

Tomasz Domański PhD¹
Institute of National Remembrance
Delegation in Kielce

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, ISBN: 9788363444600, 868 PP., VOL. 2, ISBN: 9788363444631, 832 PP.²

Although many books have been written on the fate of the Jews in German-occupied Poland,³ the death of around three million Polish Jews still motivates successive generations of Holocaust scholars and researchers studying the history of Poland's Jewish community to take up the subject. After 1989, i.e. after Poland regained its independence and cast off the restrictions of Communist

¹ I would like to kindly thank all those who have helped me prepare this review by sharing their comments and observations with me. I am especially grateful to Maciej Korcuć PhD from the Cracow Branch of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance.

² This review refers to the entirety of the book (*Night without an end. The fate of Jews in selected counties of occupied Poland*, vol. 1–2, ed. Barbara Engelking, Jan Grabowski, Warsaw 2018) with a special focus on Łuków, Złoczów and Miechów counties (*powiaty*). The abbreviated title *Night without an end* is used throughout this article.

³ I use the terms 'Germans' and 'German' instead of 'Nazis' and 'Nazi' because all the persons of German origin (by occupation-era standards) employed in the administrative apparatus of the occupied territories were in fact acting on behalf of the German state, i.e. the Third German Reich.

ensorship, interest in the subject grew steadily among historians, who could now take advantage of academic freedom, propelled by a wave of interest in Jewish culture. Because of omissions effected during the Communist period, however, we are still far from having treated the problem exhaustively. There is still a visible shortage of studies in areas such as the physical extermination of Jews organised by the German authorities, or the attitudes of different ethnic groups under German occupation toward the Holocaust.

Any attempt to fill these gaps in our knowledge deserves praise. Great expectations were sparked by information about a forthcoming volume, carefully released by the publisher, purporting to present new findings concerning the fate of Jews during the Holocaust outside big cities, in 'local Poland' (although it would have been more appropriate to speak of the *Kreishauptmannschaften* of the General Governorate (GG), since we are discussing the period of German occupation).

Night without an end. The fate of Jews in selected counties of occupied Poland, the book that I am referring to, is a two-volume work consisting of nine chapters devoted to the fate of Jews in selected counties (*powiaty*) – as the authors designate these territorial units – of occupied Poland: Bielsk Podlaski, Biłgoraj, Węgrów, Łuków, Złoczów, Miechów, Nowy Targ, Dębica and Bochnia. The chapters were authored by Barbara Engelking, Alina Skibińska, Jan Grabowski, Jean-Charles Szurek, Anna Zapalec, Dariusz Libionka, Karolina Panz, Tomasz Frydel and Dagmara Swałek-Niewińska, respectively. The volumes were edited by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski – scholars associated with the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Engelking and Grabowski also wrote the *Foreword*. The book was published thanks to funding from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (within the framework of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities), the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The authors have emphasised that their study is a continuation of previous research conducted by the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research, presented *inter alia* in *Zarys krajobrazu*⁴ and *Judenjagd*.⁵ In their view, “a number of questions

⁴ *Zarys krajobrazu. Wieś polska wobec Zagłady Żydów 1942–1945*, ed. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, with an introduction by K. Persak, Warsaw 2011.

⁵ J. Grabowski. *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu*, Warsaw 2011. English edition: *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-occupied Poland*, Bloomington, Indiana 2013.

appeared at the time concerning the role of the Germans, the reactions and actions of the Jews, and the attitudes of the Poles” (vol. 1, p. 13). The discussion “concerning the scale of Polish complicity in the extermination of Jews and, above all, the attitudes of Poles after *Aktion Reinhardt* [...], that is during what is known as the third phase of the Holocaust”, which followed the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross’s *Neighbours*⁶, provided “an additional impulse” for writing the book (vol. 1, p. 13).⁷ This time the authors decided “to examine selected areas of occupied Poland from up close using a similar methodology” (vol. 1, p. 13). The idea was to use microhistory to trace the fate of as many Jews as possible in the selected territories and to reconstruct the attitudes of other local groups toward them. This is an interesting research area, albeit one that requires an in-depth, accurate examination of thousands of discrete events. One of the most important aspects of the present review will be to determine whether the authors have successfully met this challenge.

The authors’ use of sources is of paramount importance here. The large source base and the use of materials from Polish and international archives make a positive first impression. They suggest to the reader that both the book as a whole and the descriptions of particular events in it are based on in-depth research and a thorough analysis of everyday life in occupied Poland, and that in keeping with academic standards reliable archival materials, accounts, memoirs and diaries have been used. These are the things that give testimony to the quality of a scholar’s methodology and expertise, which in turn determine the value of a work.

⁶ J.T. Gross, *Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*, Sejny 2000. English edition: *Neighbours: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, Princeton 2001.

⁷ It is a pity that the authors have referenced this discussion in a one-sided way, largely accentuating non-academic voices. They have completely skipped over critical remarks pointing to flaws in the methodology and academic treatment *inter alia* in the works of J. Grabowski. See B. Musiał, “Judenjagd” – „umiejętne działanie” czy zbrodnicza perfidia?, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2011, no. 2, pp. 159–170. Response to B. Musiał: J. Grabowski, ‘Rznięcie nożem po omacku, czyli polemika historyczna à la Bogdan Musiał’, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2011, no. 4, pp. 163–170, and polemics in B. Musiał, ‘Odpowiedź na replikę “Rznięcie nożem po omacku, czyli polemika historyczna à la Bogdan Musiał”’, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2011, no. 4, pp. 171–177. After the publication of *Night without an end*, Radosław Józwiak published a pamphlet criticising the credibility of Bielawski’s memoirs, which had been prepared for publication with academic commentary by J. Grabowski. See R. Józwiak, *Zagłada społeczności żydowskiej Węgrowa we wspomnieniach Szraga Fajwla Bielawskiego. Studium jednostkowego antypolonizmu*, Warsaw 2018.

In a certain sense, the book recapitulates the authors' knowledge about the fate of Jews in the territories examined. Due to the size of the work, it has been possible to provide a systematic overview of a number of topics. One can also see how much still needs to be done to fully reconstruct the history of local communities subjected to German terror. The authors' programme of focusing exclusively on the stories of Jewish victims has allowed them to showcase a large number of individual experiences. However, this has not always proven helpful in reconstructing the full background of the events or individual stories mentioned in the sources that they had found.

And yet historical studies should, as far as possible, provide a comprehensive picture of the past. It is particularly important for a historian to compare documents from different sources in order to ensure maximum objectivity.

The present review is divided into two parts: general remarks and specific remarks. The first part is concerned with the structure of the book, the problems touched upon in it, and the selection of sources. In the second part I will address the principal issue, namely that of how the authors and editors actually used the sources.

The analysis of the structure and concept proposed by the editors and authors of *Night without an end* should start with a basic issue, namely the choice of territories to be investigated, which throughout the book are consistently referenced as 'powiaty' (counties). According to the premise of the book, these areas were chosen as exemplifying a diverse "range of conditions [...], which influenced the progress of the Holocaust and the different possibilities that Jews had of hiding" (vol. 1, p. 16). This gives the impression that each author examined the same kind of administrative entity, and that the division of the work is orderly and methodical.

Unfortunately, this impression is misleading. What the authors refer to as 'counties' (without quotation marks) in the title of the book, the chapter headings and the narrative itself are, in fact, focus areas chosen at will by each of the researchers without following any uniform criteria. This is the opposite of what one would have expected from an academic publication. Moreover, the use of the Polish term 'powiat' (county) suggests that the counties so designated date back to a specific historical period when they were actual administrative units. The choice of focus is always up to the author, of course; but it should be consistent

and correspond to the administrative geography of a given time period. Here, the boundaries of Poland's pre-war or post-war counties could have served as reference. The administrative structure of the General Governorate would have been another natural choice, had 'county' simply stood for the German name of the GG administrative units, *Kreishauptmannschaften*. Indeed, any frame of reference would have been admissible as long as the authors all referred to the same administrative system. The use of a single term (county) suggests to the reader that the selected *counties* were actual entities on a single historical administrative map, a term that they use in the titles of the individual chapters.

From the point of view of the time of Poland's occupation described in the book, the logical choice would have been to describe the conditions in different *Kreishauptmannschaften* (and, accordingly, to use the German term). This would have corresponded with the time period under discussion and with the unique political structure of these administrative units. It would also have reflected a new scope of political power, as the German *Kreishauptmänner* enjoyed different powers than the pre-war Polish *starostowie* (county governors).⁸ This, however, would have necessitated taking into account the fact that the German *Kreishauptmannschaften* were often several times larger than the pre-war Polish counties. And as evidenced by statements in the *Foreword*, the authors seem to be aware of this.

Meanwhile, although the chapter headings all refer to 'counties', there is absolutely no consistency with regard to *what* is being referenced, despite a veneer of terminological uniformity. This veneer is only reinforced by the title of the book, which speaks of 'selected *counties*'. However, in the cases of Miechów, Nowy Targ, Dębica and Biłgoraj, we are effectively dealing with descriptions of *Kreishauptmannschaften*. In that case, to maintain a logical structure in the whole, the reader should be told up front that the remaining chapters relate not to the same kind of administrative units, but to smaller and larger parts of such units, which the authors have delimited quite liberally. Since '*Kreishauptmannschaft*'

⁸ The German occupiers aimed to fill the maximum number of top administrative positions with Germans (*Reichsdeutsche* – Germans from the Reich, or, failing that, *Volksdeutsche*); at the beginning of 1940 they carried out an administrative reform of the GG, combining the pre-war Polish counties into larger entities. This is how the *Kreishauptmannschaften* and *Stadthauptmannschaften* (city counties) came into being. *Kreishauptmannschaften* and *Stadthauptmannschaften* were superior administrative centres with a broad range of powers, through which the Germans controlled the local administration.

has been translated as 'county', it should be stated that Swałtek-Niewińska has researched a small eastern part of *Kreishauptmannschaft* Krakau, and not a fictional 'Bochnia county', which did not exist on the map of the GG. In fact, the author also uses the term 'Cracow county' (vol. 2, p. 563) in her text, which only adds to the confusion. The readers should be informed that what Grabowski describes is only part of Sokołów-Węgrów county (*Kreishauptmannschaft* Sokolow-Wengrow), and not 'Węgrów county', which did not exist at the time. Zapalec discusses only the central part of Złoczów county (*Kreishauptmannschaft* Zloczow), and not of 'Złoczów county', which is absent from the GG map. Szurek describes part of Radzyń 'county' (*Kreishauptmannschaft* Radzyn), and not 'Łuków county', which, again, was not a GG administrative entity. Meanwhile Engelking only describes the western part of Bielsk 'county' (*Kreisskomissariat* Bielsk), rather than 'Bielsk county', which did not exist in *Bezirk* Bialystok. Here, the boundaries of the area researched have been drawn even more liberally: to the west, it is bounded by *Landkreis* Bielsk from the occupation period map, and to the east, by the contemporary Polish border, which splits the area into two parts. The *Foreword* (vol. 1, p. 14) falsely claims that what is analysed in this case are *gminy* (communes, Ger. *Gemeinde*) within the boundaries of the 1939 county, since the eastern part of the said county extended beyond the border later imposed by the USSR. Nor does the eastern part of the county so defined correspond to the territorial scope adopted for research purposes. The area covered by Engelking's research, referenced as a 'county', was not a county before the war either.

These remarks also apply to the titles of the maps placed at the beginning of each chapter. These also create a semblance of 'county' uniformity. The map titles, which correspond to the chapter headings, only reinforce the reader's false conviction that each author has made a geographically and chronologically consistent choice. All of this causes structural and chronological confusion, which deviates considerably from any academic standards.

The general map showing the division of the occupied Polish territories on the front endpapers of both volumes only makes this confusion greater. The map shows the geographical location of the 'counties' described in the chapters to help the reader locate them. Perhaps the purpose was to underline the thought-through structure of the book. However, the errors that one finds here only spark

more confusion. The map is entitled 'The Division of Occupied Polish Lands after 22 June 1941'. The 'counties' in the titles of the chapters, which did not exist as administrative units under German occupation, are shown as legitimate entities in their own right along with the GG *Kreishauptmannschaften*. We are therefore dealing with non-existent administrative units: 'Węgrów county', 'Łuków county', and 'Bochnia county'. 'Złoczów county' is marked as if it had covered the entire *Kreishauptmannschaft*, even though, as already mentioned, the author only dealt with the latter's central part. At the same time 'Bielsk county' has been marked erroneously (Bielsk Podlaski has been confused with Biała Podlaska) within the boundaries of Lublin District, even though it should be inside Białystok District (which was not part of the General Governorate).

Of course it is a very positive fact that each chapter includes a separate map for each area analysed (in a black-and-white and colour version), showing the location of ghettos, labour camps for Jews, different kinds of German police stations (*Polnische Polizei* stations have been marked separately) as well as major roads and forested areas.⁹ Aside from the titles erroneously identifying the areas as 'counties' of one and the same kind, we should nonetheless appreciate this effort, since good maps always enrich the content of a book and help one to verify the information.

It is another issue altogether that the selected 'counties' do not exemplify the entirety of Poland's territory in a well thought-out way. Considering their territorial scope, they are little more than a research *sample* – too small, in my view, to extrapolate conclusions about the entirety of Polish lands. Why these and not other counties? This is not explained. Is it merely a coincidence? After all, it would be difficult to prove that the chosen areas exemplify a comprehensive variety of geographical or social conditions and are representative of Poland as a whole. Of the nine 'counties' investigated in the book almost half (!) – as many as four (Miechów, Bochnia, Dębica, Nowy Targ) – were part of a single German district (Cracow); two (Biłgoraj, Łuków) were in Lublin District; and one each were in Galicia (Złoczów) and Warschau Districts (Węgrów). Moreover, only one 'county' (Bielsk Podlaski) was not in the General Governorate but in Białystok District.

⁹ The book includes (in volume 2), a list of the sources (bibliography), a list of abbreviations, and indexes of places and people (both volumes), which, given the size of the work (around 1400 pages of text), is an important advantage.

With the exception of Złoczów ‘county’, almost none of Poland’s eastern pre-war territories are represented. All of Radom District (one of the five administrative units of the GG) and the Polish territories annexed to the Reich have also been left out. An experienced Holocaust scholar is well aware that the Holocaust had different, distinctive features in each of these regions and that a different social hierarchy of the conquered peoples existed there (e.g. Radom District had the biggest number of Jewish industrial workers in the GG¹⁰). This, in turn, affected attitudes towards the Holocaust and the possibilities for offering assistance.

The ethnic composition of the territories was different, too. Could it be that areas with a dominant Polish ethnic majority were chosen for the analysis, considerably marginalising the attitudes of Ukrainians¹¹ and Belarusians towards the Holocaust? To avoid unwarranted statements, let me emphasise that in the case of Bielsk county, the eastern part of this territory has been excluded from the book; this part accounted for nearly half of the county area, and was largely inhabited by Belarusians.

The lack of a classic ending is a noticeable shortcoming of the book. One can only find some rather perfunctory conclusions on the last four pages of the *Foreword*, which is less than modest by any standard, considering the length of the book (1400 pages of text). Offering readers the final conclusions before they have had a chance to read the book is a rare practice. The chronological framework adopted is also somewhat idiosyncratic. The final perspective of the work raises doubts, too. The narrative does not end with the arrival of the Soviets and the end of the German occupation, but continues into the first months after the Soviet occupation. Here, however, the image of post-war Polish-Jewish relations has been restricted to negative examples, mainly concerning the murders of Jews.¹²

¹⁰ J. Wijaczka, G. Miernik, ‘Żydowscy robotnicy przymusowi w zakładach zbrojeniowych Hasag w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w czasie II wojny światowej’ in *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich. Polityka – gospodarka – kultura – społeczeństwo*, ed. J. Wijaczka, G. Miernik, Cracow 2005; K. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, Cracow 2004; F. Karay, *Death comes in yellow. Skarżysko-Kamienna slave labour camp*, [Amsterdam] 1996.

¹¹ This problem has been discussed broadly in the voluminous (nearly 1000-page) collective work *OUN, UPA i zagłada Żydów*, ed. A. Zięba, Cracow 2016.

¹² It is symptomatic that even Marcin Zaremba’s study (*Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*, Cracow 2012), criticised as one-sided, has been cited in the book (once). The authors make no mention whatsoever of M.J. Chodakiewicz, *Po Zagładzie. Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1944–1947*, Warsaw 2008.

The structure of the book in its basic division into 'counties' should not, theoretically, spark any major controversies aside from those regarding the territorial scope of the 'counties' themselves (as already discussed). A consistent way of presenting issues has been adopted in all of the chapters, with some degree of individual freedom and differences of accent. In the chapters on Biłgoraj, Węgrów and Łuków 'counties', each of the authors states that he or she was particularly inspired by publications (all of them of different standing as sources) which served for each as a type of guidebook to the region. These publications are the journal of Z. Klukowski, the memoir of S.F. Bielawski (*nota bene* this publication has been erroneously included in the *Studies, Monographs and Articles* section of the bibliography) and the book *Żydzi Łukowa i okolic* ('The Jews of Łuków and the surrounding area'), respectively.¹³

It is a good thing that the authors have, at least to a certain degree, accounted for the distinctive experiences of different regions, for instance Złoczów and Bielsk Podlaski, which were under Soviet occupation in 1939–1941, as well as the local specificity of the Holocaust. For the most part, the unfolding narrative follows the standard Holocaust periodisation¹⁴ and includes an introductory background on the history of Jewish settlement. The internal structure of the chapters has been handled with relative liberty. Although this is certainly an advantage for the reader, it leads to some methodological inconsistencies in the treatment of historical problems, because naturally not all issues can be made uniform in such an extensive study.

The book lays significant emphasis on the experience of Jews during the inter-war period, although 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 Jews have been highlighted, often in a manner quite far from balanced scholarly assessment. For example, we learn from the sub-chapter 'Węgrów Powiat During the Inter-War Period' that the *Endecja* [National Democracy] organised a boycott of Jewish shops, which failed miserably, as evidenced by the sources cited by Jan

¹³ Z. Klukowski, *Dziennik z lat okupacji Zamojszczyzny (1939–1941)*, edited and with an introduction by Z. Mańkowski, 2nd edition, Lublin 1959; Z. Klukowski, *Zamojszczyzna 1918–1959*, Warsaw 2017; S.F. Bielawski, *Ostatni Żyd z Węgrowa. Wspomnienia ocalałego z Zagłady w Polsce*, ed. J. Grabowski, Warsaw 2015; K. Czubaszek, *Żydzi Łukowa i okolic*, Warsaw 2008.

¹⁴ See R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, New Haven and London, 2003.

Grabowski (vol. 1, pp. 393–394). Had the author presented these bilateral accounts against a broader background, taking economic relations into account, he would have lacked an argument for concluding his thread with the following, absurd, sentence: “The outbreak of war found the Jewish community pushed into the defensive, while violence against Jews, so pronounced at the end of the 1930s, was soon to grow with the arrival of the Germans” (vol. 1, p. 395).¹⁵ Instead of bringing us closer to the truth, this narrative actually moves us away from the reality of the period. What should one make of the above statement? Who was responsible for the escalation of violence against Jews? Is the author trying – against well-established facts – to weave the Holocaust, perpetrated by the Germans in occupied Poland, into the picture of disputes between two communities living in a free country? This manoeuvre actually moves us away from understanding the true mechanisms of the wartime genocide.

Another example of an excessively liberal approach to sources relating to the pre-war period are Libionka’s statements concerning the anti-Semitic incidents which occurred after Poland regained its independence in 1918. These are epitomised, in his view, by the events in Działoszyce. Had the author read more attentively the Polish and Jewish sources¹⁶ that he cites, he would have noticed that, independently but quite consistently, they confirm that no anti-Semitic rioting took place in the town. There was an attack by an armed band of robbers, who clashed with the Polish gendarmes who had rushed to defend the townspeople. Having overpowered the defenders, the former simply began to loot expensive shops.

When it comes to the most basic descriptions of the occupation period, any historian should be shocked by the term ‘German-Polish administration’ used in the *Foreword* alongside ‘German administration’ (vol. 1, p. 19). This seemingly trite apposition sheds light on the conceptual categories informing the *Foreword* (and

¹⁵ In the context of the statement about Jews being marginalised, it is worth recalling the figure of Ezechieł Szatensztajn, the owner of a well-known (in Węgrów and the surrounding area) industrial plant on the Liwiec river (including a mill, a power plant and a sawmill). Szatensztajn was killed at the beginning of World War II by the Germans, who seized his property but let his family remain in their home. J. Grabowski, ‘Powiat węgrowski’, in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, p. 402; Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (hereinafter AŻIH), 301/6043, Account of Władysław Okulus, n.p., n.d., typescript, f. 1. An excellent example showing the broader perspective of Polish Jews during the inter-war period is E. Majcher, *Aktywność gospodarcza ludności żydowskiej w województwie kieleckim w latach 1918–1939*, Kielce 2008.

¹⁶ D. Libionka, ‘Powiat miechowski’, in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 2, p. 26, footnote 31.

so shared by at least two of the authors of the book). Engelking and Grabowski do not explain what they mean. At the same time, they appear not to notice that the expression represents a factual error. Rudimentary definitions of 'administration' invariably connect it to a state or government ("state or municipal agencies and organs insofar as they have executive power"¹⁷). In light of this definition, there is no such thing as an administration without a state. Legal historians draw a straight line connecting an administration to the activity of a state – a specific state – regardless of whether one defines 'administration' in positive or negative terms.¹⁸

What kind of a Polish state, as distinct from the German state, could one speak of in occupied Poland under the rule of the Third Reich? Could it be that the authors believe that a Polish state, in some overt form, existed as part of the said administration? Could it be that they do not understand the fundamental differences between, for example, occupied France (an example they cite) after 1940 (where German and French administrations officially existed side by side), and occupied Poland, where any form of activity by Polish state agencies was banned? Could it be that they are unaware that the pre-war Polish local self-government had in fact been abolished, first of all through its complete subordination (even of the commune heads and mayors, who were left *en poste*) to the forcefully imposed state administration of the Third Reich?

Many of the comments and interpretations propounded in *Night without an end* would seem to suggest that the above expression does not appear by chance, nor is it simply a linguistic lapse. Rather, it seems to be part of a more general problem with the book. The authors often construct the narrative as if they were dropping red herrings for the reader, or had failed to understand that the only genuine Polish state administration in occupied Poland was to be found in the Underground. The Republic of Poland did not put any of its agencies at the disposal of the Germans. The fact that the Germans harnessed some Polish citizens (as they did the material assets of Polish government agencies) into the framework of their administration in the GG for practical reasons does not mean that part of the said administration was somehow removed from the authority of the Third Reich. The General Governorate in its entirety was run exclusively by structures of the German state. These should

¹⁷ <https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/administracja.html>.

¹⁸ T. Maciejewski, *Historia administracji*, Warsaw 2006, p. XIX.

be fundamental points of reference when reconstructing and interpreting the events which occurred under German occupation. Meanwhile, the use of lower-level administrative personnel (just as the forced recruitment of Polish citizens into German administration and the armed forces) meant the incorporation of some Polish citizens into the German administrative system, which was under German control and whose purpose was to implement German decrees and directives. Understanding these basic facts is of paramount importance, also when analysing the decision-making process behind the Holocaust. It would be equally curious if one were to describe people in the Soviet territories occupied after 1941 as living under a 'German-Soviet administration' merely because some citizens of the USSR had been made to work for the German administrative apparatus. Similarly, the SS units into which Soviet citizens were drafted (e.g. the *SS-Wachmannschaften*) would then be identified as 'German-Soviet' formations, which is absurd.

These interpretations go hand in hand with a marked tendency to portray the 'blue' police simply as a Polish police force (as if it had been a law enforcement agency established by a Polish state and not by the German Reich). One might receive the impression that the authors have intentionally abstained from offering any comment on the German provenance of this formation. Ostensibly they use the formation's German-given name (*Polnische Polizei*) in Polish translation (*Policja Polska*, Polish Police); they repeatedly use the term 'Polish police', not spelled out as a proper name, lacking quotation marks or any explanation of its actual character. On the linguistic level, this additionally instils the impression that it was a Polish and not a German force. It is portrayed as though it was an agency of a Polish state functioning alongside the German administration. In many passages, the *Polnische Polizei* is presented as acting in partnership with German officers, on a par, or even independently, as a Polish police force proper, i.e. in the sense of being attached precisely to a Polish state. This depiction may give less knowledgeable readers the impression that the said uniformed formation was actually a more or less (probably more) autonomous Polish state agency. This way of presenting the issue, found *inter alia* in the writings of Jan Grabowski, has little to do with the reality of German-occupied Poland. Established on 17 December 1939 by order of the German Reich, the *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement* was composed of pre-war Polish police officers, forcibly summoned to report for new duty. As early as 30 October 1939, Polish police officers were called to return to

work by the Higher SS and Police Leader in the GG, *SS-Obergruppenführer* Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger. The policemen faced severe punishment if they refused to obey the summons.¹⁹ The *Polnische Polizei* was a formation of the Third German Reich, part of the German Order Police, the *Ordnungspolizei* (the fact that the Germans referred to PP officers as ‘Polish police officials’ or ‘non-German police’ – a term also used later during the occupation – does not alter this fact),²⁰ without its own vertical organisation structure (the county level was the highest link), and subordinated to the German Gendarmerie. It was a German formation just the same as the already mentioned *SS-Wachmannschaften*. As a matter of fact, members of the latter also served in an auxiliary formation within the German Order Police.

Meanwhile, Dariusz Libionka uses formulations such as “a column surrounded by officers of the Polish and German police”, as if talking about smooth cooperation between the services of two countries (vol. 2, p. 79). In this situation, impersonal phrases such as “supervision over the deportation was entrusted to the blue police” do not necessarily inform the reader that it was a German operation; yet the orders came from German commanders. When Swałek-Niewińska informs of the killing of the Fragner couple and Maria Wiedelman, she cites the account of Antoni Łucki, who states that the killing was carried out by the “blue police, assisted by one German” (vol. 2, p. 571). For a historian familiar with the period, this means that the *Polnische Polizei* **under the command of** by a German gendarme [emphasis mine] arrived on the scene. The fact that there were more *Polnische Polizei* men had no bearing on the situation. The chain of command of the German formations, both part of the *Ordnungspolizei*, was the decisive factor. In this context, it is of secondary importance which officer of the Reich physically did the killing – the *Polnische Polizei* men or the gendarme. All of them represented the German Reich.

The use of pre-war uniforms (with the Polish state emblems torn off the caps) when exploiting a professional group of a conquered state for their own purposes was merely a practicality on the part of the Germans. The same was true of the conquered state’s material assets. It is hardly a discovery (as the book seems to

¹⁹ *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* [Ordinance Gazette of the General Governor for the occupied Polish territories], 2 November 1939, p. 16.

²⁰ Meanwhile, members of the German-created *Polnische Kriminalpolizei* were part of the *Sicherheitspolizei*.

imply) that the *Polnische Polizei* (PP) took part in the crimes. The PP implemented the occupier's policies towards anyone in the General Governorate, be they Jews or Poles. If a German decree envisaged killing, then the *Polnische Polizei* men carried out such murders under German command, or at German orders, and killed both Jews and Poles. However, the reader will not learn about their Polish victims from *Night without an end*, as this is outside the authors' interest. The reader is even less likely to learn about the role that the *Polnische Polizei* played in virtually all forms of human exploitation, forcing the population into compliance with German decrees.²¹ The fact that there was a group of policemen who sabotaged German orders and collaborated with the Underground (on pain of death from the Germans) does not change the role that the *Polnische Polizei* played in the Holocaust or in the terror unleashed against Poles. Perhaps drawing a full picture of the *Polnische Polizei* as an element of the German police administration would have disrupted the authors' strange narrative about a 'German-Polish administration'. Meanwhile, the *Foreword* simply introduces the *Polnische Polizei* as a 'Polish formation' (vol. 1, pp. 25–26), not as part of the occupier's apparatus. The same thing is repeated in the chapters. Hence, on the one hand, it should be emphasised that the authors are correct when writing that the *Polnische Polizei* "was an important element of the German strategy to destroy the Jews", although there is nothing really novel about this claim. At the same time, the avoidance of any statements identifying the PP as one of the uniformed formations of the Third Reich, under German orders, albeit composed of 'non-Germans' (as they were officially called in the GG), may mislead contemporary readers as to its nature.

Unfortunately, this is a method of offering the readers 'evidence' confirming a predetermined thesis. It enables the authors to describe the activities of the *Polnische Polizei* and to speak of 'expanding knowledge about Polish complicity' in the Holocaust. Although on the microhistorical level they certainly provide new examples of the 'blue policemen' involvement in crimes, the *Polnische*

²¹ For a broader discussion, see A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski. Rzecz o policji "granatowej" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1990; A. Hempel, "Policja granatowa" w Generalnej Guberni', *Wiadomości Historyczne* 1987, no. 6, pp. 483–502; M. Korcuć, 'Niemiecka Polnische Polizei. Historyczny i państwowo-prawny kontekst funkcjonowania "granatowej" policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945', in *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement. Policja "granatowa" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945*, ed. T. Domański, E. Majcher-Ociesa, Warsaw-Kielce 2019.

Polizei involvement in the killing of Jews (and in the killing of many Poles) is not a taboo subject in Poland. But it is difficult to accept ‘blue’ *Ordnungspolizei* officers as authoritative representatives of Polish society. The said society had its state representatives in the allied camp. Meanwhile, the *Polnische Polizei* officers were under German orders and constituted one of the links in the German chain of violence and terror – one of the occupation’s many pathologies. Following the same logic, should one classify the members of the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Order Service, JO),²² whom the Germans also used against the Jews, as an authoritative representation of the Jewish community in the ghettos? This would be completely absurd. Another thing: observing as a ‘research discovery’ that there was “close cooperation between the PP [the *Polnische Polizei* – T.D.] and the Gendarmerie” (J. Grabowski, vol. 1, p. 497), i.e. between two *Ordnungspolizei* forces, is as ‘revelatory’ as ‘detecting’ cooperation between the Gestapo and the *Kripo* within the *Sicherheitspolizei* (in the latter case, a description of the conflicts would have been interesting). Cooperation was the norm simply because the above-mentioned services were all part of the German repressive apparatus.

Even in the text about Miechów ‘county’ penned by Dariusz Libionka, who after all is a renowned historian, the information about the number and location of *Polnische Polizei* posts is phrased as though those manning them were not uniformed General Governorate officials but the functionaries of an implicit though never clearly articulated Poland, who ‘returned’ to service in what was allegedly the same formation as in pre-war times. This is done by falsely implying that there were institutional and structural continuities between the pre-war Polish State Police and the *Polnische Polizei*. Libionka writes: “The first commander of the Polish Police in Miechów powiat was Maj. Stanisław Siwoń. In 1927–1938, before arriving in Miechów, he had served as commander of the State Police in Częstochowa and Zawiercie. In September 1939, he evacuated to the east with his men. Once the fighting had come to an end, he **returned** [emphasis added] into the police ranks” (vol. 2, p. 43). In such instances, at least when first mentioning the formation,

²² *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* (JO) – the Jewish Order Service, commonly known as the Jewish police or militia; its members were known as OD-men or *Ordnungsdiensts*. In this review, I consistently use the German terminology. After all, it was a formation created by the German occupation authorities to repress the Jewish community. See AIPN, GK, 652/129, Abschrift aus dem Amtsblatt des Chefs des Distrikts Radom im Generalgouvernement vom 15 Juli 1941 no. 9, f. 125.

the author should explain that the said 'return' actually meant service in a new formation subordinated to the Reich. In the case of Miechów 'county', the *Polnische Polizei* is presented as a practically self-sufficient, autonomous Polish police force. On many occasions, the author describes operations carried out by the Gendarmerie and the *Polnische Polizei* as if the two were equals enjoying partner status, and as if the 'blues' were not completely subordinated to the German gendarmes. The reader is thus seriously misled. Here too, we find no mention of who set up the force and why, and whose orders the officers followed. To top things off, Commander Siwoń is said to have in fact 'returned to his post', as if the German-Polish war had ended with a scenario similar to that of France in 1940. Since the *Polnische Polizei* is presented as practically the main force implementing the third phase of the Holocaust, perhaps the authors owe the reader some explanation as to what it essentially was.²³

Another issue is that Libionka describes the German Construction Service (*Baudienst*) – set up in the GG to exploit young Poles as a cheap labour force, unconditionally subordinated to the Germans and, for this this reason, barracked – in much the same way. What the reader will not learn from the book is that members of the *Baudienst* were forcibly conscripted, and that the formation was under strict German orders. The reader is not told that the youths conscripted into the *Baudienst* had no say as to the purpose for which they would be used, while any insubordination was severely punished. The sanctions included disciplinary punishments, fines, imprisonment and the death penalty.²⁴ Nor will the reader learn that in order to tighten the discipline among the *Junaks* (*Baudienst* members – transl.), a *Baudienst* penal camp under German command (*Straflager des Baudienstes im Generalgouvernement*, colloquially known as the 'Liban') was set up in Cracow.²⁵ For over half a century, specialist literature has described the deployment of *Baudienst* men in ghetto liquidations, digging graves

²³ The anti-Jewish and anti-Polish propaganda disseminated among the ranks of the *Polnische Polizei* deserves to be analysed. We can find traces of this phenomenon for example in records from the post-war trail of Lt Otto Hubner, the officer who supervised the PP in *Distrikt* Radom in 1941–1945. AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/172–173.

²⁴ H. Gawacki, 'Liban. Obóz karny Służby Budowlanej', *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, 1951, vol. 6, p. 140.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 131–167.

for murdered Jews and searching corpses, all under strict German supervision. Those who escaped from the units “were sentenced to harsh punishments, to death, and were sent to penal camps. The last two penalties were applied most often.”²⁶

Due to the “use [of *Baudienst* units] during liquidation operations” (vol. 2, p. 44), Libionka has singled out this formation in his description of Miechów county. However, as in the case of the *Polnische Polizei*, we find no meaningful details of the structure or activities of this formation in the *Foreword* or the chapter itself. It would have sufficed to draw on the existing literature and say that the *Baudienst* was a German-managed ‘mass forced labour organisation in the GG’, established ‘to obtain a cheap and efficient labour force’, and so *de facto* to exploit the local population.²⁷ It was staffed almost exclusively through the forced conscription of young men (including the general conscription of certain cohorts).²⁸ Of all the authors, only Tomasz Frydel notes (on the margins of his main considerations, in vol. 2, p. 548) that deserters and those dodging service in the *Baudienst* faced severe punishments, including the death penalty. Such punishments were not always served following judgement by an occupation court²⁹ but administered *ad hoc*. There are documented cases of the murder of deserters or men trying to evade *Baudienst* service, including in the Cracow district and Miechów ‘county’.³⁰ One young man even committed suicide as he was being chased by *Polnische Polizei* policemen for fleeing the *Baudienst*.³¹ Are these details not equally important when describing how the Germans used the *Baudienst* as a labour force for digging and filling mass graves? How does it differ from the countless examples of Jews being forced to dig graves, including those for executed Poles (as was the case, for example, at the Glinnik cemetery in Cracow)?

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 145–149.

²⁷ M. Wróblewski, *Służba Budowlana (Baudienst) w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1940–1945*, Warsaw 1984, p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 60–61; See also T. Sudoł, ‘Organizacja i działalność Służby Budowlanej (Baudienst) w dystrykcie lubelskim Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w latach 1941–1944’, in *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, vol. 2, Warsaw 2016, pp. 23–24.

²⁹ M. Wróblewski, *Służba Budowlana (Baudienst)...*, pp. 78–79.

³⁰ J. Guzik, *Raławickie...*, pp. 195, 189, 200, 169; T. Wroński, *Egzekucje na terenie woj. krakowskiego...*, p. 179.

³¹ AIPN Kr, 502/1459, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Józef Heczko, Bochnia, 23 January 1950, pp. 193–194.

Of course, among the thousands of *Junaks* there could have been pathological individuals or men trying to win favour with the Germans through enthusiastic performance. There were also *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) hoping to be promoted. One should condemn all instances of brutality or over-enthusiasm, in other words the actions and attitudes of *individuals*, and not the *Junaks* (whom the Germans had stripped of the right to decide their own fate) as a whole. Moreover, it is a perversion of history to present their forced involvement in Holocaust operations as almost voluntary and uncoerced.

In this context, Libionka employs turns of phrase that only seemingly convey the facts, while demonstrating quite a casual approach to the sources. Let us cite his description of the deportation of Jews from the Skała ghetto in 1942 and of the role of the *Baudienst*. Libionka writes: “The *Baudienst* unit numbered some 150 *Junaks* under the command of a German, Matkaj. The night before the deportation – as Salomon Abram Kołatacz, working at the *Judenrat*, testified – ‘spurred on, they rushed into houses, dragged out Jews as well as those they came upon in the streets to the *Baudienst* barracks.’ One of their victims was Rabbi Lejb Seidmann and his family. He was killed by Matkaj” (vol. 2, p. 74). The account leaves no doubt that Matkaj goaded the *Junaks*, who, in this narrative, bear the main burden of responsibility for the deportation, as if in occupied Poland ‘*Junaks* from the *Baudienst*’ could have actually organised such operations themselves. Meanwhile, Libionka has pared down the cited testimony so much that it becomes inaccurate, to say the least. A different image of the *Junaks*’ actions will emerge if one cites the full testimony of Salomon Abram Kołatacz (Roman Kowalski) from 5 March 1945. It is revealed that this testimony concerned the ‘role’ played in the deportation by a single rank-and-file *Junak*, Franciszek Kitowski. It is this figure that Kołatacz suggests as having been almost the chief commander of the operation. The relevant fragment reads as follows:

“Kitowski was generally known as a Vd [*Volksdeutsche*],³² he didn’t hide it either, and when the deportation from Skała was ordered, sometime before this [Kitowski], who already knew about it, cast off what still remained of his humanitarian mask

³² No evidence was found to support this charge during the trial.

and began playing with the Jews according to the German system, that is by kicking, beating, and extorting various things. When the time came to deport the Jews, he gathered 200 *Junaks*, got them drunk, and spurred them on with speeches and promises of promotion, and **ordered them to surround the city** [emphasis added], so that none could escape. Spurred on, they rushed into houses, dragged out those as well as the Jews they came upon in the streets [and] hauled them to the *Baudienst* barracks, where, on one side, stood the *Baudienst* Inspector (a German) holding a revolver, and on the other side Kitowski himself, also with a revolver, and they took turns shooting the Jews brought in by the *Junaks*. Two of the Jews they shot [managed] to escape in the dark, and it is these [two] that I spoke of, and they confirmed to me that one had been shot by Kitowski and the other by the Inspector. This was [from] 28 to 29 August [19]42. That same night, accompanied by the *Baudienst* inspector, he [Kitowski] went into the house where Rabbi Zeidman Lejb lived, told him to go out in front of the house with his brother-in-law, and in the morning I found them both dead in the ditch.”³³

The *Junaks* had in fact brought some 6–7 Jews (who were shot by Matkaj) to the barracks on German orders.³⁴ Rabbi Seidmann was shot by Matkaj in front of his own home. Moreover, contrary to what Libionka suggests, the court records make no mention of the murder of the rabbi’s family at the said time. All of the witnesses tell of the killing of Seidmann and his brother-in-law.³⁵

A historian should ask whether these testimonies provide a full picture of what happened in Skala and the actions of the *Junaks*, and to what extent, in 1945, were they likely to incriminate a specific rank-and-file member of the *Baudienst*, who was portrayed as the driving force behind the events? Academic distance is all the more advised since even the Special Penal Court in Cracow did not deem as credible the testimony of Kołatacz (Kowalski), a UB (Security Department) functionary at the time. The court commented on his statements as follows:

³³ AIPN Kr, 502/1318, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Roman Kowalski [Salomon Kołatacz], Cracow, 5 March 1945, f. 5.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Suspect Franciszek Kitowski, Cracow, 6 March 1945, p. 6; *Ibidem*, Franciszek Kitowski’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 15 November 1945, pp. 211–212.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, Franciszek Kitowski’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 15 November 1945, p. 211; *Ibidem*, Testimony of Anna Kołatacz, Cracow, 15 November 1945, pp. 218–219 and a fragment of R. Kowalski’s already cited testimony.

“When examining these testimonies, the court concluded that they are not strong as they are mutually contradictory [in contrast with other testimonies made by the same witness – T.D.] in the moments cited, and therefore they can have no value as evidence, as they are subjective and tinged with bias. Therefore, the Court could not give [them] credence, and hence deems them false”.

The court also found the testimony of witness Anna Kołatacz not credible, ‘raising doubts as to its truthfulness and objectivity’, and as such was ‘inadmissible as evidence.’ This is not the place to consider Kitowski’s actual role and the degree of his devotion to the Germans. In this particular case, the witness testimonies were unconvincing enough for Kitowski to be acquitted, although he was found guilty in another case and sentenced to a year in prison for participation in deporting Jews.³⁶

The distortion of historical context and of the conditions in occupied Poland in *Night without an end* also embraces the status of commune and village heads (*wójt* and *sołtys*), Volunteer Fire Brigades, the forest service, and village guard. As the authors of the *Foreword* indicate, Volunteer Fire Brigades ‘are visible during [ghetto] liquidation operations’ (‘the second Polish formation’ – vol. 1, p. 26). What the reader will not learn from the *Foreword* or the text is that pursuant to a decree of Governor General Hans Frank on 22 April 1941, Volunteer Fire Brigades, like other fire services, were militarised within the system of services subordinated to the Reich as a ‘German technical unit of the police auxiliary service.’ The fire brigades reported to county governors (*Kreishauptmänner*) and to the German *Ordnungsdienst*.³⁷ The decree speaks of the obligation to organise volunteer (or compulsory) brigades in municipalities and small towns that did not have such units.³⁸ This is how the Volunteer Fire Brigade became a ‘volunteer’ formation in name only. Refusal to carry out the orders of the German police or civilian administration was treated as an act of violence or sabotage punishable by death pursuant to the infamous decree ‘On combating acts of violence’ in the GG of

³⁶ The key indictment testimonies were given by three Jews, including Anna Kołatacz and Roman Kowalski (Salomon Kołatacz) who were UB officers. *Ibidem*, Judgement of the Special Criminal Court (SSK) in Cracow, Cracow, 16 November 1945, pp. 223–228; *Ibidem*, Judgement of the Supreme Court (SN), n.p., 10 March 1948, pp. 232–234; *Ibidem*, Judgement of the District Court (SO) in Cracow, Cracow, 12 January 1949, pp. 237–238.

³⁷ *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* [Ordinance Gazette for the General Governorate], Cracow, 29 April 1941, no. 36, pp. 219–228.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

31 October 1939: “Whoever calls for or incites to disobedience against the regulations or orders of the German authorities shall be subject to the death penalty”, it stated.³⁹

The *Foreword* also fails to mention how compliance with the German regulations (including those confining Jews to designated areas) was enforced. This especially concerned commune and village heads, their deputies, and members of village guards. Those ordered to keep watch were selected directly by German policemen.⁴⁰ Alternately, guard ‘duty’ was organised on a rotating basis. This was not the only task that the guards had to perform. Watches were organised to protect villages from any suspicious persons disrupting the peace, including ordinary criminals.⁴¹ In order to enforce the execution of these duties, village heads were forced to sign special declarations which stated that they would take part in capturing and delivering Jews ‘staying illegally’ in their area to the police. They “took full responsibility”⁴² for failing to carry out the tasks assigned to them, and resignation was considered sabotage.

Most of the book’s chapters generally lack any deep reflection on the matter described above, although the stated ‘full responsibility’ fundamentally defined the situation of ‘authorities’ on the local level, where many Jews were seeking shelter (illegally, in light of German regulations). Fortunately, this problem is recognised by Tomasz Frydel, who clearly states that this full responsibility represented a threat to their lives (vol. 2, p. 446). In her analysis of Biłgoraj ‘county’, Alina Skibińska admits that “all the mayors, commune and village heads were in fact functionaries of the German administration” (vol. 1, p. 219). On the other hand, in his description of Węgrów ‘county’, Jan Grabowski mentions briefings for village heads (all across the GG). During these meetings, the Germans

³⁹ *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* [Ordinance Gazette of the General Governor for the occupied Polish territories], 2 November 1939, p. 10.

⁴⁰ I do not think that there is any doubt as to what kind of impression it made on the watchmen to have their names ‘listed’ by German gendarmes in the conditions of occupied Poland, with the death penalty available to the occupiers.

⁴¹ It is possible to cite cases of Poles (disclosed during trials) who were apprehended by watchmen and subsequently delivered to the German police in other areas of the GG (Kielce county). However, these cases were not examined by the court. AIPN Ki, 126/362, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Suspect Jan Miziewicz, Kielce, 24 June 1950, f. 19.

⁴² Cited after A. Skibińska, “Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?” Analiza motywacji sprawców zbrodni na Żydach na wsi kieleckiej w latach 1942–1944”, in *Zarys krajobrazu...*, p. 354.

would remind those in attendance of the penalties for hiding Jews and of the guards' duty to remain especially vigilant (vol. 1, p. 478). We are therefore dealing with a whole system set up and controlled by the German administration and police.

It is not rare for descriptions of major events to have no bearing on the narrative and comments offered in the book. As a result, the conclusions drawn by the authors and the interpretations proposed do not correspond to what is generally known about the conditions in Poland under German occupation. This is also one of the book's shortcomings. Hence, readers of *Night without an end* will not learn how the perspective of losing one's life affected the human behaviour and attitudes of Poles. Moral dilemmas simply do not exist in the proposed account. Meanwhile, there should at least be a modicum of reflection on the catastrophic dilemmas that these circumstances brought for some of the shelterers and sheltered. The predicament of village heads and village guards became extraordinarily complicated, not least because of the legal responsibility they bore for the actions of villagers, including those who were illegally (under German regulations) harbouring Jews. The existence of a well-researched monograph on the history of Michałowice commune (in one of the 'counties') shows that the authors could have noticed this problem if they wished.⁴³

In the description offered by J.C. Szurek, it is the conduct of village heads that provides the fundamental paradigm for understanding the Holocaust as a process – as if these people, rather than the conditions imposed by the Germans, had been the main driving force behind events. At the beginning of a short sub-chapter entitled 'Drifting, hiding with peasants', Szurek writes: "Staying with peasants or having any contact with them in general very often ended in death" (vol. 1, p. 606). Moreover, "rural communities, characterised by strong local bonds and interpersonal contacts, formed a dense network. It was difficult for Jews to escape it: every Jew encountered had to be reported or brought to the village head, while the latter had the duty to deliver him to the police station" (vol. 1, p. 606). It is symptomatic that the author describes a danger which ultimately came from the Germans. He is aware who made the laws penalising part of society for living outside designated areas, who forced village heads to deliver Jews to the police, who

⁴³ K. Meus, M. Chorążki, *Na granicy. Monografia historyczna gminy Michałowice*, vol. 2: *Od schyłku XVIII wieku do 1949 roku*, Michałowice 2018, pp. 254–260.

created the atmosphere of terror, and what penalties awaited those who disobeyed German orders. And yet he shifts responsibility for the fate of the Jews onto the Polish community. There is no cause-and-effect connection here.

Among the topics virtually absent⁴⁴ from *Night without an end*, one of the most prominent is the Catholic Church (as well as other churches, including the Orthodox Church), understood as a hierarchical structure and a spiritual community. One needs no reminder – considering the level of religiosity in society at that time and the place of the Church within the social hierarchy – of the role played by the attitude of the lower- and higher-ranking clergy toward the occupation, including the fate of the Jews. It would have been well to provide even a cursory picture of the circumstances in which the Church found itself, and of the opportunities it had in reality to influence the faithful.⁴⁵ The absence of such a picture, unfortunately, translates into the image of the clergy that emerges from the book. Accusations that are completely unrelated to the reality of wartime Poland are formulated. For example, Grabowski accuses a parish priest from Węgrów of abstaining from ‘going out’ during a violent German operation. In a journalistic tone, he claims that “the intervention of the local village head, teacher or priest, at least to some extent, could have cooled murderous passions and moved people’s consciences” (vol. 1, p. 446), as if one was talking about demonstrations in a democratic country, and not the criminal practices of the German authorities in occupied Poland. The author should perhaps be reminded of the reality with a quote from the decree ‘on combating acts of violence in the GG’: “Whoever calls for or incites to disobedience against the regulations or orders of the German authorities shall be subject to the death penalty”.

The editors (as reflected in the *Foreword*) do not on principle seek an answer to one basic question, namely: what did the German occupation mean for the society as a whole, for Poles and Jews, and what general conclusions regarding the attitudes and actions follow from this picture? This is a fundamental

⁴⁴ A somewhat more elaborate analysis of relations between the Catholic Church and Jews has been offered by D. Libionka for Miechów *county* (Kielce diocese), particularly for the inter-war period, although it only highlights issues linked to anti-Semitism.

⁴⁵ The absence of a discussion about the role of the Catholic Church in *Night without an end* is commented on by Jerzy Gapys in a review of the book written for the Pilecki Institute.

shortcoming in a publication which has among its principal aims, as the authors claim, to show the attitudes of Poles toward the Holocaust.

Nor do the authors seem interested in German policies or the circumstances that they produced in the Polish countryside, where fugitives from the ghettos frequently sought shelter. It is in the country, outside large cities, that the vast majority of Jews tried to save themselves in the final phase of the Holocaust. Since the authors write about this on several occasions, referring to the period from 1942 to 1945, one would have expected them to make an effort to draw a relatively comprehensive picture of the wartime reality and of the conditions that the rural population – the people that the Jews most often sought rescue with – had to contend with.⁴⁶ After all, this is the only way one can come closer to what really happened.

Meanwhile, aside from very few fragments and single sentences (such as in the chapters on Biłgoraj and Dębica ‘counties’), the description of German measures toward the rural population is almost nil, as if the German policy of terror and theft only affected the Jews. A large part of the book gives the impression that the Poles living in the countryside were not experiencing the totality of German occupation. The reader will not learn that refugees from the ghettos found themselves in a land in thrall to German terror. The smallest act of resistance or failure to comply with German orders was punished by death or deportation to a concentration camp. Over time, the reality of the German occupation, combined with racist policies (also targeting non-Jews, who were seen as ‘subhuman’) led to a severe impoverishment of the population. This is an important element which affected the situation of those from whom the refugees were seeking help. After all, the problem of living costs naturally emerges wherever there are people. The Germans exploited the conquered population economically on an unimaginable scale by stealing property, requiring slave labour on behalf of the Third Reich (obligatory work, forced labour, *Scharwerk*, etc.) as well

⁴⁶ M. Urynowicz, ‘Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej eksterminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie II wojny światowej’, in *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945. Studia i materiały*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006, pp. 209–364; Z. Schnepf-Kończak, ‘Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów na wsi w czasie okupacji niemieckiej. Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata’, in *Zarys krajobrazu...*, pp. 195–258.

as systematic appropriation of foodstuffs (quotas).⁴⁷ The German occupation authorities terrorised the population by brutal means such as mass and individual arrests and executions. The reader will not learn about the penal expeditions, villages burned to the ground, executions of peasants, etc. that took place in the same areas at the same time.

Add to this the various occupation-era pathologies resulting from German policies. The system of violence sanctioned by German law caused the demoralisation of certain members of society and contributed to social atomisation. Most people were simply trying to survive the occupation, to keep themselves and their loved ones alive. In addition to this, people lived with a constant sense of danger, fearing the omnipotent occupier, who not only used policing forces (the Gendarmerie and *Polnische Polizeien* stations, mobile pacification units), but also a network of informers and outright collaborators. We ought to bear in mind that even single units (out of different motivations) could effectively terrorise entire villages to enforce compliance with German regulations (including anti-Jewish measures). Another factor was the activity of different forest-based groups (not just partisan units but also ordinary bandits and Communist units, whose mission was to ignite local conflicts deep in the rear of the Eastern front) as well as other groups whose attitude to the population was downright ruthless. All of this augmented the confusion, the sense of being trapped, and the fear of consequences for disobeying German regulations. In addition, to further intensify this oppressive atmosphere, the German police would arrange provocations, sending out various secret agents or even organising armed groups that tried to pass as units of the Polish underground.⁴⁸ These problems affecting the communities among whom the

⁴⁷ To illustrate how profoundly burdensome the obligation of delivering agricultural produce quotas was for Polish society, let us use an example from Kielce county. One of the farmers managed to get his quota divided into installments. The dues were collected so scrupulously that one of the 'installments' he delivered amounted to 2 kg (*sic*) of rye. On the general features of German policy in Polish lands, see *inter alia* C. Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa...*, *passim*; C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1–2, Warsaw 1970. For more recent studies on wartime economic exploitation see S. Schwaneberg, 'Eksploracja gospodarcza Generalnego Gubernatorstwa przez Rzeszę Niemiecką w latach 1939–1945', *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 2009, no. 1 (14), pp. 133–153.

⁴⁸ As many as three such groups were active in the borderland of Radom and Cracow districts (Miechów county). The attitude to thieves which emerges from the activity of one of the groups is instructive. The members of the group, who were Germans, robbed a couple of peasants in the

Jewish refugees sought help are outside the scope of the authors' interest. As will be shown further on, the authors sometimes disregard these issues deliberately, even though they use sources that contain such descriptions.

These authors address these fundamental problems only marginally. Generally, as they search for archival materials that can support certain conclusions, they often fail to consider the testimonies of other witnesses, as if the former accounts did not need verification. At the same time, they make no effort to learn how the existential situation of Poles under German occupation influenced the attitudes of non-Jews toward a group whom it was prohibited, on pain of death, to shelter or to provide with any form of assistance.

But even the sources cited are often used selectively, as the authors are loth to obtain a complete picture in an effort to corroborate their *a priori* theses. For example, the sources used mention similar pathologies within the communities enclosed in the ghettos. These pathologies are passed over in silence, although some of them correspond to the 'survival strategies' that the book imprecisely describes. The excessive focus on a single aspect or side of the legal and physical segregation of society at the hands of the Germans frequently blinds the authors to the purely human dimension of different kinds of behaviour, and just as often also to the inhuman dimension of the pathologies proliferating in times of terror among a variety of nationalities – Poles as well as Jews. The sources, including those of which the authors have made partial use, talk about this. It would have sufficed to use them accurately and not selectively.

It is astonishing that the authors, in sketching a picture of a time so fundamentally different from our own, forego any attempt to determine how the ubiquitous destitution altered people's attitudes not only to abandoned Jewish property, but to any property left unattended. The impoverishment of society quickly spurred the growth of a black market. This phenomenon was also well known to those living

village of Marianów. They were pursued by *Polnische Polizei*, a German unit (which didn't know that it was chasing Germans) as well as 30 civilians armed with 'axes and sticks'. One of the Germans was killed during an ensuing skirmish. The incident was also brought up during the trial of the *Polnische Polizei* commander in Działoszyce, Piotr Sałabun. It is a pity that Libionka does not reference it. In Łuków county, German units pretended to be Soviet partisans. See T. Domański, 'Prowokacje niemieckich oddziałów policyjnych i wojskowych na terenach wiejskich dystryktu radomskiego. Zarys problematyki', in *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, vol. 2, Warsaw 2016, pp. 156, 161–162; AŻIH, 301/4800, Testimony of Jankiel Grynblat, Krynica, 27 July 1950, p. 3.

in the ghettos. Like Jewish properties, Polish mansions and homes left without inhabitants were quickly pillaged.⁴⁹ Such pathologies existed in every society that the Germans segregated into groups and subjected to different degrees of legal disadvantage. The authors formulate no research questions to determine whether there were any similarities between the fates of unattended property (both Jewish and non-Jewish, inside or outside ghettos) which was subsequently appropriated as such. The occupation created opportunities for greedy individuals to amass wealth at the expense of others. Groups of people willing to exploit the abnormal conditions to make money emerged. The authors should know (because numerous sources talk about it) that this phenomenon transcended ethnic divisions. It happened on both sides of the ghetto wall and among people in different regions, both Poles and Jews. The book's description of pathologies and servility toward the Germans should include both Poles and Jews, since the survivors' testimonies speak of both. We would then obtain a picture of complex human stories rather than a crooked mirror, which selectively focuses on a black-and-white image of some people, while overlooking similar behaviours in others.

We are also discussing a society in which millions of people had been stripped of property by the occupiers as early as the beginning of the war. People were ordered to abandon their homes and leave everything behind. It is also significant that the Germans deported over 1.7 million Poles, which meant that a huge group of people were divested of everything they owned.⁵⁰ This also affected the atmosphere in the General Governorate. Eventually, hundreds of thousands of people's homes were burnt to the ground. Those expelled from their homes also sought shelter wherever possible. It was also a society in which people might be ordered to leave their homes at once and move to other dwellings because the Germans were setting the area aside to create a new kind of district.

⁴⁹ We can cite the pillaging of property belonging to the Szeleś family of Rytwiany, Opatów county, in the autumn of 1943. At that time the Germans had murdered Jan Kalina, the father of housewife Genowefa Szeleś, for assisting Jews. After the members of the household fled, their property was looted by the local inhabitants. See the Account of Ryszard Szeleś from 31 March 2015 (in the author's collection); Account of Zofia Czerwiec from 31 March 2015 (author's collection).

⁵⁰ C. Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna hitlerowskich Niemiec w okupowanej Polsce*, Poznań 1979, p. 136. A large percentage of these people were subsequently quartered with inhabitants of the Polish countryside, which made living conditions even worse.

When relating the situations in which Jewish property was stolen, the authors sometimes seem to forget that the original plunderer was the German Reich. The Reich regarded any property owned by the Jews whom it was murdering or deporting as its state property and, as such, subject to its protection. At one point, this hardly acceptable practice of robbery even appears to be identified with a state of normalcy, as if Dariusz Libionka regarded the Third Reich as the legitimate owner of property belonging to the people it had murdered. Libionka describes the secret night-time plunder of Jewish homes (considered Reich property), whose inhabitants had been driven out by the Germans during deportation. Naturally, it is difficult to condone theft from any point of view. A historian should also see it as something repugnant (the same goes for looting a mansion or a home left behind by people of another nationality). Yet, as already mentioned, one could conclude from the book that only Jewish property was ever stolen. Moreover, the author seems only to pay attention to the **practice of robbery** by peasants, which he calls ‘robbery on a grand scale’. Yet he abstains from using this designation to describe the fact that the Germans had already seized everything first, threatening to punish anyone who took any part of this freshly acquired Reich ‘state property’ for himself. Libionka writes of this takeover of property by the Reich as follows: “**The Germans could hardly manage to bring the situation under control.** On 10 September, Baumgarten stopped a woman who was carrying ‘some rag’ out of a Jewish home. She was shot. Robbery on a grand scale also went on in Działoszyce, empty after the deportation, and the *Polnische Polizei* policemen from the local station, who were supposed to guard the property, were unable to handle the task. There, too, **only intervention by German functionaries who arrived in the town proved successful.** To terrify the population, two peasants caught red-handed were shot” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 87).

It is characteristic that the author does not tell the reader that the ‘blue policemen’ were charged with guarding property that had been deemed Reich property, and that by ‘bringing the situation under control’ the Germans, here as in other places, systematically seized all valuables, emptied and sealed houses, and then ‘distributed’ the stolen items according to their own categories of needs. He does not explicitly call this robbery. He writes about it in an impersonal way,

without mentioning the perpetrators or the purpose of the operation, giving the impression of order being restored: “Everywhere, Jewish homes and shops were emptied and sealed, and then distributed. Their contents were taken to storage facilities inside synagogues and *Judenrat* buildings” (vol. 2, p. 87). We are therefore left with an image of the local peasants committing ‘robbery on a grand scale’ and German state organs ‘bringing the situation under control’ (!) by protecting the property in question against robbery (?!). Such a portrayal of the matter would not be surprising in a German newspaper from the period. In a study devoted to the Holocaust, however, it must evoke amazement.

We also find no substantial analysis of the influence that the ubiquitous and stupefying mass of anti-Semitic/anti-Jewish propaganda by the Germans (including warnings against infectious diseases) exerted on the population. Its primary aim was to dehumanise the Jews and to segregate them completely from the rest of society. And yet it took its toll on the Germans themselves, who were often afraid to go into Jewish homes and preferred to use the JO (among others) during liquidation operations instead.⁵¹ It is hardly surprising that this left a rather grim impression on the Jews.⁵² Throughout the 1400-plus pages of the book, the term ‘*prasa gadzinowa*’ (‘reptile press’, the Polish-language press published by the Germans – transl.) appears only twice, while the term ‘propaganda’ is only mentioned a handful of times in the same context.

On many occasions, the problems highlighted above are of fundamental importance for a general assessment of the social attitudes which prevailed and the individual decisions taken at the time.

The visible absence of a broader perspective is a corollary of the adopted framework but also of the methodological outlook of the book, i.e. the

⁵¹ The main propaganda tools included the ‘reptile press’ (although it would be more accurate to speak of the German-run press in the Polish language) and the poster campaign, i.e. anti-Semitic posters pasted in small towns and villages, e.g. ‘Avoid the Jew’, ‘Jews – lice’, etc. See S. Piątkowski, *Okupacja i propaganda. Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w publicystyce polskojęzycznej prasy niemieckiej (1939–1945)*, Radom-Lublin 2013.

⁵² See *Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza. Reszta nie jest milczeniem*, Bodzentyn 2010, pp. 48–49; English edition: *The Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz*, transl. D. Bowman, Edinburgh 1981. It is astounding that the list of works cited does not include the article by J. Grabowski, ‘Propaganda antyżydowska w Generalnej Guberni, 1939–1945’, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2010, vol. 6. The article is cited only once by B. Engelking (vol. 1, p. 263).

microhistorical approach proposed by the authors (vol. 1, p. 17). As regards the work under review, this method has its advantages and disadvantages. A profound analytical probe into individual stories enables us to touch and name the suffering of the victims, to recover their names, reconstruct the circumstances of their death, and learn the names of the direct perpetrators. Any well-conceived effort to restore the knowledge of the fate of those individuals who were doomed to extermination deserves praise. But excessive personalisation has its pitfalls, and the authors of *Night without an end* have not managed to avoid them. The background against which the events unfolded disappears from the horizon, quite often along with the principal actors responsible for creating and maintaining the inhuman conditions in which the Jews were hunted down and marked for extermination.

Various kinds of disproportions in the internal structure of the individual case studies also require some attention. It is interesting what issues each of the authors focused on and deemed to be of primary importance when describing the fate of Jews in the selected 'counties'. The third phase of the Holocaust remains at the forefront of their depictions. This is in accord with the authors' declared interest in the 'survival strategies' employed by those who managed to escape the Germans' genocidal operation. However, it does not fully correspond to the subtitle of the work: *The fate of Jews in selected counties of occupied Poland*. The authors devote relatively little space to the earlier period (1939–1942, especially 1941–1942), when the German occupying authorities murdered the majority of the Jewish population. This narrative strategy may give the less informed reader a false view of the Holocaust as a process. For example, in her chapter on Bielsk Podlaski 'county', Barbara Engelking devotes 18 pages to deportations, which resulted in the death of over 20,000 Jews (vol. 1, pp. 106–123), while her description of the survival strategies employed by the c. 1300 surviving Jews in 1942–1945 spans 48 pages (vol. 1, pp. 124–172). In Dariusz Libionka's chapter on Miechów 'county', the period from 1939 to 1942 (including a description of the German administration and deportations), during which over 25,000 Jews lost their lives (vol. 1, p. 21) is covered in 70 pages (vol. 2, pp. 37–107), while 85 pages are devoted to the period from 1942 to 1945 (vol. 2, pp. 108–193). In 'Powiat bocheński' [Bochnia county], Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska devotes 26 pages (vol. 2, pp. 532–557) to the fate of the Jews between 1939 and 1942 (including deportations which claimed the lives

of some 10,000 people), and 73 pages (vol. 2, pp. 558–631) to the period from 1942 to 1945 (when around 1000 Jews were trying to save themselves between the first *Aktion* and the last). The emphases are placed somewhat differently by Alina Skibińska in ‘Powiat biłgorajski’ [Biłgoraj county] and by Anna Zapalec in ‘Powiat złoczowski’ [Złoczów county]. Without questioning the authors’ right to construct their narrative as they see fit, I believe that it is the historian’s duty to make sure that he presents the detailed considerations in such a way so as to eliminate rather than amplify any misconceptions about the Holocaust as a whole.

In depicting the third phase of the Holocaust, emphasis has been placed on the attitudes of Polish society, in accordance with the dubious claim formulated in the *Foreword*: “It was at this time that the attitude of Polish society determined Jews’ chances of survival to a very high degree” (vol. 1, p. 13).⁵³ And yet, on a fundamental level – as apparently needs to be restated time and again – it was the Germans, not the Poles, who decided on the life and death of Jews in the conquered territories. The above statement would therefore only be true if we completely ignore the historical context which comprised taking away the Jews’ right to live (the unconditional pursuit to the death of any Jew found outside the area designated for Jews) and applying total terror against the Poles, including a system of punishments (including the death penalty) not only for assisting Jews in any way, but also for failing to report them if found. This context is regularly overlooked, although it is one of the elementary facts known to scholars of the German occupation. Instead, the authors seem to be painting a picture in which Jewish survival depended first and foremost on the will of Poles, as if German authority was limited to the ghettos, outside of which lay vast areas inhabited by free and unconstrained peasants. This type of narrative may ‘impress’, but it contradicts the historical experience of the Polish lands under German occupation.

Had the historical context been developed in more detail, it would have been possible to show the entire complexity of Jewish contacts with the Polish

⁵³ Jan Grabowski goes even further in one of his texts on Polish complicity in the Holocaust: [*The Hunt for the Jews, op.cit.*] “This was the only time, and the only situation, when Poles (or, for that matter, Ukrainians, Belorusians, or Balts) decided which Jews would live or die.” See also J. Grabowski, ‘Strażacy, wiejska straż nocna i granatowa policja a Zagłada Żydów na obszarach wiejskich w dystrykcie krakowskim’, in *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, ed. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012, p. 247.

population (and vice versa) as vital intermediaries in obtaining such items as food or medicines. Meanwhile, no attempts have been made to assess the scale or fluctuation (depending on the possibilities) of such contacts, and yet they were typical of the ghettoisation period.⁵⁴ A sample is provided by the account of Jan Lorek of Bochnia (which Swałek-Niewińska ignores), submitted at the request of the ‘OD-man’ (a member of the JO) Marian Rotkopf. Although Lorek’s words were intended to show the OD-man in a good light (the testimony was submitted for rehabilitation purposes; incidentally, Swałek-Niewińska also has a positive opinion of Rotkopf), he speaks indirectly about an organised system of illegal (according to German regulations) food deliveries to the Bochnia ghetto in which Rotkopf and Lorek were involved.⁵⁵ Food was also smuggled into other ghettos. At the same time, prior to the description of ghettoisation or, alternately, of the deportations, the fate of Jews in the countryside is practically absent from the book. It would be worthwhile to show how their circumstances changed once the occupation set in, and what their relations with the local non-Jewish communities were like. One would have expected some inquiry into these issues from a book that deals with ‘the fate of Jews in occupied Poland’.

This is where we encounter one of the basic problems with the study, namely the authors’ avoidance of showing the complexities of the occupation period and, instead, punctuating the entire book with information that corroborates the thesis. One can only agree that there is a need for “research and analyses, especially the delivery of quantitatively significant and qualitatively substantiated data which

⁵⁴ Often for various reasons (usually financial and bribery-related) *Polmische Polizei* officers turned a blind eye to the smuggling of food. See S. Szymańska-Smolkin, ‘Rola policji granatowej jako pośrednika w utrzymaniu łączności między gettem a stroną aryjską’, in *Narody i polityka. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Tomaszewskiemu*, ed. A. Grabski, A. Markowski, Warsaw 2010, pp. 215–226; T. Domański, ‘Polish “Navy Blue” Police in Kielce County in 1939–1945’, in *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations. Selected issues*, ed. M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Sitarek, Warsaw 2018, pp. 73–77; F. Banaś, *Moje wspomnienia*, ed. M. Kalisz, E. Rączy, Rzeszów 2009.

⁵⁵ J. Lorek wrote: “During the time when there was a ghetto in Bochnia, I lived in its immediate vicinity on Solna Street. Together with my father at the time I made it my occupation to purchase and deliver food to the Jews confined in the said ghetto. During this time Marian Rotkopf would very often come and purchase food. He was a member of the Order Service, which enabled him to go out into the city. It is known to me that he supplied food to Jews hiding in bunkers. I know this because many of them, prior to going into hiding in the bunker, left me money with instructions to purchase food and to deliver it to them via Marian Rotkopf”. AZIH, collection *Sąd Spoleczny* (Social Court), 313/105, Account of Jan Lorek, Bochnia, 19 November 1947, f. 54.

could serve as a point of departure for further inquiry and debate regarding the historical reality instead of emotion, resentment or myths” (*Foreword*, vol. 1, p. 13). When writing about their research methods, the authors announce that they will be reconstructing “the fate of entire Jewish communities, the occupier’s policy, as well as the attitudes and actions of Polish society” (p. 17). So this is what one should expect. Such declarations should precede an equal focus on the attitudes of all groups in order to highlight different circumstances and behaviours. Any scholar of the period knows full well that the available sources reflect a whole variety of attitudes among Poles, Jews, Belarusians and Ukrainians: from the heroism of a few, through the striving of the majority to survive the war, to individual acts of villainy, betrayal, and exploitation. From this point of view, the focus on ‘Poles (as well as Belarusians and Ukrainians)’ announced in the *Foreword*, coupled with the complete omission of the differences existing within the Jewish community itself, sounds alarming. In any event, one will not find anything about Belarusians or Ukrainians in the book, considering the geographic areas on which the authors have concentrated.

From the outset, the editors and authors of the book also seem to hold a predetermined view of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, which they portray as widespread and as having existed at the structural as well as the individual level. This is in accord with Barbara Engelking’s opinion, which had been put forward before – as striking as it is detached from the historical context – that ‘Polish peasants’ as a whole “were volunteers in the sphere of murdering Jews”.⁵⁶

The above claim was, and continues to be, vocally promoted in the public debate sparked for the purposes of promoting the book before the publication was available to readers. This effective marketing ploy was certainly a sales booster, but it also showed that the principal aim of the publication was not to describe the fate of Jews, the Holocaust or the criminal policies of the German Reich (the driving force and organiser of the crimes in question), but rather Polish attitudes toward Jews. These were debated and written about before the public had any way to verify the claims or access the supporting documents, nor did the debate cover the manner in which the sources had been used. The whole discussion concerned

⁵⁶ B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień... Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945*, Warsaw 2011, p. 257.

a book as yet unavailable. As a result, some periodicals commented broadly on the content of the two volumes before their official publication, stupefying the public with emotionally charged, unequivocal headlines leaving no illusion or doubts as to the way Poles had acted during the Holocaust: 'Za kilo cukru, pół litra wódki, za buty' [For a kilogram of sugar, half a litre of vodka, for shoes], or 'Pomagaliśmy Niemcom zabijać Żydów' [We helped the Germans kill the Jews].⁵⁷

On the other hand, the structure and the methodology of *Night without an end* partly refute the stereotypes about Jews passively going to their deaths. The number of escapes from different ghettos (many individual stories), attempts to survive liquidation operations, the construction of temporary hideouts and bunkers, as well as all the ways they sought safety (although not the same as the active resistance shown during ghetto uprisings) presented in the book are irrefutable evidence of an enormous will to survive. But this still only applies to a minority. If one is to accept the data provided in the *Foreword* (vol. 1, p. 30) at face value, the percentage of Jews (the statistics differ across different localities) 'in hiding after the liquidation of ghettos' did not exceed 15% of the original Jewish population in any of the counties analysed.

It is the reviewer's opinion that the topic of Jewish everyday or social life from 1939 to 1942 has not been elaborated in sufficient detail. On the other hand, some of the authors have made interesting and important discoveries regarding everyday life, for instance Engelking (vol. 1, p. 103), Skibińska (vol. 1, p. 225), and particularly Libionka (vol. 2, p. 62).⁵⁸ They point to an essential difference between conditions in the provincial and big-city ghettos. Despite rampant 'misery and poverty', death from starvation was relatively rare in the small ghettos (which, after all, dominate in the territories analysed). This compels one to ask about the

⁵⁷ A. Pawlicka, 'Za kilo cukru, pół litra wódki, za buty...', *Newsweek* 2018, no. 16, pp. 8–13; M. Maciorowski, 'Profesor Jan Grabowski: Pomagaliśmy Niemcom zabijać Żydów', *Gazeta Wyborcza. Ale Historia*, 17 March 2018. After its release, the book was reviewed and discussed in large-circulation journals and weeklies: P. Zychowicz, 'Człowiek bywa świnią', *Do Rzeczy* 2018, no. 19, pp. 56–58; J. Borkowicz, 'Pogruchotana pamięć', *Rzeczpospolita, Dodatek Plus Minus* supplement, 19–20 May 2018, pp. 14–15; K. Czarnecka, 'Ukryte w Niepamięci. Wywiad z prof. Janem Grabowskim', *Polityka* 2018, no. 7, pp. 22–24.

⁵⁸ The account of Rejza Klingberg describing the situation in Koszyce (Libionka erroneously refers to Brzesko Nowe) is particularly important here. Klingberg presents an almost idyllic picture of life in the ghetto until 1942, without repressions or danger, using expressions like 'idyll', 'comfortable dwelling', 'not following any regulations' (vol. 2, p. 62).

degree to which these ghettos were isolated and the Jews confined in them were subjected to control, which – as Libionka writes – lay within the purview of the *Polnische Polizei* (vol. 2, p. 53). In the large ghettos we witness the decomposition of traditional social structures.⁵⁹ New elites emerge, made up of members of the Jewish ‘councils of elders’ (*Judenrat*) and functionaries of the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*. And although the authors write of the murder of members of the Jewish elites prior to the deportation phase, placing these within the broader context of communal disintegration (e.g. Skibińska), they do not discuss the process by which the new elites came into being in the small ghettos. In the chapter on Nowy Targ ‘county’, the term ‘elites’ as opposed to other members of the Jewish community does not appear at all. Only Frydel opts for a broader discussion of the Jewish elites and of their strikingly different ‘survival strategies’. However, there is no doubt that the book conveys a spirit of solidarity. Self-organisation and self-help efforts such as the Jewish Social-Self Help are highlighted.

This brings us to the fact that the authors propose an interesting, albeit logically flawed interpretation of the notion of strategy, identifying Jewish survival strategies during the Holocaust as their ‘most important research topic’. When writing of logical errors, I am thinking first of all of the difference between the dictionary definition of ‘strategy’⁶⁰ and the way in which this term is used in *Night without an end*. As a matter of fact, Engelking and Grabowski also refer to this definition: “A ‘strategy’, as various dictionaries define, involves long-term action aimed at achieving remote, deliberate objectives; it therefore presupposes the possibility of influencing, perhaps to some extent even of shaping events, and includes an aspect of psychological agency relating to faith in the future” (vol. 1, pp. 31–32). For this reason, as the editors emphasise, “our usage of the term [strategy] is consensual, rather than literal”; by survival strategies “we understand any attempts that Jews made to survive” (vol. 1, p. 32). What then is the purpose of giving prominence to a term which the authors themselves qualify as inadequate and to which they assign their own definition, different

⁵⁹ On this subject, see *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej*, ed. M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Namysło, Cracow-Katowice-Warsaw 2017.

⁶⁰ *Słownik języka polskiego PWN* (the PWN Dictionary of the Polish Language) defines ‘strategy’ as follows: ‘A thought-through course of action leading to the achievement of some important aim, usually quite remote [...]’. *Słownik języka polskiego: P–Ż*, ed. M. Bańko, Warsaw 2000, p. 699.

from the standard linguistic one? Can all actions undertaken by Jews in order to survive be called strategies, even if we treat the term conventionally? Well, no. This inappropriate use of the definition is most visible in the case of Jews hiding or being hidden in various places (barns, haystacks, caverns, forests, wandering, meandering, drifting) for a very short period of time, even though these were extremely respectable attempts to survive despite overwhelming odds. Changing the meaning of the term 'strategy' is therefore unjustified, because it does not simply involve using the word in a more general sense, but assigning a different meaning to it altogether.

On the margins of the above remarks, one should add that it is astonishing that the authors perpetuate the language of German propaganda by using expressions deriving directly from the distorted vocabulary of National-Socialist ideology such as 'Aryans' or the 'Aryan side'. Starting from the *Foreword*, the authors use the term several times without distancing themselves from such formulations. They write without quotation marks about the 'Aryan side' (p. 23) or 'Aryan papers' (p. 41). At the end, they provide a curious explanation: "The Germans used euphemisms to describe murders [...] as well as peculiar designations like 'Aryan'; however, the authors always emphasise how this terminology is to be understood. Nonetheless, due to the prevalence of this term in the sources we have decided to use these terms when describing events and, in order to make reading easier, to forego placing them in quotation marks each time, which does not mean that we accept the language of the perpetrators." Naturally, one can understand why these designations appear in the sources, but it is simply untrue that the authors "always stress how this terminology is to be understood" in the study under review. It is also unclear why abstaining from using such terms or distancing oneself from these kinds of absurd, ideological expressions drawn from Nazi propaganda would have made reading difficult. Using them in normal academic discourse to describe reality does indeed replicate the language of the perpetrators and gives new life to Nazi propaganda. Explaining the authors' awareness of these connotations in the *Foreword* does not change the fact. Nor are they excused by the fact that similar lacking insight practices can also be found in other studies.

When assessing the value of a scholarly work, it is crucial to evaluate the way in which the sources have been used. Naturally, we cannot discuss every single

citation when dealing with such a large publication. However, even looking at some of the materials cited shows us how the dominant narrative has been constructed.

The general description of the archival documentation considered in *Night without an end* takes up almost one page of the *Foreword*. The authors emphasise that they have used a variety of sources in different languages from “Polish, Israeli, American, German, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian” archives (vol. 1, pp. 19–20). As they tell us, they have considered survivor accounts and memoirs, documents from the Polish Underground State, documents produced by the German occupation authorities, documents of the Jewish Social Self-Help, wartime and post-war court records, as well as all kinds of regulations, etc.⁶¹ It is another issue that the *Foreword* does not mention the use of documents produced by the Jewish administration structures in certain ghettos (*Judenrat*), for example from Cracow or Lvov, which is something that we can easily establish by consulting the bibliography (vol. 2, p. 658).

This description as a whole might give the remarkable impression that a comprehensive and multilateral archival search has been conducted. As we know, for historical reasons, sources pertaining to the history of Jews during World War II are extremely scattered, and one can only appreciate the effort put into bringing them together. Nevertheless, after a more in-depth look at the book, the authors’ assurances that they have consulted a comprehensive body of material no longer sound very persuasive. Although they have indeed examined material from different archives, they have only superficially performed a complete search, for a number of available documents have not been used at all, from single sources to whole archival units relating directly to the topic at hand. Even with regard to *Distrikt Krakau*, to which almost half of the book is devoted, a large number of materials (available in Poland in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance and at the National Archives in Cracow) have not been considered. A number of the accounts kept at the Jewish Historical Institute Archives have not been used either. The absence of some accounts, but also the selective use of

⁶¹ The scope of the references used was characterised similarly by A. Skibińska: “My study is based not only on specialist literature but first and foremost on a variety of available sources, regardless of the language they were produced in or the place where they are kept. The reader will find the most important [references] in the many footnotes which I have appended to the text” (vol. 1, p. 201).

those that have been consulted, has had a significant impact on the content of the book (more on this below).

Anna Zapalec, who devoted part of her county study to the Soviet occupation of 1939–1941, has left out the accounts of Poles deported to remote parts of the Soviet Union, who eventually joined Gen. Władysław Anders's army (these documents are currently in the holdings of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University). No material from the manuscript collection of the Ossoliński National Institute Library has been used, and there is no mention of whether a search was conducted there at all.⁶² In the case of Biłgoraj county, a whole range of materials from the National Archive in Lublin has been left out. These gaps also include details of only seemingly marginal importance. It is impossible to list them all here, but suffice to mention that for example Jan Grabowski assures the reader that the canon priest Kazimierz Czarkowski of Węgrów is the only witness to have recorded how the town was taken over by Soviet troops in 1939 and how they were welcomed by the local Jews (vol. 1, pp. 396–397). Meanwhile, information about the arrival of Soviet forces and related events in the region, including in Węgrów itself, is provided in at least three other accounts: those of Jadwiga Górka (Gołda Ryba), Wiesław Piórkowski and Marek Gajewski; these can be found at Yad Vashem and in the Oral History Archives (*Archiwum Historii Mówionej*).⁶³ Since the authors refer to microhistory, they should not *ex cathedra* suggest that they have performed a complete search when they have not.

One can also point to a range of questions that remain unanswered with regard to the sources. The *Foreword* should include an overall assessment of the archival base. But no attempt in this direction has been made. The question arises of which types of sources were predominant and which proved the most valuable and useful for research, since not every type of source is of equal value. Finally, it is not stated which sources raise doubts as to their reliability and information value, and whether the authors made any such distinction when discussing different counties. It would have been vital to indicate whether any interpretive problems were encountered

⁶² K. Pawlak-Weiss, K. Kupeć [manuscript of the review of:] A. Zapalec, 'Powiat złoczowski', in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2018, pp. 623–760.

⁶³ T. Roguski [manuscript of the review of:] J. Grabowski, 'Powiat węgrowski', in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2018, pp. 383–546.

in the sources analysed. These are fundamental tasks for any historian. There is no mention of the precise archival units consulted or whether any of the searches failed to produce results. This is a *conditio sine qua non* of introducing any source basis to readers. Meanwhile, an analysis of the source basis actually used shows that the main sources included all kinds of survivor accounts and memoirs (less often the literature of Polish memoir) deposited in a handful of archives, printed or available online (e.g. *yizkor* books in abbreviated English-language versions), supplemented by trial records of the so-called ‘*sierpniówki*’ (August 1944 Decree trials),⁶⁴ and, to a much lesser extent, the other documents mentioned. Finally, no general analysis has been performed of the sources cited in terms of their usefulness and reliability, a problem only being flagged ‘in passing’ when talking about specific accounts. It is only when discussing individual counties that the authors introduce and comment on the sources in more detail.⁶⁵ Nor is there any assessment of the value of the previously published scholarly literature in the *Foreword*, with the exception of that on helping Jews. The editors write of an “idealised image of the occupation reality” which is allegedly conveyed in publications discussing assistance, as these portray German actions as the only danger (vol. 1, p. 38). According to the editors, this portrayal has little to do with the experience of the Righteous, for whom “the main danger, namely that of being denounced to the Germans, came from neighbours or the blue policemen” (vol. 1, p. 38) – as if this was not in fact reducible to the activity of the German administration, the German police forces, the law that the Germans

⁶⁴ Records of trials conducted on the basis of the PKWN (Polish Committee of National Liberation) Decree of 31 August 1944 on the penalties for ‘fascist-Hitlerite’ criminals guilty of the murder and ill-treatment of civilians and prisoners-of-war and for traitors of the Polish Nation. Consolidated text: *Dziennik Ustaw 1946*, no. 69, pos. 377. A rich literature is already available on this source. See *inter alia* A. Pasek, *Przestępstwa okupacyjne w polskim prawie karnym z lat 1944–1956*, Wrocław 2002; A.V. Prusin, ‘Polska Norymberga. Siedem procesów przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym, 1946–1948’, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2013, issue 9; A. Kornbluth, “Jest wielu Kainów wśród nas”. Polski wymiar sprawiedliwości a Zagłada, 1944–1956’, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2013, issue 9; A. Rzepliński, ‘Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej? Sprawy karne oskarżonych o wymordowanie Żydów w Jedwabnem w świetle zasady rzetelnego procesu’, in *Wokół Jedwabnego*, ed. P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, vol. 1: *Studia*, Warsaw 2002; 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. J. Gapys, T. Domański, Kielce 2016.

⁶⁵ In this case, Engelking notes that the past may be distorted in court documents. The example she presents is that of the postwar trial of Erich Koch (vol. 1, p. 52). This type of disclaimer, however, is lacking when the authors write on the postwar trials against Poles.

made (what denunciation would have made any difference, but for the imposed criminal regulations?), and the methods that the occupation authorities used to terrorise local communities. In other words, in this context, there would have been no denunciation but for the terror.

One can also see that the book's description of the third phase of the Holocaust (the hunts for Jews – *Judenjagd* – organised by the German occupation authorities)⁶⁶ is based only on part of the already mentioned, readily available Communist records from the so-called 'August trials' (*sierpniówki*). One should note that this is an important, albeit a peculiar source, since it was produced within the specific setting of the security apparatus and 'judiciary' of a totalitarian regime. These records require particular caution and verification, which the authors often fail to apply. After all, it is on the basis of the same August Decree that German criminals, Poles accused of anti-Polish and anti-Jewish activity during the war, Jews accused of having acted against other Jews, and Home Army soldiers charged with independence activities (cloaked as collaboration with the enemy), were tried. Radical disparities between testimonies taken down by the *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa* (the Security Department, which did not shy away from violence) and court minutes are common. Investigation reports were also drawn up according to specific principles. The image of Polish-Jewish affairs that emerges from individual cases is far from complete, and is often narrowed down to the perspective of the relationship between the accused and the victim, generally taking the reality of the German occupation (treated as obvious a few or a dozen years after the war) for granted (they were not always properly recorded by those recording the testimonies). Under these circumstances, the broader perspective of the occupation and the motivations of the perpetrators often become blurred. The nature of sources used in criminal trials is also obviously such that they contain a plethora of information about the negative actions of defendants. After all, no one is put on trial (under current regulations) for their positive deeds. Positive behaviours only appear on the margins of these proceedings. One has only to be capable of and willing to notice and decipher them as an element of the events. It is worth

⁶⁶ This pejorative terminology (*Jagd*, hunt) was used by the German occupation authorities as early as 1940, when they organised 'hunting platoons' (*Jagdzüge*) designed to hunt down 'bandits and robbers' in the GG. See AAN, AK, 203-III/49, f. 83.

emphasising here that many reports and accusations of denouncing Jews or of taking part in murdering them often proved groundless and unwarranted. Not infrequently, they arose due to envy or conflicts between neighbours. Ample evidence to this effect may be drawn from an in-depth analysis of the sources pertaining to a number of cases described in the book.⁶⁷ On many occasions the material makes evident that the witnesses' testimonies were not corroborated by other accounts, or did not stand up when confronted with well-established facts. But doubts concerning the value or interpretation of material from the so-called August trials are practically absent from *Night without an end*; hence it is difficult to conclude that the source materials have been examined in depth.⁶⁸

The authors quite often sidestep the problem of sources' credibility when constructing their narrative and putting forward claims. At times they even fail to take into account the formal outcomes of trials or any information regarding the sentences or acquittals. At the same time, they cite testimonies which were contested during the trials, but fail to mention the fact. Scholarly integrity would have dictated that they inform the reader that he or she is being acquainted with a subjective interpretation of the trial records and accounts. On several occasions, serious accusations, including of murder, are made in the book against individuals who were proven innocent under the law. It is difficult to say whether the academically unsound practice of referring the reader to the whole case file, usually comprising a couple of hundred pages, is a matter of poor academic judgement or an attempt

⁶⁷ As an illustration, one can cite the proceedings against Olga Kupiec, whom Urszula L. accused of hiding Jews due to personal squabbles (See AIPN Kr, 502/3569, Minutes of the Oral Denunciation, Gliwice, 29 May 1948, f. 2), as well as the false accusations made several times by Aleksander Hebdowski against Jan Jakubas over neighbourly conflicts. The latter was completely cleared of the charge of denouncing Jews. AIPN Kr, 502/1517, Judgement of the District Court in Cracow, Cracow, 1 April 1949, f. 269.

⁶⁸ This seems to be an entirely novel approach to this source, considering the previous academic statements made by some of the authors. In the context of research on the trials conducted pursuant to the August Decree, Alina Skibińska and Jacek Petelewicz wrote: "Of course the authors are well-aware of the shortcomings of court sources, the political entanglement of these kinds of records, and the need to confront them with other available types of archival materials. Certainly in the future, to make a comprehensive description of the reality of those times, we will need to undertake detailed, deepened analysis of the trial material, combined with research on the body of accounts and memoirs, diaries, press collections, and other documents and records in state archives and the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance and the Jewish Historical Institute". A. Skibińska, J. Petelewicz, 'Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego', *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2005, no. 1, p. 115.

to hide the fact that the records have not been studied in their entirety. I will give examples of such practices below.

An examination of some of the sources which the authors draw on to substantiate their radically formulated claims shows that quite often their method consists in using these so as to support (or at least not to undermine) the master narrative. As a matter of fact, to prove their reasoning, in many places the authors make unwarranted generalisations, offer erroneous interpretations, and – by far the worst – intentionally distort the meaning of the text and remove certain excerpts from documents. It is obvious that such measures also distort the reality being described.

This overview of the professional shortcomings should begin with the unwarranted generalisations which can be found on many levels. Jean-Charles Szurek presents his views regarding historical analysis when referring to the events in Łuków in 1920. He explains his research approach as follows:

“The point here is not to comprehensively reconstruct the events of 1920 in Łuków. This would require analysing the reasons and motives of all those who took part in the events, both at the individual and the community level. I focus on anti-Jewish incidents because it is striking how some behaviours, particularly among peasants, will be repeated during the German occupation” (vol. 1, p. 556).

So the author admits that he is not interested in a comprehensive investigation of the matter, but rather in a one-sided description which may lead to false conclusions.

We find a similar method in a passage in which Szurek offers a general assessment of the attitude of village heads toward the regulations ordering that all Jews be caught and delivered to a police station: “Some people enthusiastically implemented the German directives. The numerous trials launched on the basis of the PKWN Decree of 31 August 1944 illustrate frequent cases of village heads submitting to the *‘Judenjagd’*, this submission often being active and interested. Others seemed unmoved in implementing the occupier’s rules.” (vol. 1, p. 608). Without even commenting on the failure to examine the circumstances of the village heads on whom this duty was foisted, one can hardly expect that the above sentence, given its construction, is a result of any analysis of the large number of documents pertaining to the phenomenon in question. Writing of ‘numerous

trials' and 'frequent cases,' Szurek discusses as evidence two trials conducted pursuant to the August Decree (vol. 1, pp. 606–611). In formulating a general conclusion about the submissive involvement of village heads in the *Judenjagd*, the author fails to provide any estimates or statistical data, nor does he state how many of the August trials he has analysed and how many convictions were handed down. He is not even tempted to answer how many village heads were put on trial after the war, as compared with the total number of village heads in his county. He is not interested in the extent to which these village heads were autonomous, nor in the wider situational context.

Karolina Panz also draws general conclusions regarding the participation of the peasants in implementing the German anti-Jewish regulations in Nowy Targ county. She observes:

“Sources available to me clearly show that in the autumn of 1942 in *Kreis Neumarkt*, a key role in the methodical pursuit of victims in the mountain forests was played by organised 12-member village guard detachments, as well as informal gangs pretending to be the guards, made up of groups of young hooligans” (vol. 2, p. 290).

She seems to forget that the forests were also being combed by members of uniformed German formations: the *Polnische Polizei* and the *Forstschutzkommando* (Forest Guard). Elsewhere, she writes: “Jews from Podhale hiding in forests and barns were usually denounced and caught by Polish peasants and blue policemen” (vol. 2, pp. 317–318) – as if the ‘blue police’ (i.e. *Polnische Polizei*) was not a German-controlled armed formation, which often ruthlessly enforced German decrees targeting the population at large.⁶⁹ Nor does she write about how the awareness of the existence of informers (whom she mentions), who checked whether the locals were complying with German regulations, influenced the behaviour of the peasants who lived in fear of repression.

This method of putting forward difficult claims *a priori*, literally without presenting any findings, is also applied by Anna Zapalec in her description of Złoczów county. When analysing the General Governorate police units (and the individual members thereof) responsible for implementing the ‘final solution’ in the county, she makes

⁶⁹ D. Golik, manuscript of the review of: K. Panz, ‘Powiat nowotarski’, in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2018, pp. 623–760.

the following remark: “A particularly negative role [in the Holocaust] **was also played by policemen (including Poles) serving in the Złoczów Criminal Police** [*Kriminalpolizei*], some of whom had probably signed the Volksliste’ [emphasis mine]. I have no intention of defending those who served in a German formation. My point concerns the author’s treatment of the sources and her conclusions, which only simulate ‘research findings’. If the author had found any information about Poles or *Volksdeutsche* employed in the local *Kripo*, she would have made only a minor contribution to scholarship regarding the said German formation in the area under discussion. However, the author made no such findings. She admits: “Unfortunately, apart from interview reports from the investigations conducted after the war, during my research I found no other detailed official *Kripo* documentation from Złoczów that would shed further light on this matter” (vol. 1, p. 743). All that she did find was information on the activities of the German (!) Otto Zikmund. Under these circumstances, it is astonishing, to say the least, that although the author does not cite even a single example of negative behaviour on the part of *Kripo* officers from Złoczów other than Germans, she feels entitled to make such unequivocal claims. When there are no sources, or when they are not known to the scholar, it is not enough to make a simple analogy to other areas of the General Governorate (vol. 1, p. 743) and proclaim such categorical and ‘precise’ observations about a ‘researched’ area. The use of such methods with regard to a rather minor matter should make one even more wary of other ‘research findings’.

But a more serious problem is related to the above issues. The desire to demonstrate that Poles took part in crimes in overwhelming numbers and that they acted autonomously translates into all kinds of silence on the fact that Germans took part in these atrocities. I have already described the problem with using formulas such as ‘German-Polish administration’ or with presenting the *Polnische Polizei* simply as a Polish formation (while omitting that it was part of the German *Ordnungspolizei*) and creating the false impression that it was practically autonomous and enjoyed free rein. Not infrequently the authors go even further, *de facto* downplaying the role of the Germans in the events. It is worth comparing the source texts with the findings presented in the book because one of the main objectives stated in *Night without an end* is to define the role of the Germans in the Holocaust (see *Foreword*). Meanwhile, in some passages the Germans have been erased

from the picture or 'forcibly' moved into the shadows. And yet it was the German Reich that dictated the criminal principles shaping the occupation-era sphere of Polish-Jewish relations and set up the system in which Jewish life outside ghettos was illegal, subject to persecution by law and punished by death. The Germans were the direct perpetrators of genocide. They made the decisions and set up the formations implementing their criminal orders and instructions.

We can see what this distortion looks like in practice when reading Engelking's description of the beginning of the occupation in Bielsk Podlaski county. She first lists a number of the anti-Jewish actions and murders perpetrated by German formations. She juxtaposes these with an excerpt from Reinhard Heydrich's instructions of 29 June 1941 for *Einsatzgruppen* operating in the East: "Any attempts on the part of Communist or anti-Jewish circles to organise purges in areas recently taken over should not be impeded" (vol. 1, p. 73). This fragment, apparently testifying to a German policy to 'wash their hands' of any local personal scores, seems to foreshadow such events. And indeed, it is supplemented with a sentence from Engelking which directs the narrative towards an anti-Jewish settling of scores between local residents. Although Engelking happens not to have cited any atrocities committed by civilians, her comment suggests to the reader that she is referring precisely to these kinds of events. She writes: "It is difficult to judge to what extent the 'not impeding' [and] German inspiration or example influenced the anti-Jewish rioting in these areas" (*ibidem*), after which she presents her own suppositions regarding the causes of such rioting. Since she does not mention any examples of anti-Jewish unrest, the attentive reader may interpret this comment as irrelevant. Despite this, in the next sentence the author writes: "In a number of towns in the western part of Bielsk county, anti-Semitic excesses occurred in the summer of 1941" (*ibidem*). Again, she does not give the names of these localities and there is no footnote. Still, she is staunchly leading the reader in a specific direction when she writes: "They were not as bloody as in the neighbouring Łomża region". After which, revealing which towns she had in mind, she adds: "similarly [as in the Łomża region], the Jews were forced to destroy symbols of the recently fallen Soviet regime, statues of Lenin". She enumerates these incidents, writing about Brańsk, Ciechanowiec and Siemiatycze (*ibidem*). These were standard practices of the German authorities and formations, combining anti-Semitic and anti-Soviet

actions. The author adds that the Jews also dismantled a statue of Lenin in Bielsk. But again, there is no mention of any specific instances of anti-Jewish civilian excesses, whose causes the author had already analysed.

In this context, Engelking devotes half a page to the events in Siemiatycze (vol. 1, pp. 74–76). Her description is based on a single account, that of J. Kajles. In discussing the subject, she should have made use (even critically) of the available academic article, by Mirosław Leszczak, devoted exclusively to the fate of the Jews of Siemiatycze.⁷⁰ Leszczak provides a coherent description of the events from the summer of 1941 (he also cites Kajles's account) and we would expect Engelking to draw on his work or at least reference it, even if she does not agree with the author's conclusions. This would have been the obvious thing to do, especially since Leszczak's work is listed in the bibliography. Yet Engelking fails to consider it.

Meanwhile, it follows from Engelking's description that several Jews were murdered. Engelking first tells us – following the witness's account – that the Germans first took away all the young people, and then that the Jews were separated from the Christians. The Germans then ordered the people to identify “criminals, i.e. Communists”, which “the Christians immediately used to their advantage”. Afterwards, Engelking makes an impersonal statement: “Out of the 10 [people] selected, 7 were murdered”, without providing any information as to who actually did the killing. She leaves the reader with this, although it may suggest that the aforementioned Christians were the murderers.

The man giving the account called those selected and killed by the Germans ‘decent people’, although the author shows no interest in finding out whether or not they actually had anything to do with the Soviet occupation administration. At any rate, the event described does not exhibit any symptoms of spontaneous ‘anti-Jewish action’ on the part of locals either. Leszczak describes it as follows, correcting the names (Engelking should have reacted to this) and situating the events in time, which Engelking fails to do. Leszczak writes: “Operation groups, following the *Wehrmacht*, organised pogroms using local hooligan elements. On 29 June [1941] the Jews were collected in Siemiatycze's market square, where the public execution of seven men accused of Communist activity took place.

⁷⁰ M. Leszczak, ‘Zagłada ludności żydowskiej w Siemiatyczach’, *Studia Podlaskie* 1989, no. 2, pp. 355–356.

These included Szymon Grunberg and his son, Izrael Sołóński and his son, Mosze Bosz, Józef Fisz and others”⁷¹

Engelking then says that two Jews were killed over the course of the next few days (again, there is no reference to who committed the killing; it is only at the end of a footnote that she states that “they were most likely killed by Germans”). Then – again drawing on the same account – she writes of robberies and “beating and killing household members”, without giving any names. The perpetrators are identified collectively as Poles. It would have been better to state precisely who those Poles were. In this context, the cited account first generally states that “Poles began looting Jewish flats, they beat and killed household members”, and then illustrates this by invoking the murder of a Jewish cobbler. The account identifies the perpetrators of this murder as “the Poles Janek Malinowski, Józek the chauffeur, and a number of others” (vol. 1, p. 75). This can still be qualified as an attack by bandits taking advantage of the situation: after all, there were over 4000 Jews living in the town at that point.⁷² Leszczak’s article may indicate that the perpetrators might have been criminals taking advantage of the circumstances produced by the change of regime and the occupier’s consent: “At the beginning of July, local hooligans looted Jewish shops and flats and attacked and robbed the Jews.”⁷³ However, the reader will not find this in Engelking’s text, as she does not reference Leszczak’s article.

At the end, Engelking again relates (following Kajles) how the Jews dismantled and moved the statue of Lenin. According to the account, they had been ordered to do so by people whom the witness refers to as Poles. This is followed by a description of a procession carrying parts of the monument, and of Jews being pushed off a bridge into the water. One of them, ‘Kozubowicz, a glazier’ is reported to have hit a bridge pillar, which caused his death. The others resurfaced from the water. Here, again, Leszczak provides a date and describes this incident somewhat differently: “On 10 July, the Germans organised a dramatic spectacle in the market square when they ordered the Jews to smash the monument to Lenin, while Kogut, a teacher from the Jewish school, was ordered to deliver an anti-Soviet speech as

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 355–356.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 356.

⁷³ *Ibidem*.

this occurred. Some excesses were committed by local hooligans as a result of which the glazier Kusidowicz drowned in the River Kamionka.”⁷⁴ Of course, I am not saying that I know what happened. All I am saying is that we have a different picture here, and that Leszczak’s study is listed in the bibliography. Engelking ought to have commented on this discrepancy. If she is questioning Leszczak’s portrayal, the reader should be made aware of this and told what really happened and who is in the wrong. Further on, Engelking herself cites documents from the post-war trial of a ‘Polish policeman serving at the German station in Siemiatycze’, which suggest yet another version of the events. This makes it necessary to delve into the subject in more detail and clarify any uncertainties. However, Engelking abstains from doing so.

As to whether the events in Siemiatycze deserve to be called ‘anti-Jewish rioting’ or a ‘pogrom’ – I leave this to the reader’s judgement. Engelking calls the events of the summer of 1941 “three described cases of dismantling monuments of Lenin, one of which had the character of a pogrom” (*sic* – p. 76). Can one indeed speak of ‘anti-Jewish rioting’ in the above-mentioned towns, and join the author in pursuing reflection on the causes (“to what extent they resulted from a need for revenge, local score-settling, anti-Semitism, or simply provided an ordinary opportunity for violence and theft”; vol. 1, p. 73)? This seems doubtful. And yet, in summing up this thread the author writes – as if oblivious to the facts – of “anti-Jewish excesses in the south-western part of Bielsk county” and of “pogroms in Bielsk county” (vol. 1, p. 76). At the same time, she treats the events as if they had been confirmed beyond any doubt, and immediately proceeds to deepen her reflection on the causes. One may learn in full how an image of alleged activity on the part of the Polish community is formed in the reader’s mind:

“The causes of the anti-Jewish excesses in the south-western part of Bielsk county were similar to those in the neighbouring Łomża region: pre-war anti-Semitism, strengthened by stereotypes and experiences of the time of the Soviet occupation; resentment, which found outlet during the period of chaos when one regime replaced the other; additionally, a sense of impunity and encouragement

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 355–356.

from the Germans. The pogroms in Bielsk county were perpetrated directly by the Germans or clearly inspired by them”.

In this manner, the author moves from images that contain no anti-Semitic outbursts or pogroms committed by Poles to an unequivocal assessment of multiplied non-existent ‘facts’. One thing is certain: this picture of Polish attitudes has little to do with reality. It looks more like a dogged attempt to invent new and false myths, and has little in common with scholarship.

Finally, let us return to the excerpt from Heydrich’s instructions dated 29 June 1941 for the *Einsatzgruppen* operating in the East that Engelking cited. Had she also quoted the next sentence in addition to the one that she cites (taking it out of context and suggesting the existence of local score-settling), she would have touched on a very interesting thread, by also shedding light on what happened in the neighbouring Łomża region. The whole passage reads as follows: “Any attempts to spontaneously purge anti-Communist or anti-Jewish circles in areas recently occupied should not be impeded. **On the contrary**, [such attempts] **should be initiated without leaving any traces** [*sic* – T.D.], **intensified and set on the right track if need be, but in such a way that local ‘self-defence circles’ cannot later cite any ordinances or political promises made to them**’ (emphasis mine).⁷⁵ Accurate use of this source, however, would not fit in with the persistent effort to convince the reader of the claims propounded in the publication. It is obvious that the overwhelming majority of readers will not check all the documents.

The historians’ craft demands respect for the sources, as exemplified by the faithful citation of original documents. Meanwhile, the authors often try to erase the presence of German gendarmes, who were the superiors of the *Polnische Polizei*, from the record. Every time they do so, they are being inaccurate and unprofessional. The description of the events in the village of Ziomaki in Węgrów county may serve as an example. Grabowski indicates factual inconsistencies in the earlier literature regarding who actually came to the Ratyńskis’ farm (vol. 1, pp. 492–493). He rightly points out that there are contradictions in what has been written on the subject: one source mentions the arrival of gendarmes, while

⁷⁵ Cited after E. Dmitrów, ‘Oddziały operacyjne niemieckiej Policji Bezpieczeństwa i Służby Bezpieczeństwa a początek zagłady Żydów w Łomżyńskim na Białostoczczyźnie latem 1941 roku’, in *Wokół Jedwabnego...*, p. 293.

another speaks of an execution by the *Wehrmacht*. Grabowski himself seems to definitively resolve the issue with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause by informing readers that only 'blue' policemen arrived on the scene. He bases his conclusion on an archival source which he references in the footnote, giving the reference number and page (although without the title of the document). This is the testimony of Wiktor Ratyński (the owner of the said farm where the Jews were hiding). Drawing on the source, Grabowski writes: "On 23 August 1943, it was **not gendarmes** or the *Wehrmacht* who came to Wiktor Ratyński's farm, but the head of the PP station in Grębków, Czesław Kurkowski, accompanied by another blue policeman" [emphasis mine] (vol. 1, p. 493). Grabowski adds that the policemen were 'armed' with a denunciation and, quoting an extract from Ratyński's testimony, writes that the commander held a piece of paper on which "it said how many people there were and where they were being kept". Meanwhile, in the original testimony Ratyński clearly states that gendarmes and police came to his farm. Grabowski has thus clearly omitted this fragment. Ratyński testified: "Nine people of Jewish nationality came to my farm buildings in the village of Ziomaki, Wyszaków commune, and stayed in my building. On 23 August 1943 **gendarmes with police** from the Grębków station came to my farm building, headed by *Kommandant* Kurkowski holding a piece of paper saying how many people there were and where they were being kept. I was not at home at the time, I was in the field, having gone to soak flax" [emphasis mine] (vol. 1, p. 493). We can hardly consider this a dependable approach to a source. It is unclear why Grabowski then goes on to add that the gendarmes arrived later ("Soon after, German gendarmes arrived at Ratyński's. Neither Kurkowski nor the gendarmes had any desire to go into the barn and look for the Jews, however" (vol. 1, p. 493).

And again: there is nothing novel about stating that *Polnische Polizei* policemen were involved in crimes. As it happens, the testimony of Seweryna Ratyńska (which Grabowski also cites) speaks of murder at the hands of a German. It appears both the gendarmes and the policemen took part in the killing. These breakneck manipulations, assuming that the reader will only rely on the authors' narrative and will not bother to check the sources, are all the more astounding since the whole thing seems to be designed to produce some kind of literary effect, the aim of which is difficult to specify.

It is also unclear where in the documents Grabowski found “a few neighbours who came running at the sight of the police” (vol. 1, p. 493). None of the witnesses’ or defendants’ testimonies mention any onlookers gathering near the Ratyńskis’ home. It is true that in her testimony Seweryna Ratyńska mentions a farmer and his ‘farmhand’ (who happened to be passing by) whom the Germans forced to drag the Jews out (despite having been terrorised and threatened, Ratyńska herself did not want to do it). The interviews with other witnesses also mention disabled members of the Ratyński family. However, onlookers are an extremely important element in the narrative constructed in *Night without an end*, where the killing of Jews in the village setting is a kind of sensation taking place before the eyes of ‘bystanders’. Is this yet another manipulation intended to give weight to the not wholly truthful, literary-style statements in the *Foreword* (“Neighbours and acquaintances looking from behind the backs of police at mass murders in the ghetto streets is one of the images that appear throughout our studies with an alarming frequency” – vol. 1, p. 27)? At the end of his description, Grabowski calls Ratyńska an “important participant” in the events (vol. 1, pp. 493–494) rather than a victim herself.

These and similar practices having little to do with scholarship, such as the bending of the source material to fit one’s thesis, undermine the trust we could place in the authors. All the more so since the final episode of the above-mentioned story did involve criminal actions by a group of peasants (whom Grabowski calls the ‘village *Kommando*’), when the German functionaries were not in the village. The author could well have focused on this incident. In the evening of the same day, a group of six armed attackers arrived at Ratyński’s farm and dragged out the other group of Jews whom the Ratyńskis had been hiding there. They killed three of them, and two others probably fled (at the trial, the Ratyńskis gave different numbers of Jews they had hidden).⁷⁶

At the end Grabowski resumes his essay-style digressions, making the unfounded claim that the Jews who escaped from the Ratyńskis’ farm most likely

⁷⁶ It is a pity that the author, who analyses this case in such depth, has not cited the declaration of repentance made by the principal defendant and subsequently sentenced member of the said ‘Kommando’, Franciszek W.: “Today I understand that I took part in a bloody crime and I regret it. I did not will these people’s death. I was afraid of Nejman because he belonged to an organisation, but I don’t know which one”. AIPN, GK, 318/29, Franciszek W.’s Testimony during the Main Trial, Warsaw, 18 April 1948, p. 109.

did not survive. The ‘proof’, he states, is the fact that they would otherwise have deposited their accounts at Yad Vashem, while the Ratyńskis would have been recognised as Righteous among the Nations. This is an example of an inference completely contrary to academic standards. The claim that all Jews who survived World War II deposited accounts that would warrant granting their helpers the title of Righteous among the Nations is quite simply absurd.

A similar method was employed by Swałek-Niewińska, which is worth tracing in her description of the actions of the *Polnische Polizei* policeman Bronisław Filipowski (vol. 2, p. 563). Swałek-Niewińska makes the definitive claim that Filipowski shot an unknown Jewish man in Zabierzów, and suggests that the testimony he gave during a post-war trial, in which he stated that he had not shot at any Jews during the deportations from Bochnia and Wieliczka, was “not very credible”.⁷⁷ Without the full testimony, Filipowski’s clarifications regarding his part in the killing of a Jew in Zabierzów, as stated in the extract from his interview report from 14 December 1945 that Swałek-Niewińska cites, do sound rather naive. However, a few sentences earlier, in the same witness interview report, Filipowski states an essential fact, namely that the man had already been shot and wounded by the German gendarme Zeiss, and that he himself was acting on the explicit orders of the gendarme who was standing next to him.⁷⁸ Omitting the part concerning Zeiss’s role of directing the commission of a crime as Filipowski’s superior creates a false picture, in which we see the *Polnische Polizei* policeman as acting alone, and additionally making very flimsy excuses to exculpate himself. The issue of who the real perpetrator was is closely connected. Filipowski’s witness interview report from 14 December 1945 is not the only document in which the case was analysed. Based on the full trial records, including the testimonies of a number of witnesses and of the accused himself at the main hearing (he pointed out that he had not been able to make a statement in the course of the investigation), the District Court in Cracow ruled that the gendarme Zeiss, ‘a German, a killer/bandit’ (who also allegedly shot the policeman Dziuba for refusing to comply with his orders), was responsible for the shooting and was the direct perpetrator of the murder, not

⁷⁷ Swałek-Niewińska writes, “[...] this is how he explained his shooting of a man in Zabierzów [...]” (vol. 2, p. 563, footnote 114).

⁷⁸ The name was variously spelled Zais, Zajs and Zeiss.

Filipowski.⁷⁹ We do not learn from the book which materials the author used to rule that Filipowski had killed the Jew in Zabierzów; she only references the trial records discussed above.

When describing the initial repression that fell on the Jews of Proszowice, Miechów county, in September 1939, Libionka cites Meir Goldstein's account. In this case, too, Goldstein's account describes the actions of the Germans who, as in thousands of other places during the early months of the occupation, forced Jews to perform humiliating tasks or menial labour. In this particular example, the Germans made unidentified Poles point out Jewish houses to them, then set the Jews to work and took photos. Goldstein describes this without hiding his remorse towards the Poles who gave the Germans information, but he is clearly speaking of German actions:

“The war broke out before Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. And we no longer prayed in the synagogue but in private flats in the courtyards. And that is when our ‘beloved Poles’ came [...] – and showed the Germans where we pray, **and the Germans⁸⁰ found and dragged out Jews in tallitot and led the Jews out onto the Market Square and the so-called Fair, and ordered them to sweep the streets there.** And they took photos and laughed – our ‘*goyim*’ – and they bullied the Jews terribly. What I mean is that the Poles showed that they were glad the Jews were being bullied. Of course there were also those who brought some water and gave it to drink, but mostly they teased the Jews” [emphasis mine].⁸¹

What emerges is a picture in which the Germans forced the Jews to perform physical tasks. The Germans took photos, laughed, and bullied them, while ‘our *goyim*’, i.e. the Polish onlookers, took some part in this. But what exactly did they do? From the structure of Goldstein's sentence, the one in which he mentions ‘our *goyim*’, nothing precise can be inferred as to what exactly these bystanders were doing, but the next sentences make it clear that the Poles were

⁷⁹ AIPN Kr, 502/806, Sentence of the District Court in Cracow, Cracow, 4 March 1947, pp. 356–357. According to the judges, Filipowski's involvement in the German action that led to the murder of the Jew was ‘not personal and active’, because he was ‘standing guard’. He was sentenced to eight years in prison. *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰ The words ‘and the Germans’ are added in pencil in the account so as to make clear the role of the Germans in these events.

⁸¹ YVA, O.3/3229, Account of Meir Goldstein, p. 3.

laughing at the Jews being 'bullied' by the Germans. And that there were different behaviours, including compassion, as seen in bringing water to the Jews. There was a mix of positive and negative behaviours (teasing) among 'our *goyim*'. Of course the entire situation gives a very bad name to those who made fun of those being humiliated. But an account should always be treated with caution. Under no circumstances should it be embellished or adapted. All that a historian can do is search for other sources on the same subject. But instead of finding other sources, Libionka has independently 'transformed' (!) Goldstein's account so as to hide from sight the actions of the Germans (why?), reducing their role to that of 'photographers' and presenting the whole incident as an independent exclusively Polish action. He thus adapts it as follows: "Our 'beloved Poles', Meir Goldstein related after the war, "indicated the places where Jews prayed in secret, dragged out Jews in *tallitot* to the market square and ordered them to sweep the streets. The Germans filmed it when 'our *goyim*' bullied the Jews terribly" (vol. 2, p. 48). These methods have little to do with the scholarly use of sources or historical standards.

The reader will understand nothing of the true horror of those times if all he is served are facts severed from the entire sequence of mutually dependent events. In his description of what happened in the village of Rogów, Kozłów commune, Libionka introduces simplifications that distort the truly tragic circumstances produced by the inhuman laws that stripped part of society of the right to life. In the version presented by the author of the chapter on Miechów county, in February 1944, a poor farmer by the name of Aleksander Kuraj, who had been 'blackmailed and threatened' with being denounced to the police by the local village head Józef Grądek, killed a Jew whom he was hiding, Jankiel Liberman, with a railway wrench (vol. 2, p. 162). The author limits himself to these bare facts because they fit the title of the sub-chapter, 'Murders without police involvement'. He does not acquaint the reader with the background of the events, although a historian should be interested in how it came to pass that a heroic helper, a father of nine, suddenly turned into a murderer. A serious treatment of the historical fabric and of one's readers would require presenting the broader context, namely the German actions preceding the crime. They shed light on the infernal entrapment created by the combination of German

terror, the enforcement of criminal regulations, and the fear that gripped whole communities, helpless against violence. So, on 29 January 1943, the Germans had murdered members of the Kucharski, Książek and Nowak families for helping Jews in the villages of Wierzbica and Wolica in the same commune (Kozłów). The Germans had been assisted by the Jew Naftul (the Wandersmans' son-in-law), who had suffered a nervous breakdown, walked out into the village during a raid, and was captured by the Germans. Hoping to save his life, he pointed out to his captors the peasant dwellings in which Jews were hidden. He took the Germans to each farm building and told them how long and where he had been hiding. The *Polnische Polizei* also took part in this operation.⁸²

Earlier on, many farmers from Rogów had also helped Liberman hide. Is it difficult to understand the scale of the panic that the news from Wolica and Wierzbica caused among these villagers? The collective reaction of fear for the lives of entire families made them decide that, under the circumstances, the killing of one man (whom they had already risked their lives to help) was their only hope of avoiding the same fate as the families murdered in the nearby villages. The previous experience showed that a man who had been sheltered could – when fighting for his own survival – become the undoing of his earlier benefactors. The peasants were afraid that if Liberman was captured by the Germans, then beaten, threatened or otherwise forced to obey, he would show them the houses in which he had received help, and that whole families would pay the price. In these terrible circumstances, overcome with fear for their families, they forced Kuraj to kill a man whom he had earlier helped with dedication. The scholar should see this story as an illustration of the mechanism produced by the omnipresent German terror aimed at Polish society. An analysis of how the conditions under German occupation, the news of executions, and the principle of collective responsibility applied by the Germans had turned a man who had hitherto supported a refugee into a murderer, would bring us face to face with the true picture of those dramatic events. These cannot be understood without recalling the conditions created by the murderous laws and murderous actions forcibly imposed by the occupiers. Meanwhile, it is very easy to

⁸² AIPN, 392/1364 (P.1521), Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Bronisław Kucharski, Wrocław, 7 October 1977, ff. 1–5.

show the events in a shallow way and with several omissions. And, unfortunately, this is precisely what we find in *Night without an end*.⁸³

Libionka was familiar with the events in Wierzbica, and he describes them further on in the sub-chapter entitled ‘**Incidents** near Pilica and Kozłów. November 1942–1943’ [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 166). However, he talks about them as if they had happened on different planets. It is another case wherein the author, who lightly passes judgement on Poles, weighs his words carefully. Libionka, probably unwilling to say so *expressis verbis*, uses the following phrasing: “The latter [Naftul] “suffered a nervous breakdown and went out into the village”, where he ran into a raid. He confessed where and at whose places he had been hiding, and then the gendarmes drove him to the village. Two Jews were found at the Książek” [...]. Or: “Finally, they came to the Kucharskis” (vol. 2, p. 168). If all the participants in the events, including the peasants, had been described with such tact, the whole book would have a wholly different tone.

But that is not the case. In some of his reflections, Tomasz Frydel treats the fear of being denounced as a phantasmagoria. A historian should understand that human nature is such that in the conditions created by the Germans, anyone who took part in or was privy to illegal activity was a potential danger to others if interrogated or faced with a choice between his own life and the lives of others. These are the basics of underground activity (because hiding Jews was an underground activity) and not merely an “imagined [by helpers] threat of being denounced by Jews” (vol. 2, p. 456). Dismissing the problem in statements like “underlining the danger of being denounced by Jews might have been a simple defence strategy employed by defendants in postwar trials” does not sound very serious (vol. 2, p. 456).

Obviously, nothing here happens by chance. Everything depends on people – their resilience, determination, etc. There were members of the underground who did not betray anyone; there were also those who became instruments of German repression. The same was true of the Jews in hiding and the Poles who knew about them. There were many cases when Jews were caught or left (or were forced to leave), and no denunciations or Gendarmerie or police visits followed. But the fact that Frydel describes such situations does not alter anything, because there were

⁸³ This case has been discussed by P. Gontarczyk in ‘Śmierć Jankiela Libermana, czyli o pewnej antycznej tragedii na polskiej prowincji w czasie II wojny światowej’, *Sieci* 2018, issue 46, pp. 100–103.

also cases when those who had previously given shelter became denouncers; and it is difficult to judge whether the danger of being denounced by the beneficiaries of one's erstwhile helpers was only imagined. Wherever Jews were hiding, such risks always existed.⁸⁴

We find an awareness of the danger of being denounced, including by other Jews in hiding, in the account of Leopold Trejbicz. Hiding in Warsaw on 'Aryan papers', he declined to give his address to another Jew, Marcelli Fleiszer, who was also hiding in the same fashion and went by the name of Bogdan Czerwiński. Trejbicz wrote: 'For safety reasons, we decided not to exchange addresses or to meet outside the factory.'⁸⁵ This is what it means to operate underground – anyone can be a potential danger because we do not know who is who and what level of resilience they will show if they fall into enemy hands. It has nothing to do with ethnicity. However, when drawing on Trejbicz's memoirs, Frydel did not use this extract.

And yet just one page further on, Frydel references facts which show that the danger was real, not imagined. He enumerates examples of Jews denouncing their hosts under duress. However he adds a disclaimer, stating that denunciations "could target both those in hiding as well as those hiding them, although the Polish hosts were not at equal risk of death", (vol. 2, p. 457). This is true. If Jews were found in hiding, it was rare for them to be spared (although such exceptions did exist).⁸⁶ However the fate of the Poles (those providing shelter) was not a foregone conclusion; there were different options when it came to punishment. But German regulations explicitly envisaged death to everyone: those hiding and those providing

⁸⁴ Frydel uses the doubtful example of the Job family, whose members helped the family of Berl Sturm for a long time, to exemplify the 'imagined threat of denunciation'. At the end of the German occupation, the Jews were arrested by the German police. What Sturm literally says in his account is not that the whole family fled upon learning that the Sturms had been arrested, because Stefania Job, who had been the most engaged in helping, remained 'on duty'. Moreover, the Jobs had faced dramatic choices on several occasions to prevent the discovery of the Jewish family. Stefania Job's brother and father volunteered for forced labour instead of Stefania. She had been temporarily arrested before, and even shot at. What is interesting is that the Germans who arrested the Jews showed disobedience to the criminal regulations. They gave them food and let them continue hiding with the Poles. But this was an exception that one could hardly have expected. Would the Jobs have fled if they knew this would happen? AŻIH, 301/4596, Account of Sturm Berl, n.p., n.d., pp. 1–4.

⁸⁵ AŻIH, 301/6818, Account of Leopold Trejbicz, n.p., 26 August 1957, manuscript, f. 13. This type of behaviour was typical of Jews hiding 'in plain sight'. See E. Ringelblum, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. A. Eisenbach, Warsaw 1988, p. 83.

⁸⁶ AŻIH, 301/4596, Account of Sturm Berl, n.p., n.d., pp. 1–4.

the hiding place. The outcome depended on the man in command on the ground. But did any of the rescuers have the prophetic abilities to know in advance how a police raid on their house would end?

Sometimes the authors use the trial records to independently formulate charges regarding matters that were not confirmed even by a Communist court. The historian reserves the right to interpret the sources as he sees fit, but on important issues he should provide the reader with accurate information about the source, and why he chose not to agree with the court ruling. In this work, however, the authors often present their own pronouncements, which differ starkly from those of the courts yet fail to provide all the relevant information, even regarding the court ruling. This creates an impression in the reader's mind that these appraisals are beyond question and that the narrative is indisputable. Meanwhile, what we have here is a purely authorial interpretation of the events, omitting important information from the sources. There are no clear arguments explaining the discrepancy between the author's opinion and the court judgements, or failing that, citing other documents which could shed more light on the events under scrutiny. It is difficult to accept these conclusions drawn *ex nihilo*.

It is worth mentioning some characteristic examples. Libionka (vol. 2, p. 159) unequivocally states that "Stanisław Bielawski denounced Jozek Wahadłowski, who was seeking shelter from him". Meanwhile, in a judgement of 20 November 1953, the County Court in Miechów "acquits the accused Stanisław Bielawski of the act he was indicted, the charge being that he had revealed the place where Moszek⁸⁷ Wahadłowski, a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality, was staying in his barn". Libionka's statement is all the more surprising since one Franciszek M. was indicated in the court proceedings as the actual denouncer.⁸⁸ In this situation it is curious, to say the least, that the author refers the reader to the entirety of the case records, since these contain completely different findings.

When Grabowski discusses the fate of Jews within the context of the liquidation operation in Stoczek (vol. 1, p. 440), he describes a rape that was allegedly committed against a sixteen-year-old Jewish girl by one Tomasz F. Here the author cites

⁸⁷ This name was given in the sentence. AIPN Kr, 502/2275, Sentence of the County Court in Miechów, Miechów, 20 November 1953, pp. 160–166.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 160–166.

extensive fragments from the testimony of witness Józef Burczak. Unfortunately, Grabowski does not let the reader know that Tomasz F. was acquitted. For the sake of accuracy, it should be stated that the said charge was not formally listed in the indictment;⁸⁹ it was the Provincial Court in Warsaw that took it up when issuing a judgement on the case. The court, unexpectedly in those times, asked a fundamental question: “During the investigation, the witnesses accused F. of a number of crimes. During the hearing, Burczak partly – and all the other witnesses completely – retracted their testimonies as coerced or recorded arbitrarily in the minutes. As in many other cases, the Court had to settle a problem – whether the testimonies [given] during the investigation could and should be trusted”.⁹⁰ The court then deemed Burczak’s testimony not credible.⁹¹ But Grabowski is not interested in the entirety of the source nor in the methods of conducting and recording investigations during the period in question, since he is capable of presenting a drastic, albeit doubtful excerpt from the source as an illustration to support his claims. He has the right to come to his own conclusions, of course, but he should relate the content of the source faithfully and justify his interpretation.

The degree to which the material from the trial is convoluted, internally contradictory and under no circumstances fit to justify such categorical judgements is evidenced by the extract that Grabowski quotes in the footnote. Accusing Tomasz F. of having taken part in executing Jews, Grabowski draws on the testimony of Waław Zapisek from the investigation: “During a row, when Flak got into an argument with F., I heard Flak shouting to F. ‘You, brother, better calm down because I’m not like the Jews you shot at!’” (vol. 1, p. 439, footnote 146). However, Grabowski does not say that the information refers to one Aleksander Flak. This man was interviewed regarding the alleged exchange and testified something quite different to Zapisek:

“I never said to Waław Zapisek that I saw F. shooting at Jews. Nor did I ever have a fight with F. or tell him during an argument that he shot at Jews. I have no idea why Zapisek says that I supposedly said this to him. I know that Zapisek and F. argued frequently and I was there during one of their rows. They were fighting

⁸⁹ AIPN, GK, 318/134, Indictment against Tomasz F., Węgrów, 4 September 1950, f. 137.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, Text of the Sentence, Siedlce, 20 June 1951, f. 91.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 92.

over a fence dividing their farmsteads, and each one wanted to put the fence up elsewhere so that he could have a bigger yard. I heard Zapisek say to F. then that he would do him in.”⁹²

According to the description of Miechów ‘county’ (vol. 2, pp. 151–152), Estera Zylberband, who had been hiding at Magdalena Koziół’s place in Skalbmierz, was denounced by her friend Natalia Bączek (who later got married and changed her name to Wójcik). Libionka used the case records as his source. However, the records show something different: the court did not recognise the charge as valid and cleared the accused Natalia Wójcik and her husband Henryk Wójcik of the charge.⁹³ Libionka additionally cites two other documents in the footnote: a letter by Dawid Wolgelemter dated 25 October 1948 and Wolgelemter’s testimony dated 31 March 1949, half a year later. The problem is that these documents are mutually contradictory. In the letter, Wolgelemter identifies Natalia W. as the denouncer. Meanwhile, in the testimony, he states that Zylberband was arrested by chance.⁹⁴ In this situation the footnote, which refers the reader to a source that supposedly supports the author’s conclusions, but without elucidating the differences, is incomprehensible.

The documents are not contradictory as far as the description of D. Wolgelemter’s hiding at Magdalena Koziół’s place is concerned, although they differ significantly in tone from the depiction offered by Libionka. The scholar, drawing on the recollections of the same D. Wolgelemter and on the journal of Chaim Wolgelemter, which states: “They received⁹⁵ increasingly bad food, even though **they had to pay a hefty price for it**, and in the end, **with a day’s notice, they were told to leave the hiding place**” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 121). Meanwhile, in the witness interview report Wolgelemter only says that he and his brother ‘were dependants’ at Magdalena Koziół’s. Libionka fails to mention that Wolgelemter devoted a lot more space in the letter to his stay at Koziół’s. And his testimony is completely

⁹² AIPN, GK, 318/134, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Aleksander Flak, Węgrów, 10 June 1950, p. 117.

⁹³ AIPN Ki, 127/275, Sentence of the District Court in Kielce during an extramural session in Pińczów, Pińczów, 19 September 1949, f. 146.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, Letter from the Polish Mission in Ottawa to the District Court in Kielce, Ottawa, 5 April 1949, ff. 98–99.

⁹⁵ A number of Jews were hiding at Koziół’s at one point, including E. Zylberband’s children.

incompatible with Libionka's statements. And so the reader of *Night without an end* does not learn that Wolgelemter actually wrote:

"Mrs Magdalena came to us horribly distressed and wringing her hands, she was concerned [that] perhaps before dying a martyr's death Esterka had confessed who had been keeping her and where. We cried profusely since we had to leave Mrs Magdalena's, after all we had absolutely nowhere to go. **But Magda didn't let us leave, she said: too bad, whatever happens to you, the same will happen to me, after all we are all human beings.** We spent 16 months at Mrs Magdalena's. I won't describe my further experiences since they are not relevant here. I must only add that **Magdalena kept us for free, since we had no money**" [emphasis mine].⁹⁶

Commentary on this use of the sources available to the author seems superfluous.

Some of the techniques applied by the authors cannot but shock. One of the events mentioned by Szurek is the deportation of Jews from Adamów in October 1942. The author cites the account of Rubin Rosenberg from Adamów from 1945. The entirety of Rosenberg's description reflects the complex reality of the time, which cannot be reduced to a simple division into victims and accomplices along ethnic lines. We read in Rosenberg's account that some Poles and Jews supported the Germans, and that Ukrainians took part in the killings during the *Aktion* which had been organised by the German Gendarmerie. Rosenberg refers to the actions of Germans and Ukrainians as the liquidation operation proper. He writes:

"20 October 1942 was the day of the deportation [from Adamów]. Everyone ran away to the forest to fight the Germans. Even the Jewish militia ran away. Thirty were then found in the town. On the first day, **Ukrainians and the Gendarmerie** surrounded the town. They drove people down to the market place. They would shoot [people] for trifles. The *Judenrat* was supposed to point out hiding places, but they ran away to the forest. **Two Jews** who did not work for the *Judenrat* volunteered to denounce the hiding places. These two were also later killed by the **Ukrainians**. Jews were also denounced by **Poles**. These [Poles] helped to fight against the Jews in the forests. This was the liquidation operation. (The first operation before, a certain Polish woman accidentally started a fire which spread to all of Adamów; the **Poles** suspected that it was the work of Jewish partisans)" [all emphases mine].⁹⁷

⁹⁶ AIPN Ki, 127/275, Letter of Dawid Wolgelemter, Toronto, 25 October 1948, ff. 87–88.

⁹⁷ AŻIH, 301/639, Account of Rubin Rosenberg, Lublin, 1945, typescript, p. 1.

Naturally, this type of account requires verification and a more detailed elucidation of all the information in it.⁹⁸ But the author makes no such attempt at any further research. Furthermore, having Rosenberg mention German gendarmes and Ukrainians as those committing the crimes, as well as the negative actions of the Jews and Poles who helped the Germans detect secret hiding places, he consciously ignores all of these participants and leaves in only the Poles. He reduces the whole account to a fragment of a single sentence, suggesting that he is conveying the essence of the picture painted by Rosenberg. He also uses the term ‘liquidation operation’ in a way that suggests the involvement of Poles alone. We thus read in *Night without an end*: “Rubin Rosenberg of Adamów, aged 17 in 1945, recounts: ‘Jews were also denounced by Poles. They [the Poles] helped to fight the Jews in the forests. This was the liquidation operation’” (vol. 1, p. 610). The text related in this manner corresponds to the next sentence, in which Szurek states that “on the one hand, Polish peasants were dangerous in their joint actions, while on the other, they were equally dangerous individually [...]” (vol. 1, p. 610). Thus the following question arises: what is the value of this and the other arguments put forward by the author, since he is capable of such a manipulation of the sources? After all most readers, who do not have access to Rosenberg’s account, will simply consider the narrative an academic exposition and believe that it stems from solid ‘research’.

Elsewhere, when speaking of denunciations and involvement in the hunt for Jews, Szurek states that “cases of peasant disobedience are rare”. This claim is supposedly illustrated by the actions of peasants from the village of Krynka, Celiny commune. Unlike the vast majority of the judgements formulated in Szurek’s text, this sentence could indicate that he is well aware that the peasants were forced to take part in certain actions, and understands that many pathologies stemmed from the atmosphere of German terror, with the impunity of German functionaries and

⁹⁸ For the sake of accuracy, it should be mentioned that according to the account of Icchak Grinbaum, the deportation took place on 26 October 1942. The description of the deportation differs from Rosenberg’s, since the date of the deportation had allegedly been set by the Polish mayor who collaborated with the Germans, while Adamów was surrounded by a cordon of German policemen, Ukrainians and *Polnische Polizei* policemen. Szurek addresses the liquidation of the Adamów ghetto when discussing the activities of the Jewish partisans. See J.C. Szurek, ‘Powiat łukowski’, in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, p. 595.

collaborators being but one element. But the reality is a different matter. Szurek selects quotations which support his predetermined thesis that ‘most of the time the peasants were hostile’ (such statements immediately follow the reference to the inhabitants of Krynka on p. 609). In doing so, he also creates an impression of specific references (names, a footnote referencing the source) and solid exposition. Meanwhile, his description of the events in Krynka is another example of using sources in a way that hardly befits a historian. First, generalising, Szurek writes that ‘cases of peasant disobedience are rare.’ He then mentions two peasants who refused to take part in actions, and then – without going very deep into the source – he writes of ‘some peasants’ who ‘followed German orders.’ To give an air of precision and factuality, he mentions the deputy village head Jan Markowski as one of these peasants. Additionally, he also accuses Markowski, along with others, of ‘despoiling’ the captured Jews.

According to footnote 149, Szurek’s information comes from the records of the trial of Bolesław Przeździak, Jan Markowski, Antoni Walczak, Feliks Walczak and Stanisław Kamecki in 1951. Here, violating academic rules, Szurek does not refer the reader to a specific document or page numbers, but to the entire case file (totalling 564 pages). He only specifies that he is talking about the testimony of Bolesław Przeździak, without giving the page number or any precise information that would help one identify the testimony which he is referring to.⁹⁹ It is difficult to judge whether this is an intended obstacle for anyone who would like to verify the author’s statements against the source, or merely a result of the author’s lack of concern for or familiarity with the rules that a professional historian should follow.

Yet this is something that makes it extremely difficult to verify the information provided. Be that as it may, a careful reading of the case records sheds a whole new light on the events. They contain information which is not even hinted at by Szurek. There is no doubt that these records require separate analysis. For lack of space, I shall limit myself to the most important threads that Szurek simply omits.

⁹⁹ One may doubt whether the author read these records at all. According to his words, the trial against the persons mentioned began on 19 May 1951 (vol. 1, p. 608). It should be noted that the trial began on 18 May and ended on 19 May 1951. Most importantly, in 1946, B. Przeździak was tried by the SSK, and in December 1949 a trial against Markowski, Przeździak and Kamecki began in the Court of Appeal in Lublin (AIPN Lu, 326/11, pp. 162–213). It was at that time that the case file was forwarded to the prosecutor’s office to be supplemented with new threads.

The case records indicate that the village of Krynka was terrorised by a group of regular German informers. These people made it their job to catch Jews, while also being a terror to the local Polish population. The group consisted of Marian W., Jan S., Marian B., Józef O. and Bolesław Przeździak, whose testimony Szurek draws on. These individuals enjoyed the strong backing of the occupation authorities and operated with impunity. W. even walked about in the uniform of one of the German police formations. They abused and intimidated the locals. “The inhabitants of the village of Krynka were afraid of them, especially of W., who carried weapons and denounced Poles to the Germans; he even killed several people”, we read in the 1951 judgement.¹⁰⁰ The group forced local peasants to take part in escorting the captured Jews by threatening to tell the Germans about their resistance. It is no surprise that the Underground made efforts to liquidate them.¹⁰¹

It is clear from the case file that Jan Markowski, whom Szurek so readily vilifies, had nothing to do with catching Jews or despoiling them. This was reflected in the reasoning of the judgement acquitting him on 19 May 1951, which was based on the testimonies of several witnesses. Other accused residents, who had been forced to escort captured Jews, were also acquitted of the charge of hunting for Jewish refugees. The records make it clear that their participation in pursuing Jews was not voluntary but coerced. In the reasoning of the judgement concerning Jan Markowski, Feliks Walczak and Stanisław Kamecki, the Court of Appeal in Lublin “did not find during the court proceedings that these defendants showed any signs of enthusiasm when escorting the captured Jews, and hence did not find that their actions fulfilled the constitutive elements of a crime”.¹⁰² However the German informer, Bolesław Przeździak, was given a sentence.¹⁰³

Whereas we can definitely admire the courage and determination of those who avoided joining the search parties, it is not difficult to understand the fear that gripped those who succumbed to the threats, knowing that the Germans could do

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, Sentence of the Court of Appeal in Lublin, Lublin, 19 May 1951, p. 449.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Accused Stanisław Czubaszek, Lublin, 11 December 1950, pp. 293–294; *Ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Accused Stanisław Kowalczyk, Lublin, 7 December 1950, pp. 280–281; *Ibidem*, Jan Markowski’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Biała-Podlaska, 1–2 December 1949, pp. 163–165.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, Sentence of the Court of Appeal in Lublin, Lublin, 19 May 1951, p. 452.

¹⁰³ AIPN Lu, 326/11, Minutes of the Main Hearing, Biała-Podlaska, 1–2 December 1949, pp. 162–213.

as they pleased and would likely show no mercy in case of refusal. If the author is of a different opinion, he should have confronted the entire context of the events rather than refer to information taken out of the whole context, without accurately quoting the sources, and even here manipulating the material (vol. 2, pp. 608–609).

One of the stories related by Grabowski in the sub-chapter entitled ‘The worst option of all: The town of Węgrów, or about the dangers of rescuing’ (vol. 1, pp. 489–490) is another example where important details are removed from accounts which, once ‘clipped’, seem to corroborate the claims advanced by the author. Grabowski begins his exegesis by underlining his own ‘careful analysis of several hundred cases of hiding’ in Węgrów county. The sub-chapter begins with the story of Lusja Farbiarz, a Jewish girl whom the author introduces as “one of very few Jews to have survived in Węgrów itself”. He then mentions another Jewish woman who survived “on the outskirts of Węgrów”.

Lusja Farbiarz was hidden by a Polish woman, Pelagia Vogelgesang, who many years later was honoured as one of the Righteous among the Nations.¹⁰⁴ Lusja Farbiarz was not the only Jewish person whom Vogelgesang helped, which Grabowski does not mention. For a few months, the girl’s uncle, Chaim Farbiarz (who also survived the Holocaust and took the girl back after the war), as well as a man named Klejn (sometimes referenced as Klejman), and his child also received emergency help in the form of food and money from Vogelgesang.¹⁰⁵ The last two even spent some time in buildings belonging to the Vogelgesangs, where Pelagia helped Klejn recover from illness, treating him with home remedies – “aspirin and warm milk”.¹⁰⁶

In Grabowski’s take on the story, the heroic actions of the rescuer and the actual conditions in which Lusja was hidden are missing. For the author, the story serves first of all as a pretext for describing the phenomenon of neighbours as denouncers. Grabowski states that ‘the girl’s stay at the Vogelgesangs’ could not be concealed from the neighbours, which resulted in police visits and searches “for Jews” (vol. 1, p. 490). A few lines later, he offers a general reflection on the atmosphere in the Polish community: “While the struggle against the occupier enjoyed social approval,

¹⁰⁴ The description was based on the account of Pelagia Vogelgesang alone. AŻIH, 301/4875, Account of Pelagia Vogelgesang, Węgrów, 15 September 1946, typescript, ff. 1–10.

¹⁰⁵ N. Aleksiuń also mentions helping other Jews, ‘Historia pomocy – Pelagia Vogelgesang’; <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-vogelgesang-pelagia>.

¹⁰⁶ AŻIH, 301/4875, Account of Pelagia Vogelgesang, p. 3.

rescuing Jews did not. This lack of social solidarity resulted in denunciations which, in practically all cases, meant death for the Jews and sometimes for their Polish hosts, too” (vol. 1, p. 491). The ‘evil’ neighbours contribute to the image of Poles as simply hostile toward Jews. In Grabowski’s interpretation, the conditions of life created by the Germans in occupied Poland play no role in the matter. In fact, he sees no need whatsoever to mention the Germans and their decrees which penalised any assistance to Jews with death, and thus hugely influenced human actions and attitudes. Meanwhile, the extracts of Pelagia Vogelgesang’s account omitted by Grabowski speak directly of the residents being gripped by panic and the fear of being killed (the Germans applied collective responsibility). Vogelgesang wrote without reservation of the fear that paralysed her:

“Klejn is sick, I am terribly afraid, I beg them by God to go away because they’ll bring misfortune on my child [i.e. Lusja – T.D.] and they themselves won’t survive; already one of my tenants is telling me to register the child because if I don’t, he will, because they have no intention of paying with their lives, and he gives me an announcement to read, saying that if someone is hiding [Jews] and others know of it and don’t report it, they too [will] suffer the death penalty; of course I promised the tenant that I would register [the child] in the next few days because I won’t kill the child, come what may.”

One could see this as a reflection of the situation when announcements about the death penalty were pasted all over occupied Poland, and we may make some assumptions on this basis about how the fear of death affected people. Against this background, the figure of this heroic woman stands out like a beacon. Yet this lies outside of Grabowski’s interest. By removing the context of German terror against Poles from the picture under the guise of ‘careful analysis’, Grabowski adds yet another brushstroke to a distorted image of human behaviour.¹⁰⁷

We might add here that this slapdash use of sources is also a problem when it comes to details of relatively little importance. For over two years (from November 1942 until January 1945), a couple by the name of Kisiel hid Jews in the village of

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 9. It is unclear why Grabowski writes about ‘postwar interest’ in the girl’s fate, not only on the part of Rajzman, a member of the Węgrów Jewish committee, but also of Fajwel Bielawski (vol. 1, p. 490). Although Rajzman did in fact help Lusja, in light of Vogelgesang’s testimony ‘Mr Bielawski did not remember Lusja often, and I did not insist, but God helped so the child didn’t go hungry [...]’.

Karczowice, Kozłów commune. We read in Kisiel's account: "The closest Polish and German police station was in Kozłów. Nonetheless, searches were conducted at my place. **The German police twice searched my place very carefully**, but found nothing" [emphasis mine].¹⁰⁸ For unknown reasons, Libionka added *Polnische Polizei* officers to the Germans performing the search. Thus we can read in *Night without an end*: "The Gendarmerie **and the blues** twice searched the place but found nothing" [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 131). There is no mention of *Polnische Polizei* in Kisiel's account, nor in the account of the woman who hid at the Kisiels' place, Helena Lederman.¹⁰⁹ Of course it was irrelevant to the outcome of the search whether the Germans were alone or accompanied by subordinates, but it is not the norm in academia to make such additions to sources.

The description of the capture of three unidentified Jews in caves near Ojców in the spring or autumn of 1944 to some extent coincides with the method employed by Grabowski. Libionka describes the event in the sub-chapter 'Manhunts and murders in the vicinity of Skała' (vol. 1, p. 154). He portrays it as an anti-Jewish operation from the start. The participants included two German gendarmes, four *Polnische Polizei* policemen, and unidentified 'locals'. Wounded by grenades thrown into the rocky crevices, the Jews were pulled out of their hiding place using pike poles. Libionka mentions that the *Polnische Polizei* policemen taking part in the operation "had been alerted by children who saw a number of people hiding". There is no footnote, so it is unclear where the information comes from. The description in the book conveys a rather grim impression of the various forces uniting to hunt down the Jews: German gendarmes, Polish 'blues', and 'locals' to boot.¹¹⁰ The author does not tell the reader that when the operation started it was not known that those hiding in the cave were Jews, nor does he relate the actual reasons for the operation or the circumstances in which it proceeded.

Meanwhile, the sources referenced by the author describe these things in detail, something the reader will not find out. The most detailed account is that by the prelate Dobiecki (it is also the one that Libionka used). The direct reason

¹⁰⁸ AŻIH, 301/2646, Account of Aleksander Kisiel, Katowice, 24 June 1947, typescript, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ AŻIH, 301/2856, Account of Helena Lederman, Łódź, 1 September 1947, typescript, ff. 1–3.

¹¹⁰ Libionka indicates Rev. Dobiecki as his source in addition to the interview reports of unknown witnesses (whose names he does not cite).

for the operation and manhunt was a robbery committed in the area the night before. Children playing near the caves found an item belonging to a person who had been robbed, and then discovered people hiding in nearby caves. Believing them to be the criminals responsible for the robbery, they alerted the adults.¹¹¹ This was the tipping point. *Polnische Polizei*, gendarmes, and ‘locals’ appeared on the scene. Grenades were first thrown into the cave, and only then were people pulled out. And, as Dobiecki tells us, until the moment they were pulled out no one knew that they were Jews, because all calls to them to surrender went unanswered.

Libionka discusses the action as if its purpose had been to persecute Jews from the start, and sums up as follows: “With the help of locals, two people were pulled out, a man and a woman, and killed” (vol. 2, p. 154). He does not specify that the pulling out itself (i.e. the moment when it was recognised that the people inside were Jews) only took place after German gendarmes had arrived on the scene. Dobiecki uses impersonal formulations (were pulled out, were thrown, etc.), so we do not know who exactly performed these actions (was it the ‘locals’?) or upon whose orders. But we do know that the Jews (one source mentions a Jewish man and a woman,¹¹² another – two Jewish women¹¹³) were most likely killed by the German gendarme Ajgier (Eiger/Eigler?), something Libionka fails to mention.¹¹⁴

The book uses means which of necessity create the impression of an even greater gap between the fate of Jews and Poles, positioning the latter simply as bystanders and witnesses to Jewish misery, unaffected by similar problems. One characteristic example is the way in which Alina Skibińska quotes a fragment from the account of the Peasant Battalions (*Bataliony Chłopskie*, BCh) member Florian Wójtowicz, *nom de guerre* ‘Listek’, describing the Jews in ‘Jankiel’s’ camp: ‘they were in rags, dirty, miserable, a terrible sight to behold’ (vol. 1, p. 343). Meanwhile, in the original ‘Listek’ writes: ‘they were in rags, dirty, miserable, a terrible sight

¹¹¹ AŻIH, 301/838, Account of the Prelate Rev. Dobiecki, n.p., n.d., typescript, ff. 1–2.

¹¹² AIPN Kr, 502/949, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Władysław Cieślík, Cracow, 7 December 1946, p. 144.

¹¹³ AŻIH, 301/838, Account of the Prelate Rev. Dobiecki, n.p., n.d., typescript, ff. 1–2.

¹¹⁴ Rev. Dobiecki stated that the wounded women were killed by ‘the police’. Ajgier is mentioned by two other witnesses. *Ibidem*; AIPN Kr, 502/949, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Władysław Cieślík, Cracow, 7 December 1946, pp. 144–145; *ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Władysław Gajewski, Cracow, 7 December 1946, p. 146.

to behold, **although we did not look any better**’ [emphasis mine].¹¹⁵ I do not know whether the reader is intentionally being led in a specific direction in this passage using appropriately clipped quotations, but the image that emerges from the accumulation of such details does not necessarily correspond to what the sources say.

In the sub-chapter ‘Wartime conversions: Changing one’s religion as a survival strategy?’, among the different examples of Jews who “hoped that converting to Christianity would help them if captured”, Frydel mentions Stanisław Silberman, who changed his surname to Kocoń (vol. 2, p. 433). Frydel states that Silberman married Aleksandra Bryk in 1943, when in fact he only did so in 1945 after the German occupation had ended.¹¹⁶ Moreover, it is not known whether Silberman really did convert to Catholicism. What is known, however, is that after the war he declared himself to be of no religion.¹¹⁷ This piece of creative writing by the author undermines – and not for the first time – the credibility of his other statements, supposedly based on documents.

Alina Skibińska (vol. 1, p. 323) provides a short summary of the account of Tema Wajnsztok: “In her [Wajnsztok’s] story we will find an attack by a ‘partisan unit’ and brutal rape, hours spent motionless under a bed, stealing food from people’s fields, as well as everyday work on the farm, sewing, cleaning”. One should be more precise here, since not all of the experiences described – as one might infer from the way the narrative is constructed – were actually Wajnsztok’s lot. For the sake of accuracy, the author should have informed the reader that the description is a conflation of Jewish and Polish experiences. After all, it was not Wajnsztok but a Polish woman who was raped during the attack.¹¹⁸

The way in which *Night without an end* presents the phenomenon of Poles rescuing Jews also requires broader discussion. One could indicate a certain

¹¹⁵ AŻIH, 301/6825, Florian Wójtowicz’s Letter to the Board of the Social-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, Duszniki Zdrój, 26 July 1978, f. 2.

¹¹⁶ AIPN Rz, 353/72, Aleksandra Kocoń’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Rzeszów, 7 June 1950, p. 520.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Stanisław Kocoń, Katowice, 11 September 1947, p. 19; *ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Stanisław Kocoń, Tarnów, 28 December 1948, p. 117; *ibidem*, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Aleksandra Kocoń, Katowice, 24 February 1949, p. 229.

¹¹⁸ See AŻIH, 301/7214, Account of Tema Wajnsztok, Haifa, 28 August 1960, ff. 1–14.

understatement of this issue in different chapters. The subject is presented very sparingly, for example, in the text on Łuków county. It is true that Szurek duly notes that twelve of the Righteous among the Nations from Łuków county were peasants (although it is unclear what year specifically these data come from), but he did not deem their stories worth retelling (he does not even cite their names). Nor will the reader learn how many Jews (their names are not given either) were saved by those Righteous, nor what percentage of all those saved in the county they represent. We learn nothing about any incidents of occasional or one-off assistance. Szurek renounces the citing of such facts, even though the accounts he uses mention a great number of examples of Polish efforts to save Jews. As we know, in December 1939 the German occupation authorities forced Jews from a number of localities to move to Kock (vol. 1, p. 578). Drawing his information from the account of Mojżesz Apelbaum, the author omits a section which discusses the interventions of the locals and of their spiritual leader, a priest. When driving the Jews to Kock in December 1939, the Germans “stripped women and men naked. Whenever they found more than 150 zlotys on someone, they beat and butchered [them]. This conduct sparked protest among the Poles, who intervened at the *Landrat* Office through their priest. This proved successful and people were no longer stripped bare in the road. Personal searches were conducted on people wearing clothes”.¹¹⁹ This fragment is evidence of a positive attitude toward Jews among the local Poles (but also of how little they could do), despite being repeatedly told by the Germans that the Jews carried typhus (in 1939 contacts with Jews were not yet penalised by death) (vol. 1, p. 578). Szurek’s text only discusses a typhus epidemic and the deliberate frightening of people with the threat of infection.

We will not learn from the book about the efforts by the inhabitants of the village of Osiny in Łuków county to save Estera Borensztejn¹²⁰ either. “In the evening,” Borensztejn wrote, “I went to the people who had once bought a property from my grandfather. I told them who I was: they were very surprised, but they were afraid to keep me. Yet I had nowhere to go. In the end, they arranged with others in the village that everyone would keep me at their place for a while, so that everyone

¹¹⁹ AŻIH, 301/2013, Account of Mojżesz Apelbaum, Lublin, 12 October 1946 r., typescript, f. 1.

¹²⁰ The account is signed in writing, ‘Estera Borensztain’, while the name Borensztejn is given on the typescript.

would be guilty and no one would denounce anyone. They made a kind of unity. The village was called Osiny. I was there until spring.”¹²¹ Based on the whole account, Szurek only informs us that Borensztein was one of a couple of Jewish girls and young women who managed to survive – as he writes – by “assuming an Aryan identity” (vol. 1, p. 597), undergoing, while doing so, “at least two forms of violence: the initial violence resulting from the change [of identity] itself, and the long-term violence related to deculturation” [*sic*] (vol. 1, p. 598). In such absurd terms he describes the treatment of a young girl by peasants who hid her simply by pretending that she was a family member, which meant that she took part in all the everyday activities of the family.¹²²

The book will not tell us about the fate of Jankiel Grynblat, who hid and was hidden in the village of Koryczany, and whose account has been completely omitted by Szurek. Grynblat wrote: “The (precise) place where I was staying was completely secret, but the local peasants generally knew that I was in one of the local villages, working. I was most often in the village of Sokole. The local inhabitants treated me well and always provided assistance to POWs who had escaped from the camp in Dęblin, whom they had sympathy for. [...] At the time I lived relatively well. I worked the whole time for different peasants, for whom I sewed. I did not go hungry. I had my own bed and I was not afraid that the peasants would denounce me.”¹²³ In another account, Grynblat mentions a whole list of names of Poles from the villages of Feliksin, Gołólazy, and Sokole, who helped Jews.¹²⁴ The question arises: were these facts left out because they contradicted the vision of Polish communities constructed in the book?

¹²¹ AŻIH, 301/2989, Account of Estera Borensztain, Bytom, 12 October 1947, typescript, p. 4.

¹²² It is worth adding that Szurek emphasises the girls' work on the farm, including cow grazing (of which there is no mention at all in Borensztein's account). In light of these remarks, I am tempted to remind the author that during the period in question, in fact also in the second half of the twentieth century, child labour (from the youngest age) was a widespread and normal phenomenon on Polish farms, including cow grazing as one of the basic tasks. It should also be added that Irena Krawczyk's account does not begin with the words of the minute-taker, describing Krawczyk's appearance and demeanour, as Szurek has shown, but ends with the said words (I am of course talking about the handwritten original and not the typewritten copy). See AŻIH, 301/3998, Remarks on the Testimony of Irena Krawczyk, manuscript, no pagination. An entirely different approach to the issue of work performed by Jews in hiding (including cow grazing) is taken by Skibińska (vol. 1, p. 325).

¹²³ AŻIH, 301/4800, Account of Jankiel Grynblat, Krynica, 27 July 1950, typescript, pp. 1–2.

¹²⁴ For more, see AŻIH, 301/6332, Account of Jankiel Grynblat, February 1967, typescript, pp. 1–2.

Dariusz Libionka uses the written account of a rabbi from Działoszyce, Chaim Icchak Wolgelernter (Wohlgelernter). The author himself calls it one of the most important sources, yet he did not consider it appropriate to cite a fragment in which Wolgelernter described the attitudes of the peasants:

“It was easier to save oneself in the countryside. A simple peasant felt no hatred toward us; on the contrary, he always willingly contacted the Jew and believed him about everything. If the Jew had not entrusted him with his property to look after, there was no reason to harm him or do something bad to him. The peasants empathised with us in our suffering and misfortune. The way they manifested it was by welcoming us with bread and water. It is true that they were afraid to receive us in their homes because there were announcements hanging in every village that whoever received a Jew in their home or gave him a piece of bread would pay with his life. In spite of this, when things calmed down a little, they let [Jews] sleep in barns and even let the women and children into their homes. [...] The eighteen of us were at the village head’s place in the village of Myszyce; he did not turn us away, even though it was dangerous for him. He was in town every day and told us what went on there.”¹²⁵

What is one to make of the exclusion of such fragments from a source that the author has used in a book devoted precisely to the subject addressed here?

Elsewhere in *Night without an end* we come upon attempts to develop new language codes. Barbara Engelking could have opted for a gradual scale of assistance which, in different ways, was always tantamount to rescuing people who were facing death. Instead, she proposes a kind of bizarre language game in which, at her own discretion, she distinguishes ‘rescuing Jews’ (‘less Jewish agency, less influence over one’s fate, greater dependence on Poles’) from merely helping them. The absurdity of these ‘typologies’ is that they completely ignore the fact that any ‘illegal’ contacts with Jews, whether feeding them or providing them with shelter, were punishable by death, regardless of frequency. Meanwhile Engelking’s position is that only long-term help combined with hiding, providing food, and keeping alive deserves to be called rescuing. Other forms of assistance, which involved greater ‘Jewish agency’, should generally be designated as mere

¹²⁵ Ch.I. Wohlgelernter, ‘Działoszyce’, in *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945. Relacje świadków*, ed. M. Grynberg, M. Kotowska, Warsaw 2003, p. 32.

'help' (vol. 1, pp. 132–133). Without even addressing the academically doubtful nature of this claim it should be noted that, in practice, the boundary between 'helping' and 'rescuing' so defined would have been as fluid and untraceable as the boundary between 'greater agency' and 'lesser agency'. The author will probably not succeed in reconfiguring the meaning of existing everyday terms. This proposed new *ad hoc* definition of commonly used words is profoundly contradicted by the context of the events. It is also contradicted by other examples from *Night without an end*, where the authors describe multiple cases which – according to Engelking's idiosyncratic definitions – were 'only' incidents of help, but essentially saved Jewish lives. One example is the story of Helena Berman during the deportation from Proszowice, Miechów county, in August 1942 (vol. 2, p. 112). Having fled from the town, Berman, with the knowledge and consent of an unknown Polish woman, slept in a barn: "She spent the night there and this saved her life because the SS combed the forest that night. In the morning, having been treated to some milk, she headed for the train and boarded it".¹²⁶ Without this one-off help, Berman would likely have been killed. What was the degree of 'Jewish agency' in this particular case? What 'influence over one's fate'? What degree of 'dependence on Poles'? Perhaps it would be a better idea to simply describe what happened as it happened: after all, this is the historian's principal task (*nota bene* Libionka, who describes Helena Berman's story, skips over the positive role of the Polish woman, giving false information that Berman supposedly slept in the forest and went to Cracow the next day – vol. 2, p. 112).

Libionka uses one page to describe Jews handing their children over to Poles for safekeeping during the liquidation actions of August and September 1942. He writes about Proszowice: "Shortly after the first deportation it sometimes happened that peasants delivered children who had been placed in their care to the police station or the ghetto" (vol. 2, p. 122). And indeed, that sometimes happened. But it would be worth looking into each of these cases separately. A single sentence is decidedly too little to illuminate the complexities of the situation in which those who handed over the children left in their care found themselves. Their motivations were doubtless diverse. With regard to Proszowice,

¹²⁶ AŻIH, 301/206, Account of Helena Berman, Cracow, 1945 [?], typescript, f. 2.

the problem was depicted in more detail by Meir Goldstein (who is cited several times in different parts of the book). Goldstein's account shows the events and the dramatic choices faced by the victims of the German occupation against a broader background:

“On the first day after the action a lot of children reported to the police station. These children were joined to the transport in Słomniki. Usually ‘*goyim*’ returned the children, or some homeless children, who were wandering around town reported themselves. There was a Jewish family living in Proszowice on false Romanian papers, and this is why they were not included in the action [deportation]. Many Jews left their children with this family. And these Jews, unfortunately, returned all of the children left with them to the police station the next day. And the police sent these children to Słomniki to their families, because the families of these children, nearly all of them, had been deported to Słomniki [...]. There were also ‘*goyim*’, as I mentioned, mostly peasants, who brought children. Some said that they could no longer keep the children, others that the children were screaming and wanted to go back to their families.”¹²⁷

But the reader will not find Goldstein's deliberations in the book. Was it really not in the author's power to dig a little deeper into the subject?

Another story described in this fragment is about the Mekler family (vol. 2, p. 123). The Meklers left one of their daughters with a Polish woman. The woman panicked and handed the child over to the Germans. About the other daughter, Anna Mekler, Libionka writes: “sent to Maków Podhalański and then to Cracow, she had more luck – **having nowhere to go**, she returned and survived in hiding along with a couple of family members” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 123). The author suggests that she was unable to obtain any help from Poles in Cracow. Meanwhile, in Anna Mekler's preserved account, we may read that the main reason for her return was the fact that she missed her family, as evidenced by her own words about the person who had helped her in Cracow: “It was very discomfoting at her place and I missed my family home; finally after two months, with my father's prior consent, I went back to Wawrzeńczyce”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ YVA, O.3/3229, Account of Meir Goldstein, April 1967, p. 9.

¹²⁸ AŻIH, 301/807, Account of Anna Mekler, n.p., n.d., typescript, pp. 1–2.

Libionka also depicts the fate of the Jews who “moved to Płaszów, having no prospects of surviving on the Aryan side” (vol. 1, p. 116). He uses the example of the Weinreb family. We can read in Zew Weinreb’s account: “On the eve of the second *Aktion* we sneaked out individually to a nearby village. **The priest hid us** in the attic, and [hid] grandfather in the cellar. It became dangerous on the ground, the **Sonderdiens** were conducting manhunts. This is when the priest gave me an Aryan birth certificate and I left for Bogoria in the vicinity of Sandomierz” [emphasis mine].¹²⁹ Libionka could have quoted this in full, yet he chooses to relate it as follows: “Before the second *Aktion* in Wolbrom [i.e. the deportation – T.D.], the Weinrebs escaped into the country **and hid at a vicarage**. When it became dangerous, the priest gave Zew Weinreb a birth certificate, with which he left for the vicinity of Sandomierz” (vol. 2, p. 116). So the priest does help, but there is no mention of the fact that he knowingly hid them in the attic (‘greater Polish agency’). And with regard to the growing danger, the reader does not learn what the neutral phrase ‘it got dangerous’ means. And yet Weinreb clearly speaks of the activity of the German *Sonderdienst*.

We find yet another example where the statements of rescued Jews are mangled when looking into the trial records of Piotr Sałabun, a *Polnische Polizei* policeman from Działoszyce. This man faced serious charges of crimes against Jews, but there seems to be no reason for diminishing the help he offered to other Jews, when that indeed was the case. This much is certain. Both during the investigation and the main hearing, Andrzej Zielski and another Jew, by the name of Fabian Schlang, testified about the help they had freely received from the accused policeman.¹³⁰ Zielski spoke of temporary refuge, warnings, and a *Kennkarte* provided to him, which Libionka, for reasons unknown, decides to punctuate with the word ‘supposedly’, casting doubt on the whole thing. He writes: “The convert Andrzej Zielski (Aryan name) left Działoszyce with his wife, in which **he was supposedly helped** by the commander of the local police Piotr Sałabun” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 113).

¹²⁹ AŻIH, 301/1389, Account of Zew Weinreb, n.p., n.d., typescript, p. 1.

¹³⁰ AIPN Ki, 128/207, Fabian Schlang’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 30 November 1948, f. 145; AIPN Ki, 128/206, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Witness Andrzej Zielski, Gliwice, 14 April 1948, f. 133; AIPN Ki, 128/208, Andrzej Zielski’s Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 10 January 1949, f. 77.

In the context of help that proved life-saving, the issue of the payments that Jews made to their hosts in 1942–1945 occupies an important place in *Night without an end*. The emphases here are distributed differently across the chapters. Engelking states that “there is no mention in the sources analysed of dearly paid sheltering, [or] of abuses on the part of helpers due to the temptation to enrich themselves” (vol. 1, p. 133). For Grabowski in Węgrów county, lack of money and, by the same token, the Jews’ inability to pay for themselves made it impossible to survive – as the author writes – on the “Aryan side” (vol. 1, p. 489). Meanwhile, Libionka discusses the issue of paying for all kinds of help at greater length: “Conditions everywhere were extremely difficult. Pre-war contacts and money proved to be the decisive factor” (vol. 2, p. 127). He then presents a series of examples to which I shall return below.

Before discussing specific examples of payment, the phenomenon itself requires some explanation. The existing literature on the subject unequivocally indicates that no amount of money could ever compensate for the risk of losing one’s life,¹³¹ while the material resources of the rescuers (which had usually been diminished as a result of the occupation) were far from being an insignificant factor.¹³² This is why we must differentiate between paying for help and covering (or helping to cover) living expenses. Contemporaries took a quite similar approach to the issue. We should bear in mind that keeping people alive involved expenditure, above all on food, which is a daily necessity. Even today, anyone can easily imagine what supporting several or perhaps over a dozen people for months or years would cost. Contribution to expenses was thus considered completely understandable and natural, and needs to be clearly distinguished from other situations. Of course there were covetous individuals who failed to meet their obligations, those who wanted

¹³¹ Z. Schnepf-Kończak, ‘Pomoc Polaków...’, p. 247. An excellent presentation of the economic circumstances of helping Jews is given in G. Berendt, ‘Cena życia – ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po „aryjskiej stronie”’, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2008, issue 4, pp. 110–143.

¹³² It is worth noting what basic products cost on the free market in 1942: wholemeal bread 14 zlotys/kg, whole wheat bread 22 zlotys/kg, wholemeal flour 14 zlotys/kg, whole wheat flour 19 zlotys/kg, milk 9–10 zlotys/l, lard 150 zlotys/kg, butter 170 zlotys/kg, beef 42 zlotys/kg, pork 70–75 zlotys/kg, sugar 64 zlotys/kg. AAN, DRP, 202/I-31, Report on the situation in the country for the period 26 August to 10 October 1942, n.p., n.d., f. 83. For the sake of comparison, in 1940 the monthly wages of a *Polnische Polizei* corporal amounted to 190 zlotys, 215 zlotys for a platoon leader and 265 zlotys for a sergeant. They were adjusted during the following years, but this did not alter the picture in a significant way. A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski...*, p. 149.

to take more while giving as little as possible. At times payment was demanded to cover the risk involved in illegally (in light of the German regulations) harbouring Jews. Some took advantage of this risk as a lucrative source of income, much like other forms of illegal practices. At the other extreme, there were those who rescued Jews who had been deprived of any means, or belonged more generally to the Jewish poor. For them, it was an additional sacrifice and an economic challenge. Finally, there were also situations in which those sheltered promised to repay their helpers after the war (such promises could, but did not necessarily have been kept).¹³³ And we can never know for whom of those who risked their lives and the lives of their families this was an important factor, and for whom it was irrelevant. After all, the one-sided formulation of promises as a way of expressing gratitude did not necessarily bear on the motivation of helpers who acted out of a sheer sense of duty.

The historian could dig deeper into the subject, for example by investigating it from the perspective of the hosts. This might result in an interesting case study. But where everything is subordinated to a predetermined narrative, there is no room for the comprehensive investigation of such stories. In the *Foreword*, one reads at best that not all survivors mentioned “paying for help” (vol. 1, p. 38). Perhaps this means that they saw the help as being free of charge, which does not rule out participating in the costs?

In some places, an appropriate clipping of the source text enables the authors to obtain the desired narrative effect. For example Engelking treats the words of a Jewish survivor, Maria Wiśniewska, about the village head Malinowski as follows: in her original testimony, Wiśniewska says, “he fed me, even though I was penniless”, but Engelking retains only “he fed me”.¹³⁴

Libionka cites a number of stories from the vicinity of Działoszyce, limiting himself to abridgements of longer accounts and transmissions. However, the short

¹³³ However, there are also known cases of signed agreements between the rescuers and rescued. Z. Schnepf-Kończak, ‘Pomoc Polaków...’, pp. 248–250; T. Domański, ‘Udział Polaków w pomocy Żydom na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945’, in *Pomoc świadczona ludności żydowskiej przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945 ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Kielecczyzny*, ed. J. Gapys, A. Dziarmaga, Kielce 2016, p. 67, footnote 62.

¹³⁴ P. Gontarczyk, ‘Mord Żydów pod Dziadkowicami, czyli o naukowej twórczości prof. Barbary Engelking’, *Sieci* 2018, issue 41, p. 77.

versions completely fail to convey what the rescued Jews really thought of paying and money.

According to Libionka's text, the brothers Hyman, Josef Jehuda and Pinkus Federman "hid in Bronów, in the barn of Stanisław Matusik, with whom they had done business before the war. When the farmer realised it, he let them stay. They dug a hole that served them as shelter until the end of the war. Matusik was paid moderately, but obtained the promise that he would get more after the war" (vol. 2, p. 128). The narrative constructed in this fashion places the emphasis on the self-interest of the host, who, as we might infer from this record, was only satisfied with a certain amount because he had been promised more.

Meanwhile, the picture that emerges from the account is not so straightforward. We should start by remarking that the persons concerned were actually Stanisław Matuszczyk, his wife Marianna, their daughter Honorata, and son-in-law Wojciech Mucha (all of them numbered among the Righteous among the Nations as of 2003).¹³⁵ The story is also quite well-known on account of the film *Hiding and Seeking*, available online. The Federman brothers did not simply 'hide in the barn of Stanisław Matusik' but first asked the host whether they could stay there for a few days. Matuszczyk agreed, with the knowledge of his whole family (Marianna, Honorata and Wojciech). At one point someone in the area began to take an interest in who the Matuszczyks were preparing so much food for. This frightened Matuszczyk, and they had to behave more cautiously. At some point the terrified Matuszczyk approached the Federmans with an explanation which Hyman Federman rendered as follows: "My children,¹³⁶ it is getting too dangerous for me to hide you. I hope you survive the war but I am afraid to keep you any longer. People have heard that Wolf Federman's sons are still alive and they are looking all over for you.' My brothers and I had no choice and we left."¹³⁷ Yet shortly after, they returned to the barn and began to hide there without Matuszczyk's knowledge. And then, when the latter realised that they had returned, he let them stay anyway.

¹³⁵ <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4398948>, accessed 10 December 2018.

¹³⁶ This account was submitted in English, and yet the author tried to render the words phonetically in Polish, probably because he attached special importance to them. YVA, M.31/9891, Letter of Hyman Federman to Yad Vashem, n.p., n.d., n. pag.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*.

Libionka's text also does not include other pieces of information reported by Federman. The latter wrote both about a German raid and an extremely lucky deliverance.¹³⁸ He reported that their host liked them, that he was committed to seeing that the brothers survived, and that he considered what he was doing to be the right and honourable thing to do. Hence the issue of payment seems also to have been marginal. Federman simply calls it covering the cost of their food. He writes: "We did pay Mr Matusik [Matuszczyk] a modest amount **to cover his expenses for feeding the three of us**. Since he was reasonably comfortable **I doubt he would have risked his life for what we gave him**" [emphasis mine]. In addition, he talks about the commitment to reward their host after the war: "However, we also promised that after the war we would give him our property and the money we had hidden there. We assured him he would become a rich man. So it is possible he was also doing it a little for this promised reward. **But I doubt this was his main reason**" [emphasis mine].¹³⁹ Learning only this much from the account, we do not know on whose initiative the various promises were made, or even if Matuszczyk had made such demands. Nor do we know whether anyone actually counted on its eventual fulfilment. Honorata Mucha wrote that they took the Federmans in because they knew them from before the war. "The help was free of charge, we received no payment".¹⁴⁰ The story could be a starting point for an interesting historical study, but the authors of *Night without an end* do not take this road.

Nor is the reader told that Maciej and Marianna Konieczny from Dzierżania were another Righteous couple from Miechów county.¹⁴¹ Those they rescued included Chaim Frankiel and his son Zelig as well as Szymche Olmer, his wife Lola, their three-year-old son, and sister Tonia (Tauba). Borys Ickowicz wrote

¹³⁸ During the search conducted by the Germans Matuszczyk reportedly stated: "If you find any Jews on my farm, the first bullet goes to me"; *ibidem*, Honorata Mucha's letter to Yad Vashem, Bronów, 10 October 2002, n. pag.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*, Hyman Federman's letter to Yad Vashem, n.p., n.d., n. pag.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, Honorata Mucha's letter to Yad Vashem, Bronów, 10 October 2002, n. pag.

¹⁴¹ The failure to mention the fact that we are dealing with Righteous among the Nations is even more bizarre since Libionka was the academic editor of the Polish edition of the Book of the Righteous. The story of the Koniecznys is presented there, and the issue of payment is treated as follows: "At first the fugitives paid their keep. But when their money ran out, the Koniecznys, with the help of their children, still looked after them". 'Konieczny Maciej, Konieczna Marianna, Konieczny Mieczysław, Konieczny Piotr, Rosa (Konieczna) Honorata', in *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holokaustu. Polska*, ed. I. Gutman et al., Cracow 2009, p. 318.

in the account he deposited: “We paid for our safety with money and whatever valuables we had. Six months before the end of the war, we had no way to pay: **our money and valuables ran out. We were not thrown out** to a certain death. [...] Maciej Konieczny was a rich farmer who owned a 44 acre farm, so financial gain was not a motive [...]” [emphasis mine].¹⁴² The issue of payment was even more explicitly articulated by Sidney (Szymche) Olmer in his account dated 31 December 1986: “For the first six months **we paid for the cost of our food only**. Then our money ran out and Mr Konieczna accepted my promise to reimburse him after the war for the cost of the food. **He never accepted any money except for what it cost him, and I know that he did not save us for financial reasons**. Mr and Mrs Konieczna were religious and liberal and saved us for humanitarian reasons. [...] The parents explained to the children that human life is holy and their duty was to keep us alive” [emphasis mine].¹⁴³

Meanwhile, *Night without an end* only states that in the bunker at Konieczny’s “[t]hey sat, seven people, and received food once a day. **Borys Ickowicz, who also hid there, mentions paying with money and valuables**” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 129). Is the reader, who has been led to believe that this is a faithful citation of the source, really being treated with integrity?

Another example. According to the book, money played a major role in Jan Makola’s rescue efforts in the village of Sudolek near Raclawice. Libionka relates this story as follows: “After wandering around villages, Maier Sonnenfeld and Izrael Skóra, a member of the *Judenrat* in Działoszyce, his brother Wolf, and Mosze Rosenfrucht managed to find a foothold at Jan Makola’s [*sic*] place in the village of Sudolek near Raclawice. The first two stayed at his place longer, paying a few thousand zlotys. Sometimes they would leave and come back, bestowing gifts on the farmer each time. Finally, they stayed for good and sat in the barn for two years, although towards the end the situation was already tense” (vol. 2, p. 128). It is true that relations between Makola and the Jews in hiding, as depicted by Sonnenfeld, were peculiar, although they did manage to resolve their disagreements in the end.

¹⁴² YVA, M. 31/3965, Account of Boris Ickowicz, p. 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, Account of Sidney Olmer, 31 December 1986, p. 1. In a statement from 1992, S. Olmer also wrote about the extensive involvement of the Konieczny children in saving Jews. *Ibidem*, Statement of Sidney Olmer, n.p., 31 March 1992 [?], f. 7.

After the war, friendship flourished between Makola's and Zonnenfeld's families. In 1959, Zonnenfeld wrote: "Perhaps I may be able to invite him [Makola] for a visit to Israel."¹⁴⁴ But the beginning of the friendship looks somewhat different in Marian Zonnenfeld's account than in the version presented by Libionka, who left out a number of important details when recounting the story of Zonnenfeld and his companions. First and foremost, Zonnenfeld wrote of diverse attitudes among Polish peasants, "since some agreed [to take in Jews] for money, others even without money, and yet others under no circumstances".¹⁴⁵ The members of Zonnenfeld's group not only wandered from village to village, hiding in barns and cowsheds without their owners' knowledge, but also carried arms, at the sight of which the peasants fled. Zonnenfeld even stated: "We often terrorised horsewagons, and the wagoners had to give us rides".¹⁴⁶ Finally, he adds, "we had a whole lot of money saved", which, as the account makes clear, was not demanded by Makola, who agreed to take in two Jews for free. Here is the relevant fragment: "One night," Zonnenfeld writes, "around March [1943], we were wandering on the road and finally we knocked on some peasant's door. It was two in the morning. (The village was called Sudełek, Raclawice commune, Miechów county. Name and surname of the peasant: Jan Makola). At the sight of four men, **Makola only agreed to take in two**. [...] A so-called friendship began with Makola. Actually, that night we had come to his cottage to ask the way. But he immediately said 'You're not hungry?' And so we stayed for a couple of days" [emphasis mine].¹⁴⁷ The payment for help mentioned by Libionka thus refers to money spontaneously offered by the Jews. The amount of a few thousand is only mentioned once in the account and was specifically linked to the purchase of a cow, which "overwhelmed" poor Makola. Still, 'bestowing gifts' really did improve his situation (but did only his situation improve?), because the next time that he received money, "good food appeared on the table" (even though this was not always the case later on).¹⁴⁸

Removing such passages from the accounts and ignoring their context cannot be qualified as anything other than efforts to paint a false picture. This re-creation,

¹⁴⁴ YVA, O.3/1281, Account of Marian Zonnenfeld, Tel Aviv, 20 May 1959, p. 17.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

to varying degrees, occurs throughout the whole book and relates to different occupation-era matters, although of course not to everything. We find notable examples of manipulating the sources when it comes to the activity of the *Judenrats* and of the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*.

Unlike complex behaviours which were not in fact survival strategies but immediate actions taken in the face of actual danger, the voluntary enlistment of Jews in the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* was a kind of survival strategy. This formation, set up by the occupier, was also 'non-German' by virtue of its ethnic composition. It was nonetheless a German state organ and, as such, tasked with implementing the Reich's policies toward the people imprisoned in the ghettos. Due to the cruelty and enthusiasm of some functionaries, the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* quickly became detested in many ghettos: many accounts state this explicitly, including some of those read by the authors of *Night without an end*. However the authors, usually so eager to highlight every negative behaviour on the part of Poles, often remain silent here, omitting relevant fragments of documents and glossing over facts which point to the activity of individuals who were actively involved in aiding the German occupier in persecuting their own people. Here also, the historian should strive to nuance individual stories, highlight different behaviours and attitudes and the different degrees of entanglement in serving the Germans, much as in the case of the *Polnische Polizei* policemen. However, here too one is frequently confronted with manipulations. This time, however, they are designed to 'embellish' the picture. Removing fragments of accounts and taking statements out of context cannot be qualified as anything other than attempting to create a new layer of falsehood to be woven neatly into a predetermined master narrative.

When talking about *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* officers, Libionka observes that "we do not find many critical assessments of policemen" in the accounts related to Miechów county (vol. 2, p. 53). He selects an extract from the account of Meir Goldstein of Proszowice as representative of the conduct of OD-men in the area: "All the boys treated Jewish people well". And, Libionka adds, "the same was supposedly true of all the towns" (vol. 1, p. 53). The formula 'was supposedly' protects the author against any charge of falsely claiming that 'it was so', but at the same time it is difficult to resist the impression that he is really trying to persuade the reader that 'it was so' indeed. However, looking at the content of one of the

most important (as Libionka himself stresses in vol. 2, p. 17) autobiographical sources from the region – the writings of the already mentioned Rabbi Chaim Icchak Wolgelernter from Działoszyce – we are confronted with a polar extreme. One should bear in mind that Libionka calls Wolgelernter’s account one of the most important sources used in for his chapter: yet he consistently cuts out any opinions concerning the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* from this important source. “Even before its true face was revealed,” Wolgelernter wrote, “this structure evoked mistrust among most people, especially after members of the lower strata and the entire underworld joined it. The Order Service very quickly **obtained great powers and became a terror among the people. It tried to please its masters, the Gestapo, with submissiveness and arrogance. Its functionaries distinguished themselves with cruelty during every action and when carrying out orders.** Nor during the present deportation did they sit idly. **And when one day a Jewish historian wishes to write a history of those days and reaches the chapter ‘Ordnungsdienst’, he will blush with shame [...]**” [emphasis mine].¹⁴⁹

When guided in this vein, the reader will fail to understand why elsewhere, when citing the account of M.D. Cukerman, Libionka has to state that the people described in it “dispersed among relatives and acquaintances, **fearing contact with the Jewish police**” [emphasis mine] (vol. 2, p. 109).

The sources used by Anna Zapalec contain reports about several OD-men. Aware of the fact that not everyone was capable of behaving decently toward their compatriots, the author writes about it in more general terms. One is struck by the distinctive tone of a kind of ‘comprehending analysis’ that she employs (vol. 1, pp. 737–739). The author shows a special predilection for avoiding the personalisation of Jewish misdeeds. Jakub Chamaides, whom Zapalec cites on several occasions, mentioned the names of OD-men from the camp in Lackie: Jakub P. and his brother P., who “abused Jews brutally, beat and robbed them unceremoniously, and when the Lvov *Judenrat* sent us parcels, they took them for themselves”. Similar conduct was displayed by Mundek N., who collaborated with Friedrich Warzok.¹⁵⁰ *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Friedrich Warzok was *Kommandant* of the camp at Lackie

¹⁴⁹ D.I. Wohlgelernter, ‘Działoszyce’, in *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945. Relacje świadków*, ed. M. Grynberg, M. Kotowska, Warsaw 2003, p. 31.

¹⁵⁰ AŻIH, 301/4719, Account of Jakub Chamaides, February 1946, typescript, f. 6.

Wielkie and of all the German forced labour camps (*Zwangsarbeitslager* – ZAL) for Jews in Złoczów county. After that he was *Kommandant* of the Janowska street camp in Lvov. He was responsible for the death and torment of thousands of Jews. Along with the head of the *Kriminalpolizei*, Otto Zikmund, he was a true terror in Złoczów county. Zapalec writes about Warzok's sinister role in the Holocaust on p. 674 (vol. 1), among other places.¹⁵¹ A list of names of Jewish OD-men who toadied to the Germans in Sasów is provided by Samuel Wander: Mojsze C., Leib K., Dawid W., who beat people “in order to please the Germans”.¹⁵² The same Wander also mentions OD-men from Sasów who discovered that a certain elderly Jew from Sasów was in possession of substantial wealth and “tormented him cruelly. They made him sweep the barracks. Once he had finished, they threw straw on the floor and beat him, saying he had done a bad job. And so he swept [the floor] from morning until midnight, beaten and mistreated. Finally, he got encephalitis and, having been taken to the ghetto hospital, died within three days”.¹⁵³

It is a well-known fact that the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* took part in deportations in many ghettos in the General Governorate.¹⁵⁴ It is also well known that the mentally broken, terrorised policemen performed the tasks forced upon them by the Germans in order to extend their lives and the lives of their families. In the light of the above, questions about the purpose of eliminating OD-men from the descriptions of deportations (as some of the authors do) remain unanswered. According to Libionka, only the *Polnische Polizei*, the *Kripo* and the *Junaks* took part in the deportation from Skała (vol. 2, p. 74). One of the sources that the author draws on for the deportation (which is also cited in several other places) is the account of Dawid Nassan, who remembered 1 September 1942 in Skała as follows: “On September 1st in the morning an announcement appeared in the

¹⁵¹ AIPN Lu, 319/1145, [Actual conditions], n.p., n.d., f. 12.

¹⁵² AŻIH, 301/1403, Account of Samuel Wander, n.p., n.d., f. 4.

¹⁵³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁴ Examples are provided *inter alia* in the publication *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej*. See also T. Radzik, ‘Żydowska Służba Porządkowa w getcie lubelskim’, *Res Historica* 2002, book 11, pp. 143–149; K. Person, *Policjanci. Wizerunek Żydowskiej Służby Porządkowej w getcie warszawskim*, Warsaw 2018. One should also cite the dramatic account of C. Perechodnik, of which there have been several re-editions, *Czy ja jestem mordercą?* (later republished as *Spowiedź*); English edition: *Am I a murderer? Testament of a Jewish ghetto policeman*, transl. Frank Fox, Boulder, Colorado 1996.

streets to come to the Market at 9 a.m. In addition, OD-men went from house to house and chased people out”¹⁵⁵ Describing the deportation of some 600 Jews from Miechów, Libionka writes: “Those whose names were on the list drawn up by the *Judenrat* were escorted to the synagogue building, from where they were taken away in cars” (vol. 2, p. 72). Meanwhile, the account of Berek Finkelstein, which this report is based on, reads: “Those 600 people were taken to the synagogue by the Polish police, OD-men and the Gendarmerie, and from there [put] into cars”¹⁵⁶

Libionka goes even further in manipulating the sources when he describes the deportation from Działoszyce. He first depicts the atmosphere in the town on the eve of the *Aktion* (2 September 1942), heavily emphasising the attitudes of the Poles. Citing Wolgelernter, he says that the ‘liquidation team’ comprised 300 *Junaks* (vol. 2, p. 78). Apart from the *Junaks*, there were also *Polnische Polizzei* policemen and German gendarmes. In the next sentence, he paints the attitudes of the local peasants: “Peasants appeared in the town and without embarrassment bought property for next to nothing”. He describes the beginning of the deportation as follows: “On the morning of 3 September Jews began to be led out of flats and rounded up in the street. The rabbi Mordka Icek Staszewski, who could not walk by himself, was shot as many others” (vol. 2, p. 78). And now, in order. Wolgelernter did provide the information about 300 *Junaks* taking part in the action, which indeed is true. However, he wrote that these people were under German orders. One could infer from Libionka’s description that they were an autonomous force subordinate to no one. The testimony of F. Kitowski, which Libionka references as his source, does not mention buying out Jewish property.¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile, in his memoirs, Wolgelernter described the beginning of the deportation on 3 September 1942 as follows: “When they arrived on the said day, they ordered all the Jews [...] to leave their homes and assemble in the market square. [...] **The Ordnungsdienst together with the Gestapo went from flat to flat.** Whenever they found sick or

¹⁵⁵ AŻIH, 301/3262, Account of Dawid Nassan, n.p., 7 June 1947, typescript, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ AŻIH, 301/4781, Complaint against Mr Ickowicz of the Miechów *Judenrat*, typescript, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Perhaps such a statement can be found somewhere, but certainly not in this testimony. See IPN Kr, 502/1318, Testimony of Franciszek Kitowski during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 15 November 1945, f. 212.

elderly persons, who could not go to the market place by themselves, they shot them on the spot” [emphasis mine].¹⁵⁸

Similar stratagems are used by Swałtek-Niewińska. Citing the account of Anna Steinberg deposited at Yad Vashem¹⁵⁹ she simply removes the testimony that mentions ‘Jewish policemen’ taking part in the deportation from Niepołomice. This is how she describes the event in her chapter: “The deportation of 22 August 1942 was overseen by the blue police, without any German functionaries present. Anna Steinberg has a particularly negative memory of the local Polish police commander, Jan Ratajczak, who threatened to shoot the Jews, waved his revolver, and beat people” (vol. 2, p. 575). This is how Anna Steinberg describes the event: “The deportation was carried out by the blue police and the Jewish militia, and both behaved properly. The Jewish militia did not rush people to go. Only the commander of the blue police, Ratajczak, comported himself badly, beating people and pointing his revolver at them. The Gestapo were not there at all”.¹⁶⁰ Steinberg’s statements clearly indicate that out of the *Polnische Polizei* and the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* only Ratajczak behaved badly. No one else from the *Polnische Polizei* – the only force mentioned as being on the scene by Swałtek-Niewińska – left a ‘negative’ impression.

Another example of the role of OD-men in operations against Jews concerns the detection of bunkers, in which some Jews were hiding during the latest liquidation of the Bochnia ghetto in September 1943. Swałtek-Niewińska writes: “The groups looking for Jews in hiding consisted of several people, usually a German policeman, several Polish policemen, and often a person employed to force open the door. A local Jewish armourer Karol Goss, who had lost his closest family during the first campaign, performed the latter function under duress during the third liquidation campaign in September 1943, when he was forced by the Germans to open 30–40 bunkers” (vol. 2, pp. 563–564). Information to that effect, as indicated in the footnote, was provided by Goss in a testimony during the trial of Samuel Frisch.

¹⁵⁸ C.I. Wohlgernter, ‘Działoszyce’, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Elsewhere in the book, Swałtek-Niewińska cites Steinberg’s account from the Jewish Historical Institute (AŻIH), ref. 301/5321, Account of Anna Steinberg, n.p., n.d., typescript. When describing the deportation from Niepołomice, however, she cites the account from Yad Vashem, which suggests that they are somehow different. However, it is exactly the same account as the one deposited at the Jewish Historical Institute.

¹⁶⁰ YVA, O.62/331, Account of Anna Steinberg, typescript, n.p., n.d., p. 1.

Meanwhile, in his testimony Goss only states: "I opened the bunkers, perhaps 30 or 40,"¹⁶¹ and he names the people who he says betrayed the location of Jewish hiding places. These were two OD-men: Kalfus and Zucker.¹⁶² Is the fact that these two denouncers were Jews and not Poles the reason why this information is passed over in silence rather than highlighted (as whenever Polish peasants are concerned) in *Night without an end*? Such suspicions take root when we look at how many sources have been treated in this fashion. Moreover, in the chapter in question, the author is silent on the court findings from the trial of *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* officer Samuel Frisch, even though she cites the case file number. Why? We receive no answer. The reader does not learn important information bearing on the subject from the case file which the author dealt with several pages earlier. This information concerns the 800–1000 people hiding in the bunkers, so a large proportion of the *circa* 5000 Jews surviving in Bochnia at the time (vol. 2, p. 547). Nearly all of the testifying witnesses during Frisch's trial were Jews who had found themselves in the Bochnia ghetto at different times. The judgement, sentencing the accused to eight years in prison for anti-Jewish activity, was passed on 27 February 1947.¹⁶³ The issue of detecting bunkers was discussed at length in some of the witness testimonies and in the justification to the judgement. The court took note of the defendant's positive role in many situations, although it remained very critical of specific actions in September 1943. The order to detect bunkers had, naturally, been issued by the Germans, but it was the OD-men who implemented the German directives on the ground, being more familiar with methods of concealment and the construction of hiding places. Their actions, for example with regard to the discovery of the Schanzer bunker, consisted in tearing off the flooring and hacking their way in with axes. Afterwards they delivered five members of the Schanzer family to

¹⁶¹ AIPN Kr, 502/725, Karol Goss's Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 26 August 1946, f. 103.

¹⁶² Zucker's role was also confirmed by the witness Ela Frisch and by the defendant himself. Zucker was reportedly caught while negotiating with a *Polnische Polizei* policeman to allow his family to leave the ghetto. This is when Zucker indicated the bunkers to save himself. *Ibidem*, Ela Frisch's Testimony during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 26 August 1946, f. 104; *ibidem*, Testimony of the Accused Samuel Frisch during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 26 August 1946, f. 96. A similar testimony was given by Henryk Monheit both during the trial and in his account deposited at the Jewish Historical Institute. *Ibidem*, Testimony of Henryk Monheit during the Main Hearing, Cracow, 26 August 1946, f. 107; AŻIH, 301/1700, Account of Henryk Monheit, typescript, n.p., n.d., p. 3.

¹⁶³ AIPN Kr, 502/725, Sentence of the District Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 February 1947, f. 166.

the Germans. In the Weinfeld bunker, 'Jewish policemen' discovered around 45 people. The court concluded that "only members of the Jewish order police had been involved" in these activities.¹⁶⁴ Most of the Jews discovered (everyone from the Schanzer bunker with the exception of Arie Schanzer, who later testified) were subsequently shot by the Germans. According to Swaltek-Niewińska, the total number of Jews caught in the bunkers and shot as a result was 200 (vol. 2, p. 547).¹⁶⁵

We also find examples of sources being manipulated when it comes to describing the context of the activity and operation of the *Judenrats*. Although those working there were burdened with enormous responsibility for the fate of their people and often acted under duress (under threat of repressions), being employed by the *Judenrat* proved (up to a certain point) to be an important element in survival strategies.¹⁶⁶ A *modus operandi* often employed by the Germans was to leave members of these bodies alive for a period of time after the initial deportations, while generously promising to spare those who distinguished themselves as loyal helpers along with their families. The fact that the Germans later made nothing of such promises only shows that they never treated them seriously in the first place. They also needed Jews to act against Jews as one of the tools of their terror (in the same way that they needed Poles to act against Poles). Their helpers had better intelligence as insiders, they were familiar with evasive behaviours and tactics, and better-skilled at detecting secret hideouts.

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.¹⁶⁷ What predominates is a distinctly positive message about the universally understandable difficulties that *Judenrat* members

¹⁶⁴ This of course does not change the fact that the whole operation was directed by the Germans. *Ibidem*, f. 170.

¹⁶⁵ One of those who miraculously survived the execution was Sabina Hollander – the principal witness for the prosecution.

¹⁶⁶ It is worth recalling here, however, that the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* was based on voluntary enlistment.

¹⁶⁷ The controversies regarding the activity of the *Judenrats* in occupied Polish territories and their excessive submission to the Germans are reflected in the historical dispute concerning figures like Chaim Rumkowski or Michał Weichert, who are probably the best-known examples. Weichert's ultimate acquittal played a decisive role in the establishment of a Social Court attached to the CKŻP (Central Committee of Polish Jews). See A. Żbikowski, *Sąd Społeczny przy CKŻP. Wojenne rozliczenia społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce*, Warsaw 2014, pp. 33–35.

had to grapple with and the efforts they made to improve the lot of the Jewish community (vol. 1, p. 99). The authors often stand aloof from any attempts to judge the actions of these bodies. The research paradigm behind this major shift is unclear, since in 2007 Barbara Engelking, as co-editor of the book *Prowincja noc* (Province Night), formulated her general conclusions on the activity of the *Judenrats* in the Warsaw District as follows:¹⁶⁸

“The *Judenrats* thus engaged in a certain 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. One of the side-effects of this game, however, 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. It is therefore 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.”¹⁶⁹

Meanwhile, in *Night without an end* (edited by the same author), voices critical of the *Judenrat* are usually silenced, marginalised, or – not infrequently – removed from the accounts. For example, when writing about the deportation from Wolbrom, Libionka intentionally leaves out the *Judenrat*'s role in gathering the Jews in the marketplace according to German instructions. But for the reassuring appeal of this Jewish body, many more people would have likely made attempts to escape, hide or survive. Is this not the subject of the book? Libionka draws on the account of Henryk Harstein, but does so in a very surprising way. Harstein wrote explicitly about the *Judenrat* as a participant of the events ordained by the Germans: “On 5 September the *Judenrat* ordered people to gather in the Market. No one had slept the night before because there had already been talk of deportation and people had their things packed for a week”.¹⁷⁰ Libionka's narrative only discusses formations

¹⁶⁸ One of the ‘counties’ analysed (Węgrów) was part of *Distrikt Warschau*.

¹⁶⁹ B. Engelking, ‘Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego’, in *Prowincja noc. Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim*, ed. B. Engelking, J. Leociak, D. Libionka, Warsaw 2007, p. 161.

¹⁷⁰ AŻIH, 301/3263, Account of Henryk Harstein, 19 June 1947, f. 1.

composed of Poles, as if these were acting independently. “At night the town [Wolbrom] was surrounded by four *Baudienst* units, blue police and firemen. No one was asleep because ‘there had already been talk of a deportation and people had had their things packed for a week’” (vol. 2, p. 81). To this, Libionka adds his own statement: “there were only six alien [*sic*] gendarmes”, he writes as though avoiding any mention that they were German, and as if unaware that the German occupation system was such that even a single gendarme would have sufficed to oversee, give orders, and make sure (on behalf of the Reich) that these were followed by the *Polnische Polizei* and the *Junaks*. But no mention is made of the *Judenrat* getting everyone to come to the marketplace. The only logical explanation for this change being that the author wanted to hide the *Judenrat*'s role in rounding up the Jews.

This is all the more strange seeing as it was standard practice for the *Judenrats* to issue directives at the behest of the Germans. There should be no reason to gloss things over in this regard. The whole point of the complaint filed by Berek Finkelstein against “Mr Ickowicz of the Miechów *Judenrat*” also vanishes from Libionka's text (vol. 2, p. 73). In order to understand the language game we need to return to an extract already cited of the chapter on Miechów county regarding the drawing up of a list of 600 people earmarked for deportation from Miechów: “Those whose names were on the list drawn up by the *Judenrat* were escorted to the synagogue building, from where they were taken away in cars” (vol. 2, p. 72). Meanwhile Berek Finkelstein wrote explicitly about the circumstances in which the list was made: “Aware of imminent deportation and determined to save a part of the city, or mainly themselves, the *Judenrat* made a list of 600 Jews to be transported to Słomniki [...]”.¹⁷¹ According to Finkelstein, Ickowicz (as the deputy chairman of the *Judenrat*) took part in drawing up the list. Only when we check the actual content of the account does it become clear why it has the word ‘Complaint’ in the title.

In the earlier book cited above, Barbara Engelking describes the activities of Zejman, a member of the Węgrów *Judenrat*, as a type of *corpus delicti* of the German authorities who drained the Jews of Węgrów of all their wealth through the local *Judenrat*.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ AŻIH, 301/4781, Complaint against Mr Ickowicz of the Miechów *Judenrat*, typescript, f. 1.

¹⁷² B. Engelking, *Życie codzienne Żydów...*, p. 161; AŻIH, 301/6043, Account of Władysław Okulus, n.p., n.d., typescript, f. 2.

But there is nothing about the *Judenrat* member Zejman in Jan Grabowski's study of Węgrów *powiat*. Grabowski only mentions that one Mordechaj Zejman became head of the Węgrów *Judenrat* (vol. 1, p. 404). One would have expected the editors of the work to draw on each other's findings when the territories they are researching are concerned.

Anna Zapalec, who presented a single account as a summary of the activities of the local *Judenrat*, cites the words of Helena Kitaj-Drobner as a general conclusion: "The Złoczów *Judenrat* was famous throughout the whole area because it took exceptional care of its people. The *Ordnungsdienst* enjoyed a lesser respect" (vol. 1, p. 681). In the footnote to this quotation, however, Zapalec concludes that there were indeed some controversies regarding the functioning of the Złoczów *Judenrat*, which were a result of certain circumstances and the implementation of German decrees, as well as "opinions more critical or even different from the one cited in the text" (vol. 1, p. 682). It is a pity that she does not follow this lead in the main text in order to paint a more truly complete picture which would have given the reader an opportunity to become acquainted with those different opinions as well. But perhaps that would have disrupted the master narrative.

It is symptomatic that while she is familiar with the account of Maria Cukier, Zapalec quotes it in such a way as to hide unfavourable opinions about the *Judenrat* from the reader. What the reader is introduced to is actually a manipulated message. Zapalec writes of Cukier's experiences: "One place where people tended to help Jews was the town hospital. It was there that Maria Cukier, an inhabitant of Zborów who had been shot when jumping off a deportation train car near Złoczów, obtained help. Wounded, she managed to reach Złoczów and had her wounds dressed only at the town hospital" (vol. 1, p. 741). Not a word about the *Judenrat*. Meanwhile, Cukier described in detail how it happened that she only received help at the hospital:

"Some 10 km out of Złoczów, I jumped off the moving train. A German from one of the cars in front shot at me with a revolver, wounding me in the right side. The bullet lodged not too deep under my skin. I crawled back to Złoczów. Here I encountered Jews wearing armbands. **Two Jews helped me get to the *Judenrat*. The head of the *Judenrat* refused me medical help because I didn't**

have any money (my bag with the money had stayed on the train). **He believed that my golden necklace would not cover the cost of the procedure.** I came out, dejected, and sat down on the pavement. **Two Polish women unknown to me carried me to the hospital.** At the hospital, they operated on – I stayed there for three weeks [emphasis mine].¹⁷³

Zapalec quotes verbatim from Cukier's account: "I passed for a Pole, without papers. The whole staff and the doctors suspected that I was Jewish, but they pretended not to know. They surrounded me with the utmost care. When I came out of the hospital, I left for the unknown" (vol. 1, p. 741). Even though Zapalec is writing about the attitude of Poles to Jews here, she did not deem it worth quoting the sentences which follow, namely: "I went to the vicarage, to Rev. Pawlicki. I told him that I was Jewish. He kept me at his place. He got me the most essential items of clothing. After two weeks, he rented a flat for me in Lvov. He entrusted me into the care of his friends. He supplied me with the necessary cash and food".¹⁷⁴

Incidentally, we might add that the reader has no chance at all to learn about the figure of Father Jan Pawlicki, the parish priest from Zborów whom Cukier describes, although there is no doubt he should appear in any story about the Jews from this area. After all, Maria Cukier was not the only Jew Pawlicki helped. He aided many other Jews, including Maksymilian Dul.¹⁷⁵ Leaving out Rev. Pawlicki is even more bizarre since in one of her sub-chapters Zapalec presents escape from the county as a survival strategy. And yet this priest, who used his own money to rent flats and help his Jewish neighbours, was apparently not a sufficiently interesting figure for her.

The problem of considering other forms of collaboration with the Germans is also a part of the broader subject of the Jews during World War II. This intriguing research problem has been discussed within the context of various Jewish 'survival strategies' by Tomasz Frydel. His effort, but also his courage to come to terms with the phenomenon, should be commended. Frydel is unafraid to touch on matters that the other scholars in the book have skipped over or

¹⁷³ AŻIH, 301/2520, Account of Maria Cukier, Wałbrzych, 27 June 1947, typescript, f. 1–2.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁷⁵ YVA, O.3/3302, M. Dul, *Z otchłani*, p. 37.

depersonalised. He highlights the contacts maintained by the Jewish elites of Mielec with the Germans as a fundamental life-saving strategy (vol. 2, pp. 404–407). In the sub-chapter ‘The labour camp as a trap: The case of informers’ (vol. 2, pp. 499–511) he broadly discusses the scope of the so-called Izak Kapłan group’s collaboration with the Germans. Kapłan and his associates worked in the field to detect locations where Jews were staying outside the designated areas (ghettos, camps), encouraging them to return to the camps operating in the county. Once in a while, the Germans would organise field searches and murder these ‘unregistered’ Jews from the camps.¹⁷⁶ It is not known how many Jews fell victim to Kapłan’s group, but we do know that the Germans terminated the activity of the group (which started at the end of 1942) in June 1943, just before the Bäumer und Lösch camp was liquidated. They surrounded the barracks where the informers lived with their families and shot everyone. It is difficult to say for certain whether money (apparently ‘made from’ other Jews) was the reason why the group was liquidated. There is no firm grounding for such conclusions in the account of Jakub Grynblum, who wrote about why the group was executed as follows: “We do not know why [they were killed]. The same Gestapo men who used to drink with them took the huge fortune they left behind”.¹⁷⁷ Let us bear in mind, however, that the Germans used Jews as disposable objects on principle. Those engaged in collaboration were hoping to win favour with their German ‘masters’ through zealous service; but although the Germans accepted these services, most of the time they had no intention of rewarding them. It seems that in this case, too, the Germans decided that the group had played its part and was no longer needed. As they were about to liquidate the camp, they also liquidated their informers, thus laying their hands on a sizeable fortune. In this case, the survival strategy based on subservience turned out to be rather short-sighted. This corresponds with Zapalec’s general observations regarding some Jews’ collaboration with the Germans (vol. 1, p. 737).

Whatever the case, there is no doubt in Frydel’s mind that the activity of Kapłan’s group was a survival strategy. He even notes that the Jews in the region employed conflicting and competing survival strategies: some worked

¹⁷⁶ See the events in the village of Chrzastów in the spring of 1943 (vol. 2, p. 507).

¹⁷⁷ AŻIH, 201/3503, Account of Jakub Grynblum, n.p., 13 November 1947, typescript, f. 2.

at the Bäumer und Lösch camp, others hid on the 'Aryan side', and there were also Kapłan's informers (vol. 2, pp. 506–507). Yet even here it is worth noting how the Jews themselves saw the issue during and just after the war, when the documents which Frydel consulted were produced. They saw the problem somewhat differently. In February 1943, in the village of Chrzastów near Mielec, a meeting took place, most likely between Kapłan himself and Bogdan Protter, who was hiding in the area. Protter, whom Frydel cites, testified: "[...] I heard that some Jew named Kapłan is a German informer in Mielec country and reports Jews hiding in the area to the Germans using a couple of people" (vol. 2, p. 507). Meanwhile, J. Grynblum writes with regard to the group and the operation of the Bäumer und Lösch camp:

"The camp *Kommandant* was a Jew by the name of Frajberg¹⁷⁸ from Mielec (a carpenter); he is living in the American zone. The work was hard, they fed us as follows: 250 g of bread, and soup. We couldn't buy anything outside. The German foremen beat us. After half a year, one Im[m]ergluck and Fridman from Tarnów arrived at the camp (they are dead). They got a separate barracks. On Sunday afternoon Im[m]ergluck ordered a roll-call. They would leave in the morning and come back in the evening. We knew that the Gestapo came to visit them, they would drink, eat and make merry together. Later, it turned out that they were going to the forest, where Jews were hiding, and denounced them. [...] They would tell us they had nothing in common with us."¹⁷⁹

One is struck by the contrast between the everyday life experiences resulting from these two different survival strategies.

It is a kind of paradox that on 23 April 1943, the day when the village of Podborze was pacified (for rendering assistance to Jews), it was the peasant night guard in the village of Chrzastów who captured Izak Kapłan. He was taken to Mielec, for which one of the farmers was sentenced to seven years in prison some years later.¹⁸⁰ After the pacification of Podborze, a psychosis of fear swept over the Jews hiding in the local villages, and the numbers of people caught at the time are

¹⁷⁸ Perhaps someone named Freiberg.

¹⁷⁹ AŻIH, 201/3503, Account of Jakub Grynblum, n.p., 13 December 1947, typescript, f. 1.

¹⁸⁰ AIPN Rz, 353/61, Sentence of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, Rzeszów, 7 September 1950, pp. 498–504. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court.

presented in detail by Frydel (vol. 2, p. 474).¹⁸¹ Here, the author permits himself the following comment: “A second stage of violence began once the German police had left Podborze” (vol. 2, p. 467). Is this statement an adequate reflection of the facts?

The problem of the interdependence of Jewish survival strategies and the situation of the Poles emerges in the context of different Jewish survival strategies, as may be seen in the case of Jewish groups trying to survive in Łuków county. In 1942, many Jews sought shelter in the forests there, as Szurek’s analysis indicates (‘Partisan unit, armed combat’, vol. 1, pp. 594–597).¹⁸² However, the primary intention of these groups was to ensure the survival of the greatest number of Jews. Only to a lesser extent can they be qualified as partisan units. Szurek discusses the story of a group of Jews from Adamów, including an audacious act which the group allegedly carried out, i.e. the storming of the Adamów prison (the Poles who had helped during the deportation were killed) and the liberation of several dozen Jews. Citing Jakov Keselbrener, Szurek says that in a ‘situation of resistance’ the Poles, not Germans, were perceived as enemies of the Jews (vol. 1, p. 596). Finally, he writes that many Jewish partisans took revenge on Poles for denouncing other Jews.

It is a pity that Szurek’s considerations on the issue makes no mention of the fact that in many cases we are discussing Communist groups which, by becoming agents of Soviet policy (hostile to Poland), played an entirely different role than, for example, the French ‘resistance movement’. Szurek has skipped over many Jewish accounts, for example those kept in the Jewish Historical Institute, which makes

¹⁸¹ The events in the village of Straszęcín in autumn 1943 described by Frydel (vol. 2, p. 476) were supposed to be evidence of a panic that swept over the population of Dębica county in the wake of the pacification operations. As a result, the people themselves caught those whom the Germans were pursuing. The example chosen as an additional exemplification of this claim (the case file of Jan Skowron) not only fails to confirm it, as the author would have it, but is in fact evidence to the contrary. A number of factors contributed to the capture of two people, who were probably Dutch nationals, including the inhabitants’ prominent doubts as to the identity and intentions of these fugitives. In the village, they were even suspected of being German spies collecting intelligence. It was pointed out at the time that the village of Bobrowa had been pacified after a visit by door-to-door sellers of devotional items. The German authorities made wide-ranging use of provocation methods to fight the underground and terrorise the local population across the occupied territories. AIPN Rz, 358/59, Minutes of the Main Hearing, Rzeszów, 25–26 September 1951, pp. 272–299; *Ibidem*, Judgement of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, Rzeszów, 26 September 1951, pp. 300–308.

¹⁸² The first survival groups were formed near the village of Koryczany as early as October 1941 and also included Soviet fugitives. See AŻIH, 301/4800, Account of Jankiel Grynblat, Krynica, 27 July 1950, pp. 2–3.

his picture of these survival and partisan groups far from complete and extremely shallow. In fact, all of the Jewish survival groups in the county were overseen by a Soviet officer, Serafin Alekseyev, known simply as ‘Serafin’. For some time, he was also in command of the ‘Kiliński’ unit of the People’s Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*, GL).¹⁸³ ‘Serafin’ gave instructions to the Jewish groups and incited them to fight the Germans.¹⁸⁴ An important factor impacting the activity and perception of these units was the fact that they were organised by former members of the Communist Party of Poland, including Chil Ansztok, Ruwen Wajsblum, Dawid Wansztajn and Mosze Gran. The author could have also cited the names of those Jews who fought and fell, as mentioned by Jankiel Grynblat: Kiwel Tykocki, Abram Rozenbaum and others. The groups also comprised young Poles “fleeing conscription into the ‘Junaks’”¹⁸⁵

When analysing the activity of the Jewish groups, Szurek says very little about their attitude toward the local population or the problem of obtaining food, which led to various tensions. These issues were extremely complicated. On the one hand, the accounts speak of peasants helping to obtain weapons and ammunition (sometimes free of charge), but at the same time of the ‘partisans’ obtaining food through armed extortion and by robbing peasants.¹⁸⁶ The ethnic composition of the groups or gangs was irrelevant to the danger they posed to the local population.

The other side of the coin is the problem of defending one’s own stores of food (which diminished rapidly, given the occupier’s policy) against others. The authors fail to shed light on the magnitude of this issue, given the level of impoverishment, the German food drainage system (the extortion of quotas),¹⁸⁷ and the need to simply keep the food which allowed peasant families (which were usually quite large) to survive. They do not describe the situation of the rural folk, who often

¹⁸³ S. Piątkowski, [manuscript of the review of], J.C. Szurek, ‘Powiat łukowski’ in *Dalej jest noc...*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2018, pp. 547–622.

¹⁸⁴ See AŻIH, 301/4800, Account of Jankiel Grynblat, Krynica, 27 July 1950, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 2–3; AŻIH, 301/639, Account of Rubin Rosenberg, p. 2; AŻIH, 301/4748, Account of Abram Rozenman, p. 2.

¹⁸⁷ Farmers who had failed to deliver their agricultural quotas were shot during some of the village pacifications. T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie...*, p. 239; AIPN Lu, 328/41, Minutes of the Interrogation of the Defendant Gustaw-Fridrich Trapp, Siedlce, 24 December 1947, f. 61.

faced hunger,¹⁸⁸ or their reaction to the theft of food or property, not knowing whether they were being robbed by bandits, country thieves or Jews in hiding.

Szurek does not write even a single word about the conditions which the Germans imposed on the countryside, i.e. food requisitioning, agricultural produce quotas, and the entire system for draining the resources of the Polish population. Had he considered this problem, perhaps he would have been able to answer the question that comes to mind after reading Grynblat's recollections: why was a group of seven Jews going to a village to get food shot at, as a result of which two of its members were killed?¹⁸⁹ A historian should look at an issue from several angles in order to explain the fabric of the past. Elsewhere, Grynblat says that in the winter of 1943, following the blood trail of "a slaughtered hog that we had taken from a peasant, the Germans found our bunker" and "killed seven people, refugees from the uprising at the Treblinka camp". After establishing the name of the peasant denouncer, the man from whom the Jewish partisans had first stolen the hog, the Jews shot him.¹⁹⁰ This here is the drama and, at once, the paradox of the German occupation. The question of whether Szurek counted the said seven Jews among the 'victims of Polish denunciations' remains unanswered.

Returning to the issue of collaboration as a survival strategy, it should be pointed out that the reader does not find much information about the circumstances which dictated certain human choices and behaviours in Zapalec's text. These can only be gleaned by reading the witness accounts in their entirety. One such problem is the question of voluntary versus coerced collaboration with the Germans. One figure of undoubted interest is Lonek Zwerdling. Zapalec has removed any mention of him from the occupation-era history of the Jews in Żłoczów county, 'modifying' the description accordingly. Meanwhile, Zwerdling appears in a series of accounts

¹⁸⁸ The authors of *Night without an end* sometimes use the term 'wieśniak', pl. 'wieśniacy', to describe the rural population. It should be noted that this term has taken on a highly pejorative meaning in modern Polish, and is offensive to the person so designated. It should not appear in a reviewed publication other than in citations.

¹⁸⁹ AŻIH, 301/4800, Account of Jankiel Grynblat, Krynica, 27 July 1950, p. 7.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibidem*. No other sources for this story are known, so the details remain unclear. In trying to reconstruct its background, however, one should recall that the Germans kept a record of livestock, and the peasant would have had to account for the missing pig. Illegal slaughter (this is what a missing pig would have been qualified as) was punishable by repression. One may surmise that in searching for an alibi, the peasant had reported the theft to the authorities. Of course this is only a hypothesis, but one that takes the conditions in occupied Poland into account.

by Holocaust survivors: Mendel Ruder, Majer Perlmutter, and especially in the testimonies of Szymon Strassler and Efraim Halpern. Zwerdling's surname can also be found in the *Sefer Zloczew*, the *Złoczów yizkor* book, extensive extracts of which are available online in English.¹⁹¹

Zwerdling entered the historical arena in 1941, shortly after the Germans entered *Złoczów*, and Warzok demanded that the Jews deliver various valuable items to him through the intermediary of the local *Judenrat*. "Now," wrote S. Strassler, "the question was who should take those things to the house. The choice fell on Lonek Zwerdling. He had been an official at an insurance company before the war. He had caused some scandals, he was unemployed. A few years before the war he had started working at a meat canning factory [...]. In the *Judenrat*, he initially served as a requisitioner Jewish property. If a German ordered something from the *Judenrat*, Zwerdling would go door to door and simply take those things for the *Judenrat*. So the gentleman collected it together and, trembling with fear, took the things to Warzok's house. He found Warzok in a good mood and the latter named him his adjutant for Jewish affairs. That is, from that moment on, whatever he needs, he will ask only Zwerdling for it."¹⁹²

Another Jewish witness, M. Perlmutter, described Zwerdling as Warzok's 'trusted' associate. Meanwhile, in the *yizkor* book, Zwerdling is called Warzok's 'right hand', while the 'friendship' between them is recognised as one of the darkest chapters in the history of the local Jewish community.¹⁹³

This 'friendship' with Warzok brought Zwerdling some measurable gains. The stay in Lackie Wielkie marked the beginning of "a golden period for Mr Zwerdling. One could only leave the camp through the mediation of Mr Zwerdling. Zwerdling began to make thousands of dollars."¹⁹⁴ Zwerdling and his companions collected huge bribes in exchange for helping other Jews get into the craft workshops in *Złoczów*. These were probably set up after the first deportation (28–29 August 1942)

¹⁹¹ AŻIH, 301/87, Account of Mendel Ruder, manuscript in Polish, n.p., n.d.; AŻIH, 301/4670, Account of Majer Perlmutter, typescript, n.p., n.d.; YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, manuscript; YVA, O.3/2373, Account of Efraim Halpern, typescript.

¹⁹² YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, p. 11.

¹⁹³ AŻIH, 301/4670, Account of Majer Perlmutter, typescript, n.p., n.d., p. 2; <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Zolochiv1/zole029.html>, accessed 3 November 2018.

¹⁹⁴ YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, p. 17.

and existed until 23 July 1943. The workshops gave Jews the illusory hope of cheating death. This is how Zapalec writes about it: “According to one witness, in order to be employed there, a sizeable bribe had to be paid: 700–800 dollars” (vol. 1, p. 705). One of the sources which the author used is the account of Efraim Halpern, in which we may read explicitly: “[...] it was not at all easy to get into this camp. I was able to, thanks to Zwerdling, who got 700 or 800 dollars for it, which had been sent by [my] family in Lvov through Mr Fink”¹⁹⁵

According to Mark Paul, who cites the memoirs of Samuel Lipa Tannenbaum, Zwerdling’s story proves something that seems almost inconceivable, namely that a Jew in Złoczów had acceded to the German ‘high life’ of the occupation. According to the memoirs cited by Paul, every few days Zwerdling would present a list of wishes to the *Judenrat*, allegedly on Warzok’s behalf. Some of the requested valuables and other prized items ended up in Zwerdling’s pocket.¹⁹⁶

Unfortunately, Zapalec also skips other significant circumstances accompanying the activity of Jewish survival groups whose stories she describes (on pp. 710–711). We could cite two examples. The Jews escaping from Złoczów were not, as it might seem, running away into the unknown. According to the account of Majer Perlmutter, the escapees not only had weapons (which Zapalec does say), but also large amounts of cash and valuables. They also had connections with the Ukrainian bandits staying in the forests (Perlmutter even gave their surnames), to whose hideout a part of the group went after splitting up.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps this was the reason why they were denounced, as they had been noticed by a little Ukrainian boy¹⁹⁸ (Zapalec writes of such a local boy: vol. 1, p. 711). As a result of a German round-up, four Jews were killed in the Zazule forest.¹⁹⁹ Those who escaped included Majer Perlmutter and Frojek N. Both ran away to the Sasów forest, where on 4 May 1943 they were approached by another German search party. This time, four Gestapo men and *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Warzok were being guided by Perlmutter’s

¹⁹⁵ YVA, O.3/2373, Account of Efraim Halpern, p. 22.

¹⁹⁶ If we are to believe this account, Zwerdling was feared almost on a par with Warzok “Zwerdling became the most feared Jew in Złoczów, feared almost as much as Warzok himself”: <http://glaukopis.pl/images/artykuly-obcojezyczne/Collaboration1.pdf>, accessed 3 November 2018.

¹⁹⁷ AŻIH, 301/4670, Account of Majer Perlmutter, pp. 3–4.

¹⁹⁸ YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, p. 28.

¹⁹⁹ AŻIH, 301/4670, Account of Majer Perlmutter, pp. 3–5.

Jewish school friend, Fryda B. This was the price she paid for extending her life for a few precious months.²⁰⁰ At the hideout Warzok left pieces of paper addressed to the Jews, asking them to return to the camp and saying that they would not be harmed. If they failed to comply, however, they would be pursued and killed. The survivor accounts provide the answer to the basic question regarding the reasons for Warzok's conduct, which diverged significantly from what one would have expected of a German during World War II. Perlmutter and N. were painters – in fact N. was “Warzok's personal portraitist and Warzok liked him very much”.²⁰¹ After reading the message, N. decided to go back to the camp immediately. Perlmutter joined him. Warzok then placed them at the Janowska Street camp in Lvov. In November 1943, N. broke his promise and escaped. The Germans caught him and murdered him in a particularly brutal way (he was fed to the dogs).²⁰² We learn nothing about these dramatic human choices and instances of human suffering, nor do we learn the names of the traitors and their motives from the excerpt that Zapalec cites (p. 711). Finally, the reader will not learn the names of the people behind another failed group attempt to escape Złoczów. Zapalec only tells us that “in May 1943, they were betrayed and arrested”, and that 12 were subsequently executed by the Germans (p. 712). According to the account of Jakub Chamaides, the conspirators were betrayed by the Jewish *Kommandant*, some S.,²⁰³ while according to S. Strassler, some W., a denouncer, had infiltrated the group. “All of the members knew that the man was a denouncer, but no one had the guts to liquidate him”.²⁰⁴ Another time, when writing of plans to escape the Lackie Wielkie camp (vol. 1, p. 710), Zapalec completely ignores the role of the Gubczyński brothers, Poles who helped Jewish prisoners and gave them 36 grenades. She also ‘overlooks’ the name of the person who actually discovered the plan to escape – the OD-man N., who reported everything to *Kommandant* Warzok.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²⁰¹ YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, p. 29.

²⁰² *Ibidem*, AŻIH, 301/4670, Account of Majer Perlmutter, pp. 6–7.

²⁰³ AŻIH, 301/4719, Account of Jakub Chamaides, p. 7.

²⁰⁴ YVA, O.3/253, Account of S. Strassler, pp. 29–30. Another person responsible for disclosing the preparations is mentioned by E. Halpern. This was supposed to be the OD-man S. YVA, O.3/2373, Account of Efraim Halpern, p. 22.

²⁰⁵ AŻIH, 301/4719, Account of Jakub Chamaides, p. 6.

Strassler and Efraim Halpern submitted what are probably the most important accounts related to Złoczów county, and these were also used by Zapalec. The significance of their testimonies is unquestionable. After all, it is on their basis that the author composed her description of a group of Jews hiding in the only bunker in Złoczów to remain (along with those in it). This, of course, is the bunker built mostly through the efforts of the Strassler family at Rynek 26 in Złoczów.

This is not the place to go into how the bunker was built, what it looked like in technical terms, how it was equipped, and how much effort and dedication went into building it, not to mention the risks involved: the reader may read all about these things in the Złoczów county chapter (vol. 1, pp. 716–717). The more interesting part is what happened in the bunker. Its story is undoubtedly a tale of incredible determination in the fight to survive. Unfortunately, the author presents an extremely simplified and watered-down version of the events that took place there. I regret to say that in several places her version comes close to inventing an alternative history, as she only provides a few casual items of information about the life inside the bunker; most importantly, her description does not convey the true picture, and indeed diverges from it in significant ways. For example: “Staying Underground involved a plethora of difficult relationships, difficult mental experiences, diseases, lack of sunlight, malnutrition, as well as the birth and death of children. Two people did not survive their stay in the bunker, and two others could not take it and left the bunker. They went to the Janowska camp, believing that they might survive there, but they paid with their lives” (vol. 1, p. 717).

Let us start by clarifying that the people who did not survive were Strassler’s mother, who died of natural causes, and one Wilo F., who was stabbed to death by two other Jews during a row over money.²⁰⁶ Finally, let us specify who the individuals who ‘could not take it’ and who went ‘to the Janowska [Street] camp’ were and how they died. These two were none other than Lonek Zwerdling and his lover Nusia.

It is unclear how Zwerdling found himself among the 23 people hiding in the Strasslers’ bunker. During his stay there, Zwerdling told various stories about his adventures:

²⁰⁶ YVA, O.3/253, Account of Szymon Strassler, pp. 57–58.

“Lonek Zwerdling would talk about his shady deals with Warzok. From his story, we learn what a decent [*sic*] man Warzok was, and what scumbags the *Złoczów* ‘*Judenraters*’ were. Warzok did not make any money from the misery of the Jews in the Lackie camp, while the last dollars and gold that belonged to those Jews went into the pockets of Zwerdling and his companions.”²⁰⁷

As S. Strassler related:

“Lonek Zwerdling decided to leave the bunker. We knew that Warzok was *Kommandant* of the Janowska camp in Lvov. He [Zwerdling] was sure that Warzok would welcome him with open arms. Now the question was whether to let him leave the bunker or not. The reasons he had for not betraying the bunker included the fact that his sister, her husband and two daughters, as well as his lover Nusia and her mother were all there. After long discussions, we let him go. He left, taking all the money with him, around 100,000 dollars. He left his sister 200 dollars. It was a mistake on our part to let him take the money. After two weeks he came back to take his Nusia away with him to the Janowska camp. He said that Warzok had welcomed him with great joy. He had asked him about the Strasslers. He told him that if the Strasslers have bad conditions where they are, they can come to his camp, where we would be well and safe.”²⁰⁸

As made evident by this account, the German search for the bunker (mentioned by Zapalec) could have ended rather quickly if only Warzok had given Zwerdling the ‘appropriate’ treatment. As Strassler writes further: “Lonek and Nusia left. They were in the Janowska camp until its liquidation. During the liquidation Warzok hid them. The SS *und* *Polizei* general overseeing the liquidation threatened him that if he failed to deliver the Jews he had hidden, he himself would be liquidated. So noble Warzok was not. The money Lonek had stolen from Jews was of no help.”²⁰⁹ Finally, it must be added that the man who ‘agreed’ to deliver food to the bunker was called Lewicki and that, albeit for money, he did deliver food regularly (depending on the objective possibilities) over the course of a few months, and not just once, as one may infer from Zapalec’s text. Strassler devotes several pages to the relationship with Lewicki.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

²⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 69 ff.

The example of Lonek Zwerdling raises questions about whether in his case we may talk about a specific type of survival strategy, or seizing an opportunity to become rich, or being entangled in cooperation with the Germans. However, regardless of how we classify his actions – as a strategy or collaboration – it is certain that Zwerdling is a victim of the Holocaust. And finally, showing the true complexities of human fate brings us closer to the truth about those times. Clipping sources to fit a predetermined narrative, concealing information, selecting material in a partial way, is a road to constructing new mythologies.

It should be noted that there are also major factual errors in the publication. These seem to be due to inadequate bibliographic research. The *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz* was not established in 1940 by Hans Frank, as Frydel maintains (vol. 2, p. 378); this criminal organisation came into being in occupied Poland on 26 September 1939 and was subordinate to the commanding officer of the *Ordnungspolizei*. In the General Governorate, the creation of the *Selbstschutz*, and its subsequent subordination to the Higher SS and Police Head ‘East’ followed the orders of *SS-Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler of September and November 1939. The activities of the *Selbstschutz* in the GG probably continued until mid-1940.²¹¹ However, it was the *Sonderdienst* which reported to Hans Frank.

A few words should also be said about the tables in the publication. Nearly all of them are missing references to sources, occurrence inadmissible in a publication which purports to be scholarly. The reader or reviewer has no way of verifying the data. Additionally, in some cases the title does not reflect the content or is incompatible with it. Table 3 for Złoczów county can serve as an example (vol. 1, p. 731). The author’s efforts to distinguish Polish, Ukrainian and German families involved in helping the Jews is to be appreciated. Unfortunately, Zapalec does this somewhat clumsily. When enumerating families honoured as Righteous among the Nations, she gives the number 12, and in brackets ‘including 1 Ukrainian family’. Because there are three nationalities in the whole table, as well as the category ‘no data’,

²¹¹ T. Ceran, ‘Zapomniani kaci Hitlera. Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz w Polsce w 1939 r. Stan badań i postulaty badawcze’, in *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, vol. 1, Warsaw 2015, pp. 303–306; M.J. Mazurkiewicz, ‘Prawne podstawy funkcjonowania Selbstschutzu na polskich ziemiach wcielonych do III Rzeszy i w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie’, in *Zapomniani kaci Hitlera. Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1940. Wybrane zagadnienia*, ed. I. Mazanowska, T.S. Ceran, Bydgoszcz-Gdańsk 2016, pp. 20–21.

it is impossible to determine what nationality the other families were, nor how many of the 26 people were Ukrainians, Poles, or Germans. In the same table, the author talks about two families (Polish and German) honoured as Righteous among the Nations for hiding Jews or for helping find people to hide them. This time, too, we do not learn about the number of people in the family or about the percentages of Germans and Poles involved (vol. 1, p. 731). 'Author's research' is cited as the source of the information presented in the table, while the footnote, 'concerning the conditions of hiding' only references a series of accounts. Unfortunately this record does not explain which documents and accounts the author used to establish the figures.

Table 8 (vol. 1, p. 544) seems to indicate that Grabowski makes no distinction between the *Orpo* and the *Sipo*, the two main branches of the German police during the occupation. When listing officers in the table titled 'Staff of *Orpo* and PP [the *Polnische Polizei*, 'blue police' – T.D.] stations' in Węgrów county, Grabowski lists officers from *Sipo* (Gestapo) stations, and does not give a single name of a *Polnische Polizei* policeman. Another error is the erroneous title of the table, which stubbornly insists upon referring to 'Węgrów county'.

Citing Municipal Courts Questionnaires [concerning the German crimes] *in extenso* as Grabowski does (vol. 1, pp. 540–541) is a gross anachronism, especially when it comes to crimes against Jews. The author, who devoted a whole page (vol. 1, p. 539) to criticising these surveys (and rightly so), is well aware of their deficiencies. The sources for the Annex ('Major dates in the history of Łuków county 1939–1944') at the end of Szurek's chapter remain largely unknown (pp. 614–618), yet are very important. Only in four out of 43 rows does Szurek provide the source. Thus we do not know what period these findings date back to – whether a year ago, ten years ago, or perhaps twenty. We do not know what documents the author consulted, which data should be carefully analysed, etc. Creating and publishing this type of annex without indicating the sources is inadmissible in an academic publication. Nevertheless, it is worth going through it, even though the information is very minimal. The Annex shows how terrible the German occupation was, not just for the Jews, but also for the Poles, and how many died at the hands of the Germans. In many instances, we read that Poles were killed for unknown reasons (more in-depth research would provide an answer; all we need is a bit of effort). Perhaps because they were Poles? Finally, in a number

of cases, the author has indicated that Jews were executed along with Poles. The author could have made an effort to clarify this mystery for the reader, since from the pages of the Łuków county chapter we learn that all that the peasants virtually ever did was hunt down Jews.

At the same time, in the table titled 'Survivors from Łuków and the surrounding area' (vol. 1, pp. 619–620), the author has not defined what he means by 'surrounding area'. A similar charge could be levelled at Libionka with regard to Table 17 ('Number of murdered in the county and immediate vicinity'). It should be clarified what the authors mean by 'vicinity' (or 'immediate vicinity'). How many Jews perished in the county (Łuków) and how many in the wider area? The lack of such definitions in a scholarly work is simply unacceptable.

Coming to the end of my reflections on *Night without an end*, I ought to make a number of observations regarding the style of historical writing practised in the book. This combines a not-always-accurate treatment of the sources with a generally casual attitude toward facts, dressing the final product up in journalistic and emotional rhetorical figures. It is not the reviewer's role to be a judge of the authors' sensitivities. But is it true, as Grabowski writes, that there are Jewish graves next to every village and every town in Węgrów county (vol. 1, pp. 387–388)? Has the author conducted any research on the subject, since he does not cite any literature? When summing up the German-ordained deportations of Jews from Nowy Targ county, Karolina Panz writes emphatically: "In every one of these places Poles saw the death of Jews they knew – they heard their cries, touched their bodies, smelt their post-mortem odour. No one could have gone by unaffected. These victims were not remote or anonymous for anyone. During the next stage of the Holocaust, it was precisely the attitude of these people, of the Polish witnesses, that was of vital significance to Jews trying to save themselves" (vol. 2, p. 276). Obviously, no one should ever be indifferent in the face of another's death. But is this a language appropriate for a scholarly work?

A comprehensive discussion of the way in which all of the sources have been used would require writing a separate book. Out of necessity, in this review I have only been able to discuss selected areas. I have touched on some aspects pertaining to the structure of the book and to the way in which the authors portray the Polish community, as well as different aspects of the functioning of the Jewish

community which the occupier sentenced to extermination. I have abstained from examining one of the more important problems in *Night without an end*: the book's presentation of the Underground organisations and their attitude toward Jews. The image sketched by the authors is biased on principle, and is far from factographic accuracy and objectivity when considering the varied provenance of the units, the military and political context, as well as what went on behind the scenes. This subject has not been addressed in the present review, as that would have considerably extended an already lengthy text. Only a brief mention has been made of the Jewish Underground or Jewish survival groups after 1942. Nor did I analyse the Holocaust 'survivability' statistics (survivors and killed) presented in the book. The lack of references for the data provided in the tables as well as the use of the unknown category 'author's research' make it essentially impossible to verify the figures, all the more so as the authors have not bothered to make the data more precise, for example by looking at the function of those who survived thanks to their position in the ghetto administration or their wealth – while at the same time placing emphasis on the financial aspects of receiving help.

It is to be regretted that the authors have embraced such self-imposed strictures, which result in an extremely one-sided picture of the events. The adopted principle of focusing on the perspective of the victims (vol. 1, p. 17) should not lead to the creation of a picture of the German occupation detached from historical reality. Barbara Engelking defined the subject matter of her earlier book in much the same way: only the "Jewish side of the story" as the area of the researcher's interest.²¹² But glossing over the context and manipulating the sources, including Jewish accounts, omitting the subject of German policy in occupied Poland and its impact on other participants of the events does not bring us any closer to the truth about those times.

In an accurate narrative, there is no reason whatsoever not to condemn and describe inexcusable acts and attitudes, regardless of the nationality of those involved. There is no reason to pass over any denunciation or murder in silence. A solid historian has no reason to skip over the involvement of services set up by the German Reich to implement its criminal orders, whether consisting of Germans or others, including both the *Polnische Polizei* and the *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*.

²¹² B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny...*, p. 13.

Conclusions, nevertheless, should follow source material, and source material should not be used selectively to back up an *a priori* thesis. In fact, every sentence in the book should be traced and verified against the sources to learn to what extent the interpretations presented are credible. And here we come to the most important issue. Is the image being conveyed in *Night without an end* a picture aiming at scholarly objectivity? To my mind, it is not.

The authors' focus on building a strikingly negative picture of local communities, using various methods to diminish German perpetration, and in some instances to present an inaccurate narrative about the ghetto communities, creates a picture of the German occupation which at times diverges sharply from the historical reality, although it makes for vivid reading. The selection and use of resources as well as the interpretive layer, as discussed at length here, have been subordinated to the authors' overarching claim.

It seems that some general conclusions can be formed basing on the detailed remarks above. The book certainly brings to light a certain quantity of previously unknown information from a range of areas. However, the number of sources presented unreliably to the reader raises doubts as to whether the other archival materials have been quoted faithfully. A preliminary examination of this problem has indicated that *Night without an end*, which purports to be a scholarly publication, uses an idiosyncratic method, unknown to historians at large, when it comes to interpreting and critically approaching the sources. This is an alarming phenomenon which casts doubt on the findings and conclusions presented in the work. An analysis of only part of the sources used by the authors provides evidence that quite a large number of manipulations, misrepresentations, and erroneous interpretations have been perpetrated. These omissions and manipulations of sources do not earn *Night without an end*, presented as an academic study, a high recommendation.²¹³ Many of the phenomena and events related in the book should be described anew, taking the context of occupied Poland into consideration and drawing on the source material accurately.

²¹³ It is worth asking whether the book was subjected to a peer review procedure. It is customary for the names of the reviewers to be included in the edition notice. No reviewers are mentioned in *Dalej jest noc...*, however, as in other major books published by the Centre for Holocaust Research. See *Prowincja noc...*; *Zarys krajobrazu...*; B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny...*; J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd...*