Victims' Names (yadvashem.org): Aharon Kołatacz; Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” pp. 102–103.

³⁵ *Mapa Pamięci*; Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” p. 103.

³⁶ AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Application for employment of Edward Majos, 30 April 1945, p. 15.

³⁷ AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Special questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, pp. 20, 28.

³⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 2 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 283).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

They benefitted from the help of people who had overcome their fear of German threats to murder anyone involved in any form of support for the hiding Jews. They first took shelter with Mieczysław Korzonek from Skała.⁴⁰ He illegally hid them on his farm on Wolbromska Street. The old Kołatacz family and three of their sons found shelter with him. Daughter Masza tried to survive elsewhere. She found refuge in a makeshift hiding place in the Grzybowski family's flat in Ojców,⁴¹ and we will return to her story later.

Decision

It soon became apparent that, unfortunately, the Korzonek house would not be safe for the Kołatacz family in the long run. News circulated around the town that “the Germans are systematically searching all the buildings in Skała, liquidating the few Jews who have survived and the Poles who are giving them shelter.”⁴² Exposure was punishable by the death penalty by the Germans, both for those in hiding and those who were giving shelter. In such a situation, the Kołatacz family and their benefactor had to be rescued from disaster, and Korzonek began looking for a new place to hide them.

Having no better idea, he brought them secretly to Wysocice, to the Janczarski house. Why there? It isn't easy to definitively prejudge what made him decide. He knew the Janczarski family, but there were no special ties. The Janczarski family regarded him as an honest man. No more, no less. He took the Kołatacz family to the new place at night. He chose side roads and then rode straight through “the Ściborski forest, from where it was close” to the Janczarski home. Despite the risks, he used his son to take this dangerous route: “in front of the slow-moving cart, the teenage son of the Korzonek family rode his bicycle insuring its passage.”⁴³

The situation utterly took aback the Janczarski family. Mieczysław Korzonek, having secretly brought a group of strangers to their house, confronted them with

⁴⁰ Mieczysław Korzonek's involvement in rescuing the Kołatacz family was omitted from the notes describing the fate of the Kołatacz family (Note on Roman, Genowefa and Bogdan Janczarski, and Władysław and Irena Grzybowski, *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 244).

⁴¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴³ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 3 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 285).

a *fait accompli*. He did not warn them in any way, despite knowing that they, too, were under the threat of death from the German authorities for any form of help to the Jews. When he arrived with the Kołatacz family, Janczarska was absent at the farm or the village.

When I returned home two days later, I found the least expected guests in the house – she recounted years later without embellishment – [...] the old Kołatacz, the head of the family, his wife Bajla and three sons, two of them – Adam and Samuel growing up to be young men, the third already married, nicknamed “Czarny” because of his dark hair.⁴⁴ The wife of “Black” was hiding in the neighbouring village of Władysław – with a farmer.⁴⁵

The Janczarskis were not mentally prepared for such a burden. They faced a dramatic challenge. To agree meant that instead of trying to survive the war safely, they and their family would choose a life of constant, extreme stress. This was not about a one-off act of bravery but about the daily struggle for the survival of a group of strangers. In other words, it was about a prolonged, continuous death threat. They understood that taking in ‘illegal’ refugees under their roof would destroy the family’s entire previous existence and put their children’s lives and their own at stake. Under such circumstances, does the head of the family have the right to put his spouse and children at risk of death out of a noble impulse towards others? This is not an easy question.

Already in the General Governor’s regulation of 31 October 1939 on combatting of acts of violence in the GG, the Germans introduced the death penalty for committing unspecified “acts of violence,” identified simply as “disobedience to regulations or orders of the German authorities.” All such acts, freely defined by the occupation authorities, were to be punished by death.⁴⁶ By 1941, the Germans

⁴⁴ It is possible that in her testimony, many years after the events, Janczarska mistakenly slightly switched the names of the younger Kołataczs. Everything indicates that Adam was the adult called “Black.”

⁴⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 2 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 284).

⁴⁶ W. Uruszczak, “Perwersyjne funkcje niemieckiego ‘prawa’ w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie,” *Z Dziejów Prawa* 12 (2019), p. 688. Regulation on combatting the acts of violence in the General

already forbade any contact with Jews and any forms of aid to them without the appropriate German permits – precisely on pain of the death penalty (the Third Regulation on the residence restrictions in the General Governorate of 15 October 1941). Hans Frank explicitly announced that “Jews who leave their designated district without authorisation shall be liable to the death penalty and that the same penalty shall be imposed on persons who knowingly give such Jews a hiding place,” without distinguishing whether this referred to random occurrences or longer-term hiding of the persecuted.⁴⁷ This made the situation in Polish lands under German rule radically different from the conditions of occupation in western Europe.

The Janczarski family was therefore obliged to report to the German authorities even the mere arrival of a Jewish family at their home. And the very fact that they did not do so, when they took the Kołatacz family under their roof (“they knowingly gave shelter”), exposing them to death at the hands of the Germans. After the first years of the occupation, they knew that in such situations, Germans often acted at their own discretion and murdered people on the spot. The occupiers did not give any consideration to who was “at fault” or to what extent. The only chance to avoid criminal responsibility was to report information of an intention to commit a crime at the nearest police station or to the German gendarmerie. The regulation mentioned above of the occupation authorities “to combat acts of violence in the General Governorate” of October 1939 also introduced the death penalty for those who, “having received information of an intention to commit a crime,” failed to report it to the authorities.⁴⁸ The Janczarskis were already familiar with cases in which people could not endure such pressure and preferred to pay for their safety with someone else’s life.

Governorate of 31 October 1939 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die Besetzten Polnischen Gebiete* (The Journal of Regulations of the General Governor for the Occupied Polish Territories), No. 2, 2 November 1939.

⁴⁷ The Third Regulation on the residence restrictions in the General Governorate of 15 October 1941, *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* (The Journal of Regulations for the General Governorate), No. 99, 25 October 1941, p. 593.

⁴⁸ Regulation on combatting the acts of violence in the General Governorate of 31 October 1939. *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die Besetzten Polnischen Gebiete* (The Journal of Regulations of the General Governor for the Occupied Polish Territories), No. 2, 2 November 1939. See Uruszczyk, “Perwersyjne funkcje,” p. 688.

In the neighbouring village, during the occupation, worked the forester R. – Janczarska recounted years later – a good forester, but an even greater martinet, something he always took great pride in. In 1942, he came across a primitive hiding place in the forest – a shack with a few Jews. As I heard, food was brought to them by a farmer from Tarnawa. In fear for his own family, the forester reported his discovery to the police station. The unfortunate fugitives were tracked down, loaded onto a cart and shot.⁴⁹

Janczarska understood that the forester was driven by fear of the Germans applying collective responsibility. She realised that he feared that he and his family might pay with their lives for their knowledge of the illegal hiding place of Jews in the forest. However, she did not hide that neither she nor her husband did not intend to justify such behaviour. “My husband never spoke to forester R. about this, but he never shook hands with him again.”⁵⁰ This forester was later severely punished for cooperating with the Germans – a grenade was thrown into his flat, and the explosion crippled him.⁵¹

Now they had to choose whether to help the Kołatacz family or to tell them to leave. Even the latter solution would have been incompatible with the German laws in force in the GG. After all, the Germans had imposed an obligation to report the illegal stay of fugitives outside the places designated by the authorities.

This was a matter of the utmost trust. For the Janczarskis, Korzonek was “a person they knew somewhat, and he was worthy of trust, it seemed.”⁵² However, Janczarska stressed that Korzonek “did it without prior notice or agreement, asking

⁴⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 6 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 288).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Krzysztof Galon recounted the fate of this forester: “A local forester was suspected of denouncing [a Jew hiding in the forest – M.K.]. For this and other sins, he was severely punished; just before the end of the war, someone threw a grenade into his flat, as a result of which he was seriously maimed. From the time of that murder until the assassination attempt on the forester, I lived with a vague sense of remorse because I blamed myself for the death of the Jew; I knew something about his hiding place, although I did not share this information with anyone. The forester knew the forest like the back of his hand, and as he was a great martinet, he must have notified the police about the hiding Jew.” See K. Galon, “Pasąc krowy pod Wolbromiem...,” in *Czarny rok... czarne lata...*, ed. W. Śliwowska (Warsaw, 1996), pp. 266–267.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 285.

them to give shelter to the Kołatacz family for a few days.”⁵³ The Kołatacz family asked for the same: “they begged to be given shelter, at least for a few days.”⁵⁴

Janczarska had never hidden how much of a burden the decision to illegally provide for the Kołatacz family actually was.

We knew that the Kołatacz family were telling the truth. And also that they were in mortal danger. We were surprised by all this; my husband and I did not know what to do. The easiest thing to do now [i.e. decades later] would be to write that we decided to hide the Kołataczs without hesitation, driven by human solidarity. But that would not be true. The Kołatacz family were not our family but only somewhat familiar merchants from Skała. They were Jewish, and hiding Jews was punishable by the death penalty of the whole family.⁵⁵

Awareness of the threat was reinforced by information acquired only a little earlier.

After all, only a few days ago, when my husband and I were in Cracow, we read the placards hanging in all the streets with the names of Poles who had been shot or deported to concentration camps for helping Jews. Even [for] such things as giving a slice of bread to a Jewish child. On one such placard, we saw a familiar name.⁵⁶

Now they had to make a decision themselves. And they understood that there would be no turning back.

Often the illegal hiding of Jews is written about as if the whole problem boiled down to giving them a roof over their heads. Meanwhile, agreeing to help meant that the Janczarski family not only put themselves and their children at risk of death but also faced the challenge of secretly providing for the hidden people twenty-four hours a day. Day after day. This meant a complete reorientation of the family's entire

⁵³ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁵⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 2 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 284).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

life to underground activity - in the full sense of the word. In doing so, it must be understood that people are not pieces of furniture that can be stored somewhere, locked up and not looked after. Even hiding an illegal weapons cache (which easily captures the imagination and is treated as a display of heroism) is incomparably easier. It requires courage and secrecy to store inanimate objects. Nothing more. When hiding people, every day is a new act of heroism requiring constant hard work, ingenuity and reacting to what is happening in the neighbourhood.

The Janczarski family understood perfectly well that the secretly kept people had to be provided not only with shelter but also with sleeping conditions, daily food, water, and the possibility to maintain personal hygiene. Hence, a system for waste disposal had to be taken care of as well. Even under conditions of everyday life in a time of peace and the absence of any threats, the sheer cost of year-round maintenance of additional five (and then six) people would be a challenge for any family. So what about wartime when aid was given under the threat of death?

Besides, there is always a risk associated with the unpredictability of human nature. Who is able to plan how the people in hiding will behave, what their psychic endurance is, and whether they will be able to adapt to the conditions of the conspiracy when one false move, one ill-advised move (even if caused by fatigue or inattention) can bring annihilation not only to those in hiding but also to those giving shelter? One and the other have since been linked by a common fate of “criminal” interdependence.

Only a detailed analysis of all these circumstances and the baggage of responsibility that the people providing such assistance took on themselves and their loved ones makes us realise how dramatically difficult for the Janczarski family was the moment when they decided to provide illegal, hazardous help to, after all, strangers.

Everyone knew what the policy of the German repressive apparatus was. The Kołatacz family were also aware that their presence brought upon their hosts the threat of the murder of their entire family. They said that they could no longer stay at the Korzonek's, because the Germans, while combing the farms, were murdering not only the Jews but also the Poles who were helping them.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

It would be an ahistorical absurdity to reduce such situations to the dimension of “relations between Poles and Jews” without considering the occupying authorities’ orders and conduct. The fundamental problem in this situation was the fear of the cruelty of German terror and not who was who in a society segregated by the German Reich. Only by noticing in these dramatic moments the meeting of two groups of people subjected to German oppression can we understand the reality of those times. A fundamental moral question is whether, under the pressure of the occupation law, the Janczarskis should primarily be guided by the welfare of strangers or by their duty of concern for the safety of their children. Today, years later, would we have the right to condemn the Janczarski family if they had refused? Wouldn’t the threat to the lives of an entire family with children be a sufficient reason for the hosts to explain, in accordance with their conscience, that they would not accept such a challenge? Today, in a free world, it is easy to formulate one-sided judgements. Would some “historian” not be found who would qualify this kind of refusal with a light hand as an expression of resentment, prejudice or... anti-Semitism? We shall not know an answer to this question.

Years later, Janczarska made no secret of how important it was while making the decision that the Kołatacz family come to a farm already equipped with an underground shelter (more on this below). Without embellishing the facts, she courageously admitted straightforwardly: “I doubt whether without it [the shelter] we would have been able to make a responsible decision to protect the Kołatacz family.”⁵⁸ This is a seemingly marginal element of the whole story, which was nevertheless crucial. The fear of German brutality, the feeling of helplessness in the face of the violence of the occupying forces and the daily ease of killing did not allow us to forget that the Janczarskis were also under the power of the state machinery of the German Reich. They had to take into account that at any moment, a criminal commando could turn up to murder those illegally hidden and those illegally giving shelter. The existence of a hiding place offered at least a chance to hide Jews.

It was November 1942, and it was hard to imagine people utterly unprepared for the approaching winter somewhere in the forest. “We realised, however, that

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

the Kołatacz family, deprived of a suitable hiding place, was doomed.”⁵⁹ While the Janczarski family deliberated, “at that time, the Kołatacz family was sitting hidden in a room and waiting for our decision.”⁶⁰

In the Janczarskis’ memoirs, it is clear that the most critical problem was the threat posed by the occupation orders and not the question of who was who or what his nationality was. Hence, the couple’s decision was not an element of the “Polish-Jewish relations” that are sometimes thoughtlessly generalised today but an example of the challenges faced by people subjected to the actions of the German state terror. “We decided to take in the Kołatacz family after a long deliberation, full of dilemmas, with a compressed heart. In fact, we were deciding not only about this family’s life but also [about] our own life.”⁶¹ The Janczarski family understood that by doing so, they were also posing a direct threat to their three small children: Bogdan, Eugeniusz and Romana. “We did this not without fear because from that moment on also our lives and the lives of our three underage children [...] were in constant danger.”⁶² Years later, Bogdan, the eldest son, also recalled that that moment could not have been easy for his parents. “The parents were put in a tough situation: putting the lives of our entire family at risk.”⁶³

Throwing them [the Kołataczs] out of our house would be equivalent to passing a death sentence [on them]. About this we had no doubt. The Kołataczs no longer had a way of returning to Skała; they knew no one in the area and were defenceless. So what was to be done? We told the Kołataczs that they were staying with us, at least for a while, [in fact] we knew that it meant until the end of the war.⁶⁴

At the same time, the Janczarskis were well aware that the situation on the fronts did not herald a quick end to the German occupation, quite to the contrary. In the autumn of 1942, the Germans were still at the height of their power, ruling almost

⁵⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁶⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 4 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 285).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁶³ YVA, M. 31/5758, B. Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji o pomocy udzielonej Kołataczom z miasieczka Skała k. Ojcowa*.

⁶⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 4 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 286).

the entire continent. The front was far to the east of Poland. The Germans decided the to-be or not-to-be of millions of people in our part of Europe.

The hellish entanglements created by the reality of the German occupation meant that the Janczarskis' positive decision was not easy for the Kołataczs either: "they received our words with undisguised joy, but also with disbelief. They did not know us enough to trust us fully."⁶⁵ Nothing looked like the free world here.

By the time they arrived at the Janczarski family, the Kołataczs were already like hounded animals, pursued by all the services of the German state. The Janczarski family – not yet. According to the German segregating orders, the Kołataczs – as Jews – already had no right to stay outside the places designated by the Germans. Living outside the ghetto, they became criminals ruthlessly prosecuted by the German repressive apparatus. As Poles – although treated as subhumans by the Germans – the Reich still did not explicitly deny the Janczarskis the right to live in their own home. It did, however, condition it on their compliance with the German orders. By taking on the role of those who illegally hid people from the authorities, the Janczarski family placed themselves, in the light of the law imposed by the Reich, in the role of criminals subject to prosecution by the state services.

And then there was another problem mentioned earlier. The Janczarski family understood that, from now on, the burden of the additional maintenance of the Kołatacz family of five would also fall on their shoulders.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, they were in a difficult material situation. They had lost a large part of their possessions during the hostilities in September 1939. "It took us even longer to wonder whether we would be able to feed such a large number of people from our modest farm. In addition to our family (five people) and the five-member Kołatacz family, we also had to consider two more people who had already found shelter in our house."⁶⁷ These guests could be given legal shelter in the house, and they could help them and participate in running the farm. Unfortunately, this was impossible when people hid illegally, and food had to be provided for them anyway.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, B. Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁶⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 3 (Janczarska, "Lisi schron," p. 285).

⁶⁸ They recalled Wojciech Kwiatkowski: "He helped us with the work on the farm; in those difficult and hungry times, everyone had to earn their daily bread". See *ibid.*

“If anyone does not realise what it means to have such a number of people to feed, even modestly, let them look at the painting depicting the Last Supper. We were supposed to feed twelve people every day,” concluded Janczarska.⁶⁹ And although the Kołataczs assured them that they had the monetary resources to buy food, in practice, they could not cover their living costs.⁷⁰ Even a partial contribution to the cost of food did not mean a fee for help. It would be difficult to estimate anyway. “It was a great help to us that the Kołatacz family had some savings and, **until they were exhausted, they contributed certain sums to their food** [emphasis mine – M.K.]”⁷¹ These savings could not last for long. The same applied to the funds obtained from the Kołataczs’ items stored with neighbours and acquaintances, which were sold by Masza’s guardians (the Grzybowski) on her instructions and transferred to the Kołatacz family hiding with the Janczarski family.⁷² Masza Kołatacz described: “When my parents arrived at Mr and Mrs Janczarski’s in November [19]42, they had white linen and some leather. Father also had gold coins, which he gave to Mr and Mrs Janczarski to cover the cost of our food. Unfortunately, **the reserves were quickly exhausted, and despite this, Mr and Mrs Janczarski kept us until the end of the war** [emphasis mine – M.K.]”⁷³

Bogdan Janczarski underlined: “for my work for the Kołataczs, none of them offered me the slightest remuneration.”⁷⁴ “We did it selflessly, from humanitarian motives,” Genowefa Janczarska stated years later.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, this side of the Janczarski story is not accurately reflected in a recent publication describing these areas of the General Governorate (published in Poland under the title: *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*).⁷⁶

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

⁷⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁷¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 13 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 294).

⁷² YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁷⁶ In the publication mentioned above, entitled *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, the history of the Janczarski, Grzybowski, and Kołatacz families is mentioned in the section presenting Miechów County. Unfortunately, instead of the enormity of the sacrifice of these two families to save their fellow citizens, which is apparent from the available records, the

No descriptions do justice to the scale of the undertaking of hiding a large family from the Germans for more than two years. Even the first decision to take the Kołatacz family under their roof, to let them into the house before any long-term decisions were made, was fraught with risk. The Janczarski family had to ascertain whether Korzonek managed to bring them in secret, without witnesses. “Above all, we tried to establish whether someone followed the Kołataczs or saw them near our house. Because then the catastrophe for all of us might not have been far away.”⁷⁷

The Logistics of a Shelter

Another problem was the necessary work to convert the shelters so that people could hide in them permanently. The shelter eventually had to be adapted to the new needs. After all, it was one thing to have a room built to protect a family from air raids and another to have a hiding place for people living there in a manner invisible to visitors. “The most important thing now was to hide the Jews from unauthorised eyes” – mainly because the Janczarski house was visited by many of the forester’s customers.⁷⁸

As mentioned above, the Janczarski family lived on the edge of the village in a hamlet called Bocieniec. “The hiding of the Kołatacz family was possible owing

reader’s attention is diverted to other areas, contrary to the realities of the time. In just a few sentences devoted to these events, there is room to emphasise twice the material resources of the Kołatacz family – as if this was crucial to the provision of help. The rescued family is referred to as the “wealthy Kołatacz family,” which is ungrounded insofar as they were, in fact, reasonably wealthy before the war. While escaping the German genocide, they saved a small part of this wealth because they left some of their belongings at other people’s homes and took some with themselves. Within the framework of a mere catchword description, the author found space to mention that “the Grzybowski remained in contact with the Janczarski family, took the belongings of the Kołatacz family and sold them, using the obtained funds for hiding.” On the other hand, he did not point out that these resources were few and were very quickly exhausted. They only helped in the first period, covering a part of the cost of feeding the Kołatacz family, who were dependent on the Grzybowski and Janczarski families on a daily basis. Such a description leads to belittling the scale of the sacrifice these two families made to save their Jewish neighbours. And yet it is all too clear from the interlocking testimonies of Genowefa Janczarska and Masza Kołatacz, as participants in these events, that after the resources were quickly exhausted, the Kołatacz family continued to be dependent on the people who were hiding them – until the end of the war. See Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” p. 127.

⁷⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 3 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 285).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

to the location of our farm away from other human settlements.⁷⁹ They benefitted from this during earthworks and, later, in their daily existence.

What was our biggest problem before the war: the remoteness from other human settlements, the considerable distance from the church in Wysocice, the school and the shop turned out to be our most tremendous boon during the war. Around our homestead, just outside the windows of the house, grew a dense forest with equally dense undergrowth. Therefore, from whichever side one approached our house, it could be seen only from a distance of a few dozen metres, well-hidden among the pines, oaks, birches and ash trees. The forest hid our wartime secrets well.⁸⁰

Indeed, the proximity of the forest and the hilly terrain were conducive to hiding practices forbidden by the occupying forces.⁸¹ “The first part of our fox shelter was built while the September campaign was still in progress [in 1939]. This is because we thought [...] that the long-term persistence of the war front in our area could not be ruled out. And then a solid shelter for the whole family would be handy. It was built under the shed mentioned above because it was the only place where underground work could be done secretly.”⁸² It was a cellar measuring about 4 × 3.5 metres. Multiple layers of clay covered the ceiling made of thick wooden logs. Its height had to be limited. “Our hiding place was tiny and cramped. We sat huddled together; it was impossible to straighten up,” wrote the Kołataczs’ daughter.⁸³ This was their main shelter. Descending into the dark pit, the refugees did not know how long they would have to hide there. “We realised quite quickly that the Kołatacz family’s stay with us was not a matter of days or weeks but of many months or a few years perhaps.”⁸⁴ In the end, they spent more than two years in the shelter.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁸² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 8 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 289).

⁸³ YVA, M. 31/5758, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

⁸⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 8 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 289).

Under the new circumstances, the Janczarski family secretly rebuilt the shelters. Making use of their observations of the foxholes, they decided that for safety reasons, these shelters also needed multiple exits. “Therefore, my husband drew up a plan for underground passages, hiding places and facilities. It was then implemented, with great difficulty, over several weeks in late 1942 and early 1943. Its contractors were exclusively my husband and my eldest son Bogdan, who was strong and clever even though he was [only] 12 years old at the time. Much of the underground work was, of course, done by the Kołataczs.”⁸⁵ For a young boy like Bogdan Janczarski, this was essentially work and duties transcending his possibilities:

We began adapting the shelter and, most importantly, camouflaging the surroundings of the entire farm. At the age of only 12, I took part in this work. To protect the shelter from detection by the police dogs, which the Germans often used, I started building simple pens for raising rabbits – first in the room where the entrance to the shelter was and then against the barn wall. We used paraffin to confuse any possible ‘sniffing out’ of the smells by the dogs, but it was hard to get it (this also applied to carbide). Rabbit droppings, in other words, dung, sufficed to prevent detection [of the entrance – M.K.]. I did this work myself, he recounted years later.⁸⁶

There is no exaggeration in this. Masza Kołatacz also wrote of his involvement: “The son [of the Janczarski family – M.K.] Bogdan [...] helped his parents, watched over everything and kept vigil when strangers approached.”⁸⁷ The rules of conspiracy demanded that earth be disposed of from underground excavations in a way that would not cause curiosity and questions – even those arising from a friendly interest – about the construction in progress. Therefore, during the earthworks, “the biggest problem was the removal and camouflage of earth from the secret diggings. The clay, carried out in baskets, was dumped into the hollows of the ground and masked carefully with leaves and branches. Nature took care

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

of the rest, covering these with grass and lush weeds.”⁸⁸ Janczarska described the entire underground infrastructure as follows:

The basic underground shelter (approx. 12–15 square metres) was built within the courtyard, under a shed, in full conspiracy conditions, during the September 1939 campaign, as a possible shelter in case of prolonged fights at the war front. This shelter was subsequently extended with underground passages and various enhancements. One of these underground passages connected the shelter with the residential building (the hatch to it was placed under a moveable wardrobe in the sleeping room). A second narrow passage connected the shelter to the cowshed and, through it, to the barn above it (due to the hilly terrain). There was a small hiding place in the barn, under a thick layer of sheaves, providing an opportunity for an inflow of fresh air (it was stuffy in the underground shelter). There was also a spare underground shelter under the barn, which was generally unused. A third underground passage led westwards, directly into the forest, and gave some (in fact minimal) chances of escape, at least for some people if the main shelter were exposed. This passage was also a makeshift ventilation duct with an outlet hidden in a large pile of branches “for firewood.”⁸⁹

The Janczarskis also created a several-metre-long connection between the shelter and the house. “It was a narrow corridor from which it was possible – through a suitable hatch – to get directly to ... the sleeping room, i. e. the safest room because it was the furthest one from the house’s front door.”⁹⁰ The exit in the house was also cleverly concealed. “The entrance was camouflaged with a light moveable wardrobe. Even if an unauthorised person had pushed it open, they would not have noticed anything – the boards of the manhole (i.e. the floor) were cut diagonally so no gap would uncover the cut.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 8–9 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 289).

⁸⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*, p. 3.

⁹⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 9 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 290).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Given the approaching winter, the hiding place had to be protected from the cold. The hiding place was designed to be heated without exposing its existence. “This underground corridor passed close to the corner of the room where the tiled stove stood. This made it possible to install a small iron stove below.”⁹² In another testimony, Janczarska explained: “there was a small stove connected to the chimney shaft in the house. So it was a kind of two-storey stove, but when you burnt wood in the stove in the shelter, you had to burn it also in the stove above to avoid exposing the hiding place.”⁹³

A separate exit was dug from the shelter into the barn. It was camouflaged with manure (further neutralising the potential use of tracking dogs by intruders). From the cowshed, it was possible to enter the barn above by a ladder through an opening generally used for transferring hay and straw. This helped to avoid opening the exits and going outside. There, i.e. in the barn, “a small shelter was arranged between sheaves of straw, with a properly camouflaged entrance. Only here could the Kołataczs occasionally have access to fresh air, which was in such short supply in the underground shelter. However, this was not always possible. As soon as something suspicious happened around the buildings, the Kołataczs faded into their underground hideout like shadows.”⁹⁴

The shelter’s ceiling was constructed of thick wooden logs covered with an 80 cm layer of soil.⁹⁵ The main entrance to the shelter was located in the shed. It, too, was covered with a layer of soil. A horsecart stood over the entrance permanently. “Through the appropriately camouflaged manhole, a narrow ladder led down to the shelter. Pots of food were served through this route, and waste buckets were taken out.”⁹⁶ It was used in situations where there was no danger of exposure. On the other hand, when it was impossible to give food to those in hiding by this route due to the threat, food was passed on a string through a specially made vertically fixed concrete pipe with a 20-cm diameter.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

⁹⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 9 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 290).

⁹⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁹⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 10 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 290).

The installation was constructed mainly by the eldest son, the then twelve-year-old Bogdan Janczarski.

There were situations when you couldn't open the shelter for several dozen hours. I then came up with a way of serving food. On the other side of the rooms, I drilled a hole about 20 cm in diameter, inserted a piece of concrete drainage, and made camouflage. You could serve milk or some liquid in a bottle or slices of bread cut into appropriate strips on a string through such an opening.⁹⁷

Masza Kołatacz confirms: "Bogdan dug a small hole into our shelter, and some air would come in through this outlet, and sometimes he would drop us a flask of fresh water on a string."⁹⁸ Bogdan Janczarski also invented other additional forms of security.⁹⁹

They proved helpful when there were a lot of strangers in the yard. "For it must be remembered that my husband was a forester, and sometimes farmers from neighbouring villages, wanting to buy wood, or [those who were – M.K.] employed in the tree nurseries, waited in our yard from dawn,"¹⁰⁰ Janczarska recounts.

The last passageway – a long, 20-metre-long tunnel leading into the woods – was provided in case the shelter was detected. "This was to allow a possible escape in case the main shelter was threatened. A special emergency earth cover was prepared for this event, supported from the inside by diagonal rods. When jerked hard, these rods were to collapse, exposing the escape route."¹⁰¹

The Janczarski family did the job, even though they were not convinced that this escape route would work in a catastrophic situation. The chances of such an escape were minimal, or, in truth, none, because the Germans always surrounded the homesteads being searched very tightly. Anyway, such a possibility probably sustained the psyche of the Kołataczs – their shelter was not a trap with no way

⁹⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

¹⁰⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 10 (Janczarska, "Lisi schron," p. 291).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

out.¹⁰² However, the solution also had a practical dimension related to air access. The corridor was planned by Janczarski so that it would at least ventilate the shelter somewhat. The outlet of a primitive wooden vent was concealed by a large pile of branches, pretending to be a supply of firewood. This is where the steam escaping from the shelter was deposited in winter. Yet “despite this device, there was a constant lack of air in the shelter. It was difficult to remedy this.”¹⁰³

In addition, there was another underground shelter under the barn, built just in case – with no connection to other shelters, but eventually, it was not used.¹⁰⁴

Janczarska knew that all these endeavours only created a chance for two families to survive the war, while they certainly did not guarantee it. “The truth is [...] that if someone counted on the proverbial stroke of luck in this cruel war, he simply did not survive the occupation. We knew this truth, and that is why we survived. And with us, the Kołatacz family.”¹⁰⁵

The farm’s location in a secluded spot, close to the forest, was conducive to conspiracy, but what was an advantage could also pose a threat. The proximity of the forest meant that groups of diverse provenance hiding in the woods often visited the farm. This could have further attracted German manhunts. In addition, the farm was also frequented by visitors coming to see Roman Janczarski as a forester.¹⁰⁶ When the manhole was opened, Bogdan Janczarski would secretly watch the area so the Kołataczs could go outside the “bunker.” “When the Kołataczs were leaving the shelter to go to the barn, observation of the road access from the direction of the village had to be carried out nonstop, regardless of the weather conditions. The Kołatacz family had to be notified of any approaching strangers so that they could immediately return to the shelter, whereafter a camouflage of the manhole had to be restored.”¹⁰⁷

Genowefa Janczarska made no secret of it: “the living conditions were extremely tough. For both sides, by the way.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² *Ibid.*; YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Genowefa Janczarska of 19 March 1993, p. 10.

¹⁰³ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 10 (Janczarska, “Lisichron,” p. 290).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

The Principles of Conspiracy

Once the decision had been made to give illegal shelter, the Janczarski family realised that, at least for the duration of the war, the fate of both families had been linked by a “criminal” procedure: “There was no turning back, neither for them nor for us.”¹⁰⁹ Years later, Janczarska recalled: “We did not have easy days during the occupation.”¹¹⁰

The Janczarski family knew the Germans used their own openly operating services and a network of secret collaborators. There was, therefore, a fear whether a secret would be kept: “my husband and I wondered whether there might be a Judas among us who would betray us.”¹¹¹ The anxiety about whether a secret collaborator of the authorities would surface in the neighbourhood was natural for any conspiracy in a totalitarian state. This was by no means because all villagers posed a potential threat. The principle of any conspiracy is to protect everyone – including friends and relatives – against unauthorised eyes. It was not only the deliberate activities of enemy confidants that posed a mortal danger but also ordinary human stupidity or verbosity. Secrecy could be breached by repeated spreading – even with no malicious intent – of gossip and conjecture, passed from mouth to mouth as trivia. The Janczarskis had to reckon with the fact that all it took was a rumour about granting the illegal shelter to people to reach the wrong ears, and their entire farm could run down in blood.

No one outside the circle of indispensable people was allowed in on the secret for everyone’s sake. Security rules called for extreme caution about all those around. Again, it was not about nationality, religion, sympathy, or antipathy in such situations. If one acted in a Polish environment, the conspiracy and security rules required strict secrecy towards the Polish milieu. If someone was active in a Jewish environment (e.g. a resistance movement in the ghettos), the conspiracy and security rules also required strict secrecy about the Jewish environment. In a totalitarian state, illegal activities must be concealed even from theoretically sympathetic people, those close to you, and those harmed by the authorities. It is the

¹⁰⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 6 Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 289.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

only mechanism that offers a chance of survival. That is why the Janczarski family's hiding of the Kołatacz family was surrounded by strict secrecy – neither acquaintances near and far nor other people the Germans were looking for knew about it.

Still, one more Jew abided in the neighbourhood of the Janczarski farm and visited it, from a particular moment onwards. It was Mosze Kamrat from Cracow, who was also trying to survive in the area. The Janczarski family helped him as much as possible by giving him food, which was also punishable by death. However, they could not reveal the secret of the shelter to him either: “for understandable reasons, we did not disclose to him the fact that we were giving shelter to the Kołatacz family, [...] he only found out about it during his last stay with us,” that is, when the war had already ended.¹¹²

Even when they had to contact the underground due to the illness of one of those in hiding, they did not reveal the location of their hiding place. People involved in the underground were all the more likely to be arrested. The Gestapo's investigative methods could also have led to the disclosure of such a secret. The fewer people knew, the better.

It was no coincidence that the conspiracy also applied to their own youngest children. Information about the shelter's existence was concealed from Andrzej and Romana almost until the end of the war.¹¹³ Only the older son Bogdan knew about everything.

In addition, the resettlers living with the Janczarski family, Maria Pytel and Wojciech Kwiatkowski, were also initiated.¹¹⁴ For them, this knowledge also meant mortal danger. It is difficult to imagine that, in the event of the pacification of the farm, the Germans would have acknowledged that they lived here but knew nothing about the illegal hiding of people.

Despite the far-reaching precautions taken, some people – as it turned out later – knew or guessed that the Janczarski family was helping Jews. On the other hand, the hosts themselves were convinced for a very long time that their conspiracy was airtight. Only towards the end of the German occupation did they discover that complete secrecy had not been kept in the village: “as we found out after the war,

¹¹² YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*, p. 4.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Mapa Pamięci.*

a few people knew about its [the Kołatacz hiding place – M.K.] existence,” Janczarska stated. However, this information never reached the Germans – even though the mere knowledge of the shelter’s existence was a threat.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, it turned out that by the end of 1944, a wider circle of villagers already knew about the fact that people were being illegally kept somewhere on the Janczarskis’ farm. It is possible that partial exposure of this place was the result of a breach of security rules by one of the people in hiding. Theoretically, “there was no question of Jews in hiding going outside the homestead area, and only very rarely outside the shelter area.”¹¹⁶ The Kołataczs should have strictly observed this. It was, unfortunately, otherwise. “Towards the end of 1944, local people spread the word that Jews were hiding at the Janczarskis’ – this came about after the irresponsible behaviour of one of the Kołatacz family, who contacted a Jewish woman hiding in the village of Wysocice with the Kędzierski family. It turned out that Edward Kędzierski was bringing this Jewish woman into our shelter,” recounted Bogdan Janczarski.¹¹⁷ It wasn’t easy to justify such behaviour. After all, Kołatacz must have known that he was exposing his family, the Janczarski family, their children, and the tenants to mortal danger.

Another thing is that it did not take the disclosure of a secret for armed Germans to appear in or around a farm. Their forces were roaming the area anyway, tracking down illegal trade and Jews, partisans and people who supported them. During the prolonged war, the Janczarski family had to take additional security measures. “Some changes had to be implemented in how the special security measures functioned. The main entrance was dug from the shed to the pigsty where it was additionally masked over the security decking with a layer of earth – also dung.”¹¹⁸ According to the son of the Janczarski family, “various checks by the police and then searches by German troops intensified – dogs were also used. Still, nothing was detected thanks to the camouflage I described above.”¹¹⁹ According to his mother’s testimony, searches took place on the farm twice – once with tracking dogs.¹²⁰ Fortunately, the security measures in the form of paraffin and rabbit droppings passed the test.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*, p. 3.

Food Factory

One of the most important daily challenges for the Janczarski family was to feed such a large number of people. To provide for two multi-child families and the resettlers mentioned above, the Janczarski family had to run a kind of undercover “food factory” for about a dozen people. And all the food supply and production had to be done in a way that did not raise suspicions from the occupation authorities or confidants. The Germans, imposing, among other things, a robbery system of compulsory supplies, developed various procedures for the detailed registration and control of the circulation of food products. “A major problem was supplying food for so many people. It was made easier by our own farm, which supplied us with essential products, i.e. cereals, potatoes and vegetables,” described Janczarska.¹²¹ Fortunately, the Janczarski family still had a horse and a cart, and Janczarski himself, as a forester, had many “official” reasons for moving around. This enabled them to purchase goods all over the area without paying attention to the frequency of their journeys or the amount of goods they bought. Janczarski’s son recounted: “It was a great effort to get flour, groats and other resources – we had to purchase goods in various localities, in quantities that did not raise any special suspicions.” Therefore, it was often he himself, as an inconspicuous twelve-year-old, who harnessed horses and rode a cart around the mills. He would bring home grain products. “I was slim, short, a young boy, I did not evoke any ‘who, why’ questions.”¹²²

The purchased grain had to be milled. Also, the Germans tried to exert control over this branch – they imposed strict documentation of all milling orders. An excessive number of orders for the Janczarski family could have caused suspicions. But here, too, fate favoured them. Janczarska’s family helped. “We milled our grain in the nearby water mills, most often at my brother’s, Bolesław Makowski’s, in Imbramowice, bypassing the milling registration procedure introduced by the occupier.”¹²³

Despite all these successes, providing food for such a large number of people was a constant problem until the end of the German occupation and in 1944, new

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

¹²³ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 12 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 293).

challenges arose. Firstly, an additional resident was admitted to the shelter – Masza Kołatacz. Secondly, after the Warsaw Uprising, it was sometimes necessary to take in even more people: refugees from Warsaw. “There were days when I had up to 20 boarders, especially when a handful of Varsovians expelled from Warsaw after the fall of the Uprising arrived in Wysocice. After all, I couldn’t say I wouldn’t take in a refugee from the capital because ... I already had a few Jews at my place. If there was no other solution, I divided the food into smaller portions.”¹²⁴ Both those giving shelter and those in hiding had the same menu. “We all ate the same thing; there was no better or worse table,” wrote Janczarska.¹²⁵

In this situation, dishes could not be elaborate. The basis was bread. We had flour, mainly rye, made from our grain. Every year, however, we had to buy a few quintals of grain from our neighbours. This was difficult because the Germans oppressed the village with forced deliveries of grain, potatoes and meat. We did not deliver the quota ourselves because we bribed the municipality official. So in this way, we obtained extra rations of food.¹²⁶

After taking in the Kołatacz family to provide for it, Janczarska had to systematically prepare and bake 12 large loaves of bread a week, which meant more than 100 kilogrammes of bread per month. And this means that for 26 months, the housewife produced well over 2,600 kilogrammes of bread. “The bread was baked in two instalments, six loaves each, because that’s how much the so-called bread oven could accommodate. The baking process, bread by bread, made better use of the oven’s heat, but above all, it perfectly camouflaged the true quantity of the [baked] bread.”¹²⁷ This, however, did not exhaust the scale of the daily endeavours related to the provision of food. The most important bread topping was home-made plum jam:

We fried it for two days in a huge cauldron over a field hearth each year. It could be cut with a knife and stored in large pots made of clay. A rarer used bread

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

topping was [also home-made] cheese and butter, although we constantly kept two or three cows. We also ate very little meat: only as many hens, geese, and rabbits as we could raise, and 2–3 pigs per year.

As the forester's wife, Janczarska also admitted with some embarrassment that she had bought hares caught in snares from poachers on several occasions. "The end, unfortunately, had to justify the means," she added.¹²⁸

Vegetables and fruit also came from Janczarskis' farm, and purchases were made from neighbours. "To ensure that our 'charges' did not contract scurvy, I often served onions, sauerkraut and carrots, which were grown in large quantities."¹²⁹ The youngest children were also employed in this natural food factory. Together with Bogdan Janczarski, they would go to the forest to pick berries and mushrooms. "And this also counted in the overall food balance."¹³⁰ They bought salt, illegally imported from Wieliczka, from smugglers and pedlars. Janczarska made up for the lack of sugar with her work and enterprise. "That's why I learned to evaporate molasses from sugar beets in autumn and winter in a pot over the hearth. This was our wartime sugar – brown and heavily polluted, but sweet."¹³¹

Similarly, with her work, Janczarska made up for the shortages of other products. "I also made soap from tallow, lye and rosin, properly mixed. It was grey, semi-hard and pinchy, but it disinfected linen and bedding well."¹³²

Serving a multitude of people day in and day out required an enormous amount of work. "I was constantly helped in the kitchen by Marysia Pytel – without her, I don't think I would have ever been able to manage all my duties," confessed Janczarska.¹³³

Other routine activities were also challenging. In addition to feeding the Kołatacz family, the Janczarskis had to wash their linen, clothes, bedding, etc.¹³⁴ Such ordinary chores are often forgotten, yet washing was done by hand at the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 293–294.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

time, so with five and six extra people in hiding, it required a lot of effort. It was also a challenge that lasted for two and a half years.

In addition, such mundane issues as disposing of the waste generated in the hideout had to be resolved. It was mainly Bogdan Janczarski who took care of its disposal.¹³⁵ Another problem that is rarely remembered in such a context was illness and infection. A doctor's visit in the hideout was impossible. "Only once did they use medical help; it was given by doctor Jaros – a member of the Home Army, temporarily staying in Imbramowice."¹³⁶ Contacts with the underground helped here, of course, but this meant initiating at least one more person. Such a visit involved risking one's life, as the sick person had to be transported to another location to avoid exposing the shelter.

For the Kołatacz family, however, filling the time in the dark shelter also proved to be a problem. It could not be illuminated because Bocieniec was not electrified. They used paraffin lamps and carbide lamps, which were scarce commodities at the time. But this was not the only reason such lighting had to be saved: "the lamps absorbed oxygen, which was in short supply there. So the refugees lived in darkness."¹³⁷ Janczarska described with admiration that, despite everything, they did not lose spirit but ... learned English – "which was quite exotic for us at the time." This filled the Janczarskis themselves with encouragement – the Kołataczs believed in their survival.¹³⁸

Masza

While the Kołatacz family were still in Skała under the care of Mieczysław Korzonek, their teenage daughter, Masza Kołatacz, after escaping from Skała, found shelter elsewhere, namely in Ojców. This tourist and spa town is located a few kilometres from Skała (and 15 kilometres from Wysocice). The family of Irena and Władysław Grzybowski helped her. Masza was the only daughter of the Kołatacz family, the eldest of their children.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 15 (Janczarska, "Lisi schron," p. 295).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska.

Written down in 2017, her testimony shows how serious inaccuracies can be in this kind of second-hand testimony (this also applies to Holocaust survivors' testimonies). In her words, "the Grzybowski, in the summer of [19]42, told my parents that they were ready to shelter me because they had news [sic!] that the Jews would be destroyed and burned."¹⁴⁰ Therefore, years later, Masza Kołatacz was convinced that the Grzybowski family had already been friends with her parents before the war.¹⁴¹ In reality, no such ties connected them. The Jewish Kołatacz family from Skała was known to the Grzybowskis virtually only by sight, and they indeed also remembered Masza. Grzybowska wrote that the Kołatacz family "had a general shop in Skała" and that she often shopped there.¹⁴²

The Grzybowski family knew nothing about the fate of the Kołatacz family between 1939 and 1942. The restrictions of the German occupation had changed their previous customs – including those related to shopping. They were also unaware of the German plans; the authorities of the General Governorate did not warn the inhabitants about their murderous intentions. Masza Kołatacz had a similarly naïve idea of the circumstances of her family's reception by the Janczarski family: "Mr Janczarski [...] met my father in the summer of [19]42 and offered to take him in in case of danger."¹⁴³ Masza did not witness these situations. She did not ask her parents about it, and many years later, she tried to explain it herself, relying on her imagination rather than facts.

What it was really like was described by Irena Grzybowska. Let us go back to 1942. Grzybowska remembers precisely both the moment when she realised that the Germans carried out mass murders of the Jewish population and the moment when – to their surprise – Masza Kołatacz appeared on the doorstep of their flat. It was not a visit agreed with anyone.

Grzybowska and her husband and son were walking from Ojców to a village next to Skała. They noticed some unusual things being transported from the hill near the Jewish cemetery. "I saw a big pile of something colourful, and carriages were passing from Skała and carrying something colourful towards the [Jewish] cemetery. I asked my husband what they were carrying, whether these were such

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

coloured stones. My husband and son went to see what was lying there, and I slowly walked further along the path. In a moment, they came running to me and said that these were the bodies of Jews killed today in Skała.”¹⁴⁴ As Grzybowska said – 350 people were murdered that day. “We were terrified and upset.”¹⁴⁵

In the evening, when the Grzybowskis and Irena’s mother sat at the dinner table talking about these German crimes, they suddenly heard a knock on the door. Masza Kołatacz stood on the threshold: “she asked if she could stay the night until tomorrow.”¹⁴⁶ The Grzybowskis, like the Janczarski family, were aware that even a single night’s stay of a Jewish fugitive would expose them to the risk of being killed if discovered by the Germans. This was all the more dangerous because many Germans stayed in Ojców, as “during the occupation, it was a holiday resort for German airmen and for this reason many policemen and gendarmes were constantly hanging around.”¹⁴⁷

When the Grzybowskis invited Masza Kołatacz inside, the latter told the story of her escape from Skała. “After talking to Masza, we decided she would stay with us,” she says. Irena Grzybowska says frankly, “we didn’t know it would take so long.”¹⁴⁸ Would they have accepted anyone? It would not have been so apparent if Masza had been unknown to them. After all, none of the household members could have a guarantee that such an escapee was not, for example, a provocateur sent by the Germans. Grzybowska writes: “I agreed because we had known each other [from shopping in the Kołatacz shop – M.K.] for quite a long time.”¹⁴⁹

These are not theoretical remarks. After all, the Germans, like Communists in a Stalinist state, used various forms of provocation to detect illegal activities. Sometime later, Bogdan Janczarski came into contact with a “partisan” who, soon afterwards, returned to the Janczarski family in a German uniform (this will be discussed). When a stranger came to the house, it was unclear whether he could be

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11 Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292.

¹⁴⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

trusted or was actually looking for help. The declaration that he was hiding from the Germans because of political activity or his nationality was not necessarily true. Sometimes fear made it necessary to refuse a stranger.

Taking care of the young Jewish girl was also challenging for housing reasons. After all, keeping people illegally required maintaining strict conspiracy, preferably having hidden rooms – such as those at the Janczarski home. Meanwhile, the Grzybowski were, all four of them, crammed into one room and a kitchen. They had no shelter or even a yard at their disposal. Although the house in Ojców was entirely theirs before the war, even before Masza came to live with them, living conditions had changed significantly. Even at the beginning of the occupation, they still had six summer rooms on the house's first floor, without heating. They sealed and secured two of them to serve as year-round housing. Irena Grzybowska lived there with her husband and underage son. Downstairs was one tenant and Irena Grzybowska's mother, who had a large room with a kitchen at her disposal.¹⁵⁰

These relatively comfortable conditions did not withstand the clash with the omnipotence of the occupying authorities. It soon became apparent that in Ojców, a blue police officer assigned by the Germans to the local police station – platoon sergeant Kazimierz Guzik – was looking for a flat. He was one of the officers who had volunteered to join the *Polnische Polizei*, a formation the Germans created in 1940. He served at the Ojców post with the later notorious traitor, sergeant Kazimierz Nowak. For a few months in 1943, Guzik worked with him in the pursuit squad (*Jagdkommando*) formed by the Germans, which committed numerous murders against the Jewish, Roma and Polish population. Before the war, Guzik is said to have been a miner. During the war, when he was already serving the Germans as a blue police officer, “he became known as a torturer, abusing people and committing murders without reason. He was particularly fond of executing by a firing squad.”¹⁵¹ In her testimony, Grzybowska noted that later “Mr Guzik took part in the killing of Jews in Skała.”¹⁵² So it is hardly surprising that he did not hesitate to take advantage of the privileges of power. “He came to see my mother;

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski. Rzecz o policji “granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1990), p. 187.

¹⁵² YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska.

my mother told him we only had unheated summer rooms [free]. [...] Mr Guzik went upstairs to me,” recounted Irena Grzybowska, “he saw my flat and said to me that I could live with my mother and give him my flat. It was the beginning of the war, and people still had normal reactions; they tried to look after their property: Of course, I didn’t want to agree to that, so he went.”¹⁵³

It was not long before the women realised that they were dealing with one of those traitors who were prepared to obey even the most criminal German orders and had no qualms about their fellow Polish citizens. “The next day, he brought me a flat confiscation decision with immediate effect.” Grzybowska tried to intervene with a local German from Ojców (a civilian known for his decency), but she was quickly informed that new principles reign in the Reich. She was told that if she did not agree to give the rooms to the blue police officer, the Germans would throw her and her family out. Everyone had to comply. Irena Grzybowska and her family moved in with her mother, and later recalled: “Policeman Guzik moved into my flat with his wife and daughter.”¹⁵⁴

Thus, when, in the autumn of 1942, Masza Kołatacz knocked on their door, the Grzybowskis had only a tiny, one-room flat at their disposal and had the Guzik family as their neighbours. Irena Grzybowska’s mother (hereinafter referred to by Masza as Grandma) slept in the kitchen. The Grzybowskis divided the room with a screen. “One half was the kitchen, and the other half was Mum’s bedroom.”¹⁵⁵ The room was at the disposal of all the other household members and all the guests. It could not be isolated. Two beds, a table and a baby cot, stood in it. What was missing was an extra place to sleep. But the biggest challenge was hiding Masza from strangers during the day. They could only move the wardrobe so that a small niche was created behind it in the corner of the room. “Two wardrobes stood in the room’s corners; Masza hid behind one sitting on a stool.”¹⁵⁶ The makeshift hiding

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2. Based on the notes published in some studies, one gets a very different impression, far from the truth, that he was someone like an acquaintance who “paid visits to his hosts.” Note on Roman, Genowefa and Bogdan Janczarski, and Władysław and Irena Grzybowski, *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 244.

¹⁵⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* “It was a very makeshift shelter, easy to detect,” Genowefa Janczarska later assessed the “hiding place” at the Grzybowskis.’ From Masha’s testimony, it was probably then that Janczarska learnt the whole story of her earlier hiding at the Grzybowskis.’ She remembered very well the story

space was extremely cramped. The wardrobe could not be pushed aside any further, as this would have aroused suspicions of uninvited guests.

At night, when no visits were expected, the Grzybowski family tried to make Masza reasonably comfortable. Grzybowski slept on one bed, and his wife and Masza slept on the other. Irena's mother slept in the kitchen. However, this security was illusory – after all, in the event of a sudden intrusion by the Gestapo or the police, the householders had no chance of hiding an illegal resident.¹⁵⁷ Grzybowskis' house was not equipped with a sewage system. There was a communal toilet situated outside. Policeman Guzik and his family also used it. A stranger could, therefore, quickly draw attention. Masza had to take care of her needs behind the wardrobe. She could not use the vessel intended for taking out the waste. Firstly, it could make too much noise behind the wardrobe, and secondly, it would immediately arouse suspicions. Grzybowskis contrived that Masza would defecate into a rubber boot.¹⁵⁸ She, years later, appreciated the effort: "the flat was not seweraged, and my waste had to be disposed of."¹⁵⁹

Masza Kołatacz spent most of the day behind the wardrobe. Only with the utmost precautions could she be allowed outside the shelter. "Grandmother would close the windows and doors so that she could talk to me and take me out from behind the wardrobe so I could walk around the room for a while."¹⁶⁰ However, there was always a risk of accidental exposure, which would have cost the lives of both Masza and the entire Grzybowski family. "Once, Mrs Guzik came unexpectedly from upstairs. The door to the room was open. Masza was sitting on the bed. I looked at my husband, and he embraced the sudden visitor and said [to Guzik]: 'You look so pretty.'" By this time, Masza had managed to hide behind a wardrobe. The Grzybowskis thought that the danger had been averted. They were wrong. A factor difficult to control appeared unexpectedly. Despite numerous instructions, the Grzybowskis' three-year-old son was too young to understand the danger. "My son, seeing such cordiality from my husband towards Mrs Guzik, said

that "Masza's hiding place was a corner in the room concealed by a wardrobe pushed to the corner." See Janczarska, "Lisi schron," p. 292.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, The Letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

that behind the wardrobe, there was Marysia.” It was a moment of horror. “I, at first, was stunned with terror,” Grzybowska recounted. Fortunately, she found an explanation in no time:

Seeing a painting hanging on the wall next to the wardrobe depicting a woman carrying a bundle of brushwood on her back, I smiled and told Mrs Guzikowa that my son called the woman in the painting Marysia, who was similar to an old maid of the same name who lived with us and often carried wood from the forest in a similar manner. Mrs Guzikowa accepted this explanation with a smile and went upstairs.¹⁶¹

The fear, however, remained. Only after a long time could they recognise that the danger had been averted.

However, it is essential to note a certain imprudence in the Grzybowski's behaviour. They were involved in conspiracy work. According to its elementary principles, the two types of illegal activity should not have been combined. According to the rules of the underground structures, all organisation members should observe the rules of security. For example, keeping a Jewish woman in the house increased the danger of arrest and the threat of exposure of the cells with which the Grzybowski's were in contact. Meanwhile, according to Genowefa Janczarska, clandestine meetings of the Home Army were held in the same room where Masza stayed. The girl was, therefore, an unplanned outsider witness to the conspiratorial meetings. When this was discovered, the mood was one of perplexity. After all, this was also how Masza became the depository of the secrets of the underground: “in the event of a setback connected with Masza's exposure, the partisans could face serious consequences. Therefore, another shelter was urgently sought for her.”¹⁶²

On 6 July 1943, Irena Grzybowski's mother died. In those days, displaying an open coffin in the flat was a common custom. With candles lit and flowers, collective prayers were held by closer and further relatives and neighbours – coming to say a final farewell to the deceased. For obvious reasons, Masha could not be kept

¹⁶¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowski, p. 3.

¹⁶² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11 (Janczarska, “Lisichron,” p. 292).

behind a wardrobe for days when the room became public. There was no way out. She had to be secretly transported to another location. In addition, Władysław Grzybowski's mother had to be initiated into the matter, so another person was put in great danger. "We had to move Masza to Genowefa's husband's mother at night. There she had worse conditions. During the day, she was hidden in the kitchen in a potato cellar under the floor. She had to sit there without light. The door was closed and covered with rugs. After a few days, we moved her back to us."¹⁶³

The exact circumstances of how contacts between the Grzybowski and Janczarski families were established are difficult to reconstruct. There must have been some form of communication, if only to help the struggle for survival in material terms, at least in the early days. "Masza knew where her parents had left some of their possessions [to various people in the area] for storage. She would write a note, and my husband [Władysław Grzybowski] would go to collect these things, and then he would sell them. He would give the money from the sale to Mr Janczarski for Masza's parents."¹⁶⁴ These activities also widened the circle of people initiated into the fact that Grzybowski was involved in hiding someone from the Kołatacz family. Fortunately, none of these contacts led to the exposure of the shelter.

In such conditions, Masha stayed with the Grzybowskis for almost two years: from November 1942 to August 1944. "The Grzybowskis cared for me selflessly throughout my stay with them, putting themselves and the whole family at risk," she underlined many years later.¹⁶⁵

Family Reunification

In August 1944, Masza had to change her hiding place for good. Years later, she explained that this was due to the news of the additional mortal danger she and the Grzybowski family found themselves in. The Red Army stopped the front on the Vistula, giving the Germans time to suppress the Warsaw Uprising, but the Germans were expecting a new blow. "In August [19]44, the Germans [as in the original – M.K.] were about to evacuate all the inhabitants of Ojców; the front was

¹⁶³ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

approaching,” Masza recalled.¹⁶⁶ Irena Grzybowska explained these circumstances in greater detail.

In Ojców, the Germans seized two hotels. [...] In the village of Jerzmanowice, a few kilometres outside Cracow, in Ojców and the surrounding villages, the Germans took all the men capable of digging trenches. My husband also went digging. In 1944, the Germans started accommodating more troops in Ojców. They said they would occupy all of Ojców and resettle the population elsewhere.¹⁶⁷

It was feared that in the event of the expulsion of the inhabitants, there would no longer be any chance of hiding Masha effectively, and leaving her behind the wardrobe was not an option. So an idea emerged to take her to the Janczarski place and to reunite her with the rest of the Kołatacz family. “Then my husband and I rode our bicycles 15 kilometres to Mr Janczarski’s to ask if it would be possible for Masza to join her parents. Mr Janczarski agreed.”¹⁶⁸

Janczarska reflected years later: “Who came up with the idea of hiding Masha with us, I don’t know.” She suspected that “it could probably have been Korzonek from Skąpa because he was the only one who knew about the Kołatacz family’s current whereabouts.”¹⁶⁹ If the information on the cooperation in collecting and selling the items indicated by the Kołataczs was true, it means that some contact between them had already existed¹⁷⁰. Now the Janczarski family felt that they could take in one more person. “What was to be done? So we decided to take Masza in – to complete the family set.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 3. Therefore, Krzysztof Kocjan presented the essence of the problem not very precisely: “Due to the discovery of this fact by Home Army members gathering there (as Janczarska claims) or the cramped nature of the flat (as another source suggests – and to make matters worse, the notorious blue policeman Guzik lived in the same house), the Janczarski family transported her to their home in July 1944.” See Kocjan, “Zagłada skalskich Żydów,” p. 90.

¹⁶⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11 Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292.

¹⁷⁰ After almost 50 years, Janczarska may not have remembered it so accurately anymore, especially as the intermediary was her husband, not herself.

¹⁷¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11(Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292).

Grzybowska recalls that it was in August 1944 that Janczarski announced that he would be at the Ojców forestry inspectorate during the week. They agreed to prepare a safe transport, which could, of course, be carried out only in secret.¹⁷²

Ojców and Skała are small enough villages for people to know each other, even if from afar – in the same way as the Janczarskis and Grzybowskis knew the Kołataczs. It would have been enough for the wrong person to recognise her even once, and misfortune would have been brought upon everyone.¹⁷³ Therefore, “transporting Masza to Bocieniec was one of the more serious challenges, especially as Janczarski had to pass through Skała.”¹⁷⁴

The two families secretly agreed on the method of the secret transport and the meeting place. Władysław Grzybowski’s mother “had a large wicker basket (basket-coffer).”¹⁷⁵ Masza fit into it with her legs shrunk. “We covered her with a piece of bed linen and closed the basket with a padlock. [...] We took the basket by the ears and walked along a path through the forest to the ruins of the Ojców Castle, right opposite the forestry inspectorate. We carried the basket half a kilometre to Mr Janczarski’s cart.”¹⁷⁶ They agreed on the ruins of the Ojców castle as the place to meet Grzybowski.

The Janczarskis arrived there as agreed. “We prepared for it very carefully. On the agreed day, my husband and I arrived in a horse-drawn carriage at Ojców. The Grzybowskis’ arrived from Wysocice, not disturbed by anyone. We could not use the driveway to the Grzybowskis’ house because the road [to them] led through a German resort [in Ojców]; entry was forbidden there.”¹⁷⁷ The Grzybowskis waited until Janczarski went out of the forestry office, and the carriage with Masza in the

¹⁷² YVA, M. 31/5758, Relacja Ireny Grzybowskiej, p. 4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292; YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Here there are inconsistencies in the testimonies. Janczarska believed that the Grzybowskis carried the basket in wheelbarrows, while the latter was convinced that a servant was waiting on the Janczarski cart to help place the basket on the cart. Meanwhile, the Janczarski family had no servants. This is also an example of the challenges the researcher deals with when reading testimonies written down years later. See YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 4; YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292; *ibid.*, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

¹⁷⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11. (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 292).

basket rode toward Bocieniec.¹⁷⁸ The Janczarskis rode the 15-kilometre distance from Ojców to Wysocice in an atmosphere of maximum tension. “Masza stayed in the basket all that time, that is, for about two hours, curled up as if she were in her mother’s womb.”¹⁷⁹

The routine inspections of the transported goods conducted by the German services posed a deadly danger. “For us, the most difficult section was the passage through Skała. There was a large police station there, and a constant ‘hunt’ for Jewish survivors and small food or tobacco traders never subsided. Therefore, every vehicle was searched.”¹⁸⁰ The shape of the terrain and the road network did not allow us to bypass the police station in Skała.¹⁸¹ “We were stopped, but we avoided a search because my husband was known here as a forester, often travelling this route. [...] So we rode happily through Skała as well. Further on, it was much safer; passing through Minoga and Gołyszyn, we reached a shallow ford on the Dłubnia, and from there, we had only a kilometre to our home.”¹⁸² It was an operation full of tension. “I don’t have to write how happy we all were about [the successful finale of] this expedition to bring the Jewish girl in a basket,” Janczarska concluded.¹⁸³

The following week, her husband met the Grzybowski on another forestry inspection visit. He informed them that everything had gone according to plan.¹⁸⁴ Thus, after almost two years of hardship and sacrifice, Masza Kołatacz’s illegal hiding behind a wardrobe in Mr and Mrs Grzybowski’s flat came to an end. “All this help was unplanned and selfless. God probably helped us all survive all this without any major problems,” Irena Grzybowska concluded.¹⁸⁵

In this way, the Kołatacz family reunited, and the number of people hidden in the Janczarski shelter grew to six.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarska, *Relacja o pomocy*.

¹⁸² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 11 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 293).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

New Problems

The previously mentioned Wojciech Kwiatkowski, who lived with the Janczarski family, was arrested together with the teacher Tadeusz Zduniak during one of the German raids. Fortunately, this did not lead to the exposure of the illegally hidden Jews.

Towards the end of 1944, Janczarski's own situation became precarious – the Germans suspected him of having contacts with the underground. After all, various armed groups showed up at the farm. Janczarski was “wanted by the Gestapo for collaboration with the partisans. Fortunately, he was warned in time by the AK counter-intelligence, which had its ‘plug’ in Miechów’s Gestapo. From then on, he had to go into hiding. He hardly ever slept at home.”¹⁸⁶ Janczarska's testimony states that this happened in 1943, which is probably a mistake in the annual date. She was most likely referring to the last months of 1944, as in 1943, the partisan groups were not yet as numerous as they were the following year, and Janczarski himself transported Masza Kołatacz in August 1944, regularly visiting the forestry inspectorate and undergoing checks by police officers who knew him. In any case, at that time, he was not in hiding yet. And he certainly could not have been wanted by the Gestapo yet. Bogdan Janczarski's testimony confirms this. “I mention here how hard it was for my family to lose its safe haven – Father was forced during the autumn and winter, 1944/[19]45, to hide in the forest, in the cold, for a year, exposed to the danger of being captured and shot.”¹⁸⁷ In his testimony given in the 1980s, Bogdan Janczarski stated: “from 1944 onwards, my father and I were away from home, as I took part in the partisan movement.” He also said that “they lived in a forest area.”¹⁸⁸ In an earlier letter he wrote: “my father fought in the partisans of the Home Army, while all the care for those in hiding rested on my Mother's shoulders [...]”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

¹⁸⁷ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

¹⁸⁸ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), 392/456, File p 481 (hereinafter 392/456), Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Bogdan Janczarski of 28 February 1985, p. 45–45a. This document has almost in its entirety been published in *Relacje o pomocy Żydom udzielanej przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 2: *Dystrykt Krakowski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, ed. S. Piątkowski (Lublin–Warsaw, 2020), 488–489.

¹⁸⁹ AIPN, 392/456, The letter from Bogdan Janczarski to the GKBZH [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes] in Poland, dated 15 May 1984, p. 46.

Meanwhile, his son Bogdan had unwisely become entangled with a man claiming to be a member of the underground – in reality, he turned out to be a German provocateur: “to a certain Silesian pretending to be a partisan (who, in reality, was a collaborator of the German police) Bogdan gave some rifle cartridges he had found and he proposed to use them to shoot ... some Germans. We discovered it when this alleged partisan arrived in a police uniform to search our homestead.”¹⁹⁰ As a result, they were now taking extra precautions and Janczarski, not only himself but often with his son, had to stay out of the house.¹⁹¹

Such situations posed an additional danger of the Germans discovering the shelter. Fortunately, the previously mentioned measures worked, including scattering rabbit droppings, spilling paraffin and other safety measures against tracking dogs. “The Germans came for my husband twice, and he escaped them each time in dramatic circumstances. Even the police dogs involved in the manhunt for my husband did not sense anything suspicious underground. The shelter with the Jews turned out to be undiscoverable.”¹⁹²

Nevertheless, nothing was certain until the very end of the German order. At the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945, the tension increased even more.

When the danger was imminent, the two younger children were also forced to leave the house, usually under the care of the highlander Marysia, under some pretence. For I never told the children about the threat to the house. I was then left alone in the empty house, if not counting the faithful dogs. The *Kolataczs* in their underground shelter didn't even know about it. It was better that way. On several occasions, I expected the worst, which I preferred even not to think about.¹⁹³

The reality of the occupation revealed not only heroic attitudes but also, often at the least expected moments, extreme selfishness or concentration on oneself and

¹⁹⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 15-16 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” 295).

¹⁹¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

¹⁹² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 15 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” 295).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

the loved ones. Such behaviour also had nothing to do with the lines of national divisions and ran across religious divisions. An upsetting experience for the Janczarski family was their inability to give practical help to another Jewish refugee, Mosze (Moses) Kamrat. At this point, the Kołatacz family's history intersects with the fate of the Kamrat family from Cracow. Janczarska recalled: "a Jewish boy from Cracow visited our house in Bocieniec several times. He was only a little older than my son Bogdan so he could have been 15–16 years old at the time. His name was Mosze (Mieczysław) Kamrat."¹⁹⁴ Mosze (Moses) was born on 17 June 1928, so in 1943 he was 15 years old. His parents were Józef (born 1898) and Chawa (born 1902). He had a sister Miriam, born in 1932.¹⁹⁵ Józef Kamrat first found shelter with Jan Biskupski in Laski Dworskie. He stayed with him secretly for some time, together with his wife, son and daughter.¹⁹⁶ Then they moved to Feliksa Biskupska (née Kruczek) in the same village. "They asked me to give them food and take them in for accommodation. I fed them and took them in for a few days," in the long run, they couldn't survive safely at her place. "Our house was next to the highway, and it was not safe for them or for us to continue to keep the Jews there." Later still, at the request of Józef Kamrat, Feliksa Biskupska hid little Miriam in her house for some time.¹⁹⁷ Then Mosze was also hidden in Wysocice, with Feliksa's parents and siblings: Stanisław and Marianna Kruczek, living with their children: Stanisława, Michalina, Edmund and Teofil. The Kamrat family also used a cellar with a wooden vault built in the garden to store vegetables. They sometimes stayed overnight, and food was secretly brought to them.¹⁹⁸ This probably was how they spent the entire winter of 1942 to 1943.¹⁹⁹ The mother, Chawa Kamrat, died in 1943,²⁰⁰ probably together with her daughter. Janczarska had only unconfirmed information about this:

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

¹⁹⁵ Geni. A MyHeritage Company. Personal data: *Moshe Kamrat*, <https://www.geni.com/people/Moshe-Kamrat/6000000033681575712> (accessed 30 July 2019).

¹⁹⁶ AIPN, 392/456, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Biskupski of 24 April 1970, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Feliksa Biskupska of 24 April 1970, p. 7.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Michalina Kruczek of 24 April 1970, p. 17; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Edmund Kruczek of 24 April 1970, p. 20; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Teofil Kruczek of 24 April 1970, p. 24.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Biskupski of 24 April 1970, p. 4.

²⁰⁰ Geni. A MyHeritage Company. Personal data: *Chawa Kamrat*, <https://www.geni.com/people/Chawa-Kamrat/6000000023097262858> (accessed 30 July 2019).

At first, he [Mosze Kamrat] came to see us with his father, Józef, whom we knew a little from our pre-war contacts. He had already lost his mother and a little sister after they had escaped from the Cracow ghetto. The village leader – a martinet from the neighbouring G. [Gołyszyn – M.K.] – played an infamous role. But the boy's father was soon murdered and robbed by a farmer who initially gave the Kamrats shelter.²⁰¹

In her testimony, Janczarska paused over the circumstances of this murder. “Was he frightened of the Germans, did a miserable haul tempt him? It is not for me to judge now,” she wrote.²⁰² These are, however, unconfirmed data. Other versions of events contradict them – unfortunately, they also do not come from direct witnesses. Jan Biskupski later received information that Józef Kamrat “was shot by the Germans near the village of Krepa and that Kamrat's wife and his daughter were arrested by the Germans in the village of Gołyszyn in Miechów County and taken to the police station in Skała.”²⁰³ Bogdan Janczarski, on the other hand, claimed that Józef Kamrat “was killed by a farmer living in the village of Czaple, who was not convicted for his act, while his son [i.e. the victim's son: Mosze Kamrat] did not want to reveal the name of the killer.”²⁰⁴ All of this still requires a separate search in the available sources.

“From then on, young Kamrat wandered around the neighbourhood alone. He only came to us late in the evening, approaching so secretly that even the dog sometimes did not bark.”²⁰⁵ The Janczarski family felt that this boy should also be helped, even though this would have further increased the farm costs and hardship. “My husband and I felt sorry for this Jewish orphan, so we concluded that there could be enough space for him, as the sixth tenant, in the Kołataczs shelter because Masha was not there yet.”²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 14 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 294).

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ AIPN, 392/456, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Biskupski of 24 April 1970, p. 4.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Bogdan Janczarski of 28 February 1985, pp. 45–45a.

²⁰⁵ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 14 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 294).

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

However, this proved impossible for the least expected reasons. Wartime conditions often taught ruthlessness to people who experienced support from others. The Kołataczs blocked Mosze Kamrat's rescue. Janczarska was helpless: "But they [the Kołataczs], to our surprise, refused, motivating it by the cramped nature of the shelter."²⁰⁷ The Janczarski family had to understand that, in this truly diabolical entanglement, they were no longer the sole decision-makers on the number of those in hiding. After all, the Janczarskis could not accommodate a new tenant by force. "There was poverty; we could not help young Mosze much. He only received some meagre meal and bread for the road. [...] In the cold winter of 1943, I gave him a small quilt so that he could at least protect his back from the cold. He tied it to his back with a string and walked like that."²⁰⁸ Janczarska recalled the whole affair bitterly, finding it difficult to hide her resentment towards the Kołatacz family: "I don't bring it up, nor do I want to prove that we were good and whoever else was bad. It was the war that made man a wolf toward his fellow man."²⁰⁹ The argument about a lack of space did not coincide with reality, which is evidenced by the fact that a year later, the Kołataczs found a place in a shelter for their daughter. Mosze Kamrat was a stranger to them. This situation also says a lot about the meanness of the occupation time and the many dimensions of human attitudes revealed in the atmosphere of German terror. Moreover, for security reasons, the Janczarski family could not even explain to Kamrat why they did not take him in.

Fortunately, Mosze Kamrat found help in Wysocice, near the village of Wiktorzka, at the home of Stefan and Antonina Szyncel.²¹⁰ They took a risk, taking advantage of the fact that their house was on the edge of the village, close to the Czapple forest.²¹¹ At the same time, Kamrat understood the danger his benefactors exposed themselves to. He did not want to put the Szyncel family at even greater risk: "In autumn and winter, young Mosze would hole up for days in the large grain stacks belonging to the Czapple manor. He secretly drilled deep tunnels in

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ Note on Stefan and Antonina Szyncel in *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 736. See Florek, "Społeczność ziemi miechowskiej," p. 85.

²¹¹ Note on Stefan and Antonina Szyncel in *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 736. See Florek, "Społeczność ziemi miechowskiej," p. 85.

them, and fed on grain from unthreshed wheat, drinking water from a few flasks he had prudently taken with him.”²¹²

After the war, Mosze Kamrat visited those who had helped him, including Jan and Feliks Biskupski,²¹³ to thank them. He eventually settled down in Israel. Years later, Janczarska met him in 1992. “He thanked us for our help, even though he was the one we helped the least. Much less than this brave Jewish boy deserved,” she said, recalling the wartime events with a hint of bitterness.²¹⁴ His and his family’s fate is not always factually reflected in literature.²¹⁵

Summary of Facts

Under the laws of the German Reich, how many people committed this crime of illegally helping the Kołatacz family? Let us count the ones we know about. So we have three members of the Janczarski family (not counting the two youngest children), Mieczysław Korzonek from Skała and his teenage son, who secured the bicycle ride (we know nothing about the other members of the family and possibly other people involved, although they cannot be excluded), Edward Kędzierski from Wysocice, Irena, and Władysław Grzybowski, Irena Grzybowska’s mother, Władysław Grzybowski’s mother, the resettlers accommodated at the Janczarski forester’s lodge – Maria Pytel and Wojciech Kwiatkowski – and Doctor Jaros, who

²¹² *Ibid.* Janczarska incorrectly uses the surname Szencel.

²¹³ AIPN, 392/456, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Biskupski of 24 April 1970, p. 4.

²¹⁴ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 15 (Janczarska, “Lisichron,” p. 295).

²¹⁵ A one-sentence recollection of Mosze Kamrat and his family was included in the study *Dalej jest noc...* Dariusz Libionka, the author of the chapter on these areas, wrote: “The Janczarskis and the Szklans [as in the original – M.K.] helped Mosze Kamrat, whose family was killed by the Poles. He survived in hiding places in the fields and the forest.” In this way, the author prejudices the circumstances of the death of Mosze Kamrat’s mother and sister, which, as stated above, are questionable. Another thing is that in such a portrayal, the Poles, who were positive characters in the story (those who helped Kamrat), were described as individuals without emphasising their Polish nationality. At the same time, the villains were presented as authoritative representatives of the Polish nation. The case of blocking Mosze Kamrat’s admission to the shelter at the Janczarskis’ by the Kołatacz family was passed over in silence. After all, this caused he continued to “hide in the fields and the forest.” See Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” pp. 133–134. In *Księga Sprawiedliwych* the note on the Janczarski family mentions both the Kołataczs and Mosze Kamrat. But here, likewise, the thread of his refusal to take him into the shelter, which, after all, prevented the Janczarskis from giving Kamrat much more effective help, is passed over in silence. Note on Roman, Genowefa and Bogdan Janczarski, and Władysław and Irena Grzybowski in *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, p. 244.

helped the Kołatacz family.²¹⁶ So we obtain a figure of at least 13 people. And we know that this is not a complete list.

A separate question: how many people were directly exposed to death at the hands of the Germans for helping six members of just one Kołatacz family? Here, this number of thirteen people should be increased by the two youngest Janczarski children, who did not participate in giving aid, but in the light of German practices, were also exposed to death for the actions rendered by their parents and brother. The same applies to the Grzybowski's children. We get a figure of at least 16 people, speaking of those we certainly know of, exposed to death at the hands of the Germans. Let us remember, however, that under the Reich regulations, it was also a crime punishable by death not to disclose information about the whereabouts of Jews, even if the person who had this knowledge did not participate in helping them. One may consider that no credit can be taken for passivity, but to the number of people living in danger, one must also add those who kept the secret. Any shadow of suspicion on the part of neighbours that they knew about the illegal hiding of Jews and did not inform the authorities could have resulted in them being murdered too. These were not lip service threats. Such situations did happen. One need not look very far for examples. In the nearby village of Wierbka near Pilica, in January 1943, the Germans added Piotr Podgórski to the Jews, and the Poles caught with them. They shot them all. Podgórski was a member of the village guard organised on the instructions of the Germans and, in their view, must have known that a villager was hiding Jews. So a presumption sufficed.²¹⁷

How many people knew that the Janczarskis or Grzybowski's were hiding people illegally? After so many years, it is impossible to determine the exact number. We can only be tempted to make a conservative estimate. We are sure that at least several of the Janczarski's neighbours knew. We do not know their number or names – we rely on Janczarska's testimony concerning several people. None of them misused this knowledge, although they may have feared collective responsibility. The group of insiders who kept secret should also be extended to include

²¹⁶ *Mapa Pamięci.*

²¹⁷ K. Samsonowska, "Dramat we wsi Wierbka i jego dalszy ciąg na zamku w Pilicy," in *"Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje."* *Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej*, ed. A. Namysł (Warsaw, 2009), p. 126.

all those (number unspecified) who kept the Kołatacz family's valuables and later gave them back to the family through Grzybowski – none of them complied with the German order to denounce them under the threat of criminal liability. Every visit to these people required mutual trust. After all, it was equivalent to the exposure of organisers of illegal aid. It also involved widening the circle of people burdened with the dangerous knowledge about the hiding of Jews. This is also an essential part of the story.

“I cannot describe our threat – our awareness of the supreme danger in which the Kołatacz folks and we lived,” Bogdan Janczarski summed it up. Years later, he drew attention to a peculiar paradox: in the event of a sudden invasion of the farm by the Germans, it was the Kołataczs who were in hiding, and it was them who still had a chance that the Germans would not find them or they still had some possibility of escaping through one of the emergency exits: “The Kołataczs were protected from the outside world, whereas my family could not have that in the slightest.”²¹⁸

Genowefa Janczarska stated briefly: “But fate favoured us. We all survived.”²¹⁹ Years later, their wartime ordeal was described in various ways, sometimes in a way that was far from presenting the accurate picture of events, with untrue suggestions brought to the fore, regarding the material context of the relations of those in hiding and those giving shelter.²²⁰

²¹⁸ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

²¹⁹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 16 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 297).

²²⁰ The entire passage on the history of the Kołatacz family in *Dalej jest noc...* reads as follows: “A **wealthy Kołatacz family** from Skala gained a hiding place fairly quickly – they hid in the hamlet of Bocieniec near Wysocice. Their hosts, the Janczarski family, lived on the outskirts, the buildings of their farm adjoining the forest directly. Roman Janczarski was a forester. The Kołatacz couple and their three adult sons stayed in a specially built shelter, about a dozen square metres big. A stove connected to the chimney draught was installed there. The Janczarski's eldest son delivered the food. In July [should be: in August – M.K.] 1943, they were joined by their daughter Miriam (Masza), who, until then, had been hiding in Ojców in the flat of the Grzybowski family. The Grzybowskis remained in contact with Janczarski, **collected things belonging to the Kołatacz family and sold them, the obtained funds being used for hiding purposes**. Their flat was tiny, and, to make matters worse, a notorious blue policeman named Guzik lived in the same house.” [emphasis mine – M.K.]. See Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” p. 127. Barbara Engelking also mentioned the Janczarski family in one of her books: “the forester's wife, Genowefa Janczarska, described the conditions of hiding the Kołatacz family in an extraordinarily interesting testimony.” However, the author presented only the “construction” aspect of the creation of the underground shelter, adding only that “the whole [Kołatacz] family

After the end of the German occupation

In January 1945, the German occupation of the described areas ended. The whole of the Lesser Poland region got under the Red Army occupation. “The Kołataczs could finally come out of their hiding place of over two years into the light of day. I experienced great relief. Our hardship was coming to an end,” said Genowefa Janczarska.²²¹ Their daughter, Roma Janczarska, was operated on for appendicitis in a hospital in Miechów in January 1945. When the Soviet front passed, all hospital beds had to be emptied to accommodate wounded soldiers. “So my husband and I went to Miechów to pick up Roma by a horse-drawn carriage as usual. When we returned with our child to Bocieniec, we no longer found the Kołatacz family there. They left first for Skała, then for Cracow. They were enjoying their freedom.”²²²

Unlike the countries of Western Europe, Poland was not a free country after 1945. After its occupation by the Red Army, German totalitarianism was replaced by Soviet totalitarianism. In the post-war communist state, the Janczarskis still had problems and found they would continue to bear the costs of the relief activities they conducted during the war.

After the war, the communist authorities, just as the German occupier had done before, oppressed the rural population with the imposed obligation of forced deliveries of agricultural products. The new officials in the municipality, those of the communist hand, discovered that the Janczarski family had, during the occupation, evaded their duty to deliver the imposed quotas to the German authorities thanks to bribes. These officials were not interested in the fact that the bribes also cost money and allowed them to feed two families for over two years of wartime terror. The Communists demanded that the Janczarski family give back to the new authorities all the agricultural supplies formerly owed to the German occupiers. Let us emphasise this: they forced the “giving back” of the current and the “overdue” quotas imposed on them by the Germans. “It probably sounds unbelievable, but

survived the war.” See B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień... Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw, 2011), pp. 87–88.

²²¹ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 16 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 297).

²²² *Ibid.*

we had to deliver everything, down to the smallest grain, to the new [communist] authorities,” Janczarska commented bitterly.²²³

In the following years, in communist Poland, life was not easy for the Janczarskis – like for most of Poland’s society. The situation became even worse when Roman Janczarski died in 1949. Genowefa was left alone with three underage children as the only breadwinner.²²⁴ What had happened during the war came back in the form of various burdens and accidents. The very existence of the shelter under the floor proved dangerous in the long run – it brought about a structural collapse. Years later, due to the rotting boards, the room stove and the shelter stove connected to it sunk into the ground. Everything had to be renovated.²²⁵ The stress and experiences of the war recurred in various situations and forms. The daily excrement removal from the shelter left a permanent trace in Bogdan Janczarski’s psyche. “I am still traumatised today – I did not have a normal childhood. Maybe I shouldn’t mention it, but even an ordinary thing like carrying the waste and excrement in a bucket, which is what I did, has left a reflex to this day – I vomit whenever I enter a dirty toilet,” he recounted more than 40 years after the end of the war.²²⁶

After moving to Cracow in January 1945, the Kołatacz family settled at 5 Syrokomla Street. “Parents without means of subsistence” – was written in the Security Office’s (Polish abbreviation: UB) profile of Salomon Kołatacz,²²⁷ which probably accelerated the family’s decision to emigrate. Abraham Kołatacz changed his name. As Roman Kowalski, he became a forester and clerk in Rybnik (German: Rychbach).²²⁸ Masza lived with her parents, as did her youngest brother, who was 15 years old in 1945 and continued his education. The parents, as well as Masza and Abraham, were non-partisan; under the communist regime, they did not get involved in political life.²²⁹

In 1945, the already 19-year-old Samuel Kołatacz followed a different path – at least initially. He settled down in Cracow independently of his family. He changed

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²²⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

²²⁷ AIPN Kr, 057/1064, Profile, 11 April 1945, p. 10.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, Special questionnaire, Cracow, 16 August 1945, p. 28.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

his name to Edward Majos. He enrolled in the communist party (Polish Workers' Party, *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR) and found a job in – as he wrote it himself – “the municipal secretariat of the PPR,” i.e. the PPR City Committee in Cracow.²³⁰ He decided to get even more involved on the side of the new order. It was known in the PPR that the UB, as a new political police force built from scratch, extensively used people from the lowest social strata, but it also needed workers who could read and write well. So the PPR City Committee issued a suitable recommendation for Kołatacz for a position in the terror organs. It was emphasised that “Citizen Majos Edward is politically reliable and committed to the cause of democratic Poland.”²³¹ He quickly assimilated the propaganda terms and, given that the communists were then referring to themselves as the “democratic camp,” he used the relevant terms in soliciting employment by the Voivodeship Office of Public Security (WUBP). In his application for employment with the WUBP of 26 March 1945, he wrote that he was asking for a job “as a censor, declaring that he would try to do his work conscientiously and diligently for the good of democratic Poland.”²³² He was given a position in the Voivodeship War Censorship Department of the WUBP and signed the relevant documents and pledges. This is how Samuel Kołatacz became a functionary of the communist repression apparatus. Not for long, however. Still in October 1945, in an employee performance information, the head of the department, Nesanel Kichler (Küchler), described Edward Majos as follows: “He works well, is disciplined, politically aware, is a sincere democrat, a member of the PPR, interested in cultural and educational work, attached to work in the bodies of the Security Office.”²³³ Despite this, Kołatacz did not see a place for himself in this institution for much longer. After a year, he deserted. At the beginning of April 1946, Kichler informed his superiors that “the censor Majos Edward, employed in Department VIII of the WUBP as an office worker since 22 III [19]46, has not reported for work. According to the information we have

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, E. Majos. *Curriculum vitae*, 26 March 1945, p. 33; The letter from the PPR City Committee to the WUBP dated 23 March 1945, p. 33.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, The letter from the Personnel Department of the PPR City Committee to the WUBP with a recommendation for E[dward] Majos for a job in the Security Office (UB) dated 23 March 1945, p. 34.

²³² *Ibid.*, Application to the WUBP in Cracow, 26 March 1945, p. 32.

²³³ *Ibid.*, Employee evaluation of Edward Majos, Cracow, 5 October 1945, p. 7.

gathered, he probably went abroad”²³⁴. His suspicions were correct. Kołatacz-Majos was – as a deserter – deleted from the records of the WUBP employees.²³⁵

Genowefa Janczarska recalled a farewell meeting with the elderly Kołataczs: “We said goodbye for good then, when they left Poland, first for Aachen, then for Israel and Canada. I have not seen them since.”²³⁶ Icchak and Bajla Kołatacz maintained their correspondence with the Janczarskis for several years after the war. “The old Kołataczs still wrote me letters for some time. I could tell from their letters that it was not easy for them in an alien environment; they had to start everything from scratch.”²³⁷ Janczarska emphasises that she never asked them for any help. The correspondence ended in 1963: “Not one letter came from that side. No sign of life – for almost 30 years. It was as if everyone had died. I don’t make a tragedy of it, we didn’t count on gratitude for what we did for that family. Nor can everyone carry the burden of difficult memories.”²³⁸ Bogdan Janczarski had heard of one letter from the old Kołatacz from Canada²³⁹. He may not have known about any other correspondence. Many years later, he recalled it all perhaps all too bitterly: “after the war, none of them expressed the slightest thanks, sent even a greeting card as others normally receive from all over the world.”²⁴⁰ Years later, in a letter to Yad Vashem, he wrote: “I ask for recognition of the sacrifice [we] made ([expressed] by your Organisation), and I need this not for myself, but for my children and grandchildren, for the simple memory of those years.”²⁴¹

Janczarska described that the younger Kołataczs “gave a sign only in 1992, first Sam, then Masza.”²⁴² The latter asked the Yad Vashem Institute to speed up the procedures leading to the Janczarskis being awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal. “I would like to ask you to sort the matter quickly because Mrs Janczarska is 86. I would very much like to bring her to Israel at my expense for

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter from Lt. Kichler dated 2 April 1946, p. 5.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, Information on the service record of E[dward] Majos, p. 3.

²³⁶ YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 17 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 297).

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ AIPN, 392/456, The letter of Bogdan Janczarski to the GKBZH in Poland dated 15 May 1984, p. 46.

²⁴⁰ YVA, M. 31/5758, B. Janczarski, *Relacja z lat okupacji*.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² YVA, M. 31/5758, G. Janczarska, The testimony of 19 March 1993, p. 17 (Janczarska, “Lisi schron,” p. 297).

the ceremony at Yad Vashem.”²⁴³ It is unclear why it happened so late, but it was still possible to fully confirm the Janczarski family’s dedication to their fellow human beings in this case.

And what were Masza Kołatacz’s relations with the Grzybowski family like? After the Red Army occupied Poland, they still visited Masza in Cracow for some time. “Then Masza got married and lived in Bielsko, and I visited her there. Then she left with her husband for Aachen [Aachen – M.K.] in West Germany.”²⁴⁴ Some time later, during a trip to visit her daughter in the UK, Grzybowska could meet Masza there. In Aachen, “they attached the carriages, and the train stood for more than an hour. I had previously written to Masza to say I would be in Aachen. She and her husband came to see me on the train. Then the journey could be interrupted for 24 hours. They took me to their place and drove me back to the train the next day, and I rode on.”²⁴⁵ After Masza Kołatacz-Wolf left for Israel, Irena Grzybowska was once again her guest. “We have kept in touch by letter and telephone until now,” she wrote in April 1993.²⁴⁶

Also in 1993, Roman, Genowefa, Bogdan Janczarski, Władysław and Irena Grzybowska were awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem.

* * *

Many people’s fates were intertwined during the German occupation’s inhuman period. The story of families threatened with death for giving aid, and those denied the right to live by the German state is closely embedded in the reality of German totalitarian terror and cruelty.

Before 1939, the Janczarskis, Grzybowskis, and Kołataczs lived in their communities in free Poland. They met occasionally during business dealings. They passed each other on the streets and lived their own lives. We can only speculate that this is probably how it would have stayed if the war had not broken out. It is possible that they would all have remained distant acquaintances to each other, residents

²⁴³ YVA, M. 31/5758, The letter from Masza Kołatacz-Wolf.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, The testimony of Irena Grzybowska, p. 4.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

of the same area. Everything changed after the German Reich imposed its new order on the occupied Polish territory. In the German *General-Gouvernement*, the Kołatacz family was threatened with death like the entire Jewish community. The Grzybowski and Janczarski could live by obeying German orders. Still, driven by a compassionate impulse and willingness to make sacrifices, they took on the burden of giving illegal help despite the threat of death for acting against the laws of the German Reich.

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SUMMARY

For more than two years, the Janczarski family hid the Kołatacz family, a Jewish family they had previously known only by sight. The Grzybowski family also participated in helping the Kołatacz family. The text attempts to reconstruct the reality of everyday life in a situation of illegally hiding people for such a long time. It presents a description of the circumstances in which the decision to provide help violated the occupation law. It brings closer the methods of securing oneself from the German occupation services and tracking dogs, as well as the principles of conspiracy. The article presents all the logistics involved in hiding people (hiding places, escape routes, food production, ways of getting food, and excrement disposal). Furthermore, it characterises the behaviour of those hiding and those giving shelter. Finally, it shows the situation of those in hiding and those giving shelter after the occupation of Poland by the Red Army and under the communist regime.

KEYWORDS

- German occupation • terror • totalitarianism • Holocaust
- everyday life under occupation • social attitudes • logistics
- illegal hiding of people • illegal food production • Skąta and its vicinity
- General Governorate

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THE POGROM IN KIELCE, AS REPORTED BY OPINION-
-MAKING US NEWSPAPERS IN 1946 (*THE NEW YORK TIMES*,
THE WASHINGTON POST AND *THE LOS ANGELES TIMES*)

This article examines how the Kielce pogrom was reported in the opinion-making US newspapers. I will show a picture of the tragic anti-Jewish events that took place in Kielce as they were reported in major US newspapers: *The New York Times* (NYT), *The Washington Post* (WP) and *The Los Angeles Times* (LAT), and commented on by journalists and readers in their letters to the editors. However, I will not analyse the extent to which this picture is true, as the origin and social and political background of the Kielce pogrom continue to be the subject of research by historians.¹

¹ Some major works on the subject of the pogrom are: B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946* (Warsaw, 1992); *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, ed. by Ł. Kamiński and J. Żaryn, vol. 2, ed. by L. Bukowski, A. Jankowski, and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2006–2008); J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Okrzyki pogromowe. Szkice z antropologii historycznej Polski 1939–1946* (Wołowiec, 2012), pp. 143–176; J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, vols 1–2 (Warsaw, 2018); M. Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys* (Cracow–Warsaw, 2012), pp. 606–611 ff. For research issues relating to the pogrom, see B. Szaynok, “Nowe ustalenia badawcze dotyczące pogromu w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.” in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w.*, vol. 4: *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)*, ed. A. Grabski (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 215–235; B. Szaynok, “Polska historiografia po 1989 na temat pogromów i powojennej przemocy wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947,” in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, pp. 511–526; R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Stawiając pytania, zbliżamy się do prawdy. Wokół bezradności badawczej nad pogromem Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.” in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku*.

The first *NYT* and *WP* reports were based on information provided during a press conference hastily convened by Brigadier General Wiktor Grosz,² the head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the night of 4–5 July 1946. The first reports described the killing of 26 Jews and two others (a Polish officer and a member of the Polish Workers' Party) by Poles.³ However, unofficial information provided by Grosz made it possible to conclude that the death toll could have been higher than fifty. The newspapers also reported attacks by armed groups on Jewish dwellings, the headquarters of the Jewish Voivodeship Committee in Kielce, and attacks on Jews on trains in the Kielce region. The scale of the unrest was demonstrated by the militia's use of armoured vehicles and the authorities' imposition of a police curfew in the city from 8.00 p.m.

The *NYT* and the *WP* relied exclusively on Grosz's statements when reporting on Kielce. His argument about the existence of a political connection between the pogrom and the referendum that had just been held in Poland, as well as his comment that hooliganism during important political moments in this country had a "long and sad tradition" were uncritically reported to American readers. The blame for the attack was therefore attributed to "Fascist elements," probable members of the illegal organisation "NSZ" (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, i.e. National Armed Forces) (articles in US newspapers, presumably quoting Grosz, consistently used this abbreviation without explaining what it stood for and without writing it out), and was probably centrally organised.⁴ The *NYT* correspondent in Poland, the well-known US journalist William H. Lawrence (he was part of the press group that the Soviets had invited to visit the site of the Katyn Massacre in 1944), was provided with information – probably by government officials or even Grosz

Badania, kontrowersje, perspektywy, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2021), pp. 303–340. My article also corresponds with the coverage of the pogrom in the Australian press, recently presented in: L. Dziedzic, "Widziane z Antypodów. Pogrom w Kielcach z 1946 roku na łamach prasy australijskiej," in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku*, pp. 359–366.

² *NYT* and *WT* misspelled his surname as Groc.

³ "Poles Kill 26 Jews in Kielce Pogrom: Two Others Die in Rioting," *NYT*, 5 July 1946. Other newspapers repeated this information after the *NYT*: "28 Massacred by Pogrom Gang in Polish Town," *LAT*, 5 July 1946.

⁴ The communist authorities' accusation of underground or "reactionary" organisations causing the pogrom was an essential element of the propaganda used by the ruling camp in Poland. See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, p. 27.

himself – that the authorities would not be reporting on the pogrom in the press out of fear that it would trigger similar incidents in other towns.⁵

The Kielce pogrom, the largest anti-Semitic outbreak since the Cracow incidents of October 1945, was, according to Lawrence, part of a series of isolated attacks by the forces of an “underground” that the *NYT* correspondent did not specify.⁶ The activities of these forces were to be one of the main reasons for the mass emigration of Jews from Poland to the American occupation zone in Germany. Lawrence noted that only 800 Jews remained in Kielce out of 50,000 Poles,⁷ and over 900,000 Jews had left Poland the previous year. He quoted the opinion of his Polish interlocutors, which was the same regardless of their political leanings that despite the survival of only a fraction of the pre-war Jewish population, there is more anti-Semitism today than in the entire history of this – as he stated – “traditionally anti-Jewish country.” He regarded this as a “sad and tragic” fact. The authorities admitted to having difficulty dealing with the problem, so Jews living in small towns could not feel safe.⁸

The following day, the *NYT* reported that the death toll had increased and indicated that the direct cause of the pogrom had been two mystifications. The first was the alleged kidnapping of a 9-year-old child who had escaped home after being held at the Jewish committee for three days. The second was the actions of a group in military uniforms who entered the Jewish committee’s headquarters, which was under siege by a crowd and promised protection to the people inside before handing them over to the mob outside after leading them into the street. Lawrence pointed out that the “cruel, bestial demonstration of the undoubted widespread anti-Semitic feeling thorough Poland” at the same time demonstrated the authorities’ inability to ensure citizens’ safety within a 200 km radius of the capital. In the morgue in Kielce, the *NYT* correspondent saw the bodies of thirty-six dead, including nine women and one newborn baby – a girl born prematurely

⁵ “Poles Kill 26 Jews in Kielce Pogrom.”

⁶ The issue of blaming the underground for the pogrom is still far from being fully clarified. See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Tłum na ulicy Planty – wokół niewyjaśnionych okoliczności genezy i przebiegu pogromu Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.,” in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2, pp. 127–128.

⁷ Before the war, Kielce’s religious community numbered 16 to 18 thousand people. K. Urbański, *Kieleccy Żydzi* (Cracow, 1993), p. 126.

⁸ “Poles Kill 26 Jews in Kielce Pogrom.”

when the crowd fatally beat her mother. The other victims were two civilians, an army officer and a militiaman. In addition, 40 Jews were seriously injured, and many others suffered lighter injuries.⁹

The Washington Post, on the other hand, devoted more space to Henryk Błaszczyk, who was not kidnapped but ran away from home. He was said to have been urged to tell his story of kidnapping by his host, who had sheltered him. The *WP* unreflectively repeated the official position that this peasant was a member of the armed underground. It also reported on another alleged act of violence: dragging seven Jews from a train by a crowd shouting “kill the Jews” and beating them to death in the nearby village of Piekoszów.¹⁰ The paper also repeated the Polish government’s official “revelation” that the man who had provoked the pogrom had been identified as a member of General Władysław Anders’s army. The words of a senior Polish army officer, who had come down to Kielce, about the murder of Jews being organised by the same group from abroad that had allegedly carried out the pogrom in the same place earlier, were also left without comment.¹¹

On the same day, *NYT* readers could learn about what certain members of the American public thought about the incidents in Kielce. The Democratic Congressman Sol Bloom of New York, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in the face of the anti-Semitic pogrom in Poland, called for a worldwide solution to the Jewish problem by the United Nations. In turn, the president of the World Jewish Congress, Stephen S. Wise, in a telegram sent to Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski, demanded effective measures to protect Jews against mindless attacks and the destruction of their property. While he appreciated the steps already taken, Bloom stressed that it was the authorities’ responsibility to maintain order and peace and, consequently, to protect Jewish lives and property.¹²

The question of punishing the main perpetrators of the pogrom occupied a good deal of space in *The New York Times*. Demand for the death penalty for the instigators of the anti-Jewish incidents in Kielce, made by the Polish authorities,

⁹ “Poles Declare Two Hoaxes Caused High Toll in Pogrom,” *NYT*, 6 July 1946.

¹⁰ Information about an alleged ritual murder in Kielce was circulated on a train going to Piekoszów on 4 July 1946. At this station, people searched for Jewish passengers in the carriages and attacked Jews. See Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, vol. 1, p. 303; Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, p. 610.

¹¹ “Lie by Youth Held Causing 40 Jew Deaths,” *WP*, 6 July 1946.

¹² “Bloom will Insist U.N. Protect Jews,” *NYT*, 6 July 1946.

including Osóbka-Morawski and communist leader Władysław Gomułka, attracted particular attention. The news of the arrest of the deputy commander of the militia in Kielce was also reported by the NYT, but not commented on further. The NYT reported that 40 seriously wounded Jews had been transported to Lodz on a sanitary train under guard. Sixty-five others remained under care in Kielce.¹³ Once again citing news coming from Warsaw, this time from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NYT reported on an attempted pogrom in Częstochowa. The paper reported that a camel, a rare sight indeed in Poland, had attracted a crowd. At one point, the owner began to shout anti-Semitic slogans. The militia intervened quickly this time and, after arresting the provocateur, the crowd dispersed.¹⁴

From the same article, American readers first learned what Gomułka had said to discredit Stanisław Mikołajczyk, his political opponent. The leader of the Polish communists linked anti-Semitic actions to the leader of the opposition Polish People's Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL). The paper reported that Gomułka had claimed that the policy of negating the results of the June referendum defeat by PSL and the "NSZ" was an attempt to push the country into the abyss of civil war and anarchy. The pogrom in Kielce was said to be proof of this. The NYT quoted Gomułka's words about the Polish fascists worshipping Mikołajczyk, who had surpassed their masters (by implication the Nazis) in spreading anti-Semitism. As a result of the incidents in Kielce, Poland was shamed. There could therefore be no leniency for those accused of the pogrom. The article indicated that the soldiers who led the Jews out and handed them over to the mob would also be tried. The American correspondent estimated that the number of the arrested was between 75 and 100, but the exact figures were unknown.¹⁵

Another theme on which the American press focused was the panic and desire to leave Poland, as felt by the Jewish population. The NYT noted that, despite the news blockade imposed by the government, news of the pogrom spread rapidly among the Jews. The 48 survivors of the pogrom had only one desire: "to leave

¹³ "President of Poland Asks Doom of Killers," NYT, 8 July 1946.

¹⁴ "Poles Ask Death for Kielce Guilty," NYT, 7 July 1946. On 6 July, a crowd of about 400 people gathered in the Stradom District, agitated by the alleged murder of a child by Jews; a militia unit, after searching the place for the alleged murder, forced people to leave. Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, p. 611. The information about the camel was not confirmed by other sources.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Poland.” Despite the Polish authorities’ efforts to ensure the protection of the Jewish population, fears of further pogroms crystallised the conviction among the Jews that emigration was necessary. Crowds swarmed the Polonia Hotel in Warsaw, waiting for a transit visa to France via the American occupation zone in Germany. Others tried to obtain a similar document from the Czechoslovakian embassy to go to France, the United States or Palestine. The US officer in charge of the programme to assist Jews arriving in the US occupation zone in Germany estimated that illegal arrivals, at that time, amounting to 8,000 people per month on average, would increase 250%, but did not explain what this opinion was based on.¹⁶

The issue of emigration in the face of what was reported as a noticeable increase in anti-Semitism in some Central European countries appeared in the *NYT* in connection with a demonstration organised by Joseph Tenenbaum, head of the World Association of Polish Jews. Tenenbaum called for 100,000 Jews to be allowed to come to the USA and the same number to Palestine. Interestingly, he uncritically repeated the earlier accusation of the Polish communist authorities that General Anders was to blame for the outbreak of anti-Semitism in Poland, which had claimed more than 1,100 Jewish lives since the end of the war, “with the patronage, support and subsidies from the British government.”¹⁷ Anti-Semitism, Tenenbaum argued, is a menace to the world and should be addressed by the United Nations.¹⁸ His statement can be interpreted as resentful towards the UK government because of its role in Palestine at the time.

The *NYT* provided ongoing coverage of the trial of the perpetrators of the Kielce pogrom before a military court (9–11 July 1946). The prosecutor asked for the death penalty for nine of the twelve defendants, including a woman. The ruling was not open to a legal challenge. American and British correspondents noted the line of defence based on the argument that a military court should not try civilians. This motion was denied like other motions previously filed by the attorneys for the defendants to extend the time needed to prepare the defence. The court,

¹⁶ “Poles Ask Deaths for Kielce Guilty.”

¹⁷ It is worth noting, however, that the *NYT* quoted an opinion expressed in a BBC programme that the Polish authorities were trying to blame the pogrom on the agents of General Anders, for when “these bestial murders took place, the inspirers spoke and raised shouts of ‘Long live Anders.’”

¹⁸ “US Urged to Take Extra 100,000 Jews,” *NYT*, 12 July 1946.

composed of three army majors, proceeded to prove the defendants' involvement in the pogrom precisely. According to the *NYT*, it was clear that the authorities wanted the court to hand down a judgement in this case quickly. The article also mentioned that the ruling camp would try to accuse virtually everyone against the current government of anti-Semitism.¹⁹

The *NYT* also provided exhaustive coverage of the 11 July court verdict – nine death penalties by hanging.²⁰ The names of other convicted individuals were also provided. The “anti-Semitic agitator” Antonina Biskupska, a 26-year-old mother, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Stanisław Rurarz, a 20-year-old man who appeared mentally disabled when testifying before the court, was given a life sentence. Tadeusz Szczęśniak, who denied that he was in Kielce on that day (in fact, he denied that he took part in the pogrom), was sentenced to seven years in prison. It was noted that this was the first of several trials: a deputy commander of the *Milicja Obywatelska* (Citizens' Militia) in Kielce, accused of allowing the massacre to happen and of failing to prevent the pogrom effectively, was also put on trial. Other people were also charged with criminal offences. None of the defendants had a right to appeal against the verdict, and their only recourse was to petition President Bolesław Bierut for a pardon. However, it was expected that the head of state would not exercise his right of pardon and that the death sentences would be executed quickly.

The correspondence stressed that, “for the first time” in Polish history, people involved in a pogrom were sentenced, including to death. The authorities took this step to show an iron hand in their actions against growing and violent anti-Semitism. At the same time, the *NYT* correspondent observed that the ruling camp was trying to make political capital out of the pogrom by accusing the communists' opponents in Poland – Mikołajczyk and the Catholic Church – of not doing enough to fight anti-Semitism. In fact, the indictment formally alleged that the Kielce incident had occurred due to the participants' disappointment with the results of the June 1946 referendum. The *NYT* correspondent, however, expressed surprise at the authorities' decision to hold a trial for the participants

¹⁹ On the beginning of the process see also “Pogrom Trial, Opens for 12,” *WP*, 10 July 1946.

²⁰ “Nine Plead Guilty in Polish Pogrom,” *NYT*, 10 July 1946. For more on the first trial, see Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, vol. 1, pp. 81–83, 186–188, 263–264.

of the pogrom. He compared the court case to the successful trial of members of a mob who had lynched a black person in the US South.²¹

The announcement of the verdict was accompanied by news that another Jew had been murdered on a train from Lodz bound for Wroclaw. Initially, there were rumours of 22 people dead and new outbreaks of violence against the Jewish population. However, these revelations were denied by General Grosz himself, who admitted that Jews had indeed been murdered, but indeed fewer than 20. Presumably based on his words, *The New York Times* reported that protection of Jewish passengers had been strengthened, that police and security forces had been mobilised, and that armoured vehicles had been deployed, but did not specify where such measures had been taken.²² It is worth adding that more unsubstantiated information appeared in the NYT concerning the sentencing of nine participants in the Kielce pogrom. It was reported that the “banned NSZ” had taken nine Jewish hostages and threatened to kill them if the sentence was carried out on the Poles.²³

At this time, the image of the pogrom in the American press was increasingly linked to the issue of Polish anti-Semitism. This was undoubtedly the result of a statement by Primate August Hlond, which was met with great criticism in US newspapers. The brunt of this criticism was directed above all against the hierarch's words that the rise of anti-Semitism in Poland was, to a large extent, linked to Jews occupying top positions in the present authorities, and their desire to introduce a type of government that most Poles did not want.²⁴

According to Tenenbaum, the proof of the fallacy of this statement was that in pre-war Poland, Jews were not allowed in government positions, and anti-Semitism was also widespread.²⁵ Also the American Jewish Conference criticised the primate's

²¹ “9 Sentenced to Die in Kielce Pogrom,” *NYT*, 12 July 1946. A much shorter, informative description was also published in *WP*, 12 July 1946.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ “Poles Said to Hold Jews as Hostages,” *NYT*, 17 July 1946.

²⁴ In fact, Hlond said: “That this good relationship is breaking down, for this the Jews, who hold key positions in state life in Poland, and who seek to impose forms of government which the vast majority of the nation does not want, are to a great extent responsible. This is a harmful game because dangerous tensions arise from it. In the fatal armed clashes on the militant political front, unfortunately some Jews die, but unequally more Poles die...” Statement of Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, to American journalists, Warsaw, 11 July 1946, in Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod kłqtwq*, vol. 2, p. 662.

²⁵ We should add that Tenenbaum met with Hlond during a visit to Poland in early June 1946. According to what the *NYT* published, he said that it was wrong to apply collective responsibility for

words. In a statement, it expressed concern that they would not calm the situation in Poland, which should be the desire of every spiritual leader in this country. The World Jewish Congress, on the other hand, believed that, as a result of his words, Cardinal Hlond would find it difficult to absolve himself of co-responsibility for anti-Jewish acts in the future.²⁶ In addition, in an unsigned commentary in *The Washington Post*, the primate's statement was judged to be "unfortunate," shattering his reputation as a humanist and an open-minded man. There was no doubt that he had uttered these words under great stress. To a certain extent, however, they justified anti-Semitic behaviour since the "creatures" who started the new wave of pogroms might also have thought so.²⁷

It was as late as 14 July that the *NYT* covered the concerns raised by Mikołajczyk, who had met with 20 Western correspondents the day before. Mikołajczyk wondered why, despite the omnipotence of the security service, it was so vigilant against the PSL and other political opposition groups in Poland that it had allowed the Kielce pogrom to go ahead. Responding to a foreign correspondent's question about Prime Minister Osóbka-Morawski's statement that Mikołajczyk was no friend of Jews, the deputy prime minister of the Polish government reiterated that his party had categorically condemned the events in Kielce, regardless of who had inspired them. He expressed astonishment that crowds had been allowed to gather and commit crimes for several hours, as there were many security and military formations in Kielce. However, he refrained from commenting on Hlond's words.²⁸

In "the opinion of all neutral observers who were in Kielce," acknowledged the *NYT*, commenting on the execution of the nine people sentenced by the military

the acts of individuals, the Polish-Jewish collective was not to blame for the acts of those Jews who occupied government positions, and in turn no one should be deprived of such an opportunity because of race or religion. See "22 More Murders Charged in Poland," *NYT*, 13 July 1946; J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Logika uniku. O protokole audiencji Josepha Tenenbauma u prymasa Augusta Hlonda 3 czerwca 1946 r.," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 17 (2018), pp. 477–485.

²⁶ "22 More Murders Charged in Poland." The New York chapter of the Federation of Methodist Churches also protested against Hlond's words. A telegram to President Harry Truman demanded that the United States immediately sever diplomatic relations with the Vatican in light of the Vatican state's political commitment to protect those who "initiate pogroms and accuse Jewish government officials of murders instigated by others."

²⁷ "Anti-Semitism in Poland," *WP*, 13 July 1946. Presumably, the journal's commentator was unaware of General Grosz's dismissal of rumours of another wave of anti-Jewish speeches.

²⁸ "Mikołajczyk Hits Policy on Pogrom," *NYT*, 14 July 1946.

court, “the secret police and military did not act with the average speed or strength against the mob”, in a country where shooting to disperse a crowd was normal. It is worth highlighting this journal’s acknowledgement of the violent anti-Catholic campaign waged by the authorities following the primate’s statement, which may have been a prelude to actions taken against the Catholic Church later. Lawrence argued that the most radical members of the communist party had expressed their disappointment that the land reform did not include big property owned by the church.²⁹

At the same time, it was believed that the pogrom might have shocked the world, but not Poland, for anti-Semitism, was deep-rooted and intense here, and some Poles openly admitted it. A dozen or so educated and intelligent people would tell the *NYT* correspondent that Hitler was right about at least one thing: he wanted to kill all the Jews. The existence of anti-Semitism in Poland, where there were only about 150,000 Jews out of a population of 24 million, astonished the American journalist.³⁰

At the same time, the American press rightly observed that it was difficult to remain neutral in the sharp political division that existed in Poland. The left-wing groups, as the *NYT* called the communists and their allies in Poland, with a majority government, had in their ranks a large number of prominent Jews. In turn, some opponents of the ruling camp used anti-Semitic slogans to fight against it. The Jewish origins of Jakub Berman, called “the brains of the Left Wing”, of Hilary Minc, and a dozen deputy ministers and department heads were pointed out. On the other hand, the authorities tried almost daily to blame the “reactionary underground” and the Polish government-in-exile for anti-Semitism and to link hostility towards Jews to the PSL and its leader. According to official propaganda, this was to be the last weapon of the “Fascist reactionary elements.” The official opposition – Mikołajczyk and the Catholic Church – is “accused of failing or refusing to condemn anti-Semitism,” the *NYT* wrote.³¹

²⁹ “Poland Executes 9 Pogrom Killers,” *NYT*, 16 July 1946.

³⁰ “Poles Said to Hold Jews as Hostages,” *NYT*, 17 July 1946.

³¹ *Ibid.* The American dailies, quoting the TASS agency, cited the opinion of Y. Viktorov, presented in the pages of the Soviet *Pravda*, who also blamed “Fascist underground gangs,” from where the trail led to the Polish People’s Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL) and Stanisław Mikołajczyk. It was no coincidence, argued the Soviet publicist, that Mikołajczyk, in an interview with *Gazeta Ludowa*, did not have the courage to condemn anti-Semitism; he spoke only of condemning violence and the murder of innocent people. According to Viktorov, Primate Hlond also did the same. “Red Lays Pogrom to Fascists,” *LAT*, 15 July 1946.

The Washington Post, in its commentary, published a little bit earlier, expressed a similar opinion about the situation in Poland. On the one hand, the government was made up of elements that were “probably unrepresentative” and had gained power due to Russian pressure. On the other hand, the opposition consisted not only of true democrats like Mikołajczyk but also of representatives of the most extreme reactionism in Europe. The war had taught them nothing, as the pogrom in Kielce showed. Prophetically (it has to be said), the argument went that it was a stain on Poland’s reputation that would be very difficult to erase. The massacre of Jews carried out as a result of a rumour indicated, according to *The Washington Post*, the existence in Poland of the same virus with which Hitler had poisoned Germany. The current authorities have taken decisive steps against anti-Semitism and sentenced the instigators of the massacre. “But... that is not strong. After suffering more than any other country during war, unhappy Poland now faces a continued period of chaos, confusion and even the possibly widespread civil strife.”³²

In the second half of July of 1946, Primate Hlond’s statement was much commented on by readers of *The Washington Post* in their letters to the editor. The polemic was started by D. Siskind from Washington, who criticised the Polish Primate for his words. According to Siskind, Hlond “not only quoted a familiar Nazi line but also deliberately closed his eyes to the long anti-Semitic record of the pre-war Polish government (which contained no Jews) and the Polish people.” The author of the letter considered it indisputable that between 1919 and 1932, Poland was a leading anti-Semitic country “second to Germany.” In this “republic,” Jews were deprived of their civil and legal rights, segregated and forcibly ejected from educational institutions. No one could deny that severe anti-Semitism existed in Poland. The suffering during the Nazi occupation was not enough, according to Siskind, to awaken a spirit of brotherhood in the hearts of Poles. The “unaided” Jews waged a futile struggle in the ghetto. Siskind argued in his letter that, instead of using his influence to cement religious brotherhood, Cardinal Hlond added fuel to the growing flames.³³

His critical views were met a few days later with a retort from Catherine Myslak. In her opinion, Hlond’s statement reflected the facts on the ground. Poland re-

³² “Polish Plebiscite,” *WP*, 13 July 1946.

³³ “Letter to the Editor,” *WP*, 18 July 1946.

mained a “sealed tomb:” the press was “shackled”; there was no democracy or liberty. Any other explanation of anti-Semitism by the hierarch would have served a government subservient to Moscow, not the Polish people.³⁴ In response, Godfrey Hochbaum expressed surprise at this defence of Polish anti-Semitism. Although Poland had suffered immensely over the centuries, it was not mature enough to embrace tolerance. Until the rise of Nazi pseudo-scientific anti-Semitism, Poland was surpassed in the ferocity of her persecution of Jews only by Romania and Russia, Hochbaum argued. He even noted an uncomfortable link between denunciations placing the blame for pogroms on Jewish leaders in Poland and the shifting of responsibility to international Jewry in Hitler’s policies.³⁵

A summary of the visit to Poland by George M. Shabad, a businessman, lawyer and member of the American Jewish Congress, as presented in *The Washington Post*, can be regarded as the conclusion of the discussion around this topic. According to the daily, the current government in Warsaw is the first to fight honestly against anti-Semitism. Shabad accepted uncritically the claim that the pogrom had been organised by a “Fascist terrorist organisation” in the Kielce region, claiming that the police and army had successfully caught all its participants, except for Kielce itself. Unfortunately, the Fascist provocateurs found fertile ground in the local population. One of the main objectives of the organisers of the pogrom was to cause trouble for the authorities: to show that they were incapable of protecting their citizens. A decisive response to the pogrom came quickly, but in Shabad’s estimation, it would take several years to eradicate the “Fascist bands” in Poland. The member of the American Jewish Congress was also confident that these bands were receiving some help and funding from the London-based government. He believed that it would take one or two generations to eradicate anti-Semitism among the majority of Polish society. He thought Jews were leaving Poland not so much out of fear for their lives but out of a lack of emotional ties with the place. The pre-war government and the Poles themselves had done little to instil in Jews a sense of participation in Polish society. Moreover, persecution had not spared any Jewish family; the country had become

³⁴ C. Myslak, “Polish Anti-Semitism,” *WP*, 25 July 1946.

³⁵ G.M. Hochbaum, “Polish Anti-Semitism,” *WP*, 28 July 1946.

a cemetery for this community. Therefore, he appealed to let Polish Jews go to Palestine and the United States.³⁶

Summing up the issues relating to the Kielce pogrom and its consequences as they were covered in the opinion-making American press, the events, especially those that happened in the first days after the pogrom, were reported from the point of view of the communist authorities in Poland. From the press enunciations, readers could not learn much about the nuances of the complicated political situation in the country. It was not until a few days later that the American press published an opinion piece on the subject written by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the leader of the opposition party PSL, and commentators started to pay more attention to the exploitation of the ensuing situation by the ruling communists to discredit the political opposition, the Catholic Church and the remnants of the armed underground, publicly branded as “Fascist.” Interest in the consequences of the Kielce pogrom surged after Primate August Hlond’s speech, with most articles and opinions expressed in letters to the editor engaging in polemics with his assertions. The pogrom against the Jews in Kielce was increasingly used to highlight the prevalence of Polish anti-Semitism, which did not start after 1945 but existed before the Second World War. Some statements openly embraced the rhetoric used by the ruling camp, which became portrayed by the press as a defender of the Jewish population in Poland, while the political opposition was accused of anti-Semitism.

In the statements made by members of Jewish organisations in the United States, one can also discern an attempt to use the tragic events in Kielce to publicise and to act on the emigration of the Jewish population from Central and Eastern Europe to Western countries and Palestine, and an intention to link the perpetrators of the Kielce massacre to the British government in London. Regarding statistics, the *NYT* showed the greatest interest in this issue (publishing more than a dozen articles) of the three newspapers. *The Washington Post* also covered it extensively. It presented the opinions of its readers that were raised not so much by the pogrom in Kielce directly as in reaction to Primate Hlond’s words. The *Los Angeles Times* covered the pogrom to a much lesser extent (with just a few articles), and its account was limited to the event itself.

³⁶ G.M. Szabad, “Report On Poland,” *WP*, 20 July 1946.

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SUMMARY

The article discusses how the Kielce pogrom and its aftermath were portrayed in the opinion-making American press. In the initial days after the incidents, press reports from Poland uncritically accepted the account of events presented by Poland's communist rulers. The press articles did not provide readers with many nuances to offer a fuller picture of the complicated political situation in Poland at the time. It was not until a few days later that the American press published an opinion piece by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the leader of the opposition party, and other commentaries that tried to explain in greater detail how the communist rulers in Poland wanted to exploit the following situation to discredit their political opponents, the Catholic Church, and the remnants of the armed underground, which they called "Fascist." When the Polish primate, Cardinal August Hlond, spoke out about the issue, interest in the consequences of the Kielce pogrom resurged in the American newspapers, with most of the articles and letters to the editor polemising with Hlond's statements. The Kielce pogrom was increasingly used to emphasise Polish anti-Semitism, prevalent not only after 1945 but also before the Second World War. Some statements embraced the rhetoric of the ruling camp, which positioned itself as a defender of the Jewish population in Poland, accusing its political adversaries of anti-Semitism. Comments by members of Jewish organisations in the USA clearly indicated that they had attempted to exploit the tragic events in Kielce to publicise and intensify efforts to help Jews emigrate from Central and Eastern Europe to Western countries and Palestine, as well as a desire to link the perpetrators of the Kielce massacre to the UK government. In terms of statistics, *The New York Times* showed the greatest interest in this issue, followed by *The Washington Post*, which also provided extensive coverage, publishing readers' opinions, which were primarily reactions to Primate Hlond's words and not so much to the Kielce pogrom itself. *The Los Angeles Times* limited its event coverage to reporting on the incident.

KEYWORDS

Polish-Jewish relations • 1946 Kielce Pogrom • anti-Semitism
• American press

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ATTEMPT AT A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF SHLOMO NAHUM PERLA. THE ACTIVITY OF REVISIONIST ZIONISTS IN THE FIRST YEARS OF POST-WAR POLAND

The purpose of this paper is to describe the political activity of Shlomo Nahum Perla (Polish: Szlomo Nachum Perła), who was a sympathiser of Revisionist Zionism, a right-wing movement founded by Vladimir Jabotinsky. The first part of the article presents basic information about Jabotinsky and Jewish political life in Poland in the first post-war years. The second part traces Perla's political activity and briefly discusses the presence of Jabotinsky's supporters in post-war Poland.

Vladimir Jabotinsky lived from 1880 to 1940. He was born in Odessa¹ into a family partially assimilated to Russian culture. Influenced by the activities of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), one of the founding fathers of Zionism, and in response to the rise of anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia at the turn of the twentieth century, he became a supporter of the ideology propagating the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. During the First World War, he co-founded two military organisations that supported the efforts of the Entente states, i.e. the Zion Mule Corps and the

¹ Ch. King, *Odessa. Geniusz i śmierć w mieście snów*, transl. H. Pustuła-Lewicka (Wołowiec, 2016), pp. 16–17.

Jewish Legion.² After the war, Jabotinsky participated in the work of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO). In the mid-1920s, he started forming his own group. In 1925, together with his supporters, he created a faction within the WZO called Revisionist Zionism. It represented a right-wing vision of Zionism.³ In 1935, Jabotinsky's supporters left the WZO and set up the New Zionist Organisation, which was active until 1946.⁴

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 put an end to the centuries-long presence of a large Jewish population in Poland. Revisionist Zionists participated in the Jewish anti-German resistance movement. This is evidenced, among other things, by their involvement in the uprisings that broke out in the Bialystok and Warsaw ghettos.⁵

At the turn of 1945, before the imminent defeat of the Third Reich, an unsuccessful attempt was made to rebuild the Jewish community in post-war Poland. It was related to the temporary revival of Jewish political parties that had been present in interwar Poland. Eleven Jewish parties were active until the turn of 1950. They can be categorised according to their attitude towards Zionism and their legality. The Zionist parties included: the centre-right and religious Mizrahi, the centrist Ihud, the centre-left Hitachdut, the socialist Poale Zion-Right, the radically socialist Hashomer Hatzair (youth movement) and the Marxist Poale Zion-Left.⁶ The

² See R. Freulich, *Soldiers in Judea: Stories and vignettes of the Jewish Legion* (New York, 1965); J.H. Patterson, *With the Judaeans in the Palestine Campaign* (London, 1922); V. Jabotynski, *Dzieje Legjonu Żydowskiego* (Cracow, 1934).

³ See J. Perelman, *Rewizjonizm w Polsce 1922–1936 r.* (Warsaw, 1937); M. Wójcicki, "Podstawy teoretyczne ideologii rewizjonizmu syjonistycznego oraz ich wpływ na kształt myśli państwowej ruchu," *Jewish History Quarterly* 3/223 (2007), pp. 294–309; V. Jabotinsky, *Państwo żydowskie* (Warsaw–Cracow–Poznan, 1937).

⁴ V. Jabotinsky *Nowa Organizacja Syjonistyczna* (Cracow, 1936).

⁵ See also M. Arens, *Flagi nad gettem. Rzecz o powstaniu w getcie warszawskim*, transl. by M. Sobelman and J. Stocker-Sobelman (Cracow–Budapest, 2011); *Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach (materiały i dokumenty)*, ed. B. Ajzensztajn (Warsaw–Lodz–Cracow, 1946); R. Walewski, *Jurek*, ed. P. Wiczorek, transl. M. Sobelman (Warsaw 2020); D. Libionka, L. Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze. Wokół Żydowskiego Związku Wojskowego* (Warsaw, 2011).

⁶ See D. Flisiak, *Wybrane materiały ideologiczne i propagandowe Syjonistyczno-Socjalistycznej Partii Robotniczej Poalej Syjon-Hitachdut. Przyczynek do badań nad lewicą syjonistyczną w pierwszych latach powojennej Polski (1944/45–1949/50)* (Chrzan, 2021); N. Aleksiu, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce (1944–1950)* (Warsaw, 2002); G. Berendt, "Zjednoczenie Syjonistów Demokratów 'Ichud' – 'z biało-niebieskimi sztandarami w morzu czerwonych sztandarów'," in G. Berendt, A. Grabski, *Między emigracją a trwaniem. Syjoniści i komuniści żydowscy w Polsce po Holocauście* (Warsaw, 2003), pp. 101–223.

parties that rejected Zionism included the socialist Bund and the Faction of the Polish Workers' Party at the Central Committee of Polish Jews.⁷ In addition, three parties operated illegally: two groups opposed to Zionism, namely the centre-right Jewish People's Party and the right-wing religious Agudath Yisrael,⁸ as well as a group made of the followers of Revisionist Zionism.⁹

One of the people responsible for the operation of the Revisionist Zionist structures in post-war Poland was Shlomo Nahum Perla, born to Hawa and Moses in Brzeziny near Lodz on 3 December 1911.¹⁰ His father was a teacher of Judaic subjects and politically a supporter of Zionism. Shlomo had a younger brother, Eliezer.¹¹ In 1912, the family moved to Warsaw, where Shlomo attended one of the city's humanities secondary schools, and from 1932 to 1936, he studied law at the University of Warsaw. In the mid-1920s, he joined the Revisionist Zionist Masada, a youth group of Jabotinsky's followers; after 1930, he became a member of the Warsaw branch of Betar.¹² He was the head of the Cultural Department and later a deputy commander of Joel Krelman's branch. Next, he co-created local branches of Betar in the Muranów, Praga and Mokotów boroughs of Warsaw.¹³ From 1935 until the second half of 1937, he wrote for *Trybuna Akademicka. Niezależny organ młodej żydowskiej inteligencji* [Academic Tribune. An Independent Periodical of Young Jewish Intelligentsia]¹⁴ – a bi-monthly magazine addressed to Jewish

⁷ A. Grabski, *Działalność komunistów wśród Żydów w Polsce (1944–1949)* (Warsaw, 2004); M. Rusiniak-Karwat, *Nowe życie na zgłiszczach. Bund w Polsce w latach 1944–1949* (Warsaw, 2016).

⁸ Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, hereinafter AŻIH), Zionist Organisations, 333/580, Bulletins, *Biuletyn Poalej Emunej Isroel Be-polin*, Lodz, 1946, 1947; G.C. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939* (Jerusalem, 1996); K. Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto, 2011).

⁹ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Łodzi (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Lodz), pf 10/414, Sytuacja operacyjna we wrogim środowisku żydowskim na terenie Łodzi, 1958–1961, p. 199.

¹⁰ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), 01236/1041, Interrogation minutes, 1949, p. 29.

¹¹ D. Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów w Polsce w latach 1944/1945–1950* (Lublin, 2020), p. 78.

¹² J. Chrust, *Regulamin Betaru* (Lvov, 1934); *Encyklopedia palestyńska*, vol. 1, no. 5 (Cracow–Warsaw, 1939), pp. 291–297; D.K. Heller, *Jabotinsky's Children. Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionist* (Princeton, 2017); A. Sołtysik, "Uwagi na temat koncepcji politycznych Bejtaru," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 6 (2016), pp. 45–56; V. Jabotinsky, *Ideologia Bejtaru* (Lvov, 1935).

¹³ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 77.

¹⁴ Libionka, Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy*, p. 276.

students. Consistently with the political line of the Revisionist Zionists and other Jewish parties, Shlomo published articles condemning plans to introduce ghettos and decried anti-Jewish incidents.¹⁵ After the pogrom in Brest-on-the-Bug in the first half of May 1937, he wrote:¹⁶

Brest played the role of an ominous flash of lightning that, for a moment, lit up the sky piled with clouds, threatening us with a deluge. [...] What took place on 13 May could only have happened due to the fact that, during the last six years, both the intensified political agitation of the National Democracy across the country and the ONR¹⁷ sharing with it anti-Jewish attitudes both in practice and theory, managed to organise young people under their banners. It is no secret to anyone that vocational, secondary and tertiary education institutions spill out hundreds and thousands of graduates every year [...], remaining under the formative and political influence of Polish, racist nationalism.¹⁸

From the mid-1930s, Perla supported the activities and the methods of operation of the New Zionist Organisation. From 1937, he supported the idea of Jews actively defending themselves against attacks by the Arab population in Palestine.¹⁹ During his political activity, he contacted, among others, Menachem Begin,²⁰ Henryk

¹⁵ S.P. [S. Perla], "Nasz przegląd," *Trybuna Akademicka. Niezależny organ młodej żydowskiej inteligencji* 10 (1935), pp. 1–2.

¹⁶ W. Śleszyński, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Brześciu nad Bugiem 13 maja 1937 roku* (Białystok, 2004); S. Rudnicki, "Dokument kontrwywiadu o pogromie brzeskim 13 maja 1937 roku," *Jewish History Quarterly* 2 (2009), pp. 221–234.

¹⁷ Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (National Radical Camp).

¹⁸ S. Perla, "Pluzje czy samoobrona narodowa," *Trybuna Akademicka. Niezależny organu młodej żydowskiej inteligencji* 3 (1937), pp. 3–4.

¹⁹ Jabotinsky's followers, seeing the threat from Arab nationalists and Muslim fundamentalists, established the paramilitary organisation Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) in Palestine. Its representatives participated in Jewish self-defence and carried out retaliation attacks. See T. Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British mandate*, transl. H. Watzman (New York, 2001); V. Jabotinsky, *Der islam un Erets Yisroel* (Varsha, 1929); *idem, Dos araber-problem un Erets-Yisroel* (Varsha, 1929).

²⁰ Menachem Begin (1913–1992) was born in Brest-Litovsk. In interwar Poland, he was one of the responsible for the development of Betar. After 1948 he was an Israeli politician, and between 1977 and 1983 he was the first prime minister in the history of Israel not to be associated with the Zionist left. See M. Begin, *White nights: The Story of a Prisoner in Russia, with investigation files declassified after the collapse of the Soviet Union*, transl. H. Szafir (Cracow–Budapest, 2010); D. Gordis, *Menachem Begin: The Battle for Israel's Soul* (New York, 2014); A. Perlmutter, *The Life and Times of Menachem Begin* (New York, 1987).

Strasman,²¹ David Wdowiński,²² and Michał Strykowski²³. When Germany and the Soviet Union occupied Poland, Perla remained in Warsaw. After the German occupation authorities established the ghetto in October 1940,²⁴ he stayed on the “Aryan side.”²⁵ This was possible thanks to help from his friend Karolina Modzelewska and others. Perla tried to support his close ones confined in the ghetto financially. Unfortunately, in 5 April 1942, his brother was arrested by an officer of the *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement* (known as the blue police) and handed over to the German gendarmerie, after which he was jailed in prison on Gęsia Street.²⁶ Then, in July 1942, his parents were deported to the German extermination camp in Treblinka.²⁷ From April 1943 until the end of 1944, Perla stayed with Karolina Modzelewska in Józefów near Warsaw. The change of location was necessary because some blue policemen were blackmailing him.²⁸

The (illegal) radical right-wing Zionist organisations first attempted to restart activities in February 1945. This was when Shlomo Perla, who was staying in Lu-

²¹ Together with his wife Alicja, they were representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia, which, due to the rise of anti-Semitism in Poland, supported the fastest possible creation of a Jewish state. After Poland's defeat in 1939, Henryk, a lieutenant in the 8th Light Artillery Regiment, was taken prisoner by the Soviets and was executed in Kharkov in the spring of 1940. See L. Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience. The New Zionist Organization and the Polish Government 1936–1939* (New York, 1993), pp. 51–52, 54–55, 87, 123, 134, 136–138, 140–141, 151, 184–186, 208.

²² On Wdowiński's work for the development of the Zionist right, see S. Łoza, *Czy wiesz kto to jest? Uzupełnienia i sprostowania* (Warsaw, 1983), p. 336; Perelman, *Rewizjonizm*, pp. 100, 112, 167, 183, 265, 267, 273. Also check the Jabotinsky Institute Archive (hereinafter JIA) in Israel, P266-1, *Wdowiński David, Biographical Details*, 1964–1980; D. Wdowiński, *And We Are Not Saved* (New York, 1963).

²³ Strykowski was one of the founders of the Jewish Military Union in the Warsaw Ghetto. In interwar Poland, he published in the *Trybuna Akademicka*. See M. Strykowski, “Sursum corda!,” *Trybuna Akademicka. Niezależny organ młodej żydowskiej inteligencji* 3/4 (1939), pp. 4–5.

²⁴ B. Engelking, J. Leociak, *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warsaw, 2001), p. 57.

²⁵ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 77. Basic information about Jews living outside the ghettos: M. Grądzka-Rejak, “‘Myśmy się nawzajem poznawały po oczach.’ Z badań nad strategiami przetrwania kobiet żydowskich funkcjonujących ‘na powierzchni’ po tzw. aryjskiej stronie w okupowanym Krakowie i okolicach,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2015), pp. 51–74; G.S. Paulsson, *Utajone miasto. Żydzi po aryjskiej stronie Warszawy (1940–1945)*, transl. E. Olender-Dmowska (Cracow, 2007); L.J. Weitzman, *Living on the Aryan side in Poland. Gender, Passing, and the Nature of Resistance in Women in the Holocaust*, ed. by D. Ofer and L.J. Weitzman (New Haven CT, 1998), pp. 187–222.

²⁶ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 77.

²⁷ Libionka, Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy*, p. 277. For more information see Engelking, Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, pp. 661–689.

²⁸ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 77.

blin at the time, bumped into Perec Laskier²⁹ and Tzvi Kantor, pre-war activists of right-wing Zionism.³⁰ Soon afterwards, they moved to Lodz. In the first half of 1945, through Laskier, Perla met Tobiasz Berkal,³¹ Niusa Lubocki-Długi³² and a man named Margules, with whom he decided to recreate the structures of the radically right-wing Zionists.

Creating political structures was not easy, primarily because finding activists who had survived the German occupation was necessary. In mid-May 1945, there were around 25–30 of Jabotinsky's supporters from pre-war Lodz. They organised two secret commemorative meetings: one was dedicated to the fifth anniversary of the death of Vladimir Jabotinsky, and the other to the 41st anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl.³³ At the end of that year, about 50 or so people were working in the structures of right-wing Zionists in Lodz. The organisation was made of cells which were divided into groups (*plugi*) with no more than 15 people in each.³⁴

The number of people in the Revisionist Zionist organisation and the extent of their activities increased when, after the horrors of war, Jews began returning from the Soviet Union. Many Jabotinsky followers went to Szczecin or settled in towns and cities in Lower and Upper Silesia.³⁵ The group operating in Lodz came into contact with the newly arrived Jews through emissaries, and from there, the or-

²⁹ Perec Laskier (1910–1963) – in interwar Poland he was a member of the Betar command, and from autumn 1939 until February 1942 he participated in the recreation of the Zionist Revisionist structures in the Warsaw Ghetto. Then he was in the ghetto in Czestochowa. After 1945, for several months he was involved in the activities of right-wing Zionists in Poland. Then he left for Palestine. See Libionka, Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy*, pp. 38, 265–266, 298–299.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³¹ Tobiasz Berkal was born in 1908 in Lodz, graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw. During the Second World War, as Paweł Ostrowski, he was a member of a sabotage group of the Polish underground commanded by Andrzej Sudeczko. He took part in the Warsaw Uprising. In mid-1948, he left Poland and settled in Munich. His further activities and date of death are unknown. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³² For more about this person see I. Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe: the Story of a Jewish United Partisan Organization* (New York, 1969), pp. 130, 264, 321, 386.

³³ AIPN, 01236/1041, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 32.

³⁴ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 82.

³⁵ Right-wing and left-wing Zionists along with Bundists and religious Orthodox Jews were persecuted by the Soviet authorities. See P. Gontarczyk, "Żydowski antykomunizm kontra komunistyczny antysemityzm. Postawy opozycyjne i opór Żydów wobec władzy sowieckiej na Kresach Wschodnich RP na przykładzie wybranych dokumentów białoruskiego NKWD," *Glaukopis* 2/3 (2005), pp. 327–338; A. Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego. Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej, wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1941* (Warsaw, 2006).

ganisation spread to central and western Poland. The Revisionist Zionist structure was divided into four regions,³⁶ each headed by commanders. Until 1948, the Lower Silesia district was led by Joel Koniarski, Abram Wienryba, and a certain Chackielewicz, the Upper Silesia region was commanded by Moshe Goldszmis, Pincjas Wabnik, Moshe Bajzman and Menachem Goldkom; the Szczecin region was headed by Adam Ajnbinder, Lipa Kielich and a person named Charlin, while those in the Lodz region were under the command of Michał Prochownik, Icchak Sikuler and Abrasha Gurwicz.³⁷

Activists living in the various provinces were divided into groups of up to seven people. They were to be headed by a politically aware person with organisational experience. The activities of the districts and cells were assessed during inspections carried out by the leadership of the structures. In 1947, there were about 1,500–2,000 Revisionist Zionists underground activists in Poland.³⁸ New members were not admitted for fear of being unmasked.³⁹ Some of Jabotinsky's supporters used pseudonyms; Perla acted as "Stefan" and "Abner", Berkal as "Tuwim", Sikuler as "Kozik," and David Draznin⁴⁰ as "Arnold".

Congresses served as a sort of summary of the Revisionist Zionists' activities. They were held secretly in various places, e.g., Lodz and Bytom, from December 1945 to July 1946. They were usually attended by activists of the movement operating in a given district and were intended to discuss the current situation in Poland and Palestine and in the World Zionist Organisation. Participants of the meetings also paid tribute to Jabotinsky and the victims of the Holocaust.⁴¹

³⁶ AIPN, 00231/102, vol. 1, Information on the elimination of the leadership of the illegal Zionist Revisionist organisation in Poland, n.d., p. 101.

³⁷ AIPN, 01236/1041, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 38.

³⁸ J. Adelson, *W Polsce zwanej ludową w Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce. W zarysie (do 1950 roku)*, ed. J. Tomaszewski (Warsaw, 1993), p. 434.

³⁹ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 85.

⁴⁰ Dawid Draznin was born in Grodno on 25 October 1910, to Samuel and Estera née Janowska. He had a brother Michael and sisters Jochewet and Jelin Mirian. In the Second Polish Republic, he was a lawyer and a member of Betar. In autumn 1939 he was arrested and exiled by the NKVD to Kazakhstan. In 1946, he returned to Poland and took part in the recreation of Revisionist Zionism. See A. Gontarek, "Na usługach UB Dawid Draznin," *Kolbojnik. Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie* 2/71 (2013), pp. 27–28.

⁴¹ See JIA, K7a-13/12/1, Museum of Combatants and Partisans, Escape – Documents, Protocols, Correspondence, 1944–1947; JIA, B33-4/1, Betar Poland, Protocols from Betar Conferences in Lodz and Silesia, and from the First Conference Following World War Two, 1946.

It is worth emphasising that, after 1945, some of the pre-war members of Betar did not join the underground Revisionist Zionist structures but chose to be active in other Jewish parties:

- In the kibbutz in Lodz, run by Poale Zion-Right, there were nine Betar members repatriated from the Soviet Union.⁴² Their youth organisation was called Dror (Freedom).⁴³
- In the Wrocław kibbutz associated with the Hitachdut party, there were several Betar activists and sympathisers of right-wing Zionism.⁴⁴ The lecturer and educational instructor at this centre was a person named Hiler, a member of Betar. The youth organisation of this party was called Gordonia.⁴⁵
- In towns such as Bytom, Katowice and Lubawka, activists of the Ichud party included followers of Revisionist Zionism.⁴⁶ In Legnica, Fima Atlasowicz, who originally hailed from Białystok, was a member of the executive of the centrist Zionists. At Perla's request, he formed a group of followers of Jabotinsky's idea.⁴⁷ The Frenkel family lived in the town of Lubawka.⁴⁸ Leon Dajksel, a supporter of Jabotinsky, kept in touch with them.

In the first months of their activities, an important task was to recreate the contacts of Polish Revisionist Zionists with the structures of Betar in Western Europe, which were being rebuilt after the war. This happened thanks to Perla's trip in mid-1945 to Germany, occupied by the victorious powers. He set off intending to find his brother, who was rumoured to be in one of the German camps.⁴⁹ In Munich, by chance, he encountered David Wdowiński, who, having survived the war, did not want to return to Poland.⁵⁰ Perla began to establish cooperation

⁴² "Instrukcja MBP dla rozpracowania partii i organizacji działających w społeczeństwie żydowskim z 1946 r.," ed. A. Namysło, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2/6 (2004), pp. 342, 351.

⁴³ Aleksiu, *Dokąd dalej?*, p. 201.

⁴⁴ AIPN, 0259/447, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Aleksiu, *Dokąd dalej?*, p. 201.

⁴⁶ Employees of the Ministry of Public Security who were keeping an eye on Jewish parties, were also convinced of the presence of right-wing Zionists among the Ichud activists. See "Instrukcja MBP," p. 357.

⁴⁷ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 91.

⁴⁸ AŻIH, Zionist organisations, 333/75, a list of ransomed members of "sheklev", p. 22.

⁴⁹ This attempt failed. See Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, pp. 124–125.

⁵⁰ After the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was crushed, Wdowiński (1895–1970) was taken prisoner by the Germans. He was incarcerated in the labour camp in Budzyń, among other places. After 1946, he went from France to New York, where he taught psychiatry and psychology at the New School

with supporters of Vladimir Jabotinsky living in Munich. It was easy because, until October 1945, Wdowiński was recreating the structures of the Revisionist Zionists and was a member of the Central Committee of Bavarian Jews. Then, after travelling through Italy and France, Wdowiński went to the United States.⁵¹

Perla did not return to Poland until the end of August 1946. It happened due to a chance meeting in Munich with Shlomo Komlos, a Hungarian activist of Betar, who offered him a job in rebuilding right-wing Zionism in Hungary.⁵² At the end of 1945, Perla found himself in Budapest. He continued the unsuccessful search for his missing brother and pushed through the idea of establishing a kibbutz in Budapest for children and adolescents who had lost their parents during the Second World War. In the next two months (until the end of March 1946), about 40 people inhabited the newly established kibbutz. This place had its own regulations and a programme of activities whereby people with appropriate qualifications were sent to work in factories or to attend courses of the Society for the Promotion of Skilled Trades and Agriculture Among Jews.⁵³

In mid-1946, Perla visited the Polish Repatriation Mission operating in Budapest, asking for a document enabling him to return to Poland. He received it at the end of June. Finally, at the end of August, he returned to Lodz via Parkany, Bratislava and Zebrzydowice.⁵⁴ It should be emphasised that during this travel, he used false data, presenting himself as Meir Finkielsztejn so as not to expose himself as a supporter of Jabotinsky.⁵⁵

From 1946 to mid-1948, Jabotinsky's followers in Lodz published a bulletin entitled *Wiadomości* [*Yediot*, News] once every month or two. Ten issues of the bulletin, stretching to 10-12 pages each, were printed. The texts were both in Polish and Yiddish and dealt mainly with Palestinian and ideological problems.⁵⁶ The

for Social Research. L. Weinbaum, "Epizod z biografii Dawida Wdowińskiego," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 9 (2013), pp. 501–507; J. Wiszniewicz, *A jednak czasem mówiam sny. Historia pewnej samotności* (Wołowiec, 2009). See also JIA, P266-31, Wdowinski David, Concentration Camp Journal (Photocopy), 1944–1945.

⁵¹ JIA, P266-2, Wdowinski David, Immigration Documents to the United States, 1947.

⁵² See more JIA, B25-1, Betar Hungary, History of Betar Hungary, 1948–1991.

⁵³ AIPN, 01178/1778, Curriculum Vitae, 1949, p. 81.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵⁶ AIPN, 0259/447, Interrogation file of the suspect, Warsaw, 17 May 1949, p. 91.

information came from the Revisionist Zionist daily *Hamashkiv* [The Observer] printed in Palestine, six issues of which were posted to Poland, to Tobiasz Berkal. An additional source of information was *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [Information Bulletin], published by Jabotinsky's followers in Paris and sent to Poland to David Draznin's address. The people responsible for publishing *Wiadomości* included Perla and Draznin.⁵⁷

Perla's attempt to participate in the illegal activities of the paramilitary organisation Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) in Poland should be mentioned. In the first half of 1947, he received a letter from Icchak Sikuler⁵⁸ proposing cooperation with Etzel in this part of Europe. Perla's tasks were to include translating propaganda materials that came from Palestine and Etzel units in France.⁵⁹ Until mid-1947, Perla, along with Wiktor Urbach and others, established several Etzel cells in Polish cities: Cracow, Bytom, and Lodz. It can be assumed that each of them had about ten people. Primarily they carried out propaganda activities and organised aliyah (immigration) to Palestine or France. After 1948, Etzel's activities gradually petered out,⁶⁰ and from the end of 1947, due to his poor health, Perla no longer participated in any political work.

In 1948, as a result of the aliyah of Jews from Poland to the newly established state of Israel, the number of Revisionist Zionists decreased. At the end of March 1948, about 150–160 of them were there.⁶¹ In September 1948, the leaders of this movement (including Perla) decided to establish contact with the employees of the Israeli embassy in Warsaw. The reason was the desire to obtain promises enabling them to immigrate to the Jewish state.⁶² Until the first weeks of 1949, Perla and Ozjasz Raczka kept in touch with Yisrael Barzilai,⁶³ Azriel Uchamin, and Pinchas

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ He left Poland in March 1947.

⁵⁹ AIPN, 01178/1778, Irgun affairs, p. 109.

⁶⁰ For more, see JIA, K18-2/22, Etzel Diaspora Headquarters, Paris, Correspondence with Poland Branch, 1948; D. Flisiak, "Działalność członków paramilitarnej organizacji Irgun Cwai Leumi w Polsce w latach 1945–1948," *Kwartalnik Bellona* 3 (2018), pp. 41–50.

⁶¹ AIPN, 01178/1778, Organisational activities from the end of 1948 until March 1949, p. 104.

⁶² AIPN, 00231/102, vol. 1, Excerpt from the interrogation of the suspect Shloma Perla from 24 March 1949, p. 98.

⁶³ In 1933, Yisrael Barzilai (1913–1970) left Poland for Palestine. Between 1948 and 1951, he was an envoy of the State of Israel in Poland. After returning to Poland, he joined the Mapam party. In 1955–1961, he was a member of the Israeli Parliament, in 1955–1961 and 1966–1969 he was the minister of

Dagan.⁶⁴ However, Barzilai, who supported left-wing Zionism, disapproved of the Revisionist Zionists' efforts. The difficulties associated with the attempt to obtain the documents were presented in Raczka's account.⁶⁵

The post-war activities of Polish Revisionist Zionists were discontinued at the turn of March and April 1949, when the communist security services arrested three people responsible for the operations of this political group: Ozjasz Raczka, David Draznin and Shlomo Perla. It can be assumed that one of the reasons for the disintegration of the structures of right-wing Zionists was the attempt undertaken by Draznin in the second half of 1947 to legalise the activities of the Revisionist Zionists.⁶⁶ He contacted a Ministry of Public Security employee in the person of Major Arkadiusz Liberman,⁶⁷ which resulted in the communist services infiltrating this illegal organisation.⁶⁸

In March 1950, Draznin was sentenced to three years in prison for illegal political activity.⁶⁹ He shared a cell with Wiesław Chrzanowski, a prominent anti-communist activist.⁷⁰ Perla was sentenced to four years of prison. Ozjasz Raczka's account contains the following information about the trial:

The court composed of a professional judge, two jurors, and a prosecutor – all Poles – treated the defendants decently and with much respect. All the defendants declared that they were Zionists and members of the Jabotinsky's movement. They emphasised that they had not interfered in Poland's internal affairs, had not acted

health. See *Who's Who Israel*, ed. P. Dagan (Tel Aviv, 1960), p. 103; *Polski słownik judaistyczny. Dzieje – kultura – religia – ludzie*, vol. 1, ed. by Z. Borzymińska and R. Żebrowski (Warsaw, 2003), p. 149.

⁶⁴ Azriel Uchmamini and Pinchas Dagan were representatives of the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement. AIPN, 00231/102, vol. 1, Memorandum, pp. 112, 113.

⁶⁵ JIA, G33-5/1, Hatzohar Poland, Imprisonment of Hatzohar (Zionist Revisionist) Activists in Poland – Recollections, 1949–1951, pp. 2–4.

⁶⁶ Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, p. 185. Another reason could have been an attempt undertaken in 1948 by officers of the political police to keep an eye on the Zionist right in Szczecin and Lodz. See *ibid.*, pp. 182–188.

⁶⁷ JIA, G33-5/1, Hatzohar Poland, Imprisonment of Hatzohar (Revisionist Zionist) Activists in Poland – Recollections, 1949–1951.

⁶⁸ Gontarek, "Na usługach UB," p. 28.

⁶⁹ Among the detained and adjudged guilty were Lipa Kielich, Majer Kąkol, Mojżesz Juszkiewicz and Maks Mittelman. Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, pp. 191–199.

⁷⁰ M.J. Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955. Współistnienie, zagłada, komunizm* (Warsaw, 2000), p. 437. For more on the correspondence between Draznin and Chrzanowski after 1956, see Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, pp. 211–214, 216, 250–251.

and had no reason to act against the ruling system. They asked for a sentence that would let them to immigrate to Israel immediately. None of the defendants repented. Nor did they renounce their Zionist worldview. The attitude of the accused made a great impression on both the court and the public in court.⁷¹

Shlomo Perla was incarcerated in Warsaw I prison. He performed construction work, keeping himself apart from other detainees.⁷² He was released on 2 December 1952, and no longer engaged in political activity, afraid of being arrested again. He kept in touch with Draznin.⁷³ From the end of December 1952 until January 1953, he stayed with Diana Grynbaum, who lived in Warsaw on Rakowiecka Street. He returned to Lodz at the end of January 1953, and at the turn of February, he found a job as a planner in a haberdashery and leather cooperative. In the second half of that year, he changed his place of employment twice: in September, he started working in Konstaktyńów Łódzki in the “Żakard” cooperative, and two months later, he found a job as a planner in one of the chemical cooperatives in Lodz.⁷⁴

In 1956, another wave of Jewish emigration to Israel began.⁷⁵ It is known that as late as 1960, Perla was assessed by political police officers as a person of potential “operational value.” He was financially supported by his cousin, who lived in Israel.⁷⁶ Before 1967, he left Poland and ended up in Canada.⁷⁷

The life of David Draznin took another path. After being released from prison, he settled in Lodz, and in 1957 he left for Israel. There he joined the Herut (Freedom) party founded in 1948 and led by Menachem Begin. It was a political continuation of the Irgun Zvai Leumi organisation.⁷⁸ In 1963, when Władysław

⁷¹ JIA, G33-5/1, Hatzohar Poland, Imprisonment of Hatzohar (Zionist Revisionist) Activists in Poland – Recollections, 1949–1951, p. 6.

⁷² AIPN, 01178/1778, Opinion, Warsaw, 12 May 1953, p. 133.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, An agent’s denunciation (oral), 3 March 1953, p. 121.

⁷⁴ Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, p. 208.

⁷⁵ On the departures of Polish Jews to Israel after 1956, see P. Madajczyk, “Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce po II wojnie światowej,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2/6 (2004), p. 47; E. Węgrzyn, *Wyjeżdżamy! Wyjeżdżamy?! Alija gomulowska 1956–1960* (Cracow, 2016).

⁷⁶ AIPN, 01178/1778, Agent denunciation, 31 August 1953, p. 136, 173.

⁷⁷ AIPN, 2911/1, Information concerning Shlomo Nahum Perla, n.d., p. 3550.

⁷⁸ Gontarek, “Na usługach UB,” p. 29. For basic data on the presence of the Zionist right in Israel see Y. Shapiro, *The Road to Power: Herut Party in Israel*, transl. R. Mandel (Albany, 1991); C. Shindler, *Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream. Power, Politics and Ideology from Begin to Netanyahu* (London–New York, 1995).

Bartoszewski visited Israel, Draznin and other followers of Jabotinsky organised a ceremonial banquet in his honour.⁷⁹ In the second half of 1967, Draznin took his own life.⁸⁰ This was most likely motivated by the fact that one of his subordinates had committed embezzlement.⁸¹

* * *

Perla's life can be divided into two distinct stages. The first of them takes place in the interwar period, when the young Zionist worked for the sake of the vision of a Jewish state created by Jabotinsky. Perla's activities during that time were discontinued with the outbreak of the Second World War. During the global conflict, he was a victim and witness of German repressions against the Jewish population. At the same time, his wartime fate shows the diverse attitudes of Poles towards their fellow Jewish citizens. On the one hand, the threat posed by some blue policemen, and the help obtained from Karolina Modzelewska, on the other, should be emphasised here.

After 1945, Perla participated in an attempt to rebuild the structures of right-wing Zionism. In the realities of post-war Poland, Revisionist Zionists could not operate legally. Until mid-1946, Jabotinsky's followers focused on organising four districts and conducting propaganda activities. In the following months, they were involved in the Bricha movement organising the emigration of Jews. The end of the movement came in March 1949. One of the reasons was Draznin's failed attempt to legalise the party. In the first half of 1949, many people were detained by the Ministry of Public Security's secret police. Perla was sentenced to prison and released in 1952. After that, he avoided political involvement. Unlike most Revisionist Zionists active in post-war Poland, he did not go to Israel, but to Canada.

The documents that have been obtained made it possible to draw a portrait of Perla's political activity, but not much is known about his private life, e.g. related to starting a family. During the Second World War, he lost his parents as well as contact with his brother, whom he never saw again. After the war, he focused on his political activity (until 1949) and then, after being released from prison, when he moved from Warsaw to Lodz to find a job. He left Poland before 1967.

⁷⁹ W. Bartoszewski, *Środowisko naturalne, korzenie, prep. M. Komar* (Warsaw, 2010), p. 240.

⁸⁰ JIA, K25-4/1, Biographies, Various Individuals – Letter Daled (Hebrew), 1944–2017, pp. 1–2.

⁸¹ Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów*, p. 217.

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SUMMARY

At the beginning of the Polish People’s Republic, attempts were made to recreate the Jewish community. All these efforts failed. They included the legal reconstruction of most of the Jewish parties that had functioned in interwar Poland. An exception were the Revisionist Zionists, i.e. the followers of Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky. At the begin-

ning of 1945, representatives of this movement began illegal activities in Poland that lasted until mid-1949. The study outlines the functioning of the Revisionists Zionist after the war, giving information about the political activity of one of the leaders of this movement, Shlomo Nahum Perla. The programme basis of right-wing Zionism is also discussed.

KEYWORDS

Palestine • Poland • Jabotinsky • anti-communism

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“RZEKA,” “ATLANTYK,” “GIEŁDA” ... A REVIEW OF CASES
CONDUCTED BY THE SECURITY APPARATUS AGAINST
THE JEWISH POPULATION IN 1945–1956*

In terms of political history, the first ten post-war years for Jews in Poland can be divided into two periods. The first one (1945–1949) was characterised by political pluralism, with as many as eleven legally operating Jewish parties as well as cultural, educational and social institutions, plus the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, composed of legal party members.¹ During the second period (1949–1956), the communists redefined their approach to the newly-established state of Israel and adopted an anti-Zionist line. This resulted in ending the political quasi-autonomy of the Jewish community that had existed until then and intensified control of this community through surveillance and various forms of repression. From the authorities’ perspective, the Ministry of Public Security (*Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, MBP) played a role in all these areas. The MBP answered to the ruling party, whose powers and methods were typical of secret political police whose operations were intended to help build a totalitarian state.

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¹ The committee consisted of: the Jewish faction of the Polish Workers’ Party, Bund, Ihud, Left-Wing Poale Zion, Right-Wing Poale Zion, and Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa’ir.

This text contributes to the existing research studies published on the operations of the security apparatus directed at the Jewish community after the war. Aleksandra Namysło, Bożena Szaynok, Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, Anna Sommer, Arkadiusz Słabig, Grzegorz Berendt, Jarosław Syrnyk, and others have written about many various aspects of this subject.² The literature on the postwar history of Jews in Poland is even more extensive.³ For this reason, detailed data on the structure of the MBP and its voivodeship branches, which dealt with the surveillance of the Jewish community, was deliberately omitted. The often-repeated information about the postwar history of the Jewish people who survived the war was likewise omitted.

² M. Grądzka-Rejak, “‘Zbierać informacje o akcji przygotowawczej i sytuacji w organizacji...’ Działalność referenta do spraw żydowskich przy WUBP w Krakowie w latach 1947–1950,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2021), pp. 540–563; B. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle. Polska a Izrael 1944–1968* (Warsaw, 2007); M. Semczyszyn, B. Szaynok, “Kwestia ludności żydowskiej,” in *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w latach 1944–1956*, ed. J. Syrnyk (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 26–58; “Instrukcja MBP dla rozpracowania partii i organizacji działających w społeczeństwie żydowskim z 1946 r.,” ed. A. Namysło, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2 (2004), pp. 341–358; A. Sommer, “Działalność służb bezpieczeństwa wobec środowiska żydowskiego na terenie województwa krakowskiego w latach 1949–1954 na przykładzie rozpracowania obiektowego o kryptonimie ‘Jordan’ i ‘Zator’,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 4 (2007), pp. 435–451; J. Syrnyk, “‘Po linii’ rewizjonizmu, nacjonalizmu, syjonizmu... Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec ludności niepolskiej na Dolnym Śląsku (1945–1989) (Wrocław, 2013); A. Słabig, *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec mniejszości narodowych na Pomorzu Zachodnim w latach 1945–1989* (Szczecin, 2008); G. Berendt, “‘Społeczność na pokaz.’ Problematyka żydowska w działaniach władz w PRL w latach 1976–1989,” in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką. Kwestia mniejszości narodowych w działalności władz komunistycznych – doświadczenie polskie i środkowoeuropejskie*, ed. by M. Semczyszyn and J. Syrnyk (Warsaw–Szczecin–Wrocław, 2014), pp. 317–367.

³ See e.g., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, ed. by F. Tych and M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin, 2012); A. Namysło, *Utracone nadzieje. Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim/katowickim w latach 1945–1970* (Katowice, 2012); J. Mieczkowski, *Między emigracją a asymilacją. Szkice o szczecińskich Żydach w latach 1945–1997* (Szczecin, 1998); N. Aleksy, *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce (1944–1950)* (Warsaw, 2002); B. Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku 1945–1950* (Wrocław, 2000); P. Wiczorek, *Żydzi w Wałbrzychu i powiecie wałbrzyskim 1945–1968* (Wrocław–Warsaw, 2017); G. Berendt, “Zjednoczenie Syjonistów Demokratów ‘Ichud’ – ‘z biało-niebieskimi sztandarami w morzu czerwonych sztandarów’,” in A. Grabski, G. Berendt, *Między emigracją a trwaniem. Syjoniści i komuniści żydowscy w Polsce po Holocauście* (Warsaw, 2003), pp. 101–191; A. Grabski, *Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce (1944–1950). Historia polityczna* (Warsaw, 2015); P. Kendziorek, *Program i praktyka produktywizacji Żydów polskich w działalności CKŻP* (Warsaw, 2016); A. Rykała, *Przemiany sytuacji społeczno-politycznej mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce po drugiej wojnie światowej* (Łódź, 2007); J. Sadowska, “Żydzi w Białymstoku po II wojnie światowej jako przykład społeczności zanikającej,” *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski* 40 (2018), pp. 274–300; M. Rusiniak-Karwat, *Nowe życie na zgliszczach. Bund w Polsce w latach 1944–1949* (Warsaw, 2016); A.M. Rosner, *Obraz społeczności ocalałych w centralnej kartotece Wydziału Ewidencji i Statystyki CKŻP* (Warsaw, 2018); A. Kichelewski, *Ocalali. Żydzi polscy po Zagładzie* (Warsaw, 2021).

This paper focuses on the directions of the MBP's operations targeting Jewish communities and attempts to assess how effective they were. Based on a search query in the surviving archival materials and recording aids stored at the Institute of National Remembrance Archives, cases conducted by the security authorities in this field were also reviewed.

From "Preventive Surveillance" to the Fight against Zionism

Out of the 3.3 million Jews who lived in the Second Polish Republic before the Second World War, about 425,000 (12.7%) survived the Holocaust. During Operation Reinhardt in the Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor extermination camps and in mass executions, Germans murdered 1,710,000 or so Polish Jews. Hundreds of thousands more were killed in ghettos, slave labour camps and other extermination camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Kulmhof, and others). Others perished as a result of indirect forms of extermination (from starvation to diseases). The majority of Polish Jews survived in the USSR: in labour camps (called in sg. *spetsposelok* [special settlement]), militarised labour battalions, and various places of settlement, to which they had been sent by the Soviet authorities as deported citizens of the Second Polish Republic, inhabitants of the eastern territories occupied in 1939–1941 by the USSR, and the refugees from the area occupied by the Third Reich or evacuated just before the Wehrmacht invaded the Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy Wschodnie*) in 1941.

According to various estimates, 80,000–120,000 or so Polish Jews survived in the occupied territories, including 30,000–60,000 in hiding places and with Aryan papers, 10,000–15,000 in survival groups hiding in forests and as partisans, 20,000–40,000 in German concentration camps in the Polish territories occupied by the Third Reich. Some survived by fleeing to neutral countries.⁴ In July 1946,

⁴ R. Hilberg, *Zagłada Żydów Europejskich*, vol. 3, transl. J. Giebułtowski (Warsaw, 2014), pp. 1544–1563; A. Stankowski, P. Weiser, "Demograficzne skutki Holocaustu," in *Następstwa zagłady Żydów*, pp. 15–38; D. Boćkowski, "Losy żydowskich uchodźców z centralnej i zachodniej Polski przebywających na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich w latach 1939–1941," in *Świat niepożegnany. Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku*, ed. K. Jasiewicz (Warsaw–London, 2004); *Widziałem Aniola Śmierci. Losy deportowanych Żydów polskich w ZSRR w latach II wojny światowej. Świadectwa zebrane przez Ministerstwo Informacji i Dokumentacji Rządu Polskiego na Uchodźstwie w latach 1942–1943*, ed. and foreword by M. Siekierski and F. Tych (Warsaw, 2006); *Syberia Żydów polskich. Losy uchodźców z Zagłady*, ed. by L. Zessin-Jurek and K. Friedla (Warsaw, 2020).

after repatriation from the Soviet Union, 240,489 Jewish people were listed in the Central File of the Department of Records and Statistics of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (*Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich*, CKŻP). In recent years, researchers have lowered this number to 213,000 because some people who moved many times would register more than once in different departments of the CKŻP. The analysis of the CKŻP collection of records suggests that there were slightly more male survivors (53%) and, understandably, when we consider the chances of surviving the war, most survivors were people in their prime (20–50 years old).

The data only sheds scant light on the demography of the post-war history of the survivors. The incompleteness of sources and the constant migrations of the Jewish population in that period are among the causes of inaccurate estimates, which should also include, for example, the inability to determine the number of people who did not reveal their Jewish origin, did not register in CKŻP branches and who left the country soon after the war.⁵

In the initial years after the war, the official course of the communists ruling the country towards the Jewish population was quite liberal. Many political, social, cultural and economic initiatives made up Jewish autonomy. It was accompanied by freedom of association, party pluralism, the activities of institutions and associations and their cooperation with international organisations. At least until 1948, the vibrant socio-political life and the accompanying opening up of the Jewish population to new professions within the framework of the so-called productivisation corresponded with the emancipatory slogans proclaimed by the communists. At the same time, the attempt to rebuild Jewish life in Poland on new principles was intended to assimilate (bring closer – as it was said at the time) Jews to Polish society within the framework of creating a new communist social project. Jewish autonomy gave the illusion of building a system based on democratic principles in Poland and, at the same time, was an argument in the efforts to legitimise the communists in the international arena.

With the establishment of the pro-Western state of Israel, there was a reorientation of the internal policy towards Jews and the external policy towards the new state. Before this happened, however, the concept of rebuilding a “Jewish settle-

⁵ Rosner, *Obraz społeczności ocalałych*, pp. 203–204; see also Rykała, *Przemiany sytuacji*.

ment” in Poland lost out to the mass emigration to Palestine, promoted by Zionists, which was rampant during the first post-war five years. The rise in emigration was influenced by a variety of factors, including a lack of prospects, a reluctance to remain in a land marked by the stigma of the Holocaust, the increased popularity of Zionist ideas, and anti-Semitic violence in Poland, which had resulted in more than a thousand Jewish deaths, according to the latest findings.⁶

One of the features of the quasi-liberal character of the communists’ policy towards the Jewish minority after 1945 was limited trust, reflected in the results of the work of several divisions of the secret political police. Taking into account the scale of the cases conducted, we can conclude that the most important link used by the MBP to collect information and run surveillance on Jews was the MBP’s 5th Department (social and political), established in September 1945, and the section for Jewish affairs operating within its framework.⁷

However, we do not know everything about the work of these units. The legacy of the People’s Poland security organs resembles a scattered, incomplete jigsaw puzzle. It is difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions from the content of the surviving documents and files, which researchers sometimes come across entirely by accident. This sometimes leads to a demonisation of the role of the security apparatus and sometimes, conversely, to ignoring the actions undertaken by officers and their impact on the fate of citizens. If we assume that the scale of the activities of the security apparatus depended on political demand, then, in the case of the small Jewish community, they were, until 1950, of a minimal and preventive nature, i.e. one that was not, in principle, accompanied by open repression. The Office of Public Security (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, UBP) functionaries were mainly interested in foreign contacts, the activities of Jewish parties and associations, illegal trade, illegal emigration and border smuggling during this period.

The oldest MBP instruction known to historians, which comprehensively regulated the actions of the security organs towards the Jewish population, is a docu-

⁶ J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Cracow, 2021).

⁷ More in: Semczyszyn, Szaynok, “Kwestia ludności żydowskiej,” pp. 33–35; D. Stola, “Jewish emigration from communist Poland: The decline of Polish Jewry in the aftermath of the Holocaust,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 1 (2017), pp. 169–188.

ment dated 24 October 1946.⁸ According to these guidelines, the security forces should infiltrate all legally operating Jewish political and social structures, except for the Jewish fraction of the Polish Workers' Party, to protect their activists from the influence of "anti-state elements" and illegal organisations (Revisionist Zionists, Agudat Yisrael). In cities with large Jewish communities (Szczecin, Lodz, Katowice, Lublin, Rzeszow, Cracow and Wroclaw), these matters were dealt with by the units for Jewish affairs of the 5th Department of the relevant Voivodeship Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP) (see Appendix). The surviving materials show that the operational activity of these units consisted primarily in collecting information on the quantity and activities of various organisations: secret police officers compiled lists of members and their profiles, recorded their statements, and drafted reports about cultural events and political rallies.

Over the years, the MBP's stance towards Jewish parties and organisations became tougher. The ministry's subsequent guidelines from 1947–1948 emphasised increased surveillance of the activists of various organisations and the recruitment of agents.⁹ With the establishment of the State of Israel and the escalating tensions in the Middle East (the First Israeli-Arab War), the Eastern Bloc countries started to liquidate the Zionist parties and organisations. In Poland, this was regulated by an instruction of the Ministry of Public Administration in November 1949 (with an implementation deadline of February 1950). At the same time, for propaganda purposes, Zionists were presented as "national Fascists" and aggressors. In its instructions, the MBP began to emphasise the role of the Right-Wing Zionists and the need to uncover alleged members of the Revisionist Zionist movement. Activists of other banned Jewish organisations and parties were accused of working "for imperialist intelligence services," of having "bourgeois views," of spreading "emigration propaganda," and of "slandering the People's Republic and the Polish nation at home and abroad." They were also blamed for spreading fabricated

⁸ See "Instrukcja MBP."

⁹ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), 01439/91, Instruction No. 12 by the Director of Department V, Julia Brystygier, 28 February 1948, p. 55; *ibid.*, Instruction No. 17 by the Director of Department V, Julia Brystygier, 19 March 1948, p. 60.

rumours about anti-Semitism, murders of Jews, etc., and even for collaborating with the Third Reich as part of the Judenrats.¹⁰

From 1948, the MBP tried hard to find connections between Jews living in Poland and the British and American intelligence services. This direction was part of the espionage obsession, a characteristic feature of communist countries in the era of Stalinism. The stigmatisation of Jews as capitalists, nationalists and spies was accompanied by the regulations facilitating emigration, introduced in 1949–1951. In this manner, controlled by the MBP, about 30,000 Jewish people left the country at that time without the right of return. Another 15,000 applications were rejected.¹¹

Even after this wave of emigration, the Jewish community of no more than 50,000 people who remained in Poland was presented in the MBP documents as a threat. According to the guidelines issued in 1951 by Julia Brystygier, the director of the MBP's 5th Department, it was necessary to continue the investigation of persons associated in the past with Zionist organisations and the Bund to survey the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland and the Religious Union of the Jewish Faith, and to fight against "Jewish speculation" and trade.¹²

Let's take a closer look at the security apparatus's four most characteristic lines of work in this area: the mass illegal emigration of Jews, scrutinising Joint employees and Right-Wing Zionists, and the diplomatic mission of the State of Israel.

Illegal Emigration

Historians estimate that about 140,000 Jews emigrated illegally from Poland in 1945–1947. Emigration routes through Romania, Czechoslovakia, Austria, German occupation zones, France and Italy led to camps for displaced persons in Western Germany and Austria or to seaside ports from which emigrants sailed towards Palestine.¹³ This great emigration movement was run mainly by Zionist

¹⁰ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Symptoms, forms and methods of hostile activities of Zionist organizations and tasks of the BP [Public Security] apparatus, Warsaw, 9 April 1953, pp. 14–15.

¹¹ AIPN, 01439/90, Circular No. 1/52 of the director of the MBP 1st Department, Stefan Antosiewicz, and the director of 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, 4 February 1952, pp. 62–63.

¹² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information design for the site as a basis for work along the lines of the Jewish question, 3 April 1951, pp. 39–45.

¹³ See. K. Person, *Dipisi. Żydzi polscy w amerykańskiej i brytyjskiej strefach okupacyjnych Niemiec 1945–1948* (Warsaw, 2019); Z.W. Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope. The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge, 2002).

organisations, including *Bricha* (Hebr. escape), established especially for this purpose. Bricha activists arranged exit documents, organised trans-border transport and smuggling, and bribed border guards and Soviet soldiers.¹⁴

After the pogrom in Kielce (4 July 1946), an unofficial agreement was reached between the state authorities and representatives of the Zionists involved in Bricha's activities. The authorities agreed to an unimpeded crossing of the Polish-Czechoslovak border by groups of Jews wanting to leave the country. This "semi-legal exodus" continued until the first half of 1947, when the border was closed again due to concern about Britain's reaction on the international stage. However, this did not stop the activities of cross-border smugglers, who helped Jews (and not only) in the following years.¹⁵

As early as 1944, Bricha began its activities in the former Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic. There, among the Jewish partisans of Vilnius and Volhynia, plans were made to convey the Jews who survived the Holocaust to Romanian Black Sea ports. According to documents in Ukrainian, Russian and Lithuanian archives, already in 1945, the NKVD put under surveillance the organisers of Bricha's transfer routes (in Vilnius, Chernivtsi, and Lviv, among other places), and, a year later, began to liquidate them.¹⁶ At that time, also in

¹⁴ Y. Bauer, *Flight and Rescue. The Organized Escape of Jewish Survivors of Eastern Europe 1944–1948* (New York, 1970); M. Senczyszyn, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski 1944–1947 – kontekst międzynarodowy," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 50/1 (2018), pp. 95–121; *eadem*, "Polski szlak Brichy. Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski w latach 1944–1947," in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką*, pp. 255–276.

¹⁵ For more, see A. Namysło, *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego wobec nielegalnej emigracji Żydów z Polski w latach 1945–1950. Główne kierunki działań* in Paryż, Londyn, Monachium, Nowy Jork. *Powrzeźniowa emigracja niepodległościowa na mapie kultury nie tylko polskiej*, vol. 2, ed. by V. Wejs-Milewska and E. Rogalewska (Białystok, 2016), pp. 781–795.

¹⁶ Derzhavnyi Arhiv Lvivskoi Oblasti (State Archives of Lviv Region), fond 3, op. 1, case 441, Report of the head of the MGB [Ministry of State Security] Board of the Lviv Region A. Voronin to the secretary of the Lviv regional committee of the CP(b)U [Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine] I. Grushecki on the activities of the anti-Soviet Zionist group, May 1946 (in Russian), pp. 185–188; Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas (Lithuanian Special Archives), fond. K-1, op. 58, case 20669/3, The case concerning the organisation of illegal cross-border crossings by the Zionists, on the routes from Vilnius to Poland and further to Palestine; Report of the secretary of the Lviv regional committee of the CP(b)U [Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine] I. Grushecki for the secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U Nikita Khrushchev on the detection and liquidation of the illegal border crossing to Poland, 28 March 1946 (in Russian), in M. Micel, *Evrei Ukrainy v 1943–1953 gg.: ocherki dokumentirovannoi istorii*, Kyiv 2004, pp. 90–94 (the translation of the document into Polish in *Po zagładzie Żydów (1944–1948)*, ed. J. Grzesik [Lublin, 2011], pp. 249–256); I. Slutskiy, *Khagana – yevreyskaya boyevaya organizatsiya v Erets-Israel*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 197–199.

Poland, the Ministry of Public Security and the Nationalities Division of the Political Department of the Ministry of Public Administration collected information on the emigration activities of the Zionists.¹⁷ In the following years, the 5th Department of the MBP and its field counterparts (divisions of the 5th WUBP) collected information among Jewish settlers on the activities of the Zionist parties' kibbutzim as centres of illegal emigration, on the forgery of departure documents, the organisation of smuggling, the distribution of Zionist literature, and also on contacts between organisers of departures and Haganah and Irgun Tswai Leumi emissaries.¹⁸ Nevertheless, until 1947, arrests of Bricha activists occurred sporadically and were carried out mainly by officers from the Border Guard Troops (*Wojska Ochrony Pogranicza*, WOP) or Soviet soldiers stationed in border towns.¹⁹ Cases of illegal Jewish emigrants were generally treated as common or economic crimes (smuggling of goods and foreign currency) and were brought before municipal or regional courts or the Special Commission for Combating Embezzlements and Economic Sabotage.

In the saved documents of the security apparatus, there are several reports from 1945 to 1946 from interrogations of people associated with Bricha. They support the claim that the officers of the secret political police were well aware of its activities. Despite this, the Zionists organising border crossings were not harassed for political activities during this period. The situation changed when the border with Czechoslovakia was sealed off for the exodus.

¹⁷ Namysło, *Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, pp. 781–795. Reports on this case and correspondence between the 5th Department of the MBP and the WOP Department, see AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2.

¹⁸ AIPN, 01206/108, Message from the director of the 5th Department of the MBP, Julia Brystygi-er, to the head of the MBP Legal Department, p. 14. See also the surviving object cases concerning the Zionists in Łódź and Szczecin: Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Łodzi (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Łódź, hereinafter AIPN Łd), Pf 10/690, vol. 1, Matters concerning members of Zionist organisations in Łódź, 1946–1953; *ibid.*, vol. 3, Jewish political organisations, associations active in Łódź: Poale Zion, HeHalutz-Pioneer, Hitachdut [Zionist Labour Party], Bund, 1945–1953; Oddziałowe Archiwum Pamięci Narodowej w Szczecinie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Szczecin Branch, hereinafter AIPN Sz), 009/622, vol. 1–4, Jewish organisations in Szczecin, 1946–1949.

¹⁹ Yad Vashem Archives, Testimonies Department, file 8535, Szymon Menszer's account of his participation in the activities of Bricha in Szczecin (in Russian).

In 1947, organisers of illegal travel abroad first started to be arrested. On 16 November 1947, Section II (Independent) of the MBP's 5th Department initiated an agency crackdown in Bielawa with the code name "Rzut", resulting in the detention of a group of 30 illegal emigrants who had set off from Lodz (23 men and seven women) towards the German border. Among the detainees were Hitachdut (Warsaw) party member and Bricha activist David Tajtelbaum vel Michał Dudecki and members of the Ichud party: Majer Rapaport, Jakub Singer and Marian Szałat.²⁰ The investigation focused primarily on Bricha, an illegal organisation. At that time, the services already had information about its leadership (known as the Zionist Coordination), goals, funding sources, activities in individual kibbutzim and the participation of Zionist parties in organising illegal border crossings. The Security Office was also interested in recruiting Jews willing to leave with the help of organisations such as the Haganah and Irgun Tswai Leumi.²¹ Despite this, it was not yet decided to attack the Zionists openly. In November 1947, Arkadiusz Liberman, the head of Section II of the MBP, wrote that, although Bricha's activities caused much harm to the state (such as propaganda about Polish anti-Semitism spread by the Zionists, corrupting the authorities and the WOP, and providing cross-border routes to "enemy elements"), the "current political situation does not permit us to organise a trial."²² Liberman probably had the international situation in mind. Thus, it was decided to keep Dudecki, Szałat and Rapaport in pre-trial detention and continue the operation to expose them while the remaining detained Jews were brought before the municipal court and charged with smuggling.

The UBP's interest in illegal border crossing and the smuggling of goods increased in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, becoming one of the most important directions of the ministry's activities against the Jewish minority. Most cases concerning this issue were handled by UBP offices in the west of the country. People who had participated in Bricha's operation in the preceding years and smugglers were watched and followed. Several cases resulted in trials before military courts.

²⁰ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Report for the director of MBP 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, on the capture of a smuggling group, 24 November 1947, pp. 138–141.

²¹ AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Message from the Deputy Director of the MBP 5th Department, Witold Gadomski, to the head of the WUBP 5th Department in Wrocław, 19 May 1947, p. 23.

²² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 3, Information on the results of the investigation concerning the "Rzut" case, [November 1949], p. 131–134.

In Szczecin, the individuals accused by UBP officers of participating in a “smuggling organisation” included Lipa Kielich, Moshe Juskiewicz, Maks Mittelman, Salomon Bleiberg, Shlomo Zylberwasser, Shulim, and Maier Kąkol,²³ as well as Hersh Majerowicz.²⁴ In addition, in 1955, the 2nd Section of the local WUDsBP (counterintelligence) initiated a case codenamed “Giełda” (Stock Exchange) about “people of Jewish nationality residing in West Berlin, who had left the country illegally and were involved in cooperating with the intelligence services of capitalist countries [...] and in running people of Jewish nationality across the border.”²⁵

The operational-investigative case codenamed “Warta,” conducted in 1950–1951 by WUBP in Wrocław, ended tragically. As a result of the investigation, cross-border smugglers Jakub Frydland and Henryk Wasserman, aka Aron Pułowski, who had been involved in Bricha’s activities in Lower Silesia in the 1940s, were sentenced to death. The sentences were carried out.²⁶ Another trial in Wrocław concerned Bolesław Maciukowski, aka Kryński, who was detained while trying to cross the border near Zgorzelec in 1949. The indictment in his case included belonging to Bricha and helping about 4,000 people cross the border to Czechoslovakia.

²³ In 1947–1950, these individuals were sentenced for helping in the illegal emigration of Jews and Polish underground soldiers who fought for the country’s independence, together with their families: Salomon Bleiberg to 21 months in prison, Shlomo Zylberwasser to ten years in prison, Maks Mittelman to 18 months in prison, Lipa Kielich to two years in prison, Moses Juskiewicz to one year in prison, Szulim Kąkol to one year in prison, Majer Kąkol to six months in prison. In addition, Maks Mittelman (a Bricha activist), Lipa Kielich, Moses Juskiewicz, and the Kąkol brothers were accused of participating in an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation. See AIPN Sz, 006/30, vol. 1, Control files of the investigation into a smuggling group; AIPN Sz, 158/4, vol. 1–2, Files of the criminal case on Lipa Kielich and others. After being released, Lipa Kielich escaped to West Berlin, but both he and Moses Juskiewicz, who remained in the country, were still under surveillance by the UB (cases codenamed: “Kanał” [Canal], “Barka” [Barge] and “Bagno” [Swamp] conducted in 1952–1953 and the case codenamed “Giełda” [Stock Exchange] in 1955–1956).

²⁴ AIPN Sz, 009/884, Operational files on Hersh Majerowicz. In 1946–1948, Majerowicz was active in the Bricha organisation in West Berlin. Upon his return, he was sentenced for smuggling goods to 18 months in a labour camp. In 1948–1955, the 5th Department of the WUBP in Szczecin conducted an operational case against him, suspecting him of organising the smuggling of Jews to Israel by sea through Sweden. The suspicions were not confirmed.

²⁵ AIPN Sz, 009/1396, Order to set up a subject file “Giełda” (Stock Exchange), 8 July 1955, p. 6.

²⁶ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej we Wrocławiu (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Wrocław, hereinafter AIPN Wr), 024/567, Investigative files on cross-border routes codenamed “Warta”; AIPN Wr, 049/166, Characteristics of Bricha, an illegal Zionist organisation; AIPN Wr, 155/621, Files of the Military District Prosecutor’s Office on the case of Jakub Frydland and others.

Maciukowski was sentenced to 12 years in prison.²⁷ The WUBP in Katowice was also interested in Jewish smugglers who led people across the Polish-Czechoslovak border.²⁸

In 1953, people involved in organising transfer channels for the Jewish population to the West (including within Bricha) after the war, as well as Jewish black-market currency traffickers and people smugglers, were still under observation from the MBP's 5th Department. According to a circular from Director Brystygier, those people kept in touch with Zionists living abroad. They planned to resume illegal cross-border running of people, which was supposed to be a cover for "espionage activities of the imperialist intelligence services." Outposts of the Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, UB) across Poland were ordered to analyse their materials on the Zionist groups, black-market currency traffickers and people smugglers. The task was broad in scope because, apart from collecting documents, it also included checking the archives of the UB, the Citizen Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO) and the prosecutor's offices to take down the names of every one of Jewish origin who had featured in cases related to the smuggling of people and goods since 1945. Next, after determining the current place of residence and occupation of these people, the officers were ordered to take "operational care" of them.²⁹

Apart from Bricha, the Vaad Hatzalah (Hebrew: Rescue Committee) organisation was also involved in the illegal emigration of Jews. It was founded in 1939 at the initiative of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada to rescue Jews in occupied Europe. After the war, it continued its operations in Poland and in other countries. The organisation's head office in Poland was located in Katowice, but it had branches in several cities (Cracow, Bytom, Legnica, Walbrzych, and Sosnowiec). People involved in the Vaad Hatzalah's operations

²⁷ AIPN, 01251/359, Files of pre-trial proceedings conducted against Bolesław Maciukowski vel Kryński; AIPN Wr, 21/4079, Bolesław Maciukowski's case files compiled by the Military District Court.

²⁸ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Katowicach (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Katowice, hereinafter AIPN Ka), 032/68, t. 1, Message by Julia Brystygier, the director of the MBP 5th Department to the head of the 5th WUBP Division in Katowice, 5 October 1948, p. 14.

²⁹ AIPN, 01439/90, Circular No. 2/53 by the Department Director, Julia Brystygier, [no later than 1 October] 1953, pp. 81–82.

included orthodox rabbis, orphanage caretakers, Zionists, Joint workers and Haganah emissaries. Recha Sternbuch, the head of the Vaad Hatzalah in Switzerland, coordinated all its activities.³⁰ The main goal of Vaad Hatzalah was to get as many Jewish children and rabbis who had survived the Holocaust out of Poland as possible, along with relics of Jewish material culture. As early as 1946, the UB's Katowice office became interested in this organisation under the pressure of MBP's 5th Department.

The case codenamed "Nielegalni" (Illegals), conducted in 1946–1949 by Jakub Bronstein, a clerk of the WUBP's 5th Department in Katowice, became one of the most important UB operations in the country concerning the Jewish minority. About 35 people were tracked, but the expected results were not achieved. People associated with the Vaad Hatzalah, fearing exposure and arrest, were rapidly departing from Poland, but others appeared in their place. In addition, rabbis and activists of international Jewish organisations had access to the authorities and, often by paying for them, were able to obtain visas and other documents necessary for emigration. In April 1947, Capt. Liberman, the head of the 2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department, submitted a motion to close the "Nielegalni" case and arrest its primary "people of interest." However, since the evidence (arranging emigration documents, corrupting the authorities) was based on reports from the intelligence services, the official reasons for the arrests were to be allegations of financial embezzlement – without disclosing the "political aspects of the case."³¹ Searches ordered in the homes of rabbis Levin Bielecki and Samuel Ornsztejn prompted their decision to emigrate illegally. Several other rabbis and Vaad Hatzalah activists also left the country. The "Nielegalni" case ended in 1949 with the arrest of several people, including a few Poles, who helped cross the Polish-Czechoslovak border.³²

³⁰ Recha Sternbuch (1905–1971), born in Cracow, from 1928, she lived with her husband in Switzerland. During the Second World War, she took part in saving European Jews, this included arranging Paraguayan visas and passports.

³¹ AIPN, 0192/433, t. 3, Report on the Vaad Hatzalah organisation, 21 April 1947, pp. 155–156.

³² AIPN Ka, 063/39, Materials related to the Security Office inquiry of the Jewish Vaad Hatzalah organisation; A. Gontarek, "Waad Hacza okiem bezpieki (1946–1949). Kryptonim 'Nielegalni,'" *Kolbojnik. Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie* 2 (2014), pp. 37–41.

Undercover Operation Codenamed “Rzeka” (River): Fight against the Right-Wing Zionists

The beginning of the 1950s saw a period of struggle against the right-wing nationalist deviation in the Eastern Bloc countries. In the case of the Jewish minority, this was associated with the Zionists. High-profile trials of people of Jewish descent took place in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, including the trials of Rudolf Slánský, the former general secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and his associates, as well as of the head of Hungarian state security Peter Gabor, and the former Romanian foreign minister Ana Pauker.³³ In 1948–1952, the trial of people associated with the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee occurred in the Soviet Union. 110 people were convicted, 10 of whom were sentenced to death. On Stalin’s order, another anti-Semitic case was initiated – known as the conspiracy of Kremlin doctors or doctors’ plot (1952–1953).³⁴

There were no such political repressions on the scale of the Slánský trial in Poland during this period, though Zionists were arrested and accused of “right-wing nationalist deviation.” The campaign against the Zionists resulted in the arrests of actual and alleged supporters of the Revisionist (right-wing) movement, which was illegal after the war. They were accused of “propagating fascist literature” and participating in Bricha operations involving organising illegal border crossings for Jews.³⁵

In pre-war Poland, the Revisionist Zionist movement, and its youth wing, Betar, had many supporters.³⁶ After 1945, a few revisionists continued their activities in

³³ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 162–165.

³⁴ For more information see *Gosudarstvennyy antisemitizm v SSSR. Ot nachala do kul’minatsii. 1938–1953*, ed. by G. Kostyrchenko and A. Yakovlev (Moscow, 2005); *Yevreyskiy antifashist-skiy komitet v SSSR, 1941–1948: Dokumentirovannaya istoriya*, ed. by S. Redlich and G. Kostyrchenko (Moscow, 1996); E. Krasucki, “Narzędzie władzy. Państwowy antysemityzm w ZSRR w latach 1945–1953,” in *Między ideologią a socjotechniką*, pp. 31–32; H.-D. Löwe, *Antisemitism in Russia and the Soviet Union* in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. R.S. Levy (Oxford, 2010), pp. 166–195.

³⁵ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 3, Note on the Revisionist Zionists, 9 August 1952, pp. 125–126.

³⁶ The Revisionist movement was initiated before the Second World War by Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky. The revisionists emphasised the military struggle for Palestine (both against the Arabs and the British), criticised the sluggishness of traditional Zionism which focused mainly on settlements, and resorted to terrorist methods. The Jewish state was to cover the entire British Mandate of Palestine. As early as the 1930s, Jabotinsky was accused of being fascinated by fascism, and of modelling his programme on totalitarian methods. Years later, these accusations were used by the communist secret police.

a limited way, not legalised by the authorities. Until 1949, the revisionists published their newsletter *Wiadomości* (Hebrew: *Yedijot*) in Lodz, which was the centre of the movement where its leaders, David Draznin, Shlomo Perla, and Perc Laskier, lived. Pre-war members of the New Zionist Organisation and Betar also joined the legal parties, Ihud and Mizrachi. In August 1946, at a rally of Jewish demobilised soldiers organised by Ihud, a Maawak division of about 300 people was founded, becoming a *de facto* revisionists' centre. Its chairman was Izaak Nejter and Henryk Zussman was its secretary. The revisionists, whose programme differed from the rest of the Zionist movement, tried to find their own methods of getting people across the border. As part of their ideological framework, they supported the terrorist activities of the Irgun Zvai Leumi in Palestine and advocated the creation of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River.³⁷

In 1949, in Lodz, on the order of the director of the MBP 5th Department, the lawyers David Draznin [in 1946 a legal counsel of the WKŻP (Regional Committee of Polish Jews) in Szczecin], Ozjasz Raczko and Shlomo Perla were all arrested. They were accused of leading an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation in Poland and of the participation of representatives of right-wing Zionists in the structures of Bricha. During the investigation, attempts were made to prove the existence of an illegal Revisionist Zionist organisation. As a result of the testimonies given by Draznin (sentenced to three years in prison), Raczko (two years in prison) and Perla (four years in prison),³⁸ other alleged revisionists were arrested: Moses Juskiewicz, Shulim and Maier Kąkolow, Lipa Kielich, and Maks Mittelman in Szczecin (the sentences ranged from six months to two years in prison)³⁹ as well as Józef Brust in Lodz (the case was dropped for lack of evidence).⁴⁰

³⁷ According to Dominik Flisiak, in mid-1946 there were about one and a half to two thousand Right-Wing Zionists in Poland. See D. Flisiak, *Działalność syjonistów-rewizjonistów w Polsce w latach 1944/1945–1950* (Lublin, 2020), p. 111; *idem*, “Memorandum organizacji Irgun Cwai Leumi dotyczące stworzenia państwa żydowskiego w Palestynie. Przyczynek do badań nad działalnością syjonistów-rewizjonistów w powojennej Polsce,” *Jewish Studies. Almanac* 7/8 (2017–2018), pp. 143–158.

³⁸ AIPN, 01178/1140, Registration questionnaire of Ozjasz Raczko AIPN, 01237/135, Files of agent “Kryński” (Dawid Draznin); AIPN, 01236/1041, control and investigation files in the case of Dawid Draznin and others.

³⁹ AIPN Sz, 158/4, vol. 1–2, Files in a criminal case against Lipa Kielich and others.

⁴⁰ AIPN Ld, Pf 12/458, the Józef Brust investigation files.

Undercover Operation Codenamed “Atlantyk”: Joint Comes under the Lens of the Ministry of Public Security

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known commonly as Joint) was one of those institutions that, in the late 1940s, was classified by the authorities as a hostile, imperialist organisation. From 1914, Joint provided financial support to Jews around the world; after the Second World War it resumed legal activity in Poland.⁴¹ The organisation’s funds were used to set up hospitals, workshops and lodging places, and to support the budget of the CKŻP, Jewish cooperatives and Zionist parties.

After 1948, along with the changing policy of the Soviet Union toward the Middle East, the existence in Poland of an agency of an institution financed by American Jews became highly undesirable. The structures of Joint were described in one of the special UBP reports as an extension of “the espionage and subversive activities of American intelligence centres.” It was written that Joint was an “agency of American-Jewish capitalists” that, by financing Jewish organisations and institutions, aimed at “subordinating them to Jewish financiers in America so that they can exert influence on relations in Poland in the interests of American imperialism, and that a US intelligence network can be created on their basis.”⁴²

In 1949, the 2nd Division of MBP’s 5th Department initiated an undercover operation codenamed “Atlantyk”. It included surveillance of the Joint employees – William Bein, the representative of the Committee for Poland, and Józef Gitler-Barski, the secretary general of the Polish branch, among others.⁴³ The investigation into Joint explored various aspects, from Bein’s contacts with the Polish government-in-exile to the alleged cooperation between the former director of the organisation, David Guzik, and the Gestapo, including his participation in financing illegal emigration (Bricha) as well as the activities of Revisionist Zionists. The Polish branch of Joint was closed by the communist authorities on

⁴¹ For more see A. Sommer-Schneider, *Sze’erit hapleta: ocaleni z Zagłady. Działalność American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee w Polsce w latach 1945–1989* (Cracow, 2014).

⁴² AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Symptoms, forms and methods of hostile activities of Zionist organizations and tasks of the BP [Public Security] apparatus, Warsaw, 9 April 1953, p. 4.

⁴³ AIPN, 0192/433, t. 3, Summary of the undercover operation codenamed “Atlantyk,” 12 November 1949, pp. 47–49.

1 January 1950. The same happened to its branches in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. During the liquidation of the office of Joint, the UB officers not only seized items and documents they found in the rooms, but also questioned the employees. The investigation by the UB continued for the next three years.

On the wave of anti-Semitic trials in the Soviet Union (the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Kremlin doctors' conspiracy), functionaries of the security authorities in the People's Republic of Poland started to act openly. In February 1953, arrests of people associated with Joint began. Józef Gitler-Barski was arrested on charges of spying for the United States (he was acquitted after several months in custody). Jakub Egit, the chairman of the WKŻP in Lower Silesia, was also imprisoned. This Jewish activist from Lviv faced more serious charges: efforts to secede Lower Silesia from Poland and create a Jewish enclave subordinate to Israel in this area (the support from Joint), as well as forming a Jewish army (this concerned the setting up the Haganah training camp in Bolków, which the authorities had approved).⁴⁴ The scale of repression against Polish Jews differed from the Soviet template, and the vehemence of the anti-Semitic campaign diminished with the death of Stalin (in July 1953, the Soviet Union resumed diplomatic relations with Israel). In 1957, Egit immigrated to Canada. Nevertheless, the question of Zionist conspiracy and espionage had become a permanent part of the UB activities directed against people of Jewish origin living in Poland.

Object Case Codenamed "Jordan": Staff and Clients of the Israeli Diplomatic Mission in Poland

In 1950, the director of MBP 1st Department, Colonel Stefan Antosiewicz, issued a special instruction related to the activities of the diplomatic mission of the State of Israel, in which he ordered all 1st departments of the WUBP (and 4th divisions) in the country to initiate the so-called object case (undercover operation) codenamed "Jordan," covering:

- the Israeli diplomatic mission in Warsaw (4th Division of MBP 1st Department),
- Israeli citizens living in the Polish People's Republic,

⁴⁴ Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 229–230.

- Jewish repatriates and re-emigrants from Israel and Western countries,
- anyone residing in Poland on the basis of Polish consular passports issued in Israel,
- all contacts of citizens of the Polish People's Republic with the diplomatic mission of Israel.

That instruction also listed other groups and organisations of Jewish socio-political life “predestined for spy work,” which were traditionally dealt with by the 5th Department of the MBP and its voivodeship equivalents. These were:

- anyone who had been refused permission to immigrate to Israel (former Zionists, Bundists, PZPR members expelled from the party for registering to leave without the consent of the party authority),
- Zionists and former Joint employees,
- Jewish legal institutions – Jewish committees, the Jewish Cultural Society (artists, journalists, reporters), the Religious Union of the Jewish Faith, committees of compatriots in various cities,
- other Jewish groups and organisations (schools, dormitories, hostels, students, cooperatives),
- Jewish speculators and smugglers, especially in the western territories.⁴⁵

Similar tasks had been specified a year earlier in a note for the 2nd Division of MBP 5th Department officers: they sought connections between the Zionists with the Israeli diplomatic mission and organisations financed by Jews living in the Western countries (AJDC Joint).⁴⁶

With the initiation of a nationwide undercover operation codenamed Jordan, the Israeli diplomatic mission in Warsaw, which had been in place since 1948, became the main object of interest of the security services. The Legation (first in the Bristol Hotel on Krakowskie Przedmieście, then at what is now Szucha Avenue and was then 1 Armii Wojska Polskiego Avenue) was under constant surveillance by officers of intelligence, counterintelligence and the MBP's 5th Department. The correspondence of the diplomatic mission was

⁴⁵ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Instruction No. 1 of the Director of the 1st Department, Stefan Antosiewicz, on the investigation of contacts with the state of Israel, 7 October 1950, pp. 22–25.

⁴⁶ AIPN, 00231/102, vol. 1, Object case codenamed “Jordan,” Tasks for the Independent 2nd Division of the MBP 5th Department, June 1949, p. 255.

checked, its employees were secretly photographed, and the attaché's personal notes were stolen. Diplomats were monitored, including Chargé d'Affaires Baruch Niv and Józef Lernon and Envoy Aryeh Leon Kubowitzki. In the autumn of 1951, five MBP agents operated at the diplomatic mission.⁴⁷ According to the documents, the hostile activities of Israeli diplomacy included the management of Zionist organisations, recruitment to the Haganah, contacts between representatives of the diplomatic mission and Polish citizens, agitation to depart for Israel, espionage and subversion for Israel (which was recognised as a "US semi-colony").⁴⁸

In January 1952, the directors of the MBP 1st and 5th departments ordered the voivodeship UB to interrogate anyone who had visited the diplomatic mission. Applicants were also arrested as soon as they left the premises of the Legation. The questions, compiled in a special form, were about the life of the Jewish community in the town where the applicant came from and the applicant's attitude towards Jewish parties, religions and the state of Israel, among other things.

In November 1952, Aryeh Lerner, an employee of the consular section of the diplomatic mission, was arrested on charges of spying for the United States, Israel and France.⁴⁹ In subsequent diplomatic notes sent to Israel, the authorities tried to use the investigation into Lerner's activities and his testimony as an argument for having Aryeh Kubowitzki recalled from Poland. Years later, Lerner described the actions of the UB functionaries as "building up the Polish version of the Slánský trial."⁵⁰ He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, but the prosecutor dropped the charges due to an appeal against the verdict of the first instance court – after Stalin's death. Lerner was released in 1955 and soon after emigrated to Israel. The surveillance of the Israeli diplomatic mission continued for decades, with the central theme of the activities being the threat of "espionage and sabotage work" by its staff.

⁴⁷ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, p. 211.

⁴⁸ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information note on sorting out the Israeli question, 16 March 1950, f. p. 98.

⁴⁹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information note on the fight against the hostile activities of the employees of the Israeli Legation among the Jewish population in Poland, 31 July 1952, pp. 19–21; Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, pp. 219–227.

⁵⁰ Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, p. 220.

Scale and Quality of the Activities of Voivodeship public Security Offices

According to a report prepared in 1953 in the 5th Department of MBP, there were 13,000 Jews (21% of the total Jewish minority living in Poland at the time)⁵¹ covered by the operational and registration of the UB. However, the information in the surviving documentation indicates that, apart from putting successive names in the operational register, the quality of the actions taken, especially in voivodeship and county offices, did not meet the expectations of the directorship of the ministry.

For as long as the MBP existed, post-inspection reports of the 5th Department listed only problems: lack of competent officers, issues with the agent network and superficial handling of cases. The intensity and diversity of the local UB units' activities concerning Jews also resulted from objective conditions. In localities where not many Jews settled after the war, the officers' tasks were more modest. For example, in Rzeszow, as early as 1947, a separate desk for minority affairs was included in the general affairs desk of the 5th Department. The official responsible for Jewish affairs (Marcus Dornfest, and later Józef Olszowy) dealt primarily with the surveillance of people associated with the Jewish Religious Congregation and the issue of foreign currency trading.⁵² In 1948, in Rzeszow, there were only two object cases, one looking into Bund activists (16 people) and the other concerning the WKŻP, as well as several evidence-seeking cases (currency trading and smuggling). The operational work was based on reports from two informers. An inspection commissioned in 1948 by the MBP 5th Department showed that "the section works without a plan, chaotically and off and on."⁵³

Sometimes problems were caused by members of the staff. In 1946, a functionary of the 1st Division (for Jewish affairs) of the 5th WUBP Department in Katowice, Jakub Tyszler, conducted one evidence-seeking case without any informers.⁵⁴

⁵¹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information from the head of the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of the 5th Department of the MBP, Lipa Aichen, 11 February 1953, p. 70.

⁵² AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Work plan of the Section for General Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Wrocław "along the line of the Jewish minority," 12 November 1948, p. 257.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Evaluation of the work of the Section for General Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Rzeszow, 12 November 1948, pp. 258–259.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Decadal report on the undercover operational work of the 1st Division for Jewish Affairs of the 5th Department of WUBP in Katowice, 28 April 1946, p. 441.

It was not until the initiation of the operation codenamed Nielegalni (directed at the Vaad Hatzalah organisation) and the appearance of one of the investigators, Jakub Bronstein, that the situation improved from the point of view of the headquarters. In 1947, due to personnel problems, the WUBP in Cracow did not send any reports to the MBP on the activities of the minority section.⁵⁵

While inspecting the divisions dealing with Jewish matters in the other voivodeship public security offices, numerous shortcomings in their work with agents, inconsistency in keeping documentation and the lack of real results of their operations were pointed out. Recommendations from the headquarters, inspections, special briefings and training for employees in units of Jewish affairs, organised by the MBP, changed little in this regard.⁵⁶ In subsequent reports, accusations similar to those that the head of the WUBP in Szczecin received in writing in 1953 kept recurring: "Hostile communities have not been actively tackled as a separate issue. Materials were collected on a case-by-case basis. There were no isolated issues, and everything was treated as a whole – the Jewish community."⁵⁷

The information of 11 February 1953, signed by Lipa Aichen, the head of the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of MBP 5th Department, proves that operational work in the voivodeship units did not bring satisfactory results. At the same time, it well illustrates the state of the WUBP's activities regarding the Jewish minority. Although one-fifth of Jewish people remaining in the country were former members of Zionist parties and organisations anticipating departure for Israel, as well as former Bundists, "until now, the operational enquiry into the hostile element in the Jewish community has been conducted sporadically," Aichen admitted. This state of affairs continued in 1950 when the 2nd Section (Independent) was liquidated at the headquarters, and its duties were included in the broad framework of activities conducted by the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department. From then on, at the central level, Jewish affairs were in the hands of two department employees. Following the example of the MBP, the positions of people responsible

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Message from Witold Gadomski, the Deputy Director of the MBP 5th Department to the head of the WUBP in Cracow, 10 April 1947, p. 380.

⁵⁶ One of such meetings took place in Warsaw on 4 and 5 February 1948, another on 20 October 1949. AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Messages of the Director of the MBP 5th Department, Julia Brystygier, 22 January 1948 and 10 October 1949, pp. 386 and 530.

⁵⁷ AIPN, 1206/104, Report on an official trip to WUBP in Szczecin, 20 February 1953, p. 4.

for Jewish affairs in voivodeship offices were also liquidated. Most functionaries were moved to the 1st, 2nd or 4th Division of the 5th Department or other units.⁵⁸ Although, as early as 1951, Director Brystygier ordered that field offices appoint an employee whose sole responsibility was to collect information on the Jewish community, subsequent checks and inspections showed that only the WUBP in Cracow and Lodz created such posts (in fact, in the opinion of the central authorities, the officers employed there were not fit to carry out their assigned tasks). Lipa Aichen suggested that at least one employee responsible solely for the “Jewish issue” should be appointed in the WUBP in Szczecin, Cracow, Katowice and Lodz, and two in Wroclaw. In addition, he postulated increasing the staffing of the 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department to three employees and appointing one clerk in each of Poviats Public Security Offices (PUBP) located in Legnica, Dzierżoniów and Wałbrzych.⁵⁹ Subsequent correspondence with headquarters indicates that operational work in the field did not improve much. This time, the poor results were attributed to some of the new employees not having sufficient knowledge about the Jewish community and due to the dynamically changing demographic situation of the Jewish population in Poland.

According to dozens of reports from various units of the security apparatus, the Achilles’ heel of the functionaries was the network of agents. The situation was no different in the 5th Department. The guidelines signed by the deputy director of this department, Romuald Gadowski, in January 1947, discussed the need to make use of specific attributes of the Jewish society when recruiting agents: the rivalry between parties and associations, as well as differences in policy and worldview that divided Jews living in Poland.⁶⁰ He also suggested that informers should be sought primarily among the leadership of Jewish parties and organisations to be able to steer their activities through them.

⁵⁸ For example, in WUBP in Szczecin, a senior clerk for Jewish affairs (3rd Section), Leon Goldner, moved to 7th Section in July 1950, then he was deputy head of the 10th Division. AIPN Sz, 0023/1182, Personal files of Leon Goldner). The 7th Section also included clerks for Jewish affairs in Cracow and Katowice.

⁵⁹ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Information from Lipa Aichen, the head of the 3rd Section of 3rd Division of the MBP 5th Department, 11 February 1953, pp. 70–72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Instruction for operational enquiry into parties and organisations operating in Jewish society, January 1947, p. 135.

However, the guidelines of the directorate did not help much, since already in 1949, there were complaints: "Six months ago, there was a breakthrough in our apparatus in the field of work with agents. Was this breakthrough also made by a clerk for Jewish affairs? Unfortunately not. There is an old, undisturbed quietness in this area [...] Practically speaking, this disqualifies clerks for Jewish affairs [...]. With some exceptions, the agents' work is shallow and dishonest. They provide general information and gossip, stringing you along."⁶¹

In 1948, the 2nd Section of the MBP 5th Department had one agent and twelve informers.⁶² In the voivodeships, the sections dealing with the surveillance of the Jewish population had, on average, several informers at their disposal. At the turn of 1948 and 1949, the 1st Section for Jewish minority affairs of the 5th Division of WUBP in Lublin conducted as many as seven object cases concerning Jewish organisations; four of these did not have a single informer.⁶³

The situation worsened after the liquidation of the Jewish Affairs sections in 1950. Afterwards, many operations were run randomly, like in the WUBP in Cracow. In 1952, the head of the local 3rd Section of the 5th Department, in a message to the 5th Department, explained the lack of progress in the "Ocaleni" case (covering the Religious Association of the Jewish Faith and Jewish inhabitants of Cracow), blaming problems with the section's personnel and a total lack of informers. A year later, an object case codenamed "Zator" focused on Jewish issues concerning Zionists in Cracow. It was led by a clerk of the 3rd Section of the 5th Division, Maks Leibel. The officer had four informers – former Zionist parties activists.⁶⁴

The situation was similar in other security offices in the country. No informers were available for the undercover operation codenamed "Krzemień" (Flint),

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Analysis of our work to date and guidelines for the future, October 1949, pp. 82–83. Work with the network of agents in poviats left much to be desired. AIPN, 00231/146, vol. 2, Memo from the head of the 5th Department of WUBP in Wrocław to the MBP's Minorities Department, 28 March 1947, p. 16.

⁶² AIPN, 0649/4, vol. 1, Report of the MBP 5th Department for the period 1 January – 31 March 1948, p. 12.

⁶³ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Lublinie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Lublin), 059/9, Report of the 5th Division of the WUBP in Lublin for January 1949, p. 7.

⁶⁴ AIPN, 0192/433, v. 4, Profile of the object codenamed "Zator," 2 July 1953, pp. 73–76.

“Rzut” (Throw), initiated in March 1953, directed at former Zionists in Lublin.⁶⁵ The object case “Łudziciel” (concerning Zionists), conducted from 1953 by the 3rd Section III of the 5th Department of WUBP in Warsaw, was based on information obtained from two agents, where the activities of one of them covered the area of as many as four counties.⁶⁶ In 1952, the 3rd Section of the 5th Department of WUBP in Szczecin had four informers for Jewish matters (out of a total of 24): two recruited as part of cross-border smuggling cases and two from the Bund community; however, during an inspection ordered by the MBP 5th Department, only one was assessed approvingly.⁶⁷

The surviving documentation shows that the agents and informers came from the Jewish milieu. Most of them were members of Jewish parties and organisations, often recruited based on compromising materials (pre-war activities, speculation) or promised benefits (visa to Israel, housing). Informers working in offices and institutions coming into contact with the Jewish population (e.g. voivodship commissariats for the productivity of the Jewish population), as well as people from the cross-border smuggling groups, were also used as sources of information. In 1950, on the occasion of initiating the nationwide operation codenamed Jordan, the guidelines coming from the headquarters suggested that agents should be recruited on the basis of the materials drawn up by the MO Investigation Department, the Special Commission for Combating Fraudsters and Causers of Economic Harm, the Tax Protection Section, etc., to find people with a suspicious, compromising past – speculators, currency traders, smugglers, former members of the Judenrats and kapos. Attention was also directed towards people who, for various reasons, had been refused permission to emigrate to Israel and at applicants at the Israeli Legation in Warsaw.⁶⁸

Towards the end of the 1940s, some cases conducted by the security organs in the Jewish community began to be accompanied by open repression. Out of

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Report on the initiation of an operation to expose former members of Zionist organisations in their community in Lublin, pp. 84–95.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Analysis of materials and plan of operational undertakings concerning the object code-named “Łudziciel,” pp. 191–198.

⁶⁷ AIPN, 1206/104, Report on official trip to WUBP in Szczecin, 20 February 1953, p. 5.

⁶⁸ AIPN, 0192/433, vol. 1, Instruction No. 1 by Department I Director Stefan Antosiewicz concerning exposing operation “along Israel’s lines,” 7 October 1950, p. 24.

a total of 49 surviving operational cases from 1945–1956 (see Appendix), the four discussed in this paper ended in trials exploited for propaganda purposes: the case codenamed “Atlantyk” involving agent surveillance of the Polish branch of AJDC (Joint), the case codenamed “Jordan” concerning the inquiry into the Israeli diplomatic mission in Poland, the case codenamed “Rzeka” involving surveillance of Revisionist Zionists by agents, and the case of operational surveillance code-named “Warta” concerning former participants in the Bricha operation and the smuggling of people across the border.

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SUMMARY

This text constitutes a supplement to the already existing scientific works dealing with the activities of the security apparatus directed at the Jewish community after the war. It is mainly a short analysis of the directions of the Office of Public Security (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*) activities concerning the Jewish community and an attempt to assess their effectiveness. It also includes a list of cases conducted by the security authorities in this field, which was compiled based on a query in the surviving archival materials and registration aids kept in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance.

KEYWORDS

- Security apparatus of the Polish People's Republic • Jews
• Polish-Jewish relations

APPENDIX

Examples of operations directed at the Jewish population in 1945–1957 (excluding registration questionnaires and agent files)

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Agency surveillance operation “Atlantyka”	2nd Section (Independent) of MBP 5th Department (in cooperation with MBP 1st Department), 1949–1953	Polish branch of the American Jewish Distribution Committee Joint William Bein, Józef Gitler- Barski, Marek Wirecki, Iza Winer
Agency surveillance operation “Rzut”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department, 1947	Illegal trafficking across the border organised by Bricha, David Tajtelbaum, Michał Dudecki and others
Object surveillance operation “Jordian”	1st Department of MBP and its voivodeship branches, from 1948	Israeli diplomatic mission in Poland
Object case “Reszta”	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Warsaw, 1953	Former Zionists from the Warsaw voivodeship, maintaining contact with the Israeli Legation
Object case “Łudziciel”	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Warsaw, 1953	Former Zionists from Warsaw voivodeship
Agency network case “Rabin”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1947–1949	Rabbi David Kahane, Chief Polish Army Chaplain
Agency surveillance operation “Rzeka”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1948–1949	Revisionist Zionists and their illegal activities in the country; David Drażnin, Ozjasz Raczko, Shlomo Peła-Finkielsztejn
Agency surveillance operation “Damy”	2nd (Independent) Section of the MBP 5th Department 1948	Anyone with fake passports obtained from the Joint Directorate
Agency surveillance operation “Igła”	5th Division of WUBP in Cracow in cooperation with 2nd (Independent) Section of MBP 5th Department, 1948	Members of the Bund from Cracow, who allegedly had links with former activists PPS-WRN (Polish Socialist Party – Freedom, Equality, Independence)

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Ocaleni"	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Cracow, 1952	Religious Association of the Jewish Faith and Jewish population in Cracow
Object case "Zator"	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Cracow, 1953	Former Zionists in Cracow
Agency surveillance operation "Nielegalni"	5th Division of WUBP in Katowice (in cooperation with 3rd Section of the WUBP 1st Department and 2nd Section of the MBP 5th Department), 1946–1949	Vaad Hatzalah and its participation in moving Jews across the western borders; 35 "targets", including rabbis Lewin Bielecki and Samuel Ornsztejn
Operational and surveillance case "Warta"	WUBP in Wroclaw, 1950–1951	Persons involved in trafficking people abroad, former members of the Bricha organisation. The District Military Court (WSR) in Wroclaw sentenced two main suspects to death, Jakub Frydland and Henryk Wasserman.
Object case "Starcy"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947.	Members of the Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lower Silesia
Object case "Wulkan"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947	Members of the Jewish Workers' Union Bund and a youth organisation Tsukunft in Lower Silesia
Object case "Starozytmi"	5th Division of WUBP in Wroclaw, from 1947	Jewish Religious Congregation
Object case "Wladza"	7th Section of the 5th Section of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Jewish Committee in Legnica
Object case "Niewierni"	7th Section of 5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Former members of Poale Zion Hitahdut

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Walka"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Union of Zionists Democrats Ihud in Legnica
Object case "Czasowi"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Poale Zion in Legnica
Object case "Wschód, Zjednoczenie"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1949	Hashomer Hatzair in Legnica
Object case "Prawica" "Likwidacja"	5th Desk of PUBP in Legnica, 1952	Former Bund members in Legnica (68 people)
Object case "Reszta"	5th Section of MUBP in Wałbrzych, from 1952	Former members of Zionist organisations in Wałbrzych
Object case "Likwidacja"	5th Section of MUBP in Wałbrzych, from 1953	Former Bund members in Wałbrzych
Object case "Jordan"	5th Desk of PUBP in Żary, 1946–1953	Zionist organisations and parties in Żary
Problem case "Jerozolima," "Tel Aviv," "Jordan"	5th Desk of PUBP (PUDsBP) in Dzierżoniów, 1950–1955	Former activists of Jewish parties and organisations in Dzierżoniów
Object case "Nowe Życie"	5th Desk of PUBP (PUDsBP) in Świdnica, 1947–1950	activists of Zionist parties and organisations in Świdnica
Object case "Wyznawcy"	5th Desk of PUBP in Świdnica, 1947–1949	Jewish Religious Congregation in the Świdnica powiat
Object case "Międzynarodowcy"	5th Desk of PUBP in Świdnica, 1947–1949	Bund – the General Union of Jewish Workers in the Świdnica powiat
Object case "Oaza"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1946.	Voivodeship Committee of Polish Jews (WKŻP) in Szczecin
Object case "Bułan"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	Bund – the General Jewish Workers Union in Szczecin

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Port"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	United Jewish Workers Party Poale Zion in Szczecin
Object case "Halina"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1949	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Szczecin
Object case "Trys"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Szczecin
Agency surveillance operation "Zysk"	5th Section of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1948	Jewish smugglers and profiteers milieu in Szczecin
Agency surveillance cases "Barka" and "Kanal" were combined into one agency surveillance operation "Bagno" in March 1953	3rd Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Szczecin, from 1952	Persons suspected of smuggling and currency trading, of maintaining contacts with West Berliners, and of Revisionist views, Moses Juszkiewicz, Lipa Kielich
Issue file "Gielda"	2nd Section of WUdsBP in Szczecin, 1955–1956	Jews who illegally fled the country, residing in West Berlin
Object case "Krzemień"	Section for the Jewish minority affairs of 1st Section of 5th Division of WUBP in Lublin, 1947–1953	Activists and members of WKZP in Lublin
Object case "Omega"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Jewish Religious Congregation in Lublin
Object case "Alfa"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lublin
Object case "Beta"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Bund – the General Jewish Workers Union in Lublin

Type and codename of the case	Running unit	Description of the scope of the case and the persons targeted
Object case "Gamma"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	United Jewish Workers Party Poale Zion in Lublin
Object case "Nil"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Lublin
Object case "Delta"	Jewish Minority Desk of 1st Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, 1947–1950	Hashomer Hatzair w Lublinie
Object case "Krzemien" "Reszta"	3rd Section of the WUBP 5th Department in Lublin, from 1953	Former Zionists in Lublin maintaining contacts with the Israeli Legation (17 people)
Object case "Mgła"	2nd Independent Section of the 5th WUBP Department in Lodz, 1947–1950	Zionist Socialist Workers Party Hitahdut in Lodz
Object case "Zawierucha"	2nd Independent Section of the 5th WUBP Department in Lodz, 1947–1950	Union of Zionist Democrats Ihud in Lodz
Object case "Trapez", "Zator"	5th Desk of PUBP in Tarnow, 1951–1956	Former members of Zionist organisations and of Bund in Tarnow Poviast
Object case "Czarny"	5th Desk of PUBP in Wloclawek, 1946–1950	Jews in Wloclawek – Jewish parties and organisations, lists of people leaving for Israel



SOURCES

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JEWIS IN CRIMINAL CASES BEFORE THE REGIONAL COURT IN KIELCE BETWEEN 1939 AND 1941 – CONTRIBUTION TO POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

Introduction

During the Second World War, in the part of the occupied Polish lands known as the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement; Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo; GG), a dualistic court system was implemented by the German occupation authorities at the turn of 1939 and 1940. In addition to German courts (special courts, German courts, higher German courts), Polish municipal, regional and appeal courts also operated with the consent of the occupier. The issues related to their operation remain a little-explored research subject, although works that fill this gap in historiography are gradually being published, with Andrzej Szulczyński's monograph at the forefront.¹

¹ A. Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, (Warsaw, 2020); A. Wrzyszczyk, "Sądy na ziemiach polskich w czasie okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945). Najnowsze opracowanie tematu," *Studia z dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego* 23 (2020), pp. 35–55 (there the latest list of literature); *idem*, *Okupacyjne sądownictwo niemieckie w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945. Organizacja i funkcjonowanie* (Lublin, 2008), pp. 101–114; *idem*, "Nadzór Hansa Franka nad sądownictwem w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945," *Miscellanea Historico-Juridica* 14/2 (2015), pp. 375–387; *idem*, "O organizacji okupacyjnego sądownictwa polskiego w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945," *Zeszyty Majdanka* 14 (1992); *idem*, "Tworzenie okupacyjnego wymiaru sprawiedliwości w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1940," *Studia z dziejów*

The scarcity of such works also concerns the Kielce region.² Minor mentions of the issue we are interested in have appeared in the studies by Adam Massalski and Stanisław Meducki,³ Małgorzata Czapska, Barbara Szabat and Jerzy Zięba,⁴ as well as Tomasz Domański.⁵ The issue of the activity of “Polish” courts in the Kielce region was discussed in detail in Szulczyński’s monograph. The author explored the operations of the Municipal Court (*Sąd Grodzki*, SG) in Sandomierz and the Regional Court in Kielce (*Sąd Okręgowy w Kielcach*, SOK), to analyse the judicial practice and the nature of the criminal offences tried in criminal and civil cases.⁶ No independent text was created that would discuss the functioning of the “Polish” judiciary in this area under German occupation.

Even less is known about the members of the Jewish minority who had to face the “Polish” judiciary. The analysed material concerns civil cases related to property ownership.⁷ The historical period to which the published documents refer was, after all, a period of persecution of Jews by the German occupying

Państwa i Prawa Polskiego 8 (2003), pp. 247–270; M. Worsen, “Sędziowie w podbitym kraju. Oficjalne sądownictwo polskie w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* 128 (1999), pp. 38–53. A cognitive analysis of the trials before the Municipal Court in Cracow is also presented in: A. Czocher, “Drobna przestępczość pospolita w okupowanym Krakowie na podstawie akt więźniów więzienia przy ul. Senackiej (tzw. więzienia św. Michała) z lat 1939–1945,” *Polska pod Okupacją 1939–1945* 3 (2019), pp. 119–137.

² I define the Kielce Region as a historical area located between the Vistula and Pilica rivers.

³ A. Massalski, S. Meducki, *Kielce w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939–1945* (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, 2007), pp. 32–33.

⁴ M. Czapska, B. Szabat, J. Zięba, *Adwokatura Świętokrzyska. Zarys dziejów od początku XIX wieku* (Kielce, 2013).

⁵ T. Domański, “Pierwszy rok okupacji niemieckiej Kielc,” in *Życiorysy niepokornych*, vol. 1: *Stefan Artwiński (1863–1939)*, ed. by M. Jedynak and P. Wolańczyk (Kielce, 2021), pp. 67–94.

⁶ Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie*, pp. 118–113, 131–133.

⁷ This issue was raised in Szulczyński’s monograph, in several articles and in another monograph remaining in the typescript. See Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie, passim* (especially pp. 135–160); J. Grabowski, “Żydzi przed obliczem niemieckich i polskich sądów w dystrykcie warszawskim Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939–1942,” in *Prowincja noc. Życie i zagłada w dystrykcie warszawskim*, ed. by B. Engelking, J. Leociak, and D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 75–118; E. Wiatr, “Na marginesie funkcjonowania sądów polskich w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie. Przypadek Majera Wolberga,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 11 (2015), pp. 494–502; M.D. Racine Asselin, *Justice as Witness: Jews Facing Polish Courts During the German Occupation (1939–1942)*, unpublished PhD thesis (Ottawa, 2021). The work by Marie-Dominique Racine Asselin undoubtedly deserves a detailed analysis. The author completely omitted Andrzej Wrzyszczy’s findings on the functioning of the “Polish” judiciary under the occupation. The name of this researcher did not appear at all in her work. Also quite interesting is Szulczyński’s conclusion that “Polish courts became involved in the process of gradual plundering of Jewish property as they were unable to evade it.” See Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie*, p. 156.

authorities, which included stigmatisation, the deprivation of any rights and, finally, physical extermination. The purpose of this source study is, thanks to the publication of documents from two preserved criminal cases conducted before the Regional Court in Kielce, to show the judicial practice in criminal cases involving Jews (as claimants or defendants). Equally important will be an attempt to answer the question of whether the Jews facing “Polish” courts were second-class defendants and whether the “Polish” courts, when conducting proceedings in criminal cases, were *de facto* participating in the process of repression and defamation of Jews.

Due to the little-known activities of the courts and their standing in the occupation structure, the historical context of their operation in the years 1939–1941, i.e. the period to which the published documents refer, should be discussed in more detail. At the beginning of this study, it is worth raising the seemingly trivial matter of semantics. The dualism of the occupational judiciary in the General Governorate was a fact; nevertheless, describing these courts as *Polish*, without putting it in quotation marks or at least distancing oneself by using the phrase “so-called” (“the so-called Polish courts”), may be erroneous and not reflecting the reality of the time. The establishment of the “Polish” judiciary in the General Governorate was primarily of practical importance. From the beginning of the occupation, full power belonged to the German occupier, deciding the possibilities and scope of those institutions’ activities, the existence of which the occupying power found useful.⁸ From 1941, the term non-German judiciary was used in

⁸ The status of “former Polish officials”, as all officials of Polish descent, employed in the GG in the judiciary structure were formally referred to, was quite vividly presented in the letter of the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of Regional Courts in Radom, Kielce, and Piotrków: “There was a case recently where one of the courts did not hear the case at the appointed time, although the trial was supposed to be attended by representatives of the German authorities interested in the case, who had already arrived at the court [this may indicate the practice of the German officers presence during trials – T.D.]. While not prohibiting the accepted and somewhat justified by current communication difficulties, courts’ practice of scheduling more cases for one hour in the morning – instead of strictly adhering to Article 61 of the general regulations – I would like to point out that both single and three-member courts must, in any case, be ready for the trial at the appointed time, when the files show that the German authorities are to participate in the trial. I ask you to make sure that this principle is strictly observed by the courts under their jurisdiction”. Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach (State Archives in Kielce, hereinafter APK), Sąd Okręgowy w Kielcach 1939–1945 (Regional Court in Kielce, hereinafter SOK 1939–1945, 1, Memo of the Regional Court in Radom to the Regional Courts in Kielce, Radom, and Piotrków, Radom, 13 August 1940, p. 212.

the correspondence of German offices.⁹ The competences of the “Polish” courts became limited to cases not heard by the German courts: petty crime and civil cases.¹⁰ The trials were held under the pre-war penal code of 1932. The German side had the right to interfere in the proceedings and exercise control functions directly. German law gained primacy over Polish legislation, which resulted from racial reasons. *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* were not subject to the „Polish” judiciary in the GG because they had the right to the jurisdiction of the German courts.¹¹ The symbols of Polish statehood, in the form of an emblem, were to be removed or covered. Although it was allowed to use Polish printed forms, there were to be no traces of pre-war reality, like the phrase „judgment in the name of the Republic of Poland” in the heading. “Polish” courts in the GG issued occupational judgments not on behalf of a specific state but on behalf of an unspecified law.¹²

The subjugation of “Polish” courts to German administration is demonstrated in many ordinances. One of the more tangible examples of German influence on the judiciary was the order of 10 June 1940. The German *Staatsanwalt* (prosecutor), on the basis of indictments in criminal cases sent to him, decided via the “Polish” prosecutor whether to transfer cases to the appropriate municipal court.¹³ Another example can be the obligation to send the justice department subordinated to the head of the Radom District case files in which GG employees appeared as suspects or victims.¹⁴ The „Polish” courts in criminal cases were controlled not only by representatives of justice departments (civil structures) of the office of the

⁹ Andrzej Wrzyszczyński thinks that the use of the term Polish judiciary is fully appropriate in relation to the period from 26 October 1939 to 31 August 1941. See A. Wrzyszczyński, “Sądownictwo polskie w generalnym Gubernatorstwie. Refleksje o najnowszej książce Andrzeja Szulczyńskiego,” *Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem* 3 (2021), p. 555. The term “non-German” was also applied to police formations composed of Poles – the so-called blue police, the Criminal Police.

¹⁰ Wrzyszczyński, *Okupacyjne sądownictwo niemieckie*, pp. 105–106.

¹¹ *Idem*, “Tworzenie okupacyjnego wymiaru sprawiedliwości,” pp. 247–250.

¹² Ewa Wiatr suggests that this formula was used to disguise the proper one, “on behalf of Polish law.” See Wiatr, “*Na marginesie*,” p. 494.

¹³ To emphasise the unique position of the German prosecutor in the circulars of the German authorities translated into Polish, the term “prosecutor” was written in German. APK, SOK 1939–1945, 7, Letter from the head of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Regional Court in Kielce to the president of the Regional Court in Kielce, Kielce, 15 February 1941, p. 1.

¹⁴ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 3, Letter from the head of SA in Radom to heads of the Regional court in Radom, Kielce and Piotrków, Radom, 8 August 1941, p. 91.

governor-general or heads of districts¹⁵ but also by functionaries from the offices of the commander of the security police and the Security Service (German: Sicherheitsdienst, SD) (individual KdS – Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD). On 29 October 1940, the head of the Justice Department in the governor general's office decided that these offices should receive notifications on pending proceedings without any special summons.¹⁶ Local units of German order police authorities, such as the Criminal Police Station in Kielce, also attempted to obtain the right to control the courts' decisions or at least to read them. However, this was opposed by German supervision.¹⁷

The judges were also obliged to obey and be loyal to the German authorities.¹⁸ The situation of the functionaries of the "Polish" judiciary in the realities of the occupation was probably most clearly demonstrated by the circular issued by the head of the Justice Department at the Radom District Office, which the head of the Appellate Court in Radom sent to his subordinate units on 23 March 1942:

Rumours abound that irresponsible Polish elements intend to cause widespread disquietude throughout former Poland, in particular by committing acts of terror and sabotage against enterprises of vital importance to German government offices, etc. I emphasise that the most important interest of the Polish population requires that, by being particularly vigilant in this respect, it acts preventively. Every official of the judiciary is obliged to immediately notify the relevant German authorities if they learn of any intended acts of terror or sabotage. Otherwise, in the event of any such incidents, the most severe

¹⁵ For more on this see: Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie*, pp. 54–56; H. Mielnik, "Prawo sprawdzenia prawomocnych orzeczeń sądów polskich (nieniemieckich) w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w okresie II wojny światowej. Orzecznictwo Wyższego Sądu Niemieckiego w Radomiu," *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne* 1 (2020).

¹⁶ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 7, Letter by Teodor Osten-Sacken to head of the Prosecutor's Office of the Regional Court in Kielce, Kielce, 5 March 1941, p. 21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter by SS-Untersturmführer Weiß to the head of the Regional Court in Kielce, 24 February 1941, p. 10. The letter in this case met with no resistance from the "Polish" court, and its head limited himself to passing this information to the municipal courts subordinate to him (*ibid.*, Letter from the head of the Regional Court in Kielce to the heads of the second division and the heads of municipal courts in Kielce, Bodzentyn, Chęciny, Daleszyce, Kielce, 26 February 1941). He revoked the decision only after detailed explanations from the prosecutor, Teodor Osten-Sacken.

¹⁸ Wrzyszczyk, *Okupacyjne sądownictwo niemieckie*, pp. 153–156, 107; Sworzeń, "Sędziowie w podbitym kraju," pp. 44–47.

reaction from the German authorities towards the officials will be inevitable. I would like to remind you of the regulation on combating acts of violence in the General Governorate of 30 October 1939. [...]. Please immediately notify all your subordinate officials of the judiciary of the above and report to me on the execution of this command.¹⁹

The financial situation of the employees of the “Polish” judiciary was also disastrous. The preserved documentation contains numerous applications for financial aid and support.²⁰ Marian Sworzeń said that “they were living from hand to mouth along with others.”²¹

Regional Court in Kielce and Municipal Courts of Kielce Judicial District

The Regional Court in Kielce (German: *Bezirksgericht*)²² began its activities on 29 November 1939.²³ During the analysed period, the post of the court’s director (*Leiter*) was initially held by Judge Stanisław Gmitrzak, and then by Judge Karol Zieliński.²⁴ Within the Kielce Court District, the municipal courts in Bodzentyn, Chęciny, Daleszyce, Kielce (Kreis²⁵ Kielce), Busko Zdrój, Chmielnik, Pińczów, Stopnica, Szydłów (Kreis Busko), Jędrzejów, Szczekociny, Włoszczów (Kreis Jędrzejów)²⁶ were subordinate to the Regional Court in Kielce. In turn, the

¹⁹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 4, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of Regional Courts of the Radom Appeal District, Radom, 23 March 1942, p. 216. Detailed statistics from this circular have been preserved.

²⁰ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 3, Letter from the Justice Department at the Radom District Office to all German and Polish judiciary authorities of the Radom District, Radom, 21 October 1941, p. 346.

²¹ Sworzeń, “Sędziowie w podbitym kraju,” p. 48.

²² In 1939, after the war was lost, Kielce was relegated to the rank of a *poviat* town as the seat of the German *starosty* – *Kreishauptmannschaft*. It was not until 1941 that it obtained the status of a separate city. See P. Rogowski, E. Wójcicka, “Kielce i powiat kielecki pod rządami Eduarda Jedamczika i Huberta Rottera na przełomie 1939 i 1940 roku,” *Świętokrzyskie Studia Archiwalno-Historyczne* 8 (2019), pp. 143–162; K. Urbański, “Organizacja życia mieszkańców okupowanych Kielc,” in *Kielce przez stulecia*, ed. J.L. Adamczyk et al. (Kielce, 2014), pp. 489–492.

²³ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, List of actions in civil, bankruptcy and settlement cases before the Regional Court in Kielce during the period from 29 November 1939 to 30 June 1940, 4 July 1940, p. 11.

²⁴ The exact date of the appointment of the director could not be determined.

²⁵ *Starosty* under German occupation.

²⁶ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 1, Ordinance on the boundaries of German and Polish courts in the Radom district, from 16 September 1940, p. 373.

Regional Court in Kielce was subordinate to the Appellate Court in Radom. Before the war there was no Appellate Court in Radom. It was established at the initiative of the governor of the Radom District, Dr Karl Lasch, to satisfy his ambitions for power and political prestige and to correlate the division of general administration with the administrative division for judicial purposes.²⁷ An outstanding pre-war lawyer, Dr Witold Prądzyński, took the position of Appellate Court director.²⁸ In total, eleven judges worked at the Regional Court in Kielce at the end of February 1940,²⁹ including a coroner (*Untersuchungsrichter*), a prosecutor, two deputy prosecutors and a sub-prosecutor, ten clerks and three notaries (at the Regional Court in Kielce).³⁰

The number of judges in the Regional Court in Kielce decreased from 23 in the prewar period to 12. It is difficult to assess to what extent such a fundamental change resulted from the turmoil of war and the beginning of the occupation, and to what extent from the implementation of the German policy of removing from

²⁷ Wrzyszczyk, "Sądy na ziemiach polskich," p. 37.

²⁸ For more information on the Radom Appellate Court and the activities of Witold Prądzyński as the head of the SA in Radom, see S. Piątkowski, *Radom w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945* (Lublin–Warsaw, 2018), pp. 161–166; *idem*, *Sędziowie sądów powszechnych regionu radomskiego w latach 1917–1945. Noty biograficzne* (Radom, 2008), pp. 12–13. As early as March 1945, the prosecutor's proceedings against Prądzyński began. They were conducted by the prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court in Lublin – Branch in Radom, under the decree of 31 August 1944 (known as *Sierpniówka*). The main charge against Prądzyński concerned the welcome speech he gave on 25 May 1940 at the opening of the Appellate Court in Radom in the presence of Hans Frank, which was supposed to prove his pro-German attitude (this issue is partly discussed by Piątkowski in *Radom w latach wojny*, pp. 165–166). Prądzyński and many witnesses were interrogated in the case, including employees of the SA in Radom and Teodor Osten-Sacken. All of them testified in favour of Prądzyński, proving at the same time that the words attributed to him were manipulated and twisted, in *Krakauer Zeitung*. Some people from the legal milieu sent to the prosecutor's office their own flattering opinions about Prądzyński. On 9 July 1945, as a result of all these positive opinions the investigation against Prądzyński was discontinued because "in the course of the investigation, it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that in the newspapers which quoted the speech of the former president of in Radom, Witold Prądzyński, given on the occasion of the opening of this court, the content of the speech was distorted, because the speech he delivered did not contain passages derogatory to the dignity of a Pole, nor any content that can be considered as servile". Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu (State Archives in Radom, hereinafter APR), Prokurator Specjalnego Sądu Karnego (Prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court, hereinafter PSSK), 786, Decision on discontinuance of the investigation, Radom, 9 July 1945, n.p.

²⁹ Stanisław Gmitrzak, Franciszek Wysocki, Stanisław Brzozowski, Michał Chmielewski, Tadeusz Świdorski, Stanisław Markiewicz, Ludwik Wójcik, Edmund Siedlecki, Leszek Niewiadomski, Aleksander Woskriesieński, Gerard Wojtuń. See Domański, "Pierwszy rok okupacji niemieckiej Kielce," pp. 71–72.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

judiciary structures unreliably people labelled as “inciters” and “troublemakers.”³¹ In February 1940, as in the entire GG, the German authorities removed Jewish attorneys-at-law from the Regional Court and municipal courts jurisdiction, including 15 attorneys-at-law from the Regional Court in Kielce, and 34 Jews in the whole district. In addition, in the Radom District, Jewish attorneys were also prohibited from engaging in cases that began before 1 September 1939.³² Confirmation of employment, after prior verification, was received only by Poles. However, Jan Grabowski’s thesis that only those attorneys-at-law who “expressed support for German anti-Jewish policy” worked in “Polish” courts seems quite controversial.³³ Such a radical position is not confirmed in the sources for the Kielce Judicial District. In the preserved opinions about the bar, as prepared by the heads of individual courts, there are no references to the socio-political views of the candidates. The opinions submitted to the German authorities concerned professional experience, professional skills and professional and private life conduct. Obviously, people suspected by the German authorities of collaborating with the Polish independence underground could not work in the judiciary.³⁴

In the first of the Regional Court’s activities under the German occupation, there was an apparent decrease in the number of criminal cases dealt with by the Regional Court.³⁵ According to statistics, in 1937, a total of 6,609 cases were

³¹ In the Warsaw district, the regulation on this matter was issued on 1 May 1940 by Governor Ludwig Fischer. A. Wrzyszczyk, “Ustrój i prawo w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w poglądach prawników niemieckich na łamach czasopisma *Deutsches Recht* w czasie II wojny światowej,” *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia* 66/1 (2019), p. 449.

³² APK, SOK 1939–1945, 1, Letter from the head of SA in Radom to the managers of the regional courts in Radom, Kielce and Piotrków, Radom, 17 August 1940, p. 224; *ibid.*, List of lawyers living in the Kielce judicial district, [n.d.], pp. 211–212. According to the authors of the study *Adwokatura Świętokrzyska* the number of cases involving the Jewish population was so large that the Germans temporarily allowed Jewish lawyers to perform defence functions. However, they introduced numerous restrictions: attorneys were called counsellors; they could not wear a toga and provided their services only in the place of residence. See Czapska, Szabat, Zięba, *Adwokatura Świętokrzyska*, p. 69.

³³ Grabowski, “Żydzi przed obliczem,” p. 97.

³⁴ See opinions addressed to the German authorities. APK, SOK 1939–1945, 1, pp. 140–175. It is worth noting that Eugeniusz Nawroczyński, one of Kielce’s best-known lawyers, who passed the verification, was active in the conspiracy (The Union of Armed Struggle-Home Army [*Związek Walki Zbrojnej-Armia Krajowa*, ZWZ-AK) and was shot by the Germans in 1942. See M. Czapska, B. Szabat, “Eugeniusz Nawroczyński (1881–1942) – kielecki adwokat i działacz społeczny,” *Palestra Świętokrzyska* 17–18 (2011), p. 35.

³⁵ On the order of the department of justice in the office of the chief of the Radom district, the courts were obliged to prepare and send to the Regional Court in Kielce detailed lists of activities

referred to the Regional Court in Kielce.³⁶ Whereas, after half a year of operation (from 1939 to mid-June 1940), only 291 criminal cases were submitted to the Regional Court, and 301 were settled (including cases from the previous period). At that time, the Regional Court handed down 46 judgments in the first instance (including 16 collectively and 30 individually), while 50 cases were “settled in a different way.”³⁷ In October 1940, the Regional Court in Kielce received 120 criminal cases, and 123 cases were examined. In November of that year, the respective numbers were 113 and 129.³⁸ In 1941, a total of 1,336 criminal cases were submitted to the Regional Court in Kielce.³⁹ The number of criminal cases from the entire period of occupation lodged in the Regional Court in Kielce, preserved to this day, amounts to 44 archival units. The fate of the rest of the documentation remains unknown, but some of the documents were undoubtedly destroyed. Annotations with such content can be found in the K repertory.⁴⁰

A decrease in the number of submitted cases both criminal and civil, was recorded in all municipal courts subordinate to the Regional Court in Kielce. In total, from the opening of the courts in 1939 until June 1940, 5,480 criminal cases were submitted to these courts,⁴¹ and 986 in July 1940 (an average of 82 cases in each court).⁴² For comparison, it can be added that in 1937 as many as

(statistics) of their own and subordinate municipal courts (APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, Letter from the head of the Regional Court in Kielce to the president of the Appellate Court, Kielce, 12 July 1940, p. 8). A drop in the number of submitted cases also occurred in other “Polish” courts operating in GG. See Sworzeń, “Sędziowie w podbitym kraju,” p. 46.

³⁶ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 12, List of Regional Court activities in Kielce in 1937, Kielce, 22 May 1942, p. 373.

³⁷ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, List of activities in criminal cases of the Regional Court in Kielce for the period from 29 November 1939 to 30 June 1940, Kielce, 4 July 1940, p. 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, List of activities in criminal cases of the Regional Court in Kielce for October 1940, Kielce, 4 November 1940, p. 304; *ibid.*, List of activities in criminal cases of the Regional Court in Kielce for November 1940, Kielce, 2 December 1940, p. 382.

³⁹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 12, List of activities in criminal cases of the Regional Court in Kielce for 1941, Kielce, 13 January 1942, p. 69.

⁴⁰ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 23, Repertory, Kielce, 2 January 1941, pp. 213, 215, 219, 221 ff.

⁴¹ 7,813 cases remained from the pre-war period, and 6,667 were examined, of which 1,076 were discontinued. See APK, SOK, Regional Court in Kielce 1939–1945, 10, Collective list of activities in criminal cases of the municipal courts of the Regional Court in Kielce from the beginning in November 1939 to July 1940, Kielce, 11 July 1940, p. 78.

⁴² APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, Collective list of activities in criminal cases of the municipal courts of the Regional Court in Kielce in July 1940, Kielce, 3 August 1940, p. 142.

52,011 criminal cases were lodged in municipal courts.⁴³ The list from 1937 did not differ much from those of other pre-war years, as evidenced by the statistics cited by Sebastian Piątkowski.⁴⁴ The number of registered cases after the courts opened would indicate a significant reduction in the scale of common crime. In fact, the situation was quite the opposite. After the amnesty of 2 September 1939 and the release of many criminals from prisons, a wave of banditry swept through the areas of central Poland occupied by the Germans. Also in the years that followed, this ratio remained very high, which was reported from everywhere.⁴⁵ The reasons for the decreasing crime statistics were probably the general chaos of war, unclear legal regulations (concerning the competence of „Polish” courts) and the ambivalent attitude of the German authorities, which mainly dealt with combating the remnants of the Polish army and any resistance attempts, and the extermination of the Polish elite. Controlling common crime was assigned to the structures of *Polnische Polizei* (blue police) and criminal police (including *Polnische Kriminalpolizei*).⁴⁶ The Germans dealt with ad hoc actions, carrying out roundups in different towns,⁴⁷ activities the “Polish” judges knew about. The crimes accompanying the liquidation of banditry were, in a veiled way, conveyed in the correspondence addressed to the Regional Court in Kielce.⁴⁸ The direct

⁴³ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 12, List of activities of municipal courts in criminal cases in 1937, Kielce, 26 May 1942, p. 416.

⁴⁴ See S. Piątkowski, “Bandytyzm i inne formy przestępczości kryminalnej na obszarach wiejskich Generalnego Gubernatorstwa na początku okupacji (October 1939 – May 1941)”, *Polska pod Okupacją 1939–1945* 1 (2015), pp. 64–69; *idem*, “Zapomniane ofiary. O przestępcach kryminalnych i ich losach w Radomskim w pierwszym roku okupacji hitlerowskiej,” in *Spółeczeństwo i kultura w regionie świętokrzyskim w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. by U. Oettingen, J. Szczepański (Kielce, 2009), pp. 190–193.

⁴⁵ The problem of crime in the province of the General Governorate is extensively discussed in Piątkowski, “Bandytyzm i inne formy przestępczości kryminalnej,” pp. 64–120.

⁴⁶ A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski. Rzecz o policji “granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1990); M. Korcuć, “Niemiecka *Polnische Polizei*. Historyczny i państwowo-prawny kontekst funkcjonowania granatowej policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945,” in *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2019), pp. 14–85.

⁴⁷ A roundup was carried out in Kielce in October 1939. In Pińczów, in the courtyard of the prison, the Germans shot nine people suspected of banditry or possession of weapons. See Domański, “Pierwszy rok okupacji niemieckiej Kielc,” p. 82; Archives of the Diocese in Kielce, OD-4/5, Letter from the dean of Pińczów to the diocesan authority in Kielce, Kielce, Pińczów, 7 December 1939, pp. 54–54v.

⁴⁸ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, Letter from the head of the Municipal Court in Daleszyce to the president of the Regional Court in Kielce, Daleszyce, 2 July 1940, p. 41; *ibid.*, List of activities in criminal

practice of lower-level German security authorities (local gendarmerie stations) also caused a drop in the activities of “Polish” courts in criminal cases. For example, in the former Włoszczowa powiat (Kreis Jędrzejów), the local Polnische Polizeistationen sent indictments to the police station in Włoszczowa, wherefrom they were transmitted to the local German gendarmerie, which “kept the documents for themselves.”⁴⁹

In the initial period of the occupation, the authorities of the Regional Court in Kielce noticed many irregularities in the conduct of criminal cases by individual municipal courts: the illegible preparation of minutes of hearings and justifications for judgments, the use of unacceptable abbreviations and extremely brief summaries of witnesses’ testimonies (sometimes unrelated to the actual testimonies), omitting the appointment of defence barrister *ex officio* and the provisions of the Criminal Code. Occasionally courts did not check evidence in individual cases and refused to hear witnesses.⁵⁰ The expressed reservations were substantive in nature, and, in peacetime, these transgressions would have to be assessed as unequivocally negative. However, considering the conditions of occupation, we should be more cautious in our judgment. So either these were offences incompatible with the office or acts of deliberate negligence that were to hinder the exercise of German control. If this was the aim of the municipal courts, these actions turned out to be relatively ineffective because the Regional Court was responsible for drafting the justifications in German. Later, the Germans, as evidenced by brief references, following the widely used “law” in the GG, imposed on judges personal responsibility for the proper implementation of orders.⁵¹ So it is not surprising that many judges and heads of courts tried to avoid responsibility by submitting various types of requests to the Appellate Court in Radom, with only the mention “I submit for decision, disposal, etc.” Witold Prądyński, head of the Appellate Court in Radom,

cases of the Municipal Court in Szczekociny, under the Regional Court in Kielce, for the period from 13 November 1939 to 30 June 1940, p. 97.

⁴⁹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 1, A copy of the letter from the justice department of the Radom district to the prosecutor at the Appellate Court in Radom, Radom, 10 April 1940, p. 65.

⁵⁰ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 7, Letter from the vice-president of the Regional Court to the president of the Regional Court in Kielce, Kielce, 16 May 1941, p. 42.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from the head of the Regional Court in Kielce to the heads of divisions of the Regional Court and heads of municipal courts of the Kielce Court District, Kielce, 6 August 1942, pp. 166–167.

expressed his objection to such requests. He deemed the conduct of the judges unacceptable.⁵²

Jews before the Regional Court in Kielce

Given that the documentation is incomplete, it is difficult to answer the question about the quantitative scope of criminal cases of the Regional Court in Kielce in cases involving Jews as parties. It is known that the “Polish” courts were dealing with cases involving people accused of common crimes. Criminal cases against Jews (and Poles) resulting from violations of German occupation regulations (e.g. “illegal” trade) were subject to the German judiciary, and there were many more of those. From just the rural areas of Kreis Kielce, nearly 100 Jews were brought before the Sondergericht in Kielce.⁵³

An attempt to reconstruct the number of cases handled by “Polish” courts can be made on the basis of the repertory of the 2nd Criminal Division, which was divided into two sections. In 1939, no cases were entered in either section in which Jews were tried, and from November to the end of the year, three cases were entered in total.⁵⁴ In the following year, 73 cases were entered in section 1, in 1941 – 72 cases, in 1942 – 29 cases, in 1943 – 12. For 1941 and 1943, there were no entries about proceedings against Jews.⁵⁵ On the other hand, section 2 only sets out data for the year 1940, when 166 cases were entered.⁵⁶ Altogether, for the years 1939–1943, the repertoires recorded seven proceedings in which Jews were the defendants. The Regional Court in Kielce (section 1) proceeded with cases against Perec Fuks, Chaim Machtyngier, and Shlama Machtyngier,⁵⁷ as well as

⁵² APK, SOK 1939–1945, 3, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of Regional Courts in Radom, Kielce, and Piotrków, Radom, 4 November 1941, p. 329.

⁵³ T. Domański, “Prześladowanie Żydów na obszarach prowincjonalnych Kreis Kielce w latach 1939–1941,” *Res Historica* 54 (2022), pp. 481–532.

⁵⁴ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 23, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division. Section 1 for 1939–1945, pp. 208–209; APK, SOK 1939–1945, 24, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division. Section 2 for 1939–1945, p. 496.

⁵⁵ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 23, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division. Section 1 for 1939–1945, pp. 208–209, 315–316, 445–446; *ibid.*, pp. 490–491, 509–510.

⁵⁶ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 24, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division. Section 2 for 1940, pp. 647–648.

⁵⁷ The case against these defendants was entered into the repertoires of both sections. APK, SOK 1939–1945, 23, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division, for 1940, pp. 292–295; APK, SOK, 24, Repertory of the 2nd criminal division. Section 2, for 1939–1945, pp. 571–572. The files of this case have been preserved, see “Documents” published in this article.

(section 2) Chun Wajnsztajn,⁵⁸ Majer Mandel,⁵⁹ Lejzor Gutman, Majer Diament, Motel Ciecierski, Josek Fajnkuchen,⁶⁰ Herszel Ejzykowicz,⁶¹ Chilel Cetel,⁶² Josek Kampel.⁶³ A simple mathematical calculation shows that the percentage of court proceedings against Jews from all registered cases amounted to 2.23%, which was very low given the thousands of Jews living in the Kielce Court District (in Kielce alone, Jews constituted one-third of the city's population). This conclusion is not changed by the proceedings against Ignacy Kaufler and Moshe Borkowski,⁶⁴ found in the files of the Regional Court in Kielce (about these cases in the footnotes), which were not recorded in the repertoires.

It should be emphasised that the entries in the repertoires were made in very brief form, containing primary data – the date, the actual judgment and its legal basis (a specific article of the Criminal Code). Therefore, it is impossible to reconstruct the matters that are important for the purposes of this text: the line of defence of the accused and the attitude of the court towards Jews. Much more information can be found in (the only) three preserved files from criminal cases conducted by the Regional Court in Kielce in 1939–1941, in which five Jews were indicted,⁶⁵ and on other three cases in which the perpetrators of crimes against Jews were tried. Unfortunately, the archival material is incomplete. Some documents from the hearing are missing, including witness testimonies given during the preparatory

⁵⁸ Accused under Article 257 section 1 as well as 129 and 96 of the Criminal Code (*kodeks karny*, hereinafter *kk*), 2 September 1940, was sentenced to three years in prison and the loss of public and honorary rights for five years, and a fine. The loss of public and honorary rights adjudged by the Regional Court in Kielce clearly proved that the jury did not consider Jews as second-class defendants. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 24, Repertory of the 2nd division, section 2, p. 526.

⁵⁹ Sentenced on 19 October 1940, under Article 134 *kk* to six months in prison and a fine of 10 *zl*. *Ibid.*, pp. 557–558.

⁶⁰ They were charged under Article 160 *kk*. The Regional Court acquitted Gutman, Ciecierski and Fajnkuchen on 23 January 1941. The proceedings against Diament were suspended by the Regional Court on May 3, 1941, and then, on 18 September 1941, the accused was acquitted. *Ibid.*, pp. 569–570.

⁶¹ The accused, together with a Pole, Józef Dolik under Article 236 sec. 1 and 26, and 140 *kk*. 4 May 1941. Ejzykowicz was sentenced under Article 236 sec. 2 *kk* for a week in detention, and Dolik was acquitted. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 24, Repertory of the 2nd division, section 2, pp. 603–604.

⁶² Cetel was charged under Article 257 section 1 *kk* and on 7 July 1941, sentenced to 10 months in prison and a fine. See *ibid.*, pp. 645–646.

⁶³ Sentenced on 21 March 1941 under Article 143 *kk* for one week of detention. See *ibid.*, pp. 647–648.

⁶⁴ APK, SOK, 775.

⁶⁵ These are the cases against Ignacy Kaufler, Moshe Borkowski and Perec Fuks, Chaim Machtyngier, and Shlomo Machtyngier.

proceedings and records of other investigative activities. Only indictments, minutes of the main hearing and judgments have survived. However, these documents are significant enough to shed much light on the court proceedings.

In the first case, on 21 March 1941, the Regional Court in Kielce sentenced Ignacy Kaufler from Kielce to 10 months in prison (the co-defendant and then sentenced was Stanisław Kowalski) for forging a notarial deed for the benefit of Stefania Hempel, a fraudster.⁶⁶ In the second case, against Moshe Borkowski, accused of handling stolen goods, the court acquitted the accused. Borkowski's trial undoubtedly deserves more profound analysis, as it enables an assessment of the professionalism of the "Polish" court in deciding on a case under the conditions of occupation.

In the autumn of 1940 and the spring of 1941, there was a series of thefts of livestock (pigs and horses) in Kreis Jędrzejów near Wodzisław. The case was investigated by officers of the Polnische Polizei from Wodzisław (n.d.) and Polnische Kriminalpolizei (Julian Peas and Kazimierz Pajączek⁶⁷) from Jędrzejów. On 19 May 1941, based on the collected evidence, the Regional Court's prosecutor, Adam Fałara, accused several men (Roma – then commonly referred to as Gypsies) of the thefts mentioned above, whereas Moshe Borkowski from Kielce was accused of knowingly buying stolen horses.⁶⁸ The first hearing took place in Kielce on 16 July 1941, with the participation of the defence lawyers. Due to an ongoing typhus epidemic, the defendants, who were then in prison, were unable to appear in person.⁶⁹ The retrial took place on 4 September. At that time, during the examination of the defendants and witnesses, circumstances were revealed that completely changed the course of events laid down by the representatives of the German police authorities. The main accused, Aleksander Waśkowski, admitted

⁶⁶ APK, SOK, 762, judgement in the name of the law the case of I. Kaufler and S. Kowalski, Kielce, 21 March 1941, pp. 31–33. Kaufler withdrew his appeal submitted to the Appellate Court in Radom.

⁶⁷ APK, SOK, 775, Kazimierz Pajączek's testimony at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, pp. 20–21. According to Eugeniusz Adamczyk, the head of the Second Section of Home Army Jędrzejów District and also a *Reichskriminalpolizei* (Kripo) officer in Jędrzejów, Pajączek and Peas served the Germans. See. E. Adamczyk "Wiktor", *Mój udział w kontrwywiadzie Armii Krajowej* (Warsaw, 2007), p. 79.

⁶⁸ APK, SOK, 775, The indictment against Aleksander Waśkowski, Władysław Federowicz, Wacław Wiśniewski, Stanisław Gruszka, Moshe Borkowski, Kielce, 19 May 1941, pp. 1–7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing, Kielce, 16 July 1941, pp. 8–10.

to several thefts, but as to others, he testified: “I confessed to the police because the police were beating us, and to avoid further beatings, I preferred to admit thefts that I did not commit.”⁷⁰ Władysław Federowicz testified the same: “To stop the beatings, the police made me confess to all the thefts, but I was not involved in the other thefts. The police gave us a description of a jew,⁷¹ Borkowski, and we testified against him, that he was buying horses from us, but Borkowski didn’t buy any horses from us, and I don’t know him at all.”⁷² Waclaw Wiśniewski also denied participation in other thefts, and talked about being beaten by the police.⁷³ Finally, Borkowski pleaded not guilty. Among the evidence of his innocence, he pointed out, as follows: „I did not leave the ‘ghetto’ at all, because this was not allowed.”⁷⁴ Borkowski was also defended by several witnesses of Jewish nationality: Lejbuś Rubinsztajn, Icek Frydman and Moshe Moszkowicz. According to their testimonies, Borkowski did not leave his place of residence at the time of the theft, due to his illness and “the closure of the Jewish quarter.”⁷⁵ Kazimierz Pajączek, whose role – as the investigator – was limited to recording testimonies, did not notice any irregularities during the investigation. Julian Peas was interrogating.

The course of events undoubtedly surprised prosecutor Fąfara, who requested that the hearing be discontinued, and that Peas be questioned.⁷⁶ The latter, in turn, as conducting the prosecutor’s proceedings, claimed that the defendants had confessed to their crimes without the use of coercive measures.⁷⁷ The Regional Court in Kielce saw the case in a completely different way, recognising the testimonies of the accused during the main hearing as true. When issuing the verdict, Judges Leszek Niewiadomski and W. Szulc negatively assessed the results of the proceedings conducted by the police officers. According to the judges, Waškowski and the other defendants were unable to provide many important details that would be

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Testimony of the accused Aleksander Waškowski at the main hearing, Kielce, 4 September 1941, p. 14.

⁷¹ The original spelling has been retained in the quotations from the documents (*Jew* written *jew*, not capitalised).

⁷² *Ibid.*, Władysław Federowicz’s testimony at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, p. 15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Waclaw Wiśniewski’s testimony at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, p. 15.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Moshe Borkowski’s testimony at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, pp. 15–16.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Lejbus Rubinsztajn, Icek Frydman and Moshe Moszkowicz’s testimonies at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, pp. 21–22.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Prosecutor’s motion at the main trial, Kielce, 4 September 1941, p. 22.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Julian Peas’s testimony at the main trial, Kielce, 12 September 1941, pp. 27–31.

quite obvious if they had acted in collusion with Borkowski. In the final words of the justification of the judgement in favour of Borkowski, the judges also outlined the tragic situation of the Jews: “Finally, the witnesses Lejbuś Rubinsztajn, Icek Frydman and Moshe Moszkowicz also testified that the accused Borkowski was ill at the critical time and did not go anywhere, and moreover was in a closed Jewish quarter. It is known to the Court that in April this year [1941], due to the typhus epidemic in this quarter, strict regulations regarding the movement of people living there were in force.”⁷⁸ During the appeal trial, the Appeal Court in Radom mitigated the sentence handed down against the accused Roma, clearly indicating that one of the thefts had been committed out of hunger, which must have been the result of the occupation situation: “The defendants confessed to the acts attributed to them, they stole the piglets not for trade, but immediately after the theft they ate the meat of these piglets together with their families.”⁷⁹

Considering the historical circumstances, the trial before the Regional Court in Kielce and the judgement, together with the justification, should be assessed as quite impartial. The court did not pay attention to the national origin of the accused – Gypsies and Jews – and did not refer in any way to their legal inferiority imposed by the Germans in the General Governorate. It allowed the statements of the defendants about being forced to confess by beating to be recorded. It showed numerous logical errors in the version of events presented by the Kripo officers.

Cases in which Jews became victims of various common crimes, such as beatings or thefts, were brought to court. Records of three such proceedings (see below) examined by the Regional Court in Kielce were discovered. The incomplete documentation of the Regional Court in Kielce from the occupation years does not make it possible to draw any quantitative conclusions. The repertoires cannot be referred to, because they did not include any names of the victims, only the data of the suspects and the sentenced. However, it can be assumed with a high degree of probability that only a small number of crimes against Jews ended up in court. The reasons for the low representation of the Jewish population in court

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Justification of the judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce, Kielce, 12 September 1941, p. 42; *ibid.*, Judgement of the Appellate Court in Radom, Radom, 10 November 1950, p. 50.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Judgment of the Appellate Court in Radom according to law, Radom, 10 November 1950, p. 50.

proceedings was, quite obviously, the anti-Jewish German policy of systematic persecution and limitation of all rights, including the right to a defence. As early as mid-1940, from the area of the Municipal Court in Szczekociny, it was reported: “in view of the restrictions in relation to jews, the jewish population has ceased any litigation procedures.”⁸⁰ This note presumably points to cases under the Civil Code rather than the Criminal Code. However, it could – in the situation of occupation restrictions – also apply to Jewish victims of crime. Certainly, the German racist policy was at work here. It led to Jews not reporting common crimes of which they were victims. This is evidenced by testimonies during trials.⁸¹ Getting to the appropriate court was extremely complicated. This mundane activity, which in times of peace in the Second Polish Republic, apart from exceptional situations, was not a problem, in the conditions of occupation posed a real challenge. Due to the ban on the use of railways (Ostbahn) imposed on Jews, only the head of the German special court (Sondergericht)⁸² had the right to issue an appropriate order enabling travel by train to court. This regulation was further tightened on 21 March 1941. The German authorities, in this case, the head of the Justice Department of the General Governorate by the name of Wille, explained that “the official summons on a jew by the German or Polish judicial authority constitutes a permit allowing him to use public means of communication in non-local traffic.” However, Wille went on to “observe” that, „the summoning of a jew should be relinquished unless it is absolutely necessary to interrogate him. If the interrogation cannot be omitted, then each time it should be checked whether the jew can comply with the summons without using public means of transport (e.g. by walking for several hours). [If] it turns out that he can be required to walk from his place of residence to the place he is summoned to, or if for some other reason, it is not necessary to use a public means of transport, then the summons should indicate, ‘This summons

⁸⁰ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 10, a list of activities in criminal cases in the Municipal Court in Szczekociny of the Regional Court in Kielce for the period from 13 November 1939 to 30 June 1940, p. 97.

⁸¹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 768, testimony of Jójchen Fajrajzen at the main trial, Busko-Zdrój, 9 September 1941, p. 20.

⁸² The granting of the permit concerned the courts within the Court District in Kielce, Piotrków and the non-local division in Częstochowa. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 2, Letter from the head of the justice department in the Radom district to the head of the Appellate Court in Radom, Radom, 6 December 1940, p. 2.

does not authorise the use of public means of transport.”⁸³ The German ordinance can hardly be understood as anything other than a tacit encouragement to limit cases involving Jews, and also for them, the prospect of walking for hours to the Regional Court to seek “justice” could have been very discouraging.⁸⁴

At the same time, in the conditions of German persecution, a summons to a court hearing could turn out to be an extremely valuable document facilitating leaving the ghetto to the ‘Aryan’ side to get food or settle other matters. Despite the threat of repression, some Polish officials used court forms and thus helped the Jews, which must have reached the head of the Appellate Court, Witold Prądyński. He issued an order to combat this “practice.” Prądyński wrote in a very categorical manner: “I have received confidential information about the misuse of forms by court staff – court summons for unofficial purposes, such as to help Jews leave the Jewish quarter (ghetto). I will not tolerate this kind of abuse of an official position, and in the event of similar facts being found, the official or usher, in addition to criminal liability, will be immediately dismissed from court service. To prevent this kind of abuse in the future, I am asking you, as presidents, to issue orders that the summons forms be kept under lock and key, for which the office managers or secretaries will be responsible. At the same time, please bring the content of this circular

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Letter from the Justice Department of the General Governorate to the Justice Divisions in Cracow, Lublin, Radom and Warsaw, Cracow, 20 March 1941, p. 296. While sending a translation of the analysed letter, he “explained from his side”: “for assessing whether a given Jew is to arrive at the court using public means of transport or without using them – no distance expressed in kilometres applies. Therefore, individual cases should be treated individually and, based on the collected information, it should be decided whether there are substantiated reasons for using public means of transport (e.g. due to age, disability, etc.). It is the responsibility of the presiding judge or unitary judge who has set out the court trial and ordered the summoning of the given Jew, to check this matter and decide upon it. If a Jew is not to use public means of transport, then at the bottom, under the last column, on the first page of the summons form (copy), there should be placed an impression of a seal with the following content: Diese Ladung berechtigt nicht zur Benutzung öffentlicher Verkehrsmittel. This summons does not entitle the use of public means of transport”. See *ibid.*, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the presidents of the civil and criminal departments of the Appellate Court in Radom and the heads of the Regional Courts in Kielce, Radom and Piotrków, Radom, 25 April 1941, p. 295.

⁸⁴ The regulation concerning the oath taken by Jews in courts was also changed. The Main Department of Justice of the General Governorate in Cracow took the Torah out of the “Polish” courts. The previous provision of the Code of Criminal Procedure: “followers of Judaism keep their right hand on the Torah when taking the oath”, was removed. The content of the oath remained the same. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 3, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of Regional Courts in Radom, Kielce and Piotrków, Radom, 7 September 1941, p. 181.

to the attention of all officials and court ushers.”⁸⁵ Indeed, documents confirming the reading of the above document in individual district and municipal courts, and minutes with personal signatures of employees confirming that they had read them, have been preserved. However, we do not know whether and to what extent the German authorities influenced the issue of this ordinance.⁸⁶ It is all the more difficult to decide whether the cited document was a kind of “security” in case the Germans became interested in this practice, or whether it reflected Prądyński’s actual socio-political views. In light of the available sources, it seems that it could have been the first of these possibilities. During the post-war court proceedings against Prądyński, a letter in his defence to the prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court in Radom was sent by Mieczysław Maślanko, a lawyer of Jewish origin who became famous during the Stalinist era. Maślanko recalled several events from the occupation in which Prądyński personally helped him, e.g. by obtaining from the German authorities a temporary entry on the list of attorneys, and above all, he intervened in the German Sondergericht, so that it would look favourably on Maślanko when resolving a case against him for not wearing an armband with the Star of David.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the official circular, in addition to the ordinances of the German authorities, could have had an adverse impact on the Polish court staff in the field of examining Jewish cases.

After overcoming so many restrictions and harassment introduced by the Germans, Jews sometimes sought justice in the courtroom. It is, therefore, worth looking in detail at three cases conducted before the Regional Court in Kielce, the files of which have been preserved. They concern the residents of the area covered

⁸⁵ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 2, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of the civil and criminal department of the Appellate Court and heads of the Regional Courts in Radom, Kielce, and Piotrków, Radom, 13 May 1941, p. 406.

⁸⁶ Prądyński just as firmly demanded that the Polish staff subordinate to him stop sending various private requests for interventions to the German authorities. APK, SOK 1939–1945, 3, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Kielce to the presidents of the Regional Courts in Radom, Kielce, and Piotrków, Radom, 5 September 1941, p. 176.

⁸⁷ At some point, Maślanko was denounced to the German authorities for not wearing an armband with the Star of David. “Having learned from me,” Maślanko wrote, “that I had a case for this in a German special court, he influenced the prosecutor of this court to settle the case with a small fine of 120 zloty [as stated in a letter – T.D.]. Due to the fact that a similar charge cost others freedom, and sometimes life, my duty of gratitude to Dr Prądyński increased immeasurably”. See APR, PSSK, 786, A letter from Mieczysław Maślanko to the prosecutor of the Special Court in Radom, Lublin, 10 April 1945, n.p.

by the Regional Court in Kielce: Janas Kwaśniewski and Jojchen Fajrajzen,⁸⁸ Moshe Grysman, Szmerek Ajdelkopf, Moshe and Jenty Kaskowicz, Chawa Binsztok, Moshe and Chai Polus, Estera Bojgen, Wolf Żyto, Fajgla Jakubowicz⁸⁹ as well as Szymon Kołacza, Brucha Wagner, Izrael and Symcha Ostrowiecki, Josek Luft, Wólf Lejzor Kołacz.⁹⁰ These Jews fell victim to various common crimes, most often theft, committed by local Poles.

The case in which thefts committed to the detriment of Moshe Grysman and others were examined does not raise any doubts about the correct diagnosis. In January 1941, officers of the Kielce Kripo received a confidential report (we do not know its source) that Stanisław Kudła was guilty of this crime. During the investigation conducted by officers of the Polnische Kriminalpolizei,⁹¹ evidence was collected indicating the complicity of Kudła's wife and the Gawlik couple.⁹² It is particularly noteworthy that the Kripo officers did not disregard the anonymous report and acted according to the purpose for which the service was established, even though the victims were Jews. The case was tried by the Regional Court: its head Franciszek Wysocki and judges Stanisław Gmitrzak and Aleksander Woskriesieński. Stanisław Kudła was found guilty of theft, while his wife was found guilty of receiving stolen goods. The Gawliks were acquitted.⁹³

In the case of Kwaśniewski and Fajrajzen, although they were victims of crime, the content of the sentence revealed the anti-Semitic prejudices of the judges. The panel of judges was headed by Stanisław Gmitrzak. Apart from him, there were also district judge Michał Chmielewski and municipal judge Jan Jurkiewicz. Weighing the testimonies of the victims against Franciszek Możdżyński, known under the thief nickname "Siutka", accused of theft in Pińczów,⁹⁴ they stated, "the Regional

⁸⁸ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 768.

⁸⁹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 780.

⁹⁰ See Document No. 1.

⁹¹ Kudła's place was searched by officers, Wojciech Szewczyk, Stanisław Adach, Kończak and Wesołowski. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 780, Judgement by the Regional Court in Kielce according to law, Kielce, 1 October 1941, p. 26.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Indictment against Stanisław Kudła, Stefania Kudła, Stanisław Gawlik, and Aniela Gawlik, Kielce, 30 July 1941, pp. 1–6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, Judgement by the Regional Court in Kielce according to law, 1 October 1941, p. 25.

⁹⁴ Możdżyński could have been also involved in smuggling food into the Pińczów ghetto. At the trial, he was saying that the Jews had conspired against him and accused him out of vengeance. He claimed that he did not want to "take on himself" the matter of grain confiscated by the navy-blue

Court did not believe the statements of the evidence witnesses Kwaśniewski and Rozenchwajg that the accused tried to snatch clothes from Kwaśniewski's hands, but believed the testimony of the witness Kempkiewicz that the accused tried to find out what the accused [as in the original – T.D.] was carrying in the package by asking him 'what are you carrying, smugglings?'; for he came to the conclusion that the witnesses Kwaśniewski and Rozenchwajg, with the ease and eagerness known to their race, to exaggerate the effects of even minor incidents, especially if the injured party in these incidents are members of their tribe, so also in this case they tried to present the incident as an attempted robbery of a person, Kwaśniewski, while according to the court, it was an ordinary prank on the part of a member of the city scum, so common nowadays, anyway, to a Jew. For it is hard to suppose that the defendant, who is widely known in Pińczów, tried to commit a robbery while there was still daylight, and on a street frequented by people. Rather the hypothesis mentioned above should be accepted as correct.⁹⁵ According to this hypothesis, Możdżyński beat Janas Kwaśniewski only to make him show what he was carrying in the package, but did not try to rob him.⁹⁶ The verdict of the court in this part of the charge must be shocking also because the veracity of the testimonies of the Jewish witnesses was confirmed by the platoon-leader of the Polnische Polizei, Wincenty Duraczyński.⁹⁷

As for the other misdeeds, the judges correctly assessed the testimonies of Możdżyński's victims, including Fajrajzen,⁹⁸ which resulted in Możdżyński being sentenced for theft. The court also nullified the penalties imposed on Jewish (and Polish) witnesses for failing to appear.⁹⁹ Duraczyński mentioned above confirmed the reasons for their failure to appear. In turn, Możdżyński's appeal undermining

police or gendarmerie (he was allegedly offered a bribe of 200 zloty), which he transported for Jew Karmioł "and his associates", See APK, SOK, 768, Franciszek Możdżyński's testimony at the main trial, Busko, 9 September 1941, p. 15.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Judgement by the Regional Court in Kielce, Busko, 9 September 1941, pp. 31–32.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Wincenty Duraczyński's testimony at the main hearing, Busko, 9 September 1941, p. 17.

⁹⁸ Możdżyński stole about 30 kg of cereal bran from Fajrajzen's outbuildings and tried to steal several dozen kilograms of grain. *Ibid.*, Jójchen Fajrajzen's testimony at the main trial, Busko, 9 September 1941, pp. 20–21.

⁹⁹ The trial took place only at the third attempt. Earlier, the defendant did not appear because of typhus in the prison in Pińczów. For this reason, PP officers informed the witnesses that their appearance in court is pointless, because the trials would not have taken place in the absence of the defendant.

Fajrajzen's testimony was utterly rejected by the Appellate Court in Radom, which accepted the latter's testimony as much more reliable.¹⁰⁰

The preserved files of „Jewish” criminal cases within the scope of the judicial practice of the Regional Court in Kielce undoubtedly constitute too small a sample to extrapolate the observed regularities to all trials held in the area of the Kielce Court District. In the future, the judicial practice of individual municipal courts should be examined. We do not know whether, after analysing the remaining cases, the quantitative and qualitative proportions between those cases in which Jews were involved and the others would change. On the basis of the available material, it must be stated that in most of the cases discussed, the court coldly and objectively focused on establishing the circumstances of the events and the credibility of the witnesses' testimonies. Only in one case, and in respect of one charge, were the judges driven by anti-Semitic prejudices. Most importantly, however, the above conclusions are largely consistent with the results of research conducted on a much broader source basis (files of the Municipal Court in Sandomierz, among others) by Andrzej Szulczyński. According to his findings, the “Polish” courts in the General Governorate “in both criminal and civil cases involving Jews maintained, apart from a few exceptions, impartiality and legal, judicial objectivity.”¹⁰¹

However, the details of the preparatory stage conducted by officers of the *Polnische Polizei* and *Polnische Kriminalpolizei* remain elusive in the sources. The policemen were the first representatives of the German authorities with whom the indicted and the victims had contact. They also testified before the court about their activities. In light of the preserved and analysed material, there were no discernible racial prejudices in the policemen's attitude regarding the investigated cases. The same wicked rules, such as resorting to coercion during interrogations in order to obtain desired testimonies, were applied regardless of the origin and religion of the accused.¹⁰² Unquestionably, research into files of the “Polish” judiciary in the

¹⁰⁰ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 768, Judgement of the Appeal Court in Radom, Radom, 6 November 1941, pp. 38–42.

¹⁰¹ Szulczyński, *Sądownictwo polskie*, p. 160.

¹⁰² Even in the case of Borkowski, the attempt to blame him for the alleged dealing in stolen goods resulted rather from looking for the guilty “by force” than from racial prejudices. Kripo officers pointed to Borkowski as a prewar dealer in stolen goods. See APK, SOK, 775, Kazimierz Pajączek's testimony at the main hearing, Kielce, 4 September 1941, pp. 20–21.

context of its treatment of Jews (and Poles), as a source for the history of Polish-Jewish relations during the times of the German occupation should be continued for the entire GG area.¹⁰³

Documents

This article is accompanied by four documents (including one from the appeal procedure before the Appellate Court in Radom) from two criminal cases conducted by the Regional Court in Kielce. Both trials concern crimes committed by Poles and Jews during the occupation (including during direct German-Polish military operations in September 1939), which fell within the competence of the “Polish” courts. In the first case, Władysław Ozimek from Nowy Korczyn, a Pole, was charged with committing several crimes to the detriment of local Jews, in the autumn of 1939. Prohibited acts included intimidation, beatings and the seizure of property. A separate charge was for the theft of pepper from the municipal warehouse in Nowy Korczyn in September 1939.¹⁰⁴ A defence lawyer attended the hearing, but his name remains unknown. The Regional Court in Kielce, issuing a judgement in the case on 2 December 1940, had no doubts about Ozimek’s guilt and sentenced him to one year and three months in prison.¹⁰⁵ Ozimek served the whole sentence, which included a temporary arrest, from 23 November 1939 to 23 February 1941.¹⁰⁶

In the second case, the subject matter of the proceedings concerned the theft of clothes, committed in 1939 by a certain Perec Fuks, residing in Kielce, together with Chaim Machtyngier from Mąchocice near Kielce, to the detriment of Frymeta and Moshe Kochen. On the other hand, the Kochens were charged with stealing textiles. Szlama Machtyngier was accused of buying stolen trousers.¹⁰⁷ Thus both the suspects and the victims were Jews. This time, the Regional Court in Kielce

¹⁰³ Marie-Dominique Racine Asselin presents a completely different picture of the “Polish” judiciary in Jewish matters. Based on the preserved documentation of the courts from the Warsaw district, she depicts the milieu of the “Polish” judiciary as imbued with anti-Semitism. See Racine Asselin, *Justice as Witness*, pp. 126–200.

¹⁰⁴ See Document No. 1.

¹⁰⁵ See Document No. 1.

¹⁰⁶ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 757, Letter from the Prosecutor’s Office at the Regional Court in Kielce to the Regional Court in Kielce, Kielce, 28 February 1941, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ The subject of the crime was described in detail in the indictment. See Document No. 2.

had no doubts about the guilt of Fuks and Chaim Machtyngier, sentencing the first of them to a total of three years in prison on 2 November 1940, and the second to two years.¹⁰⁸ During the main hearing, it turned out that Szlama Machtyngier had been arrested by the Sicherheitspolizei (security police) „as a result of denunciation” and was sentenced to one year in prison by a special court (Sondergericht). However, it is not known on what charge and in which case.¹⁰⁹ The “Polish” court acquitted Szlama Machtyngier of the charge listed in the indictment. It is noteworthy, however, that the hearing was held without the presence of a defence lawyer. According to the correspondence of the prosecutor’s office at the Regional Court in Kielce, Machtyngier was to fully “endure” the sentence. His further fate, like that of Fuks, remains unknown.

The value of the published documents lies primarily in analysing the evidence in the content of the judgments. Sentences were handed down by competent judges with many years of experience. A similar conclusion can be drawn about prosecutors (see Documents Nos. 1–4). Their professionalism cannot be questioned. Based on the pre-war Polish Criminal Code, the Regional Court impartially analysed the testimonies of witnesses and weighed the evidence. In legal, “dry” language, it referred only to specific articles and deeds, treating the charges as an evident phenomenon of common crime, which – it can be assumed – was an inevitable element of war times. The language used differed significantly from the negative terminology in German ordinances quoted above, in which Jews were described as objects. In both judgments, there are no mentions of the situation of Jews and Poles in the reality of the occupation. There was not even any information about what militia the accused Ozimek served and why Fuks and Machtyngier stood before the court without legal representatives. A trial in which the defendants were deprived of the right to defend themselves should not have taken place at all. Much more important is whether the judges of the Regional Court in Kielce could raise such matters in the justification of the judgment or indicate them without exposing themselves to repression. The judge’s certificate did not in any way exempt them from possible German repression.¹¹⁰ Indeed, each sentence justification was

¹⁰⁸ See Document No. 3.

¹⁰⁹ APK, SOK 1939–1945, 759, Minutes of the main hearing, Kielce, 20 November 1940, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ Sworzeń, “Sędziowie w podbitym kraju,” pp. 48–49.

subject to analysis by the German judiciary and the security police (Gestapo). So it seems that the judges had a special (extra-normative) responsibility to hand down a just judgement in such circumstances. At the same time, the maximum care to consider the pre-war code's procedures resulted in the Radom Appellate Court's judgment favouring the defendants, contrary to German policy.¹¹¹ Including temporary arrest in the whole sentence, its beginning was set by the court not on the date of issuing the detention order in June 1940 but on the date of actual imprisonment in Kielce, i.e. on 16 December 1939.¹¹² The position of the court resulted from a suggestion sent in the form of a circular by the head of the Appellate Court in Radom, Witold Prądyński, to the heads of the Regional Courts in Kielce, Piotrków, and Częstochowa.¹¹³

¹¹¹ The available publications about the "Polish" judiciary during the occupation indicate the high ethics and professional qualifications of the judges of that time. Sebastian Piątkowski described the group of judges of the Radom region as follows, "It is a paradox that exactly during the tragic period of the Nazi occupation, the common judiciary of the Radom region reached heights in the sphere of competence, education and professional practice of people working in its structure. This phenomenon resulted from the fact that many judges displaced from the Polish lands incorporated into the Reich (especially from Greater Poland) as well as runaways from the Eastern Borderlands arrived in the Radom district." See Piątkowski, *Sędziowie sądów powszechnych*, p. 13.

¹¹² See Document No. 4.

¹¹³ In the circular, Prądyński wrote generally about the "police authorities" that protractedly "hold the arrested" through no fault of their own. See APK, SOK 1939–1945, 2, Letter from the head of the Appellate Court in Radom to the heads of the Regional Courts in Kielce, Piotrków, Częstochowa and Radom, 25 April 1941, p. 108.

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SUMMARY

During the Second World War, in the part of the Polish lands called the General Governorate by the German authorities, there was judicial dualism. On the one hand, there were the German courts, and on the other, the so-called Polish courts – municipal, district and appeal courts, which handed down judgments according to the law. The article uses the preserved files of the Regional Court in Kielce to show the judicial practice of this court in criminal cases in which Jews were the defendants or victims in the years 1939–1941. The text is accompanied by four source documents containing judgments and indictments.

KEYWORDS

Judiciary under occupation • General Governorate • Poles • Jews
• Regional Court in Kielce

DOCUMENTS

Editorial note

The documents presented below have been subjected to editorial alterations and provided with substantive and related to wording and spelling footnotes. Any emphasis in the text is marked in bold. In some cases, the punctuation has been updated; otherwise, the original spelling (in the Polish text) has been retained. The obvious typos have been corrected. All the documents included in this article are from the archival records "Regional Court in Kielce (1939–1945)," kept in the State Archives in Kielce.

No. 1

2 December 1940, Kielce – Judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce against
Władysław Ozimek

No. II 1K. 56/40^a

Judgment^b

in the name of the law
of 2 December 1940

The Regional Court in Kielce, the 2nd Criminal Division at a session
in Busko-Zdrój in a bench composed of:

Presiding Judge M[ichał] Chmielewski¹

Judge of the Regional Court St[anisław] Gmitrzak²

Judge of the Municipal Court J[an] Jurkiewicz³

^a In the upper right corner handwritten in red ink: 229 crossed out with black pencil and added: 19.

^b On the right, an impression of a round seal with an inscription State Archives in Kielce printed in black ink. In the middle: *21*.

¹ Michał Chmielewski, b. 1894, graduated in 1926; from 1939 a judge of the Regional Court in Kielce. Detained by the Soviets from 16 January 1945 to 17 October 1945 and deported to Stalino in the USSR. He returned to Poland on 17 October 1945. Then, until 8 July 1949, he was again a judge of the Regional Court in Kielce. From 9 July 1949 to 1 January 1951, he was a judge at the Voivodeship Court in Kielce. Before the Second World War, he was a member of the Association of Judges and Prosecutors of the Republic of Poland, and after the war, a member of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society and a member of the United People's Party (*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*, ZSL). APK, Voivodeship Court in Kielce, 2189, List of judges, junior judges and judge trainees in the Region of the Voivodeship Court in Kielce, [n.d.] p. 211.

² Stanisław Gmitrzak, b. 25 October 1891 in Witków Nowy, Kamionka Strumiłowa Poviát. He graduated from high school in Brody. From 15 June 1921 to 15 October 1922, he worked as a second lieutenant of the State Police in the 13th Volhynia Region. Later – in the poviát council in Horochów. He graduated in law from Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów in 1928. Then he started his training in the region of the Appellate Court in Lublin (worked in Łuck), after which he was an assessor in Lublin (1931–1932), a municipal judge in Włodzimierz (1932) and a judge at the Regional Court in Łuck. On 16 October 1938, he was appointed a judge at the Regional Court in Kielce. Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records, hereinafter AAN), Ministry of Justice, 1594. Judge Stanisław Gmitrzak's personal files.

³ Jan Jurkiewicz, b. 1887, academic education, he has worked in the judiciary from the time he graduated in 1911 to 1914. Afterwards, in the years 1920–1922 he was the secretary of the Court of Peace in Horochów and from February 1922 a judge at the Municipal Court in Busko-Zdrój. In 1939, until the entry of the Soviet army, he was the head of the Municipal Court in Busko. From 1 January 1951, a judge at the Poviát Court in Busko-Zdrój. Before the war, he was a member of the Association of Judges and Prosecutors of the Republic of Poland. Not affiliated to any party after the war. APK,

Senior recording clerk registrar St[anisław] Gala

with the participation of Deputy Prosecutor M[arceli] Bogdanowicz⁴

on 2 December 1940, having examined the case of Władysław Ozimek, son of Józef and Wiktoria née Kasperek, born on 21 August 1901 in Nowy Korczyn, accused of the following misdemeanours:

I. in the first days of November 1939 in the municipality of Nowy Korczyn, while striking Szymon Kołacz's chest with his hand, snatched from him and took one kg of tea and four hundred packets of tissue paper in order to appropriate it;

II. at the same time and place, in order to gain a financial gain for himself, he used violence against Brucha Wagner and the people riding with her, beating them with a stick all over their bodies and thus forcing her to pay him fifty zlotys;

III. at the same time in Nowy Korczyn, in order to obtain a financial gain for himself, twice, with the threat of immediate beating and killing, forced the spouses Izrael and Symcha Ostrowiecki to give him kerosene, threads and handkerchiefs, which were their property;^c

IV. at the same time and place, by threatening to bring in the gendarmerie and inciting criminal proceedings, forced Josek Luft to give him one pair of shoes;

V. at the same time, in the area of Nowy Korczyn municipality, by threatening Wolf Lejzor Kołacz and the passengers travelling with him with the confiscation of transported goods, forced Kołacz to give him one kg of soap;

VI. in September 1939 in Nowy Korczyn, he took twelve kg of pepper from the municipality warehouse for the purpose of appropriation, for acts covered by Articles 259, 261, 251 and 257(1) of the Criminal Code

Voivodeship Court in Kielce, 2189, List of judges, assistant judges and court trainees in the Region of the Voivodeship Court in Kielce, [n.d.], p. 216.

⁴ Marceli Bogdanowicz, b. 15 December 1903 in Ryczów (Wadowice Poviát). He graduated in law from Jagellonian University in 1926. He began his judicial traineeship in 1927, and passed the judicial exam in 1930. In the subsequent years, he was a court assessor in Frysztak, a judge at the Municipal Court in Frysztak, and a deputy prosecutor at the Regional Court in Rzeszów. Then, in 1932 he was transferred to the position of deputy prosecutor at the Regional Court in Jasło, and from 14 November 1936 he worked as a deputy prosecutor at the Regional Court in Kielce. In 1938 he was appointed deputy prosecutor at the Regional Court in Kielce. During the German occupation, from 1 December 1939, he served as deputy prosecutor at the Regional Court in Kielce, and on 19 March 1941, he was appointed mayor of Kielce. APK, Sąd Okręgowy w Kielcach, 1917–1939 (Regional Court in Kielce 1917–1939, hereinafter SOK 1917–1939), Marceli Bogdanowicz's personal files).

ruled:

- 1) that Władysław Ozimek is guilty of the acts described in points II, IV and V;
- 2) the same Ozimek is also guilty that:
 - a) in the first days of November 1939 in the municipality of Nowy Korczyn, snatching a package containing one kg of tea and four hundred packets of tissue paper from the hands of Szymon Kołacz, and by threatening to take the package to the German gendarmerie station, forced Chaim Jankel Kołacz to sell him twelve dkg^d of tea and one hundred packets of tissue paper for twelve groszy;
 - b) at the same time in Nowy Korczyn, by threatening Izrael and Szymsza Ostrowiecki with a denunciation to the German authorities that they have hidden goods in the basement, forced them to sell him a small amount of kerosene on credit;
- 3) to sentence him of the act described in p. II pursuant to Article 261 of the Criminal Code, to one (1) year in prison and the deprivation of civil rights and civil honours for three (3) years, and for each of the other acts imputed to him, pursuant to Article 251 of the Criminal Code to eight (8) months in prison and a total of, pursuant to Article 31 of the Criminal Code, to one (1) year and three (3) months in prison, including pre-trial detention, from 23 November 1939 to 2 December 1940, to the deprivation of public rights and civic honorary rights for three (3) years;
- 4) imposing a fine as an additional penalty under Article 42 of the Criminal Code to be considered inexpedient;
- 5) to acquit the same Ozimek of the charge specified in p. VI and of the charge that in order to gain a financial benefit for the second time, he forced the spouses Izrael and Symcha Ostrowiecki to hand to him kerosene, threads and tissue papers;
- 6) exempt the defendant from incurring court costs;
- 7) material evidence – payroll list of members of the civil guard – to be given to the board of the Nowy Korczyn^e municipality.

^c *Crossed out: IV.*

^d *A in the original. Currently: dag. All indicated corrections have been made in the Polish text.*

Grounds

The court proceedings determined as follows:

The defendant was a militiaman⁵ for only three days when German troops entered Nowy Korczyn. Soon after, he was fired from the force for some misdemeanor (testimony of a witness) Ludwik Czyrak – p. 158, guard members' payroll – p. 142 and a letter from the board of the N[owy] Korczyn municipality – p. 110).

In reference [to] p. I of the indictment

According to the testimonies of witnesses Szymon Kołacz, Chaim-Jankel Kołacz and Adam Lachowski, in early November 1939, witness Szymon Kołacz was carrying a package containing one kg of tea and four hundred packages of cigarette papers from Nowy Korczyn to Stopnica. Near Nowy Korczyn, he met the defendant and witness Adam Lachowski. The defendant approached Szymon Kołacz and asked him what he was carrying under his arm. When Kołacz replied that tea and tissue paper, the defendant, saying, "This is what I^f need," wanted to buy from him the tissue paper, but Kołacz did not want to sell it. Then the defendant snatched the package from under^g Kołacz's arm and stated that he would take him to the German gendarmerie station. When Kołacz approached the defendant and demanded the return of the package, the defendant forcibly pushed him away, and then, with the package and witness Lachowski, he went to Nowy Korczyn, where witness Sz[ymon] Kołacz also returned and told his father, Chaim-Jankel Kołacz, about the incident. The latter soon after met the defendant in the market square, carrying a package taken from his son under his arm. When Chaim Kołacz demanded the defendant to hand over the package, the defendant stated that if he sold him twelve dkg of tea and one hundred packets of tissue paper, he would return the rest of the goods. Chaim Kołacz agreed, on the condition that the defendant would pay him the maximum price for tea and tissue paper, but the defendant paid him only ten zlotys for one hundred packets of tissue paper, when the tissue paper cost

^e *Below an impression of a round seal with the inscription: State Archive in Kielce in black ink. In the middle: *21*.*

^f *The printed word nie overwritten in black ink with mi.*

^g *In the original: z pod. This spelling was in use until 1936.*

⁵ It is probably about Citizens' Militias (Polish pl.: *milicje obywatelskie*) established just before the outbreak of war to ensure social order and public security. These bodies most often self-dissolved after the entry of the German army.

twenty zlotys, and two zlotys fifty groszy for twelve dkg of tea, when one dkg of such tea cost seventy groszy at that time. Chaim Kołacz was forced to accept the money from the defendant and give him the requested goods, because in this way he wanted to save the rest of the goods. At that time, the defendant was no longer a militiaman. The testimony of the witness, Adam Lachowski, that the defendant did not snatch the package from the hands of Szymon Kołacz and did not push him away when Kołacz demanded the return of the package, does not deserve to be believed, because it contradicts the testimony of Szymon Kołacz, since the witness Lachowski was the defendant's travelling companion at the time and gave a favourable for the defendant testimony in this matter. During the investigation, Szymon Kołacz (p. 75) testified that the defendant, having hit him in the chest with his hand, had forcibly snatched the package from his hands and took it, but he did not confirm this during the hearing, testifying that the defendant hit him in the chest or pushed him forcibly away when the witness approached him demanding the return of the package. The testimony of the witness Szymon Kołacz at the hearing should be considered credible because it was given under oath. The defendant pleaded not guilty and generally made explanations^h in accordance with the testimonies of the witness A[dam] Lachowski, denying that he snatched the package from the hands of the witness Szymon Kołacz by pushing him and threatened both him and his father Chaim Kołacz with taking the package with the goods to the German gendarmerie station, but admitted the fact that he met the witness Szymon Kołacz with tea and tissue paper on the way and that later, in the town, he purchased a small amount of tea and tissue paper from his father. However, these explanations of the defendant, as contradictory to the testimonies of the witnesses Szymon and Chaim Kołacz, do not deserve to be believed. Considering all the testimonies of the witnesses Sz[ymon] Kołacz, Ch[aim] Kołacz and A[dam] Lachowski, and the circumstances that the incident between the defendant and the witness Szymon Kołacz took place in full daylight, on the road, in the presence of a third party (witness Adam Lachowski), that the defendant carried the taken package on the outside, openly, and directly after the incident took it to the town, to the market square, it should be concluded that there are no features of robbery

^h *It was written: naigól. Handwritten correction in black ink to: naogól.*

in the act of the defendant, but that there are all signs of arbitrariness, covered by Article 251 of the Criminal Code, consisting in the fact that the defendant, having snatched a package containing one kg of tea and four hundred packets of tissue papers from the hands of Szymon Kołacz, and threatening to take this package to the German gendarmerie station, forced Chaim-Jankel Kołacz to sell twelve dkg of tea and one hundred packs of tissue papers for twelve zlotys and fifty groszy.

In reference [to] p. II of the indictment

By mutually consistent and complementary testimonies of Brucha Wagner, Sura Stalewicz, Izrael-Majer Płużnik, Gitla Pinkus and Ruchla Taubenblat^k, it has been established that in November 1939, when the first four of the aforementioned witnesses and the daughter of the last-mentioned witness were travelling with goods in a waggon from Nowy Korczyn to Pacanów, after passing Nowy Korczyn they were caught up by the defendant riding on a bicycle, who, having declared that he is militiaman, demanded that they pay him because they were carrying goods. The passengers stated to the defendant that they would pay, but they did not pay and drove on. Near the village of Swiniary^l the defendant caught up with them and with the words, „Where will I chase you, didn't you promise to pay?“, he ordered the cartman to turn back towards Nowy Korczyn, the passengers to get off the waggon, and when they lingered or started to run after the cart, he started to beat them with a stick. They got severely beaten: witness Burcha Wagner,^m S[ura] Stalewicz, Gitla Pinkus and the daughter of the witness R[uchla] Taubenblat. Then witness S[ura] Stalewicz gave the amount of fifty zlotys to witness B[rucha] Wagner, who gave the money to the defendant, who released the goods and the wagon. Later all the passengers contributed to this sum. During this incident, the defendant was supported by two younger individuals. At the time of this incident, the defendant was not wearing a militiaman's band on his sleeve.

The defendant pleaded not guilty and explained that he was doing his duty when had stopped the wagon with Jews who were carrying tobacco, that Bruchaⁿ Wagner gave him twenty zlotys, of which he paid ten zlotys to the peasants who

^k *It was written:* Taurenblat. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Taubenblat.

^l *As in the original.*

^m *It was written:* Brachy. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Bruchy.

ⁿ *It was written:* Brachy. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Bruchy.

were helping him, and the other ten zlotys and the tobacco he kept The explanations of the defendant do not deserve to be believed, because they are in stark contrast to the testimonies of the aforementioned witnesses, which are clear, categorical and consistent with each other.

In this act of the defendant, there are all the characteristics of a crime covered by Article 261 of the Criminal Code.

In reference [to] p. III of the indictment

According to the testimonies of the witnesses Izrael Ostrowiecki and Symcha Ostrowiecka (pp. 82 and 14–15), in November 1939, in the evening, the defendant who was their former neighbour, came to their flat, placed an empty bottle on the table and said, “Stretch out, but I have to have kerosene in five minutes.” When the witness, Izrael Ostrowiecki, declared that he did not have kerosene, the defendant began to threaten him, that he would never forgive him, that he would report to the German authorities that Izrael had goods hidden in the basement, and he forced out Izrael Ostrowiecki’s wife Symcha Ostrowiecka to another toilet. Seeing the pugnacious behaviour of the defendant, witness Izrael Ostrowiecki poured kerosene from his „Primus” machine and kerosine lamp into the bottle of the defendant, who took the kerosene and left the flat without paying anything for it. There were such occurrences before that the defendant took goods on credit from Ostrowiecki’s shop, but had not yet paid for them. The kerosene taken by the defendant was worth about fifty groszy. The next day, in the evening, the defendant came again to the Ostrowiecki spouses’ flat with an empty bottle and demanded kerosene from the witness, Symcha Ostrowiecka, and when she told him why he was pestering her, the defendant declared, “I’ll break your bones, you stupid jerk, I’ll make you remember that Ozimek was a clerk in Korczyn.” As a result of the intervention of Symcha Ostrowiecka’s neighbour, the defendant calmed down and left the flat without kerosene.

A few days later, in the evening, the defendant again came to the Ostrowiecki spouses’ shop and, in the presence of Symcha Ostrowiecka, took a certain amount of thread and handkerchiefs without paying anything for it. Symcha Ostrowiecka did not react to this because she was afraid of him.

The defendant pleaded not guilty and explained that knowing that Izrael Ostrowiecki had stated that he had no kerosene, but finally poured some kerosene

from his “Primus” into the defendant’s bottle, that he gave Ostrowiecki twenty groszy for kerosene but Ostrowiecki did not accept the money and returned it to him, that he did not take threads and handkerchiefs from the Ostrowiecki spouses’ shop and did not make any threats against them.

As for the first case of taking kerosene, based on the consistent and categorical testimonies of the witnesses, spouses Israel and Symcha Ostrowiecki, and not believing the explanations of the defendant in this matter, as incompatible with the credible testimonies of these two witnesses, the Regional Court came to the conclusion that the act of the defendant does not have the characteristics of a crime under Article 261 of the Criminal Code, but, on the other hand, there are all signs of arbitrariness covered by Article 251 of the Criminal Code, consisting in the fact that the accused, threatening the Ostrowiecki spouses with a report to the German authorities that they had hidden goods in the basement, forced them to sell to him on credit a small amount of kerosene worth fifty groszy.

As for the second case of the defendant’s attempt to take kerosene and the third case of the defendant taking threads and handkerchiefs from the store of the Ostrowiecki spouses, bearing in mind that to the defendant’s second attempt to take kerosene only the witness Symcha Ostrowiecka testified, while the witness Izrael Ostrowiecki did not mention this fact at all, that the defendant in this case did not obtain kerosene, that earlier the defendant took goods on credit in Ostrowiecki spouses’ shop, that in the light of the testimony of the witness Symcha Ostrowiecka, the defendant in her presence took an unspecified amount of threads and handkerchiefs of an undetermined value from the shop, and in this case he did not use violence against her nor a punishable threat, that according to the testimony of the witness, Izrael Ostrowiecki, his wife had to give to the defendant threads and handkerchiefs because the defendant threatened her, but she did not tell her husband in which way the defendant threatened her, that the defendant did not plead guilty, the District Court came to the conclusion that in these two cases there is insufficient evidence of the defendant’s guilt, and therefore acquitted the defendant.

In reference [to] p. IV of the indictment

According to the testimony of witness Josek Luft, in November 1939, this witness found a pair of military boots on the road, probably left by the retreating Pol-

ish soldiers. The son of this witness, fourteen-year-old Moshe, told the militiaman Krzemiński about these boots, who soon after, together with his son, came to the witness Luft and wanted to buy these boots for fifteen zlotys. Witness Luft did not want to sell the shoes, and the Krzemińskis walked away. After about two hours, Krzemiński's son came again with the defendant to witness Luft, and demanded the boots, and when the witness Luft said that he would not sell the boots, the defendant threatened that he would bring in the German gendarmerie who would do 'that' to all Jews, and he drew his finger across his neck in a throat-slitting gesture as he said this. Witness Luft's wife, fearing that the threat would come true, gave the defendant the shoes he demanded. The defendant put fifty groszy on the table, but the Luft spouses did not want to accept the money. The defendant took the boots and the fifty groszy and left the Lufts' flat.

The defendant pleaded not guilty and explained that when he was still a militiaman, he learned from Krzemiński that Josek Luft was in possession of military boots, which he did not want to give, that he went to Luft's flat and, having learned from him that his son paid a soldier fifty groszy for these boots, placed fifty groszy on the table and demanded that Luft hand over the boots, that Luft gave the shoes voluntarily, that he took the boots to the communications officer of the German army stationed in Nowy Korczyn, but the officer ordered the defendant to take the boots for himself, that he then sold the boots to Krzemiński for six zlotys, that he did not receive any explicit order from anyone to take away the boots from Luft, that he made no threats to Luft and his family.

The explanations of the defendant deserve credibility only to the extent that they are consistent with the testimonies of the witness Josek Luft, which, being clear and categorical, are completely credible.

In this act of the defendant, there are all the characteristics of a misdemeanour covered by Article 251 of the Criminal Code.

In reference [to] p. V of the indictment

Through testimonies of witnesses Wulf^o-Lejzor Kołacz and Brucha Wagner, it has been established that in November 1939, on the road from Nowy Korczyn to Pacanów, the defendant stopped Wulf-Lejzor Kołacz's wagon with goods, threat-

^o *As in the original. Earlier: Wólfa.*

ened him and the passengers travelling with him that he would take the goods if they did not give him one slab (kg) of soap, that when the passengers promised to deliver the requested soap to the defendant, the defendant released the waggon, that after returning home the passengers contributed to the purchase of one slab of soap, which was then personally delivered by the witness Kołacz to the defendant.

The defendant pleaded not guilty and explained that he had neither demanded nor received any soap. The defendant's explanations are not credible because they are completely contradictory to the clear, categorical and mutually consistent testimonies of the aforementioned witnesses.

This act of the defendant has all the characteristics of a misdemeanour covered by Article 251 of the Criminal Code.

In reference [to] p. VI of the indictment

According to the testimonies of witnesses Teofil Majzerowicz and Jan Gołdyn, in the municipal warehouse in Nowy Korczyn, there was, among other things, pepper in two bags as evidence in a criminal case. In the month of September 1939, witness T[eofil] Majzerowicz, the municipality secretary was relocating from a municipal building to a private house. The defendant and witness J[an] Gołdyn helped him in this relocation. When witness Majzerowicz came to the municipal building at some point, he heard the defendant saying, "I'll take the pepper". Witness Majzerowicz did not respond to this and walked out. From the municipal warehouse, which was open at the time, the defendant took one bag of pepper weighing twelve kg and brought it to his flat. After some time, the defendant came to witness Majzerowicz, claiming that the latter was spreading the word that the defendant had taken pepper from the municipal warehouse, and the defendant threatened that something bad might happen to him as well because he was supposed to have taken something too.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to stealing pepper and explained that, at the beginning of September 1939, he was moving the furniture of the municipality secretary Majzerowicz from the municipal building to Anielski's house, that because the municipal warehouse was open, he asked secretary Majzerowicz what to do with the pepper which was there in a bag, that Majzerowicz did not say anything, so the defendant decided to take the pepper to his flat for safekeeping, that he took the pepper in the presence of Majzerowicz and Anielski not for the purpose

of appropriation, but for safekeeping, that this pepper was in his apartment until the day of the search, and since the defendant was arrested and imprisoned, he was unable to return the pepper to the proper authority.

Taking into consideration that the secretary of the municipality, Majzerowicz, was relocating from the municipal building to a private house and did not issue any instruction on what to do with the pepper in the municipal warehouse, which was open, although the defendant told him that he would take the pepper to his flat, that at that time Nowy Korczyn was an area of warfare, that the defendants took pepper from the municipal warehouse overtly, in the presence of witness J[an] Gołdyn, that according to the explanations of the defendant on 3 November 1939, the German gendarmerie searched the defendant's flat and took the pepper (p. 117), but in the course of the investigation, the state police could not determine what happened to the pepper (p. 108), that the accused pleaded not guilty to the theft, therefore in view of the fact that there is insufficient evidence that the defendant took the pepper from the municipal warehouse for the purpose of appropriation, the defendant should have been acquitted of the charge of theft of pepper.

When imposing the sentence, the court took into account, on the one hand, the defendant's reduced mental capacity, his family situation (he has a wife and three children to support), and poverty, and on the other hand, his previous three sentences for various crimes (p. 43) professionalism in criminal activity, a sophisticated way of committing crimes, the defendant's cruel treatment of the victims, thus^r the court deemed it right to sentence him for the crime described in p. II of the indictment to one year in prison, and for each of the other acts imputed to him to eight months in prison, and jointly under Article 31 of the Criminal Code to one year and three months in prison. On account of this total punishment, the court, based on Article 58 of the Criminal Code, included the entire pre-trial detention period. Since the crime described in point II of the indictment was committed out of a desire for profit, the court, pursuant to Article 47(1)(c) and Article 52 of the Criminal Code, sentenced the defendant to the deprivation of public rights and civic honorary rights for three years. Since the defendant is poor, the court found it pointless to impose a fine on him as an additional punishment under Article 42

^r *Handwritten in black ink: i.*

of the Criminal Code, and exempted him from incurring^s court costs (Article 83 p. o.k.s. and Article 598 of the Code of Criminal Procedure) The evidence – the payroll list of the members of the civil guard – had to be handed over to the municipality board of Nowy Korczyn, which delivered it to the court.

[1]

Source: APK, Regional Court in Kielce 1939–1945, 757, typescript in Polish.

^s Originally: poniesienia. Handwritten correction in black ink to: ponoszenia.

^t Below, two handwritten illegible signatures in black ink. Underneath an impression of a round seal in black ink: State Archive in Kielce. In the centre of the impression: *21*. On the right side, a handwritten note in black ink: No signature of the municipal judge Jan Jurkiewicz, who permanently resides in Busko-Zdrój. Under the note, an illegible handwritten signature in black ink.

Kielce, 30 September 1940^a

I Ds. 318/40

File

Indictment^b

against

1. Perec Fuks,

charged under Article 257(1) and Article 143 of the Criminal Code

2. Chaim Machtyngier,

charged under Articles 27, 257(1, 26) and 143 of the Criminal Code

3. Szlama Machtyngier,

charged under Article 160 of the Criminal Code^c

I accuse:

1. Perec Fuks

son of Benjamin and Chawa neé Bidna, b. 1 January 1919 in Kielce (detained from 22 June 1940, pp. 33, 43),

of the following crimes/misdemeanours:

I. in Kielce, on the night of 29 November 1939, acting together with Berek Farsztaj, he took from the attic of the apartments of Moshe and Frymeta Kochen, their property, namely sixty complete men's suits of various colours, 75 pairs of trousers, seven sports clothes, four jackets, four waistcoats, four navy blue school uniforms, seven items of clothing materials, two quilts and a tablecloth – with a total value of about 5,700 zlotys;

^a On the left-hand side, an impression of a seal in purple ink: II 2 K. The seal impression crossed out, next to it a handwritten subjoin in black ink: 80/40. Stamp imprint in red ink on the right-hand side: Arrest and handwritten subjoin in black ink: 157.

^b On the left hand side handwritten in red ink: 1K. 59/40. Below it an illegible word and: 51281.

^c Underneath an impression of a round seal in black ink: State Archive in Kielce. In the centre of the impression: *21*.

II. in Kielce, he knowingly deceitfully accused Moshe and Frymeta Kochen of stealing clothing materials:

a) on 5 December 1939, before Franciszek Starościk,¹ a senior sergeant of the Polish Police,

b) on 18 December 1939, before the head of Sicherheitspolizei Aussendienststelle^{e2} Kielce, Preuß [Preuß],³

c) on 22 June 1940, before the investigating judge G[erard] Wojtuń.

2. Chaim Machtyngier^f

son of Josek and Małka neé Dziadek, b. 16 May 1914 in Małchocice, Dąbrowa municipality, Kielce powiat (detained from 22 June 1940, pp. 36, 43),

of the following crimes/misdemeanours:

III. between 26 and 29 November 1939, in Kielce, he helped Perec Fuks and Berek Farsztajn to commit the crime described in point 1, by promising them before the crime was committed that he would store and sell clothes and materials stolen by them from Moshe and Frymeta Kochen [Kochens] and by taking them from them for this purpose after the theft;

IV. between 29 November^h 1939 and 5 December 1939, in Kielce, he persuaded Perecⁱ Fuks to commit a crime described in point II a).

^e *In the original:* Aussendienststelle.

^f *Originally:* Machtynkiera. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Machtyngiera.

^h *Struck through:* list opadeo.

ⁱ *Originally:* Perca. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Pereca.

¹ Franciszek Starościk *vel* Karol Dewoński alias Cat, E30, b. 17 October 1885 in Ligota, powiat Chrzanów. During World War I he served in the Legions. He was interned in Szczypiorno. He joined the police in 1919, in the 1920s he worked in Będzin in the investigative police. In 1932–1933 he was transferred from the investigative police to Kielce. In September 1939, together with other policemen, he fought in the Battle of Kock. Then he served in the Polnische Kriminalpolizei in Kielce as the head of the fraud and forgery brigade in the rank of senior sergeant. Involved in the underground activities of the ZWZ-AK. In 1944, he deserted from the police and fought in Operation Tempest. After the war, tried under the August decree (31 August 1944, issued by Polish Committee of National Liberation [Polish: *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*, PKWN]) and acquitted. Archiwum Delegatury IPN w Kielcach (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance Delegation in Kielce), SOK, 127/335, Files of criminal proceedings against Franciszek Starościk; Domański, “Pierwszy rok okupacji niemieckiej Kielc,” pp. 80, 87.

² Aussendienststelle Sipo Kielce – a branch office of the security police in Kielce. Division IV was Geheimstaatspolizei (Gestapo), division V – Kriminalpolizei (criminal police). This division included the Polnische Kriminalpolizei, the so-called Polish Kripo. In the years 1939–1941, Sipo Kielce was headed by Emil Eggers. Preuß was the head of Kripo.

³ Head of Kriminalpolizei in Kielce.

3. Szlama Machtyngier

son of Josek and Małka née Dziadek, b.1 January 1917 in Kielce, sentenced by the judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce of 10 August 1938, No. II 2K. 104/38 for a crime under Article 160 of the Criminal Code to a two-year imprisonment and a fine of 300 zlotys (currently under the police supervision, p. 147, previously detained from 22 June 1939, pp. 40, 43, until 21 September 1940, p. 149),

for the following crime:

V. on 1 December 1939, in Kielce, he purchased from Chaim Machtyngier trousers obtained by^j Perec Fuks^k and Berek Farsztajn through criminal means described in point I, and deposited by them for safekeeping in Chaim Machtyngier's flat, knowing that these trousers were stolen, and he committed this act before the end of a five-year period from the time he served his sentence for receiving stolen goods.

The act indicated in point I constitutes a crime under Article 257(1) of the Criminal Code, the acts indicated in point II constitutes a crime under Article 143 of the Criminal Code, the act indicated in point III constitutes a crime under Article 27, 257(1) of the Criminal Code, the act indicated in point IV constitutes a crime under Article 26, 143 of the Criminal Code, and the act indicated under point V constitutes a crime under Article 160 of the Criminal Code.

On the basis of Articles 19, 26 and 381(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure the case is examined by the Regional Court in Kielce composed of one judge.

Grounds

On 1 December 1939, Frymeta Kochen reported to the Polish Police Station in Kielce that, on the night of 29 November 1939, unknown perpetrators broke into her apartment in Kielce and stole ready-made clothes and clothing material, and that on the same day, on the Freedom Square in Kielce she came upon a man wearing trousers, which she recognised as stolen along with clothes and materials. She further reported that this man, whom she then pointed to the police, explained that he had bought the trousers in Lodz, then that he had bought them

^j *Inserted above the line of writing, handwritten in black ink: przez.*

^k *Originally: Fukasa. Handwritten correction in black ink to: Fuksa.*

“in bazaars” in Kielce, and finally that the trousers had been bought by his brother, from whom he bought them.

This man turned out to be Szlama Machtyngier. Interrogated by the police, he explained that on 1 December 1939, his brother Chaim Machtyngier came to his flat and, for twelve zlotys, sold him trousers recognised by Frymeta Kochen.

During the search carried out in Chaim Machtyngier’s flat on 1 December 1939, 45 suits, 74 pairs of trousers, seven sets of sportswear, four jackets, four waistcoats, four school uniforms and seven pieces of clothing materials were found, which Frymeta Kochen recognised as her stolen property.

Interrogated as a witness, Frymeta Kochen testified that the perpetrators had stolen about sixty suits and 75 pairs of trousers and, in addition to founding items, also two quilts and a tablecloth – with a total value of about 5,700 zlotys.

Chaim Machtyngier interrogated by the senior sergeant of the Polish Police, Fr[anciszek] Starościk, explained that the items found during the search were on 29 November 1939 at about four in the morning brought to his flat by Perec Fuks and Berek Farsztajn and asked him to store them, then Perec Fuks said that „the goods” were „robbed” by some woman, and then stolen by them from this woman. As for the trousers, he explained that he had sold them to Szlama Machtyngier for twelve zlotys.

Interrogated on 5 December 1939 by the same sergeant, Perec Fuks admitted that he had committed the theft from Frymeta Kochen and explained that the items found in Machtyngier’s flat, he, together with Berek Farsztajn,ⁿ had stolen from the victim’s attic. They both^o got into the attic by a ladder, he explained, and the padlock at the door he opened with a nail. After the theft, together with Berek Farsztajn, they took the stolen items to the flat of Chaim Machtyngier, whom he, Perec Fuks, had informed as early as Tuesday, 28 November 1939, that they would steal and bring the loot to him. According to the agreement concluded between Fuks and Farsztajn in this case, Chaim Machtyngier was to help them also in selling^q the “stolen goods”. Finally, Perec Fuks explained that he committed the theft because he had nothing to live on, and, moreover, because he knew that Kochen

ⁿ *On the left margin: 9.*

^o *Originally: obydwaj. Handwritten correction in black ink to: obydwaj.*

^q *As in the original.*

together with his wife had stolen the “aforementioned goods” from a rail siding in Kielce in the first days of September 1939.

On 13 December 1939, Perec Fuks, interrogated by the head of the Sicherheitspolizei Aussendienststelle Kielce, also confessed to committing the theft and said the same as on 5 December 1939, and also claimed for the minutes that he had seen when at the beginning of September 1939, at night after the bombing of Kielce, Moshe Kochen and Frymeta Kochen went to the railway station in Kielce and stole many bales of materials from the freight car,^p which they packed into sheets and carried to their flat at 24 Warszawska Street. He further claimed that, as he lived in the same house, he saw Kochens^r carrying the materials on their backs and hiding them in a closet in the attic. They went to the station to get materials and brought them to the attic four times. He saw them clearly because he followed them. When the interrogator pointed out to him that his claims sounded implausible, he explained that the city was in turmoil that night and people were stealing wherever they could. In an effort to incriminate Kochens, he further claimed that later Kochen took several bales of fabric from the hiding place, cut them (“trimmed”) and gave them to tailors to sew clothes, and then put some ready-made clothes in the shop, and the rest of the clothes in the attic. Perec Fuks also pointed out that he was telling the truth and that he could even swear an oath to it.

During the confrontation on 18 December 1939, Perec Fuks repeated the same to Moshe Kochen’s face [Polish *óczs*]^s and Frymeta Kochen, who was arrested in connection with the allegations raised by Perec Fuks.

Berek Fersztajn was not interrogated because he has run away and been hiding.

Perec Fuks, interrogated by the investigating judge on 22 June 1949, admitted that acting together with Berek Fersztajn and in agreement with Chaim Machtyngier, he had stolen clothes and materials from Kochens, and explained as follows. Two days before the theft, they agreed to carry out the theft and take the loot to Chaim Machtyngier, who undertook to store it and sell it.^t Fuks further explained that Berek Fersztajn threw down the clothes and materials from the attic, and he

^p *On the left margin: 11.*

^r *Above the line of writing handwritten in black ink addition: ów.*

^s *Original Polish text: ócz (should be: oczu – meaning: eyes).*

^t *As in the original.*

brought them to Machtyngier's flat around five o'clock in the morning. Finally, giving the motives for his act, he claimed before the investigating judge that, "in September 1939, Frymeta Kochen together with Moshe Kochen, took the goods from the freight cars in Kielce." He added that he saw it himself and that it took place "on Monday, when the train station was bombed – at night."

Chaim Machtyngier, interrogated by the investigating judge on 22 June 1940, testified otherwise than before the police and, not feeling guilty, explained that on 29 November 1939, in the morning, Perec Fuks and Berek Farsztajn brought "goods" to his flat and asked him to let them deposit it here "because nowadays they are afraid to keep it in their flat."^u He accepted the goods, not knowing that they had been stolen, and on the same day he sold to Szlama Machtyngier trousers from the goods taken for safekeeping. He told Szlama Machtyngier that these were his own^v trousers, and that he intended to tell Fuks and Farsztajn^w what to do with these trousers.

Szlama Machtyngier, examined by the investigating judge on the same day, explained that he had bought trousers from Chaim Machtyngier not knowing that they were stolen, because Chaim Machtyngier told him that he had bought them "in bazaars" and that they are too long for him.^x When, after Frymeta identified these trousers, Kochen returned them to Chaim Machtyngier, who told him to claim during the investigation that he (Szlama Machtynger) had bought them "in the bazaars."

During the confrontation, Chaim Machtyngier stated that he did not remember whether he had said that to Szlama Machtyngier.^y

Rivka Machtyngier, Chaim's wife, who was heard as a witness, testified that Perec Fuks, after bringing the clothes together with Berek Farsztajn, assured^z her husband that "the goods were not stolen," and that Perec Fuks then took the trousers out of the package and gave them to Chaim Machtyngier for safekeeping.^{aa}

^u *On the left margin:* 34.

^v *Originally:* właśnie. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* własne.

^w *Originally:* Tarsztajnowi. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Farsztajnowi.

^x *On the left margin:* 38.

^y *On the left margin:* 134.

^z *Struck through:* mężowi.

^{aa} *On the left margin:* 70.

The witness, Rivka Machtyngier, changed her testimony during the examination and finally testified that, while accepting the “goods”, neither she nor her husband, Chaim Machtyngier, had asked Fuchs^{bb} and Farsztajn about the origin of the received items and that it was not until the next day that Fuks and Farsztajn asked Chaim Machtyngier whether he was not afraid to store them and assured him that the goods were not stolen. Finally, she testified that she and her sister-in-law had visited Frymeta Kochen after Chaim Machtyngier was detained, entreating her “to do something to have her husband released.”

Witness Frymeta Kochen testified that on the second day after the search, Chaim Machtyngier’s wife, with her sisters Dyna and Frania, had come to her and told her, amidst various threats, that if she did not save their brothers and husband, they would report that “these goods” had been looted by Frymeta Kochen, and will cause her to be “taken to prison.”^{cc} She further testified that Szlama Machtyngier, when asked by her where he bought the trousers, answered that he had bought them in Lodz for twenty zlotys, and when she told him that they came from her shop, he claimed that he had bought them “in bazaars” and finally in his flat he claimed that he had bought them for twenty zlotys from Chaim Machtyngier, while his sister claimed that he had bought them for fifteen zlotys. According to the testimonies of Frymeta Kochen and the witness Maks Lejzorowicz, Szlama Machtyngier tried to run away on the way to the police station.

According to Frymeta Kochen’s testimony, when at the Freedom Square, she was asking Szlama Machtyngier about the origin of the trousers, Chaim Machtyngier approached them and ordered Szlama Machtyngier to punch Frymeta Kochen’s “mug” for accosting him, and then, when she was not giving way, he claimed that he bought the trousers the same morning and sold them to Szlama Machtyngier.^{dd}

Witness Moshe Goldfarb testified that the trousers shown to him by Frymeta Kochen, had been taken from Szlama Machtyngier, he recognised their characteristic features and special additions as sewn by his friend Shima Sztajnberg, and

^{bb} *As in the original.*

^{cc} *On the left margin: 92.*

^{dd} *On the left margin: 122.*

that the Jew from whom the trousers were taken claimed that he had bought these trousers in Lodz.^{ee}

Witness Szime Sztajenberg testified that he identified not only^{ff} the trousers but also some of the clothes as sewn by him to Kochen's order and that Szlama Machtyngier, in the process of determining the origin of the trousers, claimed that he had bought them "in bazaars."^{gg}

In the course of the investigation, based on the testimonies of witnesses Zelig Zilberberg (p. 117), Abram Tarnowski (p. 118), Szymon Zylberberg (p. 125), Szime Sztajenberg, Moshe Goldfarb (p. 116), Moshe and Frymeta Kochen, and Franciszek Starościk (p. 12), it has been determined that the Kochen's materials and clothes stolen by Perec Fuks and Berek Farsztajn and stored by Chaim Machtyngier were not stolen, but that the Kochen acquired the materials legally, that the clothes were made of these materials and were sewn by homework tailors working on Kochen's account.

On 12 September 1940, Perec Fuks, interrogated about this, testified that he did not know where from Frymeta Kochen had the materials and clothes which were stolen from her, that he had not seen the Kochens stealing from freight cars in September last year, and if he had previously accused them, it was because he was afraid that he would be shot for stealing from the Kochens.^{hh}

Witness Franciszek Starościk testified that Perec Fuks duringⁱⁱ the police investigation, explained that the theft from Frymeta Kochen he committed together with Berek^j Farsztajn and that both of them took the loot to Chaim Machtyngier, whom they had previously notified and came to an agreement about it.^{kk}

Perec Fuks, while being examined by the investigating judge on 12 September 1940, changed the prior explanations given before the investigating judge and explained that on 29 November 1939, while on his way for bread, he accidentally met Berek Farsztajn, and then, on his request, he helped him three times in car-

^{ee} *On the left margin:* 116.

^{ff} *Struck through:* zpod.

^{gg} *On the left margin:* 115, 135.

^{hh} *On the left margin:* 129.

ⁱⁱ *Originally:* o. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* w.

^j *Originally:* berkiem. *Handwritten correction in black ink to:* Berkiem.

^{kk} *On the left margin:* 128.

rying “goods” from Farsztajn’s backyard to Chaim Machtyngier’s flat,^{ll} of which Farsztajn said he stole them “from one place.” Perec Fuks further explained that then Farsztajn^{mmm} told him that he himself had thrown the “goods” from Frymeta Kochen’s attic, and that he climbed up the ladder to get there. Finally, he explained that when they were carrying the “goods” for the first time, Farsztajn knocked on the door of Chaim Machtyngier’s flat, “who opened the door and, without saying a word, let them in, and there they deposited the goods on the floor^{mmm} in the second room.” As he claims, Perec Fuks did not talk to Chaim Machtyngier, and he does not know whether Farsztajn talked to him.

Chaim Machtyngier, examined on 12 September 1940, referred to his explanations of 22 June 1940 and added that when in the morning of 29 November 1939, around five o’clock, he looked through the window and noticed Fuks and Farsztajn walking, he immediately went to the door, opened it and accepted the “goods” for safekeeping, because first Fuks and then Farsztajn asked him to do so.^{oo}

During the confrontation, Perec Fuks denied this and furthermore stated to Chaim Machtyngier’s ócz^{pp} that during the interrogation by the police, Chaim told him that Frymeta Kochen^{qq} had taken the “goods” from the freight cars.

Perec Fuks, Chaim Machtyngier and Szlama Machtyngier, acquainted with the content of the evidence collected in the investigation on 21 September 1940, claimed that they were not guilty and explained that Fuks only at Farsztajn’s request brought the items in question to Chaim Machtyngier’s flat, who in turn explained that he accepted them not knowing that they were stolen, and Szlama Machtyngier explained that he bought the trousers without knowing that they were stolen.^{rr}

Szlama Machtyngier had already^{ss} – as it is attested by the judgement of the Regional Court in Kielce No. II 2K.104/38 made on 24 March 1938 – been sentenced^{tt} to two years in prison and a fine for receiving stolen goods. A certificate

^{ll} *On the left margin: 129.*

^{mmm} *Originally: Farsztaj. Handwritten addition in black ink: n.*

ⁿⁿ *As in the original.*

^{oo} *On the left margin: 131.*

^{pp} *As in the original.*

^{qq} *Originally: zabrał. Handwritten addition in black ink: a.*

^{rr} *On the left margin: 144–146.*

^{ss} *On the left margin: 153.*

^{tt} *The word is typewritten above the line of writing.*

from the Prosecutor's Office of the Regional Court in Kielce, dated 30 September 1940, states that on this basis, he was imprisoned on 10 August 1938, and that due to war activities, he was released we^{uu} we^{vv} in September 1939.

Deputy Prosecutor
(Marceli Bogdanowicz)^{ww}

List of persons summoned to attend the hearing

Accused:

1. Perek Fuks^{xx} – prison in Kielce.
2. Chaim Machtyngier^{yy} – [prison in Kielce].
3. Szlama Machtyngier^{zz} – Kielce, 9^{aaa} Leszczyńska Street.

Witnesses:

1. Frymeta Kochen^{bbb} – Kielce, 24 Starowarszawskie Przedmieście Street.
2. Moshe Kochen^{ccc} – [Kielce, 24 Starowarszawskie Przedmieście Street].
3. Franciszek Starościk^{ddd} – senior sergeant of the State Police Kielce, Investigation Division.
4. Szime Sztajnberg^{eee} – Kielce, 86 Bodzentyńska Street.
5. Moshe Goldfarb^{fff} – Kielce, 22 Targowa Street.
6. Maks Lejzorowicz^{ggg} – [Kielce, 12 Starowarszawskie Przedmieście Street.

List of other evidence

To be read:

Notification.^{hhh}

Minutes of the interrogation of Perek Fuks on 5 December 1939, in the part relating to the accusation of Kochens of theft.ⁱⁱⁱ

^{uu} Three letters struck through.

^{vv} As in the original.

^{ww} Above, an illegible handwritten signature in black ink.

^{xx} On the left margin: 9, 11, 30, 129, 144.

^{yy} On the left margin: 10, 34, 131, 145.

^{zz} On the left margin: 10v, 38, 133, 146.

^{aaa} Below, handwritten in pencil: (Kielce prison at the disposal of the German authorities).

^{bbb} On the left margin: 64, 92, 121.

^{ccc} On the left margin: 62.

^{ddd} On the left margin: 9–10, 128.

^{eee} On the left margin: 115, 135.

^{fff} On the left margin: 116, 140.

ⁱⁱⁱ On the left margin: 9.

Minutes of the interrogation of Perec Fuks written down by the head of the Sicherheitspolizei on 18 December 1939, together with the minutes of the confrontation.^{jjj}

Criminal record data.^{kkk}

Testimonies of witnesses: Rivka Machtyngier p. 77, Dyna Machtyngier p. 72, Rosa Kapelmajster p. 90, Frania Machtyngier p. 93, Małka Białobroda p. 95, Stanisław Kwiatek p. 96, Zelig Zylberberg p. 117, Abram Tarnowski p. 118, and Szymon Zylberberg p. 125.

Record of search, a list of the items taken away and a record of the inspection of the trading books.^{lll}

Evidence: materials and clothes were seized by N.S.V.^{mmm}

A copy of the ruling by the Regional Court in Kielce of March 24, 1938. No. II 2K. 104/38 with mention of Szlama Machtyngier having served a sentence.ⁿⁿⁿ

Deputy Prosecutor

(Marceli Bogdanowicz)^{ooo}

ZK.^{ppp}

Source: APK, Regional Court in Kielce 1939–1945, 759, typescript in Polish.

^{jjj} *On the left margin: 11 and 154.*

^{kkk} *On the left margin: 54–56.*

^{lll} *On the left margin: 6, 7, 126.*

^{mmm} *On the left margin: 13.*

ⁿⁿⁿ *On the left margin: 153.*

^{ooo} *Above, an illegible handwritten signature in black ink.*

^{ppp} *Below an impression of a round seal with an inscription State Archives in Kielce in black ink. In the middle: *21*.*

No. 3

20 November 1940, Kielce – Judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce against
Perc Fuks and others

Case No. II 1K. 59/40^{aa}

Judgement
in the name of the law
of 20 November 1940

The Regional Court in Kielce, the 2nd Criminal Division composed of:

Presiding Judge: Deputy President Fr[anciszek] Wysocki

Judges: L[eszek] Niewiadomski¹

A[leksander] Woskriesieński²

Recording clerk: secretary M. Grzędzielski³

In the presence of Deputy Prosecutor of the Regional Court Marceli Bogda-
nowicz,

on 20 November 1940, having examined the case of

1. Perc Fuks, born on 1 January 1919 in Kielce, son of Benjamin and Chawa
née Bidna, accused of the following misdemeanours:

^a *On the right side an impression of a round seal with an inscription State Archives in Kielce in black ink. In the middle: *21*. In the upper right corner, a handwritten number in red pencil: 185, crossed out in black pencil and next to it: 24.*

¹ Leszek Niewiadomski, b. 1894; completed tertiary studies, worked in the judiciary from 11 July 1924. In 1939, he served as a judge of the District Court in Kielce, and performed this function until 6 December 1945. Then, from 7 December 1945 to 11 December 1950, he was deputy president of the Regional Court in Kielce. From 1 January 1951, judge of the Poviatic Court in Kielce. Before the war, he was a member of the Association of Judges and Prosecutors of the Republic of Poland and of the Polish Legionaries Union. From August 1945, member of Democratic Alliance. APK, Voivodeship Court in Kielce, 2129, List of judges, junior judge trainees at the Regional Court in Kielce (n.d.).

² Aleksander Woskriesieński, b. 1 March 1881 in Kretinga in the Kovno Governorate. He studied law at the University of Warsaw and then at the University of Moscow, graduating in 1907. At that time he began working in the judiciary as a candidate for court cases at the Regional Court in Radom, and then, in 1910, he was appointed as investigating judge in Iłża. In 1921, he was delegated from this position to perform the duties of an investigating judge for special cases at the Regional Court in Piotrków. During the war, he was evacuated to Moscow and then delegated to serve as an investigating judge in the Kherson and Simferopol regions. He returned to Poland in December 1921. On 27 February 1922, he was appointed an investigating judge at the Regional Court in Kielce. He held this position at least until 1935. AAN, Ministry of Justice, 801, Personal files: Aleksander Woskriesieński.

³ It should be: Tadeusz Grzędzielski.

I. on the night of 29 November 1939 in Kielce, acting together with Berek Farsztajn, he took from the attic of the apartments of Moshe and Frymeta Kochen, which they owned, sixty sets of multi-coloured men's clothes, 75 pairs of trousers, seven sports clothes, four jackets, four waistcoats, four school uniforms, seven pieces of clothing materials, two quilts and a tablecloth – of a total value of about 5,700 zlotys

II. in Kielce, he knowingly deceitfully accused Moshe and Frymeta Kochen of stealing clothing materials:

a) on 5 December 1939, before the senior sergeant of Polish Police, Franciszek Starościk,

b) on 18 December 1939, before the head of Sicherheitspolizei Aussendienststelle Kielce, Preüss,

c) on 22 June 1940, before the investigating judge G[erard] Wojtuń;

2. Chaim Machtyngier, son of Josek and Małka neé Dziadek, b. 16 May 1914 in Mąchocice Dąbrowa municipality, Kielce powiat, accused of the following misdemeanours:

III. in the period between 26 and 29 November 1939, in Kielce, he helped Perceb^b Fuks and Berek Farsztajn to commit the crime described in p. I, promising them before committing the crime that he would accept for safekeeping and sell the clothes and materials stolen by them from Moshe and Frymeta Kochen [Kochens], and then accepting these goods for this purpose after the theft;

IV. in the period between 29 November 1939 and 5 December 1939, in Kielce, he persuaded Perceb Fuks to commit the crime described in point II a);

3. Szlama Machtyngier, son of Josek and Małka neé Dziadek, b. 1 January 1917 in Kielce, accused of the following misdemeanour:

V. on 1 December 1939 in Kielce, he purchased from Chaim Machtyngier trousers obtained by Perceb Fuks and Berek Farsztajn through the crime described in p. I, and deposited by them for safekeeping in Chaim Machtyngier's flat, knowing that these trousers were stolen, and he committed this act before the end of five-year period from the time he served his sentence for receiving stolen goods, that is for acts covered by Articles 257(1), 143, 27, 257(1), 26 and 143, and 160 of the Criminal Code

^b *As in the original.*

ruled:

Perec Fuks and Chaim Machtyngier guilty of the crimes they were accused of. Perec Fuks for the crime described in point I, to be sentenced under Article 257(1) of the Criminal Code, to two years and six months in prison; for the crimes described in point II, to be sentenced for each of them under Article 143 of the Criminal Code to one year in prison. Pursuant to Article 31 of the Criminal Code, Perec Fuks to be sentenced to one cumulative sentence of three years in prison, with the period of temporary detention, from 22 June 1940 to 20 November 1940, credited towards their sentence.

Chaim Machtyngier for the crime described in point III under Articles 27 and 257(1) of the Criminal Code, to be sentenced to one year and six months in prison, and for the misdemeanour described in point IV, to be sentenced under Articles 26 and 143 of the Criminal Code to one year in prison. Pursuant to Articles 31 of the Criminal Code, to sentence Chaim Machtyngier to one cumulative sentence of two years in prison, with the period of temporary detention, from 22 June 1940 to 20 November 1940, credited towards the sentence. The fine under Article 42 of the Criminal Code for both defendants to be adjudged as pointless. Both defendants from paying court costs.

To acquit Szlama Machtyngier.

Grounds

The defendant, Perec Fuks, pleaded guilty and explained that he and Berek Farsztajn had agreed to steal together from Moshe and Frymeta Kochen. Two days before the theft, Berek Farsztajn, in the presence of the defendant Fuks, agreed with the defendant Chaim Machtyngier, that the stolen items they will deposit in his flat for safekeeping. They stole the packaged goods and various materials listed in the sentence in such a way that B[erek] Farsztajn entered the Kochens' attic and from there handed the goods to the defendant Fuks, and then they both carried them in three takes, at dawn, to the defendant Chaim Machtyngier's flat, which was opened by the defendant Chaim Machtyngier himself, who without saying anything, allowed them to put the loot in the room. Then, when the defendant Fuks was detained by the police on charge of committing this theft, fearing repression by the German police, and at the instigation of the defendant Chaim Machtyngier,

he deceitfully accused the Kochens before the Polish and German police that the stolen goods were earlier stolen by both Kochens from freight cars, during warfare.

The judicial proceedings fully demonstrated the truthfulness of the account of events presented by P[erec] Fuks and the truthfulness of his explanations does not raise any doubts, as the aggrieved witnesses, Moshe and Frymeta Kochen, testified accordingly that the perpetrators, after removing the padlock, got to the attic where the items listed in the sentence were stored,^c and they locked the door of their apartment on the outside with a wooden stick, thus protecting themselves against possible obstacles by the Kochens, that the goods found in the apartment of the defendant Chaim Machtyngier are their property, that they do not come from any theft from freight cars, but was legally acquired. The sources of this purchase are confirmed by the testimonies of witnesses: Szime Sztajnberg, Zelig Silberberg, Abram Tarnowski and Szymon Zylberberg. In addition, the witnesses Szime Sztajnberg and Moshe Goldfarb stated beyond any doubt that the trousers taken from the defendant Szlama Machtyngier, the brother of the defendant Chaim, had been sewn by the witness Szime Sztajnberg at the request of the Kochens and delivered to them.

However, the defendant, Chaim Machtyngier, pleaded not guilty, denied the entire charge, and explained that he had taken the items from Perec Fuks and Farsztajn to his flat, having been misled by them that these were their own things from their flat, which, by order the German authorities they have to leave, and asked them for one pair of trousers for storing the things brought in, to which they told him that “they won’t mind giving him the trousers.” So he sold to his brother, defendant Szlama Machtyngier, one pair of trousers for twelve zlotys. However, the defendant Chaim Machtyngier was unable to explain why in the police investigations he stated that the goods deposited in his flat by Fuks and Fursztajn^d were stolen by some woman, and only then they were stolen from this woman by Forsztajn^e and Fuks. Finally, he denied that he had persuaded Fuks to deceitfully accuse Kochens of theft.

This explanation of the defendant Chaim Machtyngier is, however, untrue and evasive. There is no reason to deny the truth of the slanders of the defendant

^c *Originally: przechowywali. Handwritten correction in black ink to: przechowywano.*

^d *As in the original.*

^e *As in the original.*

Fuks, who does not bear any anger towards Chaim Machtyngier. After the explanations given at the hearing by the defendant Chaim Machtyngier, the defendant Fuks firmly repeated that “the defendant Chaim Machtyngier taught him how to defend himself when they were arrested by the Polish police, and he told him, word for word, to testify that he had seen with his own eyes the Kochens carrying materials from the railway station.” Besides that^f variousness and lack of clarity of the defendant, Chaim Machtyngier’s explanations^g and the fact testified by the witnesses: Frymeta Kochen, Rosa Kapelmajster and Małka Białobroda, that Rivka Machtyngier, wife of the defendant Chaim, and his sister Dyna Machtyngier visited the aggrieved Frymeta Kochen while the defendant Chaim Machtyngier was detained by the police on suspicion of theft in question, and threatened Frymeta Kochen that if she did not save their brother and husband, they would ruin her life and put her in prison, because they would say that she had stolen goods on a railway siding during the bombing of Kielce.^h

The defendant Chaim Machtyngier actually carried out the describedⁱ threat, using as a tool to carry it out the younger, less cunning and shrewd defendant Fuks, who, persuaded by the defendant Chaim Machtyngier, deceitfully blamed Kochens, as a result of which Kochens were detained for quite a long time in prison by the German police and lost all the goods taken from the flat of the defendant Chaim Machtyngier (pp. 153 and 13), and there was a large number of goods to the value of over 5,000 zlotys, being stored by the defendant Ch[aim] Machtyngier in his flat, in the wardrobes.

When the proceedings proved that the defendant P[erec] Fuks and the defendant Chaim Machtyngier were completely guilty of the alleged acts, it was necessary to rule as in a sentence.

When imposing the sentence, the court took into consideration the clean criminal record of both defendants until now, their young age, and Fuks committing theft of a large value in a very daring manner, and the help of Chaim

^f *The word Zważywszy crossed out with black ink. Above the line of writing handwritten in black ink: Poza tym.*

^g *As in the original.*

^h *Handwritten in black ink: Potwierdza prawdziwość pomówień osk[arzonego] Fuksa.*

ⁱ *Crossed out with black ink: I tę. Handwritten insert: Opisaną.*

Machtyngier in committing this crime, who was most likely to make the largest profits from this theft; moreover, causing great harm to the aggrieved Kochens, not only materially, but above all morally and physically, by deceitfully accusing them. For these reasons, the court deems the sentence imposed on the defendants to be commensurate with their guilt and the extent of their malice.

Since neither of the defendants has any property, the court found it pointless to impose a fine on them under Article 42 of the Criminal Code and exempted them from paying the costs of the proceedings and the court fee.

The defendant, Szlama Machtyngier, was acquitted by the court, because the court proceedings did not provide any evidence of his guilt.^j

^kOn 11 March 1941,^[l] the Regional Court in Kielce ^[m]
regarding Chaim Machtyngier and Perec Fuks
^[n]
with the transfer of the detained ^[o]
Criminal cards were simultaneously sent to the Criminal Register in Warsaw.
Secretary^p

Source: APK, Regional Court in Kielce 1939–1945, 759, pp. 24–29, typescript in Polish.

^j *Below handwritten in black ink:* On the reserve side of the page, the word “Zważywszy” was added and the word “Poza tym” was written at the top. The following text was added: “potwierdza prawdziwość pomówień osk[arżonego] Fuksa i “Opisaną” – skreślono “I tę”. *Below are three illegible handwritten signatures. The first on the left in black ink, the second in green, the third in pencil.*

^k *Impression of a seal in purple ink. Partially illegible. Its handwritten completion in black ink.*

^l *Four illegible words.*

^m *Two illegible words.*

ⁿ *Three illegible words. Then four words crossed out.*

^o *Crossed out: zawiadomienie o uniewinnieniu.*

^p *Above, an illegible handwritten signature in black ink.*

1941, 13 February, Radom – judgement of the Appellate Court in Radom against
Perec Fuks and Chaim Machtyngier

KA. 12/41^{aa}

Judgement
in the name of the law
of 13 February 1941
of the Appellate Court w Radom, Criminal Division,
at an open hearing, composed of
Presiding Judge of the Appellate Court: J[ózef] Songajło¹
Judges of the Appellate Court: Dr J[an] Haber² (rapporteur)
Judge of the Appellate Court T[eodor] Kosiński³
Recording clerk: judge trainee T. Skulimowski
with the participation of the Deputy Prosecutor of the Appellate Court J. Kruszewski,
having examined the case of 1) Fuks Perec accused under Articles 257 and 143
of the Criminal Code 2) Machtyngier Chaim accused under Article 27 in connec-

^a On the right side an impression of a round seal with an inscription State Archives in Kielce in black ink. In the middle: *21*. Next to it, handwritten in blue ink: 201. Added: 33.

¹ Józef Songajło, b. 4 July 1887 in Wilkomierz near Kovno. From 1903 until 18 December 1917, he worked in the Russian judiciary. On 21 October 1918, he joined the Polish judiciary as an investigating judge of the Regional Court in Lodz. Then he worked as a judge of the Regional Court in Grodno and a judge of the Appellate Court in Vilnius. On 8 March 1930, appointed by the President of the Republic of Poland as a judge of the Supreme Court (Criminal Chamber). During the German occupation, he worked in the so-called Polish judiciary. By an order of the Justice Department at the Governor's Office of the Radom District issued on 30 April 1940, he was appointed judge of the Appellate Court in Radom, as deputy head of the criminal division. He died in Radom on 10 December 1944. See Piątkowski, *Sędziowie sądów powszechnych regionu radomskiego*, p. 74.

² Jan Haber, b. 7 July 1900 in Łojewo, Inowrocław powiat. In 1922, he graduated from the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Poznan. He passed the judicial exam in 1924. Then, from 1924 to 1927, he worked at the Municipal Court in Poznan, and later at the Regional Court in Poznan (1927-1930). Poznan. He was also socially active. In September 1939, he was evacuated to Lvov, and then returned to the territories incorporated into the Third Reich. He made a living by selling property and as a translator, afterwards he started working in the "Polish" judiciary. On 13 September 1940, he was appointed judge of Appellate Court in Radom. On 25 July 1941, he was laid-off from the judiciary at his own request. See *ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

³ Teodor Kosiński, in 1941 worked as a judge of the Appellate Court in Radom, assigned to the criminal division. See *ibid.*, p. 46.

tion with Articles 257, 26 and 143 of the Criminal Code, as a result of the appeal filed by the above-mentioned defendants against the judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce from 20 November 1940, No. II 1K. 59/40,

according to Articles 360, 499 a) and b) 598 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Appellate Court upholds the judgment of the Regional Court in Kielce of 20 November 1940, against the defendants Perec Fuks and Chaim Machtyngier, and adds that both defendants' temporary detention from 15 December 1939 is credited towards their sentence, and releases the defendants from payment of the court fee and the costs of the appeal proceedings.

Grounds

The Regional Court in Kielce, in its judgment of 20 November 1940, found

1) the defendant Perec Fuks guilty of the following misdemeanours:

I. on the night of 29 November 1939, in Kielce, acting together with Berek Farsztajn, he took from the attic of Moshe and Frymeta Kochen's apartment, which was their property, sixty sets of multi-coloured men's clothes, 75 pairs of trousers, seven sports clothes, four jackets, four waistcoats, four school uniforms, seven pieces of materials for clothes, two quilts and a tablecloth – with a total value of about 5,700 zlotys;

II. in Kielce, he knowingly deceitfully accused Moshe and Frymeta Kochen of stealing clothing materials:

a) on 5 December 1939, before senior sergeant of the Polish Police, Franciszek Starościk⁴,

b) on 18 December 1939, before the head of Sicherheitspolizei Aussendienststelle Kielce, Preüss [*Preuß*],

c) on 22 June 1940, before the investigating judge G[erard] Wojtuń, and sentenced him under Article 257(1) of the Criminal Code to two years and six months in prison, and under Article 143 of the Criminal Code to one year in prison for each misdemeanour, imposing on the basis of Article 31 of the Criminal Code, a total sentence of three years in prison;

2) the defendant Chaim Machtyngier guilty of the following misdemeanours:

⁴ See Document No. 2.

that between 26 and 29 November 1939 in Kielce, he helped Perec Fuks and Berek Farsztajn to commit the crime described in point 1, promising them before the crime was committed that he would store and sell the clothes and materials stolen by them from Moshe and Frymeta Kochen [Kochens], and then receiving from them for this purpose the goods they had stolen.

Further, that between 29 November 1939 and 5 December 1939, in Kielce, he persuaded Perec Fuks to commit the crime described in p. II a) and sentenced him under Articles 27 and 257(1) of the Criminal Code for one year in prison, imposing on him under Article 31 of the Criminal Code, a total sentence of two years in prison.

The court credited towards the sentences imposed on the defendants the period of temporary detention, from 22 June 1940 to 20 November 1940.

The defendants appealed against this judgment only regarding the duration of the imprisonment, requesting that the entire period of remand in this case, that is from 1 December 1939, be credited towards the sentence, moreover, the defendant Fuks pleaded for leniency.

The Appellate Court, examining the case within the scope of the appeal and based on the results of the appeal proceedings, accepted the appeal of the defendants, in as much as it aimed at crediting them with the entire period of imprisonment towards the imposed sentence, as justifiable. According to an official document, namely a police report of 15 December 1939, the defendants Perec Fuks and Chaim Machtyngier, had been already in police custody on that day, and their detention was in connection with the theft from Moshe and Frymeta Kochen.^b The defendants remained and still [remain] in police custody in this case – without a formal judicial order on detention – pending further police investigations and only after the police authorities presented the investigation files to the appropriate prosecutor of the Regional Court in Kielce on 4 June 1940, the same prosecutor, on 11 June 1940, applied to the investigating judge in Kielce for the pre-trial detention. On 22 June 1940, the investigating judge in Kielce made a formal decision on pre-trial detention and^c delivered it to the defendants.

^b *Originally: Kochenowi. Handwritten correction in black ink.*

^c *The word: dołączył struck through.*

Although the provision of Article 58 of the Criminal Code mentions the possibility of crediting the period of “temporary detention” towards the sentence, while Article 164 of the Criminal Code provides that “temporary detention” can be only imposed by court order, nonetheless, the lawmaker’s intention was to enable the court to credit towards the punishment the whole period the defendant was deprived of liberty before he was formally sentenced by the court. This also transpires from motives of the Codification Committee^e as regards Article 171 of the Criminal Code which stipulates that the two-month term provided for under this article^f runs from the date of the deprivation of liberty, and not from the date the court officially issued a ruling in the case. Moreover, taking into account that in the case under discussion the period from the actual deprivation of liberty to the judge’s decision lasted more than half a year, and this was not caused by the defendants, failure to credit towards the sentence such a long period of time would be unfair for the defendants, the Appellate Court accepted the appeal in this matter and accordingly changed the judgment.

Fuks’ further application for leniency the Court found unjustified^g. The Court of First Instance imposed the sentence duly substantiated according to Article 54 of the Criminal Code and the Appellate Court refers in this regard to the pertinent motives of the judgment, and fully agrees with the Court of First Instance.

The ruling on the costs of the proceedings was based on Article 598 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

[^h]

Source: APK, Regional Court in Kielce 1939–1945, 759, pp. 33–35v, transcript in Polish.

^e Originally: komisji kodyfikacyjnej. *Handwritten correction in black ink.*

^f Originally: artykułu. *Handwritten correction in black ink.*

^g Originally: Nieuzasadnionem. *Handwritten correction in black ink.*

^h *Handwritten correction in black ink: artykułu. Below, in black ink, three handwritten illegible signatures.*

Alicja Gontarek

Institute of National Remembrance, Branch in Lublin

ORCID 0000-0003-1556-1954

THE ACTIVITY OF WŁADYSŁAW GÜNTHER-SCHWARZBURG, ENVOY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND IN ATHENS, TO HELP POLISH AND JEWISH REFUGEES IN GREECE IN 1939–1941

Introduction

The issue of Polish citizens who were refugees in Greece during the Second World War has not been the subject of a separate study by Polish research centres until now.¹ The only work about Poles in that country, published in 1997, describes the Second World War period rather sketchily and deals with the Jewish question marginally.² Perhaps the unfamiliarity with Jewish languages

¹ Polish scholars have studied the military presence of Poles in Greece, and more broadly in the Balkan region, including conspiracy, partisan and intelligence operations: W. Biegański, M. Juchniewicz, S. Okęcki, E. Stachurski, *Antyhitlerowska działalność Polaków na Węgrzech i Bałkanach* (Warsaw, 1971), p. 114; W. Grabowski, “Polska Misja Morska w rejonie Morza Śródziemnego w czasie II wojny światowej,” *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*, 16 (2015), pp. 91–114; L.A.B. Kaliszewicz, “Grzegorz”. *Placówka Wojskowej Łączności w Grecji*, *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 63 (1983), pp. 92–112; *Polsko-brytyjska współpraca wywiadowcza podczas II wojny światowej*, vols 1–2, ed. by T. Dubicki, D. Nałęcz, and T. Stirling (Warsaw, 2004), *passim*. From the few Polish partisan memoirs referring to experiences in Greece, see J. Juźków, *Tagma thanatu. Wspomnienia z greckiej partyzantki* (Warsaw, 1977); J. Traczykowski, “Elas” *znaczyło wolność* (Warsaw, 1980). In particular, in People’s Poland the legend of the agent Jerzy Ivanov was promoted: J. Landowski, *Jeden przeciwko Niemcom* (New York, 1946); S. Strumph-Wojtkiewicz, *Agent nr 1* (Warsaw, 1959); M. and J. Przymanowscy, *Leonarda i jej synowie* (Cracow, 1980).

² J. Knopek, *Polacy w Grecji. Historia i współczesność* (Bydgoszcz, 1997).

hindered scholarly inquiries³ Polish historiography on Polish–Jewish relations on Greek soil has only one good account, albeit not source documented, of efforts to rescue Jews by one Emil Leyk,⁴ aka “Inżynier.” When Leyk was the head of the Kriegswirtschaftskommando in Thessaloniki, he allegedly attempted to prevent the extermination of Greek Jews who were deported from there to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp.⁵ Leyk was of Polish descent (a Mazurian⁶). He collaborated with the Greek Resistance and British intelligence. From 1 January 1942, when his immediate German superior was transferred to the Third Reich, he developed extensive sabotage operations in Greece. When he became aware of plans to deport Jews to the extermination camp, he decided to organise a mass transfer of Jews to Italy and Spain. He recommended that those who had forged documents should be sent to work in the mines as a means of protecting them. Unfortunately, this initiative was apparently not accepted by the Jews themselves, who did not take the risk of coordinating it.⁷

³ The last Polish review of the Polish academic literature on Greece and Polish-Greek relations in different historical periods was produced in 1998, See J. Knopek, “Nowożytna Grecja w najnowszej historii polskiej,” *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2 (1998), pp. 145–154.

⁴ Emil Leyk (1893–1972), an engineer, architect, Polish activist in the Mazury region, went to Germany between the wars, where he developed a career as a construction specialist. In 1940 he was appointed in the rank of captain to the Wehrmacht’s Inspectorate of Armaments and War Economy, after which he was sent to Thessaloniki in the autumn of 1941. In February 1943 he was transferred to Denmark, and in July that year, when he was temporarily transferred to Warsaw thanks to his brother Fryderyk, he became a member of the Polish Liberty Union (*Polski Związek Wolności*) (subordinated to the Home Army [*Armia Krajowa*] from 1942). He returned to Poland in 1946, but was arrested by the Department of Security in 1950. After his release from prison, he became involved with Mazury and the life of the local Evangelical Augsburg Church. See also G. Jasiński, “Grupa autochtonów o profaszystowskim nastawieniu zostanie pozbawiona kierowniczego czynnika...”. Okoliczności aresztowania księdza Jerzego Sachsa, Emila Leyka i Waltera Późnego w 1950 r.,” *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 4 (2010), pp. 435–492; S. Okęcki, “Polacy w greckim ruchu oporu,” in W. Biegański, M. Juchniewicz, S. Okęcki, *Polacy w ruchu oporu narodów Europy 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1977), pp. 228–230; *idem*, “Na ziemi duńskiej,” in *ibid.*, pp. 156–157.

⁵ Information on this subject appeared for the first time in a 1969 study, which may have resulted in its author, on the wave of the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign, writing about Jewish affairs and embellishing the theme somewhat. The article was published in the non-scientific journal *Argumenty*, which had state patronage. It was published by the Society for the Cultivation of Secular Culture. See W. Nawik, “Prawdziwy Kloss mieszka w Szczytnie,” *Argumenty* 42 (1969), pp. 1–9.

⁶ Mazurian – an inhabitant of Mazury, a geographic and cultural region in north-eastern Poland. In the nineteenth century and between two world wars, this area was part of the German state. Only after the end of the Second World War did it become part of Poland.

⁷ Jasiński, “Grupa autochtonów;” Okęcki, “Polacy w greckim ruchu oporu,” pp. 228–230; *idem*, “Na ziemi duńskiej,” pp. 156–157.

The deportation of Greek Jews, mainly from Thessaloniki, to the concentration camp KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (15 March 1943) understandably attracted more interest among Polish historians.⁸ However, it can hardly be classified as an issue of Polish-Jewish relations. On the other hand, in the studies of Greek and English-speaking historians, although refugee and diplomatic issues concerning foreign states in Greece are taken into account, there is no information on Polish themes.⁹ To date, only one paper (from 1986) can serve as a starting point for this study. It presents the survival strategies and attempts to rescue Jews in Greece. Its author is Yitzchak Kerem.¹⁰ He distinguished between the following types of fleeing from occupation and from death in an extermination camp located in occupied Polish territory: leaving a town or region, especially crossing into an area under Italian occupation, diplomatic intervention, intervention by Jews in Palestine, evacuation with Greek or English military personnel, assistance by Greek fishermen and sailors to get out of Greece, hiding, participation in partisan warfare and service in the Greek army outside the country. In terms of diplomatic assistance, Kerem briefly characterised the activities of representatives of neutral countries: Argentina, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.¹¹

Given this gap in research, the subject of this article has become relief and rescue efforts¹² undertaken by the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Athens

⁸ The literature on this subject is very rich. Let us just mention that in Poland, the first work that dealt with this topic was written in the late 1960s. See D. Czech, "Deportacja i zagłada Żydów greckich w KL Auschwitz (w świetle tzw. 'Ostatecznego rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej')," *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie* 11 (1969), pp. 5–35.

⁹ See, for example, a relatively new book, which is a record of up-to-date knowledge on the Holocaust in Greece and other related topics, e.g. relations with the Christian environment, published by Cambridge University Press: *The Holocaust in Greece*, ed. by G. Antoniou and D. Moses (New York, 2018). See also Ch. Avni, "Spanish Nationals in Greece and their Fate during the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies* 8 (1970), pp. 31–68.

¹⁰ Y. Kerem, "Dar'chej hacalah szel j'hudijm b'jawan b'mil'chemet-haolam hasz'nijah," *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 27 (1986), pp. 77–109. In 2012, Yitzchak Kerem expanded his research with a new study on the Greek government-in-exile's efforts to save Greek Jews. However, it lacks diplomatic threads. Kerem concluded that the overall Greek effort, which also took into account the efforts of the Jewish side, did not produce the expected results. Help from the government side was only possible for Greek Jews who found themselves outside Greece as refugees: *idem*, "The Greek Government-in-exile and the Rescue of Jews from Greece," *Holocaust Studies* 2–3 (2012), pp. 189–212.

¹¹ Y. Kerem, "Dar'chej hacalah szel," p. 78. This publication, due to the fact that it was written in Hebrew, is unknown to Greek scholars.

¹² The author distinguishes between the terms "relief" and "rescue". Strictly relief operations were organised in conditions where there was no imminent threat to the health and life of Jewish people. Rescue operations, on the other hand, were those that were undertaken in a specific area when the lives

during the Second World War for Polish citizens, including Jews, providing them with support and saving them from being left under the sphere of influence of the German and Italian occupiers. Staying there, as the course of history has shown, meant death in an extermination camp on Polish soil.¹³

On 1 April 1936, Władysław Günther-Schwarzburg (1885–1974)¹⁴ became the head of the Polish diplomatic mission. His tenure ended on 22 April 1941, when he left Greece.¹⁵ The article focuses on efforts taken for the benefit of Polish citizens and the duration and results of these efforts, taking into account local circumstances. Wartime diplomatic assistance is discussed after giving biographical sketches of the most important members of the Polish diplomatic corps in Greece who took part in the rescue of Jews. Günther's interwar record as a diplomat on Greek soil is also provided to give context. The pre-war themes are noteworthy since the Polish envoy established a more substantial Polish presence in Greece during peacetime and revived economic and cultural exchanges with Greek partners. In the 1930s, Günther and his colleagues created a team of people who were exceptionally committed to their work, which is not irrelevant when assessing the actions of this group during the Second World War. Integration also extended to the Polish consulate in Thessaloniki. At the time, the office of consul was held by a Sephardic Jew, Albert Nehama, who established good relations with Jews (the Jewish community) in the area.¹⁶

of Jews could be endangered as a result of German policy. Obviously, "relief" has a broad meaning, and rescue operations are part of the relief, i.e. any activity aimed at protecting the Jewish population from the various aspects of German occupation terror.

¹³ This article should be treated as another in a case study type series on the activities of Polish diplomacy on behalf of Jewish refugees. See A. Gontarek, "Polish Diplomatic and Consular Representation in Havana and the Case of Jewish Refugees in Cuba during World War II," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 464–499; *eadem*, "Działalność Poselstwa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Hiszpanii na rzecz pomocy uchodźcom żydowskim w czasie II wojny światowej (w świetle akt Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych przechowywanych w Archiwum Instytutu Hoovera). Zarys problemu," *Almanach Historyczny* 13 (2022), pp. 235–266. For a broader context of research on diplomatic assistance provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic posts, see *eadem*, "Dyplomacja polska a pomoc udzielana Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką w latach 1939–1945," in *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa*, ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek (Warsaw, 2022), pp. 113–174.

¹⁴ In the rest of this article, I use the name Günther. This is how the envoy signed his name on documents.

¹⁵ Hoover Institution (hereinafter HI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter MFA), box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 26 April 1941.

¹⁶ *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* 4 (1927), p. 71.

In addition, as an introduction to the topic, the group of Polish citizens residing in Greece until the outbreak of the war, known as the Polish colony, is described. Other issues concerning activities during the war include: the situation of the diplomatic mission and its main tasks after the outbreak of the Second World War, Jewish refugees and the evacuation of Polish citizens; the situation in which the diplomatic mission found itself after Germany invaded Greece (6 April 1941) and efforts to obtain visas; the Polish contribution to the organisation of an evacuation from Greece; Günther's assessment of the evacuation activities taken by British envoy Michael Palairet (1882–1956); and the fate of Jewish Polish citizens in Greece after the closure of the Polish Legation.

Most of the sources used to write this study were the fonds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stored at the Hoover Institution Archives. The encoded communications sent by the diplomatic mission in Athens and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped to outline the main problems Envoy Günther faced during the war. The fonds are the only compact archival material on the basis of which we can analyse the activities of the envoy, since the files of the Polish Legation in Athens, now located at the Polish Institute and the General Sikorski Museum in London, have only two catalogue numbers. In addition, occasional use was made of the Archives of New Records, Yad Vashem, press sources of Polish, British and Jewish provenance and the memoirs of Günther himself. In the search for information about Jewish refugees from Poland, two memorial books about the Jews of Thessaloniki were also consulted.¹⁷

Two sources are attached to the article – one is a “Letter from Władysław Günther, Envoy for the Republic of Poland in Athens, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, dated 27 May 1941,” in which the envoy briefly describes his efforts to evacuate the refugees, and the other is the “List of surnames of Polish passport holders at the disposal of the Department for Aliens of the Greek police, seized by the German secret service (1943).” Unfortunately, we cannot say anything further about the list of names, as it was included in the file without any correspondence explaining where and

¹⁷ Reference is made to these books: *Saloniki, 'ir va-em be-Israel* (Jerusalem–Tel Aviv, 1967); *Zichron Saloniki: gedulatah hurbanah szel Jeruzalajim de-Balkan*, ed. D. Recanati, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1971).

how it came to the MFA. It is proof of the keen interest taken by German agents in Polish citizens in Greece. It may also prove useful for genealogical research.

Polish Diplomatic and Consular Mission in Greece during the Interwar Period: A Biographical Aspect

To date, there has been no extensive research into the biography of Günther and his colleagues at the Polish Legation. It is worth mentioning that the first Polish representative in Athens, as extraordinary envoy and minister plenipotentiary, was August Zaleski, who later became Poland's foreign minister. He held this office from 1919 until December 1920.¹⁸ Then, in January 1921, a very experienced diplomat Mikołaj Jurystowski, who had worked for a long time in the Austro-Hungarian consular service, was appointed envoy. His mission ended in 1924. By the time Günther was posted as head of the Polish Legation in Athens in 1936, it was headed by Czesław Andrycz (1924–1926), Paweł Juriewicz (1926–1934), and Zygmunt Wierski (1934–1936). Two of them – Andrycz and Wierski – served as *chargé d'affaires*. Four of those mentioned (Zaleski, Jurystowski, Juriewicz and Günther) came from the landed gentry. The activity of Polish diplomats on Greek soil was not very noticeable until the 1930s. Before 1936, the Polish authorities considered this area to be of little importance.¹⁹ Jacek Knopek claims that the local Polish community in Greece became more active after Günther was posted to Athens.²⁰

We can learn a great deal about Günther's pre-war activities from his biographical note in the *Słownik biograficzny polskiej służby zagranicznej* [Biographical Dictionary of Polish Foreign Service], as well as from his memoirs published in 1963, *Pióropusz i szpada. Wspomnienia ze służby zagranicznej* [The plume and the sword. A Foreign Serviceman's Memories²¹]. The future envoy was born in

¹⁸ A. Zaleski, *Wspomnienia*, ed. by K. Kania, K. Kloc, and P.M. Żukowski (Warsaw, 2017), p. 111.

¹⁹ On this subject, see M. Kornat, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1938–1939. Cztery decyzje Józefa Becka* (Gdańsk, 2012), p. 107; B. Łyczko-Grodzicka, *Dyplomacja polska a Ententa Bałkańska 1933–1936* (Wrocław, 1981); *eadem*, *Polska, Turcja, Grecja w latach międzywojennych* (Cracow, 1985). In the 1985 publication, Greek issues were somewhat marginalised in favour of a deeper analysis of Polish-Turkish relations.

²⁰ Knopek, *Polacy w Grecji*, p. 155.

²¹ For more information, see "Władysław Günther-Schwarzburg (1885–1974)," in *Słownik biograficzny polskiej służby zagranicznej 1918–1945*, ed. K. Smolana, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 118–119; W. Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada. Wspomnienia ze służby zagranicznej* (Paris, 1963). This author's memoirs have not been published in full – the Paris edition contains only one fragment.

1885 in Dołęga (in Austro-Hungary, now the Małopolska Voivodeship) into a landed gentry family. In 1908, he graduated from the Sorbonne with a doctorate in philosophy. He also studied at the universities of Paris and Geneva. During World War I, he was a prisoner of war in Russia, and in 1915 became a member of the Polish Independence Committee in Kazan, and a year later in Kyiv.²²

After the Polish state regained its independence in 1918, he soon began working as a desk officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He owed his job to the patronage of Roman Knoll (1888–1946), who was a good friend of Günther's family. He moved in Piłsudski's circles and was a member of the Promethean movement and a freemason. He was a friend of Foreign Minister August Zaleski.²³

In May 1919, Günther was posted to the Polish Legation in Prague as legation secretary first class. At the same time, from March 1919 to mid-March 1920, he served as the Polish MFA delegate to the Inter-allied Control Commission in Cieszyn and then, from 24 May 1919 to 1 August, to the Inter-allied Plebiscite Commission.²⁴ During this period, he clearly identified himself with the Warsaw Freemasonry milieu.²⁵

In July 1920, he returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he worked in the Political Department and was promoted to a ministerial counsellor. He then headed the North Section from August 1923 to May 1924. Günther's career flourished not only due to Knoll's constant backing but, above all, due to his own abilities. When Knoll was appointed as a legate in Ankara in 1924, Günther took up the post of legal adviser to the Polish Legation. Later, their paths crossed when

²² L. Hass, *Masoneria polska XX wieku. Losy, loże, ludzie* (Warsaw, 1996), p. 247. Günther was one of Leon Chajn's informants when he wrote his book on Polish freemasons. This is clear from the correspondence exchanged between them. See L. Chajn, *Polskie wolnomularstwo 1920–1938* (Warsaw, 1984), pp. 139, 266–267, 331.

²³ Günther remembered the way Knoll encouraged him to take the job: "Knowing my family relations, he added a personal comment: Since Ukraine has been taken by the devil, i.e. the Bolsheviks, so they have also taken your Mother's income. As a diplomat, you will be able to travel and engage in literature. Remember Claudel, who was an ambassador, or our own Chłędowski and his *Dwór w Ferrarze* or *Rzym papieży*, even though he was secret advisor to the Ministry for Galicia in Vienna." Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 21.

²⁴ D. Miszewski, *Aktywność polityczna mniejszości polskiej w Czechosłowacji w latach 1920–1938* (Poznan, 2002), pp. 56–57.

²⁵ Hass, *Masoneria polska*, p. 247.

Knoll became a legate in Rome in 1926 – at that time, the diplomatic mission there was headed by Günther in the rank of chargé d'affaires ad interim. Knoll also reached out to his protégé when, as deputy minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was put in charge of reorganising that Ministry. At that time, he appointed Günther as head of a new territorial division (South Section), where he was responsible for Southern Europe in the Political and Economic Department. At the time, the future envoy to Greece was already regarded as an expert on the region. From that moment on, the affairs of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, South and Central America, Egypt, Palestine and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the independent countries of Africa, were to receive more attention from Polish diplomacy than before.²⁶

In 1931, Günther was appointed an envoy in Belgrade. In May 1935, he was recalled from Yugoslavia and put on hold. He returned to the diplomatic service later that year and, on 1 April 1936, he was appointed an envoy in Athens. In April 1938, he was also accredited as Poland's diplomatic representative to neighbouring Albania (Tirana).²⁷

Günther's mission in Athens ended in 1941 when, as a result of the German invasion of Greece (6 April), he was forced to evacuate with the Greek government to Crete on 22 April that year.²⁸ After the Greek retreat from the island, the diplomat was an envoy to the Greek government-in-exile in London (until January 1942). Then, at the request of the head of the Foreign Office, he travelled from the British capital to Cairo together with King George II and the Greek government. From June 1942 to June 1945, he held a similar post as envoy to the Norwegian government-in-exile in London.²⁹

²⁶ H. Bartoszewicz, "Misja dyplomatyczna Romana Knolla w Rzymie," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 1 (2011), pp. 55, 67.

²⁷ Knopek, *Polacy w Grecji*, p. 155; "Białogród," *Kurjer Warszawski* 108 (1938), p. 4.

²⁸ In May 1941, the envoy, while on Crete, suspected that the British were anxious for him to leave the island as soon as possible: "I have the impression that the intention to get us to leave now stems from the desire of the English to absolve themselves of their responsibility towards us." HI, MFA, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 2 May 1941.

²⁹ *Dokumenty Rządu RP na Uchodźstwie. Suplementy do tomów I–VIII. Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów październik 1939 – sierpień 1945*, ed. by W. Rojek and A. Suchcitz (Cracow, 2010), pp. 420, 445.

After the war, he remained in exile. In 1950, he started working as a lecturer and in 1960, as a Polish language and literature professor at the Polish University Abroad in London. He died on 27 March 1974.³⁰

Just before the outbreak of the war, in the summer of 1939, besides Günther, other full-time employees (functions not stated) at the Polish diplomatic mission in Athens included Secretary Zygfryd Englisch, Zofia Gulińska, Zdzisław Kamiński, Irena Przykorska and Władysław Woynowski.³¹

In the context of the relief efforts undertaken for Jews during the war, the biography of Zdzisław Kamiński, a commercial counsellor at the Polish diplomatic mission, also deserves mention. When he arrived in Athens in the 1930s, he helped to revive Polish-Greek commercial relations.³² Kamiński had a background in economics, and probably graduated from the Warsaw School of Economics (WSH). In the interwar period, before he and his wife were posted to Greece, he had worked at the thriving Ostrowiec Steel Mill.³³ His wife, from 1938 or 1939, was Zofia Galicówna, a highlander from Zakopane and a great-granddaughter of Szymon Tatar (the elder). She was a mountain climber, a co-founder and a motivator of an emancipation movement among women mountaineers.³⁴ Kamiński was also the brother-in-law of Wanda Henisz-Kamińska, a pioneer among women mountain climbers.³⁵ During the war in 1940, the Kamińskis ascended Mytikas (with a summit elevation of 2,917 metres), the highest peak of Mount Olympus.³⁶ They were probably the first Poles to set foot there. After being evacuated from Greece in 1941, Zdzisław and Zofia went to Crete and then England, where they settled, only visiting Poland for brief trips after the end of the Second World War. In the 1970s, they opened a successful interior design business.³⁷

³⁰ “Günther-Schwarzburg Władysław,” in *Kto był kim w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by J.M. Majchrowski, G. Mazur, and K. Stepan (Warsaw, 1994), p. 96.

³¹ *Rocznik Służby Zagranicznej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Stan 1 czerwca 1939* (Warsaw, 1939), p. 78.

³² Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 146.

³³ K. Tarasiewicz, *Cały wiek w Warszawie* (Warsaw, 2005), p. 120.

³⁴ In the interwar press she was called “one of the best, if not the best Polish women mountaineers.” H. Jabłczyńska-Jędrzejewska, “Walka o równouprawnienie w taternictwie,” *Start* 20 (1930), pp. 8–9.

³⁵ H. Ptakowska-Wyżanowicz, *Od krynoliny do liny* (Warsaw, 1960), p. 97.

³⁶ A. Łojek, “Pionierskie wyczyny Polek na górskich szlakach i skalnych ścianach,” *Słupskie Prace Geograficzne* 5 (2008), p. 48.

³⁷ Other employees of the legation also went to Crete: Szczesny Zalewski and Jerzy Szczeniowski. HI, MFA, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 5 May 1941; Tarasiewicz, *Cały wiek*, p. 290.

Albert Nehama, a Sephardic Jew, who was an honorary consul of the Republic of Poland in Thessaloniki, was another important figure. He ran the consulate from the time it was established on 27 May 1927. The consulate in Thessaloniki, which also covered Macedonia, was located at 6 Hermou St.³⁸ Little is known about Lio Basso and Rustem Kiazim, his two secretaries working alongside him. Researchers also have little data about the consul himself. Gościwit Malinowski made an attempt to draw Albert Nehama's biographical profile, which still needs to be filled with more information and checked.³⁹ Since at least 1920, Nehama ran a bank, established in 1907. When a consulate was opened in Thessaloniki, it was Albert Nehama rather than Aleksander Śliziński who was credited with developing Polish-Greek trade relations, being posted there as consul against the wishes of the Polish diaspora in Thessaloniki.⁴⁰ According to Ares Chadzinikolau, it was Zygmunt Mineyko, an esteemed and respected diplomat, who had supposedly been appointed consul. Nehama did not speak Polish, so the consulate's correspondence was conducted in French.⁴¹ The only member of the staff who spoke Polish was Maryła Chmielewska.⁴²

From February 1937, Poland had a second consulate in Greece, in Piraeus, headed by Arvanitidi Cosmas, though he was not involved in providing support to Jews and Poles in Greece during the war. While Nehama's remit included commercial and maritime activities, as well as socio-cultural, legal and propaganda activities, the work of the consul in Piraeus was limited to tasks related to the participation of Poles in the town's port trade.⁴³

Last but not least, there was Julian Rummel, who had been the Greek consul in Poland in 1938. He was a shipbuilding engineer by profession, director of the Office

³⁸ *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* 12 (1929), p. 258; *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* 4 (1927), p. 71.

³⁹ This researcher, without relying on archival material, speculated on Nehama's wartime fate. He suggested that the consul was probably deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. See G. Malinowski, *Hel-lenopolonica. Miniatury z dziejów polsko-greckich* (Wrocław, 2019), p. 546.

⁴⁰ Aleksander Śliziński was, among other things, founder and honorary vice-president of the Greek-Polish Chamber of Commerce. National Digital Archives, box 1-G-463a.

⁴¹ W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja, kadry, działalność* (Torun, 2006), p. 216.

⁴² A. Chadzinikolau, *Polsko-greckie związki społeczne, kulturalne i literackie w ciągu wieków* (Poznan, 2001), p. 53.

⁴³ *Rocznik Służby Zagranicznej Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, p. 78.

of the Sea League in Warsaw from 1921, founder of the French-Polish Consortium for the construction of the seaport in Gdynia (1924) and organiser and first director of the State Enterprise “Żegluga Polska” (1926-1932). In addition, he founded the Polish-British Shipbuilding Society and the Gdynia-America Shipping Lines company. He also excelled as the first president of the Polish Shipowners Association (1929). In addition, he was a member of the Gdynia City Council, serving for a time as its mayor (1928). Among his major initiatives, was the establishment of the Holiday of the Sea, the co-organisation of the Polish Yacht Club and the Rotary Club. During the Second World War in Greece, when there was no longer a Polish diplomatic post in the country in April 1941, Rummel took care of Polish citizens. After the war, in 1946, he came to Poland, where, until 1951, he served as an advisor to the Minister of Shipping.⁴⁴ He wrote his memoirs.⁴⁵

The “Polish Colony” in Greece during the Interwar Period and Envoy Günther’s Diplomatic Activity in the 1930s. An Outline

Until 1939, only a few Polish citizens regularly resided on Greek soil. Those who did were members of what was known as the Polish colony.⁴⁶ The 1920s saw a heightened role of Polish diplomacy in relief operations at a time when Polish refugees fleeing revolution-torn Russia were arriving in Greek ports. The influx of refugees grew after the Treaty of Riga was signed in March 1921, and repatriated Poles from the East began pouring in. It is estimated that between 1920 and 1922, a total of 750 to 1,000 people, including around a dozen Jews, made their way to the Greek ports. The refugees were mainly officers, soldiers and members of the Polish intelligentsia.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Hass, *Masoneria polska*, pp. 288–289; Z. Nowak, *Słownik biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, vol. 4 (Gdańsk, 1997), pp. 112–113; J. Pertek, “Rummel Julian Eugeniusz (1879–1954),” in *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 32 (Wrocław, 1989–1991), pp. 90–92.

⁴⁵ Only part of it has been published. From the preface, we learn that the author did not write a memoir of the war time. J. Rummel, *Narodziny żeglugi*, selection, introd. and notes by M. Rdeśniński (Gdańsk, 1980).

⁴⁶ Colonies in Greece were groups of settlers representing foreign countries, e.g. Great Britain, France, Poland, etc.

⁴⁷ For more, See J. Knopek, “Repatriacja polskich uchodźców cywilnych i wojskowych z Rosji przez Grecję i Cypr w latach 1920–1922,” *Nautologia*, 3–4 (1996), pp. 15–17; W. Stępiak, “Potencjalna sojuszniczka czy drugorzędny partner? Grecja w polityce polskiej w latach 1920–1923,” *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 3–4 (1995), pp. 151–167.

Jacek Knopek estimated that, throughout the interwar period, there were, on average, one hundred or so Poles in Greece. They were mainly associated with the Polish diplomatic service and the commercial enterprises operating there. Of the more significant Polish business initiatives, mention can be made of a chemical and pharmaceutical factory owned by A. Gąsecki (first name not provided). This group of Poles also included sailors and⁴⁸ Polish miners working in Greek pyrite mines between the wars.⁴⁹

In mentioning statistics for this Polish group, a separate treatment must be given to Polish Jewish citizens who made a stop in Thessaloniki on their way to Palestine as part of the illegal emigration (*aliyah bet*), which was particularly strong in the 1930s. Greece was, if not the most important, then certainly a key transfer point for Jews heading to Palestine both between the two World Wars and during the Second World War, until it was occupied by the Third Reich forces.⁵⁰ The specific nature of Thessaloniki and the difficult economic conditions, anti-Semitism and, at the same time, a very thriving Thessaloniki Zionism meant that a large number of local Jews were also among the emigrants – the city's Jewish population fell from around 93,000 in the 1930s to, according to researchers, 53,000–55,000 (20% of the total population). Jews were heading not only to Palestine but also to Western Europe and South America.⁵¹

The transport of Polish Jews arriving illegally in Thessaloniki was handled by two shipping companies based in Warsaw: the Italian consortium Società di

⁴⁸ J. Knopek, "Z dziejów kontaktów polsko-greckich," *Śląskie Studia Historyczne*, 2 (1993), p. 48.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, "Polscy górnicy w greckich kopalniach pirytu w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej," *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 3–4 (1995), pp. 275–282; *idem*, *Polacy w Grecji*, p. 146.

⁵⁰ A. Patek, *Żydzi w drodze do Palestyny 1934–1944. Szkice z dziejów aliji bet nielegalnej imigracji żydowskiej* (Cracow, 2009), p. 73. A short diary by an unknown author, written in Polish in 1934, has been preserved in the Yad Vashem Archives (hereinafter YVA). It discusses the difficult journey that the participants of the *aliyah bet* had to make. On the ship *Velos*, the author and other Jews arrived, among other places, at the Greek port of Siros (Syros), located on the island of the same name in the Cyclades archipelago in the Aegean Sea. See YVA, O.33, Testimonies, Diaries and Memoirs Collection, file 9693, Diary of an unknown person, apparently born in Poland, regarding an unsuccessful attempt to make *aliyah* to Eretz Israel on the ship, *Velos* as part of a group of illegal immigrants in September 1934, and the forced return of most of the illegal immigrants to Poland, November 1934).

⁵¹ P.I. Hagouel, "History of the Jews of Salonika and the Holocaust: An Expose," *Sephardic Horizons* 3/3 (2013), p. 6; J. Nehama, "The Jews of Salonika and the Rest of Greece under Hellenic Rule: The Death of a Great Community," in *The Western Sephardim*, vol. 2, ed. by R.D. Barnett and W.M. Schwab (Grendon, 1989), p. 247. On Zionists in Thessaloniki, see S. Shrougo, "The Thessaloniki Jewish Pioneers in the Haifa Waterfront 1929–1932," *Israel Affairs* 26 (2020), pp. 875–888.

Navigazione a Vapore – Lloyd Triestino and the French company Compagnie Française de Navigation à Vapeur – Fabre Line. The former transported emigrants by rail from Greece to Trieste, and from there by ship to Palestine via the port of Alexandria, while the latter took them to Constanța in Romania, from where they travelled via the Black and Aegean Seas to ports in the Middle East. Jacek Knopek claimed that for the Polish diplomatic representation:

They were elusive. They lived, without completing registration and passport formalities, with relatives and friends. These Jews did not show up to complete their military records or respond to announcements from the Polish Legation.⁵²

According to sources, however, the issue of Jewish emigrants and the position of Jews in Greece was monitored primarily by the Honorary Consul Nehama. Not only did he discreetly observe the practice, but also, among other things, carried out relief activities for illegal Jewish emigrants.⁵³ In addition, he took a keen interest in the anti-Jewish riots in Thessaloniki in 1931.⁵⁴ He also tried to maintain good relations with the local Jewish community.⁵⁵

The revival of the life of the Polish colony in Greece, combined with increased tourist traffic from Poland and new Polish-Greek trade and cultural contacts, occurred during the period when Günther arrived in Athens.⁵⁶ In particular, between 1936 and 1938 he took a number of initiatives that brought the two states and their elites closer together. These issues have already been discussed in the literature,

⁵² Knopek, *Polacy w Grecji*, p. 146.

⁵³ We can draw our knowledge of the situation of people of Jewish origin in interwar Greece from Polish sources – the Polish Legation in Athens and the Polish Consulate in Thessaloniki. A total of six folders on Jewish affairs in the interwar years can be found from these. See Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records, hereinafter ANN), Legation of the Republic of Poland in Athens, 228, 367, 457; AAN, Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Thessaloniki, 6, 41, 58.

⁵⁴ AAN, Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Thessaloniki, 6. On the anti-Jewish violence in Thessaloniki in the early 1930s, See A.A. Kallis, “The Jewish Community of Salonica under Siege: The Anti-Semitic Violence of the Summer 1931,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20/1 (2006), pp. 34–56; G.D. Michalopoulos, “The Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy and the persecution of Jews in interwar Salonica,” *Studia Krytyczne* 1 (2015), pp. 48–63.

⁵⁵ Between 1933 and 1943, the rabbi was the German-born Tzvi Koretz. For more information, see: M. Rozen, “Jews and Greeks Remember Their Past: The Political Career of Tzevi Koretz (1933–1943),” *Jewish Social Studies* 12/1 (2005), pp. 111–166.

⁵⁶ Knopek, *Polacy w Grecji*, p. 155.

although rather superficially.⁵⁷ Consul Nehama also successfully contributed to the reinvigorating of Polish-Greek relations in the Second Polish Republic. He was active primarily in the field of trade.⁵⁸

The Situation of the Legation and its Main Tasks after the Outbreak of the Second World War

In September 1939, the Polish Legation in Athens began to operate in a war-time mode, following instructions. The envoy wrote as late as 12 August: "Athens in August and September becomes deserted because of the heat. Having returned from Warsaw [...], I found the city empty, a lack of work at the Legation and boredom in the air."⁵⁹ As he confessed in his memoirs, however, he was not surprised by the outbreak of war. He stressed that he had learnt of the fact from dispatches flowing to the editorial office of the Greek daily *Eleftheri Vima*, rather than from the British Legation, from which he had expected to receive this kind of news.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ For more, see J. Knopek, "O kontaktach wybrzeża gdańskiego z Grecją," *Nautologia* 1 (1995), pp. 56–57; also *Biuletyn Ogólny PAT* 126 (1936), p. 8; "Król Jerzy grecki przyjął wiceministra Bobkowskiego na specjalnej audiencji," *Chwila*, 6303a (1936), p. 4; "Ulica Polska w Salonikach," *Czas* 23 (1936), p. 4; "Poseł Rzplitej u króla Grecji," *Czas*, 119 (1936), p. 1; "Pierwszy lot do Palestyny," *Czas* 286 (1936), p. 4; "Echa wypadku polskiego samolotu komunikacyjnego," *Czas* 335 (1936), p. 3; "Olbrzymi 2-motorowy Douglas leci po raz wtóry do Palestyny," *Dziennik Polski*, 309 (1936), p. 2; "Międzynarodowy Kongres Teologii Prawosławnej," *Kurjer Warszawski* 330 (1936), p. 4; "Prelekcja uczonego polskiego w Atenach," *Kurjer Wileński* 142 (1936), p. 6; "Współpraca polsko-grecka w dziedzinie lotniczej i kolejowej," *Polska Zbrojna* 275 (1936), p. 2; "Wręczenie insygniów Orderu Białego Orła królowi Grecji," *Czas* 116 (1937), p. 2; "Polski Krzyż Zasługi dla wioski greckiej," *Wieczorna Gazeta Wileńska* 137 (1937), p. 2; "Ateny," *Biuletyn Ogólny Polskiej Agencji Prasowej* 164 (1938), p. 6; *Biuletyn Ogólny Polskiej Agencji Telegraficznej* 166 (1938), p. 13; "Król grecki dokonał otwarcia wystawy sztuki polskiej w Atenach," *Czas* 13 (1938), p. 3; "Medale greckie dla Krakowa," *Czas* 211 (1938), p. 8; "Grecja," *Czas* 248 (1938), p. 2; "Adres Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności dla Tow. Archeologicznego w Atenach," *Czas* 302 (1938), p. 5; [no title], *Polska Zbrojna* 164 (1938), p. 2.

⁵⁸ For more information, see Malinowski, *Hellenopolonica*, pp. 546–547. See also "Wycieczka grecka w Krakowie," *Czas* 108 (1928), p. 2; *Wiadomości Gospodarcze Izby Przemysłowo-Handlowej we Lwowie* 10 (1928), p. 235; "Reprezentanci życia gospodarczego Grecji na PWK," *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny* 182 (1929), p. 9; [no title], *Ziemia Lubelska* 181 (1931), p. 1; "Konsulowie honorowi nad morzem," *Kurjer Warszawski* 254 (1933), p. 3; "Goście zagraniczni w uzdrowiskach polskich," *Kurjer Warszawski* 276 (1933), p. 6; "5-lecie LOTU w Salonikach," *Polska Zbrojna* 123 (1934), p. 2; "Wysokie odznaczenie konsula polskiego w Salonikach," *Nowy Dziennik* 282 (1936), p. 11.

⁵⁹ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 20.

⁶⁰ In 1939, right before September, the plan was to recall Günther from his diplomatic post and send Karol Dubicz-Penther as his replacement. H. Batowski, *Z dziejów dyplomacji polskiej na obczyźnie wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1941 r.* (Cracow–Wrocław, 1984), p. 41.

Under the new wartime conditions, the staff of the Polish post initially increased to 17 people and work intensified due to the influx of refugees, both military and civilian. Years later, Günther singled out the work of Secretary Stanisław Szydłowski, Władysław Woynowski and Józef Lipski, Tadeusz Szumański and Zdzisław Kamiński. The latter three had left their commercial councillor posts to take up “heavy administrative work.”⁶¹ The insubordination of the then Secretary Zygfryd Englisch, who “deceitfully changed orders and arbitrarily burned cipher archives” that contained documents dating back to September 1935 and was dismissed from the Legation for this, became an obstacle in the implementation of tasks.⁶²

At the end of April 1940, the diplomatic staff in Greece were downsized. Günther wrote:

The departure of [Stanisław] Szydłowski coincides with the departure of our accountant. This leaves me without a deputy, head of the Consular Section, cashier [...]. Urgent need to assign a civil servant with diplomatic and consular experience as from 1 May.⁶³

The new civil servant turned out to be *Szczęśny Zalewski*, who had been reassigned from Bucharest.⁶⁴ The loss of the Legation’s staff was associated with its voluntary enlistment with the armed forces.⁶⁵

The actively running anti-Polish German propaganda was another problem. The envoy tried to counter it systemically by asking that Counsellor Śmieszek (first name missing), a person whom he valued, be restored to his post as press attaché to parry the Third Reich and Greece’s attacks in 1940.⁶⁶ The diplomat informed the headquarters that, in February 1940, the Greek newspapers published an official

⁶¹ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 167.

⁶² Unfortunately, the matter was not discussed in depth by the envoy. HI, MFA, box, 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 8 to the MFA from Angers, 3 February 1940.

⁶³ HI, MFA, box 214, f. 9, Coded telegram No. 37 from Günther, 24 April 1940.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 11, MFA Coded telegram No. 39, 25 April 1940.

⁶⁵ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 167.

⁶⁶ HI, MFA, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 15, 6 March 1940; *ibid.*, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 25, 31 March 1940.

German communique concerning alleged atrocities committed by Poles against the German minority in Poland and announced a big publication concerning the acts of alleged terror committed against Germans.⁶⁷ Even though the German propaganda was certainly actively operating in Greece, no noticeable tensions in German-Polish relations happened. In confidential reports sent from Greece to his headquarters, Envoy of the Third Reich, Victor von Erbach-Schönberg, tried to describe Günther's position as weaker than it actually was. Henryk Batowski estimated that the German envoy wanted to curry favour with Berlin by so doing, because there was little he could have done to weaken Günther's position in Athens.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the fact remains that, in the context of the ongoing propaganda war, the Polish diplomatic mission in Athens was not regarded by the MFA as important. One of its manifestations was the fact that anti-German propaganda materials published by Poland arrived at the French Legation in Greece sooner than they arrived at the Polish diplomatic mission. This was the reason why the Polish envoy was unable to engage in more effective countermeasures against the German disinformation targeting Poles.⁶⁹

The October aggression against Greece by the Italian armed forces (28 October 1940) had a huge impact on the Polish Legation's internal affairs, just as it did the entire country. Greece lost its neutral country status. The atmosphere of threat also affected the envoy – as early as in June of that year, Günther had considered the possibility of evacuation,⁷⁰ and – following the invasion in October 1940 – he suggested that his duties be taken over by the Brazilian Legation.⁷¹ Handing over the Polish affairs to the British Legation was another option that was considered. However, these plans became irrelevant after the Greeks defended their country against the botched Italian invasion.⁷² Regarding evacuation, the chief of the mis-

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 11, 13 February 1940.

⁶⁸ The German representative reported to Berlin that the Polish envoy was “tolerated” in diplomatic circles, while he was treated as an equal with other diplomats. See H. Batowski, *Walka dyplomatycznej hitlerowskiej przeciw Polsce 1939–1945* (Cracow–Wrocław, 1984), p. 66.

⁶⁹ HI, MFA, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 24, 29 March 1940.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 61, 11 June 1940.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, box 38, f. 11, Coded telegram from the envoy to the MFA, 28 October 1940.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Coded telegram from the envoy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 30 October 1940. During the Italian invasion of Greece, the Kamiński couple became involved in helping the army. As it was extremely cold at the time, the Greek soldiers, unaccustomed to low temperatures, began to suffer from frostbite. Thanks to the Kamiński's passion for mountaineering, Greek apothecaries, unfamiliar

sion received a clear and decisive instruction from London, penned by Foreign Minister August Zaleski, telling him that because Greece had acceded to the Allied group,⁷³ evacuation would only be possible together with the Greek government.⁷⁴

In early autumn of that year, other important changes occurred in the Polish Legation. In 1940, Günther was appointed, albeit briefly, as head of the “A” Field Office of the Supreme Commander’s Second Department. Captain Tadeusz Szefer and *rotmistrz* (Cavalry Captain) Antoni Smodlibowski were assigned to help him. The first acted as a private person (a downgraded diplomat with the right of stay), and the second worked on a contract for the Legation. By the same token, Günther was able to use the military cypher.⁷⁵ In October, Colonel Edward Lewandowski was appointed head of the field office.⁷⁶ A radio transmitter was installed and operating since September, through which contact with the Polish government was maintained. Information about the radio station reached the Greeks and the British allies as late as during evacuation in 1941.⁷⁷

with the subject, received instructions from them on what and how to prepare remedies and protective measures against frostbite. They were prepared on the basis of sheep suet. The initiative may not have had a huge impact, but the Greek elite remembered how the Kamińskis’ reacted. See Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 174.

⁷³ Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, Greek issues were extremely rarely discussed in the Polish press. Let us quote how, on 31 August 1939, the need for Greece to stand clearly on the side of the opponents of Hitler’s policy was argued: “In an alliance with England it can gain everything, i.e. the preservation of its present possessions and the liquidation, once and for all, of the Italian threat, probably also the liquidation of Italian rule in the Dodecanese and perhaps even the autonomy of Cyprus. Without this alliance, on the other hand, it will be exposed to constant exploitation and abuse by those for whom the guarantees and even the alliance commitments were only worth as much as there was something to be gained. Of course, there is no fear that Greece would even for a moment consider siding with Italy and Germany. To have to submit in everything to these strong and ruthless possible allies would spell the end of Greek independence. [...] It must, therefore, be reiterated that, although no special act of alliance has, so far as is known, been signed between Greece and England, the Kingdom of Greece, with its innumerable valuable naval and air bases, with its not the worst naval fleet of a dozen light craft and its excellent naval material, and with its ever-improving army, today one hundred thousand strong, and in the event of mobilisation six times stronger, can be regarded as an ally of the peace front.” See “Ateny w sierpniu,” *Kurjer Warszawski*, 240 (1939), p. 2.

⁷⁴ HI, MFA, box 224, f. 2, MFA telegram No. 52, 28 October 1940. The envoy’s doubts about his decision to remain in Greece at that time were mentioned by the military attaché there, Tadeusz Machalski (1893–1983). T. Machalski, *Co widziałem i przeżyłem* (London, 1980), p. 177.

⁷⁵ HI, MFA, box 224, f. 2, MFA telegram No. 45 [date illegible; on the analysis of the contents of the telegram, probably September].

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, MFA telegram No. 49, 15 October 1940.

⁷⁷ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, pp. 162 ff. The literature on the subject emphasises Günther’s negative attitude towards the organisation of a liaison and intelligence outpost crypt. “Grzegorz” on the

As regards the Legation's main tasks, in September 1939, the MFA returned to its pre-war plans to create a central reloading station in Athens for all transports, especially military ones, sent from the West to Poland. Tadeusz Kobylański and Wiktor Tomir Drymmer had been put in charge of this operation, but it never took off.⁷⁸

Even though this plan had been doomed to failure because of the ramifications of Greece's policy, the Legation succeeded in going through with other operations that helped the Polish state fight for its existence. One of them was the evacuation of the Polish Armed Forces from Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia across Greece to France, the Middle East and England. Thanks to Günther's efforts and despite Greece's initial obstructions, between 12 and 15 thousand Polish army servicemen were systematically moved in 1940. Every day, fifty or so people would arrive in Greece and be given the right to stay for one week in Athens and Thessaloniki. However, the Greek authorities, who were kindly disposed towards the Polish army, did not check if they overstayed.⁷⁹ The Polish Legation even succeeded in increasing the daily contingent to 70 servicemen. They were sent to the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade formed under the command of Stanisław Kopański.⁸⁰ The flexible stance of the Greek authorities on the issue led to discussions in the Foreign Ministry about trying to win the Greek government's consent for mass transports, but it was eventually decided that they were doubtful, and no official intervention was recommended on the matter.⁸¹ The diplomatic mission also conducted recruitment for the armed forces.⁸²

Regarding other minor tasks, the Polish diplomatic mission also attempted to save tobacco purchased in Greece. Unfortunately, since April 1940, the Polish Legation had not been able to trade it, i.e. it had not been able to take it out of Greece

territory of Greece. It stemmed from a conflict with General Kazimierz Sosnkowski – and in practice Department II and VI of the Supreme Commander's Staff – and the MFA and its agencies in Greece. It was intended to paralyse intelligence activities in the area. See Kaliszewicz, "Grzegorz," p. 92; Peplowski, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych*, vol. 1, pp. 310–311.

⁷⁸ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 156.

⁷⁹ W. Biegański, *Wojsko Polskie we Francji 1939–1940* (Warsaw, 1967), p. 134.

⁸⁰ HI, MFA, box 224, f. 2, MFA telegram to the Legation No. 69(?), 14 December 1940; *ibid.*, MFA telegram No. 42, 12 October 1940.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 14, 2 March 1940.

⁸² *Ibid.*, f. 8, J. Graliński's coded telegram No. 1 from Angers, 15 February 1940.

as a result of German pressure, although the Greek Government had promised the Polish side that the transport of this commodity to a safe place would be possible, as long as the Poles were able to collect it. According to information provided by the envoy, disloyalty was also shown by the French mission in Greece, which behaved passively in this matter despite declarations of assistance, and then took action to the detriment of Poland, which the envoy described as “insincere” behaviour. In view of the development of the war situation, Günther, therefore, judged that any expenditure on monopoly agendas was ill-advised.⁸³

In discussing the wartime circumstances of the Polish Legation’s activities, it is also important to note that, during the evacuation, which formally began on 12 April and lasted until 22 April, care was taken to ensure that its archival materials did not fall into German hands. When Third Reich troops occupied Athens on 27 April, Eberhard Künsberg’s special group immediately went to the Polish legation building, but the German side informed in its report to Berlin that it had not found any interesting materials there. The building of the diplomatic mission was taken over by the German army as quarters.⁸⁴

The Problem of Jewish Refugees and the Issue of the Evacuation of Polish Citizens

Günther wrote in his post-war memoirs that as early as in September, there were refugees from Poland, but from the end of 1939, the Greek authorities – due to the country’s neutral status at the time – were reluctant to allow Polish groups to stay permanently.⁸⁵ The first information about the number of refugees on Greek soil appeared in May 1940. At that time it was estimated that there were 50 Polish citizens, in October – as many as 60,⁸⁶ and the following month this number grew

⁸³ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 25, 4 April 1940. It was about the handover of Polish tobacco to the French treasury. *Ibid.*, Coded telegram No. 20, 21 March 1940.

⁸⁴ Eberhard Künsberg headed a special diplomatic group, which in fact operated within the SS. Künsberg was an officer of this formation. After the defeat of the Second Republic, he went through the Polish MFA archives in Warsaw and then Polish diplomatic missions in other European countries. See Batowski, *Walka dyplomacji*, p. 126.

⁸⁵ HI, MFA, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA concerning the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 48, 17 May 1940; *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, czerwiec 1940 – czerwiec 1941*, vol. 2, ed. W. Rojek (Cracow, 1995), p. 159.

to 100. The Council of Ministers assessed that, as a result, the refugees in Greece “did not present much of an issue.”⁸⁷ The government’s attention was focused on larger problems caused by displacements, e.g. in Wilno.⁸⁸

Until November 1940, Jewish issues were not separated from the overall refugee issue. The situation changed after the Italian attack on Greece in the autumn of 1940 (28 October). The envoy stressed that initially, all the newcomers were materially worse off than the soldiers, as no government funds could be found to support them. For this reason, the head of the Polish diplomatic mission was forced to turn to his compatriots in the USA for help, thanks to which the first modest sums arrived, sent by an anonymous priest.⁸⁹ Günther also asked the Greeks for help, and they donated and organised a fundraiser for Polish refugees. Greek financiers K. Papastratos and G. Pesmazoglou (no first names in the sources) spearheaded the campaign. They managed to raise about half a million drachmas, a relatively large amount.⁹⁰

Zdzisław Kamiński, responsible for dealing directly with refugees, was put in charge of distributing the funds:

A special commission was set up to oversee and properly distribute these funds. Commercial Counsellor Zdzisław Kamiński represented the Legation on the Commission. Thanks to his tact and diligence, the welfare section could act in Athens for almost two years to the satisfaction of the people whom it served and operating within its means.⁹¹

Perhaps at the end of 1939 or in early 1940, relief funds for the masses of refugees began to flow from the Polish government in Angers, never fully meeting the growing demand. The envoy, aware of the financial constraints, promoted the idea of evacuation to Turkey.⁹² He first turned to the MFA with a request for funds for

⁸⁷ HI, MFA, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 61, 11 June 1940; *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów*, p. 159.

⁸⁸ For more, see Leon Rappaport, *Komitet Pomocy Uchodźcom Polakom w Wilnie (19 września 1939 – 1 stycznia 1941)*, ed. A. Gontarek (Lublin, 2020).

⁸⁹ Günther mentioned Father Mieczysław Figas, but he was in the Dachau camp during the war.

⁹⁰ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 166.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁹² *Ibid.*

evacuation purposes in June 1940.⁹³ Even though his request was granted, he had problems with cashing funds allocated in June, because checks made out to the Legation were not honoured. The Legation most acutely felt the lack of funds in the summer of 1940. Günther wrote at the time: “The legation has not a penny to spend – it is of the utmost urgency to hand over a larger sum for the upkeep of the civilian refugees, or optionally, to send them on Romanian ships or by train to Turkey.”⁹⁴ Günther specified that he is short by 10 thousand pounds sterling and 150 thousand French francs.⁹⁵ The monthly upkeep of one person, or the cost of their immediate evacuation by trail to Turkey, was estimated at five thousand drachmas.⁹⁶

The financial situation of the diplomatic mission was not faring any better either. The funds fell to a critical low point in February 1941. The envoy complained that he had no funds to engage in active diplomacy. His own means were so modest that he was unable to keep up with other European diplomats in Greece when it came to maintaining social contacts and the salaries of the other legation staff allowed them to – as he put it – “lead a student’s existence.”⁹⁷

In November 1940, seventy Polish Jews were living in Greece, according to documents.⁹⁸ Actually, there were more because the statistics that provided the number of passport holders did not include children, who were added to their parents’ documents.⁹⁹ Jewish refugees arrived in Greece in waves. The first and biggest wave came in May and June 1940, triggered by the German invasion of France, followed by the same year’s autumn military attack on Greece by Italy. The envoy reported that Jewish refugees had also been arriving from Vienna through

⁹³ HI, MFA, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 62, 12 June 1940.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram No. 59, 6 June 1940.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram No. 57, 3 June 1940.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram No. 61, 11 June 1940.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 26 February 1941.

⁹⁸ The number of Jews varied all the time thereafter. Sometimes the envoy singled out a Jewish group and sometimes he did not, which makes it impossible to trace the refugee statistics precisely in terms of nationality. The inconsistency was due to the fact that he had neither the need to check whether a Polish citizen was Jewish or not, nor were there any guidelines for dividing Polish citizens by nationality. The nationality statistics were certainly presented at the request of the superiors, who in turn were perhaps motivated to do so by the British side.

⁹⁹ HI, MFA, box 516, f. 11, Telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Polish Ambassador in London, 21 November 1940.

Hungary and even Odessa, but the majority had come through Italy.¹⁰⁰ He reported that in May 1940, a refugee transport was not possible.¹⁰¹ The influx of Polish Jews into Greece was resisted by the Greek authorities, mainly because Turkey, Palestine and Egypt imposed a ban on visas, including transit visas for Polish citizens, especially Polish Jews. This resulted in refugees piling up in Greece, which the local elite believed was bad for the country.¹⁰²

The situation was made more complex also because of the allies' activities. In the first week of June 1940, the British and French admiralties stopped their ships from sailing the Mediterranean eastwards and westwards. This caused all refugees (both military and civilian) to remain for an undetermined period of time in Athens. The Greek visa programme was also put on hold. At the end of July or August, the MFA recommended that the Legation intervenes with the British to start sea transports from Alexandretta (present-day Iskenderun) to Haifa. The envoy was also urgently called on for more transit visits through Bulgaria and Turkey.¹⁰³

The situation on the ground forced the Polish diplomatic mission to create evacuation channels from Greece. Interestingly enough, the head of the Legation of the Republic of Poland offered his opinion as early as in May that year, whereby all refugees should leave Greece because it was not safe for Polish citizens. The envoy was aware that the success of Poland's evacuation plans from Greece hinged on British and French actions regarding the availability of their ships and other types of infrastructure. In May, he asked British and French diplomats for their opinion about the fate of Polish refugees. Unfortunately, as he would later report to the MFA, the former "had no plan," while the latter "intends to advise those of his compatriots who have no connection to Greece to leave the country."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 53, 25 May 1940; *ibid.*, Coded telegram No. 50, 21 May 1940.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, box 224, f. 2, MFA telegram, 31 July or September [poorly legible date].

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, box 214, f. 10, Coded telegram No. 48, 17 May 1940.

The envoy's first diplomatic efforts concerning Jewish refugees can be dated to September 1940, still before the Greek-Italian war.¹⁰⁵ They were continued after that war broke out. The envoy paid a visit to the British representative in Athens – Michael Palairet – but he only managed to be criticised for causing panic.¹⁰⁶ Talks concerning refugee affairs with the aim of sending this group of Poles to a safe place were also held at the Foreign Office that November.¹⁰⁷ The same month, the MFA Secretary – Jan Ciechanowski – also took an interest in the fate of those Poles in Greece. He instructed the Polish ambassador in London to intervene on their behalf during talks with the British side but to no effect.¹⁰⁸

Foreign Minister August Zaleski also spoke out about the Jewish group in Greece. He drew Günther's attention to "the impossibility of nagging the British government with incessant interventions to increase the refugee contingent" to Palestine. At a Council of Ministers meeting on 19 November 1940, the minister argued that:

Just as we barely managed to get Foreign Secretary Halifax to promise that he would kindly increase the contingent in Palestine, the Envoy of the Republic of Poland in Athens sends a dispatch requesting visas to Palestine for seventy Jewish families, who had arrived in Greece thanks to bribes, weigh heavily on the reputation enjoyed by the Polish colony in Greece, who are well looked upon by the Greek authorities.¹⁰⁹

It is hard to find much understanding for Jewish refugees in these words. After the Italian attack on Greece, Günther also spoke about them in unfavourable terms, but it did not stop him from helping them:

The last few weeks have seen the arrival in Athens of about a dozen Jewish families, Polish citizens, on visas obtained through bribes. [...] They are regarded

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *HI, MFA*, box 516, f. 11, Telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Polish Ambassador in London, 21 November 1940.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter from Jan Ciechanowski to the Polish ambassador in London, 21 November 1940.

¹⁰⁹ *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Ministrów*, pp. 173–174.

in Greece as unwanted elements, especially since the time of the Italian war. In addition, by being an uncertain element, they discredit the native Polish colony politically. We have made efforts via the English Legation to send them to Palestine, but visas there depend on the immigration contingent.¹¹⁰

In another document, he called them not only an “uncertain element” but also “unnecessary” and “harmful.”¹¹¹ This atmosphere was most likely caused by reports that unidentified Jews in Greece and in the Balkans were working for Germans. The envoy was informed about this by the “A” Field Office of the Supreme Commander’s Second Department and from the Greek police’s semi-official reports. He also received information about large-scale arrests in October in Warsaw that resulted from their activities. The envoy took an interest in the issue as early as October of that year when he asked the MFA for a speedy clarification of the role that Jews who were Polish citizens played in Greece. He motivated his request by arguing that the Legation had neither the funds nor the instruments to carry out an investigation into the matter. A note inscribed on the telegram says that this issue was planned to be raised with the Foreign Office, but no subsequent correspondence between the envoy and the MFA made any mention of it.¹¹²

The next steps taken to further the cause of refugees involved non-stop negotiations with the British side. In November, the envoy suggested to the MFA that it initiate talks regarding this matter with the British side, which would “lead to such Jews being treated as refugees and not as immigrants and to granting them refugee visas, as well as creating for them special conditions of stay, concentration camps notwithstanding.”¹¹³ Most probably, Great Britain recognised this group as refugees on Greek soil – the moment they wanted to set foot in Palestine, British civil servants treated them as immigrants.

The MFA’s response to the refugee question in Greece came as late as in February 1941. The Ministry informed the envoy about its decisions regarding the

¹¹⁰ HI, MFA, box 516, f. 11, Coded telegram, 18 November 1940.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, box 516, f. 11, Coded telegram No. 132, 3 December 1940.

¹¹³ It is not a type of German Nazi concentration camp, but an internment camp. *Ibid.*, Coded telegram, 18 November 1940.

refugees, which had been consulted with the Foreign Office. The refugees were to be evacuated, and initial procedures for that were agreed: the first group was to include refugee groups who had been evacuated from Yugoslavia and people at risk who had come from Hungary, and finally – from Greece. Moreover, Minister Zaleski wrote: “At the moment, we are also unable to take measures to evacuate 100 refugees from Greece, which does not mean they cannot try to do so on their own.”¹¹⁴ In March, their number increased to 150.¹¹⁵ Possibly some Jewish refugees managed to leave for Palestine by their own efforts. This is evidenced by an account published in *The Australian Jewish Post*, which reported the arrival in Haifa of 49 Jews from Greece in February 1941. They came from Italy.¹¹⁶

Günther showed his dissatisfaction with his Ministry’s response. A month later, having put pressure on the English envoy in Greece and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talks with the British partner about refugees resumed. This time the Polish Ministry presented the results of negotiations with the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Social Welfare. With regard to visas, the British side, declaratively announced that, if the Polish government was prepared to support all such refugees on British territory throughout the war, it would be willing to consider, as part of its overall evacuation plans, placing those refugees that were at risk on its soil. The British, however, ruled out Palestine as a destination. The subsequent round of Polish-British talks also ended with a request from the Foreign Office for:

A comment from the Polish government on the evacuation of Polish nationals from Greece, specifically to see whether there are sufficiently urgent grounds to seek the evacuation of refugees from Greece, as there may be other areas more currently at risk and, therefore, requiring that Polish refugees who were most vulnerable were taken out from there.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 8, MFA telegram, 15 February 1941.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Telegram, 20 March 1941.

¹¹⁶ “News from Palestine,” *Australian Jewish Post* 21 (1941), p. 4.

¹¹⁷ HI, MFA, box 522, f. 7, Letter from the MFA to the MSW, 8 March 1941. See also *ibid.*, Letter from the Foreign Office to the Polish Embassy in London, 3 March 1941 (T.M. Snow to Antoni Baliński).

In addition, at the beginning of March 1941, the British proposed a new evacuation route to the Polish MFA – Bombay.¹¹⁸ The suggestion was made on hearing that the Greek government had issued a decree in mid-February 1941 ordering the “definite departure” of Jewish refugees, with the number of Jews with Polish citizenship fluctuating until 12 March 1941: initially, there were about 70, then the number went down to 40, only to rise again to 60. This shows that they were constantly making their way to Greece, and then either turning up at the Polish diplomatic mission or disappearing from its sight.¹¹⁹ The variability in the numbers was not great, but knowledge of them had to be continually updated. We assume that, at the time, it was a group of several dozen people, not counting family members.¹²⁰

At the beginning of March 1941, the Greek government ordered the immediate departure of all foreigners from the country but never followed through with its implementation. All foreigners were officially given ten days to leave the country.¹²¹ In the wake of these events, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while preparing the envoy for the planned Bombay evacuation, instructed him to provide more information on the refugees (occupation, level of danger) and to identify the ones that were financially prepared to cover the costs of leaving and living in the asylum area.¹²² The talks concerned a total of one hundred Polish citizens at the time, including 40 Jews.¹²³

However, Günther and his superiors soon realised that sending a Polish group to distant Bombay was beyond the capabilities of even the UK, which also recognised this and quickly abandoned the initiative. What remained, therefore, was the well-worn and only way to solve the refugee problem in Greece, namely, to seek Palestinian visas. In the second half of March 1941, the envoy once again sought to obtain them personally – in correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 7 March 1941.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram, 12 February 1941.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Coded telegram, 7 March 1941; *ibid.*, Letter from the MFA to the MSW of 22 March 1941.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 7 March 1941.

¹²² *Ibid.*, f. 8, Coded MFA telegram, 17 March 1941.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, f. 7, Coded telegram, 7 March 1941.

¹²⁴ On the issue of visas, there was a fruitless exchange of letters between the Polish and British sides: the British envoy, at the request of the Polish envoy in February 1941, requested visas for Palestine, from where the matter went to the Colonial Office in London. *Ibid.*, f. 7, Coded telegram, 12 February 1941.

Unfortunately, the British were still reluctant to issue them, although they were aware that, according to the decision of the Greek authorities, there was a real danger of Jews without the required documents being sent to an internment camp on one of the Greek islands.¹²⁵

Despite his failures to obtain visas, the envoy had the full support of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who believed that pressure had to be continually exerted on the British regarding Jews. The head of the Ministry added, however, that “this category of refugees from Greece should also not burden the State Treasury in the future,” which, for unknown reasons, suggested that the cost of their upkeep in the evacuation area would not be borne by the Polish state.¹²⁶

By the end of March, it had become clear that the Greek authorities did not intend to take radical steps against either Jewish foreigners or the rest of the foreigners, but this did not solve the refugee problem. At the time, Günther described the situation of the Polish group as follows, pointing out the ever-present issue of refugees with Polish citizenship:

On the 22nd of this month, the English Legation received instructions not to grant visas to Polish nationals other than professionals to Palestine and even India. This decision detains in Greece 70 Polish citizens unfit for the army and makes it impossible for any Polish citizen to obtain entry or residence except those already present, as the Greek authorities are absolutely opposed to increasing the number of foreigners.¹²⁷

The Situation of the Legation after the German Attack on Greece (6 April 1941) and Efforts to Obtain Visas

Four days before the German invasion, i.e. on 2 April, the Ministry of Social Welfare sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicating the need for an organised evacuation from Greece.¹²⁸ Perhaps the Ministry spoke up about the refugee issue as a result of the intervention of Günther himself, who, certainly

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Coded telegram, 20 March 1941.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 27 March 1941.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from the MSW to the MFA of 2 April 1941.

by the time of the German attack on Greece, had sent a large number of coded messages to the MFA about visas. He also used the complaints procedure. This is evidenced by the Foreign Minister's reply to them, sent on the day of the German invasion of the Greek state:

Please stop sending visa complaints against the English and Polish governments. Both these governments, as one can guess, also have other problems than visas. Despite this, they are doing what they can to ease the plight of refugees.¹²⁹

A day later, another reply came out of the MFA office from Minister Zaleski, addressed to Günther, recommending that he make renewed efforts to obtain 70 refugee visas.¹³⁰ The change in tone was due to the fact that the prior coded message had been prepared before the German attack. From that point on, both the Legation of the Republic of Poland and the MFA were in intensive work mode. The envoy, in a reply sent to the MFA, quickly revised the refugee count. He demanded that the MFA cause the English Legation to make visa and transport facilitation and allow a Polish colony of not 70, but about 100 people to go to Egypt.¹³¹ The coded telegram of 11 April refers precisely to 100 Egyptian visas and the remaining Palestinian visas in an unknown number, indicating that the envoy may not have known the exact figure of the refugee group.¹³²

One can sense a lot of tension in the envoy's correspondence. On 12 April, a short message from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed that visas for Polish refugees had been obtained.¹³³ However, the envoy managed to send a telegram to London on the same day, asking the Foreign Office for the fourth time to "cause a proper response from the English" – six days had passed since the invasion, and in Greece, no energetic action had been taken by the British or Greek sides to organise evacuations.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 8, Coded MFA telegram, 6 April 1941.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Coded MFA telegram, 7 April 1941.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, box 5, f. 5, Coded telegram, 9 April 1941.

¹³² *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 11 April 1941.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, f. 8, Coded MFA telegram, 12 April 1941. British promises and assurances on visas were not taken for granted. On 14 April came a one-sentence coded telegram from the MFA, again announcing the granting of visas: "FO [Foreign Office] has promised to issue all visas." *Ibid.*, f. 8, Coded MFA telegram, 14 April 1941.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 12 April 1941.

At this time, the MFA ordered the Polish Legation in Athens to evacuate, with its staff reduced to a minimum and a radio station to maintain direct communication. In addition, the envoy was to draw up a list of 20 refugees at risk discreetly. Unfortunately, there is no data about who was on that list.¹³⁵

However, there were significant obstacles during the preparatory work for leaving Greece. These were caused by the envoy's lack of knowledge of Greek evacuation procedures and accompanying plans. This resulted in difficulties in initiating exit discussions in Greek government circles. Unfortunately, at the time, Greek policy managers were not yet considering the option. The envoy, realising the consequences of inaction, had a conversation with the deputy head of the Greek Foreign Ministry, Minister Dalmouzo (no name given), and then with the British and Turkish envoys. As a result, the Turkish envoy approached the Greek Foreign Ministry on 14 April about the evacuation and received a specific answer. The Greek authorities suggested that the foreign delegations would be divided into three groups: those that would remain in Greece despite the German threat, those that would leave with the Greek government, and those that would leave on their own in the face of the threat. The Polish envoy, after consultation with his superiors, opted for option two – evacuation with the Greek government.¹³⁶

Since the Greek government guaranteed a departure from Greek soil only by cargo-type vessels (cargo ships, container ships, etc.) without protection, in the end, according to the envoy, only the Polish, British and Yugoslavian embassies decided to leave. The American, Belgian, Brazilian and French, among others, stayed behind.¹³⁷

At that time, around 11 April, something shocking happened from the point of view of Polish-British relations in Greece. As a result of great negligence and a dismissive attitude on the British side, the Honorary Consul in Thessaloniki, Albert Nehama, was forced to leave Greek soil in extremely uncomfortable conditions. According to Günther's coded telegram, he hastily left the city, fleeing from

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 8, Coded MFA telegram, 12 April 1941.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, box 40, f. 9, Letter from Günther to the MFA regarding the accompaniment of the Polish envoy to the Greek government in Crete, 24 May 1941.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

the German troops, due to the fact that the English consul in Thessaloniki – despite receiving instructions from Athens – notified Nehama of his departure at the last minute and “did not allow [him] to board the ship on which the British and Yugoslav colonies were evacuating. This situation meant that, left to his own devices, Nehama sailed from Thessaloniki on a barge that unspecified Englishmen had helped him hire. This enabled him to sail to Chalcis on the island of Euboea. The evacuation took place at such a rapid pace that he did not have time to take any of his belongings with him.”¹³⁸ This information is the last source trace of the consul’s fate that has been found.

For the Polish evacuation operation, the decisive date was 14 April, when it was launched by the UK. On that day, once again, the London authorities assured the envoy that the refugees would receive visas – the FO [Foreign Office] has promised to issue all visas.” The Foreign Office had already written to the Polish side about this on 12 April.¹³⁹

Until then, i.e. from 12 April until the night of 15-16 April, when Palestinian visas were finally granted to the refugees, the situation had been very tense.¹⁴⁰ Namely, they noticed that Yugoslav citizens were leaving Greece without the required visas. As Günther relayed in a coded telegram, “upon hearing this, the Polish colony staged a scandal at our Legation about the failure of the Polish Government and the Legation to protect them from the German danger.” The Polish group numbered 194 at the time. Indeed, frightened by the advancing German invasion, the crowd of Polish refugees did not realise that the British ally was solely to blame for the delays. The envoy wrote on 12 April that the British were using vague criteria, indicating clear discrimination against Polish citizens. This was incidentally communicated to Günther without embarrassment. This situation says a lot about the British side’s fear of issuing visas to Polish refugees, especially Jews, who were suspected of wanting to remain forever in the Palestinian territories, which was against the interests of the United Kingdom at the time.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 11 April 1941.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram, 14 April 1941.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 12 April 1941; *Ibid.*, Coded telegram, 14 April 1941.

Tensions between the Polish Legation and the refugees culminated on 15 April. At that time, the envoy informed the MFA that the English and Egyptian legations had not received any instructions from their superiors and had not issued visas. He also pointed out that the departures of other legations and refugees representing other nations were going smoothly, except for the Polish group. The disappointment and fear in the Polish group were all the more remarkable as the German air force was bombing the country then, and the German navy was blocking Greek ports with magnetic mines.¹⁴²

The formalities dragged on until 17 April. At that time, the MFA informed the envoy that it had officially applied to the Foreign Office for visas for 194 Polish citizens. At this point, the Ministry instructed Günther to set up a social committee to make a selection: the first to leave Greek soil should be those at risk as a result of their activities and those deemed worthy, as well as the families of military officers and “members of the Palestinian brigade.” This instruction did not explicitly mention Jews.¹⁴³

Visa matters were formally settled for the last time on 20 April, when a coded telegram arrived from the Foreign Office to Günther, the last one he got in Athens, informing him of the outcome of the talks with the British. It was proposed that one hundred refugees were to go to Palestine, thirty Jews to Burma (now Myanmar) and the rest to India. From this breakdown, we can conclude that the British side requested and received information on the number of Jews in the Polish group. However, this was a selection that was not applied in practice, as the evacuations to Burma and India did not take place.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, Coded telegram, 15 April 1941. The treatment of the German Consul in Piraeus has become a symbolic expression of the real attitude of the Greek political leadership towards the Third Reich. While German troops were attacking Greece in April 1941, as the Polish envoy recorded after the war, he “remained throughout the war in his villa, at the highest point of Piraeus, which was the natural observation point of the port and all the traffic in it, thus being able to strictly control the transport of every English unit and all war material.” It was not until the 16th day of the war that the Greek authorities demanded that he go to Egypt on the ship *Elsi*, but he protested, announcing that he would only yield to physical force, and remained still at the consulate, awaiting the Germans in Athens. *Ibid.* 5, f. 5, Günther’s letter on the political collapse of Greece to the Foreign Office, 29 May 1941.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, f. 8, MFA telegram, 17 April 1941.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 7, Coded telegram, 17 April 1941; *ibid.*, f. 8, MFA telegram, 20 April 1941.

The Polish Contribution to the Organisation of the Evacuation from Greece

The main problems proved to be not only obtaining visas in time but also organising embarkation, which took place on the night of 16–17 April 1941.¹⁴⁵ The refugees were placed on board of a ship under the care of a certain Milecki – a person of undescribed functions, probably an intelligence officer.¹⁴⁶ This operation would not have succeeded had it not been for the attitude of Zdzisław Kamiński. While Günther concentrated on procedures, Kamiński dealt with bureaucratic-technical matters, i.e. “he was constantly running from Greek offices to foreign consulates, stamping passports at night, grouping together departing travellers and putting up with all their complaints and excuses with a smile before they turned into assurances of undying gratitude on departure.”¹⁴⁷

The Polish envoy was forced to work extremely intensively and very quickly, as the main blocker of the Polish departure turned out to be the British envoy in Greece, with whom Günther had already tried to discuss technical matters related to the evacuation on 10 April. Unfortunately, the consultations did not result in any decisions. The Polish group was deprived of English protection after receiving their visa permits. In his memoirs, Günther spared no malice towards Palaiet, describing a key meeting with him concerning the evacuation:

I remember it was 4 in the afternoon. [...]. As befits a good Englishman, although he came from a Catholic French family, he indulged in the “cup of tea” ritual with his wife and daughter. The hushed atmosphere of the drawing room, the nature of the family sitting and the deliberate distancing of the topic of conversation from current events, prevented me from proceeding immediately to the matter with which I had come, so that it was only after consuming the cake imported from England – which was emphasised – and after the obligatory cup of tea that I was able to present to him the necessity of the Polish colony’s departure.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 16 April 1941.

¹⁴⁷ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 181.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 179–180.

At the time, the British envoy still believed that the evacuation of the Poles would cause “comments and panic, to which he did not wish to contribute.”¹⁴⁹

Because the British envoy refused to take real care of the Polish refugees, Günther had to act solely on his own. The success of his mission was determined above all by a happy coincidence, as a Polish ship, aptly named *Warsaw*, arrived in Athens on 14 April, so an opportunity presented itself to put the refugees on board.¹⁵⁰ The ship was transporting Argentine meat to Europe, sailing under the British flag, but nonetheless subject to Polish control.¹⁵¹ When Günther found out about this, he pressured the English admiralty to make the ship available for Polish nationals.¹⁵²

Another problem after embarkation proved to be the departure itself, delayed by wrong decisions on the English side. In this situation, there were also difficulties in accessing the British envoy. Günther could not communicate with Palairat because he “had been in church since 9 am, where he was completing the liturgical ceremony of washing the feet of beggars and giving alms. For it was Maundy Thursday.”¹⁵³ The convoy eventually set off on 18 April.¹⁵⁴

It was estimated that, just before the evacuation, the Polish group numbered around 200 people (including 30 Jews).¹⁵⁵ In his evacuation report of 27 May 1941, Günther reported that a total of 300 refugees had been deported from Greece – 100 Polish nationals, 100 British and 100 other nationals. The envoy explained the presence of citizens of other countries on the Polish ship as a general “confusion,” which was the fault of the English envoy’s inept handling of the evacuation.¹⁵⁶ The envoy gave the same estimate in his memoirs, adding that the majority of these people were Jewish.¹⁵⁷ Another source referring to the statistics of refugees who success-

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹⁵⁰ HI, MFA, box 226, f. 7, Coded telegram, 14 April 1941.

¹⁵¹ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, pp. 180–181.

¹⁵² HI, MFA, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁵³ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, pp. 181.

¹⁵⁴ HI, MFA, box 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Letter from the MFA to the MSW, 24 April 1941.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

¹⁵⁷ Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, pp. 179–180.

fully fled Greece is *The Palestinian Post*. In the article “400 refugees arrived here from Greece,” the newspaper gave a figure of 400 refugees arriving on a ship from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁸ Another British newspaper, *The Scotsman*, reported that the same number of “British, Poles, Czechs, Germans, Jews and Yugoslavs” arrived.¹⁵⁹ Perhaps in the future, other available sources will make it possible to establish the exact number of Jews evacuated from Greece.

Günther on Michael Palairet’s Evacuation Measures

The British attitude throughout the evacuation process proved so problematic that the Polish envoy did not leave the issue unmentioned. Of particular importance in this situation was the behaviour of Michael Palairet. Günther discussed it at length in two documents sent to the MFA: in a letter on the evacuation of the Polish colony from Greece dated 27 May 1941 and another letter on the political collapse of Greece dated 29 May 1941.

These documents are consistent with each other. Günther presents the actions of British Ambassador Michael Palairet in Greece as imprudent, to say the least. According to the Polish envoy:

It has to be said that the English Legation, as an expression of the second factor and, as events unfolded, almost the same factor as the Greek government, did not rise to the occasion either in terms of awareness of its duties or even in terms of the efficiency with which it carried them out.¹⁶⁰

Günther believed that Palairet’s inept management of the British embassy, which was noticeable from the very beginning of his presence in Greece (June 1939), was the main cause of this state of affairs. The former claimed that the latter showed a tendency to isolate himself, i.e. to take almost no action. Immediately after his arrival, he locked himself up in his summer residence, did not participate in socio-political life and did not counteract the skilful and aggressive German propaganda within Greece. Günther also devoted considerable room to Palairet

¹⁵⁸ “400 refugees arrived here from Greece,” *Palestinian Post*, 4553 (1941), p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ “Situation in Greece,” *Scotsman* 30/554 (1941), p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ HI, MFA, box 5, f. 5, Günther’s letter to the MFA on the political collapse of Greece, 29 May 1941.

in his post-war memoirs. He also criticised the wife of the British diplomat.¹⁶¹ Perhaps this is a somewhat exaggerated and intentionally simplified description, nevertheless it is indeed possible to clearly see Günther's loneliness in the documents he sent from the Polish Legation and from the documents sent to him by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁶²

In the opinion of the Polish envoy, although Palairet was superficially helpful and did not refuse to be sympathetic to the Polish cause, he nevertheless ranked among "average diplomats" and was incapable of making sound decisions ("lacked a sense of realism"). Günther wrote bluntly that Palairet's slow action not only led to the risky Polish evacuation, but also caused the evacuation of the English colony from Athens to take a tragic course. For the decision to leave was taken too late in relation to the developments of the war.¹⁶³ Günther claimed that the evacuation was carried out haphazardly and recklessly by the English – one of the ships carrying the British envoy's closest colleagues hit a mine and sank. The same fate befell 2,000 English soldiers on another ship.¹⁶⁴ In his memoirs, Günther also described Palairet's escape, attempting to get out of Athens on a yacht on 22 April:

The British envoy [...] who was convinced that there was no reason for him to welcome the Germans to Athens by none other than the king, boarded that day a private yacht capable of holding 10 to 12 people, belonging to some compatriot of his, placing in it his archives, coffers, the Legation's silver and his own baggage, the envoy's staff and a closer colony of a few dozen men. But he was out of luck. German planes quickly tracked down the British Legation's yacht and the next day, during a stopover off an island, when most of those travelling had gone ashore to bathe and relax, they hurled two bombs at it. The yacht began to sink.

¹⁶¹ He pointed out her omissions. She was supposed to be "busy all day long with yarn work," and besides – due to her clericalism – instead of supporting Greeks or representatives of other nations whose countries had suffered from German aggression during the war, she took care of Italian prisoners of war, arousing, to say the least, the astonishment of the Greek public. The reason for her behaviour was, as the Polish envoy put it, concern about "who among them would end their lives without receiving the Holy Sacraments." *Ibid.*, Günther's letter on Greece's political fall to the MFA, 29 May 1941.

¹⁶² Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 176.

¹⁶³ HI, MFA, box 5, f. 5, Günther's letter to the MFA on the political collapse of Greece, 29 May 1941.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Coded telegram from Günther to the MFA, 24 April 1941.

Of the dozen or so people who remained on it, eleven died from the explosion or drowned. At the same time, all the possessions of the mess, the archives, money, silver, the private belongings of the travellers were lost, including Palairet's entire wardrobe, who was wearing a swimsuit at the time. It was only a few hours later that a Greek ship sailing nearby rescued these modern Robinson Crusoes.¹⁶⁵

However, this description does not convey the horror of the situation – a British consul named Meade was killed as a result of a German bombardment and shelling on land. He died buried under the rubble of a building. His grave was hastily dug with a brass flowerpot because no other tool could be found.¹⁶⁶ The tragedy surrounding the withdrawal of British troops and civilians from Greece was due, at least in part, to the relatively late military agreement reached by the Greek and British sides on how to support the country in the event of war.¹⁶⁷

Günther's criticism, moreover, extended to all of the seventy or so members of the British personnel, with the exception of Col. Jasper Blunt¹⁶⁸ – “a man alive and active at least.” He called the rest “mechanised functionaries” who were locked in “a circle of strictly their own relations, without even social contacts, capable of only shallow office work.”¹⁶⁹

The Fate of Jews, Polish Citizens, in Greece after the Evacuation of the Diplomatic Post

We do not know how many Polish Jews left Greece. This group, like the Greek Jews, faced deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau. During the German occupation,

¹⁶⁵ Palairet went to Crete after his evacuation. See Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada*, p. 185; see also “Royal 'hunch' saved 'Greek' king,” *Palestine Post* vol. 4505 (1941), p. 3; “Sir Michael Palairet,” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 April 1941, p. 1; “Sir Michael Palairet,” *Evening Despatch* 15/542 (1941), p. 1; “Still Resisting. Final Stand in Greece,” *Birmingham Mail*, 30 April 1941, p. 1; “King's Escape,” *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 May 1941, p. 5 (some of the journals listed do not have continuous numbering).

¹⁶⁶ “Greek king slept in a hut,” *Evening Dispatch* 15/564 (1941), p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ A. Rosiak, “Brytyjska koncepcja militarnego wsparcia Grecji (styczeń–marzec 1941 r.),” *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Historica* 61 (1998), pp. 211–228. Tadeusz Machalski, the Polish military attaché in Athens, on the other hand, stated that Britain, in the face of German superiority, was not going to give real support to Greece while under attack. It limited itself, as he put it, to “symbolic aid to save England's honour.” See Machalski, *Co widziałem*, p. 226.

¹⁶⁸ The British military attaché in Athens is referred to here.

¹⁶⁹ HI, MFA, box 5, f. 5, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the political collapse of Greece, 29 May 1941.

Polish citizens were taken care of by Julian Rummel, who had left occupied Warsaw for this purpose in February 1940.¹⁷⁰ He undertook care activities through the International Red Cross, among others. He remained in contact with the MSW and Alexander Ładoś. In September 1942, the Ministry gave him one thousand francs for the purpose of providing care.¹⁷¹

According to information from Relico (Relief Committee for the War-stricken Jewish Population), the Jewish refugees from Poland and Germany who ended up in Thessaloniki between 1938 and 1940 made a bad record in the history of the city's Jewish community. A report written in French documenting the extermination in Thessaloniki noted that they formed a Jewish civic guard, called the Civil Guard, which overzealously obeyed all German orders. The German occupier took advantage of their weakest position (they were poor and lived in slums) – intimidating and terrorising them, forcing them to carry out German extermination policies.¹⁷²

Danuta Drywa established that, in June 1943, the presence of Jewish Polish citizens in Greece was no longer noted. Statistics covering southern Europe indicated that some 1,500 Polish Jews were then living in the area of Italy, Dalmatia, Slovenia and Albania. A few survived – in mid-June 1944, Józef Czapski asked Aleksander Ładoś to intercede with the Swiss authorities and/or the International Red Cross to take care of a small group of Polish citizens who were in Greece. Among them was one Jewish family living in Thessaloniki.¹⁷³

Conclusions

Envoy Günther's relief and rescue activities were multi-dimensional. They should be seen in the context of the two most important events on Greek soil: the invasion by Italian troops and then by German troops. His most important

¹⁷⁰ Nowak, *Słownik biograficzny*, pp. 112–113; Pertek, "Rummel Julian Eugeniusz," pp. 90–92.

¹⁷¹ As Danuta Drywa has determined, it was most likely a group of just over twenty people. See D. Drywa, *Poselstwo RP w Bernie. Przemilczana historia* (Warsaw–Oświęcim 2020), p. 148.

¹⁷² Relico's report on the first deportation from Thessaloniki (March 1943) reads: "The operation took place under the direct supervision of the Jewish Civil Guard, whose members behaved like real brutes. They were cruel to the poor deportees, even whipping sick and old men because they were unable to board the train without assistance. [...] A delegation of the International Red Cross wanted to help them. The Germans did not allow it." See YVA, Abraham Silberschein Archive, file 107 (3687294), *La deportation des Juifs de Salonique*, pp. 7–8; J. Jakoel, *Haszwaah w'hachurban inSaloniki: Ir va-em be-Israel* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 276, 288.

¹⁷³ Drywa, *Poselstwo RP w Bernie*, pp. 148–149.

task during the Second World War, apart from carrying out the evacuation of Polish army personnel across Greece, was to organise the departure of Polish civilian refugees (Poles and Jews). The envoy's first official diplomatic efforts in the matter of Jewish refugees date back to September 1940, i.e. even before the Greek-Italian War. After the outbreak of the war, the activity of the Polish diplomat increased greatly – he tried to obtain visas for all Polish citizens enabling them to leave. The envoy was constantly sending telegrams to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this matter, pushing the Ministry to convince the British side to issue these documents. Of great importance here was the case of the Polish Jews, who were refused permission by the Foreign Office to go to Palestine (the only possible direction of evacuation). The British services feared that they would remain there permanently in contravention of British policy in the area. Thus, a large percentage of Jewish people in the Polish group stymied visa procedures. Correspondence about visas for all Polish citizens began in November 1940 and ended on 20 April 1941.

Noteworthy is the initiative presented by Günther to the MFA in November 1940 that the British partner should treat Polish Jews residing in Greece not as immigrants but as refugees who should go to Palestine. The problem of visa document limits could then be solved.

When the German attack on Greece began, in the face of inaction by the British ally and the lack of visas for Polish citizens, the envoy, in his correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, started to apply the complaints procedure for exit visas. During this period, the Ministry made intensive efforts to obtain the necessary documents from the British side. In his endeavours in Greece, Günther was alone – he could not expect help from the British Envoy Michael Palaert. The lack of professionalism on the British side resulted in numerous failings, for example, in failing to inform Honorary Consul Albert Nehama in Thessaloniki about the evacuation. There were also no agreements or guidelines from the Allied side on the evacuation procedure and its rules. In the course of the British-led operation to leave Greece, the solidarity mechanism arising from Allied commitments also did not work. The Polish group was the last to receive official British permission to leave. It was also unable to use English ships. This situation led to Polish citizens being deprived of protection by the British side. The envoy single-handedly tried

to get hold of a ship on which the Polish group, by a happy coincidence, could sail away from Greece, which was being bombarded by the German air force.

According to Günther's post-war memoirs, there were about 300 refugees on the Polish ship, most of them Jews. Newspapers reported about 400. Unfortunately, there is no data in the archival documents on how many refugees (broken down by nationality) were on board. Certainly, in the course of the evacuation, these statistics changed - influenced by information about the boat waiting to depart, the number of refugees may have increased significantly even at the last minute. This issue requires in-depth research.¹⁷⁴

Günther's activity should be seen in a broader context than Polish diplomatic activities. The story reveals the mechanisms of the Polish representation's dependence on the Allied position, i.e. the British side. The Allied side, failing to uphold the standards of good cooperation, disregarded the security of the Polish representation and, by extension, the civilian population in its care, placing them at risk of remaining in the German sphere of influence. The main reason for Britain's long-standing blocking of the departure of Polish refugees from Greece appears to have been the high proportion of Jewish nationals. Since the only possible direction for evacuation turned out to be Palestine, the state in whose jurisdiction the area lay wanted to grant permission for evacuation as late as possible. Britain's political interests and current war aims therefore outweighed humanitarian concerns.

¹⁷⁴ More people might also have boarded the ship during the voyage.

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SUMMARY

This article deals with the activities of the Polish Legation in Athens from 1939 to 1941, i.e. until the post was shut down and its staff evacuated in the face of the German occupation of the Greek state. The diplomatic mission was then headed by Władysław Günther-Schwarzburg (1885–1974), who had held office in Greece since April 1936. His main task was to protect Polish citizens – Poles and Jews. In 1941, their evacuation in the face of the escalating German threat became paramount. The efforts to ensure that this evacuation was carried out efficiently and effectively are the main content of this article. The main obstacle proved to be the position of Great Britain and its representation in Greece, which hindered or even blocked the departure of Polish citizens and contributed to the chaos. This put at risk the health and lives not only of Polish citizens but also of British citizens, among others. The article contributes to the analysis of the Allied refugee policy during the Second World War and the links between this policy and the issue of the extermination of the Jews. The envoy and his colleagues managed to transport out of Greece a group of 300 people of various nationalities (including Poles, Jews and Britons) on the ship *Warsaw* without the help of the Allies.

KEYWORDS

Holocaust • Greece • Günther-Schwarzburg Władysław
 • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • government in-exile-of the Republic
 of Poland • Jews

Appendix No. 1

Letter from the Envoy of the Republic of Poland in Athens, Władysław Günther, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding evacuating the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941.

Alexandria, 27 May 1941

No. 3/Gr/Al.

Concerning evacuation
of the Polish colony from Greece

To
Minister for Foreign Affairs
in London

Soon after the outbreak of war, as a result of the evacuation of our citizens from Romania and Hungary, more and more groups of Poles began to arrive in Greece as refugees, who wished either to pass through Greece to Italy or France, or to wait out the storm of war in Greece. The Greek government, which more or less willingly and easily granted transit visas until the end of 1939, immediately took a negative stance towards the permanent settlement of Poles on its territory. Then, in agreement with Ambassador Raczyński¹ in Bucharest, and with Envoy Orłowski² in Budapest, who rightly wished to reduce the influx of refugees from Romania and Hungary, I addressed the Greek government and asked King George II to grant asylum in Greece to several thousand Polish refugees, but I received a reply that the difficulty of supplying food in Greece, which coincided with the outbreak of the war, because of problems of land and especially sea transportation, dictated a policy of restrictions on any foreign citizen intending to settle in Greece for any extended period of time.

¹ Edward Bernard Raczyński (1891–1991). From 1 November 1934, throughout the Second World War (until 5 July 1945), he was Polish ambassador to Great Britain. From 22 August 1941 to 18 July 1943, he also served as minister of foreign affairs (as acting minister until June 1942).

² Leon Orłowski (1891–1976) served as envoy of the Republic of Poland to Hungary from 15 May 1936 until 31 December 1940.

As a result of this position of the Greek government, Greece soon became a transit-only area for foreign citizens, only a few individuals of whom, and only thanks to the efforts of the Legation, were able to reside in Greece. Their numbers were fluid but generally close to 100, apart from a huge transport of military personnel who were evacuated with the assistance of the Messenger via Thessaloniki, Athens and Piraeus by ship to Marseille. This state of affairs prevailed until Italy entered the war, i.e. mid-June 1940. At that time, the outflow of Polish refugees to France was automatically closed, and the easy granting of transit visas, let alone residence visas, came to a halt.

During this period, Polish citizens of Jewish origin began arriving in Greece, without first asking the Legation for help, coming from Vienna via Hungary, others via the Soviets (Odessa), and there was also a group of about 50 arriving via Italy. This influx was the reason for Greece's negative stance on the arrival of Polish citizens, due to the fact that Turkey, Palestine and Egypt have now banned the issuing of visas, even transit visas, to Polish citizens, especially those of Jewish origin. At the time – this was in September and October 1940 – there were 180 refugees in Greece at that time, 70 of whom were of Jewish origin, in difficult material circumstances, wishing to go to Palestine, but without the possibility of obtaining any kind of visa, or even a transit visa, because, as was mentioned, these were refused.

At this point, i.e. from the end of September 1940, the Legation took into its own hands the effort to evacuate the immigrant colony, treating it before the British Embassy and the Greek Government as a fundamental and official issue, without, however, finding it sufficiently understood or adequately supported by English factors.

The Greek authorities, meanwhile, had threatened in writing to remove the Polish refugees residing in Athens to the islands as nuisance citizens but never went as far as carrying out this threat, extending their residence permits for a mere 10 days and forcing the refugees to appear in person each time at the police to obtain residence rights for a further period of time.

With the outbreak of the Greco-Italian War, the situation of the Polish refugees in Greece became even more serious, in view of the Greek government's tendency [to] remove all foreign citizens, all the more so as the Greek police

obtained information from abroad about the easy subjugation of the Polish Jews to the Axis powers and even to Germany.³ On two occasions, the Greek political police semi-officially warned the Legation that the persecution of young people in the German-occupied Polish territories was a consequence of indiscretions from Jewish refugees in Athens and Istanbul, revealing the “Polish job” in the Balkans and the Middle East to German secret agents.

When I presented this state of affairs and the need for the Polish colony to leave the Greek borders to the English envoy, I twice exposed myself to the accusation of causing panic and an unjustified alleged aversion to the stay of Poles in Greece, incomprehensible to him, as he was, on the contrary, of the opinion that the departure of any of the English citizens from Athens was inappropriate, claiming that the actions of the Legation were always reinforced by the existence of colonies in a given country. It was with real effort that I had to explain to him and, in turn, to several of his subordinate officials, in which I was very actively assisted by the commercial attaché of the Legation, Mr Z[dzisław] Kamiński, that the character of the Polish colony in Greece was quite different from that of the English colony, as it was not a settled, gainful and prosperous colony, but, with the exception of a group of officials and about ten people, literally, already resident in Greece before the war, it consisted entirely of newcomers, uprooted from their normal living conditions, 95% deprived of any means of subsistence and therefore living on minimal social subsidies, in poor conditions and without any ties to Greece, being an unnecessary and therefore harmful element. It was with real reluctance that he and the members of his Legation took note of this view and began, as late as the end of September, to allegedly try to obtain Egyptian and Palestinian visas for our colony. Nor can I state, even retrospectively, whether the English Legation carried out these efforts insincerely or ineptly; the fact is that in seven months they produced no result, so that only after many letters, telegrams, endorsements, etc., known to the Ministry, and only in view of the danger of our colony being taken prisoner by the Germans already advancing on Athens, did it decide on the night of 15–16 April to grant Palestinian visas.

During this period of several months, our Legation, regardless of the efforts it made in the Greek Foreign Ministry, was subjected to constant criticism from

³ The resident of the Polish intelligence service also knew about this, as stated in the article.

the more aggressive members of the Polish colony, especially Jews, for its inaction and ineptitude of conduct. The development of events, going against hopes and worsening the personal situation of the colony, increased their nervousness and resentment towards the Legation, causing the Greek authorities to take an increasingly negative attitude towards further arrivals of Polish citizens as unnecessary and only increasing the size of the colony unable to find a passage.

Already in the summer of 1940, this situation had an adverse effect on the permits granted to Polish officials, so difficulties arose in obtaining Greek visas, especially residence visas, even for the service passport holders who had been assigned to the Polish Legation in an official capacity.

Consequently, when, in the autumn of 1940, our authorities wished to assign special operations agents to the Polish Legation in Athens or to the Honorary Consulate in Thessaloniki by asking Athens for permission to increase the number of diplomatic personnel, I encountered serious and insurmountable difficulties in Athens when I asked for permanent residence and work permits for the apparent vice-consuls, concerning whom (this happened in two cases) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in my first conversations about them, made me understand that, knowing who they were dealing with, they could not count them among the ranks of established and recognised members of the Polish Legation.

As I have mentioned, this state of affairs lasted for the entire duration of the Greco-Italian War, and continued during the Greco-German War, which, as we know, soon led to Greece's catastrophe and its occupation by the Germans, and thus had an impact on the fate of all Poles on Greek territory, necessitating their definite and rapid evacuation. However, even after the German entry into Thessaloniki, representatives of the English Legation, as well as its head, the envoy himself, delayed making any real arrangements for the evacuation of the Polish colony, despite knowing that the only technical possibility of taking foreign citizens outside Greece, by sea to Egypt and Palestine, was in their hands, in view of the immobilisation, for several weeks now, of the railway line leading through Adrianopole to Turkey.

It was not until 12 April that I finally obtained permission from the English envoy to grant Palestinian visas to Polish nationals, thanks largely to a fortunate coincidence, namely the arrival in Piraeus a few days beforehand of the Polish

ship *Warszawa* and my request from the English admiralty that this ship be used primarily for the evacuation of Poles.

Unfortunately, 12 April was Easter Saturday, as a result of which the visas were not arranged until Tuesday night, already in the face of the horror of the retreating front, due to the discharge of Greek soldiers during the battle by their treacherous navy and air force ministers of war. The issuing of visas was not completed until noon on 16 April, so that the Polish colony, as well as the officials of the Legation going to Egypt and Palestine, could be loaded onto the ship on the evening of the 16th.

I deliberately emphasise these dates in order to show the tardiness and administrative ineptitude of the English agents who decided to allow the departure of the colonies only during the days of dangerous and incessant bombardment of Piraeus and sinking of ships standing in the harbour, and when the departures of these colonies increased the difficulties of the English Admiralty, already evacuating its army returning from the front, as well as the English colony and the numerous officials of its own Legation evacuated to Egypt. The English envoy, for reasons of prestige, kept them there [? illegible] for a few more days, giving permission for them to leave only after 20 April. The main evacuation of Athens took place on 22–24 April with the population in a panic, the lack of transport facilities literally under bombardment and the light of burning ships being bombed in succession. On these critical days, 23 Greek and English ships were reportedly sunk, including the *Hellas* with about 400 people of the English colony and an ill-advised private yacht mobilised by the English envoy's closest associates and their families, carrying four times the normal number of passengers, about 100 people, which sank off the coast of Kimonia with a few people and all their luggage. The English envoy himself and his family made the [journey] from Athens to Crete by plane without luggage. The envoy's official and private luggage (archives, silver, clothes) sank completely. If, on the other hand, the evacuation had been devised by the English Legation as planned, and if it had been carried out discretely a few weeks earlier, it would have taken place without disaster, without complicating the evacuation of the army, which lost several thousand soldiers in Piraeus and in the Peloponnesian ports en route to Crete as a result.

That part of the Athenian English colony that succeeded in reaching Alexandria or Cairo, as well as senior English military officers, now spared no criticism for the

English envoy and Legation in Athens for their incomprehensible and disregard for reality conduct, which caused the death of a serious number of people and the loss of serious English property. Envoy Plaeiret [PalaiRET] is also called by the English colony in Cairo “a murderer of children and a plunderer of the possessions of the people close to him.”

Evidence of the confusion which prevailed in these days of evacuation among the English leadership is the fact that the ship *Warszawa*, which contained about 100 people from the Polish colony, about 100 representatives of the English colony and 100 people of foreign colonies, and which was, it is understood, to leave Piraeus on the day of boarding, was forgotten by the moving convoy and stood in the harbour for 60 more hours, being subjected to several serious bombardments, and sailed off on the night of 18 April. However, fortune favoured the evacuation of the Polish colony, as, apart from the bombardment in Piraeus, the journey on the ship *Warszawa* took place calmly and without much danger, heading via Port Said to Haifa.

On 18 April, i.e. two days after the Polish colony boarded the ship, a dispatch from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its request to the Foreign Office to instruct the English envoy to grant visas enabling the evacuation of the Polish colony.

The group of officials of the Polish Legation going to Crete, headed by me, departed when the Greek Government considered it necessary to leave Athens, i.e. on the night of 22–23 April 1941.

In my desire to exhaust the subject of the evacuation of the colonies and the members of the Legation, I am also compelled to mention that the efforts for the departure of the recently assigned fictitious officials to the Legation were also carried out by the Legation, dealing with their passport matters simultaneously and on an equal footing with its own. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to clarify that one of the members of the Polish colony most actively demanding to be evacuated at the first suitable opportunity was Count Adam Korab,⁴ who even

⁴ This refers to Colonel Major Alfred Krajewski “Adam Korab.” In October 1940, on behalf of Department VI of the Supreme Commander’s Staff, he tried to set up an intelligence and liaison outpost code-named “Grzegorz” in Greece. It was tasked with keeping communication routes open with the “Romek” (Budapest) and “Beya” (Istanbul) bases. It was also to contact the “Sawa” communications outpost in Belgrade.

suggested to me that I hire a special ship on my own account for a few hundred thousand drachmas – as he even had it in his ordinance – and that his closer colleagues and possibly members of the envoy should leave in it as soon as possible. The arrival of the “*Warszawa*” and my assurances that his diplomatic passport was treated on a par with those of my colleagues travelling on the *Warszawa* calmed him down somewhat, thanks to which he abandoned the thought of hiring his own ship. On the day of loading onto the *Warszawa* he received a radio station from Istanbul, which the Legation helped him to transport along with his private luggage. I mention these details deliberately, as I have already been repeatedly told of Mr Korab’s regrets and complaints in Egypt, that he had an order and desire to go to Crete together with the Legation, but I personally opposed his intentions and made his departure to Crete impossible. I hereby state that Mr Korab never approached me with the intention of accompanying the Greek government or the Polish mission to Crete, but that, on the contrary, he made it abundantly clear to all the members of the mission and the Polish colony that he wished to leave Athens as soon as possible and to evacuate to a safer place.

I learned only of the order given by the Interior Ministry to Col. Lewandowski⁵ and Mr Smodlibowski telling them to stay in Athens as long as the relevant English circles remained there. This order, which was repeated to me by Colonel Lewandowski, would separate them from their families leaving on *Warszawa*, as a result of which, I suppose, Colonel Lewandowski asked me on 14 April to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and thus to the Ministry of Military Affairs, on his behalf, as well as on behalf of Mr Smodlibowski,⁶ with an explanation that their further stay in Athens was unnecessary, and personally dangerous. I did so most

⁵ Edward Lewandowski (1892–1960) – during the Second World War, he was in Paris on 6 January 1940, and then became head of the Polish Military Evacuation Post in Athens. From 1 September 1940, he served as head of Field Office “A” of Department II of the Supreme Commander’s Staff in Athens. Then, on 19 April 1941, he was evacuated to Jerusalem, where he joined the Polish Army in the Middle East.

⁶ Antoni Smodlibowski (1901–1988) – in September 1939, he was head of the Consulate General in Leipzig, then joined the Supreme Commander’s Staff in Paris. In October 1939, he was assigned to Department II of the Supreme Commander’s Staff in Budapest, where he organised the evacuation of Polish soldiers to France. Wanted by the Gestapo, he went to Athens, where he served as deputy chief of Field Office “A” until 25 April. Then, after the German army occupied Greece, he made his way to the Middle East, where he became squadron commander of the Carpathian Lancers Regiment in early July 1941.

willingly, and on the same day, i.e. 14 April, I sent the relevant dispatch to the MFA, especially as it coincided completely with my personal conviction.

I presume that, as a result of my dispatch, they received permission from the Ministry of Military Affairs to evacuate also on the *Warszawa*, despite the fact that the English agents responsible for them would remain in Athens for a few more days and then go to Crete.

Returning to the matter of the evacuation of the Polish colony, I cannot resist the need to express my deep personal satisfaction that the Polish Legation has fulfilled its duty and task of protecting Polish citizens from falling under German occupation by timely and successfully evacuating the Polish colony, the Polish refugees, as well as the Legation staff and the official and its semi-official offices, from Greece to Egypt and Palestine. Only a few Polish citizens remained in Athens, consciously unwilling to go into further exile, who renounced in advance and officially all pretensions to the Polish Legation, moral and material, for the fate which the German occupation in Greece might expose them to.

[handwritten signature] W[ładysław] Günther
Envoy of the Republic of Poland

Source: A HI, MFA, 522, f. 7, Letter from Günther to the MFA on the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, 27 May 1941, typescript in Polish.

Appendix No. 2

List of names of Polish passport holders at the disposal of the Department for Aliens of the Greek Police, seized by the German Secret Service (1943)

No	Surname	First name	Father's name
1.	Altachul	Hermina	Isidor
2.	Brozkova	Terezia	Ignac
3.	Friedmann	Katarina	Vladimir
4.	Gablonski	Helena	Jiri/George?/
5.	Gablonski	Jiri/George?	Jan
6.	Geringer	Fany	Ferdinand
7.	Geringer	Helena	Jan
8.	Geringer	Matylda	Mikulacz/Niclas
9.	Geringer	Regina	Ferdinand
10.	Glowacki	Ana	Samuel
11.	Glowacki	Vasilje	Kazimir
12.	Hajmanova	Marie	Leopold
13.	Holiczer	Amalia	Maksimilian
14.	Hotze	Voltemar/?/	Evzen
15.	Jarmolinsky	Ladislav	Miczeslaw
16.	Julinkova	Ruzena	Jan
17.	Kaczvinsky	Karol	Ladislaw
18.	Koslowska	Helena	Stanisław
19.	Kurniska	Marie	Josef
20.	Lazarew	Aloisia	Ludwik
21.	Lustgarten	Anna	Piotr
22.	Lustgarten	Filip	Jan
23.	Maciejowska	Aleksandra	Czislau
24.	Maciejowska	Cela	Ferdinand
25.	Maciejowska	Ana	Czislau
26.	Maciejowsky	Czislau	Erik
27.	Matousek	Evzenie	Frantisek

No	Surname	First name	Father's name
28.	Matousek	Frantisek	Vaclav
29.	Mlynek	Ida	Jan
30.	Mlynek	Jan	Jan
31.	Orsa	Janette	Heindrich
32.	Orsa	Lukas	Josef
33.	Pavlovska	Maria	Lukas
34.	Petrik	Helena	Karol
35.	Petrik	Karol	Frantisek
36.	Pograniczny	Josef	Ondrej
37.	Rajsky	Alzbeta	Frantisek
38.	Sianko	Olga	Vasilje
39.	Smiela	Evzenia	Michal
40.	Sponti	Dimitrij	Karol
41.	Stampf	Artur	Israel
42.	Steiner	Kazimira	Valentin
43.	Vasile	Eleonora	Albert

Source: HI, MFA, box 515, f. 5, List of Polish passports seized by the German secret service from the Aliens' Department of the Greek Police.

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THE TESTIMONY OF ELŻBIETA KOWNER VEL WANDA
BIEŃKOWSKA ON THE ACTIVITIES OF EMILIA DYNA
AND ELŻBIETA GAJEWSKA – A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY
OF POLES WHO WERE SAVING JEWS

Many Poles have been recognised by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem as Righteous Among the Nations. It is the highest title the State of Israel awarded to non-Jews who got involved in a heroic activity, namely helping the Jewish population sentenced to death by the Germans during the Second World War.¹

The available documentation is the basis for awarding the title of Righteous Among the Nations. There are still many unpublished materials kept in the archives that may shed new light on the issue of saving Jews and also enable more stories of the Righteous to be discovered, both those known and those whose actions will only now have a chance of being recognised.²

¹ According to the Yad Vashem statistics, by 25 March 2020, 6,992 Poles had been awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations. See: <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/statistics.html> (accessed 25 March 2020). This is the largest group among the citizens of 51 nations who have been honoured with this title.

² The commonly used term “righteous” should refer not only to the 6,992 Poles honoured by the state of Israel, but also in a broader sense – to all those who were not awarded the medal but were engaged in activities aimed at saving the Jewish population under German occupation.

The document presented here is about Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska, who, together with Dyna's parents – Jan and Józefa née Obidowicz – were awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations. This is the transcript of the testimony given by Elżbieta Kowner,³ a Jewish woman who was hidden during the German occupation by two officials from the Warsaw Kriminalpolizei branch⁴ in Mińsk Mazowiecki⁵ – Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska. Many people were involved in hiding Elżbieta Kowner, as it clearly transpires from the source text, but two women from Mińsk Mazowiecki contributed the most to her rescue⁶

Elżbieta Kowner gave the quoted testimony in Katowice on 26 September 1945. The addressee of this document, signed by the testifying party, was the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice, and ultimately certainly the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Warsaw, which, in 1945, on the basis of a decree from 31 August 1944,⁷ was investigating Emilia Dyna accused by the communist authorities of collaborating with the Germans. The investigation ended with the case being dismissed.⁸

The testimony of Elżbieta Kowner makes it possible to learn about the situation of a person in hiding, in this case – an assimilated Jewish woman who was baptised in 1937.⁹ The author describes in detail the conditions in which she lived, from the moment Emilia Dyna led her out of the Warsaw ghetto, then wandering around towns located in the Cracow District (Cracow and its surroundings), to hiding in places inhabited by various people.¹⁰ Elżbieta Kowner devotes a lot of space to

³ Elżbieta Kowner also called herself Wanda Bienkowska. In this study, we use the first of these names.

⁴ Kriminalpolizei – the German Criminal Police subordinate to the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo). Its officers were responsible (along with the Gestapo) for numerous repressions against the people of Poland.

⁵ S. Biernacki, *Okupant a polski ruch oporu. Władze hitlerowskie w walce z ruchem oporu w dątryckie warszawskim 1939–1944* (Warsaw, 1989), p. 25.

⁶ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), GK 453/63, Wanda Bienkowska's testimony in the case of Emilia Dyna, submitted at the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice, 26 September 1945, pp. 10–19.

⁷ Decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation of 31 August 1944 on the punishment for fascist-Nazi criminals guilty of murders and mistreatment of the civilian population and prisoners of war, and for traitors of the Polish Nation, *Journal of Laws*, No. 4 (1944), item 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ AIPN, GK 453/63, Wanda Bienkowska's testimony in the case of Emilia Dyna, given at the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice, 26 September 1945, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

discussing the interpersonal relations in the home of Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska – Kripo officials, working and living together in Mińsk Mazowiecki.¹¹ Generally speaking, Kowner talks about her life quite coherently and clearly, and her account seems credible. The only doubts are raised by the fragment about her stay in Grodno, in the house of feldsher Jakubianiec, related to Elżbieta Gajewska. The author of the testimony devoted only two sentences to this episode and did not specify when it happened.¹²

While living with the officials in Mińsk Mazowiecki, the author of the testimony was able to observe their involvement in underground activities. She was an important inhabitant in their home, and was privy to many current occupation matters. The women's guests who were involved in underground activities had the opportunity to meet Elżbieta Kowner, as she mentions in her testimony¹³ Another very interesting occurrence, not often described in the literature on the subject, is the account of a person in hiding observing how the rescuers helped other Jews. Elżbieta Kowner was able to observe the activities of the Council to Aid Jews "Żegota," thanks to her meetings with Marian Gołajewski, an escapee from Auschwitz, who visited the officials quite often, and also thanks to conversations held in her presence between the two women about their involvement in helping other Jews.¹⁴

The post-war fate of Elżbieta Kowner is not known in detail. It is only known that she took a job in the Financial Department of the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Citizens' Militia in Lodz. Later, she probably left for the United States. She certainly corresponded with Emilia Dyna.¹⁵

We know little about Elżbieta Gajewska, born in Pułtusk on 15 February 1915, a Kripo official during the German occupation. In 1943, she was of interest to the Home Army counterintelligence "Mewa" (Seagull) – Mińsk Mazowiecki. Docu-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–16.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹³ We do not know whether the people visiting the apartment knew about the woman's origin.

¹⁴ AIPN, GK 453/63, Wanda Bieńkowska's testimony in the case of Emilia Dyna, given at the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice, 26 September 1945, pp. 11–16.

¹⁵ *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu. Polska*, ed. by A. Kopciowski, S. Krakowski, and D. Libionka, vol. 1 (Cracow, 2009), pp. 148–149; "Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata w powiecie mińskim," *Mińskie Zeszyty Muzealne* 2 (2013), pp. 2, 54.

ments prepared by the intelligence cell from Mińsk Mazowiecki indicate that Gajewska was the mistress of the head of the Kriminalpolizei in that town, Julius Schmidt. The Home Army documents state that both Gajewska and Dyna collaborated with the communists. An opinion about the attitude of both officials was expressed in a letter issued on 14 November 1943 by the counterintelligence office of the Home Army “Mewa” district:

They always treated those arrested in political matters very favourably. They were taking very large bribes. Gajewska was a leader in these matters. They held parties for Schmidt and other Germans, as well as for the reds [communists – note by D.S.]. They were capable of losing several thousand zlotys at cards in one evening. During the liquidation of the Jews, most of the things and gold looted by Schmidt were taken by Gajewska. With the elimination of Schmidt [head of the Mińsk Kripo, shot by Home Army soldiers in July 1943 – note by D.S.] they both lost their influence. For the last two months, they were very quiet. There were no disturbances in which Gajewska and Dynówna would take part together with the Gestapo in Mińsk. On the first of this month, Gajewska was transferred to Rembertów [to Kripo – note by D.S.] Please make sure she is taken proper care of. I would like to point out that she very often claims to be a member of an independence organisation, especially PZP (Polish Insurgents Union). Marek.¹⁶

Elżbieta Gajewska’s post-war fate remains unknown. We do not actually know whether she survived the war.¹⁷

We have much more information about Emilia Dyna, the second official involved in saving Elżbieta Kowner. Dyna was born in Cracow on 16 March 1914, as the daughter of Jan and Józefa née Obidowicz. From 1938 to the end of August 1939, she worked in a juvenile detention centre in Warsaw. After the outbreak of war on 1 September 1939, she became a nurse in the 81st Infantry Regiment. When the military operation ended, she returned to Warsaw and from 25 October 1939, she worked at the Polnische Polizei as a kitchen supervisor for detainees. On

¹⁶ AIPN, BU 0363/442, Letter by “Mark” to “Gorzelnia IIB”, Mewa IIB, 14 November 1943, p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

7 January 1941, she was transferred to the Kriminalpolizei in Mińsk Mazowiecki, where, until 22 July 1944, she worked as an official for sanitary and behavioural matters, running the office simultaneously. As an official of the Kripo, she came into contact with the commander of the Jewish security service (Ordnungsdienst) in the Mińsk ghetto, Izydor Lipczyński.¹⁸ Emilia Dyna was providing him with money in the forest where he was hiding.¹⁹ She probably left the service. She took part in the Warsaw Uprising, during which she ran a field kitchen for soldiers of the Baszta (*Bastion*) regiment.²⁰ After the capitulation of the uprising, she was sent to a camp in Pruszków. Senior officers of the Kriminalpolizei suggested that she move to Poznań to continue her work. However, she turned this proposal down and, by using a deception, she left for her family in Cracow. At the end of November 1944, she found herself in Włochy near Warsaw, where she was selling lingerie goods together with her friend Danuta Zabokrzycka.²¹

On 19 September 1945, she was arrested by the Ministry of Public Security's Municipal Branch in Katowice and then released nine days later. There are archival documents showing that she was registered by the Ministry of Public Security as secret collaborator (*Tajny Współpracownik*, TW) – Diana. However, her activities as an undercover informant are not yet known, and documents on her work in this area have most likely been destroyed or have not been disclosed.²²

After the war, she lived in Otwock, and later in Warsaw. She was a member of the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy – the milieu of the soldiers of the Independent Operational Group Polesie commanded by general Franciszek Kleeberg – in Warsaw. She was also a member of the International Janusz Korczak Association.²³ Emilia Dyna died on 10 September 1994, and was buried at the Bieżanów cemetery in Cracow, next to Mała Góra Street.²⁴

¹⁸ *Polacy–Żydzi 1939–1945*, ed. by S. Wroński and M. Zwolakowa (Warsaw, 1971), p. 319.

¹⁹ D. Sitkiewicz, “Dyna Emilia,” in *Słownik biograficzny Południowego Podlasia i Wschodniego Mazowsza*, ed. E. Piłatowicz, K. Maksymiuk, and H. Świeszczakowska, vol. 5 (Siedlce, 2020), p. 58.

²⁰ AIPN, GK 453/63, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Emilia Dyna, Katowice, 27 September 1945, p. 20.

²¹ Sitkiewicz, “Dyna Emilia,” p. 58.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ AIPN, BU 728/112008, unpaginated, Emilia Dyna's passport documents.

²⁴ Sitkiewicz, “Dyna Emilia,” p. 58.

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SUMMARY

The study, which was based on the testimony given on 26 September 1945 in Katowice by Elżbieta Kowner, contains the published document and a commentary to it. The testimony was submitted to the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice, ultimately to the Prosecutor's Office of the Regional Court in Warsaw, which in 1945, based on the decree of 31 August 1944, was conducting an investigation against Emilia Dyna, accused by the communist authorities of collaborating with the Germans. The investigation ended with the case being dismissed.

Elżbieta Kowner's testimony brings the world of a person in hiding, in this case an assimilated Jewish woman, to the world. She describes in detail the conditions in which she lived: from the moment Emilia Dyna led her out of the Warsaw Ghetto, through wandering around towns in the Cracow district (Cracow and its surroundings), to hiding in places inhabited by various people.

Elżbieta Kowner devotes a lot of space to discussing interpersonal relations in the home of Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska – Kripo officials, working and living together in Mińsk Mazowiecki. She was an important inhabitant in their house, and in addition she was privy to many current occupation matters. She could observe their involvement in the activities of the underground and, thanks to meetings between both women and Marian Gołajewski, an escapee from Auschwitz, as well as through conversations about their participation in relief work, she could see their efforts aimed at helping other Jews.

KEYWORDS

Rescuers • Righteous Among the Nations • Jews' accounts • helping Jews

Document

29 September 1945, Katowice – Wanda Bieńkowska's testimony in the case of Emilia Dyna, given at the Public Security Municipal Office of in Katowice

To the Public Security Municipal Office
in Katowice at 10 Bartosza Głowackiego Street
in the case of Emilia Dyna

Testimony

I, the undersigned Wanda Bieńkowska, an employee of the Voivodeship Headquarters of the Civic Militia – Financial Department in Lodz, father's name – Aleksander, mother's name – Anna née Razmuk, born in Warsaw on 14 January 1910, residing in Lodz at 6 Brzeźna Street, flat 7, being aware that I am liable to imprisonment for false testimony, do testify as follows: I met the citizen Emilia Dyna in the Warsaw ghetto, at 13 Twarda Street, flat 2, where from time to time she visited a Jewish family named Nuss. I met her in early 1942. My real pre-war first name and surname is Elżbieta Walentyna Kowner, daughter of Samson Kowner and Rozalia Kowner, born in Eišiszki, Lida county on 14 October 1907, baptised in the Roman Catholic parish of St. Cross in Lodz on 16 April 1937. I presented all my documents from the times of the occupation, current and pre-war certificates, during my testimony at the Public Security Municipal Office in Katowice on 26 September 1945. According to the Nazi Nuremberg Laws, regardless of my Roman Catholic faith, I was nevertheless Jewish and confined to the Jewish quarter in Warsaw. Before the war, I had worked for 11 years in a social insurance organisation in Lodz, where I had many Christian friends and colleagues, of course "Aryans," who, being also displaced to the "Protectorate",¹ found me in Warsaw and persuaded me to get out of the ghetto and live with them. I presented this case to citizen Emilia Dyna and her friend Elżbieta,² who also advised escape from the ghetto and promised (advised to seek) help. After they left, I asked Ms Nuss³ whether she knows them

¹ The author means the General Governorate.

² Elżbieta Gajewska.

³ We do not know the first names of this family member.

well and whether, since they work in the police during the German times, it is possible that they will take me out of the Jewish quarter only to hand me over to the German gendarmes, to which I was told that their service in the police is only a fiction and a sham, that they are Polish patriots, upright and noble persons, finally she declared that she would entrust her own head and her own daughter to them with all calmness and trust, and that it's up to me what I will do. I asked whom it would be better to entrust some things and money that I wanted to take with me, and she replied that it didn't matter which one, because they are both absolutely reliable and incredibly honest beings. On 6 July 1942, citizen Emilia Dyna and her friend Elżbieta led me and the youngest Nuss daughter, Renia Nuss, out of the ghetto through the courthouse in Warsaw. Elżbieta accompanied Renia to Mińsk Mazowiecki while Emilia Dyna went with me to Limanowa railway station near Nowy Sącz, where she very warmly parted with me. On the way, I was to pretend to be her cousin. Out of gratitude for risking her own life for me, a person she hardly knew, I gave her a small globular gold watch, she held it for a while, then returned the watch to me with the words, "keep this memento of your mother. You will need it more." Therefore, after deducting travel costs and food expenses, and the cost of her return ticket, she took almost nothing from me in return for her sacrifice and exposure (death penalty for Poles hiding Jews).⁴ From 8 July 1942 to 15 August 1942, I stayed with my friend Franciszek Suchy⁵ in the village of Jodłownik,⁶ pretending to be his cousin. I was tutoring his children at the time. At that time, I looked like I was starved to death, and this appearance plus my arrival from Warsaw to a remote village, and the sudden interruption of his correspondence with Warsaw aroused the suspicion of the inhabitants of Jodłownik; rumours began to spread that Suchy was hiding a Jewish woman. Then a German

⁴ The first legal act that imposed the death penalty for Poles who were rescuing Jews was the third regulation on residence restrictions in the General Governorate of 15 October 1941. According to the regulation, the death penalty was imposed on those Poles who "would knowingly provide a hiding place" to a Jew residing outside the ghetto without permission. The issues related to legislation concerning Jews are discussed in particular by B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...* (Poznan, 2019); also J.A. Młynarczyk, S. Piątkowski, *Cena poświęcenia. Zbrodnie na Polakach za pomoc udzielaną Żydom w rejonie Ciepłowa*, (Cracow, 2007), p. 47.

⁵ No further details of this person have been established.

⁶ The village of Jodłownik was located in the Cracow District, some 20 kilometres west of Limanowa.

gendarmes unit arrived in Jodłownik and started searching the cottages, so one night I ran away. I had nowhere to go, so I put all my eggs in one basket and went straight to Mińsk Mazowiecki, to Emilia Dyna and her friend. They received me kindly. They placed me in Warsaw in the Praga district, at 14 Wrzesińska Street,⁷ with Elżbieta's relatives – the Leończyk family.⁸ In the meantime, they were to get me a Kennkarte. I brought with me a birth certificate from the Warsaw ghetto in the name of Wanda Bieńkowska. A month later, I returned to Mińsk Mazowiecki, to their place. I still had no support apart from them, whom I had known for just two months, and I was homeless. Emilia gave me a letter to her aunt, Maria Nakielska⁹ – Cracow-Dębniaki, 28a Szwedzka Street, flat 5,¹⁰ with whom I stayed for a month. Then I stayed with her other aunt, Kramarzowa,¹¹ in Biezanów on the outskirts of Cracow.¹² Then I returned to Aunt Nakielska. On 1 November 1942, Emilia came to Cracow and declared that she and Elżbieta had decided (they lived together) that I should live with them, and things will work out for us. So I lived with Emilia Dyna and her companion for a year. Neither her family, who knew what was going on, nor she, nor her companion, ever asked me for money, which I did not have anyway. I reciprocated with homework, and from them I received gifts, such as warm slippers, an artistic brooch, books, etc., which I still keep. I was to pretend to be Emilia Dyna's cousin, looked after the place and cooked dinners. While living in their home for a year, I learned a lot. In Biezanów, where Mila's [Emilia Dyna – note by D.S.] father resides, I learned that Mila is a peasant's child, that her drunkard and cruel father left his wife with four small children and moved in with another woman, that Mila's life was very hard, and that she moved heaven and earth to get her secondary education. While living with her in 1942 and 1943, I learned one thing for sure – that they both collaborated with the Polish underground organisation to the detriment of Germany.¹³ Unfortunately, they did not let me know everything, which would be very useful

⁷ The brick house at 14 Wrzesińska Street has been preserved to this day.

⁸ No further details of this family have been established.

⁹ The identity of this person could not have been established.

¹⁰ Szwedzka Street in Cracow's Dębniaki quarter still exists.

¹¹ An unidentified person.

¹² Currently, it is a Cracow District located 10 kilometres south-east of the city centre.

¹³ We do not know exactly what organisation they collaborated with.

now, as I could share even more facts known to me. They kept their guard, not out of fear that I would betray them to the Germans, of course, but out of caution that if I was given up, the Nazis could beat me and then I would “sing out” the names, so it was about protecting the Poles from the organisation, who should better remain unknown to me. So I will tell you what is known to me, and I can vouch for every word I will say.

Many people from the organisation who had weapons with them hid at our place and stayed overnight. One of them, Jan Sarnecki,¹⁴ a leftist (in Mińsk, they said he was a communist), was the head of a large terrorist organisation. He often dined and slept with us; I personally saw that he had a handgun. One time he dropped in on us in the evening, Emilia warned him that there was going to be a roundup at night and that the Germans may go to his parents’ place, so he stayed overnight, and in the morning they contacted his parents to find out if there had been Germans in the night, and they only let him go after receiving good news. There was also another Jan (a short surname, but I don’t remember, let Emilia recall it),

¹⁴ Jan Sarnecki, son of Marian and Zofia, born on 16 December 1919 in Cielechowizna, Mińsk County. In 1938, he graduated from the Secondary School in Mińsk Mazowiecki. He was fluent in German. During the first months of the war, he joined the Union of Armed Struggle, and soon after became a communist sympathiser. In September 1942, he joined the Association of Friends of the Soviet Union. After the founding of the Polish Workers’ Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR), he became a member and at the same time a member of its armed organisation – the People’s Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*, GL). He took part in the first meeting of the District (County) Committee of the Polish Workers’ Party in Mińsk Mazowiecki, where he was accepted as a member of this body. He was also a member of the GL County Staff from the moment it was set up, and between 16 March and 13 August 1943 he was its commander. His comrades in arms considered him a capable commander and a brave soldier. Thanks to the fact that he spoke German, he made acquaintances with the officers of *Kriminalpolizei* and *gendarmerie*, as well as with the *Gestapo*; in this way, the PPR and GL had a much better knowledge about German officials and functionaries. He took part in many military actions as a partisan. He maintained contacts with the soldier Władysław Klimaszewski, the commander of the Home Army unit in Mińsk Mazowiecki. Jan Sarnecki perished on 13 August 1943 near the village of Rudzienko, a few kilometres from Kołbiel (Mińsk County). See: L. Bujan, “Zaopatrywanie w broń Gwardii Ludowej” in *Z lat wojny, okupacji i odbudowy*, ed. by M. Anusiewicz and L. Grot, vol. 6 (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 36, 40; S. Dąbrowski, “W trójkącie Mińsk–Siedlce–Dęblin,” in *Czas wielkiej próby. Wspomnienia bojowników o Ojczyznę Ludową 1939–1945*, ed. M. Borkiewicz (Warsaw, 1969), p. 279; B. Dymek, “Gwardia Ludowa i Armia Ludowa Okręgu Warszawa Prawa-Podmiejska,” in *Warszawa – Prawa Podmiejska 1942–1944. Z walk PPR, GL-AL*, ed. B. Dymek (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 67, 104; J. Kazimierski, “PPR, GL-AL w dzielnicy Mińsk Mazowiecki (1942–1944),” in *Warszawa – Prawa Podmiejska*, pp. 366, 368–370, 374–375; W. Kuźniarski, A. Stelmaszczyk, S. Laskowski, “Dzielnica Mińsk Mazowiecki w walce,” in *Warszawa – Prawa Podmiejska*, pp. 586, 593–598; F. Mówiński, *Szumcie wierzby* (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 34–35, 50, 61, 88–89, 94, 114, 132, 141; W. Ważniewski, *Na przedpolach stolicy 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1974), pp. 190, 282, 283, 284.

a friend of Jan Sarnecki and his right-hand man, to whom he showed great respect and was blindly obedient; he lived in a village near Mińsk and also hid and slept with us several times, I didn't see him carrying any weapons, but all those who visited us, and there were a lot of them, mostly had guns. The third one who was hiding with us was Marian Gołajewski¹⁵ – a leftist, a fugitive from Auschwitz; he came from Warsaw, Warecka Street. He spent many nights in our place. Every day people came to find out where searches and arrests were planned and who should be warned to get away. Once, while Emilia and Elżbieta were absent, an engineer, Jurek (I don't remember his surname, I think it was Wieczorek), married, I think he worked at the Land Office, but I don't know for sure. He told me that at night, in his flat, that the Germans had arrested his friend who came to him by chance from Warsaw, when he himself was not sleeping at home. From 1 pm on that day, he was calm, because he had obtained a strong poison and if he ran into danger, he would swallow it so as not to betray people from the organisation during the interrogation. Once Mila gave me a Polish book entitled *Military Training – Infantry*.¹⁶ She told me to hide the book and pass it on to one gentleman, to whom I actually gave the book. I don't remember his name, he lived behind the Mariavite church, he had a blonde wife; she came back from the labour camps in Germany. Let Mila mention a few familiar names and I'll remember the right ones. He secretly trained the young cadres of the Polish Army.

Emilia and Elżbieta provided constant help to the Jews, many of whom certainly owe their lives to them. They led the entire Nuss family out of the Warsaw ghetto. Many Jews came in the dead of night to knock and ask for help. A Jewish

¹⁵ Marian Gołajewski was one of the activists of Żegota Council to Aid Jews, closely associated with the Democratic Party during the German occupation. In his home at 41 Nowy Świat Street in Warsaw, was an underground printing house that played an important role in the activities of the Żegota. It printed *Rok w Treblince* and *Z otchłani*, Żegota's leaflets and publications of the Alliance of Democrats. This facility was located in Marian Gołajewski's cookware storehouse, where he hid Jews. Marian Gołajewski was imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp. In 1946, at the request of the Alliance of Democrats, the State National Council awarded him the Cross of Valour. See: M. Komar, *Władysław Bartoszewski. Środowisko naturalne. Korzenie* (Warsaw, 2010), p. 219; "Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”). Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych RPŻ,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 65–66 (1968), p. 195; "Resolution of the State National Council of 11 July 1946,” *Polish Monitor*, No. 34 (1947), item 286.

¹⁶ The author probably had in mind the book by Mieczysław Fularski *Przysposobienie wojskowe w Polsce*, published in Warsaw in 1929.

woman – Lipczyński's niece from Mińsk Mazowiecki – spent a night next to me.¹⁷ We shared the same bed due to lack of space. One evening a young Jewish woman came to ask for help. She was fed and given some money. A fugitive from Auschwitz, citizen Marian Gołajewski, who was present at the time, also gave her money, I gave her a sweater, a white scarf and 10 zlotys (as I mentioned, I had almost no money). All this was happening in very difficult conditions and in an extremely tense atmosphere because both comrades, although they worked in the police, were themselves under observation and knew about the bad attitude of the German boss Julius Schmidt towards them.¹⁸ Six months after taking office he told them that they had been under observation for six months, that no guilt had been proven, but there was circumstantial evidence, and that they should be on their guard, because he would have to hand them over to the Gestapo in Warsaw as the accused. They denied it vehemently and categorically – no way, never! On this occasion, they found out who “gave them away” – namely an informant Vaishvili¹⁹ (who in Polish times was a Pole, and in German times became a Russian), the greatest enemy of the Polish organisation. One Sunday, they both came home very agitated. Well, this Vaishvili, lodged as a subtenant a woman – apparently Polish, but a German informant – in the flat of a certain Pole from Siedlce suspected of communism. This informant quietly searched the flat and provided incriminating material, as a result of which the Pole was arrested, handcuffed, and driven to Mińsk (his eyes were blindfolded). He was led to the first floor of the police

¹⁷ Most likely, Elżbieta Kowner was thinking of Celina Lipczyńska, a niece of Izydor Lipczyński, the commander of the Jewish police in the Mińsk Ghetto. See: *Polacy–Żydzi 1939–1945*, ed. by S. Wroński and M. Zvolakowa (Warsaw, 1971), p. 319.

¹⁸ Julius Schmidt, commander of the Criminal Police (Kripo) in Mińsk Mazowiecki, was shot by the Home Army soldiers on 23 July 1943, in front of the building of the Criminal Police. See: Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records, hereinafter AAN), Delegatura Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraj (Government Delegation for Poland 1940–1945, hereinafter DR), 202/II-23, Situation report on the organizational status and activities of subversive organizations of national minorities and the occupier for the period 1–31 July 1943, pp. 22–23.

¹⁹ Wilhelm Vaishvili was erroneously described by Elżbieta Kowner as an informant. In fact, he was the Kripo officer in Mińsk Mazowiecki. Stanisław Szeweluk testified in the case of Kazimierz Sowiński, deputy head of Kripo in Mińsk Mazowiecki, “Vaishvili was the evil spirit of the criminal police.” According to Stanisław Szeweluk, Vaishvili did not consider himself to be of any particular nationality. See: Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie (State Archives in Warsaw, hereinafter APW), Sąd Okręgowy w Warszawie, 5th Criminal Division (Regional Court in Warsaw, hereinafter SOW), 260, Minutes of the main hearing discontinued on 10 March 1947, 27 March 1947, pp. 83–84.

building on Warszawska Street and the beatings began, but he gritted his teeth and didn't say a word. Finally he decided to die. He asked that his hands be uncuffed, then he would tell everything; his hands were uncuffed, then he ran to the open window and jumped from the first floor, it seems that with an already broken leg he climbed the wooden fence, where a bullet of a policeman from the ground floor of the building ended his life. Well, this informant, unmasked in Siedlce, could not stay there any longer, so Vaishvili brought her to Mińsk and got her a job as a clerk in the Arbeitsamt. Well, in my presence – I swear! Mila and Elżbieta, in my presence, asked the boys from the organisation to inform the Poles working in the Arbeitsamt in Mińsk that this person was a German informant. I didn't know her name. Let Emilia Dyna give it if she remembers. One day, Emilia and Elżbieta were summoned by their German boss, Schmidt, and he showed them an anonymous denunciation (that day he himself was at the post office and received correspondence that some suspicious person in a green coat and hat was coming to them from Warsaw – Marian Gołajewski, a fugitive from Auschwitz) and that he maintains relations with Jews. They explained that this was certainly some kind of malice, that he had nothing to do with Jews, and that this gentleman was not a suspect, but simply their acquaintance, a merchant from Warsaw. You have to remember that at that time I, a fugitive from the Warsaw Ghetto, lived with them.

They had to pledge that the next time the “merchant from Warsaw” came to Mińsk, they would take him to the police chief – Schmidt. At the same time, they warned Marian Gołajewski not to show up in Mińsk. Elżbieta went alone “for a perm to Warsaw” and left a warning message for Gołajewski. From then on, they sneaked out on their own to the post office to pick up letters. They intercepted two more anonymous messages to Schmidt of the same content. I read the last of them myself and hid it under the floor in the kitchen until Emilia Dyna came from the office and then, after reading it, we burned that last anonymous denunciation. The unknown informant reported in that anonymous message that a suspicious individual in green (Gołajewski) was staying with us again and that we were hiding Jews. That if this third anonymous call is also ineffective, and if Elżbieta and Emilia are not arrested, the fourth and fifth anonymous calls will go directly to the Gestapo. Indeed, Marian Gołajewski from Auschwitz was with us again, but he had arrived late in the evening and left at 6 in the morning, and we thought

no one had seen him. It meant the spy and denouncer was living nearby, possibly a neighbour, but we had few neighbours, good Poles and friends. This was very disheartening for us. There was no one to suspect. And then there was a disaster. Emilia and Elżbieta made a few careless remarks about me, they patted me on the back in front of others for knowing foreign languages and for having studied at university. People began to wonder why, having a higher education, I was doing the dirty and hard work of a house cleaner while I didn't look like a maid, I was too well dressed. People began to mutter louder and louder about me: "Jew, Jew, hidden Jew." I asked my friends if I should leave because they were in danger. They replied, "Where do you want to go, you have no one. Don't be afraid, stay here for now. We'll help you when you'll have to get away." Knowing I had no one to go to, they continued to endanger themselves for me.

They created a double life for Jan Sarnecki, they prepared an alibi just in case, created his persona of a "worldly man" by introducing him to the suavest Polish social milieu, to the "elite and cream" of Mińsk, so that, in the event of his arrest, it could be said that it was a misunderstanding because Sarnecki belongs to of the working Polish intelligentsia, and he is no "polnische Banditen" with a gun. At that time we were visited by Engineer Słowikowski²⁰ with his wife Nina, citizen Manczarski²¹ with his wife Paulina, Engineer Paślawski²² with his family and

²⁰ It has not been determined whom the author had in mind.

²¹ Aleksander Stefan Manczarski (1896–1984) – he studied at General Paweł Chrzanowski Philological High School, from which he graduated after passing school-leaving exam, in 1915. In 1922, he graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics of the University of Warsaw. In September 1922, he became a high school teacher, but because it was extremely difficult to find a job, until 1926 he taught in various middle schools in Warsaw and Mińsk Mazowiecki. In 1926, he was appointed assistant at the Magnetic Observatory at Świder. Under the guidance of Prof. Stanisław Kalinowski, he studied the Earth's magnetism. In 1927–1939 he worked at the Free Polish University as an assistant to Professor Marian Grotowski. After the outbreak of the Second World War, he was involved in clandestine teaching. several times he succeeded in avoiding arrest by the Germans. After the war, he settled at Przedbórz, where he taught and conducted social activities. He was the brother of Stefan (1899–1979), a Polish engineer, scientist and inventor. See: <https://psbprzedborz.pl/manczarski-aleksander-stefan/> (accessed 7 March 2020).

²² Romuald Paślawski, an engineer residing in Mińsk. Before the war, he was a district engineer, he also worked in the Warsaw Voivodeship Office. He was also, until 1939, the head of the Road Department in Mińsk Mazowiecki. See: *Czasopismo Techniczne – Organ Ministerstwa Robót Publicznych i Polskiego Towarzystwa Politechnicznego*, 25 February 1929, p. 49; J. Kuligowski, *Życie polityczne, społeczno-gospodarcze i kulturalne powiatu mińskomazowieckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Mińsk Mazowiecki, 2013), pp. 68, 70; J. Orliński, "Budowa dróg w powiecie Mińskim w latach trzydziestych," *Rocznik Mińsko-Mazowiecki* 13 (2005), p. 13, 24; *Permanent International Association of Road Congress. Sixth International Road Congress. Washington, D.C, 1930*, (Washington, 1931), p. 308.

another engineer with his wife (I don't remember the name), the Wójciks, a surgeon whose name I don't remember, and of course Jan Sarnecki, and it was as if they had gathered to play bridge. All of them were impeccable Poles who adored Emilia and Elżbieta for their integrity, dedication, bravery, courage and devotion to the Polish cause. We were also visited by the owner of the printing house, an old pre-war socialist,²³ I don't know his name. The printing house was located at Piłsudskiego Street near the railway station. Unfortunately, he was captured during the roundup, probably taken to Pawiak. And sometimes we had uninvited guests, someone from the police to see who was staying with us. This was clear proof that we were under scrutiny, that the police did not have great confidence in Emilia D[yna] or Elżbieta.

One time, when I was serving dinner – in front of me – I swear!! – one of them, I think Elżbieta, was explaining to Jan Sarnecki how they should carry out the attack on the police building, where and what files are stored and where the keys are kept, she said that she would immediately fall flat on the floor and would not interfere, only that they would act quickly and efficiently, then Mila, together with Elżbieta, advised in what circumstances it would be best to shoot the boss, a German, Schmidt: 'so don't do it in the apartment, because there he has a seven-year-old son, whom he adores and would defend himself like a lion and kill everyone, nor in the police building, because there are too many blue policemen and German dogs, but only when he will be getting out of the car, this is the most convenient moment.' She told him at what time her boss usually arrives in the office. Several days had passed. On 21 July 1943, at 9 am the car with the chief of the Sicherheitspolizei in Mińsk, Julius Schmidt, a German, pulled up in front of the police building, and just as he was getting out of the car, an unknown individual jumped up, quickly hit and pushed aside the chauffeur – a Pole and fired three shots at Schmidt, who reached for the gun in his pocket, but did not manage to pull it out and just slumped onto the steering wheel. Emilia Dyna and her companion

²³ Zenon Juliusz Lissowski (1890–1945), owner of the printing house at 70 Piłsudskiego Street in Mińsk Mazowiecki, activist of the Polish Socialist Party, arrested by the Germans in 1942, sent to Auschwitz, then to KL Neuengamme, where he perished on one of the ships with prisoners sunk by the Germans. See: M. Lissowski, "Zenon Juliusz Lissowski we wspomnieniach syna – Mirosława Lissowskiego," *Rocznik Mińsko-Mazowiecki* 22 (2014), pp. 223–228.

Elżbieta should, by rights, be awarded for contributing to the assassination of such a bloody executioner and merciless murderer of Poles and Jews as the German Schmidt proved to be. Two more weeks passed – in the evening, during an attack on a large farm – an act of sabotage – grain intended for the Germans was set on fire and Jan Sarnecki was shot. A machine gun and a can of gasoline were found next to him. It was widely rumoured in the town that the chief of the German police had been shot by the communist Jan Sarnecki, a close friend of Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska. Friends no longer visited us, but were just coming to find out whether Emilia and Elżbieta had been arrested. Then they told me that I had to move out of Mińsk as soon as possible, because otherwise I would get sniffed out and make their own situation worse.

Unfortunately, my departure was out of the question at that time, because a new act of sabotage had cut off the connection with Warsaw. An electric train on that railway line, the only connection with Warsaw, had been burned. All three of us lived through terrible days and nights, constantly listening to hear whether they were coming for us. At that time, I wanted to bury myself in the ground, so as not to be the cause of their misfortune, but I had nowhere to hide. One day, Elżbieta and Mila gave me two fake ID cards, one for Emilia, the other for Elżbieta (in case they had to escape from Mińsk). I hid these ID cards in a cubbyhole loaded with wood, under bricks. I showed Emilia where they were, and the next morning I managed to go with a small hand-held suitcase as if to a dressmaker (to avoid suspicion I did not say goodbye to anyone) to Warsaw, and from there to further miserable wandering. Before that, I personally burned any documents that could have betrayed me, the high school leaving certificate, university diplomas, the pre-war ID card, employment certificate and other such documents. I wrote to Emilia and Elżbieta, signing the letter as Krystyna. When we were parting, Elżbieta and Mila lent me a few hundred zlotys and instructed me how to behave in the event of being arrested. I not only “ran away” from Vilnius from the Russians, my family was evacuated from Vilnius by the Russians, and I lived with a relative, a feldsher Jakubianiec in Grodno (in fact, the feldsher was a relative of Elżbieta),²⁴ then I reached Mińsk Mazowiecki, where I found an acquaintance at my relatives – Emilia Dyna, who

²⁴ No further details of this person have been established.

continued to sacrifice her life for me, inviting me to live at her place. However, I decided not to take advantage of this sacrifice and was just to say that she was my pre-war acquaintance whose mother I had found in Cracow. On 1 November 1944, I was in fact arrested at the main railway station in Warsaw, and escorted by two policemen, taken to the Gestapo on Szucha Avenue. They beat me there, they checked my documents (I had very good, authentic documents), they phoned to Brwinów to check whether I really worked in a German home, I worked for some Volksdeutsche as a servant, finally they said “*nicht ähnlich*” – doesn’t look like a Jewish woman - and released me in Brwinów. Within a few days, I got rid of everything and, against the will of my boss, a Volksdeutsche who had my work card/book, I departed, leaving a false address. I had telephoned Emilia earlier that I wanted to see her before the departure.

She told me not to come to Mińsk, and that she can’t come to me, at most she could get to Rembertów, to Elżbieta, where she had been transferred as a punishment. Trembling with fear, I went to Rembertów. I told her everything I had experienced in the Gestapo and that I did not know where to go, and that I doubted that we would ever see each other again. Elżbieta stated that they were still under the threat of arrest at any moment (after their boss had been murdered) and that she had turned into a nervous wreck and was urging Emilia to flee with false, sham documents. Emilia was categorically opposed to it, claiming that their employers do not have any evidence of their culpability, only clues that can be denied, but that running away would be an admission of guilt and would cause greater risk of paying for it with their lives, because where were they supposed to run to? We parted and did not see each other until the end of the war. I left for Nowy Sącz, where I stayed until 12 February 1945 (there I suffered second degree burns). I had 25 luminal tablets sewn under my dress in case the Gestapo arrested me for a second time, so that I wouldn’t be the cause of Emilia Dyna or Elżbieta Gajewska being punished with death by the Germans.

I would like to add a few more words for general characterisation and a few facts known to me. Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska restored freedom to many Poles and Jews. At great risk to themselves, they explained to their boss, a German, that the arrest of a given individual was a mistake, that he was an ordinary, hard-working man, with the opinion of a very decent person, that he was no “Polish Bandit” at

all. In many cases, the intervention was effective, unless the person was caught with a gun, then there was no help and sometimes you had to “grease” Vaishvili or others, but they never took bribes for themselves. On the other hand, the local peasants and the whole local population adored them, they were constantly being invited by Polish peasants for a Sunday. On their name days, the small house was showered with flowers. They were Polish patriots, brave and noble women. At the funeral of Jan Sarnowski,²⁵ the Polish sailor killed by a policeman, Emilia Dyna and Jan Sarnecki walked demonstratively behind his coffin at the head of the procession.

They were adored even by the prisoners, on their name day they brought home a gift from prisoners - huge red hollyhocks from the prison yard, these hollyhocks were put in the most honourable place. One day, Emilia pointed out to me an old woman in the street, supposedly Jewish, whom they had defended with great difficulty from Schmidt. Once a country woman came with a hen and milk – to express thanks for freeing her son – Emilia told her to take back the hen and then paid the woman for the milk. However, she warned the woman that her son should not stay at home because the village leader had given a very bad opinion about him to the Germans, and he could be taken again at any time. At the end of July 1943, the woman came crying that her son had been taken from her house that night by policemen. Emilia and Elżbieta got very agitated because they had endangered themselves in order to save the life of a Pole, and the stupid woman had lost her son because, despite the warning, she had let him stay at home. Unfortunately, he was shot.

In *Deutsches Haus* run by Schaeffer,²⁶ one of the waitresses was denounced as Jewish. Emilia was instructed to search the accused. She found in her clothing a card to a Polish friend with the following content: “save me, remember, do not regret anything, because it is not only about my head and life, do whatever you can.” The frightened girl began to beg Emilia not to expose her Polish friend and not to show the card to the Germans. Emilia calmed her down and gave the card

²⁵ During the occupation, Jan Sarnowski was a county inspector of dairies in Mińsk County. He was shot by a German policeman on 29 May 1943. See: Mówiński, *Szumcie wierzby*, pp. 110–111.

²⁶ Henryk Szaefer, born in 1902 at Gostyń, as a Pole; he signed the Volksliste and became a German. The Germans handed over to him a restaurant exclusively for Germans and a buffet in the German officers’ mess on Dworcowa Street. He also owned two more restaurants, at Kałuszyn and Kołbiel. See: APW, SOW, 3408, Indictment against Henryk Szaefer, Warsaw, 4 May 1948, p. 6.

to her Polish companion. While she had the card with her, she gave it to me to read over dinner one time.

A country woman, after an argument with her husband, accused him of being Jewish. Indeed, he had been a Jew 50 years earlier, but was baptised as a baby and was now 60 years old. Then the terrified woman began to beg to save him from the death penalty. Emilia and Elżbieta found witnesses who confirmed that the peasant had never been a Jew.

A Russian officer named Maksudov²⁷ escaped from captivity and lived with some woman, who then informed on him to the Germans. Emilia and Elżbieta brought him food to the prison; they asked me if “be healthy” is “bud’ zdorov” in Russian, because they used this phrase, and he replied “spasiba.”

A girl from Mińsk helped a French prisoner escape from captivity. He was caught carrying cards from her and the girl was arrested. She was facing the death penalty. Elżbieta brought these cards home, we translated them from the French as benignly as possible. The boss was persuaded to have her released on bail, then Elżbieta told the girl to run away, which she immediately did.

I could give you thousands of such examples, I just don’t remember the names. Names can be given by Emilia, and all this can be verified.

Emilia Dyna ran the behavioural section, provided medical checks for sex workers, and Elżbieta Gajewska worked in the office.

When it was necessary to rescue Poles from detention or to help prisoners, they did everything they possibly could.

Their work in the police was only a cover, under which they worked to cause as much damage to Germany as they could, at great risk to themselves, so they deserve to be awarded, like every self-sacrificing Polish patriot. They had no enemies among cultured people – they were respected and liked by the citizens of Mińsk Mazowiecki. If there were individuals hostile to them, they were probably only among prostitutes, pimps, thieves and bandits.

And let me finish with another incident. Emilia and Elżbieta recalled with great indignation that a prostitute – Julia Chojnacka – had reported to them that a child, a seven-year-old boy, the illegitimate son of a Pole and a Jewish woman,

²⁷ The identity of this person has not been determined.

was hiding out in Mińsk. She demanded that the child be shot. They replied, “Julka, you’re drunk, go to sleep, the police don’t deal with these matters.” But Chojnacka didn’t give up, she reported it to the police and so a blue policeman, Kaczmarek,²⁸ shot the seven-year-old child.

Emilia Dyna hated the Germans, she never said the word “German” at home, only “szkop” or “wicked szkop.” Certainly, no one believes that a Polish woman who hates Germans would bully Poles unnecessarily. All of the above I can confirm under oath.

Wanda Bieńkowska
Katowice, 26 September 1945.

Source: AIPN, GK 453/63, Testimony of Wanda Bieńkowska in the case of Emilia Dyna, submitted to the Municipal Office of Public Security in Katowice, 26 September 1945, pp. 10–19.

²⁸ Policeman Józef Kaczmarek, senior sergeant, district commander of Polnische Polizei, a German collaborator shot by soldiers of Kedyw AK on 16 October 1943. See AAN, DR, 202/II-23, *Sprawozdanie sytuacyjne ze stanu organizacyjnego i działalności organizacji wyrotowych, mniejszości narodowych oraz okupanta za czas od 1 do 31 października 1943 r.*, p. 79; D. Sitkiewicz, “Wobec dwóch wrogów. Raporty kontrwywiadowcze obwodu “Jamnik” – “Kamień” Armii Krajowej kwiecień–lipiec 1944 r.” *Rocznik Mińsko-Mazowiecki* 22 (2014), p. 119.



REVIEWS/ POLEMICS

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CORRECTING THE PICTURE, CONTINUED*

Reply to the editors and co-authors of the book *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], vols 1–2, ed. by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warszawa, 2018) to their polemics with my review: *Correcting the Picture? Some Reflections on the Use of Sources in the book: Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski, vol. 1–2, ed. by Barbara Engelking, Jan Grabowski, Warsaw 2018* (Warsaw, 2019)

In 2018, the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research, operating as part of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, published *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland] – a two-volume work edited by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski.¹ The book was met with great interest by public opinion and researchers, spark-

* The review “Correcting the Picture, Continued” (in Polish “Korekty ciąg dalszy”) was published prior to the English edition of the book *Night without End* and was originally added to the *Biuletyn IPN* 9 (2020). The present edition is its faithful translation.

¹ In the text, when referring to the book *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], ed. by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warszawa, 2018), I use the abbreviated title *Night without End* in brackets when I refer to some specific replies.

ing several reviews and discussions, including my extensive 2019 review entitled “Correcting the Picture?”²

In reaction to my review, the editors and authors of *Night without End* presented their polemical texts published on the Centre’s website.³ Numerous remarks and opinions, often critical, inspired me to prepare a response. In my reply, the doubts about the significance of the issues I have touched upon could be explained to the authors and interested readers, particularly those concerning the interpretation of the sources used in *Night without End*. Efforts were made to address all matters raised in the responses. It is my genuine hope that no issue was left unanswered. “Reflections” are divided into a general section addressing common threads and detailed sections focusing on individual authors’ remarks.

The general and detailed sections present, step by step, the groundlessness of most objections to my review. Importantly, new examples will be presented of the same mechanisms of using sources, as described in detail in “Correcting the Picture”, serving the authors as a basis for creating even more myths or formulating false theses. Following the scheme proposed in “Correcting the Picture”, the general section will cover the issue of selecting the research areas, the ‘German-Polish’ administration and the significance of omitting the source base in the presentation of tables and statistical data for effecting the quality of scholarly research.

I would like to begin the central part of my reply with the issue that is of utmost importance. Indeed, it is important enough for the authors to echo across almost every page of the individual texts. Various, occasionally offensive and unrefined expressions are far from the principles of academic polemics. The review has

² T. Domański, “Korekta obrazu? Refleksje źródłoznawcze wokół książki *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, Warszawa 2018, t. 1–2”, *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 209–314 (English version: “Correcting the Picture? Some Reflections on the Use of Sources in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without an End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], ed. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów [Polish Center for Holocaust Research], Warsaw 2018, vol. 1–2”, *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 637–743. I use the abbreviated title “Correcting the Picture” throughout the text.

³ <https://www.holocaustresearch.pl/index.php?show=555> (accessed 15 July 2020). Polemical texts (excluding the part by Professor Jean-Charles Szurek) have been sent to the Institute of National Remembrance in hard copy, with the suggestion they should be printed by the Institute of National Remembrance’s publishing house. The Institute agreed, offering room for polemics in its publications. Ultimately, the researchers from the Centre decided not to have their responses published by the Institute of National Remembrance.

been labelled a “disquisition” (Barbara Engelking), an “essay” (Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska), a *tractatus* and a “Potemkin village” (Tomasz Frydel) or even... a “re-tort” (Alina Skibińska). One may think that the authors were almost competing to come up with the most creative insult. Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska ascertained: “Tomasz Domański’s subsequent reservations concerning the content of the book result predominantly from his erroneous interpretations, oversights and distortion of the text. Domański then battles the enemy he has created, referring not to the content of both volumes, but to his interpretations which, in many instances, are unfounded” (“Response”, p. 2).⁴ For Professor Barbara Engelking, the review is “a lampoon-like screed” (“Response”, p. 1). However, the author has not provided any evidence of the scurrilous nature of the review and the manipulations that – in her opinion – I had committed. Professor Dariusz Libionka also made an attempt at discrediting my work, stating that: “it had been written on commission, with the aim to [...] discredit and ridicule the authors and editors of the book, to present them as *ignorami*, charlatans and manipulators, as conmen who are only themselves privy to the sources of financing of their pathetic, joyful creativity which – above all – is hostile to the interests of Poland” (“Response”, p. 2).⁵ The cited epithets are obviously far from the language of historical debate and substantive polemics that one should have expected of the Polish and international academic milieux representatives holding professorial degrees. The manner of argumentation, the terms, and the language used are clear evidence of the particularly emotional character of the discourse on the Holocaust and especially on Polish-Jewish relations under the German occupation. These statements’ tone further attests to the urgent need for an academic debate based on the power of argumentation, free of any prejudices and the belief of one’s infallibility. This was, indeed, the purpose of “Correcting the Picture” and is the purpose of this reply, which – hopefully – will inspire the authors to validate their opinions on the topics touched upon in “Correcting the Picture”.

⁴ The numbers in parentheses refer to the pagination of the responses sent to the Institute of National Remembrance. The pagination in the hard copies sent to the Institute and in the documents produced by pasting the text published in the Centre’s website into Word documents differ. Original spelling is preserved in all quotations, both from the polemics and archived materials.

⁵ Anna Zapalec also writes about an attempt at discrediting. Apparently, it is Professor Jean-Charles Szurek who raised the largest number of *ad personam* arguments in his response. They shall be addressed more fully in my detailed response.

It is by all means deeply distressing that, instead of a fact-based exchange of arguments, the editors and co-authors of *Night without End* endeavour to discredit and undermine the reliability of the researcher who 'dared' to write a critical academic review, pointing to manipulations and multiple errors in the analysis and interpretation of historical sources. At this point, it should be mentioned that, in the authors' opinion, this review was not an independent piece of work, and it was prepared by a team of Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) historians. Professor Anna Zapalec is rhetorically wondering, "to whom is my response formulated?" Professor Jan Grabowski is of a similar opinion. However, I find Professor Grabowski's opinions particularly interesting. They help to understand (unveil?) the mechanism of drawing conclusions and putting forward theses irrespective of the object of analysis, be it a historical source, academic publication, an attempt at polemics, or a review, as is the case here. The author of the response indicates that I 'repeatedly' cite 'unpublished typescripts' of other researchers from the Institute of National Remembrance. In fact, out of 213 footnotes, I have made a total of four citations on findings by other Institute of National Remembrance co-workers in „Correcting the Picture”.⁶ I doubt that 'repeatedly' is the correct term to use in this situation, as it refers to multiple and extensive citations or quoting. But this is not all. Grabowski used the above utterly false argument to construct a subsequent conclusion where he labelled my review as "the collective effort of officials delegated by their superiors to a special task consisting in – which I intend to demonstrate – an attempt at discrediting the reputation of independent researchers, and not in intellectual polemics" ("Response", p. 1). One would want to paraphrase the opinion of Swałek-Niewińska further: Grabowski subsequently battles with the enemy he has created himself, referring not to the content of the review but to his own interpretations that are unjustified in this case. Elsewhere, Professor Grabowski completed his response with a significant detail, insinuating that "the Polish state in the form of the Institute of National Remembrance" has joined in the discussion on *Night without End* ("Response", p. 1).

⁶ This refers to the manuscripts by: Tomasz Roguski, Katarzyna Pawlak-Weiss, and Krzysztof Kupeć (jointly), Dawid Golik and Sebastian Piątkowski.

According to Grabowski, on the one side, there are state officials (or an official) *ergo* the Polish state, and on the other, independent researchers – he doesn't see academics arguing their theses. And the term 'officials' is used here by coincidence. In this juxtaposition, it is used not so much as a reference to the workplace but as an insult, as if it was not possible to be a state official and a scholar at the same. Moreover, the publication of reviews analysing his field of research is for Grabowski a reason to claim that I am copying content from Dr Tomasz Roguski (an employee of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw) or Roguski from me ("Response", p. 6). Ultimately, however, he concludes that "Roguski's text is much more detailed than Domański's report. Thus, it is more likely that it is Domański who is copying without due citation. In the academic world, this action would disqualify the author of the review" ("Response", p. 6). Well, Grabowski clearly does not invite the possibility that two historians may have come to a similar, momentarily highly critical evaluation of the manner of analysing the sources presented in "Węgrów County" ("Powiat węgrowski").⁷

An important place in the responses of editors and co-authors of *Night without End* is the issue of the selection of focus areas (administrative units). In "Correcting the Picture", I pointed to a simple methodological error in *Night without End*: the use of the same term of 'a county' (*powiat*)⁸ to refer to different administrative

⁷ Hitherto, the following reviews of *Night without End* have been published: P. Gontarczyk, "Między nauką a mistyfikacją, czyli o naturze piśmiennictwa prof. Jana Grabowskiego na podstawie casusu wsi Wrotnów i Międzyles powiatu węgrowskiego", *Glaukopis* 36 (2019), pp. 313–323; T. Roguski, "Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski", *Glaukopis* 36 (2019), pp. 335–356; R. Gieroń, "Próby przetrwania Zagłady w powiecie bocheńskim. Refleksje po lekturze artykułu Dąmmary Swałtek-Niewińskiej", *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 47 (2018), pp. 95–108; D. Golik, "Nowotarska noc. Kilka uwag na marginesie artykułu Karoliny Panz", *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 47 (2018), pp. 109–133.

⁸ In "Correcting the Picture, continued", for greater clarity, I use three terms: (1) the German term *Kreishauptmannschaft* in reference to 'counties' (*starostwa powiatowe*) established by the Germans; (2) where the borders of the wartime *Kreishauptmannschaften* overlapped with the Polish pre-war county and are the subject of the analysis of the authors of individual chapters, the term county (*powiat*) is used conditionally; (3) where the authors analyse only a part of the wartime *Kreishauptmannschaft*, forming a pre-war county incorporated into the new German administrative unit, the term 'county' is used. It needs to be clarified here that the German authorities, carrying out an administrative 'reform' in the General Governorate (GG) in 1940, consolidated Polish pre-war counties (usually two or three) into one, called a *Kreishauptmannschaft*, governed by a *Kreishauptmann*, the Polish language equivalent here being: *starostwo/powiat* (county) and *starosta* (county governor). However, this term does not fully convey the actual role and scope of powers that a *Kreishauptmann* possessed in the administrative structure of the GG; it cannot be seen equivalent of the Polish pre-war *starosta*.

units. The problem pertains to Kreishauptmannschaften introduced by the German occupant and the pre-war Polish counties, in some cases picked out for analysis. The editors write: "The administrative units selected by us are located in different regions of Poland, which enables the comparison of the occupant's extermination policy and the analysis of diverse survival strategies adopted by Jewish victims" (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 14). The authors' approach to this issue represented in the response is more than symptomatic. Instead of explicitly admitting to the obvious fact, the authors stubbornly bog down in deliberations proving their correctness. Swaitek-Niewińska writes: "Tomasz Domański doesn't like the fact that some authors have indicated as their field of research the area of the pre-war county, while others of the wartime ones. He writes about it in a sensationalist tone, as if this were a significant discovery and proof of manipulation" ("Response", p. 1). Professor Grabowski: "Domański criticises that our studies, in several instances, refer to consolidated German counties (Kreishauptmannschaften) and, in several others – pre-war Polish counties. The grounds for this accusation are unclear since the decisions concerning the selection of research areas have been expressly stated in the Foreword and each of the subsequent studies" ("Response", p. 1). Neither was the tone of my remarks sensationalist, nor was this a case of whether or not I liked it, but whether it is compliant with the principles of scholarly craftsmanship. My detailed reply to Professor Grabowski will discuss the errors associated with mixing occupant's 'consolidated counties' with pre-war counties.

The argument that the selection of research areas was based on comparing the extermination policy towards the Jews is not convincing if one realises that four out of the nine analysed 'counties' were located in the same district (Cracow District). Thus, the whole area under analysis did not cover 'different regions of Poland' but different regions of the General Governorate (GG) (as well as one county from the Bezirk Bialystok). Obviously, the individual regional studies bring forth significant deliberations from the scope of the course of the Holocaust, but practically solely (aside from Bielsk) within one administrative organism. In this context, the following statement by Zapalec is unjustified:

If the reviewer believes that it is possible to come up with a 'well-thought-out exemplification', ensuring the representativeness of the selection, he should not

conceal this from his readers; I would gladly acquaint myself with his position on this matter' [...] Domański, however, was incapable of bringing anything creative or constructive into the discussion; yet, he recklessly criticised the authors of the book. ("Response", p. 3)

A similar opinion is shared by Swałtek-Niewińska, for whom my remarks concerning the lack of representativeness of research areas are the result "of a certain unfamiliarity with the principles of statistics and selection of the research group" ("Response", p. 1). Anna Zapalec seems to forget that it is not the reviewer's role to act as an editor and enumerate specific counties, and perhaps communes, that the authors should subject to analysis. However, there seems to be quite a lot of ill will and malice in both authors if they are unable to notice the following section of the review:

Except for the already mentioned Złoczów 'county', the Eastern Lands of the Republic of Poland [RP] are hardly represented in the work. The entire Radom District has been omitted from the analysis (one of five administrative units of the GG since 1941), and the lands incorporated into the Third Reich. An experienced researcher of the Holocaust is aware that in each of these omitted areas, the Holocaust and the overall situation of the conquered people in the social hierarchy differed (e.g. the Radom district was characterised by the highest number of Jewish industrial workers in the GG). („Correcting the Picture", p. 7)

And this is where one should search for "well-thought-out exemplification". Generally, scholarly publications or those aspiring to be ones, should not compare administrative units originating from different historical periods covering different territories, having different organisational structures and, at the same time, sharing the same name. This leads to obvious confusion and only feigns research coherence. The review begins with the analysis of this platitude which I consider a general remark.

The editors of *Night without End* should not conceal from the reader that, in fact, the selection of analysed areas was accidental. They should not pretend to be offering a comprehensive discussion of specific administrative units from the

occupation period when they do not. After all, even such incidental selection is a research sample. I do agree, however, with the suggestion of Professor Zapalec (and, very likely, with the views of other authors of *Night without End*, e.g. Alina Skibińska) that: “The only solution [...] I can see, is the continuation of research on other regions/counties, which may bring us closer to getting to know local occupation conditions in different parts of Poland” (“Response”, p. 3). My review begins with highlighting the need for research of a regional/county nature. What is more, the publication of *Night without End*, so bluntly characterising the attitude of the Polish society towards the Jews (in fact, putting forward an explicit theory about the complicity of Poles, on multidimensional levels, in the Holocaust), provoked a fundamental methodological postulate. It’s worthwhile for future works depicting the history of the provinces (‘local-level Poland’) to consider the fate of entire societies subjected to the occupation, not only of the Jews. Otherwise, they will present a smaller or larger portion of the overall picture, which is never sufficient to reflect the complexity or intricacy of mutual attitudes or interactions.

Significant deliberations in the responses of the authors of *Night without End* were made on the concept of the ‘German-Polish administration’ used in this book. It is clear how their individual understandings of what specifically is concealed behind the term they’ve invented differ. Alina Skibińska, referring to the application of this term, stated: “The editors used a mental shortcut to denote Polish officials in the German administration. There is nothing outrageous or ‘misleading’ about it” (“Response”, p. 4).⁹ But is that what was meant? In the disquisition presented in his response to “Correcting the Picture”, Professor Grabowski eagerly argues that this is not about the lack of precision. Ostensibly acknowledging that the use of the term ‘German-Polish administration’ did not signify the existence of any Polish administration (‘this only refers to source methodology’ – “Response”, p. 3), Grabowski attempts to defend the terminology and prove – contrary to the

⁹ The relevant part of the response reads as follows: ‘As concerns the term “German-Polish administration” used in the Foreword (vol. 1, p. 19), for a reader not intent on seeking out the ill will of the authors and editors in every part, it is clear that this refers to those structures of the local administration, whose personnel was fundamentally Polish, often the same as before the war. Staffing all positions by Germans from the Reich was not possible, which is why the editors used a mental shortcut to denote Polish officials in the German administration. There is nothing outrageous or “misleading” about it’ (“Response”, p. 4).

facts – the existence of such an administration or at least the considerable liberty of Poles in their actions within the structures organised by the Germans, i.e. actual Polish agency. Bogging down in these deliberations, he mentions an obvious fact – demonstrating at the same time his failure to understand the historical material described – that a large part of the occupation’s administrative documentation had been produced in Polish. The Germans were well aware that they had conquered areas inhabited by several million speakers of the Polish, not German, language. And although, the official language in the GG which constituted part of the Greater German Reich, was – in principle – German, for practical reasons, they had to declare Polish as (merely) permissible. This only represents a problem which needed to be solved ‘for the time being’, and has nothing to do with ‘power-sharing’. All power in the GG was in the hands of the Germans. The Poles, who were employed as lower-ranking personnel, were to obediently follow German orders. This is elementary knowledge.

Further on, Grabowski admits that the Germans in the conquered lands used and, above all, forced local people to implement German policy. He writes:

For Domański – and this is reflected in the entire official narration of the Institute of National Remembrance – the beginning of the German occupation marks an end to Polish agency on an official or state level. As suggested by the reviewer – faithfully repeating the position of the Institute employing him – with the collapse of Polish statehood, any influence the Poles may have had on administrative activities, ceased to exist. From that time on, the situation was solely under German control, so whatever harm was done, it wasn’t our fault – seems to be saying the author of the Institute of National Remembrance report. (“Response”, p. 4)

Leaving aside this quasi-ironic tone, Grabowski’s perception of the German occupation is astounding. Thus, it is worth asking: what official Polish (state) agency can we speak of in the case of German actions? Did Adolf Hitler consult his moves with Polish authorities of any level in 1939 when making territorial changes and imposing German law?

In the context of Grabowski’s interpretations, it is necessary to recall primary research findings on the operation of the ‘Polish’ judiciary system in the GG,

which Grabowski invokes as another example of considerable freedom of action allegedly enjoyed by the Poles. It should be remembered that after Poland's defeat in September of 1939, the German authorities called pre-war officials in to work. As a rule, lower administrative personnel was left in its position since, for obvious reasons, the occupants were unable to staff all positions with Reichsdeutsche or Volksdeutsche. For purely practical purposes, least of all to secure Polish needs, part of the Polish pre-war judiciary structure was temporarily retained, but fully subordinated to the Germans and German law, with powers to handle only a very limited catalogue of matters. Grabowski forgets that these 'racially lower-ranking' courts delivered judgements not in the name of the Polish state or the Polish administration, but 'in the name of the law' – an unprecedented semantic and conceptual construct. And the law was made by the Germans. There is nothing accidental in the fact the judges' chains bearing Poland's national emblem were abolished. Furthermore, judges and other court staff were required to make declarations of loyalty and allegiance to the German administration. These courts were empowered to settle only cases falling outside the scope of German courts. In practice, each civil case to which a German entity was a party to or a participant of fell within the scope of the German judiciary system. These were all temporary solutions – as was the very existence of the GG. Criminal cases were mandatorily investigated by the German public prosecutor's office, which decided what court division it would be referred to.¹⁰ What were the actual possibilities for resisting German regulations (for acting independently) is evidenced in the fates of the Warsaw Bar members and the arrests of those who dared to express their own opinion and opposed to the removal of Jews from the Warsaw Bar already in 1940.¹¹ In other words, this same judge who delivered a judgment one day, could find himself in a German jail or concentration camp the next, alongside the person he had sentenced for disobeying German legislation. Where does the author see structures operating in the name of the Polish state? This remains quite a mystery.

¹⁰ A. Wrzyszczyk, "Tworzenie okupacyjnego wymiaru sprawiedliwości w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie", *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego* 8 (2003), pp. 264–266.

¹¹ S. Jagusz, "Czterdziestolecie masowych aresztowań i zsyłki adwokatów warszawskich do obozu zagłady w Oświęcimiu", *Palestra* 7–9 (1981), p. 91.

Professor Grabowski concludes this section of his disquisition as follows:

No historian aware of the powers given to lower-rank local administration will question the autonomy of the actions of Polish rural local governments on the “Jewish” issue. There was the possibility of choice on this particular issue despite severe penalties from the occupant. The same principles governed the local officials’ decisions to be involved (or not) in enforcing the occupant’s decrees concerning security, combating conspiracy, or the broadly understood war economy. (“Response”, p. 4)

And so, instead of a credible analysis of *de iure* and *de facto* situations (under the German occupation) of Poles employed in the occupant’s administration (and of the possibilities of resisting German orders or having decision-making powers), these are suggestions that are completely detached from the reality of the occupation period. It is worth citing how a classic on the subject, Professor Czesław Madajczyk, described this ‘Polish’ administration under German occupation. Writing about the recommendations of Herman Göring and his possible influence on the resolution issued in late June 1940 on the establishment of associations of communes (Gemeindeverbände), Madajczyk stated:

They took over the assets belonging to pre-war county-level units of the local government but were not their legal successors. They were managed by county governors (Kreishauptmanns). No advisors to mayors or commune heads were appointed, nor any departments of associations of communes, collegial bodies advising county governors [...]. **As a result, the existing pre-war territorial local government was eradicated. Communes remained in name as self-governing local government units** with mayors [Polish: *burmistrzowie*] or, in collective communes, with leaders referred to in Polish as *wójtowie*, to whom village heads [Polish: *soltysi*, or sing. – *soltys*¹²] were subordinate. However, **they were, in fact, all officials of the occupying administration**, which used

¹² In further part of the text, the Polish term *soltys* (sing.) or *soltysi* (plural) will be replaced by the English equivalent: ‘village head’ or ‘village heads’, as applicable.

the local government as an executive body. The administration's decisions were final. It was a one-instance system. [...] **County governors were empowered to change any mayor's regulation** [emphasis mine – T.D.].¹³

Madajczyk's opinion leaves no doubt as to the actual situation of Poles within the administrative structures. Will Professor Grabowski equally absurdly 'accuse' this author of duplicating the Institute of National Remembrance's alleged official narrative? The validity of my conclusions is also evidenced by documents of the Warsaw Branch Home Army – a part of the area Grabowski was dealing with. It was reported, *inter alia*, that: "The local government is still an auxiliary body of the German administration. This grave and the dangerous role requires of local government employees' considerable tact and a sense of national and personal dignity. At present, local authorities are still preoccupied with imposing and enforcing obligatory quotas".¹⁴ Can one speak of a Polish agency when, acting in an atmosphere of widespread terror and bound by 'law', commune officials were preparing lists of obligatory quotas (for any delays in deliveries of quotas, members of the quota committees could pay with their own lives) or of persons designated by the Germans for deportation for forced labour? Why did the Germans organise commune meetings in the GG, where officials were not allowed to discuss matters but only obliged to accept and fulfil orders and where they were reminded of their absolute obligation (!) to hand over to the Germans any Jews in hiding? Grabowski himself has often written about this, so he must be aware of it. If – as Grabowski claims – those officials 'had a choice' (whether to get involved in anti-Jewish operations or not), why were the village heads in the GG forced to submit the following declarations:

I hereby declare that: 1. There are no Jews in the area under my authority; 2. I will command that, in the future, any Jew appearing in the area under my jurisdiction be held and delivered to the nearest gendarmerie outpost, police station or

¹³ C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1 (Warszawa, 1970), pp. 215–216.

¹⁴ Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records; hereinafter: AAN), Archives of the Home Army (hereinafter: AK), 203/X-67, Report for the period of 15 October to 30 November 1943, [place and date of origin unknown], p. 7.

SS-Stützpunkt; 3. I am aware that I am fully responsible for duly fulfilling this obligation and for the consequences of my failure to do so.¹⁵

Everybody agrees there were traitors, also among Poles, who, either on their own or within the administration of the occupying forces, acted overzealously or simply disgraced themselves by participating in crimes against the Jews or Poles. In other words, the responsibility for participation in persecution can be assessed only on a case-by-case basis, and not on a structural one. Grabowski apparently confuses two systems: internal autonomy (free will, and the assumed awareness of the consequences of one's own decisions) and the realities of the occupation period. To close this issue, here's the text of the declaration obligatorily signed by every Pole employed in the occupying force's bodies: "I undertake to faithfully and conscientiously carry out my professional duties, acting in obedience to the **German administration**. I do not consider myself bound by any oath of allegiance, service oath, work commitment made towards the former Polish state or its bodies, or any political organisation [emphasis mine – T.D.]"¹⁶ What administration did officials serve in the GG when carrying out their professional duties, then?

Alina Skibińska mentioned at the beginning of this thread also referred to the extent of freedom of action.¹⁷ One can partially agree with her conclusions. For example, in post-war practice, heads of villages were not convicted for merely performing this function but for specific actions, which Skibińska refers to as 'overzealousness'. However, she does not notice the fundamental paradox of the post-war judiciary. On the one hand, the court analysed the "overzealousness" of

¹⁵ B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...*, cooper. O. Musiał (Poznań, 2019), pp. 196–197.

¹⁶ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance; hereinafter: AIPN), Chief Commission to Investigate the Nazi Crimes in Poland, 3060/5, Collection of files of the Polish Police in Radom District, Kielce, 6 February 1943, item 290.

¹⁷ The entire passage from the response reads as follows: 'Contrarily, it is false to think that Polish officials had absolutely no freedom of action – in some cases it was smaller, in others greater, but it existed. The key word enabling understanding of the degree of their responsibility is "overzealousness". In post-war criminal trials under the so-called August Decree, convictions were for crimes committed during the occupation – not for merely performing one's function (unless it was a function in an organisation considered to be criminal), but for overzealousness in the performance of duties for the German occupying forces, which had certain negative effects. Determination of the degree of responsibility of Poles working in the administrative bodies during the occupation should, therefore, be the aim of the research and reflection of historians, as our knowledge is still insufficient in this respect' ("Response", p. 2).

a given village head. On the other, it did not always mention the compulsion on the same village head to fulfil the German orders to capture Jews under threat of the death penalty, as already mentioned above. Depending on the court, the formal interpretation (in the light of legal provisions) of the extent of possible overzealousness differed.

General issues needing to be discussed in this section include a paradigm of omitting the source base of any statistics and thematic tables observed throughout the book. I do not, by any means, underestimate the data presented by the authors. However, I am not arguing with these numbers for reasons I have already given in “Correcting the Picture”. Simply stated, data without source references are non-verifiable. They render any discussion on their validity or the examination of conscientiousness of the calculations impossible. The authors must be aware of this. In order to allow for polemics, they should list specific sources or the names of those Jews whose fate served to develop these statistics. This is the fundamental issue if such statistics were to be considered research data. Given the size of the work which seemingly meticulously lists the perpetrators of crimes against the Jews, one may get the impression that the authors intentionally deprive other scholars of the possibility to verify the data. After all, nothing stood in the way of adding a list of names of Jewish survivors to whom the data refer. This would give others a chance to point out mistakes or omissions, as is the case with academic papers. In the case of Nowy Targ county researched by Karolina Panz, simple proof of the truthfulness of this statement is provided by the account of Józef Jama concerning the fates of Jews from Szczawnica, available at the Jewish Historical Institute.

In some cases (likely where this has been confirmed), the author informed that the person had survived the war and what was their post-war place of residence he or she had managed to establish. The absence of Jama’s accounts in the sources referred to by Panz provokes two basic assumptions. Either the author used these materials and only failed to cite the reference, or she did not find the account and did not acknowledge the content in her conclusions. A reader of a scholarly paper should not be treated in such a manner. In the absence of clearly and precisely specified sources, a researcher can only guess whether trying to follow the directions of Jama (or any other accounts) will be like reinventing the wheel, or whether it will

contribute to filling in the blanks of the past. In this particular case, the blanks in the past of the Jews of Szczawnica.

A similar case from Bochnia 'County' can be illustrated with the example of the Fragner family. In "Correcting the Picture", I wrote: "The Holocaust 'survivability' statistics (survivors and those killed) have not been analysed. The lack of references for the data provided in the tables as well as the use of the unknown category of 'author's research', make it essentially impossible to verify the figures" ("Correcting the Picture", p. 71). Describing the circumstances of this family's death, Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska referred to two accounts: those of Antoni Łucki and Mieczysław Ledóchowski (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 571–572). According to Łucki, the Fragner family consisted of three people (a married couple and the wife's sister). Ledóchowski spoke of a "Wiśnicz lawyer's family of five" (*ibid.*). Perhaps, therefore, some other Jews perished alongside the Fragners. As Swałtek-Niewińska has not decided which of the cited accounts is more credible to her, this remains unknown. This surname did not appear anywhere else in the chapter. On the other hand, the investigation documents show that the Frangers' son, Zygmunt, survived the occupation. Since we do not know the list from Bochnia 'County', we do not know if he has been included in the statistics or whether Swałtek-Niewińska, using sources not listed in this chapter, acknowledged the information from the investigation to be unreliable. Such situations put into question any scholarly value of these type of statistics.

This is also the case with Węgrów 'County'. Some materials concerning aid to Jews on the territory of occupied Poland can be found in the fonds on record at the Institute of National Remembrance Archives. They have been recently published by Sebastian Piątkowski¹⁸ and concern the stories of Chaim and Estera Kwiatek (Goldberg) rescued in Drgicz by the Styś family (confirmed not only by Polish witnesses but also before a notary by the rescued themselves); Loni and Chajka Szmul rescued by Władysława Kowalczyk, Katarzyna Molska and a man going by the surname of Trochimiak in the village of Majdan, as well as Władysław Lewensztejn rescued by Stefania Barszcz in the village of Ostrówek.¹⁹ These names do not appear in the description of Węgrów 'County', although they are survivors. It

¹⁸ See: *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 1: *Dystrykt warszawski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, sel. and ed. S. Piątkowski (Lublin–Warszawa, 2019).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49, 103–104.

is, therefore, unknown whether Grabowski confirmed this information in other or perhaps the same sources and only failed to note the references (however, his book came out earlier, therefore, for obvious reasons, he could not refer to the edition) or whether these are new data, supplementing the number of Jews who managed to survive, and the Poles who rescued them. It is also not clear whether he included these people in the 'statistics'? This is yet another example confirming the methodological error consisting in the failure to provide the source basis for statistical compilations.

A detailed response to the remarks of Professor Jan Grabowski

As already indicated above, in Professor Jan Grabowski's response, there are all types of spiteful remarks and non-academic 'arguments' intended to depreciate the reviewer. Grabowski accuses me of invoking antisemitic brochures 'authored by Mark Paul'. He writes:

The problem is – what every researcher familiar with Holocaust historiography knows – that Mark Paul does not exist. This is a pseudonym of the author (or authors) of brochures filled with anti-Semitic clichés and stereotypes, available on the Internet for years. Unfortunately, Dr Domański is apparently unaware of the fact that referencing anti-Semitic brochures in the review of scholarly work on the history of the Holocaust does not put him or the Institute employing him in a good light. ("Response", p. 2)

Three issues need clarifying here. First of all, Mark Paul exists, at least to the extent there are texts signed with that name. Secondly, in his publications, he is critical of representatives of the 'new Polish school of Holocaust research', including Jan Grabowski, which is why he is met with constant criticism from that circle. Thirdly and most importantly, the primary purpose of referring to Paul in "Correcting the Picture" was to point to the memoirs of Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum,²⁰ who survived the Holocaust, cited by him. Tennenbaum's book can be read at the United States

²⁰ S.L. Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir 1939–1944. A Chronicle of Survival* (New York, 1986, an edition of 2001).

Holocaust Memorial Museum, and its extensive excerpts are also available on the Internet. The transcript of Tennenbaum's manuscript is available at the Yad Vashem Archives under ref. no. O.33/1579. However, characteristically enough, Tennenbaum's memoirs are also referred to by a co-author of *Night without End*, Professor Anna Zapalec, in the chapter "Złoczów County" ("Powiat złoczowski). The polemics used in this case by my adversary is a classic example of resorting to non-substantive arguments and insinuations of anti-Semitism. Thus, the primary problem should not be Mark Paul's existence and where he may be found, but whether the source cited by Paul exists and, if so, whether the quotation he provides is true to the original.²¹ However, attempts at finding such analysis in Grabowski's response are in vain. I will use a longer explanation to facilitate understanding that Paul is just an excuse to attack my review. I am not the only researcher who has reached for Paul's publications. It turns out that Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec (Institute of History of the Jagiellonian University) refers to 'anti-Semitic clichés,' i.e. the findings of this author as an authority on the issue of researching deplorable attitudes of Jews during wartime,²² in the book titled: *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* [Forced Cooperation or Betrayal. On Instances of Jewish Collaboration in Occupied Cracow].²³ Jarkowska-Natkaniec mentions Paul alongside Tomasz Frydel (the author of one of the chapters in *Night without End*) and Israel Gutman. This book's reviewers were professors Jacek Chrobaczyński and Andrzej Żbikowski, whose knowledge of Jewish issues Jan Grabowski will likely not deny. As can be seen, they did not pinpoint the author's reference to a 'non-existent' figure. The findings by Jarkowska-Natkaniec are an important argument in the polemics of Professor Grabowski's co-worker from the Centre – Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska – with Piotr Gontarczyk. One can read about this on the Centre's website.²⁴

²¹ To facilitate the task, I provide a description: Yad Vashem Archives (hereinafter: AYV), O.33/1579, Memoir of Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum (1975–1978), p. 227.

²² This concerns the book: M. Paul, *Patterns of Cooperation, Collaboration and Betrayal: Jews, Germans and Poles in occupied Poland during World War II* (London, 2011).

²³ A. Jarkowska-Natkaniec, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* (Kraków, 2018), p. 34.

²⁴ <http://www.holocaustresearch.pl/index.php?mod=news&show=380&template=print> (accessed 7 July 2019).

So, the problem is not quoting Paul; it all depends on who does it. In any case, I am treating these allegations of invoking anti-Semitic ‘brochures’ (and Grabowski also provides such opinions in the media, so this is no coincidence) as a highly-inept attempt at discrediting the polemicist publicly. It is also worth noting that Grabowski writes not about a brochure but brochures. Thus, he creates an impression of a multitude, multiplying facts.²⁵ I leave these explanations without further comment. On the other hand, I strongly encourage Professor Grabowski, before he accuses anyone of using anti-Semitic ‘brochures’, to read Tennenbaum’s memoirs and his critical view of the attitudes of some members of the Złoczów Judenrat.

A continuation of Grabowski’s reflections on ‘anti-Semitic brochures’ is likely his crowning argument against my study, and above all, personally against me. However, it is formulated only at the end of the response. In his disquisition, he ascertained that my criticism of how the Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst (JOD) and the Judenrats are described in *Night without End* was: “a specific form of [Holocaust] denial, widespread in Eastern Europe today” (“Response”, p. 8). Grabowski writes: “Relieving members of Polish society of responsibility for the fate of the Jews goes hand in hand with rather inept attempts to shift this responsibility onto the representatives of the dying Jewish community” (*ibid.*). He concluded the entire study with an extensive quote from the book by Manfred Gerstenfeld, *The Abuse of Holocaust Memory. Distortions and Responses* (Jerusalem, 2009, p. 58) (“Response”, p. 9). This trick is another attempt to disguise his own shortcomings, errors, and manipulations by affixing a political label, however unfounded, to the author of the polemic. It is astonishing how easily numerous manipulations in the description of the JOD and the Judenrats indicated by me are passed over in silence by Grabowski. The *Night without End* abounds in such descriptions. Afterwards, he ascertains:

And yet Domański is bogging down in it, stating: ‘It is astonishing that there are almost no debates in the book on the operation of the Judenrats in the counties analysed or on the attitudes of their members toward the Germans and other Jews. What predominates is a distinctly positive message about the universally

²⁵ Journalists are repeating this false information after him. See the article “Doktor do zadań specjalnych” in the supplement to the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily *Ale historia*, 8 April 2019.

understandable difficulties that the Judenrat members had to grapple with and their efforts to improve the lot of the Jewish community' ([“Correcting the Picture”], p. 60). Once again, the ‘Jewish perpetrators’ are being evoked. (“Response”, p. 8)

Unfortunately, Grabowski, trying to find the ‘Jewish perpetrators’ in my words, failed to quote the subsequent part of the analysed section of the review. Only in the next sentence, I recall the opinion of Barbara Engelking (co-editor of *Night without End* and many other publications by the Centre) expressed in 2007 on the topic of the Judenrat. She wrote:

The Judenrats thus engaged in a specific game with the Germans, hoping to survive. It is an illusion to think that this game could have been avoided, that it was possible not to enter into any relationship with the Germans or to oppose them. However, one of the side-effects of this game was the proliferation of violence. In order to meet German demands, the Jewish councils had to resort to the use of force within their own communities. By using force, they placed themselves on the side of the state apparatus and became part of the system of German terror. Therefore, it is no surprise that they were often perceived as institutions collaborating with the enemy, that they were increasingly judged critically or even detested by the Jews. The Judenrats found themselves in a moral trap – while wanting to do good, they contributed to the proliferation of evil. (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 60)

So, is the critical opinion expressed by Engelking towards the actions of the Judenrat in the Warsaw District (and, thus, also in Węgrów ‘County’) also an indication of the “Jewish perpetrators” and “an inept attempt at shifting the responsibility for the fate of the Jews onto the representatives of the dying Jewish community”? Professor Grabowski should first disavow the findings of Professor Engelking rather than, in a primitive way, impute the ‘Holocaust denial’ to the historian who is only citing these findings. As a side note, I will add that any attempt to shift the responsibility for the fate of the Jews, to which they had been doomed by the German Reich onto Jews themselves, will be inept, for it will be

untrue and contradictory to the facts. On the other hand, research questions on the Judenrats are justified, for example, because their activities aroused strong emotions and controversies among the Jews themselves.

Grabowski referred more broadly to the trial of Tomasz F., a “volunteer” firefighter from Stoczek. Simultaneously, this process induced him to general deliberations on the condition of the judiciary system at the time (“Response”, p. 7), which was not the subject of the review. In the case of the trial of Tomasz F. (but also other trials), my objection as a reviewer of *Night without End* applies to what Grabowski providently omits in his analysis, namely the influence of Stalin’s repression apparatus on the course and effect of the proceedings. It must be remembered that an essential part of the “justice system” of the time was made up of Security Department (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, UB) functionaries. Furthermore, they are the ones who gathered evidence and interviewed witnesses and defendants at investigation stage. Methods of operation of the UB functionaries, such as extortion, torture, and the like, are commonly known,²⁶ and there is no point in dwelling on them. But perhaps that is why a researcher should have limited trust in the content of statements – both by witnesses and defendants, recorded and signed during the investigation, when they differ significantly from the words recorded at the main hearings or testimonies before the public prosecutor.²⁷

Yet, Grabowski, in the chapter “Węgrów County” (“Powiat węgrowski”) and in his response to the review, not only fails to inform the reader of the above-mentioned procedural circumstances (doubts) but accuses me (sic!), that I provided the information about the acquittal of Tomasz F. during the court case: “Elsewhere, Domański, carefully searching the footnotes and tracking each, even the slightest, mistake in the transcription of documents, triumphantly discovers that the firefighter F. (whose cruelty towards the Stoczek Jews I mention) was acquitted by the court” (“Response”, p. 7). I honestly do not know where Grabowski sees any ‘triumph’ here. I also do not know what this triumph actually consists of, either.

²⁶ See P. Piątek, *Przestępcze wymuszenie zeznań w postępowaniach przygotowawczych prowadzonych przez organy bezpieczeństwa publicznego w latach 1944–1956. Studium kryminologiczno-prawne* (Katowice–Warszawa, 2018).

²⁷ See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, “Protokół przesłuchania jako źródło historyczne”, in *Wokół te czek bezpieki – zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłoznawcze*, ed. F. Musiał (Kraków, 2006), pp. 357–366.

When analysing any court trial, especially in such serious allegations as with F., elementary scholarly integrity would require one to provide basic facts about the indictment and sentence, especially if there was an acquittal. Indeed, these are principles that every historian should know.

Reading an excerpt from the response dedicated to this sad event, one can conclude that Grabowski fails to understand the essence of the matter, the point the reviewer is trying to make. He writes:

Domański raises this issue as if the arguments put forward in my text did not matter. Referring to the importance of the testimony given in the investigation, I present – on the example of the trial of Polish murderers of Jews from Węgrów – what the trials looked like, where Polish witnesses stood firmly behind the accused. A particular exception to this rule is the material gathered during the investigation; testimonies submitted before the rural (or urban) community agreed on a common line of defence. In the book, this mechanism is shown through the example of the firefighters from Węgrów, using the testimony of the Jewish witness, Moszek Góra, and the diary of a local public prosecutor explaining how the courts were reluctant to punish Poles for such crimes. (“Response”, p. 7)

The above comment leads to two main conclusions. First of all, Grabowski suggested that the defendants and those witnesses testifying in their favour acted as if ‘in collusion’. Hence, it follows that regardless of the facts, witnesses defending the accused become *a priori* complicit in the crime. These are strong accusations, but is not this thesis a bit too hasty and overgeneralized? It seems that, for Grabowski, any procedural doubts (coercion, false testimony, accusations, etc.) do not exist.²⁸ The second conclusion is related to the question of whether one is allowed to

²⁸ The thesis in response to “Correcting the Picture” is a repetition of journalistic statements by Jan Grabowski about the August trials (*sierpniówki*): “These are highly reliable sources. [...] The Communist government did not wish for these trials because it was afraid that the nation would shout: ‘The Communists are jailing and what for? For murdering Jews?’ [...] I’ve read hundreds of court files concerning the August trials and have found nothing about political manipulation. [...] As a rule, the trials ended in small sentences, often in acquittals. Almost all murderers were freed by 1956 at the latest”. Conversation with Dr Jan Grabowski, *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily, 30–31 July 2016, p. 23.

arbitrarily assume that the tendencies observed in the Siedlce court are actual for all court proceedings in post-war Poland (and I am not, by any means, negating the examples indicated by Grabowski) and, consequently, to ignore the judgments rendered by these courts? I believe that every trial should be thoroughly and meticulously analysed. Perhaps the number of sources analysed would be smaller and would provide more credible substantiation of the author's theses. In the light of Grabowski's above words from his response to "Correcting the Picture", I also have doubts whether the lack of information on the acquittal of F. in *Night without End*, as suggested by Grabowski, is a mistake. Perhaps it is a conscious construct, assuming that the accused was guilty regardless of the judgment.

It is also worth dedicating some space for the memoirs of a 'local prosecutor', because they can be another example of how Jan Grabowski uses already published materials. To better understand this mechanism, it is essential to use the excerpts from the article by Andrew Kornbluth, who had found the memoirs of Władysław Grzymała (a 'local prosecutor') from Siedlce.²⁹ As can be assumed, sections of Kornbluth's text were the basis for Grabowski's deliberations about the nature of the judiciary system at the time, which he included in *Night without End*. The phrase "can be assumed" is most appropriate here since Grabowski, using Grzymała's memoirs, only once invoked Kornbluth's article directly in the footnote. The remaining portion of his deliberations does not contain any reference (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 457). Since, as already mentioned, Grabowski did not refer to any other documents, I assume that the entire description was derived from Kornbluth's text, where the lawyer, as mentioned above, was described as follows:

Władysław Grzymała, a prosecutor who had worked at the court in Siedlce since graduation from law school in 1934, revealed, in unpublished memoirs, his hatred for the Communists and assured that, before the war, 'the majority' of

²⁹ A. Kornbluth, "Jest wielu Kainów pośród nas". Polski wymiar sprawiedliwości a Zagłada 1944–1956", *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 9 (2013), pp. 157–172. I also refer to this issue in my article from 2016, where I wrote about anti-Semitic tendencies prevailing in the District Court there: T. Domański, "'Sierpniówki' jako źródło do dziejów Armii Krajowej w Okręgu Radomsko-Kieleckim na przykładzie procesów przed Sądem Okręgowym, Sądem Apelacyjnym i Sądem Wojewódzkim w Kielcach. Wybrane problemy badawcze", in *Z dziejów Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, ed. by J. Gapys and T. Domański (Kielce, 2016), p. 210.

his colleagues sympathised with the *Endecja* [the National Democrats] – a profoundly nationalist, anti-Semitic and far-right party. In a meeting with fifty other prosecutors from Poland held in 1948, he noted that everyone comes from ‘the generation which graduated from law school before the war, and therefore sharing mainly the political views represented by Roman Dmowski, [Roman] Rybarski, [Stanisław] Stroński’, i.e. supporters of the ‘National Radical Camp’ (ONR).³⁰

From Kornbluth’s text we can only conclude that **Grzymała’s colleagues** belonged to or sympathised with the National Democrats and that he himself claimed to be an anti-communist. While Grabowski, using the above passage, presented this to the prosecutor in the following way: “Grzymała, a prosecutor with pre-war experience, **a fervent supporter of the National Democrats**, did not hide his political views [emphasis mine – T.D.]” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 457). Is this a fair way of using another author’s text?

Grabowski’s attitude toward the original was even more ‘laid-back’ when he was concluding Grzymała’s activeness during the trials of those accused of crimes against the Jews. In Kornbluth’s published text, one can read:

Grzymała’s attitude toward the prosecution of anti-Jewish crimes was, to put it mildly, sceptical. He wrote that there were only ‘a few exceptions’ among the Poles of persecuting Jews, that ‘more honest Jews, being less resourceful, died’, and those who survived were the ‘riff-raff’ seeking revenge on Poles and Poland. **He also described acting in collusion with the judges to clear the defendants of their allegations, of whose guilt he was not convinced** [emphasis mine – T.D.].³¹

And this is how Grabowski misquoted this section: “He also openly admitted [Grzymała] that the cases against Poles accused of murdering Jews did not constitute, to put it mildly, a priority for the judiciary. Contrarily, a public prosecutor from Siedlce wrote that the “more honest Jews died”, and only the “riff-raff seek-

³⁰ Kornbluth, “Jest wielu Kainów”, p. 163.

³¹ *Ibid.*

ing revenge on the Poles” survived. **For this reason, wishing to protect Poles accused of murders on Jews, judges and public prosecutors acted in collusion to thwart the most severe allegations** [emphasis mine – T.D.]” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 457).

Even more astonishing is the use of the text “Jest wielu Kainów” later in Grabowski’s narration, which considerably distorted the content of Kornbluth’s conclusions. Immediately after the passage quoted above, this researcher dedicated a separate sub-chapter to the August Decree, which he began with the words: “However, it would be a great simplification to suggest that the post-war treatment of crimes stemming from anti-Semitism was attributable only to prejudice”.³² And he pointed out here the fundamental legal flaws of the August Decree (*lex retro non agit*, lack of legal precision in individual articles of the law), which was also reflected in the content of the judgements and which, in turn, caused the dissatisfaction of the Ministry of Justice. Nevertheless, Grabowski, ignoring these conclusions, ascertained:

This resulted in numerous acquittals (or ridiculously low sentences, given the alleged acts), which were not appealed against by public prosecutors. Even the Ministry of Justice interventions did not help because similar lenience towards the murderers of Jews also prevailed in the appeals courts. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 457)³³

What did Grabowski base his generalisations on? Nobody knows. Kornbluth’s article does not support such firm conclusions.

Another example of Professor Grabowski’s method of using documents is the reference to an account by Władysław Okulus, the wartime mayor of Węgrów. In the chapter dedicated to Węgrów County, the local firefighters’ case held an important place. Okulus wrote explicitly about their role in the ‘displacement’ of the Węgrów ghetto. His comments as an eye-witness on the behaviour of some Poles towards Jews are very harsh and critical. Grabowski also referred to that account, writing, *inter alia*, that: “The fire brigade chief carried **a briefcase with him all**

³² *Ibid.*

³³ On the August trials see, *inter alia*, A. Pasek, *Przestępstwa okupacyjne w polskim prawie karnym z lat 1944–1956* (Wrocław, 2002).

day long, which was getting increasingly heavier, with the valuables obtained from the Jews; the firefighters intended to divide them among themselves after their all-day “work” [*Night without End*, emphasis mine – T.D.]” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 436). The above sentence leaves no doubt about the intentions of the fire brigade chief. This is not a quote of the mayor’s own words but Grabowski’s summary. Worth quoting here, therefore, are the exact words of Okulus, who wrote only that: “The commander [of the volunteer fire brigade chief] **always had a briefcase with him**. I saw the briefcase but did not look inside, and **I do not know what was in it**. However, there were rumours in town that this was where they put the money taken from captured Jews to divide it among themselves at the end of the “working day” [emphasis mine – T.D.]”³⁴ Thus, Grabowski’s report does not convey the meaning of the mayor’s words, who, as can be seen, made it clear that he is providing information based on hearsay and rumours. Is a historian permitted to treat sources in this way and present assumptions as a certainty?

The example of Okulus also shows Jan Grabowski’s selective approach to source materials. What is meant here is the case of a Judenrat member – Zejman. Barbara Engelking was critical of this figure (see “Correcting the Picture”, p. 61). In *Night without End*, Jan Grabowski only mentioned that Mordechaj Zejman was the head of the local Judenrat. Władysław Okulus devoted a few sentences in his account to the last moments of Zejman’s life, and these were shocking. There seems to be no reason not to believe Okulus. The mayor who did not hesitate to write about some Poles’ shameful behaviour had no reason to exaggerate what he had witnessed:

The Judenrat member, Zejman, acted and died miserably. At the beginning of the operation’s first day, he led his whole family to the market square, where Jews were gathered. For several days, he accompanied the tormentors, talking to them and lighting cigarettes off theirs. After a few days of marching and lively conversation, one of the Germans shot him in the back of the head. The death was instantaneous, and the miserable Judenrat member did not even know that he was dying.³⁵

³⁴ AŻIH, 301/6043, Władysław Okulus’s relation, [place and date of origin unknown], pp. 4–5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Martyna Rusiniak-Karwat also writes about Zejman's behaviour, adding that Zejman had participated in the operation of catching Jews after the ghetto liquidation.³⁶ Hence, there are sufficient sources available to enrich the knowledge on Zejman's history, capable of contributing to the analysis of the attitudes of Jews who were faced with choices in the reality of 'the Final Solution to the Jewish issue' created by the Germans. With this story, the picture of the survival strategies, which, as the authors of *Night without End* repeatedly point out, was the book's primary purpose, would be so much more complete. Grabowski nonetheless resigns from presenting this story in favour of silence and insinuations.

Professor Grabowski also referred to my method presented in "Correcting the Picture" of describing Polish-Jewish relations during the interwar period. He claims that I am reproaching him for presenting "Polish-Jewish relations of the late 1930s in bleak shades" ("Response", p. 2). In the review, I only ascertained that a: "somewhat one-sided and oversimplified vision of this time emerges. The authors seem to treat it as a kind of prelude to the wartime atmosphere. In many instances, situations of conflict in relations between Poles and the Jews have been highlighted, often in a manner quite far from balanced scholarly assessment" ("Correcting the Picture", p. 8). I have not changed my opinion; Grabowski's clarifications only confirm this for me. He writes: "But all I said was that the Jewish community was severely weakened economically at the outbreak of the war, and the relations between Poles and the Jews were significantly eroded" ("Response", p. 3). Yet the author, contrary to what he is writing now, in the chapter titled "Węgrów County" ("Powiat węgrowski") in *Night without End*, combined cases of pre-war anti-Jewish attitudes in one sentence with wartime violence against Jews, thus creating a kind of continuum.³⁷

Jan Grabowski also referred to my criticism of the description of the Polnische Polizei in *Night without End*. Unfortunately, this time he did not see the highlighted problems indicated by me, but directed the discussion to issues I had not mentioned. Again, his tone is very emotional and journalistic ("Response", p. 5). A verbatim

³⁶ <https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/miejscowosci/w/1028-wegrow/99-historia-spoleczności/183071-historia-spoleczności> (accessed 1 June 2020); for a selection of literature, see *ibid.*

³⁷ The interpretation presented by Jan Grabowski also resonates with the statements of other researchers. In an interview for the magazine *Forum*, when referring to Polish-Jewish relations in the 1920s, Elżbieta Janicka ascertained that: 'In social and economic terms, the Holocaust was a shock. In moral terms, there was no shock, but a continuation'(!), *Forum* 14 (2019), p. 14.

quotation of Emanuel Ringelblum (in the light of present knowledge on the number of Jews murdered during the Holocaust and those who had managed to survive) can lead one astray. Ringelblum's words, who, after all, did not have any opportunity to draw up accurate statistics about the responsibility of the Polnische Polizei for the "death of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews", point to a specific phenomenon, a social problem. I did not deny anywhere in "Correcting the Picture" that the Polnische Polizei (PP) functionaries committed crimes against the Jews. They committed crimes both against the Jews and Poles. My objection related to the presentation of the Polnische Polizei as a strictly Polish formation, which the authors of the "Foreword" wrote on pp. 25–26. This is the issue Professor Grabowski should refer to.

On this occasion, Grabowski's calculations concerning the number of Polnische Polizei in Węgrów 'County' attract attention. It is not only a matter of statistics, but the underlying assumption of the chapter, which the author has outlined as follows: "Major support for German and Polish police officers [i.e. Kriminalpolizei] were members of the Polish Police GG ('the blue police'), i.e. over one hundred officers deployed at eight outposts on the territory of the former Węgrów County" (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 420–421). Professor Grabowski included a footnote for this section. However, the indicated sources fail to confirm the above data and even to lend any credence to them.³⁸ Characteristically enough, when presenting his own calculations, Grabowski also refers to the Home Army report, allegedly meaning the Polnische Polizei outpost in Sokołów. ('See also the staff composition of the outpost in Sokołów [...] – *Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 421, fn. 90'). Indeed, under the indicated signature, there is a table (untitled), but with the names of more than 90 people: women, men, and children. This is by no means a list of policemen. It is difficult to work out who these people are. Professor Grabowski likely is not trying to say that Maria Schultz, born on 24 February 1879, or Barbara Anna Szczęśna, born on 16 October 1941, served at the outpost in Sokołów, or Wilhelmina Kobyłko, born on 2 April 1866³⁹

³⁸ For example, in the protocols of interrogations of Józef Maleszewski and Tytus Czarnecki, the names of Czesław Sałek and Józef Guzek do not appear (*Night without End*, vol. 1, 421). See AIPN, Archives of the Chief Commission (hereinafter: GK), 318/568, Protocol of the interrogation of witness Józef Maleszewski, Węgrów, 20 May 1954, pp. 2–3; *ibid.*, Protocol of the interrogation of witness Tytus Czarnecki, Liw, 31 August 1954, pp. 10–11.

³⁹ AAN, AK, 203/III-115, [List of persons], [place and date of origin unknown], pp. 19–20a.

(and these are not all of the older women and children on the list). Grabowski has repeated this theory regarding the number of PP officers some pages later (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 500). He based his conclusion on the testimony of Cezariusz Łukaszewski, who, according to Grabowski, was the “district commander of the PP in the Węgrów area” (*ibid.*). Łukaszewski quoted that 115 police officers were reporting to him. Grabowski acknowledged that this figure should be approached with ‘scepticism’ and ultimately unjustifiably stated that a total of “over a hundred and several dozen uniformed police officers served at the outposts as mentioned earlier” (*ibid.*).

How did he arrive at these figures? The phrase “over a hundred and several dozen” suggests a significant range, approximately 120 to 199. Professor Grabowski also claims that, on the territory of the former Węgrów County, eight outposts of the Polnische Polizei operated during the occupation in: Bojów, Miedzna, Węgrów, Wyszaków, Łochów, Sadowno, Stoczek, and Grębków (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 420–421). A little later in the same paragraph, he also mentions the outpost in Prostynia as belonging to Węgrów ‘County’ (*ibid.*). So, this would be the ninth one, which seems more likely. Grabowski does not specify the timeframe to which his calculations relate, and precision is essential here. We do not know whether these hundred and several dozen officers worked in the county in 1939, in 1943, or perhaps it is the aggregate number of all the policemen who had ever worked there. Naming specific officers from Węgrów County, Grabowski sometimes forgets that there was a rather large staff rotation in the General Governorate service. For example, when he mentions Władysław Babulewicz as serving in Miedzna, the same police officer is mentioned by another officer, Stanisław Kanciała, as serving in 1942 at the outpost in Węgrów.⁴⁰ Out of the sense of duty of a reviewer, I will add that the outpost commander in Węgrów was Julian or Józef Oleracki.⁴¹ On the other hand, it follows from Piotr Grochal’s testimony that, during the occupation, he changed his place of service several times.⁴²

⁴⁰ AIPN GK, 318/568, Minutes of the interrogation of suspect Stanisław Kanciała, Węgrów, 17 August 1954, p. 30v.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of suspect Stanisław Kanciała, Siedlce, 28 September 1954, p. 51v.

⁴² AIPN GK, 318/460, vol. 2, Minutes of the interrogation of suspect Piotr Grochal, Lubań, 4 April 1951, pp. 8–9.

Hence, are the figures indicating the number of the PP officers in Węgrów County, supplied by Professor Grabowski, factual? Grabowski did not review essential documents deposited in the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, in the GG Government fond. The financial documentation shows that the number of PP officers in Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow-Wengrow,⁴³ in June of 1940 amounted to 88,⁴⁴ and at the end of 1941, there were 95 (Polish and Ukrainian) ‘police officials.’⁴⁵ These are figures relating, as mentioned above, to Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow-Wengrow and not only to ‘Węgrów’ county or ‘Sokołów’ county. One of the Home Army reports contained detailed statistics presenting a list of the Polnische Polizei members in Sokołów ‘County’ (the pre-war Polish county is meant here). According to the report, the county headquarters had 20 officers, including the outpost in Jabłonna – 3, the outpost in Elżbietowo – 3, Bielany – 3, Kosowo – 6, Sterdynia – 5, Sabnie – 3, Repki – 4, Prostyń – 3, and Miedzna – 3. Thus, a total of 53 “blue policemen”⁴⁶ served at one time at the outposts listed in the Home Army report and at the county headquarters. Prostyń and Miedzna were erroneously included in Sokołów ‘County’; therefore, the number of PP policemen in this part of Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow-Wengrow amounted to 47. However, it appears from Grabowski’s information that the average number of staff should be at approx. 15–20 policemen per outpost. This is an important difference in presenting the forces available to the Germans. As he reported, Grabowski had at hand other material significantly ‘verifying’ the number of a hundred and several dozen police-

⁴³ This official name was given in the document. Later on, the name of Sokolow-Wengrow was given up for Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow. The name Kreis Sokolow-Wengrow originates from the merger of two pre-war Polish counties into one administrative body.

⁴⁴ These figures correspond to studies by Jan Popławski, who established that on 1 March 1940, there was one high rank PP policeman (officer) and 83 lowest rank policemen in Kreis Sokolow, see J. Popławski, *Ustrój Policji Polskiej Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w latach 1939–1945*, TS (Warszawa–Poznań, 1977), p. 283.

⁴⁵ AAN, The Government of the General Governorate (RGG), 1162, Letter to the Head of the Finance Department of the Governor General’s Office, Sokołów, 10 June 1940, p. 162; *ibid.*, Letter from the Main Finance Department of the GG Government to the Sokołów county governor (*starosta*), Cracow, 10 February 1942, p. 185.

⁴⁶ AAN, AK, 203/III-115, [Report], [place and date of origin unknown], pp. 17–18. For comparison, it can be reported that, in 1943, the navy-blue police forces in Grójec county amounted to 75 policemen. See: AAN, Government Delegation for Poland (hereinafter: DR), 202/II-23, Folwark VII, Situational report on the organisational status and activities of subversive organisations, national minorities, and the occupying forces from 1 until 31 July 1943, p. 14.

men in the form of testimonies by Łukaszewski, the wartime county commander of the Polnische Polizei with its headquarters in Sokołów. For reasons known only to himself, Grabowski appointed Łukaszewski as commander of the PP in some nondescript ‘Węgrów’ area (!). Łukaszewski served in the specific occupation administration unit – Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow. This is what he testified during the trial against another policeman, Wincenty Kołodziejski⁴⁷ – “As the District Police Commander at the time, I had 115 policemen serving under me”⁴⁸. The same data regarding his position during the occupation were provided in his personal file prepared by the UB, but this is due, above all, to the occupation reality, when there was one county PP headquarters in Sokołów (!).⁴⁹ In literature or other documents, I have not come across a situation where separate county headquarters were established for two or three pre-war Polish counties combined by the Germans into one Kreishauptmannschaft. However, the Home Army often used the pre-war Polish county structure in its documentation.⁵⁰ The County PP headquarters for Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow (Sokolow-Wengrow) was located in Sokołów. When the relevant number (46 – after deducting the commander) of policemen assigned to the ‘Sokołów part’ of this area is deducted from the total number of 115⁵¹ police-

⁴⁷ The case against Kołodziejski undoubtedly deserves a detailed discussion. It is full of ambiguities, including the testimony of the key and, in principle, the only witness to the prosecution, Bolesław Abczyński. At the main trial, the former investigating officer of the PUBP in Węgrów testified, accusing Abczyński of giving false testimony. It is worth adding here what Professor Grabowski failed to say, namely that this policeman was acquitted of the act described in *Night without End* (vol. 1, p. 508), i.e. shooting the fleeing Jew, Szolek Goldsztejn, during the ‘displacement’ of Jews from the factory in Baczki. Suppose Abczyński’s testimony and the ‘deliberate acquittal’ of Kołodziejski are considered credible. In that case, it is worth pointing to another part of this testimony, where the witness presented critical circumstances of displacement, also depicting the possibilities to help the Jews and the general atmosphere of Polish-Jewish relations. These circumstances, however, seemed irrelevant to Grabowski. Commencing the operation in 1943, the Germans announced that, after the specific hour by which the Jews were to report, they would kill three or four Poles for each captured Jew. See: AIPN GK, 209/57, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of a witness Bolesław Abczyński, Węgrów, 30 March 1945, p. 25; *ibid.*, vol. 25; *ibid.*, vol. 2, Testimony of Bolesław Abczyński at the main hearing, 2 July 1945, pp. 29–31; *ibid.*, Operative part of the Judgment, 2 July 1945, pp. 33–35; *ibid.*, Testimony of Stefan Kresa at the main hearing, 25 June 1945, p. 26.

⁴⁸ AIPN GK, 209/57, vol. 2, Testimony of Cezariusz Łukaszewski at the main hearing, 25 June 1945, p. 27.

⁴⁹ AIPN 2911/1, [Personal file: Łukaszewski, Cezariusz].

⁵⁰ This was consequent upon the Home Army’s refusal to recognise changes implemented by the invaders.

⁵¹ And these data also correspond to the findings of Jan Popławski, according to whom the PP forces at the time amounted to 113 policemen in the entire Kreis Sokolow. See: Popławski, *Ustrój Policji Polskiej*, p. 290.

men in Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow (Sokolow-Wengrow), it appears that around 70 officers may have served during the war at the PP outposts in the 'Węgrów part' of this area – much fewer than purported by Grabowski (this proves again that one should not mix territorial units from different periods).

The number as mentioned above of “a hundred and several dozen” appears in a vital part of the narrative developed in the book. Grabowski painted a picture of the occupying forces and enumerated the structures involved in the liquidation of ghettos in Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow, of which the Węgrów area formed a part and the subsequent murdering of the Jews. “A hundred and several dozen” policemen in a part (Węgrów ‘County’) of the Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow alone would be considerable. The data quoted by Łukaszewski, which, as can be seen, correspond with the statistics of the German occupation authorities, pertained to Kreis Sokolow as a whole. The simultaneous observable increase in numbers shows the apparent trend of consolidating the PP forces across the entire GG. Most likely, in Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow, this number of policemen increased to 115. However, Grabowski did not make use of any of this information. Instead, he created the non-existent ‘Węgrów area’ and ‘a hundred and several dozen’ PP policemen.

However, Grabowski correctly indicates that the German authorities used Węgrów ‘County’ policemen in anti-Jewish operations and the pacification and persecution of Poles throughout Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow. All oppressive operations targeted directly against the Polish population also encompassed the Jews.

In the sub-chapter titled “The Polish Underground State vs the Jews” (“Polskie Państwo Podziemne wobec Żydów”), Professor Grabowski attempts to deal with the existing literature which, in his opinion, wrongfully and unjustly draws attention to the Home Army intelligence reports on the fate of the Jews (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 519). At the same time, Grabowski argues that Home Army reports promoted an allegedly false theory about the widespread denunciation of Poles by ‘forest Jews’ (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 520). The critical evidence in support of Grabowski’s arguments is apparently a Home Army intelligence report dated 1943, quoted in his study:

the gendarmerie and blue police surrounded [14 July 1943 – T.D.] the following villages in the commune of Wyszaków: Wyszaków, Proszew [Proszew is situated in

the commune of Grębków – J.G.]⁵² and Polaków [the correct name is Polków-Dańbogi – T.D.]. The residents were rounded up in one place, and subsequently, their households were searched. The reason was their failure to deliver the required meat and egg quotas. As a consequence of the search, 98 cows and 140 pigs were confiscated from the farmers. Two Jews were caught on that occasion. Before they were shot dead, they were interrogated to reveal the names of the Poles who had hidden them. The Jews did not turn anybody in and were shot immediately after the interrogation. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 520–521)

The use of quotation marks is a clear indication that the above is a quote – a verbatim citation of another person’s words – which reflects not so much the veracity of the details provided as, but above all, the perception of the events and their course and the gradation of problems in the assessment of an anonymous intelligence agent – in other words, the Home Army. The logic behind the disquisition and argumentation is inexorable. The Jews behave extremely heroically, refusing to turn anybody in. They perish. The above description must finally awaken outrage, as the intelligence agent, which is seen from the above quote, predominantly focuses on the pigs and cows. This is what he presents at the beginning of his report. In this sense, the Jews are of minor importance; receding into the background makes the marginalisation of the ‘Jewish issue’ even more evident.

However, it would be erroneous to think Professor Grabowski’s quotation is faithful. The excerpt describing the operation in these villages is much longer, and the reader is presented with a summary faking a quote, which – to put it mildly – is far from scholarly integrity. In the source cited by Grabowski, the description reads as follows:

On 14 July, an expedition consisting of a division of Kalmyks, gendarmerie, blue police, Gestapo and officials from the Labour Office surrounded three villages in the commune of Wyszków: Wyszków, Proszew, and Polków. The Kalmyk squad arrived at 3:00 a.m. and surrounded all three villages simultane-

⁵² This is currently the case, but during the analysed period, it was located in the commune of Wyszków. This is also how its location was presented on the map in the chapter titled “Węgrów County” (“Powiat węgrowski”) (vol. 1, map after p. 416).

ously. The residents were gathered at one place, and then individual farmers were called out and escorted to their households to carry out the search. After all of the farms in the village were searched, the residents were rounded up again for the Gestapo and Labour Office to check their files. Nine men and 20 women were detained in Wyszaków, and six men in Polków. The women were sent to Treblinka. In addition, two Jews found hiding in the village were shot dead. They were first asked about their hideouts but said nothing. The gendarmes lined 20 men up against the wall, demanding they turn in the one who hid the Jews. After five minutes, they were released even though nobody had said anything. The described roundup was intended as ‘punishment for failure to deliver the required meat and egg quotas’. 98 cows and 140 pigs were confiscated.⁵³

A slightly longer account of these events can be found in the Home Army’s report, which Grabowski must have read, judging from the reading of “Węgrów County” (“Powiat węgrowski”). Here is the relevant excerpt:

On 14 July, an expedition consisting of a division of “Kalmyks”, gendarmerie, blue police, Gestapo and officials from the Labour Office surrounded three villages in the commune of Wyszaków: Wyszaków, Proszew, and Polków. The Kalmyk squad arrived at 3:00 a.m. and surrounded all three villages simultaneously. At 6:00 a.m., the gendarmes, police, Gestapo, and Labour Office officials arrived. The residents were gathered at one place, and then individual farmers were called out and escorted to their households to carry out the search. After the entire village was searched in this way, the residents were once again rounded up, their ID cards checked, and the Gestapo and Labour Office reviewed their files. Nine men and 20 women were detained in Wyszaków; six men in Polków. The women were sent to Treblinka. At one of the farmers (head of the village), a B.I. Bulletin dated 1941 was found under the palliase. His son was arrested [?] and a friend who happened to be there. In addition, two Jews, who had been

⁵³ AAN, DR, 202/II-23, Folwark VII, Situational report on the organisational status and activities of subversive organisations, national minorities, and the occupying forces, 1 July – 31 July 1943, p. 5.

hiding in the village, were shot dead. First, they were interrogated about their hideout location.[? – document partially damaged]. They did not say anything. Then the gendarmes lined 20 men up against the wall [?] demanding they turn in the one who had been hiding the Jews. They were released after five minutes [?], although nobody said anything. The operation was intended to punish for the failure to deliver the required contingency [?] and egg quotas. Ninety-eight cows and 140 pigs were confiscated at the time.⁵⁴

Reading the ‘abridged’ account provided by Professor Grabowski and the reports prepared by the Home Army intelligence, one may think they describe two different situations. The selection of issues is at the forefront. For the Polish underground, it is not cows or pigs that are the most important, but the people. The livestock thread has been as if added at the very end, as a sheer formality. Nevertheless, the author of the report began with a detailed description of the course of events during the pacification operation and the number of arrested Poles. Eventually, he added that, in the course of the operation, two hiding Jews were captured. However, Grabowski disregarded the way these events are described in the source. He went further and omitted the information about the Poles who, despite being lined up “against the wall”, did not disclose who had hidden the Jews. Their bravery was excluded from the investigator’s area of interest revealed to the reader. What a reader (devoid of all the details I have provided) will remember are only the heroic Jews.

Also, the omitted data on the pacification forces provoke questions about information selection. Professor Grabowski called the attack on the villages mentioned above an operation of the “gendarmerie and blue police” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 520). The groups of perpetrators evidence the absurdity of such an approach, so scrupulously listed by the Home Army intelligence yet omitted by the author. It is hard to imagine that the onsite Gestapo and other representatives of the apparatus of repression carried out the orders of the blue police from Grębkowo. Furthermore, this is the picture one gets reading about the operation of the “gendarmerie and blue police” – after all, Grabowski clearly perceives the two

⁵⁴ AAN, AK, 203/X-72, Situational report, 1 July – 30 September 1943, p. 61.

formations as equal. Also, the number of Polnische Polizei functionaries was too modest for such an extensive operation. The staff of the PP outpost in Grębków was not around 20 policemen, as Grabowski's calculations might suggest, but barely a few. For anyone familiar with the realities of rural spatial development patterns (and one can hardly assume that Professor Grabowski is not familiar with the subject), it is evident that carrying out such an extensive operation, encompassing three villages, required the involvement of considerable forces. And they were involved. It is difficult to find a better example of image distortion. Perhaps Grabowski sought to demonstrate the PP's role in exploiting the Polish countryside by 'trimming off' the sources. Alternatively, perhaps, the purpose was to highlight the PP's part in exterminating Jews. And, although the source does not state which formation specifically found the Jews and in what circumstances, who interrogated and who murdered them, the narrative does indicate the current location of the village of Proszew in the commune of Grębków (Grabowski reported in detail, a little earlier in the book, on the role of the Grębków PP in the murder of the Jews). After removing the key forces (the Kalmyks, who were the most numerous and the Gestapo as the commanders) from the picture, the Polnische Polizei is featured as a significant, perhaps even the leading force of the operation in which two Jews were murdered.

The narrative in this book excerpt is not developed only by 'trimming' down sources. There is a kind of continuation related to the appropriate accentuation of problems attracting the attention of the Home Army intelligence. Their reports were discussed by Grabowski in the sub-chapter entitled 'The Polish Underground State vs the Jews in the Węgrów County' [Polskie Państwo Podziemne a Żydzi w powiecie węgrzowskim] (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 518–523). The numerous factual errors and interpretations found in this text and the omissions of literature have already been discussed by Alicja Gontarek.⁵⁵ One example of Grabowski's creativity, contrary to sources, is highlighting the alleged preoccupation of the quoted Home Army intelligence agents with the issue of 'catching Jews,' Grabowski concludes:

⁵⁵ A. Gontarek, 'Akcja zbrojna Armii Krajowej w czasie buntu w obozie Treblinka II w sierpniu 1943 roku – rekonesans badawczy', *Studia nad Totalitaryzmami i Wiekiem XX* 3 (2019), pp. 48–97 (in particular, 52–59).

Having discussed the reports of the gradual liquidation of the death camp in Treblinka [report dated September 1943], the authors of the reports re-focused on the captured Jews, and their turning in of the farmers hiding them to the Germans: "A Jew is being kept in prison in Węgrów, captured in the commune of Łochów, who has already turned in eight people. They are probably shot dead by now. The Jew is to be released and serve as an informer to the gendarmerie". (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 522)

However, the account of the liquidation of the death camp in Treblinka is, in fact, much longer. If the intelligence agents had explicitly focused on a particular issue in this section, it had been precisely the Treblinka II camp. The 'Jewish betrayal' was yet another piece of information in the report, a much less significant one mentioned at the end, in Point 4. In the first place (Point 1), they presented information concerning Treblinka II:

From 1 September [19]43, all construction work at the death camp in Treblinka was interrupted. The camp commander demanded 17 covered wagons; it was not possible to establish why. The Ukrainians categorically claim that the camp is being liquidated and will soon cease to exist. The camp area is to be razed to the ground and planted over with rye. There is a palpable sense of anxiety among the Ukrainians. It is reported that the Ukrainians are preparing to flee. They have stocked up on civilian clothing and even reportedly Polish identification documents. On 28 and 30 August of this year, two Ukrainians took their own lives by rifle shots. The Ukrainians who took part in the liquidation of Jews in the Białystok region have already returned to Treblinka. The D[epu]ty commander of the Treblinka camp, who is simultaneously the death camp commander, left in an unknown direction at the end of September.⁵⁶

The descriptions of Treblinka I and Treblinka II camps, presented in *Night without End*, lead to another fundamental conclusion. In the narrative of Professor Grabowski, as Gontarek rightly pointed out, there is a significant shortcoming

⁵⁶ AAN, DR, 202/II-23, Situational report, 1-30 November 1943, p. 53.

in academic research skills, consisting in the omission of essential parts of Home Army documents concerning this region.⁵⁷ Grabowski selected the quotes in such a manner as to confirm his theory on Home Army intelligence focusing on the issue of ‘catching Jews’. In fact, the analysis in this part of “Węgrów County” (“Powiat węgrowski”) is based on the records from the Government Delegation for Poland funds. However, there are many more documents preserved from that time concerning Węgrów ‘County’. A report of the Bureau of Information and Propaganda (BIP) from August 1943 contains quite an extensive and detailed account of an “escape of a large group of Jews”.⁵⁸

On 8 August 1943,⁵⁹ a large group of Jews escaped from Treblinka. This escape was planned by Jews held in Treblinka not only as ‘patients’ of the death camp but also as those who were there almost from the beginning, performing different fixed functions. They organised themselves into two combat groups. On 8 August, taking advantage of the fact that 16 Ukrainians from the camp crew had gone to bathe in the Bug River, they began implementing the plan. One group attacked the barrack with arms on the signal, killing several Ukrainians. After demolishing it, they started destroying equipment by setting fire to the barracks. The few Ukrainians who were in the Jewish camp at the time did not offer any resistance. Only machine gun operators on the observation towers opened fire. There were about 1500 Jews in the escape group. Many died during the very escape from the camp, the rest scattered around the adjacent area. On the same day, extensive gendarmerie reinforcements were called in, and a massive manhunt was carried out in the vicinity of Treblinka. About 120 Jews were shot as a result.⁶⁰

Regarding the situation in October and November 1943, contrary to the truth, Grabowski wrote that Home Army intelligence was mainly interested in ‘Jewish gold’. However, he missed yet another significant part of the report, showing the

⁵⁷ Gontarek, “Akcja zbrojna”, pp. 53–54.

⁵⁸ This document was published by Gontarek, “Akcja zbrojna”, pp. 87–88.

⁵⁹ The report contains the wrong date. The events took place on 2 August 1943.

⁶⁰ AAN, AK, 203/X-69, Report, TS, 31 August 1943, p. 215.

enormous tragedy of the Holocaust of the Jewish people and the extreme complexity of the situation. It was written in the report:

Recruitment and terrorist operations recently carried out in the area [by the Germans] contributed to the undoing of many Jews still in hiding. Finding themselves engulfed [surrounded] in a trap set up around the town or driven out of hiding by their terrified helpers, they become easy prey to the now numerous gendarmerie patrols. Incidents of shooting Jews by [sic! – should be: in] groups consisting of several people [are] now quite common. Jews are often members of gangs currently on the prowl.⁶¹

Reports of the Government's Delegation for Poland or the Home Army, to which Grabowski refers in this passage of his text, were not created on a whim, composed of issues that had just dawned on intelligence agents from the Węgrów area, as the author appears to suggest. The structure of the reports was based on the template prepared by Headquarters. The Headquarters determined the issues to be addressed in the reports.⁶² However, he is right that it is unknown who selected the material and filtered the content, which was subsequently sent to the Headquarters (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 520).

I would also argue with the theory that intelligence agents focused only on minor and major sabotage, attacks on Germans, and the retaliatory acts by the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 216; Grabowski also quoted the following excerpt from Samuel Rajzman's account: 'The peasants from Treblinka area were generally very hostile toward the Jews. They turned Jews in, captured children, and, like animals on a rope, they led them to Treblinka, to death. They got perhaps 1/4 kg of sugar, or maybe nothing in return' (vol. 1, p. 480). The quoted account contains rather questionable information in some passages. For example, Rajzman claimed that one of the local Polish foresters 'murdered probably a few thousand Jews himself' (AYV, O.3/561, Testimony of Samuel Rajzman, [place and date of origin unknown], p. 10). What Teresa Prekerowa wrote about Rajzman's account (Grabowski omitted this article in his "Węgrów County" ["Powiat węgrowski"]): 'information about the children is not confirmed in any Jewish or Polish accounts. It is also worth noting that the author, publishing his memoirs in the collection entitled *The Death Camp Treblinka* thirty years later, omitted both of these pieces of information', T. Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich", *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* 35 (1993), p. 102.

⁶² More on the subject can be found, for example, in the information manual for 'BIP. Wydry'. See: AAN, AK, 203/X-65, Information manual for BIP. Wydry, [place of origin unknown], 15 October 1943, p. 79.

Germans (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 521). Naturally, the issue of terror was important. Still, reports were devoted to the entirety of life under occupation, including everyday life (prices, food, contingency quotas), political events, or reconnaissance of the occupying forces (and also provocative operations). Often information about the resistance and crimes was supplied very laconically, even as a one-liner.⁶³ A similar pattern in this respect was followed in other areas of the occupied Polish lands, e.g. the Kielce Region.⁶⁴

Grabowski 'overlooked' one more section of the Delegation's reports – this time, from the October 1943 report. It focused on provocative operations. The following was reported about Węgrów 'County':

It was established that two individuals displaced from the Poznan region stayed in the county, allegedly Jews, trying to make a connection with our people. They are under threat because of their careless behaviour and may be arrested. As they are to a certain degree familiar with the operations of the independence movement, there is some concern that they may rat should they be arrested.⁶⁵

I mentioned in my review the insufficient preliminary survey. This issue is closely related to the history of the uprising in Treblinka II and the escape of the Jews. One could draw up an entire catalogue of omitted existing publications.⁶⁶ In his study, Grabowski described "the rebellion in Treblinka and the fate of the Jews who reached the territory of Węgrów 'County'" (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 476–481). When presenting the events that unfolded following the escape (*ibid.*), he did not find it appropriate to consider the BIP reports mentioned above. When writing about the attitude of the Polish Underground State towards the Jews in 'Węgrów County', Professor Grabowski omitted in his deliberations a fundamental source article authored by Krystyna Marczevska and Władysław Ważniewski. This source identifies a series of documents developed (or published) by the Polish

⁶³ See the report from the Warsaw region: DR (202/II-23) and the Home Army: AK (203/X-68; 203/X-69; 203/X-70).

⁶⁴ T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2011).

⁶⁵ AAN, DR, 202/II-23, Situational report, 1–31 November 1943, p. 58.

⁶⁶ This issue is discussed in more detail in Gontarek, "Akcja zbrojna", *passim*. I omit the critical analysis of Grabowski's findings done by Gontarczyk, "Między nauką a mistyfikacją", *passim*.

Underground State (PPP) structures concerning Treblinka II.⁶⁷ Finally, he completely omitted the memoirs of a vital witness – a Home Army soldier and train dispatcher at the Treblinka station, Franciszek Ząbecki.⁶⁸ Grabowski's description also insufficiently (*ibid.*, p. 476) accounts for the specific actions undertaken by German civil and police authorities. He focused, and not always credibly, principally on the Polish population and the blue police. Had Professor Grabowski, in his description, accounted for the content of the reports on German-led search operations (and the accompanying atmosphere of terror) and acquainted himself with the archival material deposited at the Institute of National Remembrance,⁶⁹ his description would be closer to the truth and reality of the time. The last-mentioned source contains, among other things, the minutes of interrogation of Marianna Postek, who lived at Stoczek during the war. The Postek family hid Jews already before the rebellion in Treblinka (six people). After this event, about ten more Jews took refuge in special hideouts built by the father of the Postek family, Stanisław. They were likely escapees from Treblinka,⁷⁰ who were found by the Germans and murdered, as was Julianna Postek, beaten to death. Brothers Henryk and Waław Postek were abducted by the Germans and most likely murdered because all traces of them disappeared. At the same time, Stanisław Postek died in KL Auschwitz on 8 December 1943.⁷¹ Postek's testimony casts more light on the fate of the escapees from Treblinka on the territory of Węgrów 'County'. Grabowski determined the fate of 17 of them (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 481). Another ten or so, hiding in Postek's farmyard, significantly increases this number. Information about the deaths of four members of the Postek family also further increases the knowledge of the Polish death toll among those helping Jews in this area.

I hope that the documents mentioned here and adequate interpretation of the sources already analysed will help Professor Grabowski substantively supplement

⁶⁷ K. Marczevska, W. Ważniewski, "Treblinka w świetle akt Delegatury Rządu RP na Kraj", *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 19 (1968), pp. 129–164.

⁶⁸ F. Ząbecki, *Wspomnienia dawne i nowe* (Warszawa, 1977).

⁶⁹ This refers to the materials from the so-called Bielawski investigation, kept in the AIPN, file ref. no. 392.

⁷⁰ Witness M. Postek associates a relatively large number of Jews in hiding with the rebellion in Treblinka, see *Relacje o pomocy*, p. 172.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 171–173.

his knowledge of the Polnische Polizei as well as the Home Army and structures of the Government Delegation for Poland, which he discussed so extensively in his description of the 'County'. I also hope that he will revise his findings, should he ever decide to publish a study on the fate of the Jews in Węgrów 'County' during the occupation in the form of a monograph.

In response to the review, Grabowski allows himself the wholly unsophisticated sarcastic comment that "Polish 'onlookers' acted as directed by the Germans" ("Response", p. 6). However, the circumstances in which Poles found themselves during the Holocaust are a significant research problem which – approached with journalistic irony – does not speak too well of the author claiming to present scholarly comments. The manipulations he is capable of in this regard are best evidenced in his description of the role of 'onlookers' – entirely of his own creation – at the farm belonging to the Ratyński family in Ziomaki (see: "Correcting the Picture", p. 35).

And finally, a brief reflection of a different nature. Professor Grabowski does not understand, or, at least, so he writes: "why the following sentence is 'journalistic' in its tone: 'the intervention of a local village head, teacher or parish priest could, at least to some extent, have cooled the murderous passions and appeal to the conscience'" ("Response", p. 7). The journalistic tone is manifested in the language, building emotions and, in consequence, shaping a picture wholly detached from historical realities, where a Catholic priest or any other representative of the local Polish intelligentsia, seeing the German forces proceeding to liquidate the ghetto in the town, calls upon them to reflect upon their actions. I do not know how many people could have mustered up such an act of courage, carrying the threat of death. Moreover, I do not intend to defend the words of Rev. Czarkowski calling Commander Ajchel a 'good Pole'. However, I would like to focus on another element of the description presented in this story. Since Rev. Czarkowski "did not leave the house", he could not (and certainly not from the position of a witness) describe Ajchel's role in the 'displacement' of Jews from Węgrów during the trial as he simply had not witnessed it. There is yet one more issue that aroused my interest. Grabowski wrote about Ajchel in his response to the review: "he was one of the cruellest murderers and tormentors of Jews in Węgrów" (*ibid.*, p. 7). There is no reason to defend anyone's criminal act, but it is difficult to accept the blurring (intentional or reckless?) of the Germans' responsibility for the Holocaust. When

reading “Węgrów County” (“Powiat węgrowski), the unbalanced emphasis on the viciousness of the acts described therein became increasingly evident (I mean calling the perpetrator a murderer). It turns out that Grabowski relatively rarely uses the term when referring to Germans, while disproportionately often when referring to Poles. As a purely intellectual exercise, I have counted all instances. It appears that, in descriptions of the events and the Holocaust (including the period after the Soviet invasion, as described by the author), Grabowski uses the term ‘murderer(s)’ of a Jew/Jews in relation to Germans extremely sparingly, barely twice, and to Ukrainians – not even once, but as many as nineteen times, when meaning Poles. Perhaps this is a coincidence. I am not saying that this is intentional. On the other hand, it seems rather characteristic of the author, whose emotions and journalistic ornamentation often take precedence over the requirements of scholarly integrity.

In his response, Jan Grabowski acknowledged some of my “detailed critical remarks”. It is a pity he did not mention which ones specifically, as I could then have commented on them. Naturally, in Professor Grabowski’s belief: “their revision in no way changes the conclusions presented, and it certainly does not undermine in any way the value of the reviewed text” (“Response”, p. 8). Well, it does, actually, and in a fundamental way at that. Omitting important source information inconsistent with the constructed thesis or providing completely incorrect descriptions, and the reader encounters such cases in *Night without End*, are fundamental flaws in the academic craft. The same practices are observed in my current reply’s new examples discussed in detail. The methods used by Grabowski have severe implications for the historical narrative or presentation of people’s attitudes during the German occupation. However, one needs the integrity to notice them.

A detailed response to the remarks of Professor Anna Zapalec

Professor Anna Zapalec’s opinion of the review has been expressed in the following words: “In general, the review in the section concerning Złoczów county is a series of wishes of the author about greater detail of the content. However, taking these wishes into account would not change anything in my conclusions, aside from adding a few more examples documenting them” (“Response”, p. 7), and “Don’t the examples of Jewish collaboration so meticulously cited by him, without

deeper analysis and understanding, prove his particular tendency of highlighting such phenomena and lack of understanding of the conditions of the occupation period?" (*ibid.*). The above sentences indicate that Professor Zapalec either has not read my text very carefully or is deliberately attempting, in this not a quite substantive manner, to avoid confrontation with the academic craft errors pointed out in her text. After all, I indicated in my review instances of lack of credible analysis of historical sources and the use of various 'tricks' concerning the archival material, which can be best seen in specific, seemingly minor examples "which would not change anything much".

In my approach, it is difficult to find any 'inclinations' to highlight examples of collaboration among the Jews without considering the conditions of the occupation. In fact, the very opposite is true. Throughout my review, I highlight the significant impact of the occupation reality and the system created by the Germans on individual and collective behaviours of the occupied populace without undermining the need for researching individual attitudes. After all, it was the German authorities enacting occupation 'law' who profoundly shaped the relations among different parts of Polish society, subjected to the occupation and racial segregation (Ukrainians, Poles, Jews). I have made it clear that the root cause of pathological attitudes among the Jews was the conditions administratively imposed on them. They had to live in this reality and, above all, try to survive despite being doomed to death by the Germans unwaveringly implementing their *Endlösung* policy. Then, there is no reason to resort to unjustified practices of 'trimming' or omitting essential sections when analysing the sources concerning the relevant research area and, in this way, concealing facts that do not fit in with the pre-established thesis. Numerous examples of such practices can be found throughout the book. Anna Zapalec's chapter is no exception here. However, she tries to disavow my conclusions, claiming I suggested "some kind of conspiracy among the co-authors" ("Response", p. 6). I have not formulated any such non-scholarly allegations, and there is no need to accuse me of such behaviour.

According to the author, in "Correcting the Picture", I call for "nuancing negative behaviour of the Polish 'blue' policemen or Ukrainian policemen by presenting similar Jewish behaviours and [...] generally to equate them" ("Response", p. 11). Further, Professor Zapalec imputes to me an opinion "that the negative image of

the ghetto communities is underrepresented and, therefore, a negative picture of Polish attitudes, in particular, is exaggerated and unfair” (“Response”, p. 12). I have made no such suggestion anywhere, although I must say that I can see no reason to distinguish between similarly vile behaviour based on the nationality of the perpetrators and, consequently, to divide them into those that can be described and those subject to self-censorship. This would be far from the standards of academic research. Still, I observe this process of shaping the image of ghetto communities in *Night without End*, which I’ve discussed in detail in “Correcting the Picture”. There is a sufficient number of testimonies – also Jewish ones – showing that, at that time, vile acts of members of one’s own community were assessed equally harshly. However, in the review, I pointed out quite clearly the problem of terror, fear, growing indifference to the fate of others, and a perfectly natural focus on one’s own survival. These phenomena are or should be evident to every World War II researcher. Recognising the importance of the occupation circumstances, I have pointed to the need to analyse pathological phenomena, not to equate anything, but to call them out what they were by name and how contemporaries perceived them. I also pointed to the noticeable cause-and-effect relationship between the mass impoverishment of people in the GG, resulting from the growing economic exploitation by the Germans and increasing demoralisation, common crime, and other amoral phenomena in the occupied areas. On the other hand, I agree with Professor Zapalec that “the problem of Jewish cooperation with the German occupying forces is a difficult field of research” (“Response”, p. 9), which is also visible, as highlighted by Zapalec, in the post-war judiciary in Israel. Cases of cooperation were investigated and punished, yet there was a large group of acquitted persons (*ibid.*).

Through the specific way the narrative is constructed, Professor Zapalec, in her description of Złoczów county, deprived the readers of the opportunity to understand the impact of external circumstances on individual human decisions. May the case of Lonek Zwerdling serve as an example yet again. Zapalec writes:

For example, when I discuss the construction of the Strassler family bunker from Złoczów [...] the reviewer expects me to, in this very place, include, above all, an extensive description of Lonek Zwerdling, hiding out along with the others, a trusted man of SS Obersturmführer Friedrich Warzok – commander of labour

camps in Kreis Zloczow, as well as the circumstances of the murder of one of the Jews in that bunker. (“Response”, p. 5)

I genuinely do not know what has made Professor Zapalec think that I demand the description of Zwerdling’s story “in this very place”. I wrote no such thing. In fact, I requested supplementing the book with Zwerdling’s character, as its omission would be of significant detriment to the description of the history of the Złoczów Jews during World War II. This issue has no connection at all with the place in which this figure should be introduced. As an intermediary between the Złoczów Judenrat and German authorities, he played a vital role in the lives of the local Jews. Many witnesses mentioned him. An image of his ‘career’, the path he chose (‘survival strategy’), would undoubtedly be a valuable supplement to the impact of war circumstances (the ongoing Holocaust) on individual human choices. Yet, as I mentioned in “Correcting the Picture”, Professor Zapalec removed any mention of this character, even modifying sources skilfully. All the more unconvincing are the words of the author when she tries to explain the reasons for the ‘absence’ of Lonek Zwerdling in the book:

The description was lacking not out of a desire to avoid the topic but because no person living in the bunker was explicitly described. Nor did I analyse in detail the living conditions of this group underground; however, I emphasised the fact of designing and constructing the shelter. This was important in presenting the critical factor in this survival strategy. It is another example of the reviewer’s criticism not accounting for the context of the narrative and the purpose of individual examples. (“Response”, p. 5)

And here again, Professor Zapalec is not true to the facts in her allegations. Supplementing the description of the bunker’s construction with a picture of life inside would be an excellent addition to this story. Finally, the description provided by Szymon Strassler proves that the bunker’s construction was only half the battle. The other half was based on the circumstances left out by Anna Zapalec: iron discipline and the issue of “the communalisation of food”.⁷² The argument for failing

⁷² AYV, O.3/253, Account by Szymon Strassler, MS, pp. 48–50.

to describe the individuals who found themselves in the Strasslers' bunker in detail becomes especially weak in juxtaposition with the reading of Efraim Halpern's account, describing the circumstances of getting to the craftsman's workshops in Złoczów. In the chapter by Professor Zapalec, the part about Zwerdling's role as an intermediary disappears from Halpern's account. Here is a significant quote:

[...] it was by no means easy to get to this camp. I was helped by Zwerdling, for \$700 or \$800, which my family from Lviv transferred via Mr Fink. ("Correcting the Picture", pp. 66–67)

However, in the book, one will read:

One of the witnesses said that to get to work in these workshops; one supposedly had to pay a hefty bribe, i.e. \$700–\$800. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 705)

The source's author had expressly stated: who, to whom, and how much. Anna Zapalec, however, leaves all of this information out, replacing it with the word 'supposedly'. Seeing such methods, one naturally begins to wonder why they are used. Will it be "another example of reviewer's criticism not accounting for the context of the narrative and the purpose of individual examples' for Professor Zapalec" ("Response", p. 5)? It is clear that the context of the actions of people attempting to get to the workshops is explained only after quoting the complete account.

Another example of ignoring the impact of the occupation situation on human choices comes from the account of Meyer Perlmutter. The reader could learn from it about the specific contacts of some Jews with Friedrich Warzok, which, in turn, provided a chance for survival. It is precisely the essence of studying the fate of the Jews under German occupation. Behind each experience, there was some crucial detail, a stroke of luck, some good people, all that combined with one's activeness and overwhelming desire to survive. It is incredibly awkward to be reminding the author, who declares herself a specialist in 'micro-world' research, of these dependencies. Yet, Zapalec oversimplifies the picture in *Night without End*, for example, by presenting the story of Frojko N., who "failing to see the possibility of survival in the forest, returned with another Jew to the labour camp in

Złoczów” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 711). The researcher failed to explain the fundamental doubt in the book, namely how Frojko ‘returned’ to the camp after being away for a while? Here is the situation: first, nobody noticed his prolonged absence or escape with other Jews. Then, as if nothing had happened, nobody also noticed his return? Is Professor Zapalec saying that it was possible to leave and enter the camp at any time, just like that? Well, the truth is that Frojko, who “did not see the possibility of survival in the forest”, decided to return to the camp because commander Friedrich Warzok guaranteed his safety and all but begged for his return; Frojko immediately grabbed this opportunity. All these details can be found in the accounts that Professor Zapalec read yet chose to leave out their content. This is openly creating a non-existent reality. Depriving the story of these elements, at times so colourfully presented by witnesses, distorts their meaning and undermines the narrative’s veracity.

In her response to “Correcting the Picture”, Anna Zapalec criticises my reflections on the Złoczów Judenrat, where I drew attention to what I believe to be an unfounded generalisation (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 61). Professor Zapalec, based on one of the accounts mentioned in the footnote, concluded: “The Złoczów Judenrat was famous in the entire area as it truly took care of its people. The Ordnungsdienst was not as well respected” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 681). She also mentioned other accounts in the footnote, the authors of which had a rather critical approach to the Judenrat’s activities. This produced an apparent contradiction. In her response, Zapalec listed some examples of positive actions but failed to specify the sources, and she accused me of relying on the opinions of “two individual witnesses” (“Response”, p. 7). So, let me repeat once again – in a footnote to the text in the book, Zapalec mentioned two negative and one positive opinion. The author is also wrong in her response. Indeed, if we consider the words of Maria Cukier, which she removed, we already have three negative opinions. I, therefore, suggested that it would be desirable to present this matter more extensively. The reader could then learn why critical voices had emerged. Nevertheless, Professor Zapalec still does not see the need for a broader discussion of the problem.

This issue is undeniably related to the account of Maria Cukier. Zapalec’s explanations concerning my allegation of ‘trimming’ down this account are not convincing. Let us recall: the author has left out the highly critical words of Cukier

concerning the chairman of the Złoczów Judenrat (simultaneously including her own positive opinion of this body). This account appears on p. 741 (*Night without End*, vol. 1), where Zapalec discusses the attitudes of Poles and Ukrainians toward the Holocaust, which leads her to the unauthorised insinuations that I had taken Cukier's account out of its broader context. She explains omitting Cukier's very critical words about the chairman of the Judenrat in the following words: "I want to point out that a section of Maria Cukier's account was quoted to document the positive attitudes of some members of the Polish intelligentsia from Złoczów toward helping Jews and the quote referred to the heart of the matter" ("Response", p. 7). Even assuming that the researcher truly wanted to emphasise the attitudes of the Polish intelligentsia, there was even less reason to remove Cukier's opinion of the chairman of the Judenrat – she should have been quoted *in extenso*. Indeed, the attitude of Polish hospital personnel in Złoczów, who, despite threatening penalties, helped a Jewish woman, would stand out even more against the chairman's behaviour. Moreover, there was nothing to prevent that opinion from being cited elsewhere and included in the author's own conclusions. But nothing of the sort took place.

On the topic of Cukier's account, Anna Zapalec attempts to demonstrate that I am placing unrealistic and unfounded demands: "An example is an allegation that the figure of Father Jan Pawlicki from Zborów, who helped Maria Cukier, was not presented" ("Response", p. 6). According to the author, "the reviewer may as well have requested the presentation of all priests who helped Jews from areas adjacent to Złoczów county, and perhaps even more distant" ("Response", p. 7). Reducing to absurdity the issue of the help given to Maria Cukier by Father Jan Pawlicki does not place Professor Zapalec in the best light. After all, she, no one else, titled one of the sub-chapters: "Escape beyond the county boundaries" ("Ucieczka poza granice powiatu"). As examples of successful escapes, she described more broadly the story of Helena Kitaj-Drobnerowa and Dr Bernard Gaerber with his wife and son, who were hiding in... Warsaw (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 737). The much closer Zborów, however, did not deserve mention. One more thing of fundamental importance must be mentioned here. Presenting Maria Cukier's account and leaving out the description of the help she had received from Father Pawlicki creates an impression that this woman had been deserted. However, this was not the case.

Once again, the book's narrative contradicts the actual events when confronted with the verbatim citation of sources.

Finally, using Maria Cukier's account and the story of the help given to her by Father Pawlicki, Professor Zapalec claims that I have not authored any micro-historical publications. It is awkward for me to argue with that. I can only say that the author simply has not become acquainted with any of them.⁷³

Finally, in "Correcting the Picture", I did not call for "including even little-explained cases of Jewish collaboration [...] in the chapter" ("Response", p. 9). For example, Zapalec mentioned the escapes from craftsmen's workshops in Złoczów (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 711–712). In her response, when writing about doubts concerning a specific person who had allegedly turned in the escapees, Zapalec creates the impression that I was making every possible effort to find negative attitudes among the Jews. And that is not the point at all. Moreover, it is impossible to consider this issue as little-explained. Indeed, the sources are inconsistent as to the names, but not the facts. The source of the leak was the Jews. The Germans forced some of them to cooperate, which could also have been a survival strategy. This, in turn, also led to the destruction of resistance attempts. After all, this issue was presented not to stigmatise anybody but to shed as much light as possible on the situation of the Jews in the workshops. Struggling to survive, faced with hunger and daily repression, they had to be wary of their fellow countrymen.

Regarding the craftsmen's workshops mentioned elsewhere, Professor Zapalec accuses me of having supplied the wrong number (12) of Jews murdered by the Germans during one of the escapes. This is another example of the author's determination in searching for errors in my review. When mentioning this event, I referred to an excerpt from the chapter "Złoczów County" ("Powiat złoczowski") (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 712), and that twelve people perished in connection with the escape of Eng. Hillel Suffran's group from the workshops in Złoczów.

⁷³ Here are some examples of micro-historical studies by me: T. Domański, "Pozaetatowa placówka policji niemieckiej w Bodzentynie w okresie II wojny światowej", in *Z dziejów Bodzentyna w okresie II wojny światowej. W 70. rocznicę pacyfikacji 1943–2013*, ed. by L. Michalska-Bracha, M. Przeniosło, and M. Jedynak (Kielce, 2013), pp. 159–180; *idem*, "Miejsca masowych straceń na Kielecczyźnie na przykładzie Nowej Słupi i Świętej Katarzyny", *Polska pod Okupacją* 2 (2016), pp. 55–77; *idem*, "Akcja policji niemieckiej w Koniecznie 26 sierpnia 1943 r.", *Świętokrzyskie Studia Archiwalno-Historyczne* 3 (2014), pp. 265–279.

A few quotes will be helpful to explain better the mechanism of creating false allegations. The chapter's relevant section reads as follows:

Unfortunately, they were caught and shot dead by the Ukrainian police. Twelve people died then, reportedly. However, this version of events has not been confirmed by other sources. According to the testimony of an eyewitness, Benjamin Hochberg, five engineers from this conspiracy group were shot dead 'on the market square'; he himself was 40 m away from the place of execution; one more person was shot along with them. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 712)

In "Correcting the Picture", I wrote as follows:

Finally, we will not learn who should be blamed for the failed escape of the second group from Złoczów. The author stated only that: "in May 1943 they were betrayed and arrested". Subsequently, 12 of them perished, murdered by the Germans (p. 712). ("Correcting the Picture", p. 67)

In the relevant section of the book, Zapalec only wrote that she had not found any confirmation about the twelve murdered persons in other sources. In contrast, an eyewitness reportedly had seen the murder of six people (five engineers and one other person). From what she writes, it is unclear which version Zapalec considers correct. One can even assume that she sees them both as equally probable. It may have been this way or that way. The whole topic in "Correcting the Picture" was not dedicated to deliberations on the number of murdered Jews but to the issue of a possible betrayal. However, seeing her chance to attack the reviewer, it did not prevent her from writing:

The reviewer also reported that 12 people had been shot during the execution, but this figure does not seem correct to me (the reviewer has misread the relevant passage) because in this case, the number given by Benjamin Hochberg is more certain, as he was an eyewitness to the execution and mentioned six victims [...]. This approach is another occasion for evaluating the reviewer's scholarly craftsmanship and research attitude in the footnote to this text. (In

response, I listed all the sources dealing with the preparations for this escape and execution of Jewish engineers, which I had found and which the reviewer used only to a limited degree. (“Response”, p. 10)

In response to the review, Professor Zapalec writes that Hochberg’s version seems ‘more credible’ to her because this allowed Zapalec to criticise the reviewer for his alleged lack of scholarly craftsmanship.

Anna Zapalec (as well as other authors) also accuses me of inaccurately reading the chapter and drawing false and unfounded conclusions. As an example, she mentions Kripo’s activities and the involvement of Poles in this formation. As described in *Night without End*, the Kripo’s outpost in Złoczów was located at 7 Wały Street and had 20 police officers. In the chapter entitled “Złoczów County” (“Powiat złoczowski”), the author lists several operations involving the Złoczów Kripo but without providing any information about the individual responsibilities of non-German functionaries. In one case (p. 721), she mentions the likely denunciation of an unknown Jewish woman to the Germans by a Polish Kripo member. Again, I must say that my aim is not to defend anyone involved in criminal activities. My opinion referred to a type of summary included further in the text, which I believe is illogical. The author stated there:

A mainly negative role was also played by policemen (including Polish ones) serving in the Złoczów Criminal Police, some of whom probably had signed the Volkliste. [...] Unfortunately, during the preliminary survey, apart from the minutes of interrogations from post-war investigations, I did not find any other detailed administrative documentation from the Złoczów Kripo, which would shed some light on this issue. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 743)

She went on to state that her findings were based on an analogy with other occupied Polish lands (*ibid.*). In response to the review, proving her reasons, she reiterated the information acquired from one of the Home Army soldiers who claimed that 90 per cent of the outpost staff were Poles, and it was called the Polish Police (“Response”, p. 11). It takes a simple calculation to find out that there must have been eighteen Polish Kripo policemen (90 per cent of 20) and only two

Germans. According to other sources, there were more than two Germans (not to mention that they constituted the command),⁷⁴ and there were also Ukrainians and Volksdeutsche (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 667). Herman Grünseid claimed that the criminal police consisted mainly of Volksdeutsche.⁷⁵

Still on the issue of nationality, I do not understand the sense in indicating and reminding me that Otto Zigmund was of Austrian origin (“Response”, p. 11). The events should be analysed in the context of the times when they occurred. After the war, the Austrian origin was relevant for the prosecution of war criminals (e.g. to determine the court competent for the suspect’s place of residence). So, let us only recall here that, following the Anschluss, Austrians automatically became Reichsdeutsche – Germans from the Reich. Moreover, the place of origin of a Reichsdeutsche, be it Austria (Ostmark in Nazi terminology) or any other place, was of no importance. During the occupation, no one referred to the perpetrators of crimes from the Reich using any term other than simply ‘Germans’. I am not even going to mention Hitler himself.

In her response, Zapalec attempts to suggest that I do not discern the analysis of the attitudes of Ukrainians or Belarusians in *Night without End* and, therefore, I likely did not read the book very carefully. Well, I did read it carefully. I wrote that we would not find much information about Belarusians or Ukrainians in the study due to the area of interest defined by the authors. My conclusion in the review concerned a comprehensive look at the selection of research areas in *Night without End* (I wrote about this in the initial part), as well as specific ‘critical’ issues defined in the “Foreword” (“Wstęp”), where the research on the participation of Poles in the Holocaust is mentioned. Ukrainians and Belarusians are added in parentheses (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 25). Reading the following part of the “Foreword” proves that this is no accident. Not once (!), not even in the sub-chapter devoted to “perpetrators and their helpers” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 24–27), did the editors of the volume consider it appropriate to mention the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (Ukrainische Hilfspolizei). However, they especially highlighted the role of

⁷⁴ In the light of the occupation realities, Zigmund’s testimony argued that ‘Kripo officials’ had a Polish commander and that his role boiled down to passing on orders, which is an apparent attempt at avoiding responsibility. See AYV, O.5/61, Testimony of Otto Zigmund, p. 60.

⁷⁵ AYV, O.5/61, Testimony of Herman Grünseid, [n.p.], 2 June [?], p. 24.

‘Polish formations’, such as the Polnische Polizei or Volunteer Fire Brigades, and Polish civilians in the Holocaust. When sketching their picture, the editors could also have mentioned the ethnic composition of factory or camp guard services and the role of the Ukrainian minority. I will not dwell on the issue of calling Belarusian guards Poles and omitting in the research analysis of the eastern part of Bielsk ‘County’ by Professor Engelking.

A detailed response to the remarks of Professor Dariusz Libionka

I agree with Professor Dariusz Libionka that it is customary for ‘academic’ reviews to present the author’s achievements and discuss the structure or assumptions of peer-reviewed work. I have already discussed the latter two elements. Perhaps not as thoroughly as the author would have liked, but technical considerations have been decisive here. A detailed discussion of the nine chapters would make my already extensive review article even longer. That is why I focused primarily on the use of sources.

Dariusz Libionka’s response to “Correcting the Picture” could be summarised in a laconic statement: Domański does not note the factually consistent description of the role and activities of the Polnische Polizei, the Baudienst, as well as the JOD and the Judenrat. Thus, any comments he has made, which are generally “of little importance”, serve to “ridicule” the researcher and demonstrate his “treachery” and “methods” in “covering up the role of the Germans” in the Holocaust. Moreover, an inherent feature of Professor Libionka’s response is personal insinuations: that I am “prejudiced” against him, my writing is emotional, I am steered by “inquisitorial impulses” or “drastically inquisitorial impulses”. “In Domański’s world – Libionka writes – there are no mistakes, errors or a lack of diligence. A perfidious intention must be present in every act and omission”. For example, Libionka cited my criticism of his use of Meier Goldstein’s account (in his summary description, he ‘reduced’ the Germans’ role to photographing some Poles’ anti-Jewish behaviours) or the intentional use of Father Dobiecki’s account. It is difficult to argue with non-scholarly jibes and misinterpretations.

In response to general remarks of “Correcting the Picture”, Dariusz Libionka has two essential allegations against me. He claims that my review lacked significant fact-based additions, and that I did not refer to any of his theses, nor do I argue

with his estimates and figures (“Response”, pp. 2–3). The first of the above allegations demonstrates a misunderstanding of my review’s assumptions and objectives laid out in the preliminary part of “Correcting the Picture”. The *Night without End* has been presented as a well-documented scholarly work, being the effect of many years of research. This, almost automatically, provokes the desire to analyse the reference database (precisely the one indicated by the authors) and the way it was used. Subsequently, it shares one’s observations with *Night without End* readers. The verification results – described on 70 pages of print – proved astounding to me. Simultaneously, in some sections of “Correcting the Picture”, particularly regarding the presentation of the Righteous Among the Nations or Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst, I supplemented the picture painted by Libionka, providing the information omitted by him, which significantly modified his conclusions and interpretations. Later in this text, I will present several new additions to the factual layer of the chapter about ‘Miechów county’. These relate, among other things, to the displacement of the Jewish population in 1942 and the local community’s attitudes towards this event.

In light of the content of “Correcting the Picture”, the second allegation about the lack of polemics with Libionka’s theses and estimates (“Response”, p. 2) is unfounded and illogical. In fact, it was impossible to comment on any calculations and statistical data in his part of *Night without End* because he had not provided a source basis for these statistics, following the footsteps of the editors and co-authors. Any discussion is, thus, impossible. Finally, Libionka’s argument that I did not polemicize with any of his theses is not valid. One of the main theses from *Night without End*, with which I argue from almost the first to the last page of “Correcting the Picture”, refers to the presentation of the Polnische Polizei as “the Polish Police force in the GG”, rather than a German formation composed of Poles. Similarly, the Volunteer Fire Brigade or the Baudienst have been presented without considering the realities of the occupation. This is precisely how Libionka described them. It seems that my arguments, at least partially, convinced Professor Libionka because, in response to “Correcting the Picture”, he wrote:

But, there is no need to repeat the obvious constantly in a scholarly text, and the one published in a collective volume. After all, no one of sound mind and with a basic

knowledge of the occupation's realities will try to prove the thesis about the independence of the Polish Police in any operations in which it was involved (which does not preclude independent actions undertaken by individual policemen). [...] The same is true for the Baudienst. [...] 'Individual operations were led by the Gestapo and Kripo officers and commanders of local gendarmerie posts. They had dozens of gendarmes under their command, at least a dozen members of the Sonderdienst, about three hundred blue policemen, and several hundred Junaks'. I am presenting here the implementation of the scenario repeated throughout the GG. I do not conceal the participation of the Germans; on the contrary, I devote much space to the officer in charge of the displacement from the local Security Police, Martin F. Beyerlein, and individual gendarmes. ("Response", pp. 4 and 5)

Of course, I fully agree with Professor Libionka that there is no need to keep reminding about subordination to the Germans. On the other hand, one can and even must keep this in mind when discussing events and guiding the reader through the intricacies of wartime reality. The Baudienst is first mentioned in the "Foreword" on p. 23, in the following sentence: "Most commonly [reference to displacement operations in 1942 – T.D.] – Miechów county will serve as an example here – the Germans used a combination of different extermination tactics, basing on – primarily due to their own slim police force – the Polish blue police, units of the Volunteer Fire Brigade and Junaks from the Construction Service (the Baudienst) accommodated in local barracks" (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 23). Further on in the "Foreword", the editors do not even dedicate a word to explain the origins of these formations. In the case of the Baudienst, they failed to inform that this was a formation based on forced slave labour created by the Germans, where service was compulsory, and evasion was sometimes even punished with death. Let's say the editors of the volume did not consider it worthwhile to provide at least basic information on the status of the Baudienst in the structures of the occupying forces. In that case, it should be done by the author who so broadly describes the participation of Junaks in anti-Jewish operations. However, he did not make any substantial introductory reference. And I do not mean writing the history of the Baudienst, as Libionka suggests, but acknowledging, even in one sentence, the degree of subordination to the German occupational authorities. My assessment

of the presentation of the Polnische Polizei is similar. I have discussed this extensively in “Correcting the Picture”. No reflection accompanies the narrative of the authors and editors on the organisation of the Polnische Polizei or the scope of responsibilities of its functionaries, which is all the more surprising as the authors mention the role of the PP in the Holocaust on practically every page of the book.

On the other hand, the authors and editors constantly suggest the allegedly Polish character of this formation. It is downright incomprehensible to comment extensively on the operations of a formation without providing the reader with basic knowledge about the formation itself. I refuse to even comment on Professor Libionka’s argument about using Wikipedia to find the basic information about the Polnische Polizei. It is precisely the role of a scholarly researcher to present the issue so that the reader does not have to browse the Internet and wonder what the author actually meant. Furthermore, Libionka still appears to be unaware of this problem.

Continuing the reflections on the operations of the Baudienst, Libionka is surprised that I allegedly had failed to notice him mentioning the German units (and specific officers) present on-site when discussing the displacement of the Jews from Działoszyce. Likely to seem more convincing, Libionka has meticulously re-mentioned German units in his polemic. “What is more – he wrote – on that day, 3 September 1942, all the most important German officers and officials from local structures and Cracow were present in Działoszyce” (“Response”, p. 5). This proves the obvious: “The Junaks were not an independent force, not subordinated to anybody. How could this escape Domański’s notice?” (“Response”, p. 5). Comforting is Libionka’s recognition of (albeit belated) and emphasis on the Germans’ leadership role found in his response. I fully agree that “no one of sound mind and with a basic knowledge of occupation realities will try to prove the thesis about the independence of the Polish Police in any operations in which it was involved” (“Response”, p. 4). Except that we will find no such words or suggestions in his text, while the narrative sometimes moves in the opposite direction – and that is what my allegations pertained to. An example is his description of the liquidation of the Działoszyce ghetto (*Night without End*, vol. 2, pp. 78–79).⁷⁶ Libionka did,

⁷⁶ ‘On 2 September, in the evening, a “liquidation team” arrived by a narrow-gauge railway. Chaim Iczhak Wolgelernter speaks of 200 Germans and 300 Junaks. According to a Polish witness, this team consisted of several Gestapo members, “several German gendarmes”, as well as blue policemen and

indeed, mention the Germans present at the scene as the executions' perpetrators when discussing the events. However, this obvious fact does not reflect the historical narration he gave in the book. Every reader of *Night without End* will be able to see that what the author currently states does not correspond with the content of his text. I partially verified this description in "Correcting the Picture". However, a reminder of this seems necessary to understand my arguments. So, what picture of the displacement of Jews from Działoszyce does the reader of Libionka's chapter see? In the presented narrative, formations composed of Poles act almost autonomously.

We see the expulsion of Jews. We do not know who is doing it. This is quite clearly said by an eyewitness, Chaim Icchak Wolgelernter, but Libionka just happened to leave out this section of his account. Then horse-drawn wagons [*podwody*] are mentioned. We do not know who ordered them to come here or who the wagon drivers [*podwodziarze*] were. We will not learn that the Polish population could even be punished by death for failure to follow such orders or that the occupation rules strictly governed the obligation to provide *podwody*. There are no Germans in the description of the displacement operation. Perhaps they are standing somewhere on the side, and once they appear in this description, it is to protect the Jews from the 'Polish police'. Professor Libionka based these sections on the memories of the 'displaced' Jews. Without denying the Holocaust victims their right to an individual assessment of events and their own perception of the

Junaks. The mayor was ordered to hang out notices "stating where Jews are to gather and what they can take with them – as well issuing a warning to Poles not to touch anything as they would face the death penalty". With no sense of shame, farmers arrived in town and bought out property for next to nothing. The Junaks were brought in from Słomniki. It was the same group, equipped with shovels and pickaxes. On the morning of 3 September, they began driving the Jews out of their apartments and catching them on the streets. Rabbi Mordka, who could not walk, was shot down, along with Icek Staszewski and many others. A member of the Judenrat testified after the war that "the operation was carried out by the Polish Police rather than the Germans. They shot at Jews, who were led to the narrow-gauge railway". Allegedly, "a German asked one policeman not to shoot". There was no counting on the neighbours: "Even though we left them [the Poles] our entire property for safekeeping, they did not want to know us. Why would they save us? What do they care if we die? After all, the property in their hands will remain with them anyway", reported Wolgelernter. The only way to survive was by escaping to the countryside. Horse-drawn wagons [*podwody*] were provided. "We thought", Meyer Zonnenfeld recalled, "that they would take us to the train station. However, they drove us directly to the Jewish cemetery, to the area where dogcatchers shot dogs and sick, old horses. It turned out that the Junaks had already prepared three giant pits overnight". The execution thus began' (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 78).

tragedy they experienced, it is difficult to resist the impression that putting such quotations without appropriate commentary and clarification may lead to the conclusion that it was the 'Polish Police' who were the main driving force here. Libionka failed to inform the reader that various German forces – the gendarmerie, Gestapo, and others had complete control over what was happening. Moreover, finally, from the leftover section of Wolgelerntner's description, we learn that the Poles cannot be counted on. They took Jewish property, and the Junaks dug the holes overnight. We will not know that the Junaks did so at the behest of the Germans, and Wolgelernter wrote not only about the negative attitudes of Poles but also a great deal about the positive behaviour and complexity of the situation. And that is what Libionka failed to mention.

Continuing the subject of the Baudienst and its operations, I wish to inform that my allegation from page 14 of the review concerns how the interrogation protocol of witness Roman Kowalski (Salomon Kołatacz) was used.⁷⁷ I do not intend to prove that there were no amoral individuals among the Junaks, overzealous individuals, or those who, to varying degrees, wished to please the Germans. It would be implausible for there to be no such people, taking into account the number of those forced to barracks and to participate in the operations. In that part of "Correcting the Picture", I referred in detail to the events and role that Franciszek Kitowski, at the time a Junak from the Baudienst, reportedly played in the 'displacement' of Jews from Skała. Dariusz Libionka claims not to have cited in his chapter Roman Kowalski's (Salomon Abram Kołatacz's) claims that Kitowski had organised the dislocation operation on his own accord. The problem, however, lies in the way Kołatacz's testimonies were used. And a certain clarification is due here. The previously mentioned Kowalski testimonies concerned, in their entirety, the role Kitowski had played in the displacement of Jews and was one great accusation against this man. Kowalski reported that Kitowski had not only incited the Junaks to anti-Jewish actions but even arrived in Skała in 1941 as commander of this group.⁷⁸ Kowalski's

⁷⁷ These are testimonies given in the investigation. Libionka wrongly stated that they had been submitted at the main hearing, as indicated in fn. 202.

⁷⁸ Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance Branch in Cracow (hereinafter: AIPN Kr), District Court in Cracow (hereinafter: SOKr), 502/1318, Minutes of the interrogation of witness Roman Kowalski [Salomon Kołatacz], Cracow, 5 March 1945, p. 5.

testimonies were subsequently acknowledged by the court to be completely unreliable. In the chapter “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”) Libionka linked the section of the testimonies to the figure of a German named Matkaj and, on their basis, constructed a description of the activities of the Junaks:

The Baudienst division counted ca 150 Junaks under the command of a German named Matkaj. The Night before the dislocation – as Judenrat worker Salomon Abram Kołatacz testified – ‘incited, they ran into houses, dragged out Jews and took them, as well as those found on the street, to the barracks of the Baudienst’. One of their victims was Rabbi Lejb Seidmann and his family. He was killed by Matkaj. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 74)

The rabbi becomes a victim of the Junaks, which is obvious to any reader when put this way. Is the above description true to the facts when the investigation refers to the forced herding of Jews selected by the Germans? Furthermore, who had incited the Junaks: Kitowski – as Kołatacz testified – or perhaps their German commanders? I also see an analogy here to the all too frequent occupation situations. During a gendarmerie’s raid, a Polish village head is forced to point to a farm of another Pole, where the Germans subsequently make arrests or commit murders. In such a situation, is he complicit in the death of these people? Finally, had Libionka fully recognised the need to consider the degree of subordination of the Junaks from the Baudienst to German authorities, would he have called (even if in quotation marks) the forced participation in the displacement of Jews as a ‘baptism of fire’? (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 75).

Moving on to other detailed remarks, I will begin with an observation I made while reading the chapter “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”). One may think that the author of this part of *Night without End* has a problem with being *sine ira et studio* [“without anger and passion”]. Again, it is not my aim to justify (as the authors of *Night without End* repeatedly impute) the crimes committed by anyone against Jews but to highlight the importance of thorough research analysis and examination of the events from the cause-and-effect perspective. The sub-chapter entitled “‘Hunting for Jews’ – local perpetrators and their victims” (“‘Polowanie na Żydów’ – lokalni sprawcy i ich ofiary”) (in the section titled: “The blue police

and the Jagdkommando” (“Policja granatowa i Jagdkommando”), Libionka begins with the following observation:

The blue police, as has already been mentioned, played a significant role in carrying out both displacement actions. For Jews seeking refuge, a dense network of outposts posed a severe threat from the outset. On 1 December 1942, thirty officers from different posts were promoted, which **must have had** something to do with ‘merit’ in anti-Jewish operations [emphasis mine – T.D.]. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 145)

The ease with which such theses as this are stated here is astonishing. According to the proposed interpretation, PP’s active involvement in displacement operations is allegedly confirmed by thirty promotions to higher ranks from the hands of the Germans. It would seem that a better argument is hard to find. However, Libionka himself wrote, 100 pages earlier, that from April 1942 to March 1943, three officers and 350 policemen served at the PP in Miechów county (!) (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 43). Taking Libionka’s findings as an attempt at some sort of quantitative analysis, it would seem that fewer than ten (precisely 8.5) per cent were promoted. There are no premises for specifically considering this as proof of merit during the displacement operation. The document constituting the basis for these promotions does not contain a word of justification. There is just a list of who was promoted and where.⁷⁹ The link between the rise and policemen’s attitudes during the displacement of Jews is Libionka’s own, somewhat arbitrary, interpretation. It might well have been related to completing other tasks. This we do not know. Referring to 30 PP policemen ‘merited for’ displacement operations does not fit with the image built on the previous pages. In terms of figures, it is

⁷⁹ Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [National Archives in Cracow; hereinafter: AN Kr], PPPNB, 9, Order no. 6, Miechów, 9 January 1943, p. 13. It is also worth supplementing Libionka’s record with the information that the order signed by Commander Nowak only notified about the promotions of policemen because these, naturally, were granted in the orders of the gendarmerie commander for the Cracow District. Similarly, in other districts of the GG, e.g., in the Radom district, no substantiation was provided in the promotion orders, only the list of names with the indication of the current and new (after promotion) rank. See: AIPN, 3060/26, list of non-German policemen promoted to new ranks, Radom, 9 December 1943, pp. 141–142.

approaching Adam Hempel's slightly obsolete thesis that around ten per cent of the blue police were lackeys to the Germans.⁸⁰ Moreover, the ten per cent makes the researcher wonder about the attitude and behaviour of the remaining 90 per cent of policemen from Miechów county.

Commenting on the PP officers' involvement in displacement operations, Dariusz Libionka used another example attesting to the highly negative image of this formation. There is no reason to ignore in scholarly work the negative examples of actions of such or other police formations if they have taken place. There is no reason to advance clear-cut theses in an ambiguous situation. Professor Libionka writes: "During the period of the liquidation operation, over a dozen police officers were punished for various reasons, and several were dismissed from service. However, these punishments had nothing to do with the Jewish context" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 145).⁸¹ The author's words cannot be interpreted differently than as a belief in the lack of any form of resistance on the part of the PP policemen against participation in anti-Jewish operations. But is it an indisputable conclusion? In light of the materials that Libionka likely knew and failed to use in *Night without End*, there was some boycott of the German orders or a relatively passive service among the blue police officers from Kreishauptmannschaft Miechow. Importantly, it relates directly to the analysed period. In the order of 16 February 1943 by the commander of the PP in Kreis Miechow, Lt Władysław Szaciłło, one can read:

The Kommandeur [Commander] of the Order Police [*Policja Porządkowa*] pointed out on the occasion of handing over Mannlicher 88/90 rifles that many of them are damaged, in both their wooden and steel parts, and he recommended imposing severe consequences which, I believe, will not be pleasant for the policeman returning a given rifle. Since the arming of Polish policemen with rifles in this county has not been 100 per cent completed, as two or three men were sharing one rifle, it was difficult to establish the culprit for the improper handling

⁸⁰ A. Hempel, "Policja granatowa" w Generalnej Guberni", *Wiadomości Historyczne* 6 (1987), p. 495.

⁸¹ They mainly concerned disciplinary and moral offences. Nevertheless, here, too, it is necessary to examine whether or not they were a deliberate action, as indicated by the examples from the Radom district – simulation of alcoholism, disease, etc.

of the weapon. Therefore, the Commanders of the Outposts and Groups will bear the consequences of the improper supervision of the entrusted weapons. To avoid similar situations in the future, I recommend the Outpost Commanders assign each rifle to an individual policeman who would be responsible for its condition and maintenance. The name of the relevant policeman is to be indicated on the weapon's belt, next to the rifle number. Subsequently, it is necessary to assign the rifle to other policemen who will use it and be equally responsible for its condition. The Group Commanders will check the condition of the weapons entrusted to the Outposts and ensure due allocation to policemen, i.e. 1st-degree and 2nd-degree responsibility. The same applies to the maintenance and conservation of ammunition. I would like to point out that those police officers who carry a rifle fixed to their frames must have special hooks padded with leather or thick cloth to protect them against abrasion or damage. Any damage to the weapon will be subject to meticulous investigation.⁸²

A picture emerges from the above order of the formation of poor discipline and considerable shortage in armament, with 'many rifles' carrying signs of damage.

I am glad that Libionka will "take a look" at the omitted sections of Wolgelerner's diaries containing descriptions of the 'displacement' of Jews from Działoszyce, which omission he called "unfortunate". At the same time, I was intrigued by the author's reference in this part of his response to the then "excellently informed" blue policeman from Wolbrom, Michał Subocz, whom the author calls one of the "key witnesses". It is a shame that Professor Libionka, referring the reader to Wikipedia to find information on the PP's origins, did not quote Subocz's first sentence from the interrogation protocol of 23 June 1969: "In February 1940, as a member of the Polish underground organisation and at its command, I joined the service of the then Polish police [...]"⁸³ Subocz was, therefore, not a random person at the Wolbrom outpost. He conducted situational reconnaissance for the resistance movement and, as he emphasised, destroyed all handwritten notes. I know of such

⁸² AN Kr, PPPNB, 9, Order no. 2 of the District Commander of the PP in Miechów, Miechów, 6 February 1943, p. 17v.

⁸³ Archiwum Ośrodka Karta (Archives of KARTA Centres, hereinafter: AOK), Ds. 24/68, vol. 3, Minutes of the interrogation of witness Michał Subocz, Cracow, 23 June 1969, p. 61.

cases from Jędrzejów county. There have been cases of Home Army soldiers joining the ranks of the *Polnische Polizei* and working undercover reported in detail on criminal acts committed against Jews by other members of the same formation.⁸⁴

Let us again return to Subocz and the details he provided on the Wolbrom 'displacement', which, strangely enough, are nowhere in Libionka's description. It is pretty similar to the one concerning the Działoszyce 'displacement', analysed earlier. Libionka writes: "On 5 September, Jews began to appear on the market square from the early hours of the morning. According to some testimonies, an SS unit arrived at the scene. The commander reportedly 'explained' that the Jews were to go to the meadows near the train station, from where they would be taken to work. In the testimony of the well-informed Subocz, however, there is no mention of this. Allegedly, there were only six foreign gendarmes (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 82). At this point, Libionka used Subocz's testimony submitted in the investigation concerning the former District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes (*Okręgowa Komisja Badań Zbrodni Hitlerowskich* – OKBZH) in Cracow. The same witness presented a completely different account to the Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* – ŻIH): "There were no onlookers in the market square. Full of Gestapo officers, German gendarmerie, Special Service (*Sonderdienst*), several Polish policemen and the Jewish police"⁸⁵ These descriptions are mutually exclusive. Therefore, they should be validated, or, at the least, the existing source differences should be indicated. Subocz's recollections of the event could, at this point, become an important contribution to the reflections on the degree of terrorization and cynical engagement by the Germans of surviving Jews to participate in dislocation operations if only Libionka were willing to take them into account. Subocz pointed to the high level of activity of JOD members: "Jews are gathering from all over the city. The market square slowly fills up. The Jewish police, supervised by so many Masters, are rushing left and right, making up columns of Jews arriving from different streets. Each row is made up of ten

⁸⁴ T. Domański, "Proces z dekretu sierpniowego policjantów granatowych z Wodzisławia oskarżonych o popełnienie zbrodni na Żydach", *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 77–105 (English version: "The trial of the *Polnische Polizei* functionaries from Wodzisław accused of crimes against Jews (held according to the regulations of the 31 August 1944 decree)", *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 500–529).

⁸⁵ AŻIH, 302/211, Wolbrom. The fate of the Jews described by the Polish Catholic Michał Subocz, p. 22.

people”.⁸⁶ Elsewhere, he added: “The Jewish policemen shouted out to everyone and each person separately that they were to leave Wolbrom forever the following day”.⁸⁷ Subocz also made critical remarks about the search for Jews, trying to save their own lives at all costs. He described one of the stages of extermination as follows: “Time is pressing, they have to hurry because the wagons are constantly bringing in more ill ones, meticulously searched out by the SS and the Jewish Police with the assistance of firemen”.⁸⁸ The report mentions that the list of sick Jews known to the JOD was passed on to the Germans, who did not check each home but immediately directed wagons to the indicated address.⁸⁹ Yet, in Libionka’s description (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 82), we will not find a word on these essential details depicting the situation’s horror.

The analysis of Subocz’s memoirs is another example of Professor Libionka’s selective approach to the source material. Two things can be seen here. In his response to “Correcting the Picture”, Libionka accuses me of not noticing the description, quoted after Subocz, of local Polish people’s looting of Jewish property in Wolbrom. Naturally, I do not do anything of the sort. The review only analysed how events are described, demonstrating far-reaching simplifications or disproportionate quantifiers. Libionka states that “The Germans struggled to control the situation” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 87) with the Poles’ looting of Jewish property. In “Correcting the Picture” (p. 21), I pointed out that such a presentation of the problem would be no surprise in a German propaganda presentation. After all, they were ‘protecting’ the property of the Reich. Libionka himself is aware of this (quoting Sałabun presenting an attitude quite common at that time of Poles to former Jewish property: “It is better if the majority remains in the hands of the town residents, the poorer the enemy, the richer the subjugated nation” (*ibid.*, p. 87), nevertheless, in his narrative, Poles are the looters while the Germans only keep order (a similar opinion *ibid.*, pp. 75–76).

The other disputed issue concerned the attitude of the Wolbrom Judenrat members towards the dislocation operation. In “Correcting the Picture”, I pointed to Henryk Herstein’s account. When quoting Herstein, Libionka did so to enable

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

him to avoid writing that it was the Judenrat that ordered the Jews to gather in the square, thus becoming an involuntary participant in the events directed by the Germans. Responding to this allegation, Libionka downplayed the problem and stated: "I do not know what to think about this, since this sentence, on the one hand, demonstrates the determination in seeking faults, whilst on the other, it is reinventing the wheel. After all, the role of the Judenrats was precisely to carry out German orders" ("Response", p. 11). If, therefore, the role of the Judenrats was to carry out German orders, what is the point of removing from the quoted sources sections confirming this phenomenon?

Libionka equally dismissively notes the problem I have raised on interpreting Berk Finkelstein's 'complaint' of the Judenrat in Miechów. It is a shame that the author of "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski") did not directly write in the book the words directed at me in his response to my review. They say a lot about the reality of the time and the human dramas in the conditions created by the German authorities: "The actions of the Miechów Judenrat did not differ from others. And human reactions, especially of those whose relatives were taken, were unequivocal: they felt betrayed and outraged" ("Response", p. 11). Finkelstein was even more emphatic when stating that the Miechów Judenrat members wanted to primarily save themselves by sacrificing other Jews. And that was precisely the point of the complaint and his perception of reality. Moreover, this analysis was missing on the pages of "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski").

This selective description, compatible with the "regime of an extremely one-sided presentation of events" I pointed out in *Night without End*, can be observed in other examples of the tragic episodes of Jewish displacements in 1942. One section of "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski") concerned the deportation of Jews from Słomniki in early June 1942. The 'Reinhardt' Operation preceded this dislocation in the area. First, the gendarmes and blue police officers gathered Jews and imprisoned them in the local synagogue and school for two days. Subsequently, those 'unfit' to work were sent to the death camp in Bełżec. While still in Słomniki, "The victims – wrote Libionka – got nothing to eat or drink. Eleven people were killed" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 65).

The only source for the description of the deportation from Słomniki here is Stanisław Krupa's account. Suppose Libionka had additional information concern-

ing the Jews locked up in the school or synagogue. In that case, he should not have concealed these details from the reader but presented them and commented on them. He did not do this. In the book, where one of its principal theses refers to the Polish community's attitudes (the attitude of Poles as a condition for the survival of the Holocaust), this omission is grave negligence. Nevertheless, Krupa's account contains a substantial section about the efforts undertaken by local Poles to supply the Jews with food and drinks. Krupa wrote as follows:

Here I must comment, Krupa wrote – not without surprise – on the local population's behaviour. We knew some people in Słomniki who were filled with hatred for Jews during the interwar period. Today, seeing the misery of the Jews, these people rushed to their aid. It was not easy to help because the blue police did not even allow them to approach the buildings. Poles and, in particular, the residents of Słomniki are quite cunning; therefore, a large amount of food and drink reached the poor wretches. Whoever could, they organised some aid for the Jews. The school was accessed through the attic from the side of the Bekczyński's garden, where there were no blue police guards, while to the synagogue – through the cellar.⁹⁰

The very fact that these efforts were made seems indisputable and unmistakable, and leads to the obvious conclusion that the narrative created by Libionka should be nuanced.

Krupa's account could also be a fundamental argument describing the Poles' attitudes towards Jews during the concentration in Słomniki in late August and early September 1942. The Germans created a camp-like interim place there for the Jews. Krupa wrote over three manuscript pages about the attempts to undertake organised assistance operations by the Poles (water, food; Krupa devoted much space, particularly to the issue of supplying water), about the activities of the local fire brigade, about raising money in consultation with representatives of the Judenrat, and generally about wheedling the Germans in charge of the operation into permitting any type of help. Especially memorable is the conversation with

⁹⁰ AŻIH, 301/6276, S. Krupa: *Kreis Miechow ist judenrein*, TS, April 1966, pp. 2–3.

a female doctor who “worked at the camp overnight”, reported by Krupa. The doctor’s words provide but a glimpse at the real drama inside the ‘camp’ for those several days. “She told me – Krupa reported – that there were eight normal births, six premature births, and a dozen or so miscarriages in the camp that night. Four women died within hours of giving birth. Three babies also died.”⁹¹ There is no reason not to believe Krupa. This post-war mayor of Słomniki hides nothing in his account comprising over a dozen or so pages. He does not conceal an extremely critical opinion about the Polnische Polizei functionaries he labelled German minions. He also saw the negative role of some Junaks.⁹² This information was not used by Libionka, who reduced the part of Poles to passive observers, ‘onlookers’, and described the attitude of the local people as follows: “The Polish residents watched the deportations” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, pp. 75–76). It clearly follows from the narrative created in the book *Night without End* that the Polish people did nothing, not a single gesture, not a single attempt to help. The only Poles to whom Libionka devotes some space in this part of his chapter are the Junaks of the Baudienst (including an alleged looter) and the blue police.

Libionka’s ‘reductionist’ research can also be seen in describing the dislocation of Jews from Wolbrom. In the context of bilateral Polish-Jewish relations, he wrote: “Commercial agreements were hastily concluded with the Poles, and property *en masse* was given to them for safekeeping” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 82). A little later in this chapter, he discussed the ‘staging point’ for the Jews of the town during the dislocation operation. The author did not analyse the event in terms of the behaviour of the Poles. He merely mentioned that several thousand Jews had no water or food. The description of the first deportation from Słomniki draws attention here. The presence of several thousand Jews for several days did not go unnoticed by Wolbrom’s population. The Germans’ actions, who strictly forbade any assistance to the Jews, always played a decisive role. Libionka, however, passed over the files of the former OKBZH in Cracow in silence, though they contained information that some Poles attempted to provide food or water. Karol Tracz recalled: “My friend, a Jewish woman named Ziegler and her child, were

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 2–15.

also there. I wanted to take some milk for Ziegler's baby. Along the way, however, I was stopped by the gendarme Arndt mentioned above who did not permit me to give this milk to Ziegler".⁹³ Helena Szczygieł had had similar experiences: "The local Polish people wishing to help the Jews gathered at the rallying point were not allowed near there. The gendarmes also did not allow me to enter with the water I wanted to give these Jews".⁹⁴

The author of "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski") 'thunders' (to imitate the style of his response) that as regards the issue of hiding Jews by Aleksander Kisiel and searching for them, I pointed out to the author that: "Naturally it does not make any difference for the results of the searches, whether the Germans were alone or with their subordinate blue policemen, but it is not acceptable in scholarly work to 'supplement' the source records in this way" ("Correcting the Picture", p. 46). I must say I am puzzled by Libionka's explanations as to why the blue police officers appeared in the quoted source. In his response, Libionka first mentions the *Polnische Polizei* outposts operating in the area, which makes the presence of blue policemen in Kisiel's household more probable, to finally conclude: "My intention was not to correct the sources. Like most of the accounts included in the 301st group of the ŻIH fonds, Kisiel's account was noted down by a clerk, and its content must not be taken literally" ("Response", p. 6). With his explanations, Libionka seems to be saying: "OK, Kisiel does not mention the blue police, and so what? The PP posts were not far away, so they could have been there". Of course, they could. However, adopting an attitude where if something is inconsistent with the source, all the worse for the source, is not the best explanation here. I am not sure if Professor Libionka is fully aware of the meaning of his own words. Following the method of treating documents presented in this interpretation, all testimonies, accounts, and minutes of interrogations, as well as the resulting quotes, should be simply thrown in the trash because they are nothing more than transcripts (notes taken by clerks) and "their content cannot be taken literally". This would constitute an extraordinary research paradigm that would challenge all scholarly

⁹³ AOK, Ds. 24/68, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of witness Karol Tracz, Cracow, 9 September 1970, p. 129.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of witness Helena Szczygieł, Cracow, 9 September 1970, p. 122.

research, including that of Professor Libionka. I hope that is not his intention. Naturally, one may distance oneself from the wording contained in the minutes of interrogations if the investigative method included torture, beatings, extortion, and the interrogated had no influence on how their testimony was reported – this is often the case with the ‘August trials’ (*sierpniówki*) (which, as if contrary to his own words, are so widely used in *Night without End* also by Libionka himself). However, the author probably does not suggest that these were the methods used when obtaining the accounts kept in the ŻIH.

Another thing is that Libionka uses insinuation as to my ignorance about the post-war judicial system, particularly of the so-called *sierpniówki* – the August trials, to undermine my academic credibility. In the review (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 29), I clearly stated how complex and challenging it was to research this material. Libionka, ignoring my explanations and defending himself against – so obvious – an accusation of the lack of in-depth analysis of specific processes, advanced a surprising thesis: “Had Domański been more experienced in analysing court cases of the occupation period, he would have known that this was a very complex problem” (“Response”, p. 8). It is always an awkward situation when one quotes their own publications. I can only politely recommend that the author read my research papers concerning the problem area in question.⁹⁵ The author is aware of the need for an in-depth analysis of the processes and yet, for reasons known only to himself, does not do so in “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”). And why? He failed to present the complexity of the problem and substantiate his decision to ignore the investigation’s formal findings and the court proceeding and present his own interpretation of the events instead, without even advising the reader of this fact. Without referring to the archives (and let me ask a rhetorical question

⁹⁵ T. Domański, “Z historii oddziału ‘Wybranieckich’ czyli o wiarygodności materiałów śledczych i operacyjnych UB”, *Arcana* 106–107 (2012), pp. 253–279 (part 1); *Arcana* 109 (2013), pp. 120–144 (part 2); *idem*, “‘Sierpniówki’ jako źródło do dziejów Armii Krajowej”, pp. 167–215; *idem*, “Z dziejów policji granatowej. Proces Edwarda Krepskiego”, in *225 lat policji w Polsce. Geneza i ewolucja policji*, ed. by P. Majer and M. Seroka (Olsztyn, 2017), pp. 219–243; *idem*, “Polish ‘Navy Blue’ Police in the Kielce county”, in *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Sitarek (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 53–93. More papers on ‘August trials’ have been published, see: T. Domański, “Postępowania sądowe z dekretu z 31 sierpnia 1944 r. jako źródło do dziejów relacji polsko-żydowskich, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem procesów tzw. sierpniówkowych. Na przykładzie powiatu kieleckiego”, in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku. Badania, kontrowersje, perspektywy*, ed. by T. Domański, E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warszawa, 2021); and Domański, “Proces z dekretu sierpniowego”.

here – how many readers actually do that?), the picture presented in “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”) is self-evident and beyond any doubt. However, when juxtaposed with the source material, this picture becomes shattered. I hope that Libionka will resolve these shortcomings in an extended version that he has already announced.

The same perspective should be taken with the interpretation of my review concerning the murder of Jankiel Liberman by Aleksander Kuraj in the village of Rogów, or the turning in of Estera Zilberband or Moszek Wahadłowski provided in the response. According to Libionka, I want to blur the responsibility of the actual killers of Liberman because “it is not the conditions that kill”, and I allegedly do not see Kuraj’s tragedy: “He [i.e. Domański] does not see the tragedy of a Pole, the father of a large family, forced to commit the murder” (“Response”, p. 8). This comment shows Libionka’s misunderstanding of what I wrote in “Correcting the Picture” about the events in Rogów, Wolica, and Wierzbica. And yet, it is Libionka’s text that tells us nothing about these dramatic events’ background. His terse account of the events given in the chapter “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”) only justifies the title: “Murders without the involvement of the police” (“Mordy bez udziału policji”). Indeed, no German police-like formation – be it the blue police, the gendarmerie, or any other – was present at the crime scene or committed the crime. But was Liberman murdered in a space-time vacuum? And weren’t the ‘incidents’ from the neighbouring villages of the Kozłów area, though taking place a year earlier, widely known to the villagers of Rogów? Couldn’t these events affect the decisions of the villagers, and make them fear for their lives? Or perhaps, in this particular village, the murderous German law had not applied? Furthermore, does not a detailed analysis of Liberman’s murder help paint a fuller picture of the occupation’s tragedy, where a former benefactor becomes – against his own will – a murderer? Is the presentation of circumstances in which the perpetrators had lived a diffusion of responsibility?

As for turning in Zilberband, in his response, Libionka regretfully failed to specify the exact file sheets from the proceeding against Natalia Wójcik, which proved her and her husband’s guilt. Underlying the book’s conclusions, the documents mentioned in the footnotes are simply mutually contradictory. Perhaps Libionka should once again carefully examine the documents mentioned in the footnotes. Regarding the investigation against Stanisław B., I highlighted a signifi-

cant methodological error of Professor Libionka. One cannot merely summarise the events in a few sentences (making references to case files) and pronounce somebody guilty of this or that crime without informing the reader that it is only the author's interpretation of the events (or source material to be more specific) and give a mere footnote referring to the whole case – the more so that the case files point to a different perpetrator, which is confusing. I do not see any point in ridiculing the issue and making comments which do not conform to the conventions of academic discourse. Case in point: “I discussed the subject briefly and – what is even worse – I pronounced the guilt of a Pole (informer) whereas, in 1953, he was acquitted by the County Court in Miechów, which accused a different person” (“Response”, p. 8). Well, one Pole was acquitted, and another Pole was accused. It is only a matter of a name, not worth arguing about... Libionka can see something in “Correcting the Picture” that is not there, and he suggests that I agree with the court as to the guilt of Stanisław B. because he writes: “My opinion on individual responsibility also differs from the one of the reviewers” (“Response”, p. 8). In “Correcting the Picture”, I do not point to any specific perpetrator, only to the facts mentioned above. Anyway, I am curious about how Libionka will handle this case in a book version [of his chapter]. Will he resort to “discussing it briefly” or elaborate in detail on individual witnesses' testimonies, indicating the relevant interrogation transcript, transcript date, and sheet number in the footnote?

Libionka ended his analysis of the ‘August trials’ with an interesting jibe: “There is yet another problem: if someone is acquitted in a Jewish context, for some historians, the court suddenly is no longer a tool of Stalinist oppression against the Poles” (“Response”, p. 8). It is a shame that Professor Libionka did not name the researchers using such a paradigm, but he again resorts to insinuation. Demanding a researcher to present the actual legal situation, even if we perceive it as unreliable and inadequate, is not, by any means, a matter of evaluating the quality of the court (regardless of the time it operates in). Is it good practice to declare, as Libionka did, a specific person guilty of significant crimes without any thorough analysis of the facts and subsequently, in a footnote, refer the reader to the case file containing diametrically different conclusions?

Commenting on some of the issues addressed in “Correcting the Picture”, Libionka attempts to divert the criticism of his obvious methodological errors in

a different direction. It is challenging to adopt a different view on this issue, having read the author's opinions on the history of the Konieczny or Federman (and Matuszczyk) family. It is not the 'compact style' or 'lacking details' that I objected against, but unjustified abbreviations distorting the words of those doing the act of saving and those saved, and, in a sense, diminishing the significance of the Righteous Among the Nations. The abbreviations used by Libionka present these noble individuals as mere money-grubbers for whom money and valuables were the key drivers, particularly "as they were promised more after the war". I have discussed this extensively when talking about Jews paying for help. If Professor Libionka is aware of any source material confirming his theses – he should present it, for instance, anything undermining the words of Hymen Federman, instead of creating fiction. This story is yet another element affecting the credibility of the picture produced in the book. As it happens, the cause of my consternation was the following sentence: "As regards the Konieczny family, I have dared to quote an account from which it follows that some Jews hidden by them paid for their upkeep" ("Response", p. 11). I cannot see any purpose in this irony. The problem of living costs is commonly found in Polish and Jewish sources (witness accounts), which Professor Libionka is perfectly aware of. Allow me to raise one point here. In the case of the Konieczny family, it was not, in fact, about "paying for their upkeep", as Professor Libionka puts it, but rather "covering the costs of living". The difference between the two expressions is subtle yet significant. The juxtaposition of the accounts of hidden Jews with the author's original narrative in "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski") and the response's content is a perfect occasion for demonstrating the logic behind Professor Libionka's argumentation. In "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski"), Libionka left out all details presenting the Righteous as noble and decent people. Let us juxtapose the relevant paragraphs and leave the conclusions of Professor Libionka to the reader. In *Night without End*, the issue of paying is presented by Libionka in the following way: "There were seven of them, and they were given food once a day. Borys Ickowicz, who was hiding with them, too, mentions paying in cash and with objects of value. When they ran out of money, they agreed that they would reimburse the costs incurred after the war" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 129). Moreover, this is how the money issue was presented by Ickowicz, quoted by me in the review:

We were paying for our safety with money and whatever we had of value. Six months before the end of the war, we ran out of money and valuables. We were not thrown out to face certain death. [...] Maciej Konieczny was a rich farmer. He had 44 morgens, so he was not financially motivated [...].

The money issue was explained with more empathy by Sidney (Szymche) Olmer in his account given on 31 December 1986:

For the first six months, we paid only for our food. When we ran out of money, **Mr** Konieczny agreed to my promise to reimburse his food costs after the war. He never took any money other than food costs, and I knew he was not hiding us for money. Mr and Mrs Konieczny were religious and liberal and helped us for humane reasons. [...] Mr and Mrs Konieczny explained to their children that human life was sacred and that it was their duty to save us. ("Correcting the Picture", p. 54)

Suppose Professor Libionka does not see a difference between his 'abbreviations' and the presentation of the issue of the saved ones. In such a case, this fact does not speak well about the credibility of his research papers. The same would apply to Libionka's description of the relations between a farmer, Jan Makola, and Marian Sonnenfeld's group.

Finally, Dariusz Libionka is surprised by my pointing to the existence of provocative German units. As an experienced researcher, Libionka surely knows that this was one of the elements of the then-contemporary reality affecting human attitudes and actions (the sense of threat, uncertainty, fear, and German omnipotence, even if it was an impression and not the reality). The German 'masqueraders' were commonly talked about in the Miechów area and across the entire GG.

I would like to add at this point that one cannot agree with the interpretation of Helena Lindzinowa's account made by Libionka (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 123). It is yet another abbreviation contradictory to the sources. According to Lindzinowa mentioned above, a small boy named Leopold Brajnes survived in the Miechów orphanage run by nuns during the occupation. Libionka, referring to the account, writes: "Despite the Gestapo's investigation, his origin had not been

discovered”. It is only partly true. Actually, the investigation had been conducted, and the person behind this ‘non-discovery’ of the boy’s Jewish origin was a Gestapo soldier of unknown name, as Lindzinowa clearly states:

A few days later, the Gestapo came to Miechów, looking for a supposedly Jewish child. After three doctors confirmed it, the child was to be killed. A nun [forced to do so] dressed the boy in white clothes, put a white medallion on his neck, and took him to the Gestapo in Cracow, in Pomorska Street. The Gestapo officer to whom the child bowed politely must have liked the boy because he smiled at him. Nevertheless, he ordered to undress the child. Sensing something wrong would happen, the child hung on the nun’s neck and started screaming and crying, not letting anyone take him from the nun. She had to undress him and cried as she was doing it, along with the child. The Gestapo officer took the child, but he soon returned, declaring to all present that the child is of Aryan origin and only had had surgery due to a serious injury. The child was saved and taken back to the Miechów orphanage [...].⁹⁶

I also hope that Professor Libionka will include in his subsequent publications more details on the “very well documented” structures of the Kriminalpolizei (Kripo). Still, in his response, he wrote that one of his objectives was to “describe the German occupation forces in this area”. If so, I will add that, based on the Statistical Journal of Office V, prepared by the Reich Main Security Office, Kripo’s outposts operated not only in Miechów, as could be concluded from the account given in the chapter titled “Miechów County” (“Powiat miechowski”) (vol. 2, pp. 40–41), but also as field outposts (Aussenposten) in Wolbrom, Proszowice, and Kazimierza Wielka.⁹⁷

And finally, one more comment concerning the accusation that I perfunctorily addressed on how underground units and their attitude towards the Jews had been discussed in *Night without End*. This is how Libionka interprets my view:

⁹⁶ AŻIH, 301/4573, Account of Józef Jama, Szczawnica, 11 June 1946, p. 1. Perhaps it was the same child mentioned in detail by Philipp Riedinger during his interrogation. He testified that it was county governor (*starosta*) Kalpers who opposed the ‘destruction’ of the child, AIPN Kr, 075/1, vol. 24, Translation. Ref.: Philipp Riedinger, Cracow, 15 August 1951, pp. 73–74.

⁹⁷ See: *Jahrbuch Amt V (Reichskriminalpolizeiamt) des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes 1939–1940*, p. 142.

There may be two reasons for Domański's dodging: either some other expert was delegated to explore this issue, and we will know his or her opinion some time later, or he had decided that the issue is too complicated or perhaps too controversial. ("Response", pp. 13–14)

My polemics with the publication of Joanna Tokarska-Bakir and Alina Skibińska, mentioned by Libionka, clearly prove that I do not avoid 'too complicated' or complex problems. Moreover, I cannot see any alleged inconsistency. I am not aware that the unit of Marian Sołtysiak, aka 'Barabasz', was engaged in any conspiracy activity in the Cracow vicinity. I was very precise in stating that naturally, a review could not discuss in great detail every problem addressed by the authors, mainly when one person engages in simultaneous polemics with nine other authors. Perhaps, I will also analyse Professor Libionka's achievements in this field in the future. I have presented another example of Jan Grabowski's description of the Home Army's attitude (in this particular case, intelligence dispatches) from Węgrów 'County', apart from the topics discussed in "Correcting the Picture", earlier in this text.

Finally, I will refer to the opening quote from Professor Libionka: "In Domański's world" – writes Libionka – "there are no mistakes, errors, lack of diligence. Every act and omission must be accompanied by a perfidious intention" ("Response", p. 2). I do not know what Professor Libionka's conception was; however, the number of various errors should provoke some reflection. I am glad that Libionka has noticed some shortcomings I highlighted. He recognised in his response the need to establish cause and effect relationships between the facts and events, with care for details. Because it is often in the details where the circumstances behind people's choices can be found. I am also glad that Libionka has admitted that at least some of his statements were inappropriate and that he would modify them in the monograph on "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski"). After all, it is not about merely providing details but about giving a historic account reflecting the time's actual reality.

A detailed response to the remarks of Doctor Alina Skibińska

In her response to "Correcting the Picture", Alina Skibińska pointed to several issues of a general nature. I have already discussed the right to choose the geographic areas for the research or the concept of the existence of the 'German-Polish'

administration in the opening section. At this point, I would like to focus on yet another general objection against the setting of thematic accents in analyses of individual counties. Skibińska notices the disproportions identified by me but dubiously justifies the adopted arrangement by the “course of the liquidation operations”. These disproportions, called a “false accusation”, are unimportant to her because “it surely wasn’t our intention to present a full picture of the Holocaust” (“Response”, p. 2). What, then, was the intention of the authors of the book given the sub-heading: *The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland*, vols 1–2 (*Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, t. 1–2)? This is expressly explained by the authors of the “Foreword”, calling the Jewish survival strategies during the Holocaust their “main research objective”. The title itself and another declared objective of the book (“recreation of the fate of whole Jewish communities”) is the cause of another objection in “Correcting the Picture” – an absence of in-depth analysis of the situation of Jews in the years 1939–1941/42, manifesting itself in failure to describe internal relations within the community and contacts with ‘local’ people. The disproportions mentioned above may give a false perspective on the Holocaust. Hence, either the book’s objectives should be different, or the title should be more like “Jewish survival strategies on the ‘Aryan’ side”.

The issues mentioned above concerning ‘survival strategies’ correspond with yet another general problem highlighted by Skibińska in her response. On page two of the response, she made a rather laconic attempt to defend the central thesis of the book, expressed in the “Foreword”: “It was the time [1942–1945] when attitudes of Poles had an enormous impact on Jewish chances to survive” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 13). Let me say it once again: it was not the Poles who decided about the life and death of the Jews; it was the Germans. Every Holocaust researcher knows the arguments among German decision-makers concerning the fate of Jews in labour camps. One decision was all it took to have them all killed. It was not the Polish people who created “the German occupation system”, but the Germans. German authorities’ actions, the ‘law’ established, and their draconian enforcement shaped Poles’ attitudes towards the Jews. In other words, the thesis that attitudes of Polish society were the decisive factor conditioning the survival of the Jews is questionable, as it is based on two fundamental errors: it places both nations (the Poles and the Jews) in a time-and-space vacuum. It suggests that any external

circumstances did not hinder the actions of Poles. And the words contained in Skibińska's response: "[...] the accusation that the thesis is "questionable" would have to be proven, because our publication proves just the opposite' only confirm their detachment from the historical background.

Unfounded and offensive is the accusation that I had revealed the identity of a rape victim reported by Tema Wajnsztok. In my research, I never disclose any so-called sensitive data – and this is undoubtedly the case here. In my work at the Institute of National Remembrance, I often come across sensitive data in the preliminary surveys and job-related correspondence. I recommend that, before making serious accusations against me, Alina Skibińska first carefully reads her section of the book *Night without End* and then "Correcting the Picture". It would be most effective to juxtapose the two sections – Skibińska's words from the chapter "Biłgoraj County" ("Powiat biłgorajski") and my comment from "Correcting the Picture". The relevant paragraph of the collective work reads:

Such custodians for the survivor – Tema Wajnsztok of Frampol – were the women: Aniela Chmiel and her daughter, Janka, and a woman named Ducherka (Janina Sitarz). She shared with them the experience of unending hunger, cold, and fear. In her [Tema Wajnsztok's] story, we can find an encounter with a 'guerrilla raid' and a violent rape, hours spent motionless under a bed, stealing food from other people's fields, and everyday work together, sewing and cleaning. Tema was moving from one place to another, often changing her place of stay, but Chmielowa's house was always a safe harbour where she could return. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 323)

In "Correcting the Picture", I wrote:

This passage could benefit from greater precision since not all the situations mentioned here were experienced by Wajnsztok, as this narrative could suggest. In a detailed account of the facts, the author should inform the reader that this is a description of both the Jewish and Polish experiences. Indeed, the victim of the rape during the raid was not Tema, but a Polish girl. ("Correcting the Picture", p. 48)

It is clear from the context that I had not revealed the victim's personal details. Nor had I given any hints which could ensue such speculations. This 'Polish girl' could be any Polish girl Tema Wajnsztok had met or had heard about, as she kept changing her place of stay. Regrettably, the author herself, unthinkingly, disclosed the details of the victim, writing:

I wish to explain that I used an impersonal form fully consciously and deliberately, without revealing who had been raped. I consider such information sensitive data, and I am not sure if there are any living descendants of Janina Chmiel. Unfortunately, the reviewer pointed to that person, showing no consideration for this fact. ("Response", p. 3)

It could be hard to be more precise, entirely unnecessarily, too.

This case of using archived materials reminds me of the level of understanding of the case file from the trial of one of the subordinates of Lt Col Marian Sołtysiak, reflected in an article "Barabasz i Żydzi" ("Barabas and the Jews"), which Alina Skibińska co-authored with Professor Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. I engaged in polemics with the authors on that occasion. They quoted a section from the transcript of the interrogation of Edward Skrobot alias 'Wierny', in 1951. Skrobot claimed that he had been told by another Home Army officer, 2nd Lt. Czesław Łętowski alias 'Górnik' about an order issued by the Home Army Headquarters, "to liquidate all Jews, whether a Home Army member or hiding from the Germans".⁹⁸ Not only didn't Skibińska and Tokarska-Bakir notice the total non-credibility or even absurdity of this order, but they thought they were revealing "shocking details" from the history of the Home Army (AK) Headquarters.⁹⁹

Later in the response, Alina Skibińska strongly emphasises that she had no intention to diminish or ignore the context of the occupation in *Night without End*. Skibińska's assurance has been provoked by my comments on Florian Wójtowicz alias Listek's comments, presented by her. Wójtowicz's account, as presented in

⁹⁸ Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance Delegation in Kielce, District Court in Kilece (SWK), 128/48, Transcript of the interrogation of suspect Edward Skrobot, Kielce, 21 April 1951, p. 59v.

⁹⁹ A. Skibińska, J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Barabasz i Żydzi. Z historii oddziału AK 'Wybraniec'", *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 7 (2011), p. 80.

“Biłgoraj County” (“Powiat biłgorajski”), lacks a section where he compared or, actually, presented as equivalent to the poverty of the Jews from “Jankiel’s squad and the situation of the Peasants’ Battalions [*Bataliony Chłopskie* – BCh]”. My comment pertained to the ‘here and now’. But the ‘here and now’ of Skibińska, having cut out that piece from Wójtowicz’s recollections, obviously did not convey the BCh guerilla fighter’s message for posterity. In her response, Skibińska claimed that she had shortened the quotation only because, at that point, she had been focusing on the living conditions of Jews hiding in the woods (“Response”, p. 2). Skibińska’s argument doesn’t seem convincing. In the above-quoted sentence, she admits that the broader context is not that important to her. Later in her response, she assures that “concealing Polish misery” under the occupation was not her intention – she is not very convincing, either (“Response”, p. 2). Indeed, Skibińska did mention compulsory deliveries of agricultural produce in her chapter. On two occasions, she, in one sentence, explains that the evasion of that ‘obligation’ was punishable by sentencing to a labour camp. However, on the same occasion Skibińska, for instance, claims:

When talking about restrictions, obligations and prohibitions, one must not forget that tributes, repressions, curfew, labour obligations, imposed levies and registration of livestock (animal ringing) applied not only to Jews but the whole population of an invaded country, although, in the case of Jews, these restrictions were more severe, oppressive and economically devastating. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 211)

This statement is true about the years 1939–1941. However, she did not put the book’s main period, namely the years 1942–1944/45, in a similar perspective.

To finish my response to Dr Skibińska, I will take at face value her declarations to account for the issues suggested by me in her subsequent research (“Response”, p. 2).

A detailed response to the remarks of Professor Barbara Engelking

In her response to “Correcting the Picture”, Professor Barbara Engelking did not address most of my numerous objections concerning the analysis of source material. However, she did refer to the language of the arguments *ad personam*. Questions, which she describes as “non-substantive”, are left unanswered. These are questions about abbreviations of documents, distorting their sense (the most

obvious example being the recommendations of Reinhard Heydrich dated 29 June 1941 for the Einsatzgruppen operating in the East), unprecedented in research work, ignoring the existing literature or labelling all Polish peasants 'Holocaust volunteers' in her earlier research.¹⁰⁰

Now and then, in her love for irony, Professor Engelking seems to deprecate the efforts of people saving Jews. She writes:

For me, fascinating is also the discussion on self-help and mutual help among Jews: after all, it was not that all Jews were hiding in closets, and each had two or more Poles working their tails off and attending them. There were many Jews who had been perfectly managing on their own and helping others – provided that no one had interfered... ("Response", p. 3)

The discussion about self-help (mutual help) among Jews is, naturally, exciting and vital. Still, it should be conducted with respect for the source material and consideration for the specificity of individual stages of the Holocaust. After all, the chances for self-help differed considerably in closed and open (provincial) ghettos; they differed even more in the villages until the final stage of the Holocaust – ghettos had not been formed – and in the period of operation of the Judenjagd.

However, Professor Engelking did respond to two problems that she considered "the basis for substantive discussion": the difference between helping Jews and saving Jews, and fear as a moral category. The author broadly discussed various sorts of help. However, she sums up all her conclusions in a single sentence: "saving" is a much broader term as not all extended help meant 'saving'" ("Response", p. 1). I still believe that any form of helping Jews, particularly at the third stage of the Holocaust, was equivalent to saving lives and involved putting the helper's and their family's life at risk. The occupation context is crucial here. Engelking's deliberations in her response ("Response", pp. 2–3) only obscure the picture instead of clarifying it. It should be repeated and emphasised that any form of helping Jews, despite the risk of punishment by death, which prolonged life, was saving this life.

¹⁰⁰ B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień... Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warszawa, 2011), p. 257.

Moreover, Professor Engelking's reflections on 'fear' can hardly be considered revealing ("Response", pp. 4–5). I wish to add here that every researcher dealing with the Second World War, not only in the context of the Holocaust, is faced with complicated issues of fear, heroism, and wickedness. I agree with the author that fear does not justify destructive acts against Jews or representatives of other nations, such as murders, blackmail, or pillage. Although fear is not an excuse, it does explain many situations. A historian has to provide a substantive explanation of past events, accounting for the context in which they were taking place. I also hope that the need for an in-depth analysis of mechanisms affecting mutual behaviours/attitudes of Poles and Jews during the German occupation that she mentions will not be a mere declaration on her part.

A detailed response to the remarks of Karolina Panz

Karolina Panz, in a surprising way, deprecates substantive guidelines as manifestations of lack of refinement, concluding her disquisition in the following way: "I shall pass with silence over the level of propriety emanating from this comment [...]" ("Response", p. 1). She is not able to justify her quasi-literary and not-so-scholarly descriptions.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, she attempts – distant from the principles of substantive discussion – to deprecate the reviewer:

I do not know what language Domański will use to describe it [the Holocaust], as he has not published any major work on the subject so far. Before he decides on his language, I recommend familiarising himself with the long-going scholarly debate on how to talk about the Holocaust. ("Response", p. 2)

My answer to this must be the same as to the authors mentioned above: my scholarly work on the German occupation is available; one can easily become acquainted with it. I am also open to discussing critical reviews. I am convinced

¹⁰¹ This is how Karolina Panz 'deals with' serious research problems: "In each of the places Poles witnessed the death of the Jews they had known – they heard their screaming, touched their corpses, and smelled their death. It left no one indifferent. To no one, were these victims distant or anonymous. In the subsequent stage of the Holocaust, the attitudes of these people, Polish witnesses, were crucial for Jews trying to save their lives" (vol. 2, p. 275).

that a historian should write about the object of their research interests in a subject-matter style, following the principles of research methodology, without resorting to emotional figures of speech.¹⁰²

In detailed comments, I shall first address the thesis on the Poles' attitude as a factor decisive for 'survivorship' of the Holocaust. Panz categorically elaborated on it on several occasions in "Nowy Targ County" "Powiat nowotarski". Indeed, the horror of the German occupation deserves more gravity and maturity. Panz talks about it as if she was completely unaware of the reality of the time and place: "In the first weeks after the operation, Jews were killed not only due to organised round-ups and individual denunciations. Frequently, simple lack of help from the Poles, out of fear or indifference, was enough to lead to death by starvation or the cold" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 291). Does fear for one's life and the life of the family caused by the German announcement of the death punishment for any help to Jews mean nothing to the author? Panz continues in a similar tone in subsequent passages of *Night without End*: "Even saving the most helpless Jewish children was unacceptable for people around" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 344). This shocking sentence is a part of the author's comment preceding recollections of a Jewish girl, Roza Rawid:

In the first months of my stay there, I would go out and play with other children, but after the German announcements about the death penalty for hiding Jews, other people from the townhouse did not want me there. From that moment on, I was hiding. When someone came, I used to hide under the bed, and when a visitor was staying longer, I stayed in a small attic.

The juxtaposition of the source material with the author's commentary leads to an obvious conclusion that, in this way, Panz shifts the responsibility for the death of Jews from the German occupation authorities imposing murderous 'laws' upon the local people. This shift is detached from reality but, most importantly, is simply unfair towards the people living under pressure of the occupation and omnipresent

¹⁰² I encourage the author to become acquainted with the following publications: T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2011); *'I nie widziałem ich więcej wśród żywych...'. Pacyfikacja Michniowa 12 i 13 lipca 1943 r. w dokumentach i relacjach*, preface and ed. T. Domański (Kraków, 2013).

terror. This is where the historical analysis lacks the link with the impact of the General Governorate's occupation reality upon some people's attitudes. Panz provides verbatim quotations of the German announcements about the death punishment for helping Jews, but now and then, she fails to account for them in her comments. Nevertheless, at their discretion, German authorities could administer the death penalty regardless of the age of a Jew or the form of help. Being a historian dealing with the Second World War, I would never dare to judge people's choices in such dramatic circumstances and create an opposition: 'my life' vs 'your life'. Moreover, it does not matter whether I am writing about Poles helpless in the face of murders committed on other Poles, Poles powerless in the face of murders committed on Jews, or Jews helpless in the face of murders committed on other Jews – as such situations equally occurred every day during the period in question.

Karolina Panz does recognise that "Fear of repressive measures was justified – punishments for helping Jews were administered in Kreis Neumarkt promptly and mercilessly" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 344). The author does not notice that what she disrespectfully states in one sentence contradicts what she writes in another. This is what my comment from "Correcting the Picture" (p. 31) referred to. It is hard to grasp Panz's understanding of the occupation since, in one paragraph, she can include two contradictory statements.

Her deliberations are sometimes truly astonishing in this respect. She writes:

'The Final Solution' took place in front of Polish residents of cities, towns, and villages of Nowy Targ county, who often watched the fate of their Jewish neighbours with terror and sympathy. Nevertheless, following German orders, local governments organised horse wagons [*podwoły*] and gravediggers, put up German announcements, and looked after and allocated abandoned Jewish houses. Heads of the villages arranged groups of peasants to make thorough inspections of the woods, and they did it dutifully. Therefore, from among hundreds of Jews trying to survive in their familiar neighbourhoods, so very few had managed to survive. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 343)

Simplifications contained in such a presentation are very far-reaching. After all, the same 'local governments' in the same way obeyed the orders given throughout

the GG and applied to Poles. Had the author carried out a more in-depth analysis of the region's history, she would have seen the instances where Polish villagers had been sent under supervision to search for Polish peasants hiding from Germans in the mountains. As a result of focusing principally on the Jewish community alone, the context had been entirely ignored. It is a similar perception of reality as in the case of Jean-Charles Szurek, which I mention in "Correcting the Picture".

Nevertheless, in her response, Panz firmly claims that she had perfectly explained the complexity of the occupation: "I write about repressive actions, fear, dilemmas and dramatic choices made by people who did help and those who did not. Therefore, I do not know why the author of "Correcting the Picture" claims that I have not done so" ("Response", p. 2). I hope that the explanations provided in my response will help Panz to understand the internal contradictions in her discourse.

Another example illustrating the distortion of the historical context presented directly in the source material, resulting from focusing, in principle, on the Jewish issue alone, is the account of Roman Dattner speaking about the situation of the Jews in Zakopane. Panz quotes: "Courses for Ukrainians were held at that time [...], they were telling what Krüger had been doing to the Jewish people in Zakopane" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 236, p. 113). Seemingly, it is just a statement of fact. And the omitted part of the sentence reads: "Courses for Ukrainians were held at that time. They were trained to be future executioners of Jewish and Polish people and those Jewish craftsmen [...] ¹⁰³ were telling what Krüger had been doing to Jewish people in Zakopane".¹⁰⁴ Another nuance that can lead to a conclusion that Dattner was aware that German violence was directed not only against Jews but also against Poles is left out. The quoted sentence would not fit in with a biased picture of the Polish community created in "Nowy Targ County" ("Powiat nowotarski"). After analysing the passages mentioned above, one of the research declarations made by Panz sounds truly ironic: "The reality I describe is the reality I saw in the source material" („Response", p. 3).

Such emphatic advancements of Panz's thesis make it worth confronting the accounts given by Jews who survived. Like Chana Windstrauch (Panz makes

¹⁰³ Their names are given in the passage.

¹⁰⁴ AŻIH, 301/3272, Account by Roman Dattner, Cracow, 2 July 1947, TS, p. 1.

extensive use of her diary), those seeking help were usually critical of the Poles who, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, participated in anti-Jewish operations (catching, denunciation). However, Windstrauch pointed to the objective external circumstances compelling people to behave as expected by the occupation authorities: “We decided we would go through the forests and fields at night, to Łętownia, to some peasants we knew. We approach one of them, and another, and then another. They all refuse to put us up for the night; they say they fear the Germans. – What are we going to do now? Tired, hungry, homeless, chased – you won’t believe it unless you have experienced it”.¹⁰⁵ They were eventually helped by another peasant who was “shaking with fear. Nevertheless, they had to leave because “a more stringent order [it should have been: announcement] was put up that day that any family hiding a Jew will be punished by death”.¹⁰⁶ Panz omits such details. Why?

A different approach is adopted by Panz when she describes the actions of some representatives of the Jewish community. Let us analyse the displacement of Jews from Jordanów. This act of the Holocaust was preceded by the demand to pay a tribute which – as the author aptly points out – was common in such operations in the GG. When presenting these dramatic events, Panz refers to the account by Ozjasz Szachner, who recollects:

I saw it in Lviv that one day before the operation, the Germans demanded a tribute to be paid by the Lviv Jews, and the next day Jews were being murdered on the streets or taken outside the city and murdered, and I warned them not to pay the tribute, that it was *schitegeld*, that they should instead use the money to build hide-outs or run away from the town. A chairman of the Judenrat, Erwin Kögel, agreed with me [...] and hid in the woods, while deputy chairman, Kappner, argued that we had nothing to fear [...] and we should just pay the tribute. I did not trust the Germans and hid my whole family, my father, sister, sister-in-law and two children, in the woods. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 278)

¹⁰⁵ AYV, O.3/2300, Account by Chana Windstrauch, Tel-Aviv, January 1964, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The details of the displacement operation are quite different if we take under consideration the full version of the account by Szachner.¹⁰⁷ In the version quoted by Panz, the passages about gathering the money to pay the tribute are not included. Neither are the words presenting a broader picture of the attitude of the chairman of the Judenrat as a representative of the Jews at the moment decisive for the Jewish community of Jordanów. Panz actually does not clarify whether the tribute was paid or not.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Szachner was very precise about that. From what he says, we learn how dramatic an attempt to survive this tribute was. It was paid in the hope that the displacement would be abandoned or, at least, postponed. At the same time, it was a considerable material loss, as the money could have been used to prepare hide-outs. He was leaving out the words “who left the town immediately” totally changed the meaning of Kögel’s attitude description. According to Szachner, the chairman of the Judenrat abandoned the Jews as soon as he had received reliable information about the planned displacement, which took place a few days later. At the same time, other members of the Judenrat forced the Jews to pay the tribute. Isn’t that relevant for drawing conclusions on the occupation reality or personal motives of some representatives of the Jewish elites? These complex and difficult behaviours are not different from the reality elsewhere in the GG, where ‘new elites’ were being formed.

I have been extremely surprised by the argumentation presented by Panz, insistently claiming that there were no elites in Kreis Neumarkt. Analysing her arguments, one may arrive at a regrettable conclusion that Panz cannot define what

¹⁰⁷ “I had seen it in Lviv, that one day before the operation, the Germans demanded tribute to be paid by the Lviv Jews and the next day Jews were being murdered on the streets or taken outside the city and murdered, and I warned them not to pay the tribute, that it was ‘*schitegeld*’, that they should rather use the money to build hide-outs and run away from the town. A chairman of the Judenrat, Erwin Kögel, agreed with me, a very decent man, who abandoned the town immediately and hid in the woods, while deputy chairman, Kappner, argued that we had nothing to fear [...] and we should just pay the tribute. I did not trust the Germans and hid my whole family, father, sister, sister-in-law, and two children in the woods. I, myself, continued to go to work. The Judenrat imposed the tribute on all the Jews, and even the poorest gave away whatever they had and were left with nothing. I remained in the town to organise everything for my folks in the hide-out. The tribute was paid on Thursday”, AŻIH, 301/3453, Account by Ozjasz Szachner, Cracow, [no date], pp. 1–2.

¹⁰⁸ The sentence following the quotation does not explain anything: ‘He [a blue policeman] called him when Furman walked by his post (the man was returning from Nowy Targ where during the whole night he had sorted money before taking the tribute to the bank)’, *Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 278.

elites in a given community were or are. 'Elitism' is quite a complex phenomenon. Being a member of the elite does not have to be related to "making a fortune" or social background („Response", p. 3). In the occupation's reality, because this is what we are talking about, Judenrat members' social background was of little importance. Important was the very membership in this body ('new elites'), artificially created by the Germans, which was supposed to represent the Jews and, most importantly, serve as an intermediary in forcing them to obey various orders and regulations. These people were forced to assume responsibility for the lives of their fellow men. Hence, they were becoming the 'new elite', a 'new leading class', because of their performed function. Was it not the reason why in the post-war 'settling of accounts' attention was paid to the functioning of the Judenrats and the level of their submissiveness to the Germans? I doubt that anyone could deny, as Panz suggests in her response by claiming that there were no new elites, that Kögel or Kappner had been the elite of this community. They had been. This view is also present in the accounts given by the survivors mentioned above. In the context of the displacement of Jews from Jordanów, Chana Windstrauch recollected:

The Chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) E[rwin] Koegel did a runner that day for good. Moreover, his deputy, Kap[p]ner, returned that day from Nowy Targ and assured people that nothing bad would happen in Jordanów and that the tribute was duly paid. The tribute imposed on our family was five thousand zlotys, and we had no money to pay. Dearest Iziek gave away his beautiful golden Schaffhausen.¹⁰⁹

It is clear from the tone of Windstrauch's words that she saw the members of the local Judenrat as leaders. Otherwise, she would not have written that the chairman "had done a runner", as this phrase has strong negative connotations. In this particular reality, 'did a runner' simply means 'he left' or 'he abandoned' the town. Later, Windstrauch emphasises, as Szachner did, the role played by the Judenrat member, Kappner, in convincing the Jewish community that the tribute had to be paid. Had the Judenrat not been trusted by Jews and, on the other hand,

¹⁰⁹ AYV, O.3/2300, Account by Chana Windstrauch, Tel-Aviv, January 1964, p. 26.

had it not felt responsible for the fate of Jews, would they have engaged in actions that they believed could save their fellow men?

Let me quote Roman Dattner to sum up my conclusions on that issue:

In 1940, [in Rabka], after Krüger's arrival, the Germans ordered the organisation of the Judenrat comprised of 12 members. The Judenrat was to act as an intermediary between the Germans and the Jewish community. A liaison between the Judenrat and the Germans was Jakób Beck, a baker, a character the Gestapo officers brought with them from Zakopane.¹¹⁰

This man (killed in 1943 in Cracow by the Germans) was a known collaborator of the Germans, helping them steal Jewish property. Some of Beck's actions are also mentioned by Panz. However, she does not note his 'privileged' position. She cannot see that Beck's 'social advancement' in the new occupation reality substantially contradicts the opinion she so diligently tried to prove. As follows from Stefan Blasberg's account,¹¹¹ Beck was not the only Jew in Rabka who demonstrated such behaviour. The similarity between Beck's fate and choices in Rabka and those of Zwerdling in Złoczów is quite astonishing. Fortunately, Anna Zapalec does not question the existence of such 'new Jewish elites'.

Karolina Panz also argues that "Representatives of the local intellectual elites [this refers to the Jews from the Kreis Neumarkt area] – including a few doctors and lawyers – fled to the East when the Germans were coming and remained there under the Soviet occupation" ("Response", p. 3). Obviously, the author is correct that they had fled, but did they all do it? Panz must have forgotten what she wrote based on Dattner's account. One of the persons tortured by Wilhelm Rosenbaum in Zakopane was ... "a lawyer from Zakopane" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 236). Ignoring one's findings to get the right 'effect' is rather depressing.

In her attempts to prove there were no Jewish elites in Kreis Neumarkt, Panz also writes: "The Judenrats were formed by the same petty merchants and craftsmen, who were members of pre-war kahals" ("Response", p. 3). These "petty merchants

¹¹⁰ AŻIH, 301/3272, Account by Roman Dattner, TS, Cracow, 2 July 1947, p. 1.

¹¹¹ AŻIH, 301/221, Account by Stefan Blasberg, Sosno[wiec?], 3 June 1945, p. 2.

and craftsmen” forming the Judenrats – councils administrating Jewish communities – automatically became the managing class, the ‘new elite’ which could have little in common with the concept of ‘elitism’ as understood before September 1939. Perhaps the elite’s issue was not very noticeable in the county in question, yet their formation mechanism is typical.

Elsewhere in her response, Karolina Panz accuses me of forming mutually contradictory opinions: “In one review, Domański, on the one hand, claims we had a ‘pre-assumed thesis on Polish complicity’ (“Response”, p. 4), and, on the other, that we had ‘on principle, focused exclusively on the fate of Jewish victims’ (*ibid.*)”. Then Panz attempts to prove that she had never used the term ‘complicity’. Naturally, there was also an empty platitude in the form of an accusation that I (as well as my colleagues from the Institute of National Remembrance) defend the “myth of an innocent Poland” (*ibid.*). Repeating the platitudes, the author has not explained what she meant by “the myth of an innocent Poland” – whether she referred to the Polish state or the Polish people. The Polish state is clearly not responsible for the crimes committed by the German occupation authorities (now and then, the authors seem to be unaware of that – *vide* Jan Grabowski) and how the occupied people were used. Individual responsibility rests with those Polish citizens who, for whatever reason – whether as an official of German police-like forces or as intentional informers and sometimes even murderers – acted against Jews, Poles, or Roma people. No one is trying to deny the facts. I may refer Panz to my article in *Polish-Jewish Studies* (which will be published soon) on the crimes against Jews committed by the PP members from Wodzisław and a farmer from the same village. Having first deprived Jews of their property, they subsequently caused their death. An unbiased reading of the Institute of National Remembrance’s publications is undoubtedly better than repeating *de facto* political slogans slandering the Institute and its employees. I have defended professionalism in historical research, and I always will. In “Correcting the Picture” and the present response, I have pointed out numerous areas that need to be corrected before it could be said that the presented picture is the effect of diligent and rigorous research.

But at this point, I would like to explain that the section about “focusing, in principle, on the fate of the Jews”, is a classic example of taking the words out of context. In „Correcting the Picture”, I repeated the authors’ declarations made

in *Night without End*, pointing out that its presentation may be oversimplified when the problem is narrowed down to this single aspect. No one can – or at least should – deny that the major part of the book (if not most of it) is devoted to the fate of Jews in the Polish-Jewish context. Hence, it is somewhat problematic for me to explain to Panz the “thesis on complicity”. The assurance that the authors did not use the term only proves her problems with understanding the main theses and the perception of the book that Panz had co-authored. I have discussed this in detail in “Correcting the Picture”. I suggest looking close into how the Polnische Polizei and other ‘Polish’ formations are described in *Night without End*. Or one may limit oneself to reading the last sentence on the fourth page of the cover of the said book.

A detailed response to the remarks of Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska

I have discussed the general observations of Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska in the introductory part. One of the major issues addressed in her detailed comments is the Polnische Polizei. In her clarifications, the author defends her description and explains:

I cannot agree with the reviewer’s impression that the authors claim and suggest that the Polish Police during the occupation was “a Polish state structure independent of the Germans” ([“Correcting the Picture”], p. 10). For a reader with some knowledge about the Second World War, it is evident that the Polish Police or rather Polnische Polizei, was formed to pursue goals and follow orders of the German occupation authorities. However, the reality was not as simple as Tomasz Domański sees it. (“Response”, p. 2)

I must explain here that I see a highly complex reality, free of simplifications and distortions. In one of my articles, I have shown that, e.g. in Kielce county, nearly 80 per cent of PP officials were pre-war state police officers. Moreover, over half of them (51.78 per cent) served in the police for more than ten years.¹¹²

¹¹² T. Domański, “Policja granatowa w Kielcach i powiecie kieleckim w latach 1939–1945”, in *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warszawa, 2019), pp. 125–126.

Hence, these were experienced policemen, familiar with the 'routines', which is crucial in this service. I agree with the author, and I have also proved it, that not all PP officials were equally committed to participating in anti-Polish or anti-Jewish actions. Hence, naturally, there have been and will be questions about the reasons for active involvement in performing German orders. Therefore, an in-depth and thorough analysis of this occupational milieu would be required in terms of social background and unique features. Such a 'research questionnaire' would be helpful to determine certain common elements which could substantiate a thesis on the reasons for subordination, or perhaps non-subordination, in implementing German policy.¹¹³ I do agree with Swałtek-Niewińska on yet another issue. The 'Germanness' of the Polnische Polizei, that is to say, the placement of this formation in the occupation structures and the degree of its subordination to the German authorities and implementation of the German goals, does seem a bit vague. A PP policeman spoke Polish; often, he would be a pre-war policeman who people knew personally, working in the same building as before the war. No wonder that PP policemen were often treated as being 'ours' ("Response", p. 5).

I am happy that Swałtek-Niewińska has noticed the complexity of the PP's functioning. Still, the elements mentioned above are the only common points in my and hers (and the other authors' of *Night without End*) understanding of the realities of the Polnische Polizei's functioning. There are many examples in "Bochnia County" ("Powiat bocheński") and elsewhere in *Night without End*, where events involving PP policemen are interpreted as if the author was not aware of these realities. Moreover, Swałtek-Niewińska attributes the following statement to me: "the analysis of operations of Polish policemen is irrelevant in the context of our knowledge about the involvement of some Poles in killing Jews" ("Response", p. 3).

I have not written anything like that. It is evident to any researcher dealing with the occupation that persecution of the Jews with the involvement of the PP (including in displacement operations, round-ups, or executions) happened

¹¹³ Important findings on the operation of the Polnische Polizei, its members and structures, and its position within the German occupation system, can be found in the Institute of National Remembrance's collective publication mentioned in the preceding footnote.

everywhere in the GG where the Polnische Polizei existed. It was one of the tasks assigned to the formation by the occupation authorities, just like various persecutions of native Poles. My, allegedly erroneous, approach to the description of the PP in *Night without End* is supposedly manifested in the description of the murder of the Fragner family. Swałek-Niewińska writes in “Bochnia County” (“Powiat bocheński”): “But when the Polish Police and German Gendarmerie was called to the captured [Jews], they were executed in the nearby forest, field or cemetery, without sending to a ghetto” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 571). Only, in such a presentation of events – as I pointed out in “Correcting the Picture” – the Polnische Polizei (or, according to the authors of *Night without End*, ‘the Polish Police’) is not a German formation made up of Poles (as it was, in fact, the case and what, as they insistently claim to be in their response to “Correcting the Picture”, the authors have indeed meant), but a different formation acting side by side with the German Gendarmerie. The official separation of the two formations assumed in this narrative is evidenced by the following sentence – a quotation from Antoni Łucki. The author accurately quotes the witness describing the Fragner family’s shooting by the “blue police assisted by one German”. Another witness’s account (Mieczysław Ledóchowski) saying that two German policemen killed the Fragner family from Bochnia (*ibid.*, p. 572) is irrelevant to the discussion. After all, Ledóchowski’s words have nothing to do with the issue of official subordination (or autonomy) of the PP police officers and only state a simple fact. However, Swałek-Niewińska does not say which version of the story about the murder of the Fragner family is more credible to her. She leaves it for the reader to decide.

Having analysed the court files concerning the murder of the Fragner family, used by the author, I feel embarrassed at the interpretation of these facts given in the book (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 572). Perhaps other sources could negate or confirm my conclusions, but the issue of the denunciation of this family is rather apparent. The investigation did not prove in any way that Olga K. turned in the people who could be in the future her parents-in-law because, in the light of these materials, she was helping them considerably. It is most likely that the person who had triggered the events was a farmer from the village of Muchówka, who was hiding the Fragner family, and the reason was that he feared the death penalty for helping Jews. Olga K. testified:

As far as I know, B.¹¹⁴ had been hiding the Fragner family for a v[ery] short time, just three days. He had not kept them longer because the Germans put up announcements reading that people who were hiding Jews would be punished by death, and so he, out of fear, told them to go away. In the morning, the said farmer let them out from their hide-out and the Fragner family, that is Fragner, Izajasz, his wife Franciszka and her sister named Wiselman, went towards the woods in the direction of Rajbrot. Later I was told by people whose names I don't remember that local people attacked the Fragner family, robbed them of all their valuables, and took them to the state police [Polnische Polizei] station in Lipnica Murowana, where a German gendarme shot them at Lipnica cemetery.¹¹⁵

The same B. was named as the perpetrator, in the same circumstances, by another witness, Władysław Mikulski.¹¹⁶

According to Swałtek-Niewińska, I raise the case on the Baudienst presented in *Night without End* in a sensational tone. I can even notice a pattern here. Swałtek-Niewińska and the other authors perceive my critical remarks concerning their book as a sign of the reviewer's "excitation" and "sensational tone". I should be happy that Swałtek-Niewińska provided information about the death punishment for fleeing from the Baudienst. Indeed, the problem of the Baudienst is considerably more concealed in the texts by Tomasz Frydel and Dariusz Libionka. I have devoted a long passage in that section of "Correcting the Picture" to Libionka's description in his "Miechów County" ("Powiat miechowski") chapter. I suggest that Swałtek-Niewińska should read the relevant sections of Professor Libionka's writings because I still believe that it is a distortion of history to present the Junaks forced to participate in the Holocaust operations nearly as autonomous actions ("Correcting the Picture", p. 14).

¹¹⁴ No farmer named B. from the village had ever admitted to the MO (People's Militia) that he had hidden Jews. See: AIPN Kr, Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie (Court of Appeal in Cracow), 1940–1945, 502/3569, Letter of the chief of the MO station in Nowy Wiśnicz to the Prosecutor's Office in Cracow, Branch Office in Bochnia, dated 11 October 1948, p. 27.

¹¹⁵ AIPN Kr, 502/3569, Minutes of the interrogation of suspect Olga K., Gliwice, 2 September 1948, p. 11v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of witness Władysław Mikulski, Bochnia, 2 September 1948, p. 31v.

Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska also accuses me of “making every effort to find manipulation”, which “is a general characteristic” of my text (“Response”, p. 6). Once again, there had to be remarked that I had been driven by “emotions” – this time of a “journalistic” nature. Let us carefully analyse the piece where I am supposedly making every effort to find manipulation. I pointed out that, in the description of a displacement of the Jews from Niepołomice, in August 1942, Swałtek-Niewińska omitted from the quoted account given by Anna Steinberg the information on JOD officials taking part in the operation. I wrote in the footnote that this was the only place in the book where the author referred to the Steinberg account archived in Yad Vashem. In other cases, she only provides the reference number of the account from the Jewish Historical Institute (ŻIH) (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 575; “Correcting the Picture”, p. 58). Such presentation of the source clearly suggests that two different accounts given by the same person existed, which would not be unusual. But, in fact, we have one account having different reference numbers in different archives. It’s a shame that Swałtek-Niewińska did not account for these doubts in the book.

Given the above, one can only guess. Perhaps the author wanted to ‘gild the lily’ of the scope of the preliminary survey performed, or maybe she had other reasons, like trying to omit the information on JOD’s involvement in the displacement operation? Or maybe it was about Steinberg’s words: “The Jewish militia did not insist on people to move on” (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 58)? This statement means that there must have been situations where the “Jewish militia” was more active. Many survivors talk about this, but these testimonies, showing the genuinely complicated reality of the time, have been frequently omitted in *Night without End*.

Swałtek-Niewińska provided some explanations for her quoting Anna Steinberg in response to “Correcting the Picture”. It appears that the researcher was not interested in the situation of the Jews as a whole because “the main figure described on the occasion of the Niepołomice displacement operation was the Ratajczak mentioned above” („Response”, p. 6). As she puts it: “I am not referring in this sentence to the behaviours of other policemen and their involvement in the deportation taking place there” (*ibid.*). One can get the impression that the author is unsure what the book’s main subject is. It seems that the discussion on Jews being displaced from Niepołomice should focus on that community and not on this or that policeman, regardless of their behaviour. Here, particularly surpris-

ing is the authors' statement that any attempt to interpret the book in the context of Polish-Jewish relations is incorrect:

Naturally, as a reader, he [i.e. Domański] may find this theme the most interesting or the most important, but it is worth remembering that this is not a book about Polish-Jewish relations or Polish attitudes towards Jews, and even less so an attempt to give a complete picture of the occupation reality. ("Response", p. 4)

What is, then, the main subject of the book? What is its pivot? Swałtek-Niewińska's words prove that the remarks from the review on her ignoring the occupation context or the choices made by some Jews – the choices negatively perceived by other Jews – are correct. Since the author herself admits that she intentionally omitted the JOD's involvement in the displacement operation in Niepołomice and focused only on the role of the local 'Polish police' chief, Ratajczak, what else, if not the Polish-Jewish relations, comes to the foreground?

As for other detailed remarks, Swałtek-Niewińska did not comment on the trial of a policeman named Filipowski, discussed by me in "Correcting the Picture". I still do not know what source material was the basis for her opinion that he killed a Jew in Zabierzów because, indeed, such conclusions cannot be drawn from the case file. The Filipowski case is also clearly contradictory to the final declarations made by Swałtek-Niewińska: "I have not found in this extensive text ["Correcting the Picture"] any substantial guidelines or corrections of sources or methodology used" ("Response", p. 6). These words of Swałtek-Niewińska are like repeating empty phrases that have little to do with reality. It is hard to find a better example of specific methodological guidelines than the Filipowski case comments.

I could continue by paraphrasing the author's words: I am embarrassed seeing how inattentively Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska has read my review and her own book. The author attempts to prove that she has extensively described the issue of smuggling food to the ghettos, which I postulated in my review. She even provided the page numbers. On this occasion, she also referred to the basic principle of academic research: the choice and selection of archived material ("Response", p. 5). So, she has seemingly proved that the author of the "composition" [i.e. the reviewer] is biased and "picks on her" for no reason. Let us, therefore, return to the

sections of “Bochnia County” (“Powiat bocheński”). On pages 534–537, Swałtek-Niewińska talks about the relocations of Jews to the county, the establishment of ghettos in the county, and the functioning of Jews in locations where ghettos were not organised until 1942. Indeed, the author does mention one instance, the village of Turek, where local people reacted positively to the arrival of the Jews. And that’s it. We have not learned anything more. She does not discuss the Christian population’s attitudes in other places, although numerous questions can be asked: What were these positive reactions? Was it giving food or medicines? Offering free accommodations?

And I wouldn’t call her description of food smuggling extensive since she only devoted the two sentences to the issue:

In the case of Romek Marber’s family, maintaining the pre-war acquaintance with a Catholic neighbour from Turek, also relocated to Bochnia, proved extremely important. After the ghetto was established, together with Romek Marber’s grandfather, he smuggled goods between the Jewish district and the rest of the town. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, pp. 534–535)

The researcher did not elaborate on the theme and did not try to analyse whether this was an isolated case or rather an element of a broader phenomenon that considerably affected the Jews’ chances for survival. In “Correcting the Picture”, I wrote more about the subject. Using the source material not used by Swałtek-Niewińska, I demonstrated that the actions of the two men from Bochnia, Marian Rotkopf and Jan Lorek, gave reasons to believe that there could have been more (unknown by name) people involved in the smuggling than just an acquaintance of Romek Marber. A lot depended on the Jewish side as the most interested in obtaining food or medications. It would perfectly fit in with the methodological approach of *Night without End*, where the authors quite strongly highlight self-reliance and the self-organisation of Jews. The theme of Marber has been cut short by Swałtek-Niewińska, who stated in the following sentence:

But, in most cases, the financial situation of people displaced from the areas incorporated into the Third Reich was bad because they were brutally torn away

from their places of work and sources of income. The Jewish Social Mutual Help organisation made considerable efforts to help the newly arriving Jews in the county towns. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 535)

Finally, I would like to respond to one more comment of Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska: “But I am certain that the review will be used as a tool in contemporary journalist and political discussion” (“Response”, p. 6). Well, many scholarly publications stir up discussion. It is vital that all judgements and opinions, particularly of a journalist nature, are formulated with respect for diligence and truth and not meant just to discredit the reviewer who has dared to disagree with the authors.

A detailed response to the remarks of Tomasz Frydel

I will start my response to Tomasz Frydel with something he considers a “trifling mistake”. It is a perfect exemplification of this author’s model of thinking and argumentation as well as the other ones. They call minor or trifling mistakes all identified errors (but also manipulations and distortions). I naturally agree with the author that every researcher has the right to make mistakes (as we all do), but to confuse Selbstschutz with Sonderdienst is a severe substantive error. Selbstschutz and Sonderdienst, although both comprised of representatives of the German minority in Poland, are considerably different formations. The Selbstschutz was a paramilitary organisation established in 1939, based on a national socialist ideology dominated by hatred against the Poles and known for its bad reputation. Members of the Selbstschutz actively participated in and committed many crimes against their Polish neighbours from the first moments of the war. In contrast, the Sonderdienst was a police-like formation of Governor General Hans Frank, created after the occupation structures had become more firmly established.

Moving on to the point, Tomasz Frydel sees in my review “the crux of erroneous reasoning”:

For, he [i.e. Domański] adopts a dictionary (or common) definition of terms usually used in social history and then eagerly applies such literary sense, deprived of historiographical connotations, to the reviewed text and uses it as the foundation for his criticism. (“Response”, p. 4)

Unfortunately, the author does not specify which terms I have misinterpreted. I assume this also applies to the history of the Bäumer und Lösch camp. Regrettably, Frydel has not addressed any of my critical comments, namely calling a survival strategy any action aimed at saving one's own life, even *par excellence*, the betrayal of one's fellow man. I asked a fundamental question in my review, which Frydel fails or does not want to notice: did Jews kept in the said camp or hiding in the villages of Dębica county in 1944 understand and interpret the actions of Izaak Kaplan's group as a survival strategy? I stated rather clearly that Kaplan's contemporaries had a completely different perception (not to mention experience) than the one presented in Frydel's analysis. The 'dissonance' among various 'survival strategies' was probably the most noticeable to the Jewish community members. They, after the war, most categorically demanded the establishment of Community Courts and squaring accounts with the dark occupation history.¹¹⁷

The activities of Kaplan's group, or precisely the number of Jews captured and turned in by himself and his accomplices and then murdered by the Germans, have not significantly affected the content of the table titled 'Perpetrators and Circumstances of Death of Jewish Fugitives' drawn up by Frydel (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 450). I agree with the author that the exact data are not available, yet the author estimated the number of the group's victims at "dozens of people" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 510). However, it is surprising that due to the lack of detailed data, the author had ignored Kaplan's victims entirely in the figures concerning Jews hiding in villages and had not accounted for those data in his estimates. Failure to account for this information is a significant substantive error. A table is used not only to provide specific numbers, but it should also accurately reflect the facts: in the absence of exact numbers – estimates. In this situation, in the context of "own estimates based on gathered documentation", the total of 952 seems questionable. It can be assumed that more people were trying to survive but were eventually killed (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 452).

This unjustified interpretation of the occupation reality as "competing" survival strategies (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 509, 518) is also evidenced by the author's

¹¹⁷ A. Żbikowski, *Sąd Społeczny przy CKŻP. Wojenne rozliczenia społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce* (Warszawa, 2014), pp. 33–36.

omission of a more detailed account of the second liquidation operation of the Dębica ghetto. In his chapter, Frydel devoted two sentences to that event: “The Gestapo carried out the second liquidation operation in the ghetto on 15–16 December, with the help of the Immerglück and Order Service. Among people transported to the Bełżec death camp, there was the chairman of the Dębica Judenrat, Józef Taub, with his wife and two children” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 502). The ‘displacement’ operation’s dramatic details are found in the omitted section of Berl Stur’s account, whom the Job family later hid.

Sturm recalled:

On 15 December 1942, during the Dębica ghetto liquidation, I was hiding with my daughter, Anna Sturm, with a group of six people, in a bunker in the ghetto. At 6:00 am, two Jewish militiamen – Monek K. and Pulek G. from Dębica – came to say they had to reveal our bunker. My son, Izaak, who worked in the same building in a shoemaker’s workshop and was ‘legal’, cried before them, begging them not to do that, but to no avail. They told him to reveal the bunker. These two militiamen dragged all six of us out to the hall; my son had to go back to work in the workshop. The militiamen stood in front of me with long sticks in their hands. I begged K. to let me go to the workshop and say goodbye to my son, but he categorically refused. They led us to an empty field, in the direction of the hospital, where they executed people every night. As we walked there, Pulek G. went away to get other Jews. K. was leading us alone. It was at daybreak. The fog was so thick that one could hardly see another person. Then I decided to run away. I managed to run with my daughter to the woods, where someone robbed me of all my money.¹¹⁸

This passage, shocking but perfectly depicting the tragedy of those events, provokes another question about Frydel’s concept of “two competing survival strategies” being justified (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 511). ‘Competitiveness’ ended where the ‘strategies’ were mutually exclusive, when ‘the strategy’ of two Jewish policemen ‘leads to death’ – as it clearly follows from Sturm’s account – of

¹¹⁸ AŻIH, 301/4596, Account of Sturm Berl, [place unknown], 17 June 1946, TS, p. 1.

the 'strategy' of the Jews hidden in a bunker. Sturm – and the voice of this witness should be decisive – did not see any 'competitiveness' here, but a brutal fight for life, for another day, in the conditions created by the Germans. Sturm does not mention the Germans in his account. However, does it mean they were not there?

The omitted section of Sturm's account provokes further questions about the statistics provided on page 413 (*Night without End*, vol. 2) and the reliability of the author's phrase – "own estimates based on gathered documentation". It can be assumed from Sturm's account that eventually, some Jews were murdered during the second displacement. However, we don't know what Frydel's thoughts on that subject are.

Inaccurate are the author's comments – naturally spiced up with the accusation of my alleged ignorance. "Correcting the Picture" –

is an example of a fundamental lack of understanding of the discussion on the social dynamics and mechanisms of extreme violence in the community context, which is evidenced by the reviewer's knowledge or rather his lack of broader historiographical competences concerning the Holocaust. ("Response", p. 18)

Frydel writes: "In the sub-chapter concerned (and the chapter as a whole), I consistently apply the fundamental heuristic principle – empathy for all authors – both Poles and Jews, entangled in the hellish dynamics of the German occupation" ("Response", p. 7). Frydel is right when he emphasises the impact of the occupation conditions on human behaviours. Unfortunately, his final theses deny the facts and, most importantly, the logic of his arguments.

Moreover, they run against a properly conducted analysis. In his response, but most importantly, in his chapter, the author writes about terror, the death penalty, and pacifications for helping Jews and turning in or hunting for Jews by Polish villagers. He seems to recognise the complexity of the problem. He points to human action mechanisms and admits that Poles began to perceive Jews as a threat to their own, particularly collective, existence due to German repressive actions. Still, at the same time, he can trivialise the problem, contradicting his argumentation. According to Frydel, the fundamental source of Poles turning in Jews was Polish anti-Semitism: "Deep changes in social relations consequent upon extreme

terror could only enhance (or trigger) anti-Semitism existing since pre-war times” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 476), and exclusion of the Jews “from the Polish nation’s *universum* of its moral obligations”. A Jewish life, as Frydel argues, was interesting for Polish neighbours “as long as they [the fugitives] were the source of money and valuables” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 477). He easily bandies accusations like that around. Is his generalisation founded in any way? Certainly, it is not based on his argumentation. It would be appropriate if the author adopted a more individualised approach and accounted for the problem’s nuances. Perhaps he could give examples of actual denunciations or murders by local people, which were the effect of hidden anti-Semitism breaking out after pacification actions. To present the evil done to Jews by Poles (because, regardless of our judgements, turning someone in to the Germans was evil) as coming down to anti-Semitism, in the light of “hellish wartime entanglements” the author writes about, is a huge misunderstanding. What is, then, the author’s assessment of the reasons for disregarding ‘Jewish life’ by the above-mentioned Jewish members of the Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst?

The above conclusions bring us close to another general ‘discovery’ made by Frydel:

The data [*Night without End*, vol. 2, the table on p. 450] help notice different conditions of unsuccessful attempts to survive in the provinces. Both the number of victims and the perpetrators of these crimes confirm the thesis about the decisive role of the rural self-defence system and local factors in political actions. In all three categories of murders committed by police-like forces, most victims had been ‘turned in by the locals’. The pressure to capture and turn in Jews was exerted from the bottom – by villagers and, most importantly, by people engaged in self-protection structures. Police-like round-ups of Jews initiated without the involvement of the village security system were much rarer. If they happened, they resulted from activities of a network of informers or happened by accident [...]. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, pp. 450–451)

The problem is that Frydel’s general disquisitions here considerably undermine what he writes later about German actions and the reaction of the conquered

people. Equally strongly manifested here is one of the book's key themes, namely that the survival of Jews in the years 1942–1945 depended on the attitudes of Poles towards Jews. Frydel's thesis is entirely detached from the motivation and, most importantly, from the circumstances in which the 'perpetrators' – in this case, villagers – functioned. Pressure on turning in the Jews and other suspicious persons was not exerted by village watches or villagers but by the German occupation authorities enacting their murderous 'law' and imposing obligations (including on village watches). The pressure was from the top, and acting was ascribed to the bottom. To lose this hierarchy is putting the well-known and described occupation system upside down. Had the pressure been exerted from the bottom, pacification actions with killing innocent people, organised by police-like forces to remind the villagers of their duty to capture Jews, would have been redundant. Moreover, there would be no sense in organising briefings in the GG, where representatives of the German administration reminded people of their 'duty' to capture Jews (Grabowski or Skibińska mention this duty in their respective chapters) or any suspicious persons posing a threat to the village's security.

The thesis so strongly advanced by Frydel, actually shifting the responsibility from the Germans upon the rural community, is all the more astonishing that it is put forward by the researcher who, later in the book, among other things, points to an essential link between terror and turning in Jews. Frydel's thesis is also noticeable in the following sentence: "It is hard not to conclude that the lion's share of the victims in the county was killed by the German police" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 452). Given the brutality of the German occupation in Poland and one of the critical tasks the occupation and the Third Reich authorities assigned to themselves, namely total extermination of the Jews, the above statement is instead an obviousness, not a revelation. Naturally, one must also consider personal responsibility, overzealousness, initiative, etc. (which was strongly emphasised during the post-war trials – there are numerous publications on the subject, which Frydel could use) from the villagers' side.

So, instead of making unjustified generalisations, in his table entitled 'Perpetrators and Circumstances of Death of Jewish Fugitives' and, subsequently, in the comments to the table, Frydel could have differentiated between instances of denunciations and murders of Jews in his focus area, motivated by fear or an 'imaginary'

fear and those being simply acts of banditry or anti-Semitism. Such an approach to the crime and its dynamics would be closer to reality. The author established that at least 32–35 Jews were captured in the villages of Dębica county after the pacification action in Podborze (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 474). When we refer this data to Table 9 (*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 450), we will see that out of the 96 ‘local’ Jews turned in, approximately one-third of them were turned in after the pacification action carried out by German soldiers in Podborze. How do these numbers correspond with the generalisations about anti-Semitism and “pressure from the bottom”?

Since Tomasz Frydel has deigned to evoke Leopold von Ranke in his response and call me a supporter of his method, I would like to remind the words written about Ranke’s narrative: “although every sentence used by Ranke to create his picture is true, the picture itself is not”.¹¹⁹ And this is precisely the case with the presentation of some of Frydel’s research outcomes. However, I do not see any contradiction between empiricism (Ranke) and the need for a broader presentation of everyday existence. This particular remark pertains to the work’s title, namely the fate of Jews under the German occupation. Is it possible that Frydel finds it inappropriate to identify research needs in a review that mainly addresses the problems related to source materials?

This part of the chapter “Dębica County” (“Powiat dębicki”) also shows that the way the authors describe the *Polnische Polizei* suggests its Polish character (which would be justified only in terms of the nationality of its members), and not to say – it’s an emanation of the Polish state. Naming the perpetrators of individual crimes committed against the Jews, Frydel mentions apart from the German police – also “Polish police forces” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 451). It is impossible not to repeat the words of Swałek-Niewińska here: “To a reader having some knowledge about the Second World War, it is obvious that the Polish Police or rather the *Polnische Polizei*, was formed to pursue goals and obey orders of the German occupation authorities” (“Response”, p. 3). The blue police was a police-like force of the German GG and not Poland.

Coming back to Frydel’s thesis about pacification actions being a catalyst for anti-Semitism, which is controversial, to say the least, one must ask, following the

¹¹⁹ J. Topolski, *Prawda i model w historiografii* (Łódź, 1982), p. 25.

logic of such a concept, about the existence of any anti-Dutch feeling before the war in the village of Straszęcín or its vicinity, since, in 1943, two Dutchmen were captured there. When referring to the events of 1943 in Straszęcín, the author made the following comment in the main text: “Similar concerns and situations consequent upon repressive actions were also observed concerning other groups of fugitives, e.g. prisoners of war who had escaped from captivity” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 476). A footnote is added to this sentence, while the main text reads:

In the village of Straszęcín, the village head with the night-watchmen captured two Dutch prisoners of war, who had escaped from Pustków, and handed them over, chained, to the blue police in Dębica. Both men had been hiding in the village, but after the pacification action in the nearby village of Bobrowa, on 8 July 1943, the villagers’ attitudes changed. (*ibid.*)

The testimonies of witnesses and other findings show that the Dutchmen were captured because they had been suspected of collaboration with the Germans and apparently because of their suspicious behaviour. Nevertheless, Frydel’s conclusions leave no doubt. Omitting suspicions of possible collaboration with the Germans, Frydel treats testimonies of witnesses and official findings (based on these testimonies) as an apparent excuse justifying the capture and delivery of the two men from the village where they first had found help. He claims that the only reason was fear caused by pacification actions in the area. Good that at least in the response, the author is less radical and admits that it could have also been the suspected collaboration with the Germans. Perhaps my suggestion was too firm, as well; nonetheless, I cannot entirely agree with Frydel that the idea of “the Dutchmen as German agents” was formed later in the course of the trial because he had forgotten to mention the essential testimony of one of the accused, Ludwik Adamowicz, dated 22 May 1951:

One day, I do not remember what day it was, when I was on the road, I saw people running in the direction of the buildings where Andrzej Wój lived.¹²⁰ I went there,

¹²⁰ The correct name is Wojko. See: Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów (hereinafter: AIPN Rz), 358/59, Testimony of witness Andrzej Wojko given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 292.

too, and learned that at Wój's, there were Germans in civilian clothes – instigators. A moment later, Jan Skowron, deputy commune leader [deputy village head], came out, the ringleader in the village of whom everyone was scared, and Stanisław Kolbusz – chief of the county watch. Skowron or Kolbusz told me, “Come here. We have some Germans that need to be delivered to the police.” Skowron and Kolbusz explained that they were instigators, snoopers who wanted to check whether people here were willing to hide fugitives. I went with them to the village head's room, where there were many peasants and two men – allegedly Germans.¹²¹

This was the accused's first testimony. These words were also repeated in Adamowicz's application for release from remand at his final interrogation on 21 July 1951,¹²² but also in the applications (there were two), filed with the prosecutor's office in Rzeszow by the wife of the accused, Stanisław Kolbusz, named Stefania, concerning her husband's release.¹²³ So, witnesses talked about “suspicious persons” at a relatively early stage. Frydel omitted Adamowicz's testimony and applications, using only the testimony given during the main trial. Having done so, it was easy for him to accuse me that I had anticipated the trial findings to support my thesis. As shown above, it was not true at all.

Simultaneously, in his response to “Correcting the Picture”, Frydel presented some testimonies of witnesses and suspects, allegedly proving his theses' validity. Nevertheless, he omitted all the rest. Witness Bronisława Dymska-Mazur testified:

I heard that before they captured the Dutchmen in Bobrowa, the Germans had killed some people and burnt houses, so we were scared because, as Ignacy Lipa told my husband and my husband then told me, a piece of paper had been pinned to Lipa's house reading that my husband, Jan Dymski, along with Stanisław Golema and Stanisław Kolbusz, had been accused of communism. Kolbusz was

¹²¹ AIPN Rz, 358/59, Transcript of the interrogation of a suspect Ludwik Adamowicz, Oleśnica, 22 May 1951, p. 64.

¹²² AIPN Rz, 358/59, Letter by Ludwik Adamowicz to the county prosecutor's office in Dębica, Wrocław, 5 July 1951, pp. 198–199; *ibid.*, Transcript of the final interrogation of suspect Ludwik Adamowicz, Dębica, 21 July 1951, pp. 161–162.

¹²³ AIPN Rz, 358/59, Request by Stefania Kolbusz, Bobrowa, 6 June 1951, p. 76; *ibid.*, Letter by Stefania Kolbusz to regional prosecutor in Rzeszow, Dębica, 6 June 1951, pp. 77–78.

even more frightened because he hid a Russian in his house. After the occupation, I heard that there had been Jews hiding at Szostak's. I also heard that there were Dutchmen in the village, and the people were scared of them because they did not know who they were. People were saying they were buying some duvets from them. I guess that after burning the houses in Bobrowa, the acc[used] Ludwik Adamowicz was hiding from the Germans, and even once wanted to spend a night at our home but we refused because we had once seen the Germans coming for him, in a car. I cannot remember if it was before capturing the Dutchmen.¹²⁴

Witness Tadeusz Pytynia testified:

I saw these two men once [...] talking to a village girl who, as I heard later – told me they used to come to her. I saw the same two men who had been talking to her a few days later, sunbathing by the Wisłoka River. When I saw them for the first time, they were well dressed. I heard that the Germans had carried out a pacification action in Bobrowa, where they had killed 18 people and burnt some buildings.¹²⁵

Witness Julia Szostak testified:

Some three months before capturing those Dutchmen, as they had been called, they were roaming about the village, and came to me several times. I once even purchased a pair of trousers from them, and they were also coming to see my daughter, Michalina, now married and named Dymska. People in the village said that they were spies, and my daughter was even hiding from them. About a month after being captured, my late niece told me she used to see them on the road, in a car, with the Germans, already after being captured [...]. My daughter got a letter from one of them.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ AIPN Rz, 358/59, Testimony of witness Bronisława Dymska-Mazur given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, pp. 293–294.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Tadeusz Pytynia, given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 294.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Julia Szostak, given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, pp. 294–295.

Witness Józef Rak testified:

It was summer, I do not remember the year, there were two men in the village. People called them 'the Dutchmen' because they told them they were Dutch. Actually, they used to visit the village and later go away in the direction of Pustków. I saw them a few times at Wójek's, Jan Szostak's and Krzywak's. They once came to my mother's house with a suitcase. In it were German striped duvets for sale. I reprimanded my mother for buying because my cousin from Bobrowa and others were sent to a prison camp for a few months for purchasing blankets from such men. I saw them once in front of Jan Szostak's house, drinking vodka. People from Pustków warned us against these Dutchmen because they were roaming about Pustków openly, in broad daylight, and drinking vodka and selling things. I have no direct information about capturing the Dutchmen. I only know it was known from the morning what would happen to them. That afternoon, maybe around 3:00 pm, I heard from Jan Skowron that he told them [he had told them, i.e. the Dutchmen? – T.D.] to move [go] further away, or they would be taken away. Those Dutchmen were well dressed, roamed openly around the village, and looked well fed. I was hiding away from the Germans because I had escaped from a transport to a labour camp, often fleeing with Ludwik Adamowicz when the Germans were coming by the village.¹²⁷

Witness Ignacy Lipa testified:

From about spring until they were captured, two young men used to come to the village – people were saying they were Dutchmen. They came to my house a few times, once they had a coat to sell, but I was afraid that others would take it away from me if I bought anything from them. Besides, they came because of my daughters, whom I forbade to have any contact. We communicated a bit in German and with gestures. People were scared of them because they did not know "who they were". After all, they could have been Germans pretending

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Józef Rak, given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, pp. 294–295.

they did not understand Polish. At that time, a piece of paper was pinned to my house, along with my name and the names of Stanisław Golema, Stanisław Kolbusz, and Jan Dymski, announcing that we were communists or suspected communists. The Dutchmen worked at the Wojko's; they were threshing with a machine. Those Dutchmen were well-dressed in civilian clothes; they were good-looking, with haircuts. They walked around the village openly. Prisoners from Pustków had their hair cut short.¹²⁸

Witness Michalina Dymka testified:

It was summer, I do not remember the year, it was still bright. Seeing a horse cart going to Wojko's, I watched because I knew they would take two young men away, who used to often come there. From about 100 meters, I saw the cart pulling up in front of Wojko's house, and the two men got into the cart. Piotr Golema alone was in the cart, no one else. I went away before the cart left. I had known those two young men since spring. For about four months, they came to the village, selling things. They came several times to my house, and I spoke with them a little in German and also communicated by gestures. They said they lived in Lignoza. I bought half of a military duvet and trousers from them; they also had shoes; one of the neighbours bought them. Besides, they came because of my daughters, whom I forbade to have any contact with. They came cause they wanted to buy vodka and butter, too. When I worked in the garden in Lignoza, I saw them there, walking around, well-dressed. I did not see them doing anything. On the day they were taken away on a cart from Wojko's, I saw them there and told them to go away from the village or be taken away, but they only laughed. They were visiting the Wojkos, Stanisław Golema, Adam Lipa, Piotr Krzywak, who bought a jacket and mantle from them, and others. Someone bought a camera from them. When I warned them to go away from the village, I spoke Polish and used hand gestures, and they told me they understood. Moreover, they understood when they wanted to buy vodka and were told there was no vodka, which they also understood. They did not speak Polish; they only

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Ignacy Lipa, given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 295.

knew a few words. They used to come at various times during the day. I never heard that they stayed for the night in the village; they came during the day. I saw them going away in the direction of Ligoza. After they were captured, I did not see them either in Ligoza or the village. After they were captured, I worked in Ligoza for a short time. Before they were captured, they had been to Cracow, and I got a letter from Cracow written to me in German. When they returned from Cracow, I avoided them, so they did not come anymore. In Bobrowa, some people came with religious medallions and prayer books, and then came the pacification. Some 20 people were shot dead and buildings burnt down, and the people thought it was all because those peddlers got information from people about what was going on in the village. The prisoners' barrack working under armed guard in Ligoza was in the forest, some 2 km away surrounded by barbed wire. I saw those men whom people called the Dutchmen, speaking freely with the Germans in Ligoza. They looked like some experts. People called them the Germans, too. They were well-dressed, wearing elegant shirts, and the camp prisoners had work clothes with side stripes, a star on the back, and a number.¹²⁹

It is clear from the above that the Dutchmen's behaviour seemed 'strange' to the people of Wola Bobrowska. They roamed the village openly; they were well dressed, well-fed, were selling things, did not run away, and even sunbathed by the river. All this conflicted with the image of people chased and persecuted by the Germans – Jews, Soviets – runaway prisoners. If we link the facts with the testimony of Michalina Dymska about 'peddlers' and of Jan Skowron (given at the main trial), the sequence of events seems obvious. Frydel ignores yet another important detail in his response and the book. One of the people accused of turning in the Dutchmen, Stanisław Szostak, had been hiding a Jew in his attic for a long time – Tewel Knie. (Szostak called him, apparently by mistake, Tehelkni), as claimed during the trial by a relative of the family – Juda Preker (he was talking about the Knie family).¹³⁰

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Ignacy Lipa given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 295.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Testimony of Stanisław Szostak given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 288; *ibid.*, Testimony of witness Juda Preker given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 294.

This information is found in the chapter “Dębica County” (“Powiat dębicki”) (vol. 2, p. 431), but without specifying that it pertains to Szostak, accused of capturing the Dutchmen. Moreover, although it seems reasonable in the book, as the case of the Dutchmen is only mentioned there, then it is certainly not in the response, which is to prove that the reason for turning in the Jews was the pacification action in Bobrowa. Szostak was involved in capturing the Dutchmen because he was so ordered (as he testified)¹³¹ by Jan Skowron and because the Dutchmen’s behaviour was suspicious, not because of fear or panic. After all, he had already risked his and his family’s life hiding Tewel Knie.

A fascinating question about the Dutchmen is why the information about their alleged collaboration with the Germans had appeared before the court trial only in the testimony of one of the accused. Perhaps because the testimonies of the other accused (and of those accused in other, similar cases) pertained to who (and where) captured the victims, how they behaved (demonstrated active or passive behaviour), who tied up the victims, who ordered their capturing. Perhaps this is because the investigation was conducted by the People’s Militia (MO) functionaries taking a very narrow ‘perpetrator–victim’ perspective. These details, totally obscuring the background, must have been extremely important for the trial, as strongly evidenced by the example of Piotr Golema, one of the farmers accused of capturing the Dutchmen. The proceedings against him were discontinued because – as stated by the prosecutor’s motion – the man was only performing a ‘technical’ function as a coachman, so he only drove the captured Dutchmen. “And since – the prosecutor argued – in light of the judgement of the Whole Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court dated 2 February 1951 [...], a coachman who only performed the actual act of driving a cart is not guilty of a crime punishable under the August Decree of 1944, and this was the action performed by Piotr Golema – an application for discontinuation of this proceeding is justified”.¹³² It only shows how very vague the provisions of the August Decree were. It also confirms the conclusions drawn by the attorneys in the 1940s and 1950s, mentioned by Kornbluth.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Stanisław Szostak given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 288.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Application for discontinuation of the proceeding against Piotr Golema, Dębica, 23 July 1951, p. 166.

Also, note that, for the people living in the country at that time (and later), who were often uneducated, illiterate, or almost illiterate, an event like a pacification action served as a point of reference (something happened before or after the pacification action). Frydel does not seem to understand it. Therefore, in this case, and hundreds of others, in transcripts of interrogations conducted by the former District Commission to Investigate Nazi Crimes or for the 'August trials' (*sierpniówki*), expressions like "I do not remember the day" or "I do not remember the year" are pretty frequent. The events in Bobrowa served as a point of reference, a warning about what may happen if the threat is not taken seriously. One of the accused, Kolbusz, testified that they had been forced to sign investigation reports. It is also how the other accused explained the differences between the investigation reports and their testimonies given before the court.¹³³

In another string entitled 'Gontarczyk – good, Frydel – bad', Tomasz Frydel refers to the murder of Jankiel Liberman described by me. The event is presented in *Night without End* by Professor Dariusz Libionka. My objections to this author resulted from the analysis of this particular case and the occupation reality, which – I believe – Libionka has ignored. I only mentioned that Piotr Gontarczyk had already commented on the description of the murder of Liberman and that I simply agreed with his opinion ("Correcting the Picture", pp. 38–39). This is not something extraordinary when one researcher agrees with the theses of another.

I have the impression that Frydel also agrees with the interpretation provided by Gontarczyk, but here comes the most interesting reflection of Frydel making the following, most unusual, accusation against me:

At the same time, this point of view is rejected by the reviewer when it is used in my article. It should be added that the publication of our book has preceded Gontarczyk's article, and the mechanisms in question have been described in the book more thoroughly and extensively. The article by Gontarczyk, referred to by Domański, addresses the issues already discussed in *Night without End*.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Testimony of witness Stanisław Kolbusz given at the main trial, Dębica, 25 September 1951, p. 286.

[...] An unbiased reader would admit that this is exactly the subject matter of two sub-chapters in my text. The reviewer only processes the findings, presenting them slightly differently, as if unaware, he was just reinventing the wheel. (“Response”, p. 8)

Every reader of “Correcting the Picture” and my present response will notice that I acknowledge Frydel’s research findings and correct interpretation of the events (where it is correct). It applies to these ‘hellish entanglements’ and the awareness of the link between German pacification actions and denouncing Jews. However, Frydel simply directs his accusations to the wrong person, concurrently making erroneous generalisations (I shall not comment on the language he uses). Suppose similar analyses of complex occupation realities and mechanisms of human behaviour are present throughout *Night without End*. Why are they not observable in Dariusz Libionka’s description of Liberman’s case? Why are there no reflections of that kind in the chapter by Jean-Charles Szurek? Perhaps Tomasz Frydel does not know this book – apart from his chapter. Alternatively, maybe he has not read it attentively enough. He should address his comments, not to me but to the co-authors of *Night without End*.

Later in the same part, Frydel makes further accusations against me. This time the comments have been triggered by my opinion expressed in “Correcting the Picture” that *Night without End* lacks deeper reflection about the pressure exerted on local people to make them obey German orders (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 16). Frydel claims I haven’t noticed his “deepened reflection” on creating the atmosphere of fear (“Response”, p. 9). The author of “Dębica County” (“Powiat dębicki”) has not read “Correcting the Picture” carefully enough. Otherwise, he would have found the following passage there:

The majority of ‘county’ texts generally lack deepened reflection on that subject ‘although this full responsibility’ commonly referred to local representatives of the ‘authorities’ in the area where Jews – illegally from the perspective of German laws – were seeking refuge. Fortunately, the problem has been noticed by Tomasz Frydel, who expressly speaks of the threatening death penalty. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 446)

Doesn't it sufficiently prove that I see Frydel's text's analytical value when such analytical value is manifested? I believe that making imaginary accusations and engaging in polemics is pointless for its sake. Again, I recommend that Tomasz Frydel abandons his desperate attempt to defend *Night without End* and simply read the whole book. At this point, I would like to refer to one of Frydel's final comments about my alleged *Gleichschaltung* of the entire mentioned book. Well, no, I will not do it anywhere. However, I see numerous examples of a similar way of describing past events detached from the facts and sources.

Frydel also accuses me of using too far-reaching generalisations. To prove it, he is quoting my words: "the analysis of source materials actually used in 'county' descriptions shows that the most common source materials are various accounts and recollections of the survivors (and rarely Polish memoir-type works)" ("Correcting the Picture", p. 28). Later, Frydel provides detailed information on the number of Polish memoir-type works 'used' in his chapter and stated:

Sticking to the main point of the discussion, I would like to deny that I used mainly the accounts and recollections of Jewish survivors. My primary sources are testimonies of Poles in the so-called 'August' trials, Home Army dispatches, reports of the Central Commission to Investigate Nazi Crimes, and Polish memoirs, chronicles, and diaries. ("Response", p. 7)

Frydel's thesis does not hold because the author slightly 'adjusted' his sentence (omitted its continuation) where, among the essential sources used by the authors, I mention the 'August trials' materials.¹³⁴ I broadly discussed the problem of founding theses on 'trimmed' quotations in "Correcting the Picture". As you can see, I have not omitted the 'August trials' in my description. Still, I mentioned them in the first place as the primary source. When I wrote: "other documents mentioned there", I simply did not want to repeat what the editors had written in the "Fore-

¹³⁴The sentence reads as follows: "Yet, the analysis of source materials actually used in 'county' descriptions shows that the most common source material is various accounts and recollections of the survivors (and rarely Polish memoir-type works) kept in several archives, published in printed form, available on the internet (e.g. remembrance books in abbreviated English language version) complemented by the 'August trials' files, and – to a much smaller degree – other documents mentioned there" ("Correcting the Picture", p. 28).

word”. Frydel’s criticism follows from an erroneous understanding of the section concerned. My analysis referred to the book as a whole and not only his chapter. There is not, and there cannot be any automation in this respect. Various sources may dominate individual sub-chapters or sections, but the sources I mentioned are from the source materials’ core body.

The author (and also other authors of *Night without End*) tries to divert the polemic to issues of secondary or even lesser importance, while the objections raised are considerable. It is, for instance, the case with the use of Berl Sturm’s account. The comments in “Correcting the Picture” pertain to Frydel’s deliberations on Poles being motivated by their “imaginary fear of denunciation by the Jews” (“Correcting the Picture”, pp. 39–40). In his response, Frydel quotes an extensive passage from the book, emphasising that not the whole Job family escaped after hearing that the Sturm family they had been hiding was caught (“Response”, pp. 9–10). Nevertheless, my entire conclusion referred to using this story as an example of imaginary denunciation – based on the story’s ending, the Sturm family did not turn in anyone. The Germans conducted no repressive action and even gave the Jews some food – hence the threat was imaginary. Such a manner of drawing conclusions and advancing research theses is an example of ahistorical thinking. After all, the whole paragraph Frydel begins with the words: “There are some examples of situations where the actions of Poles were motivated by their imaginary fear of denunciation by the Jews” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 456). Moreover, I mentioned the Job family as the first example. Had the Sturm family turned in the Job family, could their actions (escape) still be described as motivated by an imaginary fear of denunciation? All their names would likely be included in Table 10 for Dębica county (‘Cases of Denunciation Found in Source Materials’ – *Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 463). Hence, one could conclude that members of underground organisations running away or changing hideaways and points of contact after a ‘leak’ were motivated by an imaginary fear of danger. But these were just basic safety precautions, just like in the case of the Job family. Unfortunately, in his analysis of the past, Frydel fails to understand these fundamental issues and tries to devalue the problem, using empty phrases like “what has that got to do with anything?” (“Response”, p. 11).

The history of the Job family is also a source of conclusions related to covering the costs of help. This is similar to using sources as the one discussed in “Correcting the Picture” in my remarks to Libionka’s text. Frydel writes:

It should be assumed that paying was the most effective, combined with such favourable circumstances as a pre-war acquaintance or closer relationship with the helpers, i.e. when paying for help was not the only element of the strategy. Sometimes a person kept hiding Jews even when they ran out of money **because some ties or bonds were formed between them** [emphasis mine – T.D.]. Having escaped with his daughter from the Dębica ghetto, Berl Sturm met 17-year-old Stefania Job in Łęki Dolne and promised ‘compensation’ for hiding them. ‘I had paid her money for a few months’, Sturm wrote after the war. ‘When I ran out of cash, Stefania Job did not stop helping’ – he added, and the determination in saving Sturm and his daughter was even greater. (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 432)

From this narrative, it follows that initially, Job decided to help Jews only for financial reasons. Only later did a particular bond develop between the saving and the saved. A post-war account of Sturm, evoked by Frydel, reveals quite different reasons for this assistance. Decisive for Stefania Job’s decision was the Sturms’ tragic situation and her sympathy for them, and the compensation was suggested only by Berl Sturm. These are his own words:

On the road to Tarnów, I met a 17-year-old girl, Stefania Job, from Łęka Dolna. **I did not know her, and she did not know us. Seeing our tragic situation (my daughter was limping because of exhaustion), she took pity on us and, having heard our story, promised to help us.** We went with her to her home, where she promised to hide us. **On the way, I declared compensation for her help** [emphasis mine – T.D.].¹³⁵

¹³⁵ AŻIH, 301/4596, Account by Berl Sturm, Cracow, 17 July 1946, TS, p. 2.

Then Sturm talks about paying and then further help despite the subsequent lack of money. However, he had been promised help by a stranger before any money was mentioned or a bond developed.

There is an error in Frydel's text that needs to be corrected: "Stefania Job twice volunteered to go to Germany when the police surrounded the house to 'avoid searching of the house where we were hiding'. Her father stood up for her the first time, and the second time – her brother" (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 432, p. 201). Such a description is illogical and not true to the facts. It is not true that Stefania Job twice volunteered to go to Germany. Had she volunteered, police raids on their home would have been pointless. She was simply included in the list, and she did not want to go. Hence, the police were after her. Stefania's brother and father volunteered to go instead of her. The second time, to prevent further police raids and save the Jews they had been hiding, she did not run away and was arrested as a result. Then her brother volunteered to go instead of her, and she was released.¹³⁶

The Leopold Trejbicz account I evoke as evidence of the commonly experienced sense of fear of denunciation Frydel calls a poor example ("Response", p. 12). Let us recall the facts. Trejbicz mentioned that, as a precaution, he had not revealed to another Jew (nor that Jew had revealed to him) the exact address 'on the Aryan side'. In specific occupation conditions, Jews could, and sometimes did, denunciate other Jews. I mention Trejbicz's account (as naturally corresponding with the one of the Job family) to present how Frydel, perhaps unintentionally, coins some vague concepts such as the 'imaginary fear of denunciation' as opposed to a real impending threat, when every situation he described was as real as it could only be. Let me remind this once again: in every historical circumstance, every human being entrusted with a secret may reveal the secret in the face of an extreme situation. Furthermore, for people whose life depends on that secret being kept, realising that possibility is not an 'imaginary fear of denunciation' but retaining the basic sense of reality.

However, Frydel is right when he writes that I have ascribed to him the information about a possible death punishment for evading the service in the Baudienst, while Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska actually provided the information. Frydel was

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

long-emphasising the significance of a thorough analysis and frequently demonstrated a good understanding of the studied reality. Unfortunately, he did not mention the death punishment for escaping from the Baudienst. If he did, he would have come closer to the description of the actual functioning of the Baudienst, as the author of the book he refers to. Instead, he has chosen to quote Mściśław Wróblewski and present detailed calculations in the footnote of the earnings of the Junaks during Katastrophendienst and the amount paid by the Dębica governor (*starosta*) to the Baudienst for the “‘work’ during the ‘displacement of the Jews’” (*Night without End*, vol. 2, p. 400).

Finally, I would like to give one more example of an argument *à la* Tomasz Frydel, focusing on page numbering in the documents: “Trying to correct my initial mistake, Domański introduces his own. In the relevant footnote, he refers to page 520 of the case file, which is supposed to contain the testimony of Aleksandra Kocoń (*née* Bryk) with the correct marriage date (p. 47, fn. 116). But the testimony of Aleksandra Kocoń is on page 519, while page 520 contains the testimony of Stanisław Kocoń”¹³⁷ (“Response”, p. 10). As it turns out, I did not make a mistake in the page numbering. Aleksandra Kocoń’s testimony begins and ends on page 520. Stanisław Kocoń’s testimony begins on the same page and ends on page 527. How bitter in this confrontation the words about “Potemkin villages” and “banging one’s head against the wall” sound. Tomasz Frydel, providing quotes from the case of Jan Skowron and others in his response, gives wrong page numbers himself.¹³⁸ Moreover, he does not see the difference between sheets or folios (foliations) and pages (pagination) in documents.¹³⁹

Making light of all his mistakes, Frydel states that “Correcting the Picture”, as I already mentioned, is a “Potemkin village” trying to pass as a review. This opinion

¹³⁷ AIPN Rz, 353/72, Testimony of Aleksandra Kocoń given at the main trial, Rzeszów, 7 June 1950, p. 520; *ibid.*, Testimony of Stanisław Kocoń given at the main trial, Rzeszów, 7 June 1951, pp. 520–527.

¹³⁸ Frydel claimed in his response that page 285 (he uses the incorrect term *folio* [sheet]) contained the statement of the village head of Bobrowa, while, in fact, the page contains a section of the transcript of the main trial and testimony of Jan Skowron. Folio 294 was supposed to contain witness testimony of Stanisław Kolbusz, but it contains the testimony of Józef Kolbusz; folio 296, according to Frydel, contains testimony of Ludwik Adamowicz, but it contains testimonies of Józef Zaręba and Józef Dymski.

¹³⁹ On page 433 (vol. 2), he stated that the testimonies were to be found on folios, while the case files have pagination.

is repeated in various forms in many parts of the response. I wish to assure the author that pointing out inaccuracies is not a matter of my favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the book. It is merely a method of verifying the quality of research commonly applied in scholarly and scientific work. It is a matter of facts and only it should be considered in this context.

A detailed response to the remarks of Professor Jean-Charles Szurek¹⁴⁰

In scholarly and scientific work, the readiness to submit one's research outcomes for a critical review should be natural. Professor Jean-Charles Szurek begins his polemic by attempting to convince the reader that his and his colleagues' work is unreviewable. He justifies this opinion by announcing that the review's tone is "opinionated and disrespectful", is "strewn with shockingly insulting comments", and its style "does not meet basic standards and is unacceptable in academic milieu" ("Response", p. 1). Immediately afterwards, he uses the strange argument that "the current managers of the Institute of National Remembrance" are my employers and then authoritatively pronounces that: "It is, therefore, above all a **political** text [emphasis mine – T.D.]" ("Response", p. 1). Szurek illustrates all this in the following way:

Here are some interesting specimens found during reading, referring to all authors: "This information is available in source materials [...] – provided that they are used conscientiously and not selectively", "violating the principles of research diligence", "lacking in academic skills", "manipulation of source information", "Is the presented image one aspiring to scholarly subjectivism? It is not". ("Response", p. 1)

This attempt to classify a critical analysis of how source materials were used as a political move is astonishing. It appears to discourage the reader from familiarising themselves with its substantive content. It is not a form of polemic accepted in

¹⁴⁰ The response of Professor Jean-Charles Szurek has not been sent to the Institute of National Remembrance. I am referring to the version published at: <http://www.holocaustresearch.pl/index.php?show=555&strona=564> (accessed 10 December 2019).

scholarly or scientific discourse. Professor Szurek does not specify which political option I am to represent. Is it pointing to evidence of factual carelessness in using source materials, deficiencies in methodological skills in some authors, and lack of scholarly objectivity in approaching source materials political? As I endeavoured to verify the sources referred to by the authors in the footnotes, I looked forward to exchanging arguments. After all, this is why scholarly texts contain footnotes. In footnotes, authors can explicitly identify the sources of their information, also to be better prepared for the verification of how the author uses these source materials.

I also do not know which of my comments can appear disrespectful. I do not derive any satisfaction or sense of superiority from the fact that someone else's conclusions presented to readers, with references made to specific source documents, are, in fact, inconsistent with the content of such documents. There was nothing disrespectful in stating these facts. However, I believe that Jean-Charles Szurek knows perfectly well how to demonstrate disrespect. Let me offer some examples of the phrasing he uses in his text. He refers to me, among other things, as "an author who fulfils, in such a caricatural way, the order of party-state 'historical politics'", adding that "[my] conduct is particularly perverse", and concludes that "this hostile attitude [of mine] is deplorable". He also uses the phrase: "Dr Domański and the heralds of his camp (e.g. the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr Jarosław Szarek or Jan Pospieszalski, a journalist)" ("Response", p. 2). I leave the issue open whether this type of language used should be left unanswered in a scholarly debate.

The manner in which Szurek evoked the Paris conference (21–22 February 2019) is quite awkward. When I arrived at the conference, my review had already been published. I was looking forward to a fact-based historical discussion in the allotted timeframe. I always believed that fact-based academic debate is the best way to exchange opinions and views. After all, the conference was open to the public. One of the presented papers was entirely devoted to the Institute of National Remembrance, which was the subject of a barrage of insults hurled at it during the conference. These insults were not so hateful as simply far removed from the truth. During the time allotted for discussion, I repeatedly asked for the floor to be able to respond to the papers delivered. I was blatantly ignored and denied the floor as soon as it became apparent that I was the author of "Correcting the Picture". These are strange standards for a scholarly conference.

Similarly, what is surprising is the strictly enforced ban on filming and recording the conference, while the conference itself was open to the public. In his text, in the context of my presence at the conference, Szurek attempts to ungraciously apply – putting it mildly – a quote from Professor Boucheron, kindly including me in the “disgraceful retinue of professional practitioners of belligerent ignorance” (“Response”, p. 1). Was this because I had dared to analyse the sources referred to by the authors and identify some instances of their carelessness in using them? Does Professor Szurek believe that his works cannot be subjected to scholarly reviews?

Concerning the Institute of National Remembrance, he rehashes false and absurd insinuations formulated on numerous occasions – with equal disrespect for the facts – by Jan Grabowski. I can only report that none of my scholarly works has been subject to any interference by the Institute of National Remembrance management because it is not, and has never been, the Institute’s practice to do so. Factual studies that do not satisfy the standards of research methodology (and this is determined in the course of the review procedures) have no chance of being published. However, each author is responsible for their scholarly work, as I am. Regrettably, Professor Szurek is not aware of this. On this occasion, I wish to add that every author of academic papers takes responsibility for the accuracy and reliability in applying source materials. Moreover, they are open to critical review.

The work of people performing clerical tasks stemming from obligations imposed by statutory duties (e.g. erecting monuments, administrative issues) is separate from the research work performed by researchers and scholars employed by the Institute. Similarly, at any university institute (department), the clerical tasks, e.g. of the Institute’s director, are by no means connected to their scholarly research. It is astounding that Professor Szurek does not understand this. Similarly, he fails to realise that the Institute does not enact laws, even those affecting its operations. It is worth relying on facts and not on emotionally formulated rumours and unfounded accusations in scholarly debate.

Finally, Jean-Charles Szurek denied me my right to participate in a scholarly debate, claiming that “its style [“Correcting the Picture”] does not meet elementary standards, [...] has no right to exist in academic circles” (“Response”, p. 1). He has also noticed... some delusions in my analysis. Eventually, I became a member of a group of “doctors named Domański” that he classified among the “Holocaust

deniers” and other groups. The accusation of ‘Holocaust denial’ binds all epithets. It serves as a warning (for how else should it be understood?) to any other potential reviewer of his texts and the texts of other authors included in *Night without End*, because one simply does not speak to deniers. What can I say? My research work is open to critical review and debate. If Professor Szurek is willing to make an effort and read my publications, I will welcome any fact-based comment he would make. Furthermore, I will be grateful for identifying at least one phrase in my texts which could be classified as an example of ‘Holocaust denial’.

Although the author of „Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) refers to some of the issues I have raised, like his colleagues – the co-authors of *Night without End* – he diverts reader’s attention to the fringes, merely touching upon problems I mention or ignoring them altogether. He failed to respond to numerous minor and critical issues, and he concluded his response by including me – as I have already mentioned – in the group of ‘Holocaust deniers’. Instead of addressing factual remarks, he accuses me of allegedly removing Polish responsibility for the fate of the Jews, a lack of understanding of statistical data, scholarly dishonesty, presenting a false image of relations between Jewish survival groups and the Polish people, as well as the lack of sufficient sensitivity to Jewish suffering. I shall address these accusations in the same order.

One of the foundations of Szurek’s response to “Correcting the Picture” is the accusation concerning ‘delusions’ purportedly characterising my perception of *Night without End*. Even when first made, this accusation is embellished with the phrase: ‘as usual’. Hence, then, allegedly ‘as usual’, I make the delusional accusation against the co-author of *Night without End*, accusing him of transferring the responsibility for the Holocaust from the Germans to the Poles (“Response”, p. 2). Furthermore, he claims that I attempt to “remove the issue of Polish responsibility from sight by any means” (*ibid.*). In the latter case, in the opinion of the French researcher, my attitude is motivated by ideology. It also stems from my lack of understanding of the statistics he provided in “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”). Since the author has not stated *expressis verbis* which statistics he means, I assume he means the data concerning Jewish ‘survivorship’ of the Holocaust and persons responsible for the deaths of Jews. The above assumption is based on the following passage:

The statistics concerning Łuków county show the distribution of accountability across categories of perpetrators. However, from the perspective of Jews seeking help at the third stage of the Holocaust, the Polish presence is the most important. Therefore, the attitudes of Poles are examined in great detail. Jews who had managed to escape from the trains heading for Treblinka, who had been hiding in villages and forests, had direct and decisive contacts with Poles, mainly peasants. (“Response”, p. 2)

In his interpretation, Szurek agrees with the opinions expressed in the “Foreword” to *Night without End* (vol. 1, p. 32), presenting the attitude of the Poles as a factor decisive for the ‘survivorship’ of Jews in the years of 1942–1945. Szurek bypasses the occupation context of the events in silence. One may assume from the image created by the French researcher that, in his eyes, German terror (its scale so very different between Poland and France), the role of the German authorities and police-like structures, their anti-Jewish policy and practices, were far less critical for the fate of Jews than the attitudes of local peasants. He appears to forget that the German authorities unwaveringly implemented *Endlösung*. Removing the Holocaust from the context provided the researcher with the basis for another conclusion, namely that: “[...] the Polish countryside in this area was **an open-air prison for Jews** [emphasis mine – T.D.]”. However, it would be worth adding who had built this prison.

I agree with Professor Szurek that the Jews who had managed to escape from the trains heading for Treblinka and subsequently hid in villages or forests had the closest and most direct contact with the peasants. This is not an original observation. However, I disagree that this contact was decisive. It was not the representatives of the conquered nation who, in principle, decided the fate of Jews. It was the Germans, their laws, and murderous practices (also addressed against non-Jews willing to help Jews in any way). The Germans, particularly in the brutal occupation reality of the East (unknown to the western part of Europe), decided about the life and death of the conquered nations. Moreover, this cannot be changed by the fact that there were people who – in the occupation reality created by the Germans – for various reasons (fear for one’s own and one’s family’s fate is not the

same as the desire for enrichment or anti-Semitism) had turned in or murdered Jews.¹⁴¹ And nobody denies this.

Nevertheless, I do have a problem with recognising the value of these statistical perspectives. And the reason is the lack of source data for these statistics. The authors of *Night without End* (and Professor Szurek is not an exception here) have not supplied any source material for their tabular calculations. There is no information on the criteria applied to qualify attitudes and events in each category. For example, we do not know how Szurek counted the individual perpetrators. The basis for a scholarly discussion is creating opportunities to validate quoted data. I highlighted this significant shortage and its consequences in “Correcting the Picture” and the need for providing detailed responses to individual authors. Unfortunately, also in his response to my review, the author of “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) did not cure this defect. In “Correcting the Picture”, I asked, for example, whether the number of victims of Polish denunciations provided by Professor Szurek includes Jews killed by the Germans after stealing a hog from one of the farmers by some men in hiding (“Correcting the Picture”, pp. 65–66). Does the number of informers include the peasants from Krynka terrorised by local bandits collaborating with the Germans (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 608–609)? The author did not indicate the sources for his ‘statistical’ calculations, which consequently undermines or at least reduces their value. He has not made the slightest effort to reflect upon or respond to these – seemingly – quite simple and obvious questions. Lack of response provokes some doubts and additional questions. For, it may turn out that an in-depth analysis of circumstances of individual denunciations questions the credibility of “fundamental findings” for ‘Łuków County’.

I am writing all this because I agree with Professor Szurek that it is generally difficult to precisely develop (based on ‘hard’ data) Holocaust statistics for, as he emphasises – “no one is able to provide them” (“Response”, p. 2). Nevertheless, he is heading in such a direction – as if ignoring his own argumentation. Therefore, the absence of source data is even more striking. How could other researchers refer

¹⁴¹ The above conclusions pertain to the Radom District and were formed on the basis of my research for the publication entitled: “Proces z dekretu sierpniowego” and “Postępowania sądowe z dekretu z 31 sierpnia 1944 r.”

to these findings in the future? How could they add something new or confirm the opinions of the author? At the same time, Professor Szurek aptly concludes that there is no other way to develop statistics than “by collecting grass-roots data on every Jew who had managed to escape a liquidation operation”. These undoubtedly impressive views on the analysis of source data expressed *ex-post* is not only incompatible with the author’s words in “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) but simply undermine them. After all, Szurek himself states: “These statistics cover a small number of people, which – apart from illustrating the scale of the Holocaust – is not representative of anything, but it points to characteristic phenomena and major tendencies”. Again, I agree that statistics may show predominant tendencies or specific patterns. Nevertheless, in *Night without End* (vol. 1, p. 590), using the statistics which – as he admits – are not representative of anything, with an accuracy of two decimal places (!), the author calculates the percentage of deaths of Jews attributable to the Poles and the Germans, respectively. Therefore, is it a justified statistical data analysis method that, depending on the author’s needs, sometimes are and some other times not arguments forming the research thesis?

Without providing source information, we will not know what archived materials (we do not even know to what period they pertain, and this is important) served as a basis for preparing the final annexe on historical events in Łuków county. Hence, we will never know what is based on reliable scholarly research and what is not.

Moving on to detailed remarks from Professor Szurek’s response, I must explain that the critical issues raised in “Correcting the Picture” referred mainly to how the source materials were analysed and interpreted. This problem is already apparent in the sub-heading of “Correcting the Picture: Reflections on source analysis” (“Korekta obrazu: Refleksje źródłoznawcze”). Therefore, on numerous occasions, I have been – I must admit – quite critical of the selected sections. However, it would be difficult not to. When the author of the reviewed publication omits important sections of source material in his quotations or information crucial for understanding the described events, I had to point out such instances. Szurek has used my critical approach to sections of “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) to accuse me of alleged ‘declining, as usual, Polish responsibility’ for the fate of the Jews. This applies, among other things, to the problem of the village heads. First of

all, I wish to repeat that both older and contemporary historical literature defines the status of village heads as, *de facto*, German administration officials.¹⁴² Already the use of the term ‘German official’ alone entirely indicates somewhat limited decision-making powers of people holding such offices. Secondly, I asked in my review whether the two examples (trials) discussed by Szurek are an excellent source basis for extrapolation to the whole studied area – ‘Łuków County’ – and for arguing that: “Some of them implemented German orders with zealotry. Numerous trials initiated under the PKWN’s [The Polish Committee of National Liberation] Decree of 31 August 1944 demonstrated frequent cases of subordination by village heads to the Judenjagd, often done actively and for personal gains. Others were inflexible regarding implementing the occupant’s rules” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 608).

In my opinion, this was too small of a research sample to illustrate the complexity of Polish-Jewish relations in the occupation reality. Naturally, I asked about the number of convicted or, at least, accused village heads. It would provide a broader context for concluding. I did not demand – as Professor Szurek claims in his response – “presenting all relevant court trials (August trials, i.e. *sierpniówki*) in Łuków County” (“Response”, p. 3). Consequently, I pointed to the unjustified narrative sequence consisting of Professor Szurek using inappropriate generalisations founded on isolated facts (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 30). In other words, when Szurek writes about numerous trials, he should enumerate them and not hide the data away from the reader. Regrettably, neither my appeals mentioned above nor my pointing to the need to account for the situation of rural communities meet with any understanding from Professor Szurek; they also served as a basis for his fierce criticism.

Nevertheless, the material and spiritual situation of people also subjected to the brutal occupation policy, who had to fight for their own survival, must have profoundly affected the decisions whether to help Jews or not. According to Szurek, my – rather apparent – demand concerning the need for a difficult but necessary multi-dimensional presentation of the problem is a ‘classic method of deceiving

¹⁴² See the opinion of Professor Madajczyk referred to in the preface. This opinion is shared by some co-authors of *Night without End* (e.g. Alina Skibińska).

a reader who is not an expert on the subject”. I am afraid I have to disagree with this point of view.

Defending himself against the accusation concerning unfounded generalisations, Szurek adds: “I based my analysis on two trials because they perfectly illustrate my typology of survival strategies. Hence, overall trial statistics are in this case of no use to me”. That does not convince me. Szurek seems to sustain the view that one can easily write about ‘numerous trials’ and ‘frequent cases’ without providing a sufficient source basis. Let us, therefore, analyse how these ‘statistics’ compare to the total number of village heads in the county during the occupation and to precise requirements. Based on Professor Szurek’s findings, in the 1920s, Łuków county consisted of 18 rural communes. Every commune consisted of several to a dozen or so villages (which remains true about the Polish administrative structure). If we assume the average of ten villages per commune, one may easily assume the total of 180 village heads in Łuków ‘County’. I should add here that usually, every village head had a deputy, which doubles the number of German officials. Estimating the number of people called to account could help, at least, in determining the approximate scale of subordination to the Judenjagd. A precondition for such an analysis would naturally draw attention to the nature of the August Decree and its imprecise provisions.¹⁴³ The course of the trials would also call for a close examination because of how the officials of the apparatus of oppression had conducted them. The reader can only assess the consequences of presenting the problem by using two examples.

One of the trials served for Professor Szurek as a basis for formulating yet another accusation against me – an accusation of scholarly dishonesty. My ‘dishonesty’ supposedly manifests itself in my alleged intentional misunderstanding of the “logic of the argumentation” presented in “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) and concerning the trial of Bolesław Przeździak (and others). I already discussed this (exhaustively) in “Correcting the Picture”. However, since the author uses this example to illustrate my ‘dishonesty’, let us return to the events in the village of Krynka in Celiny county. Let me begin with *an in extenso* quotation of the relevant sections from the chapter and a response by Professor Szurek. This is important,

¹⁴³ Kornbluth, “Jest wielu Kainów”, pp. 157–172.

for the juxtaposition of what he writes in this response and the book demonstrates the inconsistency of his message. In *Night without End*, Szurek writes:

Instances of peasants' disobedience [to the Judenjagd] are rare. An example is the trial of peasants (the case of Bolesław Przeździak, Jan Markowski – deputy village head, Antoni Walczak, Feliks Walczak and Stanisław Kamecki) from the village of Krynka, Celiny county, which commenced on 19 May 1951 in Lublin. Two peasants had opposed denouncing and hunting for Jews. In autumn 1942, this group was ordered to chase and catch Jews who had escaped from the trains, usually during stopovers (Krynka is situated near the railway route), and hand them over to the Germans. **Some peasants, including deputy village head Markowski, obeyed the German orders and robbed the captured Jews.** Still, two of them – Stanisław Czubaszek and Stanisław Wilczek – opposed to taking the risk and let the Jews go [emphasis mine – T.D.]. (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 608–609)

And that is it. Only in response to “Correcting the Picture” did the author present some circumstances he had previously omitted, which I pointed out in my review. Szurek wrote:

In the incriminated passage, I was explaining the difficulties faced by peasants hiding Jews, stemming from various reasons: fear of the occupant, the duty to turn in the Jews to the Germans, hostility against Jews, etc. In this particular case, I wanted to show that in the village of Krynka, suffering from extreme repressive actions, two men – Stanisław Czubaszek and Stanisław Wilczek – had taken an enormous risk and helped to escape the Jews held by Przeździak. Czubaszek's and Wilczek's behaviour was that of the Righteous. The village of Krynka was situated near railroad tracks. A group of local collaborators fiercely operated there, led by a local policeman named Przeździak, who engaged in the merciless hunting for Jews. Having assumed that the whole group hunting for Jews had acted out of fear, all members of that group, except Przeździak, were acquitted in court after the war. What is important is that most of those local collaborators were **killed by the Home Army near the end of the war**. Przeździak was not.

The deputy village head, Jan **Markowski**, was forced by one of the armed **collaborators** to hand over three Jews to Przeździak who had escaped from a death transport. Markowski told two men, Stanisław Czubaszek and Stanisław Wilczek, to escort the Jews to Przeździak, which, fearing repression, they did. However, on the way, they enabled the Jews to escape, causing distress to the police collaborators who severely battered Wilczek for that. The Jews were eventually captured and handed over to the Germans. In some trials conducted based on the August Decree, the village head obeying German orders may have ended up convicted, even if the testimonies of witnesses were objectively favourable for them. This, however, was not the case here. **Tomasz Domański claims that I had unjustly treated Markowski** when I wrote: “Some of the peasants, including the deputy village head, Markowski, obeyed the German orders and, additionally, robbed the captured Jews, but two of them – Stanisław Czubaszek and Stanisław Wilczek – opposed to that, took the risk and let the Jews go” (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 609). Domański believes that, since Markowski was acquitted, I should not mention his involvement in actions against Jews. Even if **Markowski did not personally take part in robbing the Jews**, which I eagerly confirm, he was accused **because he *de facto* ordered others to look for the Jews** [emphasis mine – T.D.]. (“Response”, p. 4)

A simple comparison of two excerpts – one from *Night without End* and one from the response to my review – clearly shows how many ‘gaps’ there are in this short, but quoted in its entirety, section from “Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”). Contrary to the author’s response, *Night without End* does not mention any events crucial for the case concerned. The narrative of *Night without End* does not account for the direct pressure exerted on the villagers. The Germans are far in the background, and anti-Jewish actions are carried out independently by local people. We do not see any activity of local bandits directly collaborating with the police. We are not told they terrorize and harass local peasants, forcing them to participate in hunting for runaway Jews. It is worth reminding that one of these men even wore a German uniform. Finally, we will not learn from *Night without End* that the group was chased and gradually eliminated by a local Home Army unit. As much as reminding that I am glad that, having read “Correcting the Picture”, Szurek accounts for the facts

mentioned above in his narrative, I am astonished that he actually accuses me of ... 'dishonesty'. With such behaviour (I will leave the assessment of this behaviour to the reader), he refuses to admit that the reviewer is right. Still, instead, he uses the opportunity to attack the reviewer again. Omitting facts crucial for the events he calls 'the logic of argumentation', he accuses me of my inability to understand it. Nevertheless, the situation is straightforward: there is no justification (even in the 'logic of argumentation') for omitting details crucial for the described events if a historian wants to give a reliable account of these events. Therefore, neither I nor any reader could 'understand' something simply not present in the text.

Finally, regarding the events in the village of Krynka, Jean-Charles Szurek claimed that I had accused him of unjust treatment of deputy village head Jan Markowski. I uphold it because it follows from the complete court files that Markowski had nothing to do with robbing the Jews or turning them in ("Correcting the Picture", p. 44). If Szurek knows of any other documents, he should disclose them, but he did not do it in *Night without End*. Furthermore, he did not inform the reader that Markowski was acquitted of all accusations and only presented his own vision of the events based on abbreviations of source materials. After reading "Correcting the Picture", it seems that he withdraws from accusing Markowski of robbing the Jews, gladly – as he put it – admitting that "Markowski was not personally involved in the robbery". Still, with stubbornness worthy of a better cause, he continues accusing him of "*de facto* ordering others to look for the Jews". However, this is also a groundless accusation. What a strange approach to practising scholarly work it is!

On the one hand, Szurek admits that an armed collaborator forced Markowski to order capturing Jews. However, on the other, he claims that "he *de facto* ordered the others to look for the Jews". Who, then, *de facto* ordered capturing Jews? This question seems crucial. Was it Markowski or perhaps the Germans *via* a group of their collaborators? Moreover, in Szurek's opinion, who is guilty of instigation or ordering the acts that had caused the death of these Jews?

Another 'example' of my alleged dishonesty is my opinion expressed in "Correcting the Picture" on Szurek's way of presenting the account by Rubin Rosenberg concerning the displacement of Jews from the village of Adamów in 1942. Again, the inevitable insinuation was made that I was 'deluded', and accusations

were made against me, which, to put it mildly, went against the facts. Rosenberg's account has been so 'trimmed' by Szurek that out of a more extended passage in *Night without End* there is only a piece about Poles participating in a liquidation operation against the Jews in Adamów. Szurek explains that this was not a mistake since: "the complexity of the situation in Adamów was described earlier, in the part of the text devoted to the role of the Germans, Ukrainians, and Polish policemen" ("Response", p. 3). Moreover, he also adds: "When Rubin Rosenberg talks about the liquidation operation, he does not mean that the Poles were the authors, but that they participated in it". Moreover, later: "I'm not writing here **about Jews turned in by other Jews** because **I have done so elsewhere in the text**. Furthermore, my intention is not to 'accuse', but to understand, including the dilemmas of the village heads, as some of them, in fact, did try to help the Jews" ("Response", p. 3). It is only true that Szurek earlier did describe the role of the Germans and Ukrainians. However, after 'abbreviating' Rosenberg's account, the information about Jews turning in other Jews to save their lives completely disappears. So, Szurek has removed an essential element from Rosenberg's account. And my intention is not – as Professor Grabowski imputes – to look for 'Jewish perpetrators' but to present the reality as it was. Such is the duty of a historian. Rosenberg presents an apocalypse where the Germans wrote the scripts and, most certainly, decided on their contents. It perfectly shows the gradation of the events and actions of representatives of individual nations. Finally, my point is not to deny the involvement of the Polnische Polizei in the displacement where it did take place, as in many other cases. I do not make any such omissions, and I see no reason for doing so.

One more aspect of the displacement of the Jews from Adamów is worth analysing. Without specifying the source of information,¹⁴⁴ Szurek writes that soon after the displacement operation, the village of Adamów was attacked by Jewish guerrilla fighters who freed several dozen Jews from prison and killed Poles who "helped in the deportation".¹⁴⁵ The attack in Adamów and the freeing of Jewish prisoners

¹⁴⁴ Professor Szurek wrote that 'Yakov Keselbrener gave the most important testimony' concerning the events. Unfortunately, he did not state where exactly Keselbrener's testimony could be found, see J.Ch. Szurek, "Powiat łukowski", in *Dalej jest noc*, p. 596.

¹⁴⁵ The authors of the "Foreword" to *Night without End* (Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski) used the description of the events as the evidence that sometimes Jews organised retaliatory actions against 'local murderers and informers' (*Night without End*, vol. 1, p. 41).

is mentioned in recollections of Kiliński's GL [People's Guard] commanded by Serafim Alekseyev and of the commander himself.¹⁴⁶ The events allegedly took place in August 1942.

The same month, Kiliński's GL squad commanded by Serafim took control over Adamów. The county office was destroyed, and documents were burned. In addition, a requisition dairy was destroyed, a blue police post was shot at, and 200 Jews were freed. One policeman was injured, and one gendarme was killed. Participants of the operation were, among others, Jan Janiszek from Niedźwiedz, Henryk Wojciechowski from Krzywda, Józef Kornacki, Iwan Kurylenko and Aleksander Łogaczew. The unit withdrew towards the village of Cisownik. After leading out the last group of Jews, Józef Kornacki and Aleksander Łogaczew stayed in Szczałb forest and were killed while being pursued by the Germans.¹⁴⁷

Not a word is mentioned here about killing Polish civilians. However, the killing of a German gendarme is mentioned, which would explain the immediate retaliatory action of the German police in the form of the pursuit of the guerrilla group. Similar events are described in "Kartki dziennika nauczyciela w Łukowie z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej", but dated at the end of October 1942:

On 30 October [1942], I went to the village of Burzec to inspect the cooperative. When I was approaching the village, I was stopped by some peasants who had escaped from the village because gendarmes had arrived there to seek and capture Jews. I was told that some Jews had escaped from Adamów, managed to secure some weapons, and attacked and destroyed the county office; they were also looking for the village head whom they wanted to kill. They did not find him, so they wrecked his house. They killed one gendarme and injured another one. The rest, along with the blue police, escaped. A transport of Jews was passing there at night. It was stopped, and some Jews escaped again from about ten wagons. They hid in the forests. The Germans are chasing them at

¹⁴⁶ S. Alekseyev 'Serafim', "Zginęli bez wieści", *Biuletyn ŻIH* 65–66 (1968), pp. 235–247.

¹⁴⁷ Recollections of J. Granztof, <http://deblin.cal24.pl/wspomnienia.php> (accessed 19 December 2019).

the moment. As a result, 25 Jews were killed. I know that by 4 November, they had not been buried yet.¹⁴⁸

It is a shame that Szurek did not confront these words with Keselbrener's account, which he also hid rather carefully.

Nevertheless, entirely surprising are other disquisitions of Professor Szurek. In this part of the response, he says: "There are no reasons to believe that any relation existed between Serafim Alekseyev and orders from Moscow, and even more so, that his saved Jewish brothers-in-arms shared his views" ("Response", p. 4). So far, I have been convinced that we are past the stage of identifying the circumstances of forming communist guerrilla troops and whose orders the Red Army officers followed when they formed the GL units. There is no doubt about the group's affiliation in question with Soviet communist guerrillas. And Moscow? It is enough to reach for the published memoirs of Serafim Alekseyev, alias 'Serafim':

At Stachurski's, we often listened to **radio programmes from Moscow**. They had a wind turbine producing energy for the radio kept in a beehive. If we had explosives – I told him once – the Germans would not behave with such impunity at the railway station. Henryk thought for a moment and said with full conviction. "Don't worry, Serafin [so stated in the text]. Soon we will. **I will have reliable radio contact with Moscow** [emphasis mine – T.D.]."¹⁴⁹

Even if the contact was not established, 'Serafim' persistently tried to convince the readers of the need to contact the 'Headquarters'. Every historian with a basic knowledge of communist guerrillas understands that the purpose of listening to Moscow radio was to be up to date with the current political line of the party, while the purpose of radio contact with higher rank officials via a radio station was to receive instructions and guidelines.

Professor Szurek uses yet another way to repudiate my review. He tries to convince the readers that I do not understand the tragic experience of Jewish girls

¹⁴⁸ "Kartki dziennika nauczyciela w Łukowie z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej", <https://www.lukow-historia.pl/?p=6461> (accessed 19 December 2019).

¹⁴⁹ <http://deblin.cal24.pl/wspomnienia.php> (accessed 19 December 2019).

who – having chosen to fight for their lives – had to hide away and change their identity from Jewish to Polish. Szurek described this process as double violence inflicted upon Jewish girls. He included among them Estera Borensztejn hidden, *inter alia*, collectively by the village community of Osiny. My alleged lack of understanding he additionally described as ‘nit-picking’. However, in my review, I quote Borensztejn’s recollections:

In the evening I went to the people who once had bought my grandfather’s estate. I told them who I was: they were astonished but afraid to let me stay. I had nowhere to go. Finally, they agreed with other people in the village that they would hide me for some time and so, they all would be guilty, and no one would turn others in. They united themselves in a way. It was the village of Osiny. I had stayed there until the spring. (“Correcting the Picture”, p. 48)

From this account, the Poles hiding Borensztejn were perfectly aware of her nationality, and they must have been aware of the possible punishment under German regulations.

In his response, Szurek argues: “I don’t mention Borensztejn’s story in my text. I do not even mind that Dr Domański attaches her example to my quoted sentence. He solemnly concludes: “In this absurd way, he [Szurek] refers to peasants hiding the girl and treating her like a member of the family, which meant participating in all everyday activities with the rest of the family” (p. 49). This is dishonest. The process of deculturation is often a necessary final step, frequently saving a life, although very painful, particularly for a small girl” (“Response”, p. 6). There is nothing dishonest in the story of Estera Borensztejn presented by me. It clearly follows from „Łuków County” (“Powiat łukowski”) that Professor Szurek included Estera Borensztejn along with other girls in the same category of ‘successful transformation to Aryan identity’, which he subsequently calls violence of deculturation¹⁵⁰ (*Night without End*, vol. 1, pp. 597–598). Therefore, I presented

¹⁵⁰ The relevant passages read as follows: “We know five examples of successful transformation to Aryan identity, three of which involve the changing of one’s name. It is worth emphasising that all mentioned survivors who changed their identity were women. They included two young girls: Lilian Fenster (born in 1926, so she was 16) and Ryszka Huberman-Iwan (date of birth unknown) and three

the circumstances constituting the background for the girl's saving, which are not shown in the book. I have never claimed that the transformation of identity is easy for anyone, let alone a child. A small but crucial supplement is needed to analyse the girls' stories. Guilty of the violence of deculturation are the Germans who condemned Jews to the Holocaust. They created the reality in which clergymen or peasants, out of human kindness and compassion (or Christian love for one's neighbour), in the hope of saving their lives, taught Jewish fugitives the principles of Catholicism so that they could be absorbed into the social background. In this particular reality, Estera Borensztejn and Irena Krawczyk, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, become so deeply rooted in their new identity that they feel Polish (which they equate with Catholicism) and do not want to return to their Jewish tradition. This background (with German presence in it) is nowhere in Professor Szurek's narrative. The whole story again is reduced to Polish-Jewish relations.

At the end of his text, Jean-Charles Szurek, fighting with my alleged ill-will and yet unable to suppress his poorly concealed spite, wishes me to find a researcher identity in Sartre's tone. As I see it, this is not the language of debate and should never be used in scholarly discourse. To sum up, let me repeat that critical reviews and polemics are standard practices in scholarly and scientific work and not an attack. I can only hope that the insults aimed at me have resulted from excessive emotions, far from the standards expected of history researchers.

Conclusions

In one of her comments to "Correcting the Picture", Anna Zapalec assumed an ironic tone which does not fit in with academic discourse – and went beyond the limits of the absurd in formulating the following opinion:

Having read the review, I have the impression that, in his criticism, Tomasz Domański does not engage in discourse on equal terms with the authors, and only tries to prove that he would write the book better. Moreover, he seems convinced that other researchers' publications presenting different points of view

kids: Marianna Adameczek (born 1930), Estera Borensztejn (born 1932), and Irena Krawczyk (born 1932)". Later in the text, Szurek writes about two forms of violence related to acculturation, Szurek, "Powiat łukowski", pp. 597–598.

are redundant since he has mastered the truth. Such an approach to scholarly research and in reviews is methodologically wrong. Naturally, nothing prevents Domański from writing such a model book and presenting his own findings, confronting them with ours. (“Response”, p. 3)

I do not think I have a monopoly on infallibility. No one has it, not even the editors and co-authors of *Night without End*.

Nevertheless, every professional researcher should be aware of the importance of research standards. Therefore, when reading the book, confronting it with the sources, and, eventually, writing the review, I was deeply convinced that scholarly research needed to be conducted in line with the principles of a fair analysis of archived materials. I was convinced that it called for describing past events on such a basis, whether they pertain to Jews, Poles, Germans, or any other nation. Every historian must treat historical sources with respect and avoid simplifications, distortions, and manipulations. Can a researcher analyse source materials without accounting for the time and circumstances in which they have been created? Can we ignore the facts stated there if they do not fit our thesis? Is it good practice to omit crucial source information and immediately afterwards use abbreviated source material to draw general conclusions and create a picture of the occupation reality? When writing about operations of the *Polnische Polizei*, the Volunteer Fire Brigades, or the *Baudienst*, can we ignore the occupation interrelations affecting their functioning and immediately afterwards suggest that the reader may find more information on the Internet? Are these research standards? Is it good practice to promote false terms, such as ‘German-Polish administration’, or to describe the circumstances of persecuting Jews and helping Jews, detached from the then reality? Is it good practice to present tabular data without providing a data source and then accusing this or that researcher of refusing to engage in a polemic on such data?

I discussed all these general observations in detail, pointing to relevant examples and source materials in “Correcting the Picture” and the present response.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Perhaps many of these errors would have been avoided had the publication been subjected to the review procedure. Perhaps the editors of *Night without End* could reveal the names of the reviewers, if any, as it is commonly done in the case of books with scholarly aspirations.

Given the number of objections to *Night without End* raised and documented by me, I must say I am embarrassed by the intellectual quality of the heading published on the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research website, announcing 'correction of a failed correction.'¹⁵² As it is commonly accepted in the academic world, a researcher open to constructive criticism does not need to use such methods to label his or her adversaries. Nonetheless, I hope that the editors and authors of the book will use hints about the source materials, suggestions, and critical comments.

¹⁵² <https://www.holocaustresearch.pl/index.php?mod=news&show=381> (accessed 12 August 2019).

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DEATH FOR HELPING JEWS... A HANDFUL OF COMMENTS ON
THE LATEST BOOK BY BOGDAN MUSIAŁ¹

Time and time again, the issue of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War triggers great emotions and passionate discussions among professional researchers, publicists and politicians. This tends to fuel a spiral of further disputes. By their scope and form, they far exceed the framework of reliable debate among members of the scientific community and, by means of the media, influence social views and political conflicts in Poland and abroad. There is no shortage of “amateurs” and “dogmatics,” even those with scholarly ambitions engaged in polemics and works based on them, as the author of the reviewed publication *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...* [Who Will Come to Help a Jew] Bogdan Musiał points out.² As a symptomatic expression of the gross distortion

¹ B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi*, collaboration O. Musiał (Warsaw, 2019), p. 412.

² From 1999 to 2004, Bogdan Musiał worked at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, from 2007 to 2010 at the Institute of National Remembrance, and from 2010 to 2015 he headed the Department of Central and Eastern European Studies at the Faculty of Law and Administration of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. Bogdan Musiał can no doubt be considered one of the most important figures impacting Polish historical policy after 1989. His most significant publications include: *Rozstrzelać elementy kontrrewolucyjne! Brutalizacja wojny niemiecko-sowieckiej latem 1941 roku* (Warsaw, 2001); *Na zachód po trupie Polski* (Warsaw, 2009); *Przewrót majowy 1926 roku w oczach Kremla* (Warsaw, 2009); *Wojna Stalina 1939–1945. Terror, grabież, demontaże* (Poznan,

of historical realities in the realm of mass culture, this respected scholar takes the immensely popular recent novel by Australian nurse Heather Morris, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*.³ Both in an interview and in the book itself, the author ahistorically and unfairly drew attention to the alleged indifference of Poles from Oświęcim and the surrounding area to the fate of Jews murdered in the extermination camp.⁴

The same is true of works that ostentatiously claim to be scholarly, to mention studies by Jan Tomasz Gross, Barbara Engelking, Jan Śpiewak and Jan Grabowski in particular.⁵ In Musiał's view, they often manipulate and distort historical sources or alternatively take an uncritical approach to the testimony of Holocaust survivors. By surpassing themselves in the radicalness of their statements, these scholars are supposed to create an image of the massive entanglement of Poles in the Holocaust

2012); *Geneza paktu Hitler–Stalin. Fakty i Propaganda* (Warsaw, 2012); *Sowieccy partyzanci 1941–1944. Mity i rzeczywistość* (Poznan, 2014); *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden, 1999); "Aktion Reinhardt". *Der Völkermord an den Juden im Generalgouvernement 1941–1944* (Osnabrück 2004) (editor); *Genesis des Genozids. Polen 1939–1941*, with Mallmann (Darmstadt, 2004); *Kampfplatz Deutschland. Stalins Kriegspläne gegen den Westen* (Berlin, 2008).

³ H. Morris, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* (translated into Polish by K. Gucio as *Tatuażysta z Auschwitz* (Warsaw, 2018).

⁴ M. Gostkiewicz, Interview with Heather Morris, "Jak Lale Sokolov zakochał się w dziewczynie, której wytatuował w Auschwitz obozowy numer, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21–22 April 2018, <https://weekend.gazeta.pl/weekend/1,177333,23257435,jak-lale-sokolov-zakochal-sie-w-dziewczynie-ktorej-wytatuowal.html> (accessed 26 February 2021). See S. Steinbacher, "Musterstadt" *Auschwitz. Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (München, 2000), p. 307; Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, pp. 7–9.

⁵ See also J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów, 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu* (Warsaw, 2011); *idem, Na posterunku. Udział polskiej policji granatowej i kryminalnej w zagładzie Żydów* (Wołowiec, 2020); *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski, vols 1–2 (Warsaw, 2018); B. Engelking, "Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień". *Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw, 2011); J.T. Gross, *Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka* (Sejny, 2000); *Skandaliczne słowa prof. Śpiewaka: "Nie mogę znieść retoryki ratowania Żydów przez Polaków"*, <https://dorzeczy.pl/kraj/100332/Skandaliczne-slowa-prof-Spiewaka-Nie-moge-zniesc-retoryki-ratowania-Zydow-przez-Polakow.html> (accessed 26 February 2021). See T. Domański, "Correcting the Picture? Some Reflections on the Use of Sources in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without an End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], ed. by B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów [Polish Center for Holocaust Research], Warsaw 2018, vol. 1–2," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 637–743; T. Roguski, "Recenzja pracy: *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, edited by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski," *Glaukopis* 36 (2019), pp. 335–356; P. Gontarczyk, "Między nauką a mistyfikacją, czyli o naturze piśmiennictwa prof. Jana Grabowskiego na podstawie casusu wsi Wrotnów i Międzyzyles powiatu węgrowskiego," *Glaukopis* 36 (2019), pp. 313–323.

or their indifference and passivity towards the tragic fate of the Jews. In addition, their arguments are supposed to “downplay, minimise and sometimes even completely ignore” (p. 12) the terrorist occupation policy of the German authorities and the resulting psychosis of fear among Poles. In his view, these authors thus contribute to further perpetuating the false belief spread in the West, including the USA and Israel, that Poles “willingly assisted” the National Socialists in carrying out the Holocaust and are “co-responsible for this crime.”⁶ They even go so far as to claim that Poles were supposed to have killed more Jews than they saved, often actively participating not only in German crimes against this population but also in the plundering of their property.⁷

In his book, Bogdan Musiał tries to prove the opposite of what the proponents of a negative vision of the history of Polish-Jewish relations in the years 1939–1945 are pushing. According to him, Poles “were not left a free choice in the matter of their approach to their Jewish neighbours, as the legislation in occupied Poland clearly shows.”⁸ As he himself points out in the introduction, his aim is “to introduce into the discourse and scholarly circulation sources concerning German legislation criminalising aid to Jews in occupied Poland.”⁹ In his book, Musiał focuses on the General Governorate (GG) as the only subject of his considerations, which may leave the reader feeling there is more to the story. Although the author emphasises that the western Polish territories incorporated into the Reich in the autumn of 1939 (Poznańskie, Upper Silesia, Pomorze) and the North-Eastern Borderlands merit separate considerations because they were under distinct legal and policy occupation regimes that require “additional and separate archival queries,” the fact that the GG is his sole focus might create the impression that the issue has not been fully covered and could lead to speculation about the attitudes of Poles towards Jews in other territories under German occupation. It could also serve as a pre-

⁶ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 11.

⁷ It is worth adding that Musiał casts doubt on the competence of these scholars who, as far as he knows, do not speak German sufficiently or at all, which is an essential condition for exploring the reality of Poland's occupation by the Third Reich and its specific bureaucratic jargon. Moreover, Barbara Engelking and Jan Tomasz Gross have no higher education background in history, and thus their research skills in this field may seem questionable. See Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

text for criticising the author's arguments. A comprehensive analysis of the issue would be very much desired due to the radical polarisation of views in this field of inquiry. On the other hand, the General Governorate did not differ significantly in its methods and means of racial terror from other Polish territories under the German yoke. It is fair to think, however, that only in Hans Frank's "principate" did the ordinances criminalising any assistance to the Jewish population have such a broad reach.¹⁰ In this context, the author rightly emphasises that the legislation in force in occupied Poland was "unique in Europe, as were the repressions and punishments enforced for providing aid to persecuted Jews." For nowhere else "did Germans execute people accused of helping Jews and their families."¹¹ This vital fact usually escapes scholars associated with the Centre for Holocaust Research and the Jewish Historical Institute (i.e. the forerunners of the New School of Holocaust History Research) or is deliberately downplayed by them.

¹⁰ The death penalty for such acts was also in force in the Polish parts of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine and Reichskommissariat Ostland – in Volhynia, Polesie, Nowogródzczyzna, eastern Białystok and Vilnius, although it is likely that such legal acts were not issued everywhere. Interestingly enough, for example, documents from the State Archives of the Grodno Region include an official proclamation on the death penalty for helping Jews in Slonim (General Commissariat of Belarus), issued on 22 December 1942, i.e. a few months after the liquidation of the ghetto there. In this proclamation, the German town administration warned the local population against hiding Jews in their homes or on their farms under threat of execution. At the same time, it ordered that Jewish fugitives should immediately be handed over to the German gendarmerie or the local protection police (Schutzmannschaft). In the Polish territories annexed to the Reich, there was no general decree on the death penalty for helping Jews. Announcements prohibiting assistance may have appeared locally at the time of the liquidation of individual ghettos, e.g. on 24 June 1942 in the district of Blachstädt (Blachownia, Upper Silesian Province), after the deportation of all Jews, the local starost issued a "public warning" that "anyone who helps Jews by hiding them or assisting them in any other way was to expect the severest punishment. In addition, people would be held criminally liable if they were aware of the unauthorised residence of Jews in the district of Blachstädt, but did not immediately report this to the nearest police station or gendarmerie." The issue of criminal responsibility for helping Jews in the territories incorporated into the Reich and the North-Eastern Borderlands still needs to be explored in detail. See M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Namysło, *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w okresie II wojny światowej. Kontekst i uwarunkowania in Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 25–26; Państwowe Archiwum Obwodu Grodzieńskiego (State Archives of the Grodno Region), M.41/3148, Die Stadtverwaltung Slonim, Bekanntmachung, 22 December 1942, p. 6; *Kara śmierci za ukrywanie Żydów. Wywiad z prof. Andrzejem Żbikowskim*, <https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/kara-smierci-za-ukrywanie-zydow-wywiad-z-prof-andrzejem-zbikowskim>, (accessed 19 February 2020); *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945*, vol. 8: *Sowjetunion mit annektierten Gebieten II: Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien und Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, ed. by S. Heim, U. Herbert, M. Hollmann et al. (Berlin, 2016), Doc. 157.

¹¹ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 17.

Bogdan Musiał's book comprises six chapters, a summary and an appendix. In the first chapter, the author, taking into account well-known positions from Polish and German historiography, presents an overview of German policy in occupied Poland, with particular emphasis on the situation of the Jewish population in the GG until the end of 1941. The historian outlines the antecedents of the German regulations aimed at eliminating not only Polish-Jewish cooperation but also any Polish assistance to persecuted Jews. Chapters two to five form the book's thematic core and deal with the extermination of Jews from the beginning of 1941 until the end of the occupation. Musiał meticulously describes the situation in the Warsaw Ghetto and the famine that prevailed there, which contributed to the development of Polish-Jewish trade, as well as the hunt for Jewish escapees who escaped from the ghettos before being sent to death camps. He emphasises the drastic tightening of sanctions for helping Jewish escapees: from the death penalty for "perpetrators" (October 1941), to demonstration executions with entire families (November 1942), to pacification operations. The historian devotes considerable space in this part of the work to specific examples of repression, clearly outlining the process of their escalation and radicalisation. He also presents the problem of Poles' complicity in the hunt for Jewish escapees, cases of denunciation and the dilemma of the hostages who were forced by the Germans, under the threat of the death penalty, to take an active part in capturing escapees from segregated Jewish districts. The sixth chapter attempts to present the legal aspects of the punishment for helping Jews in other countries occupied by the Reich and the post-war fate of German perpetrators. The appendix of Musiał's study contains source documents (selected ordinances of the central and local GG authorities penalising assistance to persecuted Jews), an interview with the author and his review of Jan Tomasz Gross's controversial book, *Sąsiedzi* (Neighbours), comments on the German policy of remembrance, and a poignant short story by Krzysztof Kąkolewski, *Bezruch, cisza, ciemność* (Immobility, silence, darkness), deeply rooted in historical realities, about the drama of a Pole who carried the burden of responsibility for the death of a Jew during the occupation.¹²

What conclusions can therefore be drawn after reading Bogdan Musiał's book? First of all, he evocatively depicts the reality of the occupation and carefully pre-

¹² See K. Kąkolewski, *Bezruch, cisza i ciemność* in *idem, Węzły wojny* (Poznan, 2010), pp. 63–70.

sents the historical context of the issues discussed. He repeatedly emphasises that the monstrous magnitude of the German terror against Poles must have greatly impacted their behaviour and attitudes and, consequently, their readiness to take risks and help their persecuted Jewish fellows. He points out that many Poles were not protected from the terror even by complying with all the occupiers' demands, not resisting passively or actively, and not belonging to the leadership strata. They could have been murdered or deprived of freedom at any time as part of collective reprisals for "anti-German" operations or displaced during the Germanisation of their homelands. By the end of the occupation, several hundred thousand "ordinary Poles" had lost their lives in this way, and millions were deported or forced to flee.¹³

Despite the repression, apprehension and an all-pervading psychosis of fear, in Musiał's view, Polish society did not, on the whole, remain indifferent to the tragic fate of the Jews. In this context, the researcher points out, for example, that without smuggling, the number of deaths from starvation in the Warsaw closed-off residential district would have been many times higher, which is also confirmed by the testimonies of the city's Jewish residents. The researcher writes at length about Jewish half-starved child beggars who managed to go outside the ghetto walls to the Polish population to ask for food. The sight of them caused shock and sympathy among Varsovians, which meant that the little beggars often received alms. (Sometimes, the children strayed into the German districts of the city, and this ended tragically, usually with their murder on the spot). In order to end the "practice" of Warsaw residents supporting the hungry, Ludwig Fischer, Warsaw District Governor of the General Governorate, issued a decree on 10 November 1941, forbidding, on penalty of death, the giving of alms and food to Jews, including starving children. He must have deduced that helping Jewish children "was not a marginal phenomenon, it had to be widespread, because otherwise, German officials would not have demanded the death penalty for these crimes."¹⁴ Moreover, he states, citing data from Jozef Gitler-Barski, director of the Warsaw Ghetto Child Welfare Committee, that by the time the ghetto was liquidated in the

¹³ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 27.

¹⁴ See "1941 listopad 10, Warszawa – Obwieszczenie dr. Ludwiga Fischera dotyczące kary śmierci za nieuprawnione opuszczanie żydowskich dzielnic mieszkaniowych," in Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 272.

summer of 1942, a total of up to 300 children had escaped through its walls and taken refuge with Polish families.¹⁵ Also in the provinces, Jews were hidden (either for free or in exchange for money or valuables), and illegal Polish-Jewish trade and economic cooperation flourished, especially concerning handicraft services. According to Musiał, this prevented mass starvation deaths in other ghettos in the General Governorate as well. It seems that, to illustrate the development of the black market more fully, it would be worth analysing the situation in other ghettos in more detail, especially in those that were not physically separated from the so-called Aryan section. After all, most of them were open or semi-open. Apart from Warsaw, the stereotypical image of a ghetto separated by a wall still applies in the GG only to Cracow and Nowy Sącz. The possibilities and opportunities for Polish-Jewish contacts in the economic sphere were not limited to Warsaw, though the author did not describe this in detail.

An extremely interesting part of Musiał's work is the characterisation of the course of official correspondence and the increasing radicalisation of German legislation concerning the criminalisation of any hint of support from Poles for the Jewish population. In this way, the author is part of the structuralist current in research on the Third Reich, noting the important element of rivalry and competency friction between the various institutions of the Nazi regime.¹⁶ Interestingly, he also gives examples of senior officials of the occupation apparatus who resigned from their positions in protest against the tightening of anti-Jewish laws. This was the case of Eberhard Westerkamp (head of the Main Department of Public Administration in the GG government) and Alfred Spindler (head of the Main Department of Finance), who did not suffer any professional or personal

¹⁵ See Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance), AIPN, GK 196/337, Józef Gitler Barski's testimony of 25 January 1947 during a trial before the Supreme National Tribunal in Ludwig Fischer's case (extract), p. 136.

¹⁶ See K. Hildebrand, *Das Dritte Reich* (München, 1991), p. 178 ff.; *idem*, "Monokratie oder Polykratie? Hitlers Herrschaft und das Dritte Reich," in *Der Führerstaat, Mythos und Realität*, ed. by G. Hirschfeld and L. Kettenacker (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 73 ff.; I. Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London, 1993), p. 59 ff.; P. Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches. Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (München–Wien, 1991), p. 10; M. Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung* (München, 1992), p. 423 ff.; M. Ruck, *Führerabsolutismus und polykratisches Herrschaftsgefüge – Verfassungsstrukturen des NS-Staates in Deutschland 1933–1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, ed. by K.D. Bracher, M. Funke, and H.A. Jacobsen (Bonn, 1992), p. 36 ff.

consequences because of their resignation. For the vast majority of German officials, however, the extermination of the Jews was not a significant problem, and they participated in this crime voluntarily. The growing criminal dynamics of Nazi polycracy in the General Governorate resulted in the increasingly draconian laws of the GG occupation authorities regarding racial policy. Musiał reports that Ludwig Leist, plenipotentiary of the district chief for the city of Warsaw, issued an order on 14 January 1941 containing a clear threat of punishment for Poles for giving aid to Jews residing outside the Jewish quarter.¹⁷ In subsequent legislation of 13 February, Leist criminalised not only illegal Polish-Jewish exchanges but also the “donation and otherwise transfer of all kinds of goods to Jews.”¹⁸ The author notes that similar regulations (prohibitions on contact with Jews, on trade, on giving a ride in a horse cart, on giving aid or shelter, etc.) were often issued arbitrarily and at the time still without a proper legal basis by the governors of other districts in the GG. He demonstrates that punishments (fines, arrests of up to three months or deportation to a forced labour camp) did not remain on paper alone, and gives documented examples of Polish “supporters” who faced reprisals for helping Jews.¹⁹

The Germans quickly concluded that the promulgated orders were not being complied with. They, therefore, began to tighten the regulations and, for the first time on 15 October 1941, Governor General Hans Frank issued an administrative regulation, but with the force of a decree, concerning the death penalty for leaving a Jewish quarter without permission. At the same time, under the same penalty, Poles were forbidden to give shelter to Jews.²⁰ However, it must be remembered that

¹⁷ See *1941 styczeń 14, Warszawa – Zarządzenie Ludwiga Leista o utworzeniu dzielnicy żydowskiej w Warszawie* (odpis), in Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 257.

¹⁸ See “1941 luty 13, Warszawa – Rozporządzenie Ludwiga Leista o zbywaniu towarów Żydom poza żydowską dzielnicą mieszkaniową w Warszawie (odpis),” in Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 258.

¹⁹ For example, on 10 February 1941, Zbigniew Mroczkowski, an engineer, was arrested for supplying food to Jewish people. On the same day, he was imprisoned in the Pawiak prison in Warsaw, and then transported to Auschwitz at the end of May that year. See Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 66; T. Gonet, “Mroczkowski Zbigniew,” in *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, ed. by A. Namysło and G. Berendt (Warsaw, 2014), p. 247.

²⁰ The administrative regulation provided that: “(1) Jews who leave their designated district without authorisation are subject to the death penalty. Anyone who knowingly gives such Jews a hiding place is subject to the same punishment. (2) Instigators and abettors shall be subject to the same punishment as the perpetrator, an attempted act shall be punished as an accomplished act. In milder cases, heavy imprisonment or prison may be imposed. (3) Sentencing shall be by the Special Courts.” Musiał

the thrust of this legislation was primarily directed against the Jews themselves. The prohibition on providing escapees with a “hiding place,” which was subject to an identical punishment, was subsidiary to the first prohibition. This is indicated by both the construction of this provision and the title of the regulation itself: “on restrictions on residence in the *General-Gouvernement*.” Significantly, during the first year the ordinance was in force, the death penalty was carried out exclusively on Jews. In Warsaw, for example, the first execution of eight Jews for illegally leaving the ghetto took place on 17 November 1941. For Poles, the threat of death for helping the Jewish population became real a year later.²¹

However, the threat of the death penalty for merely hiding Jews was not enough for all high GG officials. Some representatives of the local civil authorities concluded that the measures taken had proved unsatisfactory and that it was necessary, under penalty of death, also to prohibit any assistance, however small. Thus, the governor of the Warsaw District, Ludwig Fischer, less than a month later, on 10 November 1941, extended the threat of this sanction to other acts of assistance to Jews, including the provision of food and, consequently, the giving of alms to begging Jewish children. As cases of helping Jewish people continued to occur, the German officials concluded that the sanction for a Pole must be harsher than for a Jew. The death penalty was extended to cover the family of the “abettor.” These draft regulations were agreed on ad hoc in the GG occupation administration in 1942. Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, Higher SS and Police Leader in the General Governorate issued identical ordinances establishing Jewish housing quarters for the Warsaw and Lublin districts²² (on 28 October 1942) and for the Radom, Cracow,

points out that the German judges most often pronounced the death penalty. Only the Governor General could save the lives of the condemned, a right that he even exercised sometimes. However, due to the protracted nature of *Sondergerichte* proceedings, from the second half of 1943 onwards, criminal cases for aiding and abetting Jews were often referred to police summary courts, which immediately passed and executed death sentences on defendants without any procedural formalities. See “1941 październik 15, Kraków – Trzecie rozporządzenie o ograniczeniach pobytu w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie,” in Musiał, *Kto dopomóż*, pp. 269–270, and 137–149.

²¹ See K. Persak, “Co dziś wiemy o niemieckich represjach za pomoc udzielaną Żydom? Omówienie pracy: Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej, vol. 1, eds Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, Aleksandra Namysło (Warsaw, IPN, 2019), 464 pp.,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 16 (2020), p. 783.

²² See “1942 październik 28, Kraków – Policyjne rozporządzenie o utworzeniu żydowskiej dzielnicy mieszkaniowej w dystryktach warszawskim i lubelskim,” in Musiał, *Kto dopomóż*, pp. 299–303.

and Galicia districts (on 10 November 1942).²³ Under these identical decrees, any assistance to Jews (providing shelter, giving food) was to be punished by death. Moreover, paragraph three of the ordinance read: “Anyone who is aware that a Jew is illegally staying outside the Jewish quarter and does not report this to the police will be liable to police security measures.” Implicit in this official euphemism was the death penalty or deportation to a concentration camp.

Musiał notes that these regulations did not stop Poles from supporting Jews and showing them solidarity. He describes demonstration executions, during which German policemen and gendarmes murdered “not only the ‘culprits’ or those ‘suspected’ of helping Jewish escapees, but also their nearest and dearest, including small children,” such as the Ulma family from Markowa (24 March 1944) and the Kosior, Obuchiewicz and Kowalski families from the village of Stary Ciepeliów (6 December 1942).²⁴ At the same time, he stresses that those who aided Jewish escapees had to reckon with the fact that those escapees might hand them over to the Germans, fearing being subjected to physical abuse to force confessions. The Jews in hiding were also often unaware of the sanctions that would be meted out to their benefactors for helping them. At the same time, the author notes that the repressions mainly affected the inhabitants of the Polish countryside. He has not noted any cases of Poles accused of helping persecuted Jews being shot directly on the spot and together with their family members in large cities. He concludes that the reasons for this cannot be responsibly explained without further research and archival queries.

In his book, Musiał does not shy away from difficult topics in Polish-Jewish relations during the war. One of these is the denunciation by Poles to Germans of Jews who were in hiding. The author places this issue in the context of German anti-Jewish legislation and the occupation regime’s terror against Poles. The motives for denunciation varied. Prevalent among them were: fear of repression, desire for revenge, anti-Semitism, and material motives related to the anticipated reward for turning in or catching a Jewish escapee. Musiał emphasises that both the Polish

²³ See “1942 listopad 10, Kraków – Rozporządzenie policyjne o utworzeniu żydowskich dzielnic mieszkaniowych w Okręgach Radom, Krakau i Galizien (Galicja),” in Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, pp. 306–311.

²⁴ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, pp. 159–161, 175–179.

independence underground during the war (through death sentences) and the post-war Polish courts punished people who denounced Jews to the occupying forces. He points out that behaviour of this kind was also stigmatised by Polish society in general. He adds that the German authorities often took hostages to force the surrender of Jewish refugees and those helping them, which were either systemic or ad hoc. Due to the small presence of occupation units in the rural area, the Germans contrived to pick hostages in each village. They were responsible with their lives if there were “acts of violence,” which included helping Jews. If a hostage was aware that someone in a village was hiding ghetto escapees and did not report it, they were threatened with death. The intimidation of the inhabitants was also carried out in such a way that a representative of the German administration, usually the district governor, would announce to the village heads that Jews were being kept in their area and that if they were not handed over, the Germans would execute five people in each village, regardless of whether they were “guilty” or not. Musiał noted examples of executions for a failure to comply with the denunciation order, also carried out against Poles forced under penalty of death to serve in what was known as village guards/patrols²⁵ (Ortsschutzwache/Ortsschutz).

In addition, the local population was used by the occupying police forces in hunts and manhunts for Jewish escapees. The historian writes that it is unknown how many Poles voluntarily undertook to catch escapees. In his opinion, although they cost the lives of hundreds or perhaps several thousand Jews, it can be assumed that they were not massive. Indeed, if this reprehensible phenomenon had been widespread, the Germans would not have had to use terror and drastic punishments for offering any assistance to ghetto escapees or to take so many Poles hostage. Nonetheless, under these horrific conditions, there were thousands of Righteous Among the Nations who crossed the boundaries of fear by deciding to help the Jews, for which they often had to pay the highest price. While reading Bogdan Musiał’s book, that the author cites too few examples of Poles breaking or observing anti-Jewish legislation. Because of the focus on the analysis of legal acts, the stories are often too short, given in a dispassionate manner, and thus lacking in detail and description of the circumstances of the events.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

Against the backdrop of reflections on the darker sides of Polish-Jewish relations in 1939-1945, however, the author firmly denies Jan Grabowski's revelations about the scale of Polish involvement in the persecution of Jews. The latter maintains, allegedly based on an article by the long-time director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Szymon Datner,²⁶ that Poles murdered, directly or indirectly, more than 200,000 Jews during the Holocaust, most of them escapees from the ghettos.²⁷ Rejecting such, as he put it, "plucked from thin air" claims,²⁸ Musiał shares the relevant argumentation of Shevah Weiss, a Holocaust survivor. In 2011, the former Israeli ambassador to Poland said that the percentage of Poles harming Jews in various ways had been "a pathology and a margin that grew in importance and strength during the war, under the terrible terror of the German occupier. If the Germans had not occupied Poland," Weiss argued, "such behaviours would not have occurred."²⁹ He also pointed out the enormous risk to Poles who saved Jews, so often overlooked by Jan Grabowski and others like him: "To risk death – one's own and one's children's – to save a stranger requires great courage. To demand this of ordinary people terrorised by the occupier is too much. The Jewish people did not undergo this trial," stressed Weiss.³⁰ Musiał concludes that Poland was the only nation in Europe occupied by the Third Reich that was subjected to such a harsh and tragic trial. According to him, authors dealing with the problem of rescuing Jews should ask themselves the fundamental question of whether they would have risked their own lives and those of their children to help others. It is easy to make accusations and judgements from the perspective of several decades. In this case, it is perhaps worth first reading the account of the incident on the Kierbedzia Bridge in

²⁶ See S. Datner, "Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na Żydach zbiegłych z get," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 75 (1970), p. 29.

²⁷ See *Orgy of Murder: The Poles Who 'Hunted' Jews and Turned Them Over to the Nazis. More than 200,000 Jews were killed, directly or indirectly, by Poles in World War II, says historian Jan Grabowski, who studied the brutal persecution of the victims*, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/premium.MAGAZINE-orgy-of-murder-the-poles-who-hunted-jews-and-turned-them-in-1.5430977> (accessed 26 February 2021)

²⁸ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, pp. 233–235.

²⁹ "Szewach Weiss w Międzynarodowy Dzień Holokaustu," *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 January 2011, <https://www.rp.pl/artykul/600404-Szewach-Weiss-w-Miedzynarodowy-Dzien-Holokaustu.html> (accessed 26 February 2021).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Warsaw,³¹ or the story of the actor Jerzy Trela's grandfather, who reproached himself for years for refusing a request to take in a Jewish girl out of fear of being denounced by Volksdeutsche living in his village.³²

Musiał, analysing the literature on the German occupation in other parts of Europe, especially in the west of the continent, states that, to the best of his knowledge, there is no indication that outside Poland, the Germans created special legislation criminalising help for Jews. The same was true of the entire system of violence and terror enforcing complicity in rounding up Jewish escapees. He infers from that that there was probably "no such need in other occupied or satellite countries" to create legislation of this kind. In his opinion, the reason for this may have been that "the scale of aid and escapes was not very large, and the German authorities could count on the effective and voluntary participation of the local population and local authorities in catching Jews."³³ In this context, the author mentions the activities of the French police, Lithuanian collaborators and the collaborationist governments of Slovakia and Hungary, although he adds that further research is needed to understand this issue better.

In this part of his work, Musiał also demystifies Germany's alleged "exemplary reckoning with its Nazi past." He points out that, after the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, its successive governments deliberately scaled down the denazification policy, including specifically putting Nazi criminals on trial. As a result, most of them continued their careers in the new German state as civil servants, judges or police officers. The researcher regrets that, with regard to the crimes committed against the Polish population during the occupation, the authorities of the Republic of Bonn, and later Berlin, completely disregarded the problem of holding the guilty to account. He states he is unaware of "any West German court conviction for *Nazi* crimes committed against ethnic Poles in occupied Poland."³⁴ As an aside, for Musiał, a symbolic example of the failure to hold to account German torturers and murderers "from behind the desk" is the fate of Heinz Werner Schwender, the governor of the Łowicz county during the war and

³¹ Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 83.

³² *Ibid.*, back cover page.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

the author of the notice of 17 December 1941, featured on the cover of his book as “a testimony to the inhuman anti-Jewish and anti-Polish decrees.”³⁵ Schwender suffered no consequences for his criminal practices after the war. The same was true of German police lieutenant Eilert Dieken, responsible for the massacre of the Ulma family, who led a quiet life in West Germany after the war and worked as an exemplary policeman until his death.

In his conclusion, the author again dissects the arguments and research workshop of revisionists and representatives of the New School of Holocaust History Research. He particularly criticises the works of Jan Grabowski and Jan Tomasz Gross, accusing them of distorting or completely omitting the historical context of the German occupation, manipulating sources and falsely accusing Poles of allegedly massive and voluntary entanglement in the Holocaust. For a vivisection of Gross’s work based on his flagship book *Sąsiedzi* (Neighbours), see also the annexe section. They use materials from the press and scientific periodicals published years ago,³⁶ in which Musiał accurately demonstrates the now well-known, blatant methodological flaws, deliberate distortions, selective approach to sources and biased interpretations made by Gross. However, Musiał, striking a journalistic tone at times, unnecessarily resorts to biting remarks, *ad personam* arguments and sarcasm towards some of his academic adversaries representing a different view of Polish-Jewish or Polish-German relations (e.g. towards Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Barbara Engelking or Jan Błoński.³⁷) The strength of the documented arguments presented in his study easily suffices in this debate and, with its reliability, speaks for itself more effectively than attempts to discredit and demonstrate the incompetence of opponents in a historical dispute.

In addition, the annexe section contains selected source documents, i.e. German decrees criminalising aiding Jews in the GG (a total of 34 legal acts 70 pages long).

³⁵ “I draw your attention once again to the order that anyone who gives shelter to Jews leaving a place of confinement without permission from the Authorities, or otherwise shows his assistance to Jews, shall be punished by death.” See “1941 grudzień 17, Łowicz – Odezwa starosty powiatowego dr. Heinza Wernera Schwendera o karze śmierci za udzielenie pomocy Żydom,” in Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 277.

³⁶ See “Nie wolno się bać. O książce Jana Grossa i stosunkach polsko-żydowskich z Bogdanem Musiałem rozmawia Paweł Paliwoda”, *Życie*, 2 February 2001; B. Musiał, “Tezy dotyczące pogromu w Jedwabnem. Uwagi krytyczne do książki ‘Sąsiedzi’ autorstwa Jana Tomasa Grossa,” *Dzieje Najnowsze* 3 (2001), pp. 253–280.

³⁷ See Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, pp. 225, 228–229, 238–239.

The original spelling has been preserved, with “Jews” and “Poles” mostly written in lowercase. Occasionally, however, errors resulted from linguistically incorrect translations. The only shortcoming of this part of the work is the lack of translation of some sources from German into Polish. Readers unfamiliar with German will undoubtedly be disadvantaged. This is striking because most documents are in two languages (German and Polish). Given the extraordinary cognitive value of these legal acts, it would be worth remedying this shortcoming in the book’s next edition. This is all the more relevant now, especially when, as Musiał himself rightly points out, a side effect of the German historical policy pursued after 1949 was the coining in the West of the false term “Polish death camps.” In his view, this policy indirectly contributed to the prevailing belief there that the Poles, as a fundamentally anti-Semitic nation, were jointly responsible for the Holocaust along with the “Nazis,” who, in this twisted narrative, supposedly did not necessarily have to be Germans.³⁸

Before passing a final judgement on Bogdan Musiał’s book, it is still worth noting the source base he used. Most of the documents cited in the book can be found in Polish archives, including mainly the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (AIPN), the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute (AŻIH), the Central Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw, the public archives of the cities of: Warsaw, Lublin, Cracow, the Archives of the Western Institute (IZ), the Archives of the Yad Vashem Institute, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (USHMM), the Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg, the Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ) and the Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Wiesbaden (HHStA). In addition, the author drew extensively on Polish, German and Anglo-Saxon historiography, memoir literature on the period, as well as official promulgators, in particular the *Journal of Regulations for the General-Gouvernement* (*Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*). The lack of a name index and of a bibliography at the end of the work is a bit upsetting because it is difficult to get a better idea of the sources used by Musiał. It should be noted, however, that the work is enriched with meaningful photographs that

³⁸ B. Musiał, “Polskie obozy śmierci” – efekt uboczny niemieckiej polityki historycznej,” in *idem*, *Kto допоможе*, pp. 393–401 (the article was first published in *Gazeta Polska*, 14 June 2012).

depict the anatomy of day-to-day crime and the occupational, political background of the events described.

In formulating a final assessment of the book *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...*, it should be emphasised that it is undoubtedly very important and necessary in the current highly polarised discussion of Polish-Jewish relations during the war. This debate is often characterised by extreme emotions and accusations stemming from different experiences and narratives, which are made not only absolute but also subject to non-scientific conjunctures. In his book, however, Musiał is not guided by emotions but, on the basis of documents, gives a factual and meticulous interpretation of German law that – against the background of Europe occupied by the Third Reich – was only so harsh and ruthless in Poland towards those who in any way gave aid to the Jews. This is definitely a new approach in the analysis of the attitudes of Poles towards Jews, which has been insufficiently exposed in the literature on the subject so far, and which sheds light on the overwhelming influence of the occupation reality on the decisions and choices of ordinary people. Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, such as the limitation of the research area only to the GG or minor technical imperfections (e.g. the lack of a bibliography), in view of the subject matter, this book should be an export commodity of Polish historical policy and, consequently, should be immediately translated into English and German. Due to the researcher's authority, it can be a solid weapon in a more professional scientific discussion, based on facts and not on biased interpretations, half-truths or even deliberate misrepresentations. The latter, unfortunately, still prevail in Western opinion-forming circles, creating a false, damaging and ahistorical picture of Poles purportedly massively collaborating with the Nazis in the extermination of Jews.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE MARGINS OF THE EXHIBITION ABOUT
GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON JEWISH FAMILIES
IN TARNÓW IN 1942¹

In October 2020, the Berlin Museum Topography of Terror (*Topographie des Terrors*) opened the exhibition *The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów Ghetto* (*Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów*). The presentation of the exhibition at this institution of culture and remembrance is of particular importance, as the site of the museum was the location of the most important headquarters of the instruments of repression of the German state, i.e. the Gestapo office, the Reich SS Headquarters, the SS Security Service (SD) and, during the Second World War, the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). The museum, dedicated to the remembrance of acts of terror and genocide across Europe, was opened in 2010.²

This exhibition was created in cooperation with the Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Natural History Museum in Vienna.

¹ The article refers to the publication by Margit Berner, *Letzte Bilder. Die "rassenkundliche" Untersuchung Jüdischer Familien im Ghetto Tarnów 1942/Final Pictures: The 1942 'Race Study' of Jewish Families in the Tarnów Ghetto* (Berlin–Leipzig, 2020) and the exhibition catalogue: *Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów. Katalog zur Ausstellung/The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów Ghetto. Exhibition catalogue*, ed. by K. Vohland et al. (Berlin, 2020).

² <https://www.topographie.de/en/topography-of-terror/> (accessed 20 January 2021).

On the one hand, it shows the fate of the Jews of Tarnów, and, on the other, it addresses the issue of the collaboration of German scientists in the crimes. At the opening of the exhibition, the German Minister for Culture Monika Grütters stated that the show makes it clear that scientists included those who “with their supposedly scientific ‘objectivity’ of research – with a cruel, cold view of their fellow human beings – contributed to the legitimisation of genocide.” (“In der Ausstellung werde deutlich, dass es auch Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler waren, die mit der angeblich wissenschaftlichen ‘Sachlichkeit’ einer Untersuchung – mit einem grausam kalten Blick auf ihre Mitmenschen – ihren Beitrag zur Legitimierung des Völkermords leisteten.”)³

In 2020, in connection with the exhibition, Margit Berner published the book *Letzte Bilder. Die ‘rassenkundliche’ Untersuchung Jüdischer Familien im Ghetto Tarnów 1942/Final Pictures: The 1942 ‘Race Study’ of Jewish Families in the Tarnów Ghetto* (Berlin–Leipzig 2020). Katrin Vohland and others prepared the exhibition catalogue: *Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów. Katalog zur Ausstellung/The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów Ghetto. Exhibition catalogue.*

Description of the Exhibition

The exhibition *Cold Eye. Last photographs of Jewish families from the Tarnów Ghetto* was based on photographic documentation of more than a hundred Jewish families, created in occupied Tarnów in late March and early April 1942 as part of the German project “research on typical East European Jews.”⁴ The second part of the exhibition title may suggest that the “research” was carried out in the ghetto. In fact, at that time, the Tarnów Ghetto did not yet exist. It was established on

³ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/bundesregierung/staatsministerin-fuer-kultur-und-medien/aktuelles/letzte-bilder-aus-dem-ghetto-1803362> (accessed 21 January 2021).

⁴ Leszek Hońdo states that the research was conducted from 23 March to 2 April 1942, while the exhibition catalogue says that the research lasted until 4 April (“Vom 23. März bis zum 4. April 1942 sammelten die beiden Anthropologinnen biografische Informationen, Messdaten und Fotos der 106 Familien/From 23 March to 4 April 1942, the two anthropologists gathered biographical information and took measurements and photographs of the 106 families”. See L. Hońdo, *Nazistowskie badania antropologiczne nad Żydami. Tarnów 1942* (Cracow, 2021), pp. 62, 257; and *Der Kalte Blick/The Cold Eye*, p. 90.

19 June 1942 (i.e. after the first deportations to the Belzec extermination camp, which were carried out on 11, 15, and 18 June).⁵

During this “research”, two young anthropologists, Dora Maria Kahlich (1905–1970) and Elfriede Fliethmann (1915–1987),⁶ along with their assistants, were looking for racial characteristics, photographing and examining 106 Jewish families in occupied Tarnów. This was a total of 565 people (men, women, and children). As a control group, 13 people from among the Jewish intelligentsia and beggars were also individually examined.⁷ Their work aimed to demonstrate the alleged Jewish “racial inferiority.” The “academics” were assisted in Tarnów by photographer Rudolf Dodenhoff (1917–1992). Dr Anton Plügel (1910–1945),⁸ acting head of the racial and population research section of the Institute for German Work in the East (IDO),⁹ was responsible for selecting the location and coordinating with the relevant authorities in the occupied Polish lands.

Not all those photographed had lived in Tarnów before the war. Some had been forcibly displaced from other towns and communities after 1939 (many of them came from Cracow). Ultimately, 106 Jewish families were relegated to the status of “material” for “scientific” work and, on orders from the German authorities, were selected for the study. We might add that children had to be at least four years old, as younger ones – according to the “academics” – would not show “racial characteristics” or be able to sit still while being photographed.¹⁰ A few weeks or months later, almost all those photographed were murdered in the Holocaust. Only just over twenty people survived.¹¹

The exhibition presented in the Berlin Museum Topography of Terror, the axis of which is the anthropological “research” carried out in March and April 1942,

⁵ See Hońdo, *Nazistowskie badania*, p. 11; *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1944*, ed. G.P. Megargee, vol. 2: *Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe* (Bloomington–Indianapolis, 2012), p. 585.

⁶ In June 1945, Kahlich was dismissed from the University of Vienna. Two years later she got a job as a court expert. Fliethmann, meanwhile, was to be employed as a social worker (or educator) in West Berlin after the war. *Der Kalte Blick/The Cold Eye*, pp. 75–77.

⁷ Berner, *Letzte Bider*, p. 182.

⁸ *Der Kalte Blick/The Cold Eye*, p. 68.

⁹ Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (IDO) was established by Hans Frank on 20 April 1940 (on Adolf Hitler’s birthday).

¹⁰ *Der Kalte Blick/The Cold Eye*, p. 21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

is complemented by information and photographs showing the life of Tarnów Jews before and during the Second World War, acquired from Polish and foreign institutions and private collections.

Last Photographs... An Analysis of Margit Berner's Publication

Margit Berner's book *Letzte Bilder* – as Dr Andrea Riedle, Director of the Foundation Topography of Terror, wrote in its foreword – laid the groundwork for the exhibition *Cold Eye. Last photographs of Jewish Families from the Tarnów Ghetto* (*Der Band von Margit Berner bildete die wichtigste Grundlage für die Erarbeitung der Ausstellung 'Der kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów'*). The author of this publication, together with the historians: Götz Aly, Ulrich Baumann, and Stephanie Bohra, curated this exhibition.¹² The book was published in German and English (translated by Jefferson Chase). The publication is a voluminous 292-pages long, consisting of a foreword, an introduction and a dozen sections.

Berner used various studies and materials to illustrate the problem she was interested in. The literature on the subject cited in the work lists 73 studies (monographs and articles). It seems that the bibliography could have been supplemented by several more recent publications by Polish historians concerning the history and Holocaust of the Jewish population in Tarnów and the activities of the IDO, which conducted anthropological research. It is worth recalling, for example, works by Leszek Hońdo, "Judenrat w Tarnowie" [Judenrat in Tarnów],¹³ and Elżbieta Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* [The Extermination of Jews in the Cracow District in 1939–1945].¹⁴ We also have literature on the IDO: Anetta Rybicka, *Instytut Niemieckiej Pracy Wschodniej. Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit. Kraków 1940–1945* [Institute for German Work in the East]¹⁵; Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, *Wyzwolić się z błędnego koła. Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit w świetle dokumentów Armii Krajowej i materiałów zachowanych w Polsce* [To Break Out

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

¹³ L. Hońko, "Judenrat w Tarnowie," in *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło (Cracow, 2017), pp. 51–67.

¹⁴ E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszów, 2014).

¹⁵ A. Rybicka, *Instytut Niemieckiej Pracy Wschodniej. Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit. Kraków 1940–1945* (Warsaw, 2002).

of the Vicious Circle. Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit in the Light of Home Army Documents and Materials Preserved in Poland];¹⁶ Elżbieta Duszeńko-Król, *Kolekcja fotograficzna Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit Krakau 1940–1945. Zdjęcia z Polski* [The Photographic Collection of the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit Krakau 1940–1945. Photos from Poland];¹⁷ *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny. Działalność Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit w świetle nowych materiałów źródłowych* [Anthropology and Ethnology during the War. Activities of the Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit in the Light of New Source Material] under the editorship of Małgorzata Maj.¹⁸ In this last publication, particularly valuable in the context of our discussions are the articles by Krzysztof Kaczanowski, who devoted his attention to the evaluation of anthropological, medical, and psychological research conducted by the IDO in Podhale, the Lemko Region, and other areas of Poland,¹⁹ and by Lisa Gottschall, who wrote a synthetic political and academic biography of Anton Plügel – one of the heads of the Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung (Race and Ethnicity Research Section, SRV), and active member of the NSDAP.²⁰

Margit Berner's findings are based primarily on archives. The sources used by the author consisted of documents found both in Polish archives (Archives of the Jagiellonian University, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, National Archives in Cracow, Branch in Tarnów) and foreign ones (Arolsen Archives, Bundesarchiv Berlin, National Anthropological Archives Washington, Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation – Visual History Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Universitätsarchiv Wien, Universität Wien, Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv, Yad Vashem Archives).

¹⁶ T. Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, *Wyzwolić się z błędnego koła. Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit w świetle dokumentów Armii Krajowej i materiałów zachowanych w Polsce* (Cracow, 2004).

¹⁷ E. Duszeńko-Król, *Kolekcja fotograficzna Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit Krakau 1940–1945. Zdjęcia z Polski* (Cracow, 2014).

¹⁸ *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny. Działalność Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit w świetle nowych materiałów źródłowych*, ed. M. Maj (Cracow, 2015).

¹⁹ K. Kaczanowski, "Ocena badań antropologicznych, medycznych i psychologicznych, prowadzonych na Podhalu, Łemkowszczyźnie i innych terenach Polski przez IDO," in *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny*, pp. 75–94.

²⁰ L. Gottschall, "Student wiedeńskiego Wydziału Ludoznawstwa i aktywny członek NSDAP: Anton Adolf Plügel," in *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny*, pp. 95–102.

In the introduction, the author tells the story of the discovery in the Vienna Natural History Museum's collection of photographic documentation captioned "Images of Tarnów" and a set of files titled "TJ Tarnów 1942" (the abbreviation stood for "Tarnów Jews"). The photographs were numbered consecutively from 1 to 565 and divided into groups of fifty. The series was not complete. The files also contained a list titled "Identity documents of Jews who appeared before the anthropological commission in Tarnów on 23 March 1942." This census included 106 male heads of families, their addresses, occupations and the number of family members photographed. Handwritten information about the anthropological data and statistical analyses were also part of the file, as well as documents containing the fingerprints of the people covered by this study. The collection was donated to the museum in the 1980s.

The documentation collected by the anthropologists included extensive data on the Jews photographed, while Margit Berner wrote short biographies of the 106 families and illustrated them with relevant photographs. Thanks to her many years of research and her contacts with survivors and their relatives, she was able to identify the people in the pictures and collect additional material (testimonies, interviews and new photographs).

In the individual chapters of Margit Berner's study, we find a characterisation of the life of the Jewish population before the war and during the occupation. We read about the "research" carried out by German scientists and about the deportations of Tarnów's Jews, their Holocaust and the fate of those who survived. The chapters are interspersed with biographical notes of the Jewish families photographed. The book is supplemented with very rich iconographic material. The biographies are illustrated with photographs of the members of each family taken during the 1942 study. The author has also included other photographs and survivors' testimonies where possible.

The book's shortcoming is that the table of contents, in most cases, refers the reader to the wrong pages; for example, the chapter "Die Ermordung der Tarnower Juden/The Murder of Tarnów's Jews" should be on p. 17, but is in fact on p. 19, the chapter "Jüdisches Leben in Tarnów/Jewish Life in Tarnów" should start on p. 55 but begins on p. 59, the chapter "Tarnów unter deutschen Terror/Tarnów Under German Terror" should be on p. 129 but is on p. 133, etc.

The wording in the last sentence of the book's introduction (p. 17), namely that "two and a half million Polish Jews were murdered between 1941 and 1945 under German and Austrian rule," is questionable. ("Die Todeswege der vielen und die überlebenspfade der wenigen stehen beispielhaft für zweieinhalb Millionen polnische Juden, die zwischen 1941 und 1945 unter deutscher und österreichischer Herrschaft als Namenlose ermordet wurden und für immer vergesse werden sollten/Their stories and death and life of these few people are emblematic of the two-and-a-half million Jews murdered between 1941 and 1945 under German and Austrian rule, who were supposed to be forgotten forever"). We find a similar statement on p. 257 – "unter deutsch-österreichischem Terror/under the German-Austrian reign of terror." First of all, it was the German state (the German Reich) that planned and implemented the Holocaust in the territories it occupied. The army, the uniformed services and the various formations and structures set up by the Reich were all used for this purpose. It was the German state that issued the ordinances that formed the basis of the anti-Jewish measures. Austria had been within the borders of the German Reich since March 1938, so Austrians became German citizens (Reichsdeutsch). In addition, it is worth recalling that Jews were murdered on Polish territory as early as September 1939 – when German troops invaded. For example, in Przemysl, officers of operational groups shot 600 or so people.²¹ According to the findings so far, in the first weeks of the occupation in the Polish territories, the losses among the Jewish population amounted to about 7,000 people.²² It should be emphasised that the Germans had been developing their anti-Semitic programme against Polish Jews since the start of September 1939, and these plans evolved over time.

On page 23 of Margit Berner's book, we read in the English version that "From the outside, the ghetto was patrolled by German and Polish police, the latter in blue uniforms." Missing here is a sentence explaining what kind of organisation

²¹ See G. Berendt, "Straty osobowe polskich Żydów w okresie II wojny światowej," in *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, ed. by W. Materski and T. Szarota (Warsaw, 2009), p. 63; Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 52.

²² See Berendt, "Straty osobowe polskich Żydów," p. 63; B. Musiał, "Przypadek modelowy dotyczący eksterminacji Żydów. Początki 'akcji Reinhardt' – planowanie masowego mordu Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie," in *Akcja „Reinhardt”. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2004), p. 19.

the 'blue police' was, i.e. an indication that it was a formation of the German Reich, part of the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei).²³

The same page mentions the June operation in Tarnów, saying that "Within a week, 4000 Jews had been shot in their homes, on the market square and in the nearby woods in mass executions. Another 8000 Jews from Tarnów were transported to Belzec and gassed to death once they arrived." It is true that about 8,000 Jews were transported from Tarnów to the death camp in Belzec in June. However, the number of those murdered on the spot, i.e. in the Jewish cemetery, in Buczyzna Forest and in the forests around Skrzyszów, is much higher. It is estimated that it was between 8,000 and 10,000 people.²⁴

The publication also makes errors of significant importance for interpreting the Second World War. For example, on p. 12, we read in English that the academics were supported by the "Nazi state" [*sic*]: "These two young academics' goal, very modern for its time and supported by the Nazi state [*sic*], was to describe and categorize the genetic inheritance of 'racial characteristics' by comparing parents and children." In contrast, the German version only mentions the state. On p. 133, the English-speaking reader will learn that, on 17 September, the Soviet Union incorporated Poland's eastern territory: "On September 7, 1939, a few days after Germany invaded Poland, the Wehrmacht conquered Tarnów. Ten days later, the Soviet Union incorporated the eastern part of Poland [*sic*], and Germany formally annexed large amounts of territory in the west." However, in the German version, the above sentence reads differently: "zehn tage später marschierten sowjetische Truppen im *östlichen* Teil Polens ein und Deutschland annektierte große Gebiete im Westen" (ten days later, Soviet troops entered eastern Poland and the Germans annexed large areas in the west). In the German version, it would be relevant to point out that, after the September campaign, Germany made a new administrative division of the Polish lands it had occupied. Almost half of the land was incorporated directly into the Third Reich, and a "General Governorate for the occupied

²³ See M. Korcuć, "Niemiecka Polnische Polizei. Historyczny i państwowo-prawny kontekst funkcjonowania granatowej policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945," in *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2019), pp. 14–85.

²⁴ Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 291.

Polish areas” was created from the remaining territory. The changes carried out from the first days of October 1939 were, in fact, a violation of the provisions of the Hague Regulations respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 18 October 1907, signed by the Republic of Poland and the German Reich. Under Article 42 of the Regulations, occupied land should remain under military administration until the war’s end. In the meantime, the occupant decided on a different administrative arrangement.²⁵

The Cold Eye... Analysis of the Exhibition Catalogue

The second publication worth looking at is the exhibition catalogue *Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów. Katalog zur Ausstellung/The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów Ghetto. Exhibition Catalogue*. The book, 270 pages long, is published in German and English in a 22 by 26 cm format, with most of it taken up by photographs. The whole book begins with a preface and an introduction entitled. “Bilder der Ermordeten, Stimmen der Überlebenden/Pictures of the Victims, Voices of the Survivors,” in which Götz Aly very synthetically and interestingly presents the genesis and concept of the exhibition. The description he uses of the IDO as a kind of “academic think tank,” functioning under the occupation administration, may cause reservations: “eine wissenschaftliche Ideenfabrik der Besatzungsverwaltung/an academic think tank attached to the occupational administration” (pp. 16–17). Let us recall that this was an academic and political establishment, described by Zbigniew Libera as follows: “since 1942, the largest German institution carrying out Ostforschung [“research” of the East – R.G.] in the lands of occupied Poland.”²⁶ In particular, the use of the English term “think tank” can lead to the perception of this institution in line with the modern understanding of the term, as an independent, not-for-profit organisation set up to study and analyse public affairs.

²⁵ The study also contains small mistakes, e.g. on p. 9 there is incorrect number of people photographed: “With the help of images taken of 556 Jewish men, women and children and other anthropological data, the two scholars hoped to identify particular ‘racial characteristics’ of Eastern Galician Jews in an effort to prove supposed Jewish ‘racial inferiority.’” There are also typos: on p. 259 misspelled “fron,” should be “from”; on p. 210 – “Oalestine,” should be “Palestine”; on p. 66 – “Endejca,” should be “Endecja.”

²⁶ Z. Libera, “Sekcja Rasowo-Ludoznawcza Instytutu na Rzecz Niemieckiej Pracy na Wschodzie w badaniach etnologów i antropologów w Krakowie,” in *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny*, p. 7.

In the subsequent brief chapters, entitled: “Anthropologie, Nationalismus und Rassenlehre/Anthropology, Nationalism and Race Theory” (p. 42), “Die Verwissenschaftlichung von Vorurteilen/Prejudice as Science” (p. 58), “Anthropologie, ‘Rassenkunde’ und Karriere/Anthropology, ‘Race Studies’ and Careers” (p. 6), “Die Werkzeuge der ‘Rassenwissenschaft’/The Tools of ‘Racial Science’” (p. 84), “Die suche nach ‘typischen Rassenmerkmalen’/The search for ‘Typical Racial Characteristics’” (p. 98), “Das ‘Archiv der Bilder’/The ‘Picture Archive’” (p. 110), the reader can consult charts showing photographs and artefacts relating to racial theories, their development, as well as the eugenic theories and Social Darwinism gaining popularity in Europe from the late 19th century onwards, along with the people responsible for carrying out anthropological research in Tarnow, including their research methods and the results of their work.

The last and longest part, entitled “Vielfalt und ihre Vernichtung. Eine Chronologie/Diversity and Its Destruction. A Chronology” (p. 112), contains charts depicting the prewar Jewish community in Tarnów, the outbreak of war and the initial repressions against the population of Tarnów, the course of the various stages of the Holocaust, the post-war accountability of the criminals, the fate of Holocaust survivors and issues of commemoration. This section also includes photographs depicting members of the Jewish families included in the anthropological study. Appropriate captions and commentary accompany all the photographs.

The descriptions are sometimes imprecise or incomplete. On p. 153 we read: “Ende mai 1940 verhaftete die Gestapo 728 in der Mehrzahl christliche Anwälte, Lehrer, Politiker und Geistliche in Tarnów und deportierte sie am 14. Juni nach Auschwitz/In late May 1940, the Gestapo arrested 728 lawyers, teachers, politicians and clergy, most of them Christian, and sent them to Auschwitz on June 14.” Indeed, on 14 June 1940, the Germans sent a group of 728 Poles from the Tarnów prison (including a small number of Polish Jews) to Auschwitz. However, in addition to lawyers, teachers, politicians and priests, the deportees also included soldiers of the September campaign, members of independence organisations, secondary school pupils and students – mostly young people aged 16 to 30.²⁷

²⁷ See also P. Cywiński, *Początki Auschwitz w pamięci pierwszego transportu polskich więźniów politycznych* (Oświęcim, 2015).

In the discussion of the June 1942 extermination of the Jews in Tarnów on p. 174 we read: “Am 11. Juni 1942 begann der Massenmord an den Tarnower Juden [...] Für das Zusammentreiben und Morden rückte Verstärkung an: Teile des Polizeibataillons 307, deutsche Gendarmerie, Angehörige der Waffen-SS und der volksdeutschen Hilfspolizei. Die Polnische Polizei und Jugendliche des polnischen Baudienstes mussten Hilfsaufgaben erledigen/The mass murder of Tarnów’s Jews began on June 11, 1942 [...] Reinforcements – part of Police Battalion 307, German gendarmes, and members of the Waffen-SS and the auxiliary police – were then brought in to round up Jews and murder them. Polish police and young members of the Polish construction service were also required to help.” In the case of the term “Polnische Polizei/Polish police” (as indicated earlier in relation to Margit Berner’s publication), the nature of this formation should be clarified. It was created by the German Reich and was part of the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei). The same comment applies to the expression “polnischen Baudienstes/young members of the Polish construction service,” especially in its English translation. It should be recalled that the German Construction Service (Baudienst) was created in the GG to exploit Polish young people as cheap labour, ruthlessly subjugated to the Germans and barracked for this purpose. The reader will not learn from this description that it operated under strict German supervision and command. Also missing from this account is information that on 11 June, during the first deportation in Tarnów, officers of the Jewish Order Service (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst, OD) distributed deportation cards in houses and brought the families to whom they had delivered them to the collection point on Magdeburg Square.²⁸

On p. 188 we read that, during the first extermination operation, 8,000 Jewish children, women and men were murdered in Belzec within seven days, and 4,000 were shot in Tarnów (“Nach sieben Tagen waren 8,000 jüdische Kinder, Frauen und Männer in Belzec mit Motorabgassen ermordet und 4,000 in Tarnów erschossen worden/In seven days, 8,000 Jewish children, women and men were murdered in the gas chambers of Belzec, while 4,000 were shot dead in Tarnów.”). Here it is worth adding that all those unfit to travel (the elderly, the sick, the crippled and

²⁸ Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 290.

mothers with small children), i.e. between 8,000 and 10,000 people, were murdered in the Jewish cemetery, in Buczyna Forest and in the forest around Skrzyszów.²⁹

Conclusion

The activities of the Institute for German Work in the East (where Anton Plügel and Elfriede Fliethmann worked) in the occupied Polish territories already have their own literature.³⁰ Particularly noteworthy is the paper published in 2015, edited by Małgorzata Maj, on the activities of the Racial and Population Section of the institution.³¹ It was this section that carried out anthropological research on highlanders, Lemkos, Volksdeutsche and Jews. However, the studies of the Jewish population in Tarnów are not analysed in this publication. The first to write on this subject, almost thirty years ago, were Götz Aly and Susanne Heim in their work *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*.³² Just over a decade later, Gretchen E. Schafft described this issue in more detail. In 2006, the Jagiellonian University Publishing House published a Polish translation of her book, *From Racism to Genocide. Anthropology in the Third Reich*.³³ This study dedicates more than a dozen pages to a discussion of Fliethmann's and Kahlich's activities in Tarnów.³⁴ A book by a historian specialising in the history of the Jews of Tarnów – Professor Leszek Hońdo of the Institute of Judaic Studies at the Jagiellonian University – *Nazistowskie badania antropologiczne nad Żydami. Tarnów 1942* (Nazi Anthropological Studies on Jews. Tarnów 1942), came out at the end of 2021 (i.e. after the reviewed publications had been published).³⁵

In addition, a documentary film by Justyna Łuczaj-Salej and Bogusław Sławiński *Archiwum istnień* [Archives of Existences] was made in 2009, presenting the ac-

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³⁰ Rybicka, *Instytut Niemieckiej Pracy*; Bałuk-Ulewiczowa, *Wyzwolić się z błędnego koła*; Duszeńko-Król, *Kolekcja fotograficzna*.

³¹ *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny*.

³² G. Aly, S. Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg, 1991), pp. 122–126.

³³ G.E. Schafft, *Od rasizmu do ludobójstwa. Antropologia w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, transl. T. Bałuk-Ulewiczowa (Cracow, 2006).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13–30.

³⁵ Hońdo, *Nazistowskie badania*, p. 11.

tivities of anthropologists from the IDO Race and Population Section. One part of the film was dedicated to the study of Jews in Tarnów in 1942 (it presented, among other things, Frana Eisenbach-Haverland's own recollections of members of her photographed family).

The reviewed books are part of the discussion on the effects of politically and ideologically motivated use of science. The strength of these studies is that they can be consulted by both scholars of the subject matter and readers who are only familiar with the basic facts of the field in question. Despite the shortcomings (which should be removed from subsequent editions), it is worthwhile for the Polish-speaking reader to get to know these publications as well. The books could be used by Małopolska educators and scholars researching the Holocaust in this area.

The exhibition, presented at the Berlin Museum with photographs of well over 500 Tarnów Jews taken as part of pseudo-scientific racial research, presents, in an interesting way, both a fragment of the fate of Tarnów Jews during the Second World War and the complicity of German scholars in anti-Jewish activities. Often no trace remains of those murdered during the Holocaust, which makes it all the more worthwhile to present the *Cold Eye* exhibition in Poland.



CHRONICLE

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GERMAN CRIMES IN WIERZBICA AND WOLICA.
EXHUMATION AND FIRST FUNERAL OF A FAMILY MURDERED
FOR HELPING JEWS IN 1943

In May 2022, the funeral of the Książek family from Wierzbica, murdered by German officers for helping Jews, took place at the parish church in Kozłów near Miechów.

Despite German prohibitions and the death penalty imposed for any assistance given to the Jewish population, the family of Piotr and Julianna Książek sheltered two Jewish refugees from nearby Żarnowiec on their farm in Wierzbica. Other Jews were also taken in by local farmers in the neighbouring villages of Wierzbica and Wolica. Unfortunately, one of them was found by a German patrol in January 1943. When interrogated, the Jewish man agreed – probably hoping to save his own life – to take the Germans to all the houses where he had been offered help and all the places where he knew Jews had been hidden or had been helped by the local Polish population. It was clear to all at the time that such activities were illegal under German law, and the individuals, along with their family members, would be subject to brutal repression by the occupier if ever found out.

On 29 January 1943, the occupation authorities sent a punitive expedition to Wierzbica and Wolica, including German officers (including blue police-

men¹) and one Kazimierz Nowak, a *Volksdeutsch* notorious for murdering Jews, Poles, and Romani living in the area. The members of this expedition brought along the captured Jew who led them one by one to the houses of families who had given aid to Jews.

In Wolica, the officers carried out the first murders. When they came to the house of Jan Gądek, they shot him on the spot and then murdered his wife, Władysława, and his mother-in-law Balbina Bielawska for helping Jews. Then the German officers and the rest of the expedition drove to Wierzbica. The arrested Jew led them to the Książek family. In the house of this Polish family, the Germans found two hiding Jews from Żarnowiec (since they were not from this village, their names could not be ascertained). They shot the Jews on the spot and then murdered, one by one, all four members of the Książek family, who were in the house at the time:² Piotr Książek (he was 67 years old and is sometimes mistakenly referred to as Franciszek³), his sons: Jan Książek (21 years old) and Zygmunt Książek (18 years old), and Piotr Książek's wife, Julia Książek (40 years old).

The arrested Jew then led the officers to the home of the Polish Nowak family from Wierzbica. There, they murdered Nowak (an invalid) and his daughter, just a few years old, for helping Jews.

They later headed for the Kucharskis' farm, where they shot eight family members, one by one, who were in the house at that time, killing Izydor Kucharski's wife, Anna, and four of their children: Mieczysław (15 years old), Bolesław (9 years old), twins Józef and Stefan (5 years old). Their grandmother, Julianna Ostrowska (86 years old), was also shot dead. Two of these eight people were miraculously saved,

¹ The Polnische Polizei, known as the blue police, was a German service created by the authorities of the General Governorate in December 1939. It included some former police officers of Polish nationality. This police force, as a German service, was – consistent with reality – regarded by Polish society as one of the tools of the occupier's repressive policy. On more about this, see M. Korcuć, “*Niemiecka Polnische Polizei. Historyczny i państwowo-prawny kontekst funkcjonowania granatowej policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*,” in *Policja granatowa w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2019), pp. 14–88.

² Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, hereinafter AIPN), GK, 392/1364, Minutes of Piotr Karcz's questioning, 7 April 1978, pp. 10–14.

³ This is explained by Piotr Książek's grandson, Wojciech W. Książek, *Mord mej rodziny i sąsiadów-Żydów w Wierzbicy. Starajmy się robić swoje*, <https://wojciechksiazek.wordpress.com/mord-mej-rodziny-i-sasiadow-zydow-w-wierzbicy-starajmy-sie-robic-swoje/> (accessed 15 October 2020).

although German officers were convinced they had killed them. The father of the family, Izydor Kucharski, was shot in the back of the head. The perpetrators thought he was dead. It was only later apparent that the bullet had passed through the head and exited through his eye socket. After the massacre, Izydor Kucharski regained consciousness, despite his severe wounds. However, he was maimed for life and lost one eye. His son, Bronisław Kucharski, also survived, despite being shot in the head at close range.⁴ He, too, became an invalid for life, losing his sight completely.

The Jewish guide, whom the Germans had arrested, did not save his life as the officers from the punitive expedition did not intend to honour any commitments they had made to him. Having used his deposition, they also murdered him near the village of Żabiniec. The perpetrators of the murder also shot a Pole, Stanisław Tochowicz,⁵ who was just passing by.

The occupation authorities did not allow funerals to be arranged. Four members of the Książek family were buried directly at the entrance to their house (their mill). After the war, the site was marked with a wooden cross and a small fence. The abandoned house fell into neglect and was taken apart. Years later, a stone slab with the names of the murdered people and information about the circumstances of their death was placed on the spot where the bodies had been buried.

Piotr Książek, a grandson of the murdered Piotr Książek, asked the Institute of National Remembrance for help in arranging the first honourable funeral of the murdered Książek family members. In 1943, the grandson Książek's father was in a German POW camp, where he had been taken prisoner after the September campaign of 1939, and thus survived the war. On 24 May 2022, the Cracow Branch of the Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom of the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation carried out an exhumation at the site. The archaeological and exhumation work was carried out by a group of specialists led by Dr Krzysztof Tuni from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of

⁴ AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Record of Piotr Karcz's interrogation, 7 April 1978, pp. 10–14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Record of questioning Bronisław Kucharski as a witness, Wrocław, 7 October 1977, pp. 1–5; *ibid.*, Record of Piotr Karcz's questioning, 7 April 1978, pp. 10–14; *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 202–204; AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Record of Piotr Karcz's questioning, 7 April 1978, pp. 10–14.

Sciences.⁶ The remains of four members of the Książek family, Piotr, Julia, Jan and Zygmunt, were retrieved from the burial pit. Small objects of personal use were found next to all the skeletons. The remains were identified based on a detailed anthropological analysis using historical documentation. Justyna Marchewka and Veronica Bogdanovich from the Institute of Human Biology of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Sciences at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw carried out the anthropological analysis. According to the reports concerning the excavated remains of a woman, “the preserved skeletal material made it possible to conclude that the examined remains belonged to a woman who died between the ages of 35 and 45, which allows the deceased to be identified as Julia Książek.” In the case of the remains of an older man, “the preserved skeletal material made it possible to conclude that the examined remains belonged to a male who died being over 60 years old, which allows the deceased to be identified as Piotr Książek.” According to the expert report, the preserved skeletal material also supports the conclusion that “the remains examined belonged to a male who died being over 20 years old, which allows the deceased to be identified as Jan Książek.” With regard to the last remains, the preserved skeletal material confirms that “the examined remains belonged to a male who died being between 16 and 20 years old, which allows the deceased to be identified as Zygmunt Książek.”⁷

All the remains were finally laid to rest, one by one, in ornamental wooden coffins provided by the IPN.

On 27 May 2022, the first Christian funeral of the Książek family took place at the parish church in Kozłów. In addition to local residents and official delegations, the ceremony was attended by the families of the murdered, including Piotr Książek’s grandchildren: Piotr Książek and Stanisława Miernik née Książek.

All the remains were interred in a common grave in the Kozłów parish cemetery. The family has agreed to the Institute of National Remembrance funding a stone grave monument on the tomb in 2023.

⁶ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow), K. Tunia, “Sprawozdanie z prac archeologiczno-ekshumacyjnych w miejsc. Wierzbica, pow. Miechów w roku 2022”, Cracow 2022, handwritten account.

⁷ *Ibid.*, J. Marchewka, V. Bogdanovich, “Analiza antropologiczna szczątków kostnych z prac archeologiczno-ekshumacyjnych przeprowadzonych w roku 2022 w Wierzbicy, pow. Miechów”, Cracow 2022, handwritten account.