

THE HOLOCAUST
AND POLISH-JEWISH
RELATIONS

CENTRALNY
PROJEKT
BADAWCZY

IPN

ZIEMIE POLSKIE
POD OKUPACJĄ
1939-1945

CENTRALNY
PROJEKT
BADAWCZY

IPN

STOSUNKI
POLSKO-ŻYDOWSKIE
W OKRESIE
II WOJNY ŚWIATOWEJ

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COMMISSION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF CRIMES AGAINST THE POLISH NATION

THE HOLOCAUST AND POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Research on the extermination of Jews and on the Polish-Jewish relations during World War II has been one of the pillars of the scholarly activity of the Institute of National Remembrance ever since its establishment. The decisive factor dictating the choice of research subjects by the Institute is the Institute of National Remembrance¹ Act, which defines its time frame, 1918–1989, the subject matter as the fate of Polish Jews and the Polish-Jewish relations, and the geographical focus on events occurring on Polish lands. The German occupation period is of particular interest. Works published at the Institute are generally the results of research conducted individually by staff members. The emergence of central research projects has brought more coordination. The subject matter in question has been covered under the project “Extermination of Jews on Polish Lands”, in 2017 transformed into the project “Polish-Jewish Relations in 1918–1968”.² The two projects are closely linked to another initiative, titled “Index of Poles persecuted for helping Jews”, the principal idea of which is to create a full database of biographies of Polish people who suffered for helping Jews during World War II.³ The project was conceived and initiated in 2005 by the Institute of Strategic

¹ <http://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-ipn/documents/327,The-Act-on-the-Institute-of-National-Remembrance.html>.

² <http://ipn.gov.pl/pl/nauka/badania-naukowe/24330,Centralne-Projekty-Badawcze-IPN.html> (in Polish).

³ A digital database of information on Poles persecuted for helping Jews is available at www.zyciezazycie.pl in Polish.

Studies in Kraków, which also assumed the organizational patronage of the project. The Institute of National Remembrance conducts this research in cooperation with the Head Office of State Archives, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Yad Vashem Institute.

The results of research conducted by the Institute's staff are successively published in the form of books and articles in scholarly and popular journals. The IPN has significant achievements in this field.⁴ The most important published works⁵ are worthy of particular attention.

Another significant aspect is that the publications played a vital role in the public debate on two tragic events from the 1940s; the pogroms in Jedwabne and Kielce.⁶ Findings presented in both these volumes continue to form the scientific basis for a substantive discussion on both issues. It is worth noting that, in comparison with other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Poland's debate on the events described in these publications is truly groundbreaking. The publications include texts devoted to Polish-Jewish relations during World War II⁷. Another important factor popularizing heroic attitudes was the series "Kto ratuje jedno życie..." [Whoever saves one life....], which described both the context of providing help under occupation and stories of individual rescuers⁸.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the Institute's research activities on Jewish topics up to 2010 see: J. Walicki, *Tematyka żydowska w publikacjach naukowych Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* [in:] *Bez taryfy ulgowej. Dorobek naukowy i edukacyjny Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej 2000–2010*, eds. A. Czyżewski, S.M. Nowinowski, R. Stobiecki, J. Żelazko, Łódź 2012, pp. 161–172.

⁵ A complete catalogue of publications (in Polish), comprising more than forty titles is available on-line at: <http://ipn.gov.pl/pl/publikacje/katalog-publikacji/27353,Katalog-publikacji.html>.

⁶ *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vol. 1: *Studia*, eds. P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, Warsaw 2002; *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vol. 2: *Dokumenty*, eds. P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, Warsaw 2002; *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, eds. Ł. Kamiński, J. Żaryn, Warsaw 2006; *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2, eds. L. Bukowski, A. Jankowski, J. Żaryn, Warsaw 2008.

⁷ *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945. Studia i materiały*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006; A. Puławski, *W obliczu Zagłady. Rząd RP na Uchodźstwie, Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj, ZWZ-AK wobec deportacji Żydów do obozów zagłady (1941–1942)*, Lublin 2009.

⁸ E. Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2008; M. Szpytma, *The Risk of Survival. The Rescue of the Jews by the Poles and the Tragic Consequences for the Ulma Family from Markowa*, Warsaw 2009; „Kto w takich cza-

Two conference volumes devoted to the Shoah in the General Government and on Polish lands under occupation⁹ are crucial for Holocaust research, regardless of how much time has passed since their publication. The Institute has also started to compile monographs of individual ghettos organized by the German occupying forces in Poland or selected aspects of their functioning¹⁰, as well as the essential figures in the history of the Shoah¹¹. A separate group also includes albums based on the extensive iconographic material, mostly from the Archives of the Institute or other institutions¹².

Apart from publishing and educational activities, another important aspect of the work of the Institute of National Remembrance is the presentation and popularization of research results, as in this book concerning

sach Żydów przechowuje?” Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej, ed. A. Namysło, Warsaw 2009; E. Rączy, I. Witowicz, *Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945/Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2011; *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, eds. A. Namysło, G. Berendt, Warsaw 2014 (e-book).

⁹ *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka, Warsaw 2004; *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy*, ed. A. Namysło, Warsaw 2008.

¹⁰ E. Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie. Doświadczenie Zagłady – świadectwa literatury i życia*, Białystok 2013; M. Grądzka, *Przerwane dzieciństwo. Losy dzieci Żydowskiego Domu Sierot przy ul. Dietla 64 w Krakowie podczas okupacji niemieckiej/A broken childhood. The Fate of the Children from the Jewish Orphanage at 64 Dietla Street in Cracow during the German Occupation*, Cracow 2012. M. Grądzka-Rejak, *Kobieta żydowska w okupowanym Krakowie (1939–1945)*, Cracow 2016; A. Sitarek, *Otoczone drutem państwo. Struktura i funkcjonowanie administracji żydowskiej getta łódzkiego*, Łódź 2015 (also available in English: A. Sitarek, “Wire Bound State”. *Structure and Functions of the Jewish Administration of the Łódź Ghetto*, Łódź–Warsaw 2017); *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012; E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2014.

¹¹ E. Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie...*; M. Grądzka-Rejak, *Kobieta żydowska w okupowanym Krakowie...*; A. Sitarek, “Otoczone drutem państwo”...; *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012; E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim...*

¹² A. Namysło, *Zanim nadeszła Zagłada... Położenie ludności żydowskiej w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim w okresie okupacji niemieckiej/Before the Holocaust Came... The situation of Jews in Zaglembe during the German occupation*, Katowice 2009; *Łódź Ghetto/Litzmannstadt Getto 1940–1944*, eds. J. Baranowski, S.M. Nowinowski, transl. K. Gucio, Łódź 2014.

the problems of the Holocaust and aid for Jews. This element is reflected in regular international scientific conferences presenting the current state of research in this field. Often, these symposia are co-organized with other leading academic centers from Poland and elsewhere dealing with the history of Jews and the history of the twentieth century.

One of the first such events was the international academic conference organized by the Łódź Branch of the Institute of National Remembrance and the Jewish research Center at the University of Łódź “Jewish towns are now all gone ...” Destruction of Jews in the Polish countryside. Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders.” Papers were grouped according to the categories proposed by Raul Hilberg. The main purpose of the conference was to present the situation of the Jewish population in the Polish countryside during World War II . Participants attempted to answer questions about the mechanisms of the extermination of Jews conducted there by the Germans and to discuss the details of its implementation. The papers also addressed the reaction of Polish and German society to the tragedy of thousands of Jews that was happening before them.

Another important event co-organized by the Institute of National Remembrance, the Center for Holocaust Research and the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute was the international academic conference “Being witness to the Holocaust” on the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, organized in April 2013. The conference was dedicated to the memory of Szmul Zygielbojm, a Bund politician and member of the National Council of Poland in London. Authors presented the results of research relating to direct witnesses of the Holocaust. Discussions were held on attitudes, choices, possibilities of action, but also on passivity, silence and helplessness of the bystanders. Also analyzed were the attitudes of representatives of selected European societies, churches of various denominations, and groups of the resistance movement towards the Holocaust. Another important element of the conference was to present the perspective of Jews as witnesses of the Holocaust.

Two years later, the conference “Helping the Jews in German-Occupied Poland” was organized. It was once again a result of the cooperation of the Institute of National Remembrance, the Commission for the Prosecution of

Crimes against the Polish Nation, the Polish Center for Holocaust Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and also the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. It was precisely the remembrance of the patron of the latter institution, Emanuel Ringelblum, and of other Jews in hiding, as well as the memory of those who rescued them and tried to help them in various ways (e.g. Jan Karski, the Polish Underground courier who tried to inform the world about the tragedy of Polish Jews) that gave the impulse to organize this symposium. The purpose of this event was to recapitulate the results of research conducted to date in that area. Authors of presented papers analyzed cases of individual and organized aid, and also the activity of the Jews themselves to save their own brethren. A separate session was devoted to papers on the activity of the resistance movement, including informing representatives of Western European states and the United States about the Holocaust on occupied Polish lands. Two sessions were also dedicated to the Righteous Among the Nations.

In 2015, an international academic conference titled “Jewish Elites and Jewish Community Leaders during the Second World War (1939–1945)” was organized by the IPN. This event was followed by a collective monograph of the same title¹³. The authors of the texts attempted to answer questions concerning the situation of prewar elites in occupation conditions in order to identify changes, differences or elements guaranteeing the stability of certain processes. This issue has been presented both globally and with reference to regional examples. One of its elements was the comparison of the prewar and wartime Jewish elites with regard to geographical, social, religious, cultural and economic factors. Specific issues addressed included the fate of the chairmen and members of the Judenrats and officers of the Jewish Order Service as examples of the wartime elite. The customs and everyday life of the elite during the occupation, as well as their social and cultural work were also discussed.

In 2017, the international academic conference “Nations of Occupied Europe Facing the Holocaust” was held, during which the latest findings

¹³ *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej*, eds. M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Namysło, Katowice–Cracow–Warsaw 2017.

concerning official and social attitudes in countries occupied by the German Reich towards their Jewish inhabitants during World War II were presented. Another problem addressed was that of the attitude of nations from countries collaborating with the Third Reich towards the anti-Jewish policy of their governments, and also the position of neutral states on the fate of Jewish communities and Jewish refugees. Speakers from European, American and Israeli research centers outlined various factors (legal, economic, historical) that influenced the behavior towards the outlawed community condemned to extermination. They presented a wide range of attitudes: from helping victims to cooperating with the occupying forces in implementing anti-Jewish policies. A publication summarizing the results of the debate is currently being developed.

Apart from scientific research, the Institute has issued interesting source materials from the extensive collection of the IPN Archives related to the Holocaust or Polish-Jewish relations¹⁴.

• • •

The object of this publication is to present selected results of research carried out by the staff of the Institute of National Remembrance on the Shoah and the Polish-Jewish relations during World War Two. The majority of work has been completed within the Central Research Project “The Holocaust of Jews on Polish Lands”. Most of texts featured herein have been published in Polish in materials released by the Institute or in Polish scientific journals (the only previously unpublished text is the article by Tomasz Domański). These articles, often of great scientific value, have so far been available only within the Polish scientific community. The main idea behind the decision to publish these texts in an English translation is, on the one hand, an attempt to introduce the scientific achievements of the Institute’s staff to foreign readership and thus encourage them to read other scholarly publications of the Institute, and, on the other hand, to bring valuable articles into international circulation.

¹⁴ *Rozwiązanie kwestii żydowskiej w dystrykcie Galicja*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2001; *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie już nie istnieje!*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2009.

The wide variety of topics in the following texts made it impossible to divide them into thematic or chronological groups. The whole work opens with a text by Grzegorz Berendt, affiliated to the Gdańsk Branch of the Institute, in which the author confronts the issue of Jews who escaped from ghettos. Based on statistical data, he tries to recreate the state of knowledge about escapees from “closed districts”, from transports to extermination camps and from the camps themselves, organized for Jews by the German occupying forces. The subsequent text, so far unpublished, by Tomasz Domański, associated with the Kielce Branch of the Institute and coordinator of the project “Polish-Jewish relations 1918–1968”, is devoted to the ‘Navy Blue’ Police in Kielce County during World War II. This formation has yet to become a subject of a comprehensive academic study and its role in the history of the Holocaust and occupation of Polish lands is a particularly interesting research problem. The article by Martyna Grądzka-Rejak from the Institute’s Headquarters, previously affiliated to the Kraków Branch for many years, tells the story of another, thus far unstudied aspect of the history of the Jewish community during the occupation, being the fate of Jewish women hiding on the so-called Aryan side in the capital of the General Government, namely Krakow. Analyzing the survival strategies of those women, the author recreates the daily life of female escapees from the ghetto in the face of mortal danger. The following article, written by Aleksanda Namysło, long-term coordinator of the project “Extermination of Jews on Polish Lands”, affiliated with the Katowice Branch of the Institute, is an in-depth analysis of the files of German Special Courts (*Sondergericht*) in the light of their sentences passed for helping Jews. These extremely rarely used materials bring much valuable information showing the realities of the operation of the criminal German occupation system in Poland, and they are also a valuable source for reconstructing many aspects of the process of helping Jews. The text by Sebastian Piątkowski, from the Institute’s branch in Radom, describes the role of German police forces (gendarmerie) in the mechanism of Jewish extermination in the Radom District of the General Government. The author points out the significant role of the German gendarmerie in the process of the Shoah, indicating that there are enormous gaps in the research devoted to this formation. Elżbieta Rączy from the Rzeszów Branch of the Institute

described main information about the so-called Aktion Reinhard in Kraków District. The author focused on the scale and the course of extermination of Jews in different locations of the District. The article by Adam Sitarek from the Łódź Branch of the Institute is devoted to the response of residents of the occupied Łódź to the fate of those imprisoned in the ghetto organized in the city. Based on accounts and testimonies by Łódź inhabitants, the author seeks to portray a wide range of attitudes and feelings not only of Poles living in the city, but also of a large group of Germans who resided in Litzmannstadt, new hosts of the city annexed into the Reich. The text by Mateusz Szpytma, Vice President of the Institute of National Remembrance, formerly associated with the Kraków Branch of the Institute, is primarily a reconstruction of the tragic events of the annihilation of the Jewish community in Markowa. The author also outlines the criminal proceedings directed at punishing the perpetrators of the crime. The final text in this volume, penned by Marcin Urynowicz from the Institute's Headquarters, is devoted to assistance provided by Poles to Jews. The author has systematized the issue, providing a detailed description of the problem, at the same time identifying shortages of historiography in this field.

The publication is supplemented with a full bibliography of works on the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations published by the Institute of National Remembrance, with publications available in English marked in bold. The bibliography is followed by a list of abbreviations used in the book and biographies of authors of texts published in the volume.

*Martyna Grądzka-Rejak
Adam Sitarek*

JEWISH ESCAPERS FROM GHETTOS OR DEATH CAMPS¹

Forty years ago, Szymon Datner published an article about the Jews who tried to avoid death at the hands of the German invaders by escaping from the ghettos². Although the title suggested synthetic findings, that text was of a contributory nature. The author presented examples of events, in which about a thousand people were murdered. In addition, he mentioned an estimated number of about twenty thousand people who were supposedly hiding in Warsaw during 1940–1944. 25 years after the end of the war, the author still did not have enough information to try to provide aggregate data. In addition to mentioning several dozen cases of murders of Jews hiding outside ghettos or camps, the historian made the following concluding remark: “Against the background of nameless deaths of hundreds of thousands and millions who perished in gas chambers and mass executions, these victims, in many cases identified individuals, deserve attention for one reason above all: these were the people who tried to fight for their existence in a specific way. They were the Jews who either never moved into the ghettos but hid on the ‘Aryan’ side, or those who, having suffered the ghetto torment, tried to break away, or finally those who tried to escape the Holocaust at the place of the murderous action or from the

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012.

² S. Datner, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na Żydach zbiegłych z ghett* [*Nazi crimes against Jewish escapers from ghettos*], “Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego” [“Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute”] 1970, no. 75.

death transports. Their total number was not small. In one of my works I have estimated the number of Jewish survivors, most of them due to the help of the Polish population, at about a hundred thousand people. One can assess, equally approximately, that at least a similar number of victims have been captured by the occupying authorities and have fallen victim to the genocide.”³

After a dozen years or so Datner’s knowledge regarding the number of Jews trying to survive on the ‘Aryan’ side has not changed much. When interviewed by Małgorzata Niezabitowska he stated: “The Poles are not responsible for the crimes of the Holocaust. On the other hand, if I am allowed to express it this way, the actual problem for Poles was posed by the about two hundred thousand to two hundred fifty thousand Jews who tried to save themselves. [...] [the number of – G.B.] is not entirely reliable, as are all the other [numbers] related to this issue. There was no way to calculate precisely how many Jews tried to save themselves. It has not even been determined how many were saved due to the help of the Poles, because many of these Jews left Poland shortly after the war. There is some controversy among historians about the number of those rescued. The span is large: from fifty thousand, according to [Filip] Friedman, to one hundred and twenty thousand, according to [Józef] Kermisz of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. [...] My assessment, also intuitive to some extent, is eighty thousand to one hundred thousand of those rescued. In any case, these Jews, about a quarter of a million looking for help, were a problem for the Poles. They knocked on the windows of their cabins, and on the doors of their apartments.”⁴

Datner, as a direct observer of the Holocaust in the Białystok region, and also as a historian who has been investigating the issues of the wartime occupation for several decades, replied to the questions posed by the journalist by saying that the dominant majority of Poles remained passive in the face of the Holocaust, and pointed out “two active groups” beside them. In his opinion, they were: “Those who denounced, assaulted or murdered

³ *Ibid*, p. 29.

⁴ M. Niezabitowska, T. Tomaszewski, *Ostatni. Współcześni Żydzi polscy* [*The last ones. Contemporary Polish Jews*], Warsaw 1991, pp. 148–149.

Jews, either for profit or because of pure hatred, and those who sheltered and supported Jews in all sorts of ways. The latter group was much more numerous and more representative for both the Poles in general and the authorities of the Underground Polish State. But the former group was more effective in its actions.”⁵

Niezabitowska ends this thread of the conversation by asking: “Do you think the Poles were, in general, OK?” The answer she has received was: “No, that is not what I think, but should the question be: is it better to judge the nation according to those who denounced Jews, or to those who risked their own lives for them, I have no doubts about the answer.”⁶

Szymon Datner died in 1989, aged 87. He never published a comprehensive, extensive scientific study on the problem of the number of Jews who tried to survive in occupied Poland outside the ghettos and camps. On the other hand, his general words were used in 2011 in the context of the discourse on the so-called “third wave of extermination”, which describes the activities directed at the capture and murder of the Jews who had escaped from their places of isolation and from their death transports.

Datner made his estimates based on the knowledge of the 1960s and 1970s. No encyclopedias or detailed studies existed at the time that would cover all or the dominant majority of ghettos established by the Germans in occupied Poland. In particular, knowledge of the situation in the part of the prewar Polish Republic that was incorporated into the Soviet Union after 1944 was incomplete. Comprehensive studies on the situation of Jews in 1939–1944 in the former eastern Poland (the so-called *Kresy*, or *Borderlands*) were not initiated until 1991. Until that time the Jewish suffering there was hidden under the general heading of “Soviet citizen victims”.

In the second decade of the 21st century we are in a better position than Datner. We can use the four-volume *Holocaust Encyclopedia* edited by Israel Gutman, published in the early 1990s, the single-volume encyclopedia devoted to the same issues edited by Walter Laqueur⁷, the three-volume encyclopedia edited by Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder that presents Jewish

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 150.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 151.

⁷ *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, New Haven–London 2001.

life before and during the Holocaust, and the two-volume encyclopedia of the ghettos published by the Yad Vashem Institute⁸.

I decided to try to find out, based on the information in the *Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, what is the state of knowledge about the scale of escaping from the ghettos, death transports and German camps for Jews within the borders of Poland as of 1 September 1939. This encyclopedia includes 590 entries that fall within the territory of my analysis. Authors of the entries, when identifying the location of the settlement, used the pre-war units of the Polish territorial administration: provinces (województwo⁹), counties (powiat) and towns. However, they did not systematically assign these places to those administrative units that were established after Germany's invasions of Poland and the Soviet Union¹⁰. Meanwhile, as indicated by Anatol Leszczyński and Rafał Żebrowski, there were 81 large and 737 small Jewish communities in prewar Poland. The discrepancy between the number of 590 ghettos described in the encyclopedia and the 818 religious communities makes it necessary for another encyclopedic work to be prepared in the future, to include descriptions of events in those places not listed in the encyclopedia. By gaining new information and integrating it with that gathered earlier, the detailed knowledge of historians increases constantly.

According to Teresa Prekerowa, the Germans established about 400 ghettos in Poland¹¹. According to the findings of Yad Vashem historians, it is clear

⁸ *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

⁹ The word 'district' is used in *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* to denote both the prewar Polish 'województwo [province]' and wartime German administrative units. The word 'province' is used in this paper for the former – translator's note.

¹⁰ One of the introductory sections of the encyclopedia, authored by Guy Miron and Shlomit Shulhani, includes the following statements regarding the numbers of ghettos in the individual administrative areas: Wartheland – nearly 60 ghettos, Ciechanów Authority District (Regierungsbezirk Zichenau) – no collective data, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz – no collective data; General Gouvernement: Warsaw district – 65 ghettos, Radom district, approximately 70 ghettos, Cracow district, approximately 60 ghettos, Lublin district, approximately 50 ghettos, Galicia district, no collective data, Białystok general district, no collective data, Nowogródek, Polesia and Volhynia provinces, over 120 ghettos; see G. Miron, S. Shulhani, *General introduction* [in:] *The Yad Vashem...*, pp. XLVI–LIII.

¹¹ T. Prekerowa, *Wojna i okupacja [War and Occupation]* [in:] *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Pol-*

that the number quoted by Prekerowa certainly does not apply to the entire area of the prewar Poland. She describes, in an approximate manner, the situation only in the area of the postwar Poland. Skole town in the Stanisławów province, where up to two thousand people were imprisoned until 3 September 1942, provides an example of the omitted Jewish communities. The same can be said about the town of Bełz in Lwów province, known from a popular prewar Polish song, as 1,540 people were sent to a death camp from there in 1942. Despite the inaccuracies, the encyclopedia provides a compendium of knowledge, accumulated by the authors who cooperated with the Israeli institute, which cannot be overestimated.

The authors of individual entries used accounts submitted by survivors as one of the most important historical sources. The value of these is varied. It depends on the knowledge that a witness had while staying in the ghetto or that he/she gathered after leaving it. Persons holding official posts with the ghetto administration (Judenrat, Ordnungsdienst, etc.), due to their access to documents, had a better awareness of population movements than other prisoners. Unfortunately, in the case of many ghettos, neither the documentation produced by their administration nor by the German administration units was preserved. This is particularly true of small ghettos, and among these particularly of those in the *Borderlands*. Documents were often destroyed at the time of their liquidation. Only in some places very precise data on the number of prisoners in the ghetto on the day of its liquidation, and on the number of people murdered, deported to other detention centres, or sent directly to the centres of immediate death were preserved. The dominance of personal accounts over official documentation is probably the main reason for the fact that most entries do not include information about the scale of escaping from a particular ghetto, even less any specific or only approximate figures. Witnesses reported their own experiences, but in general they knew little about the phenomenon as a whole. Very often the entries, when discussing the numbers of escapers, use imprecise expressions: 'many' (appearing 20 times), 'not many' (23), 'about a dozen' (2), 'several' (8), 'several dozen' (42), 'several hundred' (30), 'a group'

sce w zarysie (do 1950 roku) [An Outline of Modern History of Jews in Poland (until 1950)], ed. J. Tomaszewski, Warsaw 1993, p. 283.

(20), 'groups' (4), 'a number' (3). In as many as 103 cases information about escapers includes no exact or approximate number. The sum of the absolute numbers; given in the encyclopedia entries, amounts to over 28,000 people. It does not include those people who were hiding in Warsaw.

The encyclopedia includes no estimated numbers of escapers for such large concentrations as Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź, Lublin, or Kielce. And yet very large numbers appear sometimes in this context. Gunnar S. Paulsson estimated the number of Jews living on the 'Aryan' side in Warsaw at 28,000, of which, in his opinion, "16,500 were killed and 11,500 survived"¹².

It is far easier to determine, based on the sum of the descriptions, the factors that determined escapes, as well as the likelihood of survival after leaving the ghetto. Almost complete absence of information about this regarding the parts of Poland annexed to the Reich, especially in the former Łódź and Silesia provinces, is striking. Similarly, data on the part of the Kielce province, which was included into the Katowice Authority District (Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz), is scarce. Interestingly, the encyclopaedia includes no data at all about the fate of the inhabitants of the former Pomerania province, while in the case of the Poznań province there is only an occasional mention about sending Jews to labour camps there.

There are differences between the numbers of individual, group, or even mass escapes mentioned in the notes about ghettos in the old districts of the General Gouvernement (GG), i.e. Warsaw, Radom, Cracow, and Lublin, and those for the parts of Poland that were placed under the authority of the German Reich after 22 June 1941, including the newly incorporated Galicia district. Areas within the Galicia district are an exception in this respect. In the areas west of the Bug and San rivers there were fewer escapes from ghettos by prisoner groups of a hundred or more people. Out of 83 such cases, no less than 61 took place in the areas to the east of today's Poland's borders. The largest numbers of escapers were recorded in the Volhynia, Polesia, Nowogród and Vilna provinces. These were attempted shortly before the liquidation action or after it had commenced.

¹² G.S. Paulsson, *Utajone miasto. Żydzi po aryjskiej stronie Warszawy (1940–1945)* [*Secret city. Jews on the Aryan side of Warsaw (1940–1945)*], Warsaw 2007, p. 324 (originally published as: *Secret City: the Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945*, London 2002 – translator's note).

In the former Kielce and Lublin provinces, in the GG districts mentioned above, mass escapes occurred more frequently and involved a relatively large number of escapers. One particular incident is that of about three thousand people escaping from the ghetto in Sandomierz, at the end of 1942, influenced by rumours of an imminent deportation to death camps.

Escapes of about a thousand people from the death camps at Treblinka and Sobibór, who rebelled and broke fences, and reached the 'Aryan' side in August and October 1943, were important for the GG area. Most accounts from the so-called old GG districts refer to attempts made individually or at the most in groups of a dozen or several dozen people.

The different behaviour of the Jews in Poland's eastern *Borderlands* was influenced by the mass crimes committed by the Germans, or with their consent and their inspiration, already from the last days of June 1941. Massacres of thousands of people in one-day genocide operations were an experience unknown in the GG. Influenced by such traumatic events that took place in the immediate vicinity, or by accounts of eyewitnesses who had escaped from places of execution, many people concluded that the Germans were not intending the enslavement of the Jews, but at their total annihilation. Therefore, information about the involvement of members of the Judenrat or the Jewish Order Service in underground conspiracy and preparations to organise resistance for the time of the next massacre is more frequent in the context of Eastern provinces than in the GG. The twelve or so months between the first acts of genocide and the liquidation operations that took place in the second half of 1942 provided enough time for preparations of active opposition against the Germans and their collaborators. Resistance groups formed. Their members gathered arms, prepared operational plans, and established contact with people outside the ghetto. The rapid forming of the first Soviet partisan groups in the east drew the attention of the Jews to those formations. In 1941 and 1942 there were basically no alternatives. They were the only ones that could possibly incorporate Jews from the ghettos. The acts of resistance and escapes were slowed down by the principle of collective responsibility introduced by the German occupying authorities in the east. One man's escape could be punished by the death of all his family members or those who had been in contact with him.

Table 1. Mass escapes from ghettos in occupied Poland

Province	Number of towns	Numbers	Approximate numbers
Białystok	2	1,200	–*
Kielce	9	4,700+	several hundred, five times
Cracow	–	–	–
Lublin	6	1,100+	several hundred, twice
Lwów	–	–	–
Łódź	–	–	–
Nowogródek	13	2,715+	several hundred, twice
Polesia	11	5,000+	several hundred, four times
Pomerania	–	–	–
Stanisławów	2	300+	several hundred
Silesia	–	–	–
Tarnopol	5	900+	several hundred, twice
Warsaw	5	700+	several hundred
Vilna	9	2,280+	several hundred
Volhynia	21	8,100+	several hundred, seven times
Total	83	26,995+	23.000 (?)

* The following symbols were used in the tables: – no data; ? data uncertain/unknown number; . no such category.

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

The sense of responsibility for relatives and for the entire community determined the actions of individuals and of ghetto administrators. Therefore, in the *Borderlands*, an act of open resistance against the Germans was part of an action plan to be carried out when it became certain that the Germans were preparing the final massacre. In such case, an escape from

the ghetto or labour camp offered the only chance of survival. It is difficult to say whether there was any interconnection, but the sequence of occurrences was similar in different areas, often very distant from each other. The conspirators would set fire to ghetto buildings, and then break the fences surrounding the ghetto and disperse in the neighbourhood.

It is worth mentioning the most spectacular acts of resistance combined with escapes. On 2 March 1942, no Jew reported for the roll-call preceding the execution at Marcinkańce (Grodno district). The ghetto prisoners had hidden in hiding places prepared earlier or had left the ghetto. The Germans captured and killed a hundred people. 800 people escaped from Brańsk. In the Kielce region, the largest escapes took place at Chmielnik and Sandomierz. More than 600 people left the ghetto in the former, and about 3,000 in the latter. In the Lublin province, the most spectacular escape took place at Łaskarzew, where 800 Jews escaped. In the Nowogródek area the largest group (700 people) escaped from the ghetto at Stołpce. In Polesia as many as 2,700 people attempted to escape into the forests at Prużana. In the Vilna area, 700 people, or two-thirds of Jews from the ghetto at the little-known village of Szarkowszczyzna, escaped. In Volhynia the biggest escapes took place at Tuczyn (2,000 people), Dąbrowica (1,500), Ostróg (800) and Rokitno (700). The figures add up to a total number of about 27,000 participants of mass escapes from ghettos. With information about 25 places of mass escapes where the term 'several hundred' was used to describe the size of the escapers' groups, it can theoretically be assumed that these could involve up to 25,000 people in total. This in turn would enable one to conclude that the sum of the known numeric and descriptive numbers reached between approximately 27,000 and approximately 50,000 people.

News about massacres was spread by escapers from execution sites and camps. Aware of their fate, the Jews tried to escape from their death transports. The scale of this phenomenon is perhaps the most difficult to grasp in quantitative terms. Sometimes a lot of people jumped out of a train at one time. Already in March 1942 the first escapers from transports to Bełżec arrived at Żółkiew. The escorting guards killed 300 Jews from Rohatyń as they jumped out of the train in September 1942. How many escaped successfully is unknown. It is known that about 290 Jews from Siemiatycze,

who did this after the operation in their town (2 November 1942). About 140 people survived jumping out of the train. After a while half of them either returned to the ghetto or were shot. After the operation in Rzeszów (15 November 1942) at least 200 people escaped from the transports to Bełżec. That was the number of those who returned to the ghetto. Several dozen people jumped out of their train and returned to Rawa Ruska. In the case of Sieniawa there are accounts of about as many as several hundred ‘jumpers’.

High mobility was a feature of some people who tried to avoid extermination. This statement applies not just to the movement between different places of residence or hideouts on the ‘Aryan’ side. A noticeable category was formed by ghetto escapers who sought refuge in other ghettos, either those still considered relatively safe or simply those that still existed. Their residence there was sometimes legalised. Most often, however, the escapers were in a situation that could be described as a grey zone of illegal residence. The ‘illegals’ existed using their own means and/or the help of ‘legal’ prisoners of the ghettos, acquaintances or relatives, including members of the Judenrat, the Jewish police, or Jewish social workers. Various categories of escapers came to existing ghettos: those from liquidated ghettos, from labour camps, transports or those who had survived executions. After some time even these ghettos, previously considered safe, were liquidated, and those who had miraculously survived previously, were either able to escape death again, or this time they perished. The scale of illegal movement between ghettos is impossible to assess. One can at best give examples of more spectacular group movements from one place to another.

Thus, when discussing the fate of the escapers, one of the situations that should be considered is that they died in another ghetto or another place of execution after a temporary stay on the ‘Aryan’ side.

People from other ghettos who arrived in bigger numbers were recorded in the following locations: Kielce province: Łosice, Starachowice and Zarki; Cracow province: Brzesko; Lublin province: Lublin and Parysów; Lwów province: Lubaczów and Mosty Wielkie; Polesia province: Prużana; Tarnopol province: Kopyczyńce and Narajów; Mazovia province: Kołbiel, Nowy Dwór

and Warsaw; Vilna province: Głębokie, Oszmiana and Lebedziew; Volhynia province: Brody, Tuczyn, Zbaraż and Zborów.

Another situation that cannot be overlooked, in the discussed context, is the return to ghettos after what seemed to be the final liquidating operation. When officially there were no more Jews in a particular location, the Germans spread the news about re-opening the ghettos, creating the so-called second ghettos. This way people who had been hiding in bunkers or other hideouts, in the ghetto or on the 'Aryan' side, were encouraged to reveal themselves. During 1942–1943 thousands of people were lured into this trap. Their existence was prolonged in most cases by a few days or weeks, less often by a few months. The largest second ghettos were created at Sandomierz, Szydłowiec (over 5,000 people), Sobolewo (about 1,400), and Kołomyja (about 2,000).

The numbers of people returning to the ghettos were significant in the following places: Białystok province: Siemiatycze and Zambrów; Kielce province: Chmielnik, Radom, Sandomierz, Staszów, Szydłowiec, Wierzbnik-Starachowice and Wolbrom; Cracow [Małopolska province: Dąbrowa Tarnowska and Dębica; Lublin province: Rejowiec, Siedlce, Sobolewo; Lwów province: Chodorów and Sokal; Nowogródek province: Lida, Słonim, Stołowicze and Wołożyn; Polesia province: Bereza Kartuska; Mazowia province: Kolbiel; Vilna province: Święciany; Volhynia province: Aleksandria, Kozin, Krzemieniec, Torczyn, Trojnowka and Tuczyn.

Lastly, it is worth asking: can a historian now estimate the number of Jews who tried to survive on the 'Aryan' side and the scale of their neighbours' involvement in their annihilation? Negative replies should be given to both. So far, only partial works have been produced that do not enable a comprehensive statistical image. On this basis, it is possible to formulate at least a catalogue of factors that influenced the situation of the Jews on the 'Aryan' side, and which groups of perpetrators contributed to murdering them. Researchers still face years of study before the grid of researched areas covers most of prewar Poland's areas that are crucial to this question. This means the area of Poland with the exception of the Pomerania, Poznań and Silesia provinces where only a small proportion of the Polish Jews lived.

Table 2. Escapes from ghettos in occupied Poland

Province	Number of ghettos	Number of ghettos with escapes recorded	Number of escapers
Białystok	47	26	1500+?
Kielce	83	31	5500+?
Cracow	37	15	500+?
Lublin	67	40	1300+?
Lwów	39	19	260+?
Łódź	46	7	60+?
Nowogródek	32	26	3300+?
Polesia	26	19	4600+?
Pomerania	–	–	–
Poznań	.	.	?
Stanisławów	16	10	100+?
Silesia	1	.	?
Tarnopol	21	14	800+?
Warsaw	65	18	Warsaw district: 700+? (Warsaw)
Vilna	47	32	2300+?
Volhynia	63	56	7700+?
Total	590	313	28 620+?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 3. Białystok province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Augustów	county seat	.	.
Białystok	county seat	150	.
Bielsk Podlaski	county seat	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Boćki	Bielsk Podlaski	.	.
Brańsk	Bielsk Podlaski	800	.
Brzostowica Wielka	Grodno	.	.
Ciechanowiec	Wysokie Mazowieckie	36	.
Czyżewo	Wysokie Mazowieckie	30	.
Dąbrowa Białostocka	Sokółka	.	.
Drohiczyn	Bielsk Podlaski	300	.
Druskienniki	Grodno	.	?
Grajewo	Szczuczyn	.	.
Grodno	county seat	30+	several dozen
Gródek	county seat	.	?
Indura	Grodno	.	.
Janów	Sokółka	.	?
Jasionówka	Białystok	.	a group
Jedwabne	Łomża	7	.
Jeziory	Grodno	.	.
Kleszczele	Bielsk Podlaski	.	.
Knyszyn	Białystok	.	.
Krynki	Grodno	40+	?
Kuźnica	Sokółka	.	.
Łomża	county seat	.	.
Łunna	Grodno	.	a group
Marcinkańce	Grodno	.	several hundred
Michałowó	Białystok	30	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Milejczyce	Białystok	.	?
Orla	Bielsk Podlaski	.	.
Piaski	Wołkowysk	.	not many
Porozów	Wołkowysk	.	a number
Porzecze	Grodno	.	?
Rajgród	county seat	.	?
Siematycze	Bielsk Podlaski	.	.
Skidel	Grodno	.	.
Sokółka	county seat	.	.
Sopoćkinie	Augustów	.	.
Stawiski	Łomża	.	?
Suchowola	Sokółka	.	a group
Swisłocz	Wołkowysk	.	.
Szczuczyn	county seat	.	.
Wasilków	Białystok	.	.
Wołkowysk	county seat	.	a group
Wysokie Mazowieckie	county seat	.	many
Zabłudów	Białystok	.	?
Zambrów	Łomża	.	?
Zelwa	Wołkowysk	.	?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 4. Kielce province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Będzin	county seat	.	.
Białobrzegi	Radom	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Bogoria	Sandomierz	.	.
Busko Zdrój	county seat	.	.
Chęciny	Kielce	.	a number
Chmielnik	Busko	600	.
Chmielów	Opatów	.	?
Ciepielów	Wierzbnik	30	.
Czeladź	Będzin	.	.
Częstochowa	county seat	.	several dozen
Dąbrowa Górnicza	Będzin	.	.
Denków	Opatów	.	a group
Drzewica	Opoczno	.	a group
Garbatka	Kozienice	.	.
Gniewoszów	Kozienice	.	.
Iłża	Wierzbnik	.	.
Janowiec	Kozienice	.	.
Jedlińsk	Radom	.	.
Jędrzejów	county seat	.	several hundred
Kielce	county seat	.	several hundred
Kłobucko	Częstochowa	.	?
Końskie	county seat	.	.
Koprzywnica	Sandomierz	.	many
Koszyce	Pińczów	.	about a dozen
Kozienice	county seat	.	several hundred
Kunów	.	.	.
Lipsko	Wierzbnik	.	not many
Łagów	Opatów	.	several
Łosice	county seat	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Magnuszew	Kozienice	.	.
Małogoszcz	Jędrzejów	.	.
Miechów	county seat	.	.
Mniszew	Kozienice	.	.
Modrzejów	Sosnowiec	.	.
Myszków	Zawiercie	60+	?
Nowy Korczyn	Busko	270	.
Odrzywół	Opoczno	.	.
Olkusz	county seat	.	.
Opatów	county seat	.	?
Opatowiec	Pińczów	236	.
Opoczno	county seat	.	several dozen
Osiek	Sandomierz	.	.
Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski	Opatów	.	several dozen
Ożarów	Opatów	.	.
Pacanów	Busko	.	.
Pińczów	county seat	.	.
Połaniec	Sandomierz	.	.
Przedbórz	Końskie	9+	?
Przysucha	Opoczno	.	several
Radom	county seat	106+	several hundred
Raków	Opatów	.	.
Ryczywół	Kozienice	.	.
Sandomierz	county seat	3000	.
Sienno	Wierzbnik	.	.
Skalbmierz	Pińczów	.	.
Skaryszew	Radom	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Skarżysko Kamienna	county seat	.	.
Skrzynno	Opoczno	.	.
Sławków	Olkusz	.	.
Sobków	Jędrzejów	.	.
Solec n. Wisłą	Wierzbnik	.	.
Sosnowiec	county seat	.	.
Staszów	Sandomierz	1000	.
Stopnica	Busko	.	.
Strzemieszyce	Wielkie	.	.
Suchedniów	Kielce	30+	?
Szczekociny	Włoszczowa	.	.
Szydłów	Busko	.	.
Szydłowiec	Końskie	.	.
Tarłów	Wierzbnik	.	several dozen
Wierzbnik-Starachowice	county seat	.	several dozen
Wiślica	Pińczów	200	.
Włoszczowa	county seat	.	.
Wodzisław	Jędrzejów	.	.
Wolanów	Radom	.	.
Wolbrom	Olkusz	.	?
Wyśmierzyce	Radom	.	.
Zawichost	Sandomierz	.	?
Zawiercie	county seat	.	.
Zwoleń	Kozienice	.	.
Żarki	Zawiercie	.	.
Żarnów	Opoczno	.	.

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 5. Cracow province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Andrychów	Wadowice	.	.
Biecz	Gorlice	.	.
Bobowa	Gorlice	.	.
Bochnia	Kraków	.	?
Brzesko	county seat	.	several dozen
Chrzanów	Tarnów	.	.
Dąbrowa Tarnowska	county seat	.	many
Dębica	Ropczyce	.	many
Gorlice	county seat	.	.
Jasło	county seat	.	?
Końskie	Jasło	25+	?
Kraków		.	.
Krzeszowice	Chrzanów	.	.
Limanowa	county seat	.	.
Łącko	Nowy Sącz	.	.
Mielec	county seat	.	.
Mszana Dolna	Limanowa	.	?
Nowy Sącz	county seat	.	not many
Nowy Targ	county seat	.	?
Osiek	Jasło	.	.
Pilzno	Ropczyce	.	.
Rabka	Myślenice	.	.
Rzepiennik Strzyżewski	Gorlice	.	.
Rzeszów	county seat	100+	?
Sędziszów	Ropczyce	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Skawina	Kraków	.	.
Stary Sącz	Nowy Sącz	.	.
Sucha Beskidzka	Żywiec	.	.
Tarnów	county seat	.	?
Trzebinia	Chrzanów	235+	?
Tuchów	Tarnów	.	.
Wadowice	county seat	.	?
Wieliczka	Kraków	.	.
Wielopole Skrzyńskie	Ropczyce	.	.
Zakliczyno	Brzesko	.	.
Żabno	Tarnów	40	.
Żmigród Nowy	Jaśło	80+	?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 6. Lublin province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Adamów	Łuków	50+	2 groups
Annopol-Rachów	Janów Lubelski	.	?
Baczki	Węgrów	.	several dozen
Bełżyce	Lublin	.	?
Biała Podlaska	county seat	.	many
Biłgoraj	county seat	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Biskupice	Lublin	.	.
Chełm	county seat	.	.
Chodel	Lublin	.	.
Dębica Irena	Puławy	.	.
Firlej	Lubartów	50+	?
Grabowiec	Hrubieszów	.	.
Gródek Jagielloński	county seat	.	several dozen
Hrubieszów	county seat	.	not many
Kamionka	Lubartów	12+	?
Kazimierz Dolny	Puławy	.	.
Kock	Łuków	.	.
Komarów	Tomaszów Lubelski	.	not many
Konstantynów	Biała Podlaska	.	several dozen
Końskowola	Puławy	.	.
Kosów	Sokołów	.	not many
Kraśniczyn	Krasnystaw	.	.
Kraśnik	Janów Lubelski	16+	many
Krasnobród	Zamość	.	?
Krasnystaw	county seat	.	.
Kurów	Puławy	.	a group
Lubartów	county seat	.	.
Lublin		.	.
Łaskarzew	Garwolin	800+	?
Łomazy	Biała Podlaska	.	not many
Łuków	county seat	.	not many
Maciejowice	Garwolin	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Markuszów	Puławy	50+	many
Michów	Lubartów	.	
Międzyrzec Podlaski	Radzyń	200+	?
Mordy	Siedlce	.	.
Opole	Puławy	.	.
Ostrów	Włodawa	.	many
Parczew	Włodawa	100+	?
Parysów	Garwolin	.	?
Piaski Luterskie	Lublin	35+	?
Piszczac	Biała Podlaska	.	.
Puławy	county seat	.	.
Radzyń	county seat	.	?
Rejowiec	Chełm	.	many
Ryki	county seat	.	.
Sarnaki	Siedlce	.	?
Siedlce	county seat	.	several dozen
Sławatycze	Włodawa	.	.
Sobienie Jeziory	Garwolin	.	.
Sobolew	Garwolin	.	several hundred
Sokołów Podlaski	county seat	.	.
Sterdyn	Sokołów	.	numerous
Stoczek	Węgrów	.	.
Stoczek Łukowski	Łuków	.	.
Szczebrzeszyn	Zamość	.	several hundred

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Świerże	Chełm	.	several dozen
Tarnogród	Biłgoraj	.	a few
Tomaszów Lubelski	county seat	.	?
Tyszowce	Tomaszów Lubelski	.	hundreds
Wąwolnica	Puławy	.	.
Węgrów	county seat	.	.
Wisznice	Włodawa	.	many
Włodawa	county seat	.	not many
Wojsławice	Chełm	.	?
Zamość	county seat	.	?
Żelechów	Garwolin	.	a group

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 7. Lwów province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Baranów	Tarnobrzeg	.	?
Bóbrka	county seat	20+	?
Borysław	Drohobycz	.	?
Brzozów	county seat	.	.
Chodorów	Bóbrka	.	many
Czudec	Rzeszów	.	.
Dobromil	county seat	.	.
Drohobycz	county seat	200+	?
Dukła	Krosno	.	.
Frysztak	Krosno	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Jaryczów	Lwów	.	?
Jasienica Rosielna	Brzozów	.	.
Jawornik Polski	Rzeszów	.	?
Jaworów	county seat	.	several dozen
Kolbuszowa	Rzeszów	40+	?
Komarno	Rudki	.	?
Krosno	county seat	.	.
Leżajsk	county seat	.	.
Lubaczów	county seat	.	several dozen
Lwów	county seat	.	.
Mosty Wielkie	Żółkiew	.	.
Mościska	county seat	.	.
Niebylec	Rzeszów	.	.
Przemyśl	county seat	.	.
Radomyśl	Tarnobrzeg	.	.
Rawa Ruska	county seat	.	several dozen
Ropczyce	Rzeszów	.	.
Rudki	county seat	.	many
Rymanów	county seat	.	.
Sambor	county seat	.	.
Sanok	county seat	.	.
Sieniawa	Jarosław	.	?
Sokal	Jarosław	.	?
Sokołów Małopolski	Kolbuszowa	.	.
Strzyżów	Rzeszów	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Tarnobrzeg-Dzików	Tarnobrzeg	.	.
Tyczyn	Rzeszów	.	.
Ulanów	Nisko	.	several dozen
Żółkiew	county seat	.	?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 8. Łódź province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Bełchatów	Piotrków Trybunalski	.	.
Brzeziny	county seat	.	.
Bugaj	Radomsko	.	.
Chocz	Kalisz	.	.
Dąbie	Koło	.	.
Dobra	Turek	.	.
Gielniów	Opoczno	60	.
Głowno	Brzeziny	.	.
Grabów	Łęczyca	.	a group
Grodziec	Konin	.	.
Izbica Kujawska	Koło	.	.
Kalisz	county seat	.	.
Koluszki	Brzeziny	.	.
Koło	county seat	.	.
Kowale Pańskie	Turek	.	several dozen

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Koźminek	Kalisz	.	.
Lutomiersk	Łask	.	.
Lututów	Wieluń	.	?
Łask	county seat	.	.
Łęczycza	county seat	.	.
Łódź	county seat	.	.
Nowiny Brdowskie	Koło	.	.
Osjaków	Wieluń	.	.
Ozorków	Łęczycza	.	.
Pabianice	Łask	.	.
Pajęczno	Radomsko	.	.
Piątek	Łęczycza	.	.
Piotrków Trybunalski	county seat	.	several dozen
Poddębice	Łęczycza	.	.
Praszka	Wieluń	.	.
Rzgów	Łódź	.	.
Sempolno	Koło	.	.
Sieradz	county seat	.	.
Stryków	Łódź	.	.
Szadek	Sieradz	.	.
Tomaszów Mazowiecki	Brzeziny	.	?
Tuliszów	Konin	.	.
Ujazd	Brzeziny	.	.
Uniejów	Turek	.	.
Warta	Sieradz	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Widawa	Łask	.	.
Wieluń	county seat	.	.
Wieruszów	Wieluń	.	.
Zagórów	Konin	.	.
Zduńska Wola	Sieradz	.	.
Zelów	Łask	.	a number

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 9. Nowogródek province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Baranowicze	county seat	200	.
Dereczyn	Słonim	300	.
Dworzec	county seat	.	.
Horodyszczce	Nieśwież	.	.
Horodziej	Nieśwież	.	.
Iwieniec	Wołożyn	100	.
Iwje	Lida	220	.
Jeremicze	Stółpce	.	about a dozen
Kleck	Nieśwież	400	.
Korelicze	Nowogródek	25	.
Lachowicze	Baranowicze	16+	several dozen
Lida	county seat	500	.
Lubcza	Nowogródek	.	.
Mir	Stółpce	300	.
Nieśwież	county seat	25+	.
Nowa Mysz	Baranowicze	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Nowogródek	county seat	170	.
Ostryna	Szczuczyn	120	.
Połonka	Baranowicze	.	several
Raduń	Lida	17+	several hundred
Rubieżewicze	Stołpce	.	.
Słonim	county seat	160+	?
Stołowicze	Baranowicze	40+	?
Stołpce	county seat	200+	?
Szczuczyn	county seat	.	.
Świerzeń Nowy	Stołpce	220+	several
Wasiliszki	Szczuczyn	30+	?
Wiszniew	Wołożyn	.	a small number
Wołożyn	county seat	.	several dozen
Woronów	Lida	.	not many
Zdzięcioł	Nowogródek	200+	several hundred
Żołudek	Szczuczyn	.	?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 10. Polesia province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Bereza Kartuska	county seat	.	several hundred
Brześć nad Bugiem	county seat	.	groups
Chomsk	Drohiczyn	.	.
Dawidogródek	Łuniniec	100	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Domaczewo	Brześć	.	several dozen
Drohiczyn	county seat	.	several
Dywiń	Kobryń	.	?
Horodec	Kobryń	.	.
Janów Poleski	Drohiczyn	.	several dozen
Kamieniec Litewski	Brześć nad Bugiem	.	.
Kobryń	county seat	100	.
Kosów Poleski	Iwacewicz	.	many
Kożanogródek	Łuniniec	.	?
Lenin	Łuniniec	100	.
Linowo	Prużana	.	not many
Łachwa	Łuniniec	600	.
Łuniniec	county seat	.	.
Małoryta	Brześć nad Bugiem	.	.
Mikasz-dewicze	Łuniniec	.	.
Pińsk	county seat	150+	several hundred
Pohost Zahorodny	Pińsk	.	several dozen
Pohost Zarzeczny	Pińsk	30+	?
Różana	Iwacewicz	500+	?
Serniki	Pińsk	300+	?
Stolin	county seat	30	.
Wysokie Litewskie	Brześć	.	many

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 11. Stanisławów province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Bolechów	Dolina	.	hundreds
Bursztyn	Rohatyń	.	a group
Gwoździec	Kołomyja	.	.
Horodenka	county seat	.	several dozen
Kałuż	county seat	.	.
Kołomyja	county seat	.	several hundred
Kosów	county seat	.	?
Nadworna	county seat	.	?
Rohatyn	county seat	.	several dozen
Stanisławów	county seat	100+	?
Stryj	county seat	.	several dozen
Śniatyń	county seat	.	.
Tłumacz	county seat	.	.
Tyśmienica	Tłumacz	.	.
Żurawno	Żydaczów	.	not many

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 12. Silesia province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Bielsko-Biała	county seat	.	.

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 13. Tarnopol province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Borszczów	county seat	.	several

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Brody	county seat	.	groups
Brzeżany	county seat	300	.
Buczacz	county seat	.	.
Busk	Kamionka Strumiłowa	.	.
Czortków	county seat	.	.
Jezierzany	Borszczów	.	several hundred
Kopyczyńce	county seat	.	a group
Kozowa	Brzeżany	.	.
Leszniów	Brody	.	.
Narajów	Brzeżany	.	several
Podhajce	county seat	.	several hundred
Podwołczyska	Skałat	.	.
Przemysławany	county seat	.	groups
Radziechów	county seat	.	many
Skałat	county seat	300	.
Tarnopol	county seat	200+	several hundred
Trembowla	county seat	.	several dozen
Zbaraż	county seat	.	.
Zborów	county seat	.	?
Złotów	county seat	.	?

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 14. Warsaw province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Biała Rawska	Rawa Mazowiecka	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Błędów	Grójec	.	.
Błonie	Warsaw	.	.
Bolimów	Łowicz	.	.
Brześć Kujawski	Włocławek	.	.
Czerwińsk	Płońsk	.	a group
Drobin	Płock	.	.
Falenica- Miedzyszyn	Warsaw	.	?
Gąbin	Gostynin	.	.
Gostynin	county seat	.	.
Góra Kalwaria	Grójec	.	.
Grodzisk	Błonie	.	.
Jabłonna- Legionowo	Warsaw	.	not many
Janów	Radzymin	.	.
Jeziorna Królewska	Warsaw	.	.
Kałużyn	Mińsk Mazowiecki	.	not many
Karczew	Warsaw	.	?
Kiernozia	Łowicz	.	.
Kolbiel	Mińsk Mazowiecki	100	.
Krośniewice	Kutno	.	several hundred
Kutno	county seat	.	.
Łowicz	county seat	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Łyszkowice	Łowicz	300	.
Maków Mazowiecki	county seat	.	.
Miłosna	Warsaw	.	.
Mińsk Mazowiecki	Warsaw	13+	?
Mława	county seat	.	.
Mosielnica	Grójec	.	.
Mrozy	Mińsk Mazowiecki	.	.
Nowe Miasto	Płock	27+	?
Mszczonów	Błonie	.	.
Nowe Miasto	Płock	.	.
Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą	Rawa Ruska	55+	?
Nowy Dwór	county seat	.	.
Osiężycy	Nieszawa	.	.
Otwock	county seat	.	?
Piaseczno	county seat	.	.
Piotrków Kujawski	Nieszawa	.	.
Płock	county seat	.	.
Płońsk	.	.	.
Pruszków	county seat	.	?
Pułtusk	county seat	.	.
Pustelnik	Mińsk Mazowiecki	.	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Radzymin	county seat	200	.
Rawa Mazowiecka	county seat	.	.
Rembertów	county seat	.	.
Sanniki	Gostynin	.	.
Sierpc	county seat	.	.
Skierniewice	county seat	.	.
Służewo	Nieszawa	.	.
Sochaczew	county seat	.	several dozen
Solipse	Włochy	.	.
Stanisławów	Mińsk Mazowiecki	.	.
Strzegowo	Mława	.	?
Tarczyn	Grójec	.	.
Tuszczy	Radzymin	.	.
Warka	Grójec	.	.
Warsaw	county seat	.	.
Wawer	Warsaw	.	.
Włocławek	county seat	.	.
Wołomin- Sosnowka	Radzymin	.	several hundred
Wyszogród	Płock	.	.
Żychlin	Kutno	.	.
Żyrardów	Błonie	.	.

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 15. Vilna province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Braślów	county seat	.	several dozen
Bystrzyca	county seat	.	several dozen
Daugeiliszki	Święciany	.	.
Dokszyce	Głębokie	250	.
Dołhinów	Wilejka	.	several dozen
Druja	Braślów	200	.
Dukszty	Święciany	.	.
Duniłowicze	Postawy	.	?
Dzisiaj	Głębokie	.	several hundred
Głębokie	county seat	.	?
Gródek	Mołodeczno	250	.
Hermanowicze	Głębokie	.	.
Hoduliszki	Święciany	.	.
Ignalino	Święciany	.	.
Ilja	Wilejka	.	a group
Kiemieliszki	Święciany	.	not many
Kobylnik	Postawy	.	.
Krasne	Mołodeczno	100	.
Krewa	county seat	.	.
Krzywicze	Wilejka	.	?
Lebiedziew	Mołodeczno	25+	?
Łużki	Głębokie	?	.
Łyntupy	Święciany	.	a group
Mejszagoła	Vilna	.	not many
Miadzioł	Postawy	240	.
Michaliszki	Vilna	.	several dozen

Miory	Brasław	250	.
Nowe Święciany	Święciany	.	?
Opsa	Brasław	.	.
Ostrowiec	Vilna	.	?
Oszmiana	county seat	100	.
Parafianowo	Głębokie	.	a group
Plissa/Plisa	Głębokie	.	a group
Podbrodzie	Święciany	500	.
Postawy	county seat	.	?
Radoszkowice	Mołodeczno	252	.
Raków	Mołodeczno	.	?
Smorgonie	Oszmiana	.	.
Soły	Oszmiana	.	.
Szarkow-szczyzna	Głębokie	.	several hundred
Święciany	county seat	150+	?
Świr	Święciany	.	.
Troki	Vilna	.	.
Widze	Brasław	.	a group
Vilna	county seat	.	.
Wormiany	county seat	.	.
Zaśkiewicze	Mołodeczno	.	.

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

Table 16. Volhynia province

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Aleksandria	Równe	100	.
Antonówka	Kostopol	.	?

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Beresteczko	Horochów	.	not many
Berezne	Kostopol	.	several dozen
Berezów	Sarny	50	.
Bereźnica	Sarny	.	several
Boremel	Dubno	.	several dozen
Czartorysk	Łuck	10+	?
Dąbrowica	Sarny	500	.
Demidówka	Dubno	.	.
Derażne	Kostopol	.	not many
Dubno	county seat	120+	.
Horochów	county seat	.	not many
Hoszcza	Równe	.	several dozen
Kamień Koszyrski	county seat	.	groups
Kiwerce	Łucka	.	not many
Klesów	Sarny	.	.
Klewań	Równe	30+	?
Kołki	Łuck	15+	?
Korzec	Równe	.	several hundred
Kostopol	county seat	.	several hundred
Kowel	county seat	1227+	?
Kozin	Dubno	30+	many
Krzemieniec	county seat	.	several hundred
Lubieszów	Kamień Koszyrski	.	?
Luboml	county seat	32+	many
Ludwipol	Kostopol	350	.
Łanowce	Krzemieniec	.	.
Łokacze	Horochów	.	not many

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Łuck	county seat	.	several hundred
Maciejów	Kowel	.	several dozen
Międzyrzec Korzecki	Równe	.	several dozen
Mizocz	Dubno	.	several hundred
Młynów	Dubno	.	several dozen
Ołyka	Łuck	.	several hundred
Opalin	Luboml	.	.
Osowa Wyszka	Kostopol	30+	?
Ostróg	county seat	800	.
Ostrożec	Dubno	.	many
Poczajów	Krzemieniec	12+	?
Powórsk	Kowel	12+	?
Radziwiłłów	Krzemieniec	300	.
Rafałówka	Sarny	.	several dozen
Rokitno	Sarny	700	.
Równe	county seat	.	many
Rożyszcze	Łuck	80	.
Sarny	county seat	.	several hundred
Stepań	Kostopol	550	.
Szack	Luboml	50+	?
Szumsk	Krzemieniec	60+	?
Torczyn	Łuck	.	several dozen
Trojanówka	Kowel	150	.
Tuczyn	Równe	2000	.
Turzysk	Kowel	.	.
Uściług	Włodzimierz Wołyński	300	.

Location	County	Number of escapers	Number of escapers not known exactly
Warkowicze	Dubno	.	several hundred
Werba	Dubno	.	.
Wiśniowiec	Krzemieniec	.	?
Włodzimierz Wołyński	county seat	.	a group
Włodzimierzec	Sarny	.	several hundred
Wysock	Sarny	150+	?
Wyżna	Kowel	.	several dozen
Zdołbunów	county seat	.	several dozen

Source: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

POLISH ‘NAVY BLUE’ POLICE IN THE KIELCE COUNTY IN 1939–1945¹

Introduction

For many years after the end of the Second World War very little had been written about the activity of the Polish Police (PP)² in the *General Gouvernement* (GG)³, the so-called ‘navy blue’ police⁴. This was a shameful issue that was passed over. A breakthrough occurred as late as the end of the 1980s,

¹ This article does not address the question of the Polish Criminal Police (*Polnische Kriminalpolizei*), which originated from the prewar Investigations Service (*Śłużba Śledcza*), the latter being a part of the prewar State Police (*Policja Państwowa*). Those were the so-called ‘Polish undercover agents’. The Polish Criminal Police was incorporated directly into the German *Kriminalpolizei* (KP). The *Kriminalpolizei* was part of the structure of the Office of the Commandant of the Security Police and the Security Service (*Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*; KdS) as the V Office (J. Grabowski, *Tropiąc Emanuela Ringlebluma. Udział polskiej Kriminalpolizei w “ostatecznym rozwiązaniu kwestii żydowskiej”, “Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały”* 2014, no. 10, pp. 27–56).

² The acronym of PP was common to both the prewar *Policja Państwowa* (State Police) and the wartime German-controlled *Policja Polska* (Polish Police) (translator’s note).

³ *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator’s note).

⁴ M. Getter, *Zarys organizacji policji niemieckiej w Warszawie i dystrykcie warszawskim w latach 1939–1945*, “Rocznik Warszawski” 1967, vol. 6; *idem*, *Policja granatowa w Warszawie 1939–1944* [in:] *Warszawa lat wojny i okupacji*, b. 2, eds. K. Dunin-Wąsowicz and others, Warsaw 1972, pp. 213–238; J. Popławski, *Szkolenie policji polskiej Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w okresie okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, “Problemy Kryminalistyki” 1983, no. 162, pp. 714–721; M. Mączyński, *Polskie formacje policyjne w stolicy Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939–1945*, “Rocznik Krakowski” 1993, vol. 49, pp. 153–159.

with the advent of Adam Hempel's publications, including the main one entitled *Pogrobowcy klęski* (*Epigones of the defeat*)⁵. In the following years many interesting publications related to the entirety of Poland appeared⁶. There are also regional studies⁷ and minor contributions, also from the Radom District⁸. Still, the state of academic literature about the Polish Police in the *General Gouvernement* is far from satisfactory. This publication is an attempt to present the organization and main areas of activity of the Polish Police in the Kielce County of the Radom District.

⁵ A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski. Rzecz o policji "granatowej" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1990; *idem*, "Policja granatowa" w *Generalnej Guberni*, "Wiadomości Historyczne" 1987, no. 6.

⁶ S. Szymańska-Smolkin, *Rola policji granatowej jako pośrednika w utrzymywaniu łączności między gettem a stroną aryjską* [in:] *Narody i polityka. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Tomaszewskiemu*, eds. A. Grabski, A. Markowski, Warsaw 2010, pp. 215–226; A. Skibińska, "Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?". *Analiza motywacji sprawców zbrodni na Żydach na wsi kieleckiej w latach 1942–1944* [in:] *Zarys krajobrazu. Wieś polska wobec Zagłady Żydów 1942–1945*, eds. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, Warsaw 2011, pp. 380–393; J.A. Młynarczyk, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą. Problem kolaboracji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie – próba syntezy*, "Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość" 2009, no. 1, pp. 113–121; M. Mączyński, *Zasady naboru i kwalifikacji kandydatów do służby w Policji Państwowej w latach 1919–1945* [in:] *Policja Państwowa w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Wybrane aspekty organizacji i funkcjonowania*, ed. A. Tyszkiewicz, Cracow 2015, pp. 39–86; M. Getter, *Policja Polska w Generalnej Guberni* [in:] *80 lat w służbie państwa i narodu*, Szczytno 2001; *idem*, *Policja Polska w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, "Przegląd Policyjny" 1999, no. 1–2, pp. 74–91.

⁷ J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu*, Warsaw 2011; M. Mączyński, *Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty funkcjonowania administracji bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego w zajętych obszarach polskich w latach 1939–1945. Ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Krakowa jako stolicy Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, Cracow 2012, pp. 299–325; M. Mączyński, *Polskie formacje policyjne w stolicy Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939–1945*, "Rocznik Krakowski" 1993, vol. 49, pp. 153–159.

⁸ S. Piątkowski, *Policja Polska tzw. granatowa w Radomiu i powiecie radomskim (1939–1945)*, "Między Wisłą a Pilicą. Studia i Materiały Historyczne" 2001, vol. 2, pp. 107–128; *idem*, *Między obowiązkiem a kolaboracją. Policja "granatowa" w dystrykcie radomskim w latach 1939–1945* [in:] *Z dziejów Policji Polskiej w latach 1919–1945*, ed. E. Majcher-Ocisa, Kielce 2010, pp. 163–186; W. Szarek, *Oddajmy należną część i szacunek byłym policjantom*, "Kombatantkie Zeszyty Historyczne" 1992, no. 1, pp. 37–40; E. Wiatr, "Zdawanie Żydów" – udział policjantów granatowych w wysiedlaniu Żydów na przykładzie powiatu radomszczańskiego, "Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały" 2010, no. 2, pp. 499–510.

Structure, organization, tasks

The reactivation of the Polish police in the new conditions of occupation was announced by an appeal issued on 30 October 1939 by Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the SS and Police Commander in the GG. This document ordered, under the threat of most severe penalties, all the officials and officers of the Polish police on active service as of 1 September 1939 to report to the nearest German police station or the nearest *starostwo* (local authority)⁹. 17 December 1939 is regarded as the date of the official establishment of the Polish Police, this being the date when the General Governor issued a decree about the organization of the Polish Police of the *General Gouvernement*, which has become commonly known as the ‘navy blue’ police because of the color of their uniforms¹⁰. The Polish Police was deprived of the chief command level or even of the district command level. A county (*powiat*) or municipal command, strictly subordinated to the German public order police, the *Ordnungspolizei* (*Orpo*), was its highest organizational unit. Special liaison officers were only appointed for proper coordination. The ‘navy blue’ Polish Police was transformed into a local authority body supervised by county or town *starostwo*¹¹.

Meanwhile, the PP organization in the Kielce County (one of ten in the district), just as in other parts of the Radom District¹², began even before Hans Frank’s decree of 17 December 1939. As early as 28 November 1939, according to the orders no. 1 of the PP County Headquarters in Kielce, the following were posted to the KP: clerk Edward Filipecki, *st. sierż.* Jan Gajek, *st. sierż.* Jan Kwinta, *st. sierż.* Stanisław Szkutnik, *sierż.* Władysław Rogaczewski, janitor Marcin Szmata, while 95 policemen, including Anna Damska as a clerk¹³, were

⁹ A. Hempel, “*Policja granatowa*”..., p. 38.

¹⁰ In this article the terms “Polish Police” and “‘navy blue’ police” are used interchangeably in relation to the Polish Police of the *General Gouvernement*.

¹¹ For more information about the organization of the Polish Police in the GG see: A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, pp. 23–123.

¹² See: S. Piątkowski, *Policja Polska...*, pp. 109–110; *idem*, *Między obowiązkami...*, pp. 165–167.

¹³ AIPN Ki, *Wojewódzki Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych w Kielcach (WUSW Ki)*, 014/84, t. 2, *Odpis rozkazu nr 1 Komendy Powiatowej PP w Kielcach z 28 XI 1939 r., Kielce, 28 XI 1939 r.*, s. 81–82. The following officers were designated for the county headquarters in Kielce: *plut.* Gozdur, *plut.* Kordalewski, *plut.* Miernik, *plut.* Stasiuk, *kpr.* Drzazga, *kpr.* Florczak,

posted to the police station in Kielce. On 10 December 1939, in accordance with the prewar structure¹⁴, the following police units were activated: the station at Skarżysko-Kamienna and the posts at Białogon, Bieliny, Bodzentyn, Bliżyn, Chęciny, Daleszyce, Dąbrowa, Łopuszno, Morawica, Mniów, Niewachłów, Ociesęki¹⁵, Piekoszów, Samsonów, Nowa Słupia and Suchedniów. PP *kpt.* Andrzej Gubała was appointed the head of the police station at Skarżysko, while the following were appointed to command individual posts: at Białogon – *plut.* Julian Pobocho, at Bieliny – *plut.* Franciszek Mamiński, at Bodzentyn – *plut.* Władysław Kaleta, at Bliżyn – *plut.* Henryk Juściński, at Chęciny – *sierż.* Józef Jasiński, at Daleszyce – *plut.* Jan Nowacki, at Dąbrowa¹⁶ – *st. sierż.* Jan Gajda, at Łopuszno – *sierż.* Henryk Lipowski, at Morawica – *sierż.* Jan Hutz, at Mniów – *plut.* Piotr Ślusarczyk, at Niewachłów – *plut.* Władysław Kopacz¹⁷, at Ociesęki – *sierż.* Stanisław Biernacki, at Piekoszów – *kpr.* Michał Janicki, at Słupia Nowa – *sierż.* Teofil Stawski, at Suchedniów – *sierż.* Mikołaj Mironowicz¹⁸. The post of the county commander of the PP in Kielce was held by *mjr* Adam Janasiński and by *kpt.* Lucjan Paprzycki.

kpr. Gozdek, *kpr.* Goń, *kpr.* Kubicki, *kpr.* Kociński, *kpr.* Karolak, *kpr.* Kałwa, *kpr.* Kaczmarczyk, *kpr.* Krzemiński, *kpr.* Morawski, *kpr.* Minkacz, *kpr.* Papierz, *kpr.* Żaba, *kpr.* Zamorski, *kpr.* Zaborek and candidates: Michniewski, Mazerant, Szymkowski, Raczyński, Strawiak, Zawada (*ibidem*, *Wyciąg z rozkazu Komendy miasta Policji Polskiej w Kielcach nr 69 z 16 III 1943 r.*, s. 88).

¹⁴ See: AP Kielce, *Komenda Powiatowa Policji w Kielcach, 71, Pismo Komendy Powiatowej PP w Kielcach do kierowników komisariatów, Wydziału Śledczego oraz komendantów posterunków w powiecie kieleckim, Kielce, 7 I 1937 r.*, pp. 16–18.

¹⁵ The board of the Ociesęki community literally demanded from the Kielce *starostwo* “to establish at the village of Ociesęki a *Gendarmerie* or police station and to allocate adequate numbers of men with arms for the protection of property and security of the community people.” This request appeared in connection with the spread of theft and robberies, both already committed and expected. In addition, the community board stated that “there is a suitable furnished office of the former Polish police station, which can be used for the above purpose at any time” (*AIPN, Główna Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu [AIPN GK], Der Stadt- und Kreishauptmann Kielce [Starosta Miejski i Powiatowy w Kielcach] [SMPK], 652/50, vol. 1, Pismo zarządu gminy Ociesęki do Starosty Powiatowego w Kielcach, Ociesęki, 1 XII 1939 r.*, p. 21).

¹⁶ On 27 December 1939 the post was transferred to Wiśniówka Mała (AP Kielce, *Akta Miasta Kielce [AMK], 2641, Rozkaz nr 4, Kielce, 18 I 1940 r.*, p. 4).

¹⁷ Quite soon, already on 29 December 1939, Kopacz was replaced at the post by *st. sierż.* Julian Andrzejewski (AP Kielce, AMK, 2641, *Rozkaz nr 3, Kielce, 29 XII 1939 r.*, p. 2).

¹⁸ AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 014/84, vol. 2, *Odpis rozkazu nr 2, Kielce, 18 XII 1939 r.*, p. 84.

The same order stipulated that, on a temporary basis, the following books would be maintained in police units: station book, duty book, inventory/check list of detainees, list of material evidence, service notebook, correspondence log and directory, delivery book, list of employees, inventory, list of inspections carried out; and the following at individual posts: station book, check list of detainees, list of material evidence, service notebook, correspondence log (directory as required), delivery book, list of employees, inventory, list of inspections carried out¹⁹.

The number of posts and the organizational chart of the Polish Police in the county did not last until the end of the German occupation. Depending on needs, detached PP officers formed a kind of 'sub-posts'. One of these was established at Antonielów in Łopuszno community and it was active from 27 April 1943 until at least 8 April 1944. The task of the police was to protect German colonists from the village. The group of policemen included, among others: *sierż.* Franciszek Misiak, *sierż.* Antoni Bartocha, *sierż.* Stanisław Biernacki, *plut.* Stanisław Gwóźdź, *kpr.* Mieczysław Głowacki, *plut.* Czesław Lasecki²⁰. Furthermore, during 1943–1944 the German authorities carried out a constant accumulation of the posts, intending "to create large countryside stations led by German commanders"²¹. Activity of the partisan units remained an important factor that affected the existing network of posts (see further below). Disarming police posts forced changes. For example, the Samsonów post was transferred to Zagnańsk²², and the Niewachłów post with the entire personnel was transferred to Mniów after it was disarmed. The crew of a dozen or so was led by *sierż.* Piotr Ślusarczyk²³.

In May 1940 the personnel of police stations, posts and the county headquarters in the Kielce County was about 230 officers (see Table 2). The German occupiers accepted team rotation as a rule, so the teams of

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁰ AIPN Lu, *Prokurator Specjalnego Sądu Karnego w Lublinie (PSSKL)*, 315/79, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Franciszka Miśka*, Kielce, 28 I 1945 r., p. 116.

²¹ A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, pp. 69–70.

²² AIPN Ki, *Sąd Okręgowy w Kielcach (SOK)*, 127/254, *Zeznania Stefanii Sokołowej na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Władysławowi Szczśniakowi*, Kielce, 6 IX 1948 r., p. 149v.

²³ AIPN Ki, *Prokuratura Miasta i Powiatu Kieleckiego w Kielcach (PMPK)*, 139/28, *Protokół końcowego przesłuchania podejrzanego Piotra Ślusarczyka*, Kielce, 21 I 1956 r., p. 130.

the posts changed. Some policemen left the service due to illness or retirement. There were also, not so rare, cases of police officers murdered by ordinary bandits in the early years of the German occupation or, in subsequent years, executed following a death sentence by the underground resistance. An increase in the number of PP officers in the Kielce County (and in the whole Radom District) took place in December 1939 when, as part of a general wave of deportation, police officers (with their families) were sent in, under threat of penalties, from the Polish territories annexed to the Third Reich. Policemen from Pomerania, Silesia, Wielkopolska and Łódź area were dispersed to all police posts and stations. Since they knew the German language, their service with the ‘navy blue’ police facilitated daily contacts with the German police, also raising some concerns among the local population. It is worth emphasizing here that in late 1939/early 1940 the ranks of the prewar police corps were terribly decimated by the ‘Katyn action.’ The total losses among the Kielce police officers and the Prison Guards numbered 736 people²⁴.

Table 1. Payroll of Polish policemen for June 1940

Unit	Number of police officers	Remuneration in zlotys (zł)
Kielce County Headquarters	9	2,970
Skarżysko-Kamienna station	27 ²⁵	6,035
Białogon post	5	1,025

²⁴ The policemen included 3 at the rank of *inspektor* or *podinspektor*, 37 *komisarz* or *podkomisarz*, 13 *aspirant*, 71 *przodownik* or *starszy przodownik*, 232 *starszy posterunkowy* and 273 *posterunkowy*. In addition, the victims included 65 officers of the auxiliary service of the State Police (M. Jończyk, *Miednoje – policyjny Katyń. Katalog wystawy*, Kielce 2013, [p. 9]).

²⁵ In 1939 the personnel of the PP Police Station in Skarżysko-Kamienna totaled 33 policemen (including one commissioned officer) (AP Kielce, KPPK, 71, *Pismo komendanta Policji Państwowej w Skarżysku-Kamiennej do komendanta powiatowego w Kielcach, Skarżysko-Kamienna, 7 IV 1939 r.*, p. 3).

Bieliny post	5	1,025
Bodzentyn post	5	1,215
Bliżyn post	5	1,000
Chęciny post	6	1,695
Daleszyce post	7	1,380
Łopuszno post	6	1,240
Morawica post	4	835
Mniów post	6	1,215
Niewachłów post	5	1,075
Piekoszów post	5	1,050
Ociesęki post	6	1,265
Słupia Nowa post	6	1,215
Suchedniów post	8	1,645
Samsonów post	6	1,190
Wiśniówka Mała post	5	1,075
Total	133	28,150

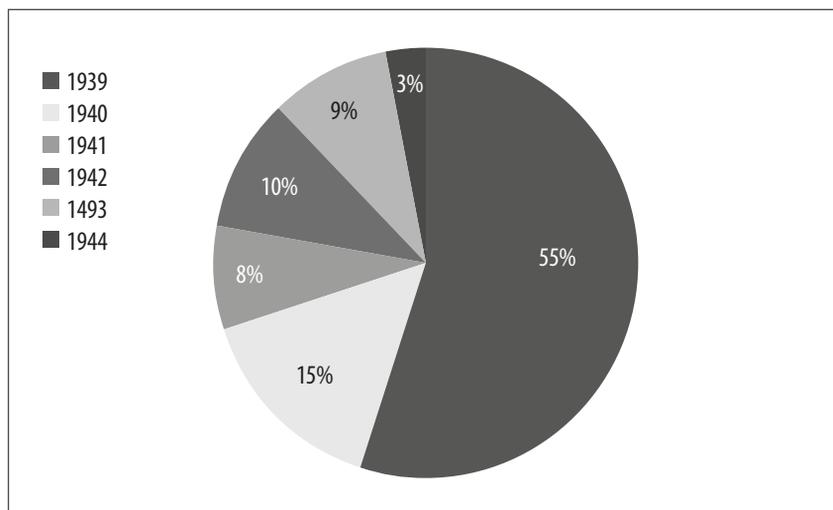
Source: AIPN GK, *Der Stadt- und Kreishauptmann Kielce (Starosta Miejski i Powiatowy w Kielcach)* (SMPK), 652/99, Vol. 1, *Lista płac policjantów polskich za czerwiec 1940 r.*, p. 50.

According to the analysis of surviving personal files of PP officers²⁶, 70% (see Chart 1) of policemen from the Kielce county entered the ranks of this formation in 1939 and 1940, forced by the orders of the German authorities. Nevertheless, as many as 22% joined during 1942–1944. The reasons behind this may have varied. There have been cases of joining the police following the order of underground resistance organizations, for example (mainly the

²⁶ The analysis covered the forms of a total of 336 policemen who served with the ‘navy blue’ police in the Kielce county during 1939–1945.

AK²⁷)²⁸. The lack of sufficiently objective sources makes a thorough analysis of the phenomenon impossible, but Stanisław Gizowski from the police station in Kielce can be identified as an example²⁹. Finally, the ranks of the police were joined by candidates motivated by the simple desire to “find a job”, such as Stanisław R.³⁰

Chart 1. The year of joining the ‘navy blue’ police



Source: AIPN GK, *Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD für den Distrikt Radom (Komendant Policji Bezpieczeństwa i Służby Bezpieczeństwa dla Dystryktu Radomskiego)* (KdS), 105/130, [Ankiety osobowe mundurowej policji polskiej z powiatu Kielce 1941–1944]. Own calculations.

²⁷ *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) – the principal armed underground resistance organization, reporting directly to the exiled Polish Government in London (translator’s note).

²⁸ This phenomenon was present in the PP throughout the GG (P. Majer, *Policja Polska w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie. Kolaboracja z obowiązku i tego konsekwencje* [in:] *Między irredentą a kolaboracją. Postawy społeczeństwa polskiego w latach niewoli – “W obcym mundurze”*, eds. L. Michalska-Bracha, M. Korybut-Marciniak, Warsaw 2013, pp. 306–307).

²⁹ AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 005/885, *Życiorys Stanisława Gizowskiego, Kielce, 22 XII 1948 r.*, p. 16.

³⁰ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/359, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Stanisława Raczyńskiego*, p. 2.

The characteristic of the PP officers of the Kielce County is equally interesting when the age and service experience are considered. Statistical data show that there were 21.72% of the youngest police officers, aged 18–25; 24.10% of the oldest ones, over 45; 21.13% percent of those aged 26–35; and 33.03% aged 36–45³¹. In terms of police service experience, prewar police officers with over 10 years of seniority dominated, representing 51.78% of the total. There were 11.01% of those with experience of 5–10 years, and 15.77% with 1–5 years, while slightly less than a quarter of all ‘navy blue’ policemen (21.42%) had no experience in this area when they joined.

Table 2. Payroll for police officers of the County Headquarters in Kielce for May 1940.

Name and surname	Rank	Gross payment (in zł)	to pay (in zł)
Adam Janasiński	<i>mjr</i>	645.00	645.00
Lucjan Paprzycki	<i>kpt.</i>	500.00	500.00
Edward Filipecki	8 th class clerk	310.00	310.00
Jan Gajek	<i>st. sierż</i>	265.00	265.00
Jan Kwinta	<i>st. sierż</i>	265.00	265.00
Stanisław Szkutnik	<i>st. sierż</i>	265.00	265.00
Władysław Rogaczewski	<i>sierż.</i>	240.00	240.00
Marcin Szmata	janitor	215.00	215.00
Total		2,705.00	2,705.00

Source: AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 014/84, vol. 2, *Lista uposażeń nr 1 dla urzędników policyjnych Komendy Powiatowej w Kielcach za maj 1940 r.*

It is also worth writing a few words about the wages in the Polish Police, because it had a significant impact on the functioning of this formation. In addition to Table 2, it must be added that the wages of a *plutonowy* amount-

³¹ AIPN GK, KdS, 105/130, [Ankiety osobowe mundurowej policji polskiej z powiatu Kielce 1941–1944]. Own calculations.

ed to 215 zł a month in 1940, and that of a *kapral* – 190 zł³². The salaries, although valorized, were so low that they were barely sufficient for buying the rationed products at official prices. Black market prices were several times higher and this, combined with the need to support a family, made the material situation of police officers extremely difficult. Equally unfavorable was the issue of supplying policemen with uniforms. Maintaining the PP was a responsibility of town or community administrations. For example, in the municipality of Chęciny 5,720 zł was spent on the PP during 1940–1941, and 2,000 zł during 1942–1943³³.

The armament was, of course, the most rationed of goods, which each policeman had to account for. In the PP this consisted of a Mannlicher 98 rifle and ten rounds of ammunition. Some posts also received Steyr pistols³⁴. Equipping police officers with obsolete weapons and scanty ammunition allowances resulted, of course, from the lack of trust of the German authorities towards the Polish Police.

In addition, the service provided periodic training in criminal proceedings, firearm use, handcuffing practice, action against several armed criminals, German language, investigation work, interrogation techniques (false testimonies, witnesses claiming to be experts), guidelines for price control, snow removal training, making reports of epidemic outbreaks, rabies control, hygiene regulations, etc.³⁵

Initially, the Polish Police officers carried out the majority of their pre-war duties, which may be described as maintaining and safeguarding public

³² AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/99, vol. 1, *Lista plac posterunku w Białogonie za maj 1940 r.*, p. 34.

³³ For comparison, in the budget year 1940/1941, 1,500 zł was spent on the maintenance of the fire department, and 3,798 zł for the maintenance of primary schools. In the year 1942/1943 a total of 6,111.01 zł was spent from the budget of Chęciny on social services, including 1,502 zł for extra meals for children, 456 zł for off-site care, 2,400 zł for social self-help, 1,155.51 for aid for the poor, 4,578.66 zł for “primary school benefits” (*AP Kielce, Akta Miasta Chęciny [AMC]*, 93, [*Preliminarz budżetowy*], s. 10–11, 22–23; *ibidem*, 94, [*Preliminarz budżetowy*], s. 28–29, 32–23, 37–38).

³⁴ AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/99, vol. 1; S. Piątkowski, *Policja polska...*, p. 117; *idem*, *Między obowiązkiem a kolaboracją...*, pp. 171–172.

³⁵ AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/50, vol. 1, *Pismo Komendy PP powiatu jędrzejowskiego do kpt. Holzhausena i komendantów posterunków PP, Jędrzejów, 14 III 1942 r.*, p. 275; *ibid*, *Pismo Komendy Powiatowej PP w Kielcach do posterunków powiatowych, Kielce, 14 III 1941 r.*, p. 33.

order. The police, therefore, took care of the observance of fire regulations, investigated theft, robbery and rape cases; interrogated witnesses, conducted searches, investigated fires or assaults, sought to prevent illegal alcohol production³⁶. It also assisted in transporting prisoners to Polish courts and to prisons. These PP tasks continued in the following years. First and foremost, it was countering common criminality, very widespread during the war. For example, only between 18 and 31 May 1943, the County HQ of the Polish Police in Kielce sent to *Kreishauptmannschaft* in Kielce information about six attacks in the Bodzentyn community, the description of which indicates that they were all of a purely robbery nature³⁷.

An attempt to include the ‘navy blue’ police in the implementation of the occupant’s policy

Over time, however, the Polish Police was increasingly seen by the public as a formation that cooperated with the Germans, which resulted from a gradual and increasingly frequent use of the policemen to implement the occupant’s policy. The Germans used the ‘navy blue’ officers mainly in economic matters: they used them to conscript people for compulsory labor (also to assist in roundup arrests organized by German structures) and to collect the compulsory quota of agricultural produce and farm animal requisitions. The level of the agricultural quotas, which from 1942 on amounted to nearly half of all the harvest, and the forced deportation of agricultural laborers (from the spring of 1943 in Kielce region this turned into regular manhunts and roundups) encountered increasing resistance of the Polish people³⁸. Paradox-

³⁶ The scope of activities carried out is reflected in the duty books used at the posts, as mentioned earlier. No police station book from the Kielce County could be found. However, on the basis of the preserved books from Jędrzejów and Opoczno Counties it should be concluded that the PP in the Kielce County dealt with similar matters. (AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 69/131, *Station der Polnischen Polizei in Lelów [Posterunek Polskiej Policji Komunalnej powiatu jędrzejowskiego w Lelowie]. Kontrola dochodzeń*; AP Kielce, *Policja Państwowa w Opocznie, Księgi Stacyjne*, t. 1–7).

³⁷ T. Domański, *Źródła do dziejów Bodzentyna...* (in print).

³⁸ See: T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej*, Kielce 2011, pp. 180–182. Marian ‘Dzik’ Świdorski recalled that from the winter of 1943, on his instructions, policemen from the Bodzentyn post have distributed justly the contingents and all kinds

ically, the increasing involvement of the PP in these tasks could result from the involvement of larger forces by the German occupants, as well as from the application of extremely severe penalties, including death sentences, to those who evaded the orders.

Technically, it was the local authorities and quota committees who were responsible for meeting the deadlines and the supply amounts from individual farmers, and they often used the police when collecting the quota³⁹. PP officers assisted in collecting the products and requisitions in the buildings of individual farmers, and participated in these procedures, but also in arrests, at the orders of the German authorities, of the resisting peasants and detaining them in custody, which was to induce them to deliver the overdue tribute⁴⁰. For those who evaded delivering the compulsory quota of agricultural produce, the occupation authorities created special criminal camps, such as the one at Łopuszno⁴¹. In this case, too, the duty to bring the convicted persons rested largely on the Polish Police.

For example, Jan Kosmala from Huta Szklana was arrested on 7 November 1942 by policemen from Bieliny and on November 13 he was sent to “labor camp in Łopuszno”⁴².

In July 1943 Waclaw Dzierbicki from the post at Białogon has escorted Helena Broniś (Pędzik) to the camp at Łopuszno⁴³. The rules of escorting Polish

of tribute imposed by the German (M. Swiderski, *Wśród lasów, wertepów*, eds. M. Jedynak, S. Mróz, Bodzentyn 2010, p. 50).

³⁹ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/333, *Zeznania Aleksandra Kubickiego na rozprawie głównej w sprawie Gustawa Kubickiego, Kielce, 14 V 1949 r.*, p. 78.

⁴⁰ AIPN Ki, Sąd Apelacyjny w Kielcach (SAK), 126/43, *Zeznania świadka Antoniego Snocha na rozprawie głównej w sprawie Walentego Birskiego i Antoniego Gołucha, Kielce, 23 XI 1949 r.*, p. 71; *ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Stanisława Gołucha, Kielce, 19 V 1949 r.*, p. 275.

⁴¹ See more: T. Domański, *Obóz karny w Łopusznie*, “Kuryer Kielecki” (supplement to “Echo Dnia”) 2015, no. 25, p. 4.

⁴² AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/44, vol. 1, *Pismo posterunku policji polskiej w Bielinach do Komendanta powiatowego policji polskiej w Kielcach, Bieliny, 12 XI 1942 r.*, p. 435. Kosmala was not the only farmer transported by the PP from Bieliny to Łopuszno. Others, such as Ignacy Cygan, were wanted (*ibid*, *Pismo posterunku policji polskiej w Bielinach do komendanta powiatowego policji polskiej w Kielcach, Bieliny, 23 X 1942 r.*, p. 438; *ibid*, *Pismo posterunku Policji Polskiej w Bielinach do kierownika obozu pracy w Łopusznie, Bieliny, 10 X 1942 r.*, p. 439).

⁴³ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/375, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Heleny Broniś (Pędzik), Sobiecín, 16 XII 1948 r.*, p. 15.

farmers to the camp at Łopuszno are illustrated perfectly by a letter from the PP County HQ in Kielce to the post at Bieliny: "Delivery of the detainees, it said, should be performed in groups by horse-carts to Kielce, and thence by train at 11.29 to Małogoszcz. At the station in Małogoszcz, the detainees must be picked up by the escort from the post at Łopuszno, with whom you must first communicate by telephone, giving the day and time of arrival. The Bieliny escort, after handing over the detainees, returns to Kielce on the next train, arriving in Kielce at 15.54, and thence by one of the waiting horse-carts they return to Bieliny. Upon bringing the ones in question into the camp, the attached orders, forms, shall be filled in by the physician and the head of the camp. One of these forms will be retained by the head of the camp and the other one must be submitted to the County HQ with the report of the duty carried out"⁴⁴.

In the case of conscription of people for forced labor, the role of the PP was to bring the people listed nominally by the German Labor Offices. Out in the country in the GG the above obligations were imposed on the police as early as January 1941⁴⁵. There are very many examples of the participation of policemen in such activities⁴⁶. The village headmen were also included in the conscription system, obliged to indicate to policemen the persons named by the committees in individual villages⁴⁷. Detainees were often held in jails on the premises. In addition to bringing people to Labor Offices, the PP was also burdened with the obligation to transport forced laborers to Częstochowa, from where they were sent to the Third Reich. The Polish Police performed auxiliary duties (guarding luggage, for example)⁴⁸, although one of

⁴⁴ AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/44, vol. 1, *Pismo Komendy Powiatowej Policji Polskiej w Kielcach do posterunku Policji Polskiej w Bielinach, Kielce, 3 X 1942 r.*, p. 440.

⁴⁵ A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, p. 159.

⁴⁶ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/43, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Stanisława Gołucha, Kielce, 19 V 1949 r.*, p. 275; *ibid*, *Zeznania świadka Zofii Filipczak na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Wincentemu Birskiemu i Antoniemu Gołuchowi, Kielce, 23 XI 1949 r.*, p. 72; *ibid*, *Odpis wyroku przeciw Wincentemu Birskiemu i Stanisławowi Gołuchowi, Kielce, 21 XII 1949 r.*, p. 130; *ibid*, *Zeznania świadka Zofii Filipczak na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Wincentemu Birskiemu i Antoniemu Gołuchowi, Kielce, 23 XI 1949 r.*, p. 72.

⁴⁷ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/348, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Kotrusa, Kielce, 7 X 1947 r.*, p. 30; *ibid*, 127/360, *Zeznania Jana Kowalskiego na rozprawie głównej w sprawie własnej, Kielce, 7 I 1950 r.*, p. 52.

⁴⁸ AIPN Lu, Specjalny Sąd Karny w Lublinie (SSKL), 9/157, *Zeznania Wincentego Sobiepańskiego na rozprawie głównej w sprawie własnej, Kielce, 24 V 1946 r.*, p.111.

the transports, on 5 March 1943, was led independently by policemen from Kielce under the command of *sierż.* Antoni Bartocha. The escort included also Franciszek Świącicki, Jan Stasiuk, Edward Przepiórka and Waław Wąsik⁴⁹.

Equally important for the German occupants as roundup arrests for labor was the prevention of illegal trafficking and slaughter, and in this the 'navy blue' police played a prominent part beside the German police, controlling the market and imposing fines for too high prices or sanitary disorders⁵⁰, as well as for illegal slaughter⁵¹. Moreover, almost at every railway station or market place PP officers, under the supervision of the German police (sometimes independently), requisitioned food and other goods. To this end the Germans (the *Gendarmerie* and *Schupo*) formed special groups of policemen, called "Lichwa" ("Usury") in Polish sources⁵². Józef Kaliński described it this way: "We were surrounding the market square in Kielce and conducted a search in the market, in which I took part, and which took place once or twice a week"⁵³. According to the AK intelligence of 1941, the department for combat against usury at the Kielce police station included, apart from Kaliński, the following policemen: *st. sierż.* Wincenty Hamrol⁵⁴,

⁴⁹ At Górki Szczukowskie the transport was derailed by the underground resistance, and the people who were being deported for labor were released. During the action, as confirmed by one participant, the police did not fire, they only did so after the partisans had withdrawn. The use of firearms by the policemen was to protect them from responsibility to the German authorities. Investigations on the assault were conducted both by the Germans and *mjr* Janasiński (AIPN Ki, 127/291, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Antoniego Bartochy, Kielce*, frame (fr) 12; *ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Wincentego Boguckiego, Kielce*, 1 IX 1948 r., fr. 41).

⁵⁰ AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 013/1799, *Protokół zeznania Franciszka Świącickiego, Kielce*, 29 I 1945 r., p. 60.

⁵¹ The policemen explained during postwar proceedings that fining without calling the Germans was advantageous, because an intervention by the German police could end in death. On the other hand, policemen faced death penalty for failure to execute the regulation actions in the case of trafficking (A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, p. 152).

⁵² The *Amt für Preisüberwachung* (Price Control Authority) led the fight against illegal trafficking (M. Getter, *Zarys organizacji...*, p. 255).

⁵³ AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 014/84, vol. 4, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Józefa Kalińskiego, Kielce*, 27 III 1945 r., p. 4.

⁵⁴ According to Franciszek Misiek, a policeman from Kielce police station, Hamrol was the head of "Lichwa" (AIPN Lu, PSSKL, 315/79, *Protokół zeznania podejrzanego Franciszka Miśka, Kielce*, 28 I 1945 r., p. 15).

sierz. Władysław Biernacki, *plut.* Józef Pierzgałski, *plut.* Jan Matuszko, *plut.* Kazimierz Łukaszewski, *plut.* Andrzej Stelmach, *kpr.* Stanisław Darowny, *kpr.* Władysław Kerl and *kpr.* Edmund Matysiak⁵⁵. It is known from postwar legal proceedings that Antoni Zamorski⁵⁶, Bolesław Wrzyszczy⁵⁷, Bolesław R.⁵⁸ and Franciszek Misiek⁵⁹ also served with the Kielce anti-usury unit at various times. Stanisław Raczyński, also from the police station in Kielce, was employed to collect parcels and other materials at the railway station in Skarżysko-Kamienna⁶⁰.

Directing a Polish policeman to a special anti-trafficking department was not synonymous with his committing national treason. This was determined by one's individual attitude to the service. Antoni Zamorski worked in the Kielce 'Lichwa' from January to April 1942. In order to be dismissed from this department, he simulated an illness. After the war, most witnesses claimed that he had been a "good Pole". Witnesses also mentioned the fact that he was living in poverty, had to sell even his own clothes to buy food. He obtained fuel by digging up stumps from the woods⁶¹.

⁵⁵ AAN, Armia Krajowa (AK), 203/XII-2, *Rap spec nr 1, Kielce, 25 XII 1942 r.*, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Zamorski admitted that he belonged to the unit in the record of his interrogation as a suspect, as also confirmed by witnesses, including Jan Stasiak, who added that he was forced to make other testimony about Zamorski (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/9, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Stanisława Wojnowskiego, Kielce, 15 VI 1946 r.* p. 42; *ibid, Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Antoniego Zamorskiego, Wałbrzych, 11 II 1946 r.*, p. 19; *ibid, Zeznania Jana Stasiaka na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 27 I 1947 r.*, p. 11).

⁵⁷ He confirmed his membership in this branch at the main trial in his case. He apparently served with it in April and May 1943 and was dismissed because of poor results and because he warned people (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/35, *Zeznania Bolesława Wrzyszcza na rozprawie głównej, listopad 1945 r.*, p. 56).

⁵⁸ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/251, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Bolesława R., Gorzów Wielkopolski, 8 XI 1947 r.*, p. 14; *ibid, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Szymona Hańderka, Kielce, 14 XI 1947 r.*, p. 23; *ibid, Wyrok SO w Kielcach przeciwko Bolesławowi R., Kielce, 25 IX 1948 r.*, p. 136.

⁵⁹ AIPN Lu, PSSKL, 315/79, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Franciszka Miśka, Kielce, 28 I 1945 r.*, p. 15.

⁶⁰ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/359, *Wyrok przeciwko Stanisławowi Raczyńskiemu, Kielce, 30 III 1950 r.*, p. 81v.

⁶¹ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/9, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Antoniego Zamorskiego, Wałbrzych, 11 II 1946 r.*, pp. 19–20; *ibid, Zeznania Antoniego Zamorskiego na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 27 I 1947 r.*, p. 110; *ibid, Zeznania świadka Władysława Kowalskiego na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Antoniemu Zamorskiemu, Kielce, 27 I 1947 r.*, p. 113; *ibid, Zeznania*

Franciszek Misiak and Bolesław R. were on the opposite side. Misiak was employed in 'Lichwa' in December 1942. He worked there until April next year. During a trial in 1945 the following was written about him: "[...] the accused, very often acting on his own, as well as with the help of the German *Gendarmerie*, confiscated in the streets of the [Kielce] market, and even in private premises of the poorest Polish population, food products which they traded. The accused did not content himself with confiscating food products, but he often imposed penal fines. When confiscating food products, the accused, as all witnesses say, was ruthless, worse than the Germans, worse than all the other *gendarmes*, he bullied Polish people, beat people, he caught, beat and kicked his with his feet the 13-year-old daughter of Maria Syncerz, who traded buns, and as a result he contributed to her imprisonment. The accused also often searched for food products on trains, where, by [...] beating, he confiscated food products from Polish people, irrespective of the quantity"⁶². For the above actions and for participation in the roundup arrests and for handing two Poles into German hands, one of whom died, Misiak was sentenced to death after the war and the sentence was probably executed⁶³.

The District Court in Kielce sentenced Bolesław R. to three years in prison for confiscating food products, The court has found, among other things, that during his police service in 1944, R. has arrested Maria Makowska, confiscated two loaves of bread from her, and then beat her⁶⁴.

At the time, for the Polish people, evading the occupant's legislation on the marketing of food and necessities, often intended to affect the very biological survival of the nation, was a fundamental matter. The following, doubtlessly fair, assessment of the actions of the Polish Police from Warsaw can also be applied to the Kielce county: "the demoralization of the police is still deep and almost universal." This was especially noticeable in *Kripo*. The general moral order of the police was also influenced by the pressure of

świadka Antoniego Pronobisa na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Antoniemu Zamorskiemu, 27 I 1947 r., p. 113.

⁶² AIPN Lu, PSSKL, 315/79, *Uzasadnienie wyroku w sprawie Franciszka Miśka, Kielce, 23 VII 1945 r., pp. 78–79.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 78. It proved impossible to find the report of the execution of the death penalty.

⁶⁴ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/251, *Wyrok przeciwko Bolesławowi R., Kielce, 25 IX 1948 r., p. 136.*

the German authorities, who clearly “pushed all of the ‘black jobs’ onto the Poles”, and the police could not evade this⁶⁵. The underground resistance press⁶⁶ condemned the over-zealousness of policemen and their personal desire to get rich, which, considering the level of their monthly wages, was an all too frequent temptation. It seems that the issue of remuneration lay at the root of the corruption and extortion so widespread in the PP⁶⁷.

“Turning a blind eye on the regulations in force” often had a specific price. At Skarżysko-Kamienna, according to Izabella Łęcka, “all merchants sent parcels to ‘navy blue’ policemen”. Rybicki, a local restaurateur, summed it up by saying: “then [during the German occupation] we never took payment from the police”⁶⁸.

The scale of economic exploitation of the Polish population introduced by the German occupants should also include the weight of all kinds of tribute work, services, construction work (*Baudienst*) and the obligation to provide free transport, i.e. a cart and horse⁶⁹. In this case, too, the duty to ensure that these obligations were discharged, rested on the ‘navy blue’ police. Policemen, with the help of villagers, were obliged to perform the ungrateful role of appointing people, for example, to clear roads of snow or to cart timber from forests⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ AAN, Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj (DRP), 202/II-34, *Sprawozdanie okresowe za czas od 14 XI 1942 do 15 II 1943 r., no location, 20 II 1943 r.*, p. 58.

⁶⁶ A warning for over-zealous policemen appeared, among others, in the “Chrobry Szlak” magazine (S. Piątkowski, *Policja Polska...*, p. 121).

⁶⁷ A very interesting question about sources of support was posed during the interrogation of Franciszek Świącicki in the Kielce UB: “It is impossible that, being in the ‘navy blue’ police for almost 5 years, that you only lived with a salary of 400 zł, without any illicit income?” Responding to this question, Świącicki agreed with the interrogator that he could not have survived with a salary of 400 zł, so he helped himself by trading flour, for which he went to the country and earned from 2 to 9 zł per kilogram in the city (AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 013/1799, *Protokół zeznania Franciszka Świącickiego, Kielce, 29 I 1945 r.*, p. 61). Testimony of Franciszek Świącicki’s Testimony, Kielce, 29 January 1945, p. 61).

⁶⁸ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/286, *Zeznania Izabelli Łęckiej na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Ignacemu Smokowi, Kielce, 21 IX 1950 r.*, p. 42; *ibid*, *Zeznania Rybickiego na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Ignacemu Smokowi, Kielce, 21 IX 1950 r.*, p. 42.

⁶⁹ K. Przybysz, *Chłopi polscy wobec okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939–1945. Zachowania i postawy polityczne na terenach Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, Warsaw 1983, p. 120.

⁷⁰ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/43, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Kasprzyka, Piekoszów, 14 V 1949 r.*, p. 255; AIPN Ki, PMPK, 139/28, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Piotra Ślusarczyka, Kielce, 23 XI 1955 r.*, p. 64.

During daily activities of the 'navy blue' officers, there were cases where Polish civilians were killed by them. There were two kinds of these events: accidental, like the death of Antoni Szwarz on 27 May 1942 at Łopuszno, shot by Wiktor Stolarczyk⁷¹, or intentional, such as the death of Władysław Stępień on 14 December 1942, at the village of Przyjmo, shot by Bolesław Kowal from the post at Samsonów⁷². Since 1942, the 'navy blue' policemen much more often took part in arrests, searches and raids against Poles who had escaped from forced labor or from the *Baudienst*, who were active in the underground resistance, who evaded their labor obligations or, generally speaking, who resisted the "German reconstruction of the GG". The PP share in this type of action was either on their own, when the policemen could, depending on the situation (and on their willingness to), refrain from performing their official duties, or cooperate with German officers, which greatly hindered any assistance to the wanted persons. On many occasions, in such situations, the wanted ones were killed by Germans, like Michał Czechowicz from Piekoszów, arrested and shot dead the same day by German *Gendarmerie* for the possession of a radio set. Policeman Wincenty Birski from Piekoszów took part in the arrest of Czechowicz and several other people, for which after the war he was sentenced to five years in prison. The basis of the sentence was Birski's activity, which consisted of "conducting a search at the place of residence of the arrested by the looking through papers at the apartment"⁷³.

⁷¹ On 27 May 1942 German police together with Polish policemen Antoni Zuchowski and Wiktor Stolarczyk from the police post at Łopuszno arrested Władysław Świercz, Stanisław Świercz, Paweł Świercz, Franciszek Perz, Antoni Szwarz, Antoni Sobura, Jan Kopiec (school headmaster), Władysław Mysior (community employee at Snochowice). During the night, when the men were held in the communal jail they undertook a successful attempt to escape (perhaps in agreement with Stolarczyk). Stolarczyk then fired a few shots, accidentally killing Szwarz (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/324, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Pawła Świercza, Snochowice, 2 IX 1948 r.*, p. 7; *ibid*, *Uzasadnienie wyroku przeciwko Wiktorowi Stolarczykowi, Kielce, 19 XI 1948 r.*, pp. 76–78).

⁷² AIPN Ki, SWK, 128/161, *Odpis wyroku SN przeciwko Bolesławowi Kowalowi, Warszawa, 18 VI 1954 r.*, p. 112.

⁷³ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/43, *Wyrok przeciwko Wincentemu Birskiemu i Stanisławowi Gołuchowi, Kielce, 21 XII 1949 r.*, p. 130. Piotr Kaleta, another policeman from the post at Piekoszów, was acquitted of the charge of arresting Czechowicz (*ibid*, *Odpis wyroku przeciwko Piotrze Kalecie, Kielce, 8 IV 1949 r.*, pp. 295–296).

The participation of 'navy blue' police officers in terrorist and extermination actions together with the German police was particularly detrimental among the activities against the Polish population. Research shows that in the Kielce County, no activity of officers similar to the "Kazimierz Nowak group" from the Miechów County was observed⁷⁴. The research shows only one case of a 'navy blue' policeman's participation in executions of Poles, namely *sierż.* Bolesław R. from the police station in Kielce who, according to AK intelligence, "volunteered to join the execution squad and has taken part in the shooting of prisoners, for which he receives 100 zł per person. [...] Notwithstanding this, he is an informer to the German authorities, both against his colleagues and other people working in the underground resistance"⁷⁵.

On the other hand, PP officers participated in various types of raids against the partisans together with the German police. On 10 April 1943 "two carts filled with 'navy blue' policemen" accompanied German *gendarmes* from the post at Bieliny during their operation out in the country. The AK troop led by Marian Świdorski 'Dzik' organized an ambush against this group at Święta Katarzyna.

During the engagement, after the Polish policemen replied with fire to a call to lift their hands up, the AK men started firing as well. As a result of the engagement, two 'navy blue' officers were killed. Eventually the policemen were disarmed and set free, while the AK troop captured 7 rifles, ammunition and 5 pairs of footwear⁷⁶. The combat group of the *Stützpunkt* at Bieliny, composed of 3 *gendarmes*, 8 *Schupo*-men and 4 Polish policemen, prepared an operation between the villages of Porąbki and Krajno II on 16 June 1943. A man holding a document identifying him as Ignacy Dziura was shot at the time⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ See: A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, pp. 186–189; M. Mączyński, *Organizacyjno-prawne...*, pp. 315–316.

⁷⁵ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/251, *Wyciąg z listy konfidentów sporządzonej przez organizację podziemną AK w czasie okupacji niemieckiej z 20 XI 1943 r.*, Kielce, 15 XI 1947 r., p. 31.

⁷⁶ M. Świdorski, *Wśród lasów...*, pp. 14–15.

⁷⁷ AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/44, vol. 1, *Pismo Stützpunktu w Bielinach do kierownika Schutzbezirk Kielce, Bieliny, 16 VI 1943 r.*, p. 191. An engagement between the PP from Bodzentyn and partisans also took place in February 1943 at Święta Katarzyna, when policemen,

The DRP reports show that the 'navy blue' police in an unknown strength took part in a raid against the partisans in the Siekierzyńskie Forests in October 1943⁷⁸. The engagement between a patrol of the German *Gendarmerie* (8 men) and the 'navy blue' police (3 men) with a forest-based group took place on 20 April 1944 in the area of the village of Widelki, in Daleszyce community. As a result of the exchange of fire, 3 *gendarmes* were killed, and 3 more plus the commandant of the Polish Police post at Bieliny were severely wounded. The partisans won 1 Sten, a few rifles and hand guns. The next day the Germans sent a penalty expedition from Kielce to the place of the engagement. Polish population had left the place by then⁷⁹.

On the other hand, the policemen, due to their contacts and knowledge of the German language were repeatedly able to help Polish people avoid repression. Surviving sources include enormous numbers of entries confirming how 'navy blue' officers turned a blind eye to illegal trafficking and illicit slaughter, mediation in the release of detainees, sluggishness in official activities, etc.⁸⁰ Examples of personal interventions on behalf of the Polish people can also be found. In July 1943, after BCh⁸¹ partisans attacked the quarry at Gostków, where Jews and Poles worked, Roman Trojanowski from Bliżyn explained to the *gendarmes* that the local population had nothing to do with the attack. At the same time, during the event itself, he prevented the death of Józef Ołownia⁸².

The complexity and a certain tragedy of the situation of the 'navy blue' policemen, who often had to arrest their compatriots, lay in the fact that their

ordered by German *gendarmes* from Bieliny, transported Stanisław Osuch from Leśna and Stanisław Osuch from Krajno to the police station at Bieliny. (AIPN GK, SMPK, 652/44, vol. 1, *Pismo posterunku żandarmerii w Skarżysku do powiatowego plutonu żandarmerii w Kielcach, Kamienna, 11 II 1943 r.*, p. 105).

⁷⁸ AAN, DRP, 202/III/7, vol. 1, *Informacja bieżąca nr 41 (114), 30 X 1943 r.*, p. 387.

⁷⁹ AAN, AK, 203/XII-10, vol. 1, *Kongo. Ordre de Bataille (OdeB) wojska i formacji paramilitarnych*, [no location, no date] p. 212.

⁸⁰ T. Domański, *Pozatetowa placówka policji niemieckiej w Bodzentynie w okresie II wojny światowej* [in:] *Z dziejów Bodzentyna w okresie II wojny światowej. W 70. rocznicę pacyfikacji 1943–2013*, eds. L. Michalska-Bracha, M. Przeniosło, M. Jedynak, Kielce 2013, pp. 176–177.

⁸¹ Bataliony Chłopskie (Peasants' Battalions) – an armed underground resistance organisation of the peasant movement (translator's note).

⁸² AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/96, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Ołowni, Skarżysko-Kamienna, 11 XI 1949 r.*, pp. 122–123.

families were often not free from the danger of deportation to forced labor or to concentration camps. Wiesław, the son of police officer Albin Brym, was sent to work in the Third Reich. After some time he escaped, and after a few months of hiding he was caught by the *gendarmes* and sent to Gross Rosen. Brym's second son, Włodzimierz, was killed as a BCh partisan⁸³. The son of Ignacy Smok was killed at Gross Rosen⁸⁴.

The attitude of the PP towards Jews

I would call the attitude of the PP officers towards the Jewish population in the Kielce County as ambivalent, which was due in part to the changing position of the Jews in the Polish territories occupied by the Germans. Three periods in the relationship between the Jews and the Polish Police can be distinguished between 1939 and 1945: the existence of ghettos⁸⁵, deportations to death camps, and the period from 1942 until the entry of the Red Army and the end of World War II in 1945⁸⁶.

Each of these periods was distinguished by its own specific features. During the first one, the role of the Polish Police, who carried out German directives, was essentially limited to supervising the external walls of the ghettos. The 'navy blue' officers co-operated with the German police in this, to ensure that the Jews did not leave the ghettos without special passes and that they did not contact the 'Aryan' side⁸⁷. The order within the ghetto was guarded by the Jewish Order Service, also known as the Jewish Police⁸⁸.

⁸³ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/3, *Pismo Albina Bryma do Prokuratora SO w Kielcach, Kielce, 17 XI 1946 r.*, p. 40.

⁸⁴ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/286, *Zeznania Ignacego Smoka na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 21 IX 1950 r.*, p. 40.

⁸⁵ For information about ghettos in the Kielce County, see: K. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, Cracow 2004, *passim*; *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, eds. G. Miron, S. Shulhani, Jerusalem 2009.

⁸⁶ Jan Grabowski called this period the *Judenjagd*, the hunt for Jews (J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd... passim*).

⁸⁷ S. Szymańska-Smolkin, *Rola policji granatowej...*, pp. 216–217; A. Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski...*, pp. 170–171.

⁸⁸ For information about the infamous role of the JOS in the ghetto in Kielce, see: K. Urbański, *Zagłada ludności żydowskiej Kielc*, Kielce 1994, pp. 96–97; *idem, Zagłada Żydów...*, p. 97.

This should not be forgotten. The ghetto control system was a set of connected vessels. Often, however, the PP also worked within the Jewish quarters. According to Bolesław Kuczerawa, a policeman from the Suchedniów post, “the ‘Jewish Militia’ frequently asked the ‘Polish Police’ to designate a policeman who would walk around the apartments, along with the ‘Jewish Militia,’ and check why some [people] did not go to work. This was intended to force those who were assigned to work to go to work on a regular basis, as the German authorities imposed contributions onto the entire ‘ghetto’ when someone failed to report to work”⁸⁹. In Kielce during 1940–1942 the ‘navy blue’ policemen occasionally guarded executions of Jews from the local ghetto, which the SS men carried out in the Jewish cemetery⁹⁰.

On the other hand, Polish policemen in Kielce made enabled others to help the Jews in the ghetto, and they also helped the Jews themselves. It is a matter for further analysis to determine the principles of this assistance. Janusz Siwek from Kielce recalled: “Our help for the Jews was spontaneous, but some tips like: ‘Guys, you could give some help’ were given to us by our troop leader Stanisław Nowodworski and by a kind of guardian of ours, Zbigniew Grodecki. I remember once I was able to enter the ghetto. I was advised to contact my neighbor Zdzisław Zawada, two years older than me. I was even told to dress up somewhat poorly, and it was in the winter. Together with Zawada at the appointed time we went to Warszawska Street. Zdzisiek had a package with him. Józef Zawada, Zdzisiek’s father, who was a ‘navy blue’ policeman, stood at the entrance to the ghetto next to the synagogue. Next to him stood a German *gendarme* who pretended not to see us, and then we entered the ghetto at the order of Mr Zawada. Mr Zawada was a member of the ZWZ⁹¹-AK. I know this from the account of Zawada himself, which he submitted to me after the war. Anyway, my father and brother told me about Zawada’s AK membership already during the war. Zawada’s son, and

⁸⁹ AIPN Ki, SWK, 128/173, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Bronisława Kuczerawy, Kielce, 31 V 1954 r.*, pp. 44–44v.

⁹⁰ A. Massalski, S. Meducki, *Kielce w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939–1945*, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow 2007, pp. 57–58.

⁹¹ *Związek Walki Zbrojnej* (Union of Armed Struggle) – an earlier name of the AK (translator’s note).

Zdzisiek's older brother, was in the AK troop of [Marian Sołtysiak] 'Barabasz'. [...] In the ghetto we went to Dąbrowska Street and there we entered a wooden building with an attic room, and from this building one could go to Nowy Świat Street, where we left the parcel that Zdzisiek had with him. We did not take anything with us. From what I noticed, Zdzisiek must have been in the ghetto many times because he knew the way very well"⁹². Turning a blind eye to German regulations concerning contacts between the ghettos and the 'Aryan' side was the most common form of assistance. Simple non-impediment of these contacts sometimes meant that much⁹³.

In 1942 the German authorities started the so-called 'final solution of the Jewish question' in the GG. In June 1942 a circular was sent to police posts that ordered direct attention to Jews outside the ghettos. The underground resistance press revealed that the 'navy blue' police had been ordered to fire at fugitives of Jewish nationality⁹⁴. In the summer and autumn of 1942 the Radom District was swept by a huge wave of ghetto liquidations and deportations of Jews to death camps. The 'navy blue' policemen were also forced to participate in the process of ghetto liquidations, usually acting as a guard around the ghetto or quarter⁹⁵. Janusz Siwek, already quoted earlier, recalled: "I saw the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Kielce. In this operation, besides the Germans who were the most numerous, I saw Polish 'navy blue' policemen, but also the unarmed fire brigade. The policemen and firefighters walked on one side, escorting individual groups of Jews, taking them to Młynarska (Mielczarskiego) street, where the Jews were driven into cargo railcars"⁹⁶. The 'navy blue' policemen were also tasked

⁹² Account of Janusz Benedykt Siwek of 25 May 2015, in the author's collection. Janusz Benedykt Siwek's report of 25 V 2015.

⁹³ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/9, *Zeznania świadka Heleny Szplit na rozprawie głównej w sprawie Antoniego Zamorskiego, Kielce, 27 I 1947 r.*, p. 116.

⁹⁴ S. Piątkowski, *Między obowiązkiem...*, p. 178.

⁹⁵ J.A. Młynarczyk, *Organizacja i realizacja "akcji Reinhardt" w dystrykcie radomskim [in:] Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka, Warsaw 2004, p. 190.

⁹⁶ Account of Janusz Benedykt Siwek of 25 May 2015, in the author's collection. Siwek's memoirs correspond with the findings of Ewa Wiatr concerning the Radomsko County, where PP officers also took part in the escorting of the Jews (E. Wiatr, "Zdawanie Żydów"..., pp. 499-510).

with arranging carts to carry the bodies of the murdered. According to the findings of Jacek Młynarczyk, 80 to 100 PP officers participated in the deportation of the Kielce ghetto⁹⁷. Usually, after the deportation, Polish policemen guarded the property left by the Jews. Often they also participated, as a law enforcement service, in the sale of the property to the local population⁹⁸.

At this point, the most difficult period began in the relations between the 'navy blue' police and the Jews. Contrary to the bans and to the intentions of the German authorities concerning the closure of the ghettos, many of their inhabitants managed to escape to the 'Aryan' side. There may have been over 5,500 people like this in the Kielce district⁹⁹.

The ghetto escapers were seeking rescue on the 'Aryan' side. Many succeeded. Polish police officers from the Kielce County had some share in the process. It is known that Saturnin Jabłoński helped to produce fake documents for a Jewess he knew, Marmur Orinstajn, under the false name of Maria Nogaj. She then left with Władysław Gajewski to do forced labor and thus saved her life¹⁰⁰.

Wincenty Birski was also involved in helping the Jews. He provided food packages to Henryk Fajner, harbored him after the ghetto was liquidated, fed and warned against his arrest. During Birski's trial Fajner testified: "May God give him health, he was the best Pole, he saved the Jews' skin, they had means to live, and he did it selflessly"¹⁰¹.

In the context of helping the Jews the trial of another policeman: Roman Trojanowski from the police station in Skarżysko was a paradox. According to the indictment, Trojanowski forced Berkówna, an 18-year-old Jewess,

⁹⁷ J.A. Młynarczyk, *Bestialstwo z urzędu. Organizacja hitlerowskiej akcji deportacyjnych w ramach "Operacji Reinhardt" na przykładzie likwidacji getta w Kielcach*, "Kwartalnik Historii Żydów" 2002, no. 3, pp. 362, 368.

⁹⁸ AIPN Ki, SWK, 128/173, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Bronisława Kuczerawy, Kielce, 31 V 1954 r.*, pp. 44–44v.

⁹⁹ G. Berendt, *Żydzi zbiegli z gett i obozów śmierci* [in:] *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012, p. 131.

¹⁰⁰ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/164, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Władysława Gajewskiego, Koszalin, 10 I 1948 r.*, p. 143.

¹⁰¹ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/43, *Zeznania świadka Henryka Fajnera na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Wincentemu Birskiemu i Antoniemu Gołuchowi, Kielce, 23 XI 1949 r.*, p. 74.

from the queue for bread, thus depriving her of her modest food ration¹⁰². However, when interrogated, Trojanowski stated that during the German occupation he harbored a Jewess himself, as confirmed by Ireneusz Kroc. Apparently that was Rozenbergówna from Bliżyn¹⁰³. Eventually, the Regional Court in Kielce, at a session in Radom, on 27 February 1950, found Trojanowski guilty as charged, including that case of beating up the Jewess, and sentenced him to 8 months in prison¹⁰⁴.

An unknown number of 'navy blue' policemen took part in anti-Jewish actions in the Kielce region between 1942 and 1944¹⁰⁵. In many localities of the Kielce County Poles were catching the Jews who were hiding and the Jews who were harbored by Poles. One Józef Staszewski from Psary together with others denounced Jews to Polish policemen from Bodzentyn¹⁰⁶. In the winter of 1943 Antoni Boczek, Jan Kopeć and Józef Kopeć caught 2 Jews at Sorbin: Rozenbergs, and denounced them to the 'navy blue' police at Bliżyn, and as a consequence they were both killed. These Jews were shot by German *gendarmes* from Skarżysko-Kamienna¹⁰⁷. Bajnyś Lipa, a resident of Jeziorko village was captured in the village of Mirocice, on suspicion of theft, and then handed over by the local population to the Polish Police post at Nowa

¹⁰² AIPN Ki, 126/95, *Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Romanowi Trojanowskiemu; Radom, 15 XI 1949 r.*, p. 3.

¹⁰³ AIPN Ki, 126/95, *Zeznania Romana Trojanowskiego na rozprawie głównej w sprawie własnej, Radom, 27 II 1950 r.*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, *Sentencja wyroku w sprawie Trojanowskiego Romana SA na sesji w Radomiu, 27 II 1950 r.*, p. 33. Some witnesses testifying before the Rehabilitation Commission maintained that Trojanowski was hostile to the Polish population.

¹⁰⁵ A. Skibińska, "Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?"..., pp. 380–381.

¹⁰⁶ AIPN Ki, 126/22, *Akta sądowe w sprawie Józefa Staszewskiego*.

¹⁰⁷ AIPN Ki, SWK, 128/158, *Odpis wyroku SW w Kielcach, Kielce, 26 II 1951 r.*, p. 17. Until 1941 the Rozenberg family lived with Józef Olejarz in Sorbin. It consisted of four persons: father, mother of unknown names, daughter Ruchla and son Berek. In 1941 they moved to Henryków, where they lived with a widow named Gołkowa, then they moved to the woods and hid in a dugout. Olejarz repeatedly brought them food and they used to visit him to collect food. In the winter of 1943, when they came to Olejarz for food, they were caught by Kopeć, who were joined by Boczek. Kopciowie and Boczek took the Jews to the Polish Police station at Bliżyn. The next day, the entire Rozenberg family was shot near the village of Wojtyniów by German *gendarmes* who had come from Skarżysko (AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/406, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Olejarza, Sorbin, 3 IV 1950 r.*, p. 12).

Ślupia. He was taken away from the post by members of the 62th Motorized *Gendarmerie* Platoon, who then shot him at Święta Katarzyna¹⁰⁸.

The Appeal Court in Kielce found Jan Miziewicz and Józef Kręcisz from Wzdół-Kolonia guilty of arresting 5 Jews from the family of Ankel Boresztand, including his wife Gitla, their oldest daughter Andzia, the younger one Topka, and the son Abram, and handing them over to the ‘navy blue’ police¹⁰⁹. In the court trial the subsequent fate of these Jews was not determined. Actually, the rule in this type of cases was that the court did not inquire whether the Jews were subsequently murdered, and if so, by whom¹¹⁰. It is not known why this was the case. Perhaps it was the effect of anti-Semitic attitudes at the District Court in Kielce¹¹¹.

The story of denouncing the Jews from Wzdół also shows a picture of the war in the countryside: ubiquitous fear, continuous intimidation, mutual control, and constant presence of the Germans. German police picked hostages from among the local population, who guaranteed the order in the area with their life and freedom¹¹². Władysław Miernik has given the following description of a briefing organized by the German *Gendarmerie*: “In the communal authority, immediately after the establishment of our Group, it was served by a German and a civil interpreter. This briefing was held for one hour’s time. At that meeting, this German told us that we were to pursue groups of Polish partisans, all kinds of spies of Polish organizations, and Jews, and if such individuals were discovered, then this was to be reported immediately to the village headman, and he in turn would report to the post of the navy blue police”¹¹³.

¹⁰⁸ T. Domański, *Miejsca masowych straceń na Kielecczyźnie na przykładzie Nowej Ślupki i Świętej Katarzyny* [in:] *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, Warsaw 2016, vol. 2, ed. M. Przegiętka, pp. 55–77.

¹⁰⁹ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/362, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Białka, Wzdół-Kolonia, 21 VI 1950 r.*, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ A. Skibińska, “Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?”..., p. 380.

¹¹¹ 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 Polskiego na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, eds. J. Gapys, T. Domański, Kielce 2016, p. 210.

¹¹² AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/362, *Wyrok SA w Kielcach, Kielce, 14 XII 1950 r.*, pp. 150–151.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Władysława Miernika, Kielce, 24 VI 1950 r.*, pp. 15–16. Jan Dulęba confirmed this testimony (*ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Jana Dulęby, Kielce, 26 VI 1950 r.*, p. 26).

In the described situations, the PP post offices functioned as a kind of intermediaries. The mechanism is well illustrated by an example from Samsonów. Władysław Szcześniak, a police officer from this post interrogated as a suspect¹¹⁴, explained that the civilian population had twice brought in a Jew and once three Jews, and that there were women among them. He claimed that “the post commander had to accept these Jews and inform the *Gendarmerie*”. The *gendarmes* would then come and shoot the Jews¹¹⁵.

Files from the trial of Antoni Lisowski, Władysław Gębski, Ignacy Duś and Wojciech Duś show that Polish policemen from Samsonów, who have indeed cooperated with the troop of Paweł Stępień “Gryf” from *Kadra Polski Niepodległej* (Cadre of Independent Poland; an organization integrated with the AK), have themselves shot 3 Jews named Berkowie – 2 men and a woman¹¹⁶. This was not the only example of ‘navy blue’ officers killing Jews on their own initiative. The commandant Konstanty Werdyn, also a member of the underground resistance organization, had negative effect on the rest of the policemen. In the 1960s he was proved guilty of taking part in the shooting of six members of the Jewish family named Goździński, under supervision of the German police¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁴ Szcześniak was accused, among others, of participation in murders of Jews, of which he was acquitted (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/254, *Wyrok przeciwko Władysławowi Szcześniakowi, Kielce, 11 XI 1948 r.*, p. 224). Unfortunately, the justification has not survived.

¹¹⁵ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/254, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Władysława Szcześniaka, Kielce, 21 IV 1948 r.*, p. 40.

¹¹⁶ These people have reported in the autumn of 1943 at the farm of Bartłomiej Sadowski at Długojów. They stayed one night at Sadowski’s place, and then the next day ‘navy blue’ policemen came from Samsonów and shot these Jews in nearby woods. When passing judgment, the court accepted that the defendants were acting in an atmosphere of the occupant’s terror and that “this fact must have exerted a tremendous influence on the mentality of the community of Długojów and increase the atmosphere of fear caused by the conduct of the occupant’s authorities. The accused committed the crime as charged in this very atmosphere of terror, because they feared for the lives of their own as well as those of their loved ones.” AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/393, *Wyrok SW w Kielcach, Kielce, 9 II 1951 r.*, pp. 90–93.

¹¹⁷ AIPN Ki, SWK, 128/202, *Wyrok przeciwko Konstantemu Werdynowi, Kielce, 6 VII 1962 r.*, p. 154. For more information about the Werdyn case, see: A. Skibińska, “Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?”..., pp. 388–390. Werdyn, Kielce, 6 July 1962, p. 154. More about the Werdyn case. A. Skibińska, “Got 10 years, but for what?”, pp. 388–390.

Of course, the above examples of the relationship between the ‘navy blue’ police and the Jews provide just a small part of the issue, which requires broad further research.

Cooperation with the underground

When assessing the ‘navy blue’ police as a whole it is extremely important to consider the involvement of members of this formation in the underground resistance activities. The increasing doubts of the German police as to the loyalty of the Polish Police concerned political matters. Actually, the involvement in the resistance conspiracy can be divided into three main forms: membership of secret (anti-German) police authorities, direct participation in the activity of underground resistance organizations, and resistance activities conducted individually¹¹⁸. Marek Getter was right to remark that for some ‘navy blue’ policemen the involvement in the resistance organizations’ activities was a way of making up an alibi when facing the forthcoming end of the war, while others had become involved with the resistance earlier, for patriotic reasons¹¹⁹.

Information about policemen’s illegal involvement multiplied between 1940 and 1941, bringing in November 1941 the first comprehensive vetting of the PP. Partial data shows that the percentage of policemen identified as suspect was low at the time and ranged from 3% in Piotrków up to 8% in Kielce. The result of the vetting action of 1941 was the introduction in 1942 of checking the forms of Polish officers newly accepted into service by the German security police (*Sicherheitspolizei – Sipo*). A further vetting campaign began in the spring of 1943 under the pressure of the public order police (*Orpo*). The loyalty of 2,061 officers was verified. Already after preliminary checks it was shown that 115 policemen were found in the files of the security police, although the operation had not covered all the officers by this time. The information was not passed on to the *Orpo* HQ¹²⁰. It might

¹¹⁸ A. Hemepel, “*Policja granatowa*” w *Generalnej Guberni*, “*Wiadomości Historyczne*” 1987, no. 6, p. 498.

¹¹⁹ M. Getter, *Policja granatowa...*, p. 233.

¹²⁰ W. Borodziej, *Terror i polityka. Polityka niemiecka a polski ruch oporu w GG 1939–1944*, Warsaw 1985, p. 27. According to Marek Getter, about 200 Polish policemen were invo-

seem that if the *Gestapo* was in possession of information about contacts and co-operation between the policemen and the underground resistance, this should have led to an immediate arrest of the officers. However, due to their professional knowledge, standard procedures were not followed. At the same time, the fact that many policemen evaded their duties or executed them sluggishly led to the placing of the PP on 5 May 1942 under the SS judiciary and the supervision of the German police, and from 1944 the same applied also to families of the ‘navy blue’ policemen¹²¹.

In the Kielce County, the earliest information about the involvement of the ‘navy blue’ policemen in the underground resistance activity comes from 1941. A denunciation against a ‘navy blue’ policeman with an accusation of conspiratorial activity originated from Bieliny community in 1941. The people who, according to the denunciator, “were playing politics” included Władysław Ołubiec from Bieliny and Stanisław Mikołajczyk from Nowa Słupia, *posterunkowy* of the Polish Police. The author of the letter attached the text of a distributed leaflet as proof¹²². Indeed, Stanisław Mikołajczyk joined the Polish Police in 1939. He used the pseudonym ‘Harpun’ in the resistance structures. He was one of the first members of SZP¹²³-ZWZ at Nowa Słupia post. He received the task of uncovering the infamous Gestapo agent Franz Wittek¹²⁴. ‘Harpun’ was going to poison him, but that did not work. Instead, he was arrested on the night of 12 April 1941. He took poison himself and died on 15 April¹²⁵.

lved in the resistance movement (M. Getter, *Policja granatowa w Warszawie 1939–1944...*, p. 227).

¹²¹ P. Majer, *Policja Polska...*, p. 305.

¹²² AIPN GK, *Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienst im Distrikt Radom. Aussendienststelle Kielce* [Komendant Policji Bezpieczeństwa i Służby Bezpieczeństwa Dystryktu Radomskiego. Oddział w Kielcach] (Adst Ki), 645/4, *Anonim adresowany do “Pana Starosty w Kielcach” [zarejestrowany 19 III 1941 r.]*, p. 85.

¹²³ *Służba Zwycięstwu Polski* (Service for Poland’s Victory) – an earlier name of ZWZ (translator’s note).

¹²⁴ For information about Wittek’s activities in the Kielce region see: M. Michalczyk, *Diabeł Piątej Kolumny*, Warsaw 1986; T. Domański, *Miejsca masowych straceń...*, pp. 55–65.

¹²⁵ The same night there were mass arrests at Bieliny. Ołubiec, a member of the ZWZ, was also among the detainees, (T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie...*, pp. 112–113. M. Michalczyk, *Diabeł Piątej Kolumny...*, pp. 63–65, 81–85).

One of the resistance networks was established by Julian Pobocho from the police post at Bieliny (he died on 17 March 1942 at KL Auschwitz)¹²⁶. Władysław Rojek from Krajno Wymyślone, Piotrowski from Górno, Wojciech Tosnowiec from Krajno Południowe, Antoni Stępnik from Krajno Pogorzałe, and Józef Stępnik, Bolesław Szlufik, Piotr Szlufik and Stanisław Adam Szlufik belonged to the organization created by that policeman¹²⁷. The activity of the Pobocho group was discovered by the Gestapo as a result of a denunciation, which read: "To the Gestapo. I report that the gang of thugs standing at the betrayal of the German State at Bieliny, apart from those who were arrested by you, Sirs, as dangerous from others, includes Pobocho, a Polish policeman, and Bieliny community alderman, Barański [...]. Pobocho is a rascal, who in the evenings and nights had parties and fun with priests [...]. Such rascals, as they are, should be locked up or laboring in a camp because they are dangerous to the German people, this is no fairy tale, but true information. I warn you of these traitors, arrest them"¹²⁸.

Apart from the cases mentioned above, it is known that Piotr Chyb from the police station at Skarżysko-Kamienna¹²⁹ and Henryk Juściński, the com-

¹²⁶ *Mężczyźni transport z 15 września 1941 r. 190 osób o numerach od 20752 do 20941* [in:] *Księga pamięci. Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Radomia i innych miejscowości Kielecczyny 1940–1944*, vol. 1, eds. F. Piper, I. Strzelecka, Oświęcim 2006, pp. 335, 357; Henryk Lipowski, the commander of the police post at Łopuszno, was also sent to the concentration camp in 1942 (AIPN Ki, *Związek Kombatantów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Byłych Więźniów Politycznych Świętokrzyski Zarząd Wojewódzki w Kielcach [ZK] 192/7*, M. Migacz, *Działalność polityczna ugrupowań ruchu oporu na terenie gminy Łopuszno*, manuscript, Włoszczowa 1984, p. 63).

¹²⁷ AIPN GK, KdS, 105/212A, *Wniosek o areszt Władysława Rojka, zam. Krajno Wymyślone*, Kielce, no date, p. 74; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Władysław Rojek, zam. Krajno-Wymyślone], p. 78; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Piotrowski, zam. Górno], no date, no location, p. 81; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Tosnowiec Wojciech, zam. Krajno-Południowe no date, no location, p. 92; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Antoni Stępnik, zam. Krajno-Pogorzałe no date, no location, p. 118; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Józef Stępnik, zam. Krajno no date, no location, p. 123; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Bolesław Szlufik, zam. Krajno-Stara Wieś II no date, no location, p. 142; *ibid.*, *Wniosek o areszt na nazwisko Szlufik Piotr, zam. Krajno-Południowe no date, no location, p. 147; ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Szlufik Stanisław], no date, no location, p. 149; *ibid.*, [Karta informacyjna na nazwisko Adam Szlufik, zam. Krajno-Lęki], no date, no location p. 162.

¹²⁸ AIPN GK, Adst Ki, 645/4 [Donos] *Do Komendy Policji Niemieckiej Gestapa w Kielcach dom Kasy Skarbowej [list ten został zarejestrowany 26 V 1941]*, pp. 81–82.

¹²⁹ J. Rell, *Podobwód ZWZ – AK "Morwa" Skarżysko-Kamienna*, Kielce 1993, p. 177; In 1944

mander of the police post at Łopuszno, who used the pseudonym of 'Zakonnik'¹³⁰ both belonged to the AK. Władysław Szcześniak from the post at Samsonów/Zagnańsk, Franciszek Świącicki from the police station in Kielce and Wincenty Sobiepański from Chęciny have cooperated with the AK¹³¹. Constant or occasional cooperation consisted mainly of conducting intelligence of the composition and armament of police posts, planned German activities, and imminent arrests¹³².

Many 'navy blue' policemen took part in the 'Burza' operation¹³³ and in partisan warfare in the Kielce region from mid-1944 on. Desertion from the service and joining the partisans in this period resulted primarily from the situation at the front line and a certain laxity of the German occupation¹³⁴. On 25 July 1944 the Germans ordered the evacuation of the 'navy blue' police station from Skarżysko. Police officers had to report in Częstochowa for further service by 31 July 1944. This order was not carried out by the station commander Smok,

he deserted and hid. AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 005/1308, *Raport o zatwierdzeni kandydata na werbunek*, Kielce no date, p. 5.

¹³⁰ His son Tomasz, 'Sęć', 'Tomek' was also active with the AK („*Felek*” Adolf Karol Landl, ed. S. Felcman, Kielce 1998 r., p. 40).

¹³¹ Szcześniak kept illegal newspapers. Świącicki repeatedly, according to instructions from Jadwiga Wójcik, whose home was used as the contact point in Kielce, performed various activities for the underground resistance, although formally he did not belong to the organization (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/254, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Pawła Stępnia, Szczecin, 10 VIII 1948 r.*, pp. 93–93v; *ibid*, *Zeznania Antoniego Ferta na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Władysławowi Szcześniakowi, Kielce, 6 IX 1948 r.*, p. 148; *ibid*, *Zeznania Zdzisława Rychtera na rozprawie głównej przeciwko Władysławowi Szcześniakowi, Kielce, 6 IX 1948 r.*, pp. 150v–151; AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/291, *Oświadczenie Pelagii Zdanowskiej, asyentki PKP, Kielce, [1948 r.]*, fr. 56; AIPN Ki, SWK, 127/298, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Jadwigi Wójcik, Sosnowiec, 9 I 1949*, p. 31; AIPN Lu, PSSKL, 9/157, *Zeznania Mieczysława Janury na rozprawie głównej w sprawie W. Sobiepańskiego, Kielce, 24 V 1946 r.*, p. 113).

¹³² AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/254, *Zeznania Antoniego Ferta, Zeznania Zdzisława Rychtera*.

¹³³ Operation 'Burza' ('Storm') was the uprising of underground resistance forces planned by the AK to coincide with the defeat of the German occupying forces at the hands of the advancing Soviets (translator's note).

¹³⁴ For example, Stanisław Raczyński deserted in May 1944, Stanisław Zalewski from the Zagnańsk post on 25 July 1944, and Albin Brym in August 1944 (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/359, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Stanisława Raczyńskiego, 8 XI 1949 r.*, p. 3; AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/348, *Własnoręczna informacja Stanisława Zalewskiego, Wrocław, 22 X 1947 r.*, p. 48; *ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Stanisława Zalewskiego, Oleśnica, 18 IX 1947 r.*, p. 16; AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/3, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Albina Bryma, Kielce, 22 VIII 1946 r.*, p. 17).

who dissolved his crew. As he admitted himself, his younger colleagues joined the partisans, while he fled on 1 August 1944 and went to Krotoszyn¹³⁵. At the initiative of Jan Kicała, who cooperated with the AK, the crew from the Bodzentyn post was disarmed at Święta Katarzyna on 30 July 1944¹³⁶.

Policemen Wiktor Stolarczyk, Saturnin Jabłoński, Franciszek Kucharski and Witold Szymkowski defected from the post at Łopuszno. At that time they were its entire crew. They joined the 18-strong AK group under Kowalczyk 'Konrad' from Snochowice¹³⁷. Jabłoński, arrested after the war, testified: "We were ordered to join the partisans on 28 July 1944. Commander Juściński first went alone, and left the order for me to bring the rest of the crew of the post to the assembly point, but as regards Szymkowski, who did not belong to the organization, he gave me a free choice, whether to take him to the forest with us, or to smother, that is to incapacitate him before leaving. [...] I carried out this order. I remember that he gave me the password 'Warsaw', and then 'we come on the orders of Sergiusz [Mieczysław Stęplewski] to Zakonnik [Henryk Juściński]' "¹³⁸. After the 'navy blue' police officers arrived, their earlier conduct was investigated in the ranks of the AK. Jabłoński was due to be brought to trial, but the former policeman had fled the troop¹³⁹.

¹³⁵ AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/286, *Protokół rozprawy głównej przeciwko Ignacemu Smokowi, Kielce, 21 IX 1950 r.*, p. 40; *ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Ignacego Smoka, Krotoszyn, 9 XII 1949 r.*, p. 102.

¹³⁶ T. Domański, *Źródła do dziejów Bodzentyna i gminy Bodzentyn w okresie II wojny światowej w zasobie archiwalnym Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (in print); AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 6/1729, *Życiorys Jana Kicały* no date, no location, p. 15.

¹³⁷ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/324, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Wiktora Stolarczyka, Kielce, 10 IX 1948 r.*, p. 19v.

¹³⁸ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/164, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Saturnina Jabłońskiego, Koszalin, 4 IX 1947 r.*, p. 53. According to Mieczysław Migacz, 'navy blue' policeman Bronisław Gudowski and Aleksander Szykowski were also members of the troop of Stęplewski 'Sergiusz' in July 1944 (the names of these policemen from the Kielce County could not be confirmed), who had escaped together with Adolf Karol Landl, a German *gendarme* from the Łopuszno post who cooperated with the AK. For unknown reasons Gudowski and Szykowski, following a brief stay with the partisans, took their assigned weapons, escaped and hid from both the Germans and the AK. (AIPN Ki, ZK, 192/7, M. Migacz, *Działalność polityczna ugrupowań ruchu oporu na terenie gminy Łopuszno*, manuscript, Włoszczowa 1984, p. 63.

¹³⁹ AIPN Ki 127/164, *Zeznania Stanisława Ogonowskiego na rozprawie głównej Saturnina Jabłońskiego, Kielce, 26 I 1948 r.*, p. 169; *ibid*, *Zeznania Lucjana Słomko na rozprawie głównej Saturnina Jabłońskiego, Kielce, 15 XII 1947 r.*, p. 124.

Most of those PP officers who cooperated with the underground resistance did work with the AK, but some policemen had links with other organizations. Ludwik Stefaniak from the police station in Kielce belonged to the *Polska Niepodległa* (Independent Poland) organization¹⁴⁰. Jan Ruca, the commander of the post at Morawica, collaborated with the GL¹⁴¹, while Bronisław Kuczerawa from the post at Suchedniów and Wiktor Stolarczyk from the post at Łopuszno (mentioned earlier) with the NSZ¹⁴². After departing from the AK troop under 'Konrad', Stolarczyk joined the 'Świętokrzyska' Brigade of the NSZ. He participated in three actions against the Germans: at Pogwizdów, Marcinkowice and Caców. Then he withdrew with the Brigade through the Czech territory to Pilsen (Plzno)¹⁴³. He returned to Poland in May 1947¹⁴⁴.

Many policemen, even those for whom we have no information whether they were connected with the underground, supported the resistance of the Poles in various ways. Secret school classes took place at the apartment of Jan Konietz at Mała Street in Kielce, which his son attended, among others¹⁴⁵. It was similar with Antoni Bartocha's family. His son and daughter attended secret school classes at his home¹⁴⁶. Even Bolesław R. apparently provided room for secret teaching, as emphasized by the judge in the justification of

¹⁴⁰ Janusz Siwek recalled: "I remember that after the Soviets dropped leaflets over Kielce in the summer of 1944, the Polish Police were ordered to collect these leaflets in order to destroy them. Mr Stefaniak kept many of these leaflets and he handed these over to me, and we, the boy scouts, distributed them around Kielce. We planted the leaflets to the Germans and to Polish people. The leaflets were written in German and other leaflets depicted illustrations of German soldiers taken captive, killed or in 'miserable situations'. Stefaniak was killed on 12 January 1945 during the bombing of Kielce by the Red Army, in Mickiewicza Street. He was buried in the New Cemetery" (Account of Janusz Benedykt Siwek of 25 May 2015, in the author's collection).

¹⁴¹ *Gwardia Ludowa* (People's Guard) – the communist armed underground resistance organisation (translator's note).

¹⁴² *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne* (National Armed Forces) – an armed underground resistance organisation controlled by the nationalist movement (translator's note).

¹⁴³ For more information about the controversy surrounding the march of the NSZ 'Świętokrzyska' Brigade see: in: J. Żaryn, "*Taniec na linie nad przepaścią*". *Organizacja Polska na wychodźstwie i jej łączność z krajem w latach 1945–1955*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 27–92.

¹⁴⁴ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/324, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Wiktora Stolarczyka, Kielce, 10 IX 1948 r.*, p. 19v.

¹⁴⁵ Account of Janusz Benedykt Siwek of 25 May 2015, in the author's collection.

¹⁴⁶ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/291, *Oświadczenie Marii Jezierskiej*, no date, no location, fr. 178.

the sentence in the postwar trial¹⁴⁷. Włodzimierz Brym, the son of Albin, a policeman from Bieliny, was active with the BCh using the pseudonym of ‘Litawor’ and harbored a 17-year-old partisan from the group of ‘Jurand’¹⁴⁸.

In conclusion of this topic, it is worth mentioning that Polish policemen made an important contribution to the creation of the *Państwowy Korpus Bezpieczeństwa* (State Security Corps), i.e. the police structures of the Polish Underground State. The activity of the PKB requires further in-depth regional studies¹⁴⁹. In the light of current findings, it is known that the post of the district commander of the PKB in Kielce was held by *ppłk/podinsp.* Jan Misiewicz ‘Minkiewicz’, who was also the PP liaison officer in the Radom district during 1939–1943¹⁵⁰. According to the Report on the activities of the PKB in the Radom-Kielce District, the organizational work of this formation was based exclusively on the ‘navy blue’ police¹⁵¹.

Operations of the underground resistance against the PP

In the Radom district, GL troops carried out particularly many actions of disarming the ‘navy blue’ police stations already from 1942 on¹⁵², treating these activities primarily as an easy way to acquire weapons and military equipment, without paying attention to the consequences inflicted by the Germans on the Polish policemen for the loss of weapons. They were liable to be sent to prison, deported to a concentration camp, or even to be pun-

¹⁴⁷ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/251, *Wyrok SO w Kielcach przeciwko Bolesławowi R., Kielce, 25 IX 1948 r.*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁸ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/3, *Pismo Albina Bryma do prokuratora SO w Kielcach, Kielce, 17 XI 1946 r.*, p. 40.

¹⁴⁹ About PKB see: m.in. J. Gmitruk, *Policja Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego*, “Przegląd Policyjny” 1999, no. 1/2, pp. 92–101; W. Grabowski, *Polska policja w czasie II wojny światowej. Wybrane problemy* [in:] *Policja Państwowa...*, pp. 167–191; *idem, Policja w planach Delegatury Rządu RP na Kraj*, Cracow 1995.

¹⁵⁰ W. Grabowski, *Polska policja w czasie II wojny światowej...*, p. 173.

¹⁵¹ *Sprawozdanie o PKB do dnia 9 X 1943 r.* [in:] W. Grabowski, *Policja w planach...*, p. 36. In total, in October 1943, 112 career commissioned officers and 1616 career uniformed men were active with the PKB. W. Grabowski, *Polska policja w czasie II wojny światowej...*, p. 175.

¹⁵² B. Hillebrandt, *Partyzantka na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1970, pp. 516–518; *idem, Działania oddziałów i brygad partyzanckich Gwardii i Armii Ludowej na Kielecczyźnie*, Warsaw 1962, pp. 28–29, 42, 83.

ished with death¹⁵³. The orders of the main GL headquarters directed to the partisans called upon the ‘navy blue’ policemen to “lay down their arms and ammunition at any call from the partisans”¹⁵⁴, In the Kielce district, the group of Stanisław ‘Garbaty’ Olczyk disarmed the post at Samsonów¹⁵⁵, the ‘Sowiński’ troop, the post at Nowa Słupia¹⁵⁶, and the ‘Ziemia Kielecka’ troop, led by Ignacy Rosenfarb aka Ignacy ‘Narbutt’ Robb, the post at Niewachłów. The attack on the latter post was unique. In order to force the ‘navy blue’ policemen to surrender, the GL men used members of their families as human shields¹⁵⁷. Yet another communist group attempted to attack the PP post at Mniów, which ended with the removal of a telephone, demolition of equipment and destruction of files in the building. The policemen, having left the premises, fired at the attackers without suffering casualties¹⁵⁸.

In an attempt to counter the attacks on the posts, the German command issued special orders: “In cases of threat of major banditry, the posts should be prepared for the crew to be able to stay overnight at the post, watching their security. So you must think about straw mattresses and straw. The policemen bring with them, for the night, blankets, pillows and washing utensils etc. In such cases the duty officer is in service, the rest of the crew are asleep. Pay attention to phone calls, outgoing as well as incoming. Duty watchmen should be changed every few hours. Food, if it cannot be done otherwise, must be brought from home”¹⁵⁹.

Attacks at ‘navy blue’ police stations were carried out not only by members of the communist groups, but also by the BCh and AK, although the latter two undertook such actions only towards the end of the German occupation.

¹⁵³ 7 policemen from Żarnowiec, who allowed themselves disarmed without a fight, were executed (S. Piątkowski, *Policja Polska tzw. granatowa...*, p. 116).

¹⁵⁴ AAN, Społeczny Komitet Antykomunistyczny (Antyk), 228/12, *Działalność obozu komunistycznego w Polsce (za czas od 21 IV do 15 V 1943 r.)*, no date, no location, p. 78.

¹⁵⁵ S. Piątkowski, *Między obowiązkami* p. 183; B. Hillebrandt, *Partyzantka na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1970, p. 518.

¹⁵⁶ AAN, GL, 191, XXIII-2, *Raport nr 21, Okręg nr 5*, [no location] 9 IX 1943 r., p. 49; *ibidem*, *Raport nr 25, Obwód nr III, Okręg nr 1*, no location, 13 X 1943 r., p. 53.

¹⁵⁷ P. Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza droga do władzy*, Warsaw 2003, p. 263. The action against the Polish Police station was apparently carried out in retaliation for “burning down a Polish village” (AAN, GL, 191/2, *Pierwsi bohaterowie Kielecczyzny: Kaliński, Żbik, Broniek*, no date, no location, p. 9).

¹⁵⁸ AAN, Antyk, 228/12, *Sprawozdanie z terenu. Pracownia*, 22 VI 1943 r., p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ AAN, DRP, 202/II-34, *Załącznik do Części IV KB za 20 I – 20 II [1943 r.]*, p. 106.

The AK generally did not carry out such actions because of the consequences for the ‘navy blue’ officers for losing their weapons (especially since many policemen cooperated with the organization). The AK approach changed at the end of the war. In July 1944 a detached group, from the AK troop of ‘Grot’, disarmed the Polish Police post at Chęciny, where it took several rifles¹⁶⁰. Also in July 1944 the Bodzentyn post was disarmed by AK soldiers under the command of ‘Szatan’. The same year, a group of partisans under the command of Julian Woźniak from the troop of Mieczysław ‘Szczytniak’ Młudzik disarmed the post at Piekoszów¹⁶¹.

Members of the underground resistance repeatedly took away guns from single policemen. For example, the GL subversion group in Świętokrzyskie region, under the command of ‘Zemsta’ and ‘Skiba’, with the help of ‘Wir’ and several other partisans, disarmed two policemen from Bodzentyn¹⁶². Also, one of the PP officers at Mniów was shot dead by a GL troop, referred to as “several-times murderer of Poles and agent of g[esta]po”¹⁶³, while *sierż.* (Władysław?) Nowacki from the post at Mała Wiśniówka was punished by flogging “for being a flunkey to the occupant”.

On 14 August 1943 at Bodzentyn partisans from the troop of Jan Kosiński ‘Inspektor Jacek’ shot the commander of the local post, named Kozak¹⁶⁴. In September 1944 Władysław Marczewski from the Zagnańsk post was shot by the troop of Marian Sołtysiak ‘Barabas’ at Serbinów. It was presumably by members of the underground resistance, “for mistreatment of the Polish people”, who shot dead Zygmunt Bekiel¹⁶⁵ and wounded Wincenty Hamrol

¹⁶⁰ AP Kielce, ZBoWiD, 177, *Ankieta, Chęciny, 1978 r.*, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ S. Piątkowski, *Między obowiązkiem...*, p. 185; L. Kaczanowski, *Następcy Schustera*, “Przemiany” 1976, no. 4, p. 23; AP Kielce, ZBoWiD, 177, *Życiorys Juliana Woźniaka, Bolmin, 30 I 1982 r.*, p. 35; *Archiwum Zakładu Historii Ruchu Ludowego, Relacje BCH*, R-56, S. Kwiecień, *Relacja z działalności konspiracyjnej “Rocha” i BCH w okresie okupacji*, no location [1961], p. 7. The immediate reason was apparently to release Stanisław Ludwиковski, who had escaped from Germany.

¹⁶² E. Wiślicz-Iwańczyk, *Echa puszczy jodłowej*, Warsaw 1969, p. 85.

¹⁶³ AAN, AL, 191/XXIII-2, *Raport Kielce (do raportu Radom nr 8)*, no date, no location, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴ AAN, AK, 203/XII-10, vol. 2, *Wykonane wyroki na zdrajcach za okres od 1 VIII do 28 IX 1943 r.*, no date, no location, p. 52.

¹⁶⁵ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/164, *Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Saturnina Jabłońskiego, Koszalin, 4 IX 1947 r.*, p. 47.

from Kielce, a *Preisüberwachung* officer, described by the AK intelligence as: “interpreter and the right hand of [Hans] Gaier, a dangerous informer and Pole-hater”¹⁶⁶. For unknown reasons a BCh troop punished Antoni Zamorski with flogging¹⁶⁷. Unidentified perpetrators shot Paweł Łuczak, who served at the Mniów post, among others¹⁶⁸. Policemen in the Kielce district also fell victim to ordinary bandit attacks, which were a common occurrence in the GG¹⁶⁹.

PP cooperation with the Germans

Taking into account the actions of Polish Police officers in implementing the occupant’s policy and the participation in anti-Jewish actions, it is worth analyzing the available source material in terms of formal cooperation between the PP and the German occupying structures. The list of “traitors cooperating with the enemy as informers and informants” prepared by the AK Security Department is of particular importance for these studies. For Kielce the list included 36 names, including 3 marked as “policeman”, 1 as “navy blue” policeman, and 3 as “criminal police officers”, and also 2 persons identified as German collaborators who lived with a “brother policeman”¹⁷⁰. The above

¹⁶⁶ AAN, AK, 203/XII-10, vol. 2, *Wykaz zniszczonych*, no date, no location, p. 47. Hamrol was described as an informer by another policeman, Franciszek Święcicki (AIPN Ki, WUSW Ki, 013/1799, *Protokół zeznania Franciszka Święcickiego, Kielce, 29 I 1945 r.*, p. 61).

¹⁶⁷ AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/9, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Jana Stasiaka, Wałbrzych, 10 I 1946 r.*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ AIPN Ki, 139/28, *Protokół końcowego przesłuchania podejrzanego Piotra Ślusarczyka, Kielce, 21 I 1956 r.*, p. 132.

¹⁶⁹ AAN, Antyk, 228/12, *Sprawozdanie z terenu. Pracownia, 22 VI 1943 r.*, p. 12; E. Adamczyk “Wiktor”, *Mój udział w kontrwywiadzie Armii Krajowej*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 102–104.

¹⁷⁰ AIPN Ki, *Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Kielcach (OKBZH)*, 53/227, *Wykaz zdradców współpracujących z wrogiem w charakterze konfidentów i informatorów sporządzony na dzień 1 IV 1944 r.*, pp. 1–2. The “*Prawda Polska*” newspaper, no. 65 of 27 August 1942, reported that Adam Janasiński was a Gestapo agent in Kielce. The article became the basis for carrying out investigations in this case by the Prosecutor of the Regional Court in Kielce. Witnesses were interrogated and gave Janasiński a very positive opinion of an honest man. They said that Janasiński warned his compatriots against roundups and destroyed the anonymous letters received by the PP so they did not get in the hands of the *Gendarmerie*. The proceedings were discontinued in the absence of evidence of guilt (AIPN Ki, *Prokuratura Sądu Okręgowego w Kielcach*, 131/174, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Heleny Tysnarzewskiej, Kielce, 12 X 1948 r.*, p. 6; *ibid*, *Protokół prze-*

list should be considered incomplete. It is difficult to recognize as credible that the Germans had just 36 informers¹⁷¹ in the city which at the time had over 50,000 inhabitants. Among those mentioned was the 'navy blue' policeman Boleslaw R., whom the AK's intelligence characterized as follows on 20 November 1943: "Sierż. of the 'navy blue' police in Kielce. He volunteered to join the execution squad and has taken part in the shooting of prisoners, for which he receives 100 zł per person. He is assigned to 'Lichwa', where he distinguishes himself as a very eager oppressor of the traders. His attitude to the traders is such that the Germans often hold him back and his colleagues demand a death sentence from the organization. Notwithstanding this, he is an informer to the German authorities, both against his colleagues and other people working in the underground resistance"¹⁷².

A similar list of agents-informers, suspect persons and the flunkeys to the German occupant, was prepared the AK Security Department for the Kielce county. The list included the following communities: Bliżyn; Bieliny, Bodzentyn, Chęciny, Dąbrowa, Dyminy, Górno, Mniów, Morawica, Niewachłów, Słupia Nowa, Samsonów, Snochowice and Suchedniów¹⁷³. A total of 65 people were listed, including 4 policemen. Stanisław Gałka from Słupia in Nowa Słupia community, and Stępień, police *kapral* from Zagnańsk in Samsonów community, were marked as "suspect", Piotr Ślusarczyk from Mniów as "German flunkey"¹⁷⁴, Władysław Marczewski from Słupia in Nowa

śluchania świadka Ireny Lubasiowej, Kielce, 12 X 1948 r., p. 7; ibid, Wniosek o umorzenie dochodzenia przeciwko Adamowi Janasińskiemu, 26 XI 1948 r., p. 13).

¹⁷¹ There was also a list no. 2 entitled "List of persons suspected of cooperation with the enemy as informers and informants prepared on 1 April 1944". The list included a total of 159 names, but not a single 'navy blue' policeman or Kripo policeman (AIPN Ki, OKBZH, 53/227, *Wykaz osób podejrzanych o współpracę z wrogiem w charakterze konfidentów i informatorów sporządzony na dzień 1 IV 1944 r.*, pp. [1-2]).

¹⁷² AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/251, *Wyciąg z listy konfidentów sporządzonej przez organizację podziemną AK w czasie okupacji niemieckiej z 20 XI 1943 r.*, Kielce, 15 XI 1947 r., p. 31.

¹⁷³ Probably one of the policemen at Łopuszno was constantly collaborating with the Kielce Gestapo (AIPN Ki, ZK, 192/7, M. Migacz, *Działalność polityczna ugrupowań ruchu oporu na terenie gminy Łopuszno*, manuscript, Włoszczowa 1984, p. 7).

¹⁷⁴ The case of the Mniów police post commander appeared twice in postwar proceedings. In 1947 the Kielce District Court acquitted Ślusarczyk from charges of taking away food from people and of capturing wanted persons. In 1956, the prosecutor's office of the City and County of Kielce dismissed new proceedings against Ślusarczyk. In the justification

Słupia community as “informer”¹⁷⁵. The percentage of policemen included in the list was therefore small and was equal to only 6.15% of all PP officers in the Kielce district¹⁷⁶.

Conclusion

A Rehabilitation-Qualification Committee was established on 29 August 1945, set up to assess the activity of police officers serving in the State Police until 1939 and in the Polish Police during the German occupation. From January 1946 to the beginning of 1952, when the Committee ended its work, out of the 8247 applications filed by former police officers, 556 were declared non-rehabilitated¹⁷⁷. The reasons for a negative opinion included the persecution of the Jewish population, beating the detainees, arrest and ill-treatment of persons, bribery, adoption of German nationality, and being a flunkey to the Germans. The reasons for the refusal to rehabilitate included participation in actions imposed by the occupant: roundup arrests, requisitions and punishing with fines¹⁷⁸.

Mostly, the list of allegations made against the ‘navy blue’ policemen in rehabilitation proceedings coincided with those that were then charged in courtrooms. On the basis of incomplete data¹⁷⁹ 27 policemen from the Kielce County were tried after 1945: 9 from the police station in Kielce,

of the dismissal the principle of *res iudicata* was quoted (AIPN Ki, PMPK, 139/28, *Odpis wyroku SO w Kielcach przeciwko Piotrowi Ślusarczykowi, Kielce, 15 XII 1947 r.; ibid, 1, pp. 149–153*).

¹⁷⁵ AIPN Ki, OKBZH, 53/227, *Wykaz agentów-konfidentów, osób podejrzanych oraz służalców sporządzony na dzień 1 IV 1944 r.*, pp. [1–2]. No profession was quoted for 46 persons. See also: AAN, AL, 191/XXIII-2, *Raport Kielce (do raportu Radom nr 8)*, no date, no location, p. 10.

¹⁷⁶ German informers in the PP in the Jędrzejów County constituted an equally small percentage. The list of 36 names prepared by Eugeniusz Adamczyk included only 2 ‘navy blue’ policemen and 3 officers of the Polish *Kripo* (AIPN Ki, 126/61, *Wykaz informatorów i szpicli gestapo z jędrzejowskiego, Jędrzejów, 21 XI 1945 r.*, pp. 14–15).

¹⁷⁷ It is worth raising the issue of the truthfulness of the statements made, as pointed out by Ewa Wiatr (E. Wiatr, „Zdawanie Żydów”..., pp. 507–508).

¹⁷⁸ R. Litwiński, *Komisja rehabilitacyjno-kwalifikacyjna dla byłych policjantów (1946–1952)*, “Dzieje Najnowsze” 2004, no. 1, pp. 117–134.

¹⁷⁹ The research into this matter continues and the findings quoted here will certainly change.

3 from Piekoszów, 2 from Łopuszno, 3 from Samsonów, 2 from Skarżysko-Kamienna, 2 from Chęciny and 1 each from Wiśniówka Mała, Bieliny, Bodzentyn, Suchedniów, Mniów and Białogon. 13 police officers were totally acquitted (in the 1st and 2nd instance), 8 were sentenced on some charges and 6 were sentenced on all charges. In comparison with the total number of policemen who served during the German occupation in the Kielce County, the percentage of officers charged was about 17, while just over 4% were found guilty¹⁸⁰.

Considering the widespread dislike of the 'navy blue' police and its involvement in the implementation of the occupant's policy, the number of those declared guilty of actions against the civilian population is extremely modest. Some investigations carried out by the UB¹⁸¹ officers had little in common with justice, it was common to torture the accused policemen to force them to admit to the alleged crimes. This is testified, for example, by Wincenty Sobiepański's own words on his case: "I am surprised that in the file of the inquiry, the report of my interrogation by the UB does not include my testimony that I was a *Volksdeutsch*, because even to this I was forced by beating"¹⁸². Witnesses were also forced to make statements with added phrases they had not said, or even prompted to sign ready-made reports. There are many such examples¹⁸³.

The overall assessment of the policemen was largely dependent on the court practice. It was assessed whether the defendant acted on his own initiative or explicitly instructed by the Germans, whether representatives of

¹⁸⁰ According to Adam Hempel's findings, collaborative attitude was apparently displayed by about 10% of the 'navy blue' policemen (A. Hempel, "*Policja granatowa*"..., p. 495).

¹⁸¹ *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa* (Security Authority) – the communist secret police in Poland in the immediate postwar period (translator's note).

¹⁸² AIPN Lu, SSKL, 9/157, *Zeznania Wincentego Sobiepańskiego na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 24 V 1946 r.*, p. 110.

¹⁸³ See, for example: AIPN Ki, SAK, 126/43, *Zeznania świadka Antoniego Snocha na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 23 XI 1949 r.*, p. 71. In the face of contradictions in the testimony, witness Stasiak stated: "In Wałbrzych, security officials had everything with regard to the accused [Zamorski], already written on a paper sheet [...]. I had not said in the earlier investigation that the defendant tried to harm the Poles and Jews at every step. During the interrogation in Wałbrzych, those who interrogated me wrote more than I said; they wrote the report in my presence. I have read this report and signed it." (AIPN Ki, SOK, 127/9, *Zeznania świadka Jana Stasiaka na rozprawie głównej, Kielce, 27 I 1947 r.*, p. 112).

the German police were present when he performed his official duties, what was the opinion of the local community about him, and the veracity of the witnesses was verified.

One of the defenders wrote, “Although the charges against the accused are very grave, however, it should be borne in mind that in such cases, on many occasions, the court found a far-reaching hostile attitude of those who testified, especially as in this case we are dealing with a policeman who, due to his duties, doubtlessly must have had enemies”¹⁸⁴.

At the end of this brief essay about the organization and activity of the ‘navy blue’ Polish Police in the Kielce region in 1939–1945, it may be concluded that the assessment of the Polish Police as a whole is extremely difficult. Officers of the Polish Police were both doing things worthy of recognition and committing shameful acts that required stigmatization, which creates an image full of contradictions that are difficult to understand. It is easier to describe individual officers, their attitudes and behavior than the Polish Police as a whole.

¹⁸⁴ AIPN Ki, 127/254, *Pismo adwokata Czesława Sadowskiego do Sądu Okręgowego w Kielcach, Kielce, 29 VII 1948 r.*, p. 79.

“WE RECOGNISED EACH OTHER BY OUR EYES”. FROM RESEARCH ON THE SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF JEWISH WOMEN LIVING ‘ON THE SURFACE’ ON THE ‘ARYAN’ SIDE IN OCCUPIED CRACOW AND ITS VICINITY¹

Introduction

The survival strategies of Jewish women² using ‘Aryan’ papers on the ‘Aryan’ side in occupied Cracow and its surrounding area³ have not yet been

¹ This paper presents the stories of women who lived ‘on the surface’ on the ‘Aryan side’, but they were not living in specially organised and prepared hideouts, hiding places or other isolated locations. Staying ‘on the surface’ meant a greater influence on one’s fate than in the case of women who were constantly in hiding, but at the same time it entailed the risk of being recognised by Poles or Germans. It was precisely the possibility of showing these opportunities and dangers of life on the ‘Aryan’ side, or ‘on the surface’ that was an essential criterion for selection of the analysed cases.

The text has appeared in Polish in the volume in “Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość” 2015, no 25/26.

² For the purposes of this article, and for the research I have conducted on the fate of Jewish women in occupied Cracow, I define a Jewish woman as being over fourteen. This is connected with the legal regulations introduced by the German occupation administration. In 1939 (the second executive enactment issued on 11 December 1939 to the 26 October 1939 decree on forced labour for the Jewish population in the *General Government*) the Germans defined the age range for the Jewish population able to work, stipulating that the labour duty applied to persons between the ages of fourteen and sixty.

³ In the article I have used the definition of the ‘Aryan’ side as adopted by Małgorzata Melchior. The researcher has decided that this term may also be applied to places where no ghetto existed. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow uses the term ‘Aryan’ side with reference to the survival strategy of Jews hiding in Warsaw, only after the ghetto was established there. In Cracow, the ghetto functioned from March 1941, but many of the smaller surrounding towns where, Jews who had escaped from the city sought refuge, had no separate Jewish quarters. People who chose to hide on the ‘Aryan’ side and whose testimonies I have analysed, did not stay solely in Cracow, but they often moved from one place to another. In addition, I have distinguished between people hiding on the ‘Aryan’ side and those using

described extensively in the work of historians and other researchers, who have studied the consequences of the Second World War in the capital of the *General Government* (GG)⁴.

There have been a number of publications concerning this issue, both academic and popular, but usually more in the form of micro-history than comprehensive analysis, as exemplified by Monika Stępień's paper on the fate of two Jewish women who were living in Cracow under altered identities⁵. This is related to the fact that neither the hiding of Jews outside the ghetto nor the German camp in Płaszów (on the outskirts of Cracow) have been thoroughly researched and described yet. Until now, there has been no complete monograph to synthesise the assistance of the Poles to the Jews in the capital city of the GG. The few texts devoted entirely to the topic of saving Jews in Cracow were based on the research conducted by Krystyna

'Aryan' papers. For example, the neophytes who converted to Christianity in 1939 and 1940, before the Cracow ghetto was established, had already been living on 'Aryan papers' at the time of its establishment, and did not wish to be included in the Jewish community. Not all Jews living on the 'Aryan' side in the later period had the so-called 'Aryan' documents, so they needed to stay in hiding places, away from witnesses. The division into the categories of Jews living 'on the surface', that is among Poles, or 'under the surface', i.e. constantly in hiding, has already been described during the war by Emanuel Ringelblum (E. Ringelblum, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w czasie II wojny światowej. Uwagi i spostrzeżenia*, Warsaw 1988). See also M. Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość. Polscy Żydzi ocaleni „na aryjskich papierach”*. Analiza doświadczenia biograficznego, Warsaw 2004, pp. 13–15; J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, *Strategie przetrwania. Żydzi po aryjskiej stronie Warszawy*, Warsaw 2004, p. 8; G.S. Paulsson, *Utajone miasto. Żydzi po aryjskiej stronie Warszawy (1940–1945)*, Cracow 2007, pp. 18–46; L.J. Weitzman, *Living on the Aryan Side in Poland. Gender, Passing, and the Nature of Resistance* [in:] *Women in the Holocaust*, eds. D. Ofer, L.J. Weitzman, New Haven (CT) 1998, pp. 187–222.

⁴ *General Government* (GG) was a term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered as occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator's note).

⁵ See M. Stępień, *Dzień powszedni „papierowych Żydów” na przykładzie losów H. Fisher i M.M. Mariańskich*, <http://www.wkj.ihuw.pl/wkj/index.php?page=sekcja-dzien-powszedni-zaglady>, access 19 January 2015; A. Peleg, B. Łabno, *Maria Hochberg-Mariańska* [in:] *Wojna to męska rzecz? Losy kobiet w okupowanym Krakowie w dwunastu odsłonach*, eds. A. Czocher and others, Cracow 2011; T. Seweryn, *Wielostronna pomoc Żydom w czasie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, "Przeгляд Lekarski – Oświęcim" 1967, no. 1, pp. 162–183; B. Szatyń, *Na aryjskich papierach*, Cracow 1983; M. Mariańska, M. Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów. Poza gettem w okupowanym Krakowie*, Cracow 1988; J. Aleksandrowicz, *Kartki z dziennika Doktora Twardego*, Cracow–Wrocław 1983.

Samsonowska⁶. Selected topics related to this issue have also appeared in histories of the period and also in memoirs that describe the German occupation of this city.⁷ Furthermore, there are no publications on denouncing Jews in occupied Cracow. Although, for example, Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, who was hiding in the GG capital and its vicinity, claimed that “Cracow was not as infested with the plague of informers and *szmalcownicy*⁸ as Warsaw”⁹, as confirmed by Krystyna Samsonowska’s research¹⁰, the subjects of denunciation, blackmailing and betrayal frequently appear in memoirs of Cracow Jews who survived the Holocaust¹¹.

The purpose of this paper is to show the motivation for choosing survival strategies on the ‘Aryan’ side, the main moments of transition to living with the Jewish identity hidden, and the challenges, opportunities and

⁶ K. Samsonowska, *Pomoc dla Żydów w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* [in:] *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945. Studia i materiały*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006, pp. 827–856 (a source annex was added to the text); K. Samsonowska, *Pomoc Żydom i ratowanie ich w Krakowie w okresie okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945* [in:] *Krakowscy sprawiedliwi. Motywy, postawy, przesłanie*, ed. M. Bednarek, Cracow 2013, pp. 21–33. See also M. Grądzka, *Kościół katolicki w Krakowie w pomocy Żydom. Zarys problematyki badawczej* [in:] *Kościół krakowski 1939–1945*, ed. Ł. Klimek, Cracow 2014, pp. 125–154.

⁷ See A. Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Cracow 2001; A. Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945*, Cracow 2002; A. Ronikier, *Pamiętniki 1939–1945*, Cracow 2013; K. Zimmerer, *Zamordowany świat. Losy Żydów w Krakowie 1939–1945*, Cracow 2004.

⁸ The word *szmalcownik* (plural: *szmalcownicy*) is a Polish neologism coined during the war to denote people who blackmailed hiding Jews and those who helped them. The practice was known as *szmalcownictwo* (translator’s note).

⁹ M. Mariańska, M. Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów...*, p. 29.

¹⁰ See for example K. Samsonowska, *Pomoc Żydom i ratowanie ich...*, pp. 21–23.

¹¹ See *Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (AŻIH; Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute), *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady* (Collection of testimonies of Jews – Survivors of the Holocaust), 301/622, *Relacja Anny Landesman z 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/780, *Relacja Maurycego Wassermana z 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/807, *Relacja Anny Mekler z 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/1083, *Relacja Hersza Fristera z dn. 3 IX 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/1142, *Relacja Markusa Halperna z 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/1378, *Relacja Brunona Peczenika z dn. 21 I 1946 r.*; *ibid*, 301/2335, *Relacja Heleny Weinberger z dn. 29 I 1946 r.*; *ibid*, 301/2393, *Relacja Michała Zellnera z dn. 7 XII 1946 r.* Research of this topic was conducted for the Cracow district (J. Grabowski, *Strażacy, wiejska straż nocna i granatowa policja a zagłada Żydów na obszarach wiejskich w dystrykcie krakowskim* [in:] *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012, pp. 245–264; M. Röth, *Starostwie powiatowi i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* [in:] *ibid*, pp. 279–294).

dangers, in the lives of Jewish women living 'on the surface' on the 'Aryan side' in occupied Cracow and its environs. I have also chosen individual stories of women that illustrate more specifically the problems they faced.

Because, according to the analysed testimonies, it was often the case that women who chose to live on the 'Aryan' side did not stay permanently in Cracow but also went temporarily to surrounding municipalities, such as Igołomia-Wawrzeńczyce (about 25 km from the city centre), Luborzyca, Skala (about 20 km from the city centre), Węgrzce and Wieliczka (about 15 km from the city centre), or Nowe Brzesko (about 35 km from the city centre), I have included the environs of the city in the title of the article, meaning other villages and towns within 40 km from the GG capital. However, I would stress that I am interested in the cases of women who, while hiding in Cracow, temporarily stayed in nearby towns; but not the cases of those with permanent shelter there.

Due to the complexity of the phenomenon I am interested in, I have only analysed the fates of those women who lived among the Polish population, and not of those Jewish women, who, due to lack of 'Aryan' papers or because of their 'bad' (Semitic) appearance, permanently stayed in hide-outs¹². In this article I have drawn attention not only to the survival strategies they chose, their ways of concealing their origin and identity, but also their everyday life, family relationships, work and religious life. One of the survival strategies, chosen by the Jewish women, was the adoption of baptism, which has a special place. This study is not intended to analyse the assistance provided to Jewish women by non-Jews or, symmetrically, at a synthesis of the problem of extortion in occupied Cracow. Both problems appear in the content, but only as a background or an illustration of individual cases, as they were inherent elements of the survival strategy on the 'Aryan' side in the GG capital. However, as such, they form separate and very important areas for research and publication.

¹² The same criterion was used by Lenore J. Weitzman in her article (see also L.J. Weitzman, *Living on the Aryan Side...*, p. 187).

Source basis

This article does not exhaust the issue of the presence of Jewish women on the 'Aryan' side in Cracow and surrounding towns. It is rather an introduction to extensive research of this subject, and the conclusions presented in it result from an analysis of selected source material. Personal documents are of primary importance for the subject matter researched here: memoirs and accounts made by Jews who survived the Holocaust for Jewish historical commissions¹³ shortly after the end of the German occupation. This material is currently in the collection of the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw¹⁴. Among the testimonies referring to the stay in the Cracow ghetto or the Plaszow camp, one may find stories, submitted by Jews reporting post-war, about their own lives on the 'Aryan' side or those of their dear ones. Even after an initial inquiry it may be said that among more than 800 accounts relating to occupied Cracow, more than 150 refer to life on the 'Aryan' side. This group also includes the testimony of those who were saved in hiding and in Cracow monasteries¹⁵. I have also used the reports from the archives of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem¹⁶, obtained by the Institute employees, some of which originated from persons who had stayed in occupied Cracow and then came to Israel¹⁷. It should be noted that often the accounts lack dates for the events described, therefore the researcher is not always able to identify the period of the occupation to which they are referring.

I have also included the memoirs of survivors of the Holocaust gathered in the collections of AŻIH in Warsaw.¹⁸ The collection contains 344 memoirs, of which only 16 refer to the fate of the Jewish community during World

¹³ The Jewish Historical Commission was found in 1944. One of its main goals was to collect accounts of Holocaust Survivors.

¹⁴ AŻIH, *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 301.

¹⁵ See for example *ibid*, 301/406, *Relacja Zygmunta Weinreba z dn. 8 V 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/432, *Relacja Amy Weissberg z dn. 2 VII 1945 r.*; *ibid*, 301/431, *Relacja Sali Warszawskiej z dn. 26 VI 1945 r.*

¹⁶ Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors. Testimonies Department of the Yad Vashem Archives, O.3.

¹⁷ Collecting the memoirs commenced after 1953, that is since the establishment of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem.

¹⁸ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302.

War II in Cracow and its environs, and 12 of that group were written by girls and women. In fact, only three diaries, those of Maria Steczko, Irena Markiewicz and Fela Szechter, are significant for the analysis of the experience of women on the 'Aryan side'. All three women were living not only in Cracow, but also in nearby towns. In their memoirs they described current events, family, professional and social situations, as well as relationships with their husbands, boyfriends, fathers, brothers, sons or other men.

The set called '*Neofici*' ('Neophytes'), held in the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow¹⁹ is of particular importance to the subject analysed here. It contains the applications of Jews to change their religion, including those submitted between 6 September 1939 and the end of 1942.

It is worth mentioning that this documentation also covers many years before the outbreak of World War II. It is possible to recreate not only the list of persons who have chosen to receive baptism but also of the clergy preparing them for the necessary examinations of their knowledge of the Christian faith in the Roman Catholic rite. The contents of the documents in the "*Neofici*" set provide much information about the mentality, customs and social life of certain circles and of Jewish families, as well as the relationship between Poles and Jews in occupied Cracow. I have also used the collection of records that forms the legacy of the Cracow metropolitan, Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha, the so-called *Teki sapieżyńskie* (Sapieha files), mainly no. XXVI file, which holds, among others, notes for letters regarding the neophytes.

The main waves of Jewish women on the 'Aryan' side

About sixty thousand Jews lived in Cracow before September 1939²⁰. Regardless of the migrations of people caused by the outbreak of the war, since the spring of 1940 the authorities of the *General Gouvernement* have embarked on a consistent and planned policy aimed at physically removing the Jews from the city, at 'purifying' (as the Germans called it) the GG capital. From 12 April

¹⁹ *Archiwum Kurii Metropolitarnej w Krakowie* (AKMKr; Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow), "*Neofici*", *Zbiór podań za lata 1939–1942*, no pagination.

²⁰ *Dzieje Krakowa*, eds. J. Bieniarzówna, J.M. Małecki, vol. 5: A. Chwalba, *Kraków w latach 1939–1945*, Cracow 2002, pp. 95–96; *ibid.*, vol. 4: E. Adamczyk and others, *Kraków w latach*

1940 regulations were issued for the forced relocation of Jews from the city, and only ten thousand people, mainly craftsmen and professionals useful for work, received the right of residence²¹. As a result of these resettlements, by March 1941, an estimated fifty thousand Jews had been forced to leave and initially only eleven thousand people were moved to the Cracow ghetto²².

However, the number of Jews or, more narrowly, of Jewish women who tried to save their lives by moving to the 'Aryan' side is unknown. Surviving official (*Judenrat*-maintained) statistics of the Jewish population in occupied Cracow date to mid-1942, so it is impossible, generally, to provide such data²³. Accounts show, however, that the scale of this phenomenon was not marginal. Henryk Zvi Zimmerman mentioned the fairly common organising of "hiding places for those who, while having good papers, had bad, non-'Aryan'

1918–1939, Cracow 1997, pp. 30–36; *Drugi spis powszechny ludności z dn. 9 IX 1931 r.* [in] *Statystyka Polski Seria C*, Warsaw 1937, p. 13 & next.; AŻIH, 228/11, *Sprawozdanie dotyczące liczby ludności żydowskiej Krakowa* (statistics), pp. 1 & next. According to the census of 1931, in Cracow 45,828 people declared one of the Jewish languages as their mother tongue, which constituted about 20.95 per cent of the total population of the city (23,340 people have declared Yiddish and 22,488 people Hebrew). 56,515 people have identified themselves as followers of the Mosaic religion. In turn, according to the registration of the Jews at the order of the German occupier in the autumn of 1939, about 68,482 Jews lived in Cracow and in neighbouring communities (e.g. Borek Fałęcki, Skawina, and Prokocim).

²¹ Very important orders regarding this were issued in November 1940, obliging the Jews who did not have a residence permit to leave the GG capital city by 2 December 1940. The Germans have also prepared lists of displaced persons and their family members, and a transit camp was organised for them in the former Mogiła fort. It first functioned at Lubicz Street, and from February 1941 at 26 Szlak Street (R. Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945*, Warsaw–Cracow 2009, p. 13; M. Pemper, *The Road to Rescue. The Untold Story of Schindler's List*, Hamburg 2005, published in Polish as *Prawdziwa historia listy Schindlera*, Cracow 2006, p. 36. See also A. Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Cracow 2001, p. 45).

²² Over time their number has increased. It is estimated that before the June 1942 deportation to the Bełżec death camp there were about 19,000 people in the ghetto.

²³ *Archiwum Narodowe* (National Archive) in Cracow (AN Cracow), *Der Stadthauptmann der Stadt Krakau* (Local State Official of the City of Cracow), SMKr 1939–1945, SMKr 774 (microfilm no. J 13871), *Ludność dzielnicy żydowskiej w Krakowie według grup zawodowych i płci* (Population of the Jewish district in Cracow according to professional groups and sex); *Die Bevölkerung des Judenwohnbezirkes in Krakau* (Population of the Jewish district in Cracow) 1 May 1941, p. 15; AN Cracow, *Der Stadthauptmann der Stadt Krakau*, SMKr 744 (microfilm J 13 869), *Die Bevölkerung des Judenwohnbezirkes in Krakau* (Population of the Jewish district in Cracow) 1 January 1942, pp. 37–38.

appearance. In particular, women with 'good' appearance organised these shelters, they even rented flats outside the ghetto".²⁴ It is difficult to say what numbers were referred to by the statement about this being common. All the more so, because Zimmermann also talked about those women who stood no chance of living freely in Polish society, for example due to their inability to speak Polish. But because of the absence of circumcision, even for women with Semitic features, if they had strong documents, it was easier to stay on the 'Aryan' side than it was for men, regardless of the latter's appearance. Mariańska added that their inner conviction and determination in the struggle for life were extremely important: "No one could be forced to be rescued. Only a determined person, ready for anything, aware that death at the hands of the Germans was inevitable, and that rescue by escaping was possible, only such risk-ready individual had chances of survival. And there were those who, without special contacts, without plans, without immediate help, staked everything on one card and won their lives. It is possible to establish the statistics of those who achieved it, but those who died while attempting this shall never be counted".²⁵

When analysing the postwar accounts of people who had lived in occupied Cracow, one can distinguish several events that influenced women's decisions to try to survive on the 'Aryan' side. Thus, apart from the individual stories of women, whose decisions were influenced, for example, by personal tragedies (irrespective of when these took place), it is possible to indicate certain waves of moving to the 'Aryan' side. The first motive to take such a step was the, already mentioned, mass resettlement of the Jewish population out of Cracow organised by the Germans in the second half of 1940 and in early 1941. Women who had already decided at that time not to conform with the German regulations went to places near Cracow. Some of those women, in their attempts to obtain residence registration, used fake documents that confirmed Polish origin. Another strategy adopted at the time was the acceptance of baptism, and thus becoming a Roman Catholic. This method of surviving will be described further in this article.

²⁴ H.Z. Zimmermann, *Przeżyłem, pamiętam, świadczę*, Cracow 1997, p. 122.

²⁵ M. Mariańska, M. Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów...*, pp. 54–55.

The decision to establish the ghetto in Cracow, taken on 3 March 1941 and published three days later, was another event, which for a certain group of Jewish women, provided the motive to start living on the 'Aryan' side. Similarly to the mass displacements in later periods, women who decided not to live within the city limits moved, usually with the closest family members, to suburban towns where separate Jewish districts were not established at all or were created later. The women in this group included, among others, the already mentioned diary author: Irena Markiewicz, with her husband Adolf, four-year-old son Zbigniew and several other family members (including her brother-in-law with his family) they first hid at Krzeszowice (from March 1941), then went to Dubie for a month, and since April 1941 they lived at Szklary near Cracow, and then at Skała. After a while Irena and her child returned to Cracow and stayed there until the end of the German occupation²⁶. Similarly to the Markiewicz family, Maria Steczko with her husband and four-year-old son also decided not to live in the Cracow ghetto but chose to hide in the countryside on the 'Aryan' papers. In her memoirs she wrote about the stay at Wawrzeńczyce near Cracow and then, after denunciation, in Cracow and finally in Warsaw²⁷.

Following becoming accustomed to and at least superficial adaptation to the conditions of life in the Cracow ghetto, the deportations of people from the district to the death camp at Bełżec (in June and October 1942) proved another event that influenced the decision of women to move to the 'Aryan side'. June 1942, the time of the first deportation, was of particular importance for the inhabitants of the ghetto because it then became clear what fate awaited them. The hope that had accompanied them from the establishment of the ghetto: that the requirement to live within the district was the last of the chicanery that the Germans would use against them, proved vain. Therefore, some people decided to leave the ghetto immediately after the first deportation and seek refuge in Cracow or in nearby towns. The sec-

²⁶ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/96, *Pamiętnik Ireny Markiewicz* [written in April 1945].

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 302/66, *Pamiętnik Marii Steczko* [written in February 1946], pp. 1–2. The name of Steczko was taken on by the family during the German occupation, but they continued to use it even after the war, so in this text I also use this name when describing the history of this family.

ond mass deportation of October 1942 has only strengthened the legitimacy of undertaking this risky survival strategy.

While the establishment of the Cracow ghetto became a catalyst for the move of a certain group of Jewish women into the 'Aryan' side, its liquidation also had an impact on this. Although the inhabitants of the ghetto did not know the exact German plans, their memories show that from December 1942, when the ghetto was split into two parts, there was an increasing awareness of the ultimate result of what the Germans were doing. It was not only on 13 and 14 March 1943, when the district was finally liquidated, that shelter was sought outside the ghetto walls, but this movement began several weeks earlier. According to survivors' accounts, the Jews sensed that the ghetto would soon cease to exist, so they made the decision to escape. Some of the women who decided to go to the 'Aryan' side at the time were afraid that they would not survive the selection and be sent to their death. This was especially true of mothers with small children. Others did not wish to go to the Plaszow camp so as not to be separated from the still surviving family members. The trade in fake 'Aryan' papers increased at the same time. These were acquired so that after leaving the district one could live among the Poles rather than in enclosed hideouts.

Attempts to escape from the Plaszow camp or its sub-camps and to start living on the 'Aryan' side were extremely difficult and risky, yet these risks were taken²⁸. There was a collective responsibility for a prisoner's escape from the camp. Therefore, it was mostly children rather than adults who were sneaked out of Plaszow to find shelter with the Poles, because they were not included in the formal registers of prisoners.

Neophytes, one of the strategies of survival on the 'Aryan' side

According to available sources, most women began hiding on the 'Aryan' side after June 1942 that is after the first mass deportation from the Cracow ghetto to the death camp at Bełżec. Already earlier, however, another

²⁸ See M. Pemper, *Prawdziwa historia listy Schindlera...*, p. 151; AŻIH, *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 301/4126, *Relacja Eugeniusza Biezanowskiego*, no date; *ibid.*, 301/4641, *Relacja Diny Landau*, no date.

er survival strategy emerged among Jewish women in occupied Cracow, connected with concealment of their true identity. It consisted of changing their faith and acceptance of baptism. The analysis of applications in this matter gathered in the archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow shows that in the whole of 1939 over one hundred official requests for a change of religion were submitted. This phenomenon intensified after the Germans issued a regulation on the need to wear the Star of David armbands²⁹. Zenon Szpingar recalled that ‘the introduction of the armbands was accepted by the Aryan [Polish – M.G.-R.] population with a certain satisfaction. Until then mistakes did happen and sometimes an Aryan [Poles – M.G.-R.] was mistaken for a Jew by the Germans because of facial features or hair colour and was consequently beaten up. Now this could not happen’³⁰. In 1940 there were over 150 applications for the change of religion, culminating in 1941 the census for that year included nearly 300 people from Cracow wishing to receive baptism. This strategy was also adopted by men, although their applications were less numerous than those of women. The lists only cover officially registered applications, so they do not take into account the cases of secretly giving or accepting baptism outside the administrative boundaries of Cracow. In 1942 the number of applications was reduced. The laws published on 10 October that banned baptism of Jews under the threat of severe penalties, including the death penalty, caused there to be no further official entries in the curia. This does not mean that these activities were discontinued, but they were subsequently done secretly.

It should be added that a group of Jewish women who had changed their religion before the war lived in occupied Cracow. Gunnar S. Paulsson emphasised that in the case of Warsaw “converts played an important role as a Jewish bridgehead on the ‘Aryan’ side, a vital link to the mass escapes

²⁹ “*Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die Besetzten polnischen Gebiete/Dziennik Rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla Okupowanych Obszarów Polskich*” (Journal of Regulations of the General Governor of the Occupied Polish Areas) 1939, no. 8, Regulation on the marking of Jews and Jewesses in the *General Gouvernement*, 23 November 1939, p. 61.

³⁰ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/8, *Pamiętnik Zenona Szpingara* [written in 1944–1945], p. 72.

from the ghetto”³¹. In Cracow, at this stage of research, I have noticed no such dependence.

In this article, I wish to focus on those women who have been baptised after September 1939. Analysis of the surviving documents shows varying declarations used by those people wishing to change their faith during the German occupation to motivate their applications. The applicants can be divided into five basic categories. Probably the largest group consisted of the women who saw the changing of their religion to Roman Catholic as a chance to save their own lives and of those their loved ones. The applications, apart from the assurances that the decision had been thoroughly thought out and that they have an inner conviction and desire to accept baptism, usually ended with notes that the person concerned did not want to be deported from Cracow or to be moved to the Cracow ghetto. For example, the following statement was included in an application filed on behalf of Anna Wald: “Today she wishes to be baptised even more eagerly, because she does not expect even the slightest benefit from the change of religion, and no one can accuse her of selfishness. Because the neophyte had been ordered to leave Cracow within four weeks, she begs for, through me, acceptance and if possible, quick settlement of her case”³². Such arguments may indicate that the main motive of the woman was the desire to remain in the city.

There were many more similar cases. One may indicate here the case of the family of Róża Reibschaid-Feliks, whose baptism was finally given at Wawrzeńczyce near Cracow³³. In their application they wrote explicitly about an order to leave the city, the execution of which could be delayed or even cancelled by the consent to the acceptance of baptism. The writer Helena Hellerówna had also applied to the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow during the period of the deportations. In order to accelerate the issuing of permission for the baptism of herself and her mother, she wrote a letter to the Mayor of the city, “Knowing your goodness, Sir, I dare submit the following request: My mother and I live in Łągiewniki (Borek Fałęcki municipality) and the parish

³¹ G.S. Paulsson, *Utajone miasto...*, p. 9.

³² AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1940, *Podanie dotyczące Anny Wald*, no pagination.

³³ YVA, O.3/2799, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, Testimony of Rosa Reibschaid-Feliks, p. 6.

priest of Borek, Fr Mączyński has submitted on our behalf the request for permission for the baptism to the Curia, confirming that we have been prepared, etc. Only the consent of the Curia, i.e. of Archbishop Sapieha is needed. There are plenty of request applications in the Curia and it takes a long time, while we are going to be deported or moved from here to another district any day now”³⁴. In a further part of the letter she asked for support for her application by the Mayor and by the Metropolitan Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha. She has added: “I apologise for bothering you with all this, but I am in a very difficult situation and that is why I am so keen to get the matter settled quickly. Let me call on Thursday afternoon to find out if you, Mr Mayor, wished to take care of my request”³⁵. Documents do not show whether there was any reaction to her letters and requests to the authorities.

Another group consisted of the women who declared that they had not decided to be baptised earlier because they had not received parental consent to change their religion. In such cases, the acceptance of baptism without the permission of the mother and father could not only bring about exclusion from the family but also financial difficulties. The war has become a factor in speeding the women’s decision, because, as they declared and put it in their applications, they did not have the time to wait for their parents to change their opinion or to die. Born in 1916, Regina Leitner wrote: “There were obstacles on the part of parents who did not even wish to hear about me becoming a Roman Catholic. [...] I have long felt a Christian in my yearning, so when the war broke out, my first thought was that I could die unbaptised”³⁶. The Metropolitan Curia also received a request from four women: Maria Bernstein, Sabina, Florentyna and Alfreda Schiffman. The women wrote in it, among others: “We abandon Judaism, and we wish to accept the Catholic faith with conviction, for purely internal motives. Although we have had Catholic conviction for years, we have been unable to fulfil our desires due to our parents and to conditions over which we have no control [...]; we have a sincere will to receive Holy Baptism and to become followers of the

³⁴ AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1941, *Podanie Heleny Hellerówny z 15 września 1941 r.*, no pagination.

³⁵ *Ibid*, no pagination.

³⁶ AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1939, *Podanie Reginy Leitner*, no pagination

true and infallible principles of Christ”³⁷. The application shows that they have asked for baptism once there were no formal obstructions, i.e. lack of parental consent. These were not isolated cases.

The third group included those Jewish women who had lived outside Kazimierz³⁸ before the war. They declared and stressed that they did not feel connected with the Jewish community and had been thinking of baptism for years. Maria Blumenfeldowa argued: “For a long time I have been thinking about accepting baptism and joining the Roman Catholic Church, but I wanted to test for myself whether this desire was not transient. During this time I often attended services and sermons to acquaint myself with the Catholic Church, its teaching and liturgy”³⁹. The women in this group did not experience any opposition from the family; moreover, it was often the case that, for example, siblings or someone dear had earlier changed their religion. The application of Emilia and Michalina Kurz was interesting in the arguments it used. The mother and daughter (after the Germans issued a regulation that ordered the Jews to leave Cracow) lived in the Prądnik Czerwony community, unaffected by the forced evacuation of the Jewish population at the time⁴⁰. They came from an assimilated family of landowners, which explains their proximity to the Catholic community: “All the close relatives of the Kurz and Findler families have long been Christians. [...] Both have been raised from childhood in a purely Polish environment and have nothing in common with Jewry, they actually live according to Christian principles and wish to receive holy baptism”⁴¹. The motivation in the application of Helena Axelhorn was similar in tone. She wrote: “I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and all the principles proclaimed by the Church. I have long been in error, but now I wish to become a faithful member of the

³⁷ AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1940, *Podanie Marii Bernstein, Sabiny Schiffman, Florentyny Schiffman oraz Alfredy Schiffman z dn. 2 grudnia 1940 r.*, no pagination.

³⁸ Kazimierz was the Jewish part of Cracow since middle ages (translator’s note).

³⁹ AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1940, *Podanie Marii Blumenfeldowej*, no pagination.

⁴⁰ Prądnik Czerwony became part of Cracow after 28 May 1941 when, under the order of the Chief Department of Internal Affairs of the Government of the GG, 27 rural communities were fully incorporated into Cracow, and two only partially.

⁴¹ AKMKr, “*Neofici*”, Documents of 1940, *Podanie Emilii i Michaliny Kurz z dn. 30 lipca 1940 r.*, no pagination.

Catholic Church, and to receive the grace of salvation through baptism and prayer”⁴². She considered her previous faith “erroneous”, and she emphasised that she had been interested in the Christian faith since her youth, but did not specify what had precluded her from accepting baptism. The applications of the women in this group expressed a clear distancing not only from the religion, but also from the whole Jewish community.

The fourth of the declared motives resulted from the desire to marry a Catholic. An example is provided by the story of Lili Nesselroth, who applied for baptism because of her connection with a Catholic. The girl had had a Catholic fiancé for a year and a half. “Considering the fact that as long as the current difficulties are rectified, the petitioner intends to marry her fiancé who has conscientiously practiced religious rites, she humbly asks for a gracious consideration of her request in the shortest possible time”⁴³. As evidenced by the attached documentation, Lili had begun her religious education already at the beginning of the German occupation, but the deportation planned by the German authorities interrupted her efforts. This story combined two main motifs: the main one, that is the wedding with a Catholic, and the secondary one, resulting from the fear of potential deportation. The information about marriage to a Catholic appears not only in the documents of the Curia but also in many accounts⁴⁴.

The last group included other factors that were declared to have influenced the decision to adopt the Catholic faith. There were, among others, the motives of most of the family having already been baptised, and therefore the woman applied for it, because she did not want to die as a follower of Judaism. An analysis of the available applications suggests that the change of faith was one of the survival strategies that resulted from careful observation

⁴² AKMKr, “Neofici”, Documents of 1940, *Podanie Heleny Axelhorn*, no pagination.

⁴³ AKMKr, “Neofici”, Documents of 1941. *Podanie Lili Nesselroth z dn. 30 czerwca 1941 r.*, no pagination.

⁴⁴ See AŻIH, *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 301/432, *Relacja Anny Weissberg z dn. 2 VII 1945 r.*; *ibid.*, 301/830, *Relacja Henryka Mellera z 1945 r.*; AŻIH, *Dział dokumentacji sprawiedliwych* (Department of Documentation of the Righteous), 349/180, *Dział dokumentacji odznaczeń Yad Vashem* (Department of Documentation of Yad Vashem Decorations), *Sprawa Władysława Budyńskiego; Księga sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu*, ed. I. Gutman, vol. 1, Cracow 2009, pp. 71–72.

of the occupation reality. This does not preclude that some of these women actually wished to adopt the Catholic faith. Today, it cannot be verified whose decisions were based on internal motives or religious dilemmas, and whose were a part of their struggle for life. Due to the vast amount of material, this issue requires further research and a separate publication.

Chances and dangers. Factors enabling the living of women ‘on the surface’ on the ‘Aryan’ side

The stay on the ‘Aryan’ side required having an appropriate appearance, as well as maintaining extreme caution, constant self-control and careful observation of the environment. An anonymous author left a significant testimony on this: “How many of those beautiful girls attracted attention with their exotic beauty. They lightened their jet black hair in vain; their dark eyes retained the wistful expression. Danger loomed at every corner, at every tram stop. A former acquaintance here, a blackmailer there, an undercover agent here, a police officer with a too insightful look there, and elsewhere a personal search: in a word, every path filled with obstacles through which one must penetrate”⁴⁵. One needed to keep particularly calm when one heard, in a conversation or accidentally in the street, the anti-Semitic opinions that Hitler has finally solved the problem with the Jews. This was a great mental burden for those who were hiding. It was not always enough to dye one’s hair and have fake documents, even very well crafted. Many women who tried to live on the ‘Aryan’ side were captured, for example, by German *gendarmes*, Gestapo agents, ‘navy blue’⁴⁶ police officers or black-mailers (*szmalcownicy*).

For those women who had the correct physical appearance and properly forged documents (baptism certificate, employment certificate, residence registration, *Kennkarte* i.e. German identity card), other factors, such

⁴⁵ YVA, Michal Borwicz Collection, O.62/63, Excerpts from a diary written in the prison on Helclow Street in Krakow, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement policeforce under German occupation was commonly known as ‘granatowa’ (‘navy blue’) for the colour of their uniforms (translator’s note).

as clothing, place of residence, a job and self-confidence, formed the basis for existence 'on the surface' on the 'Aryan' side. In the context of the distribution of the 'Aryan' papers the story of Tadeusz Dzik is well-known. He was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations after the war, having 'organised' fake documents for the Wahl family living in the ghetto. The *Kennkarten* (*identity documents*), made by a man named Żuchowicz, were paid for by the Wahl family. Dzik had also provided fake documents to other inhabitants of the Cracow ghetto, including Samuel Scheindlinger, Runia Graj, her brother Izydor Morgenstern, and his wife Helena, and also Sara Stern and her husband⁴⁷. He paid the intermediaries for this, but he did not charge for the aid himself. Many more people made and delivered fake documents to the ghetto. Zenon Fijałkowski wrote that, besides lay people, some of the priests who ran parish offices provided Roman Catholic birth certificates to Jews who had escaped from the ghetto and were in danger of being arrested. These were the basis for the obtaining of residence certificates or *Kennkarten*. Making the certificates was a complicated operation: "parish death and birth records were searched for data that would match the data of those who were to obtain such certificates. The records on which the certificates were to be based needed to be properly marked as already used"⁴⁸. So far I have not encountered any account or other source material indicating that the preparing of fake certificates by clergymen or monks was made for a fee, such as voluntary donations for church purposes. This cannot be confirmed or ruled out.

Familiarity with the rites of Polish culture and symbols of Catholicism also increased the chances of survival. Moreover, good knowledge of the Polish or German language and fluent use of it with no accent or Yiddish additions was advantageous. Helena Diamant-Fischel mentioned it, as for these very reasons she was unable to live on the 'Aryan' side: "I was a bright blonde, peroxide of course, but my features are quite Semitic. As for my

⁴⁷ AŻIH, *Dział dokumentacji sprawiedliwych*, 349/180, *Dział dokumentacji odznaczeń Yad Vashem, Sprawa Tadeusz Dzika; Księga sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata...*, pp. 153–154.

⁴⁸ Z. Fijałkowski, *Kościół katolicki na ziemiach polskich w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej*, Warsaw 1983, p. 201.

language! I spoke German at home; I rarely used Polish until I married. To this day I do not pronounce the whistling consonants correctly and my accent, even if not Jewish, sounds definitely foreign”⁴⁹. Therefore, Jewish women from assimilated families, closer to the Polish culture than the Jewish one had chances of living on the ‘Aryan’ side. There was no lack of these in Cracow before the war, as shown by the census figures quoted earlier. For women from traditional backgrounds, who spoke poor Polish or with a distinct Jewish accent, staying in properly prepared hiding places was the only chance to survive on the ‘Aryan’ side.

The ways of living of Jewish women on the ‘Aryan’ side are a broad subject for research. Diaries and postwar accounts provide much information on various spheres of life. In principle, almost every case leads to differing conclusions as, apart from the initial ones, there are no distinct threshold points that would be common to women hiding in Cracow. For Jewesses born in the city, the basic danger was to be recognised by some of their former acquaintances, neighbours, etc. This was even more so as Cracow was not as large a city as Warsaw at the time, so the sense of anonymity was much less there. Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, a Jewess and an activist of the ‘Żegota’⁵⁰ who was hiding in Cracow and its environs, wrote about it: “I could not forget even for one moment that in [...] Cracow I had lived for six prewar years, I was known by many people here, Poles, Jews, and that no documents nor even the best Aryan look would help if someone makes a denouncement to the Gestapo or simply hands me over into the hands of the nearest ‘navy blue’ or German policeman”⁵¹. At the same time having friends in the place where one was hiding gave the chance of obtaining help.

In the hierarchy of attitudes on the ‘Aryan’ side, in contrast to the period of ghetto life, becoming, in a way, invisible to the milieu was a most import-

⁴⁹ YVA, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, O.3/1338, Testimony of Helena Diamant-Fischel, p. 7.

⁵⁰ ‘Żegota’ was the code-name of the Polish Council to Aid Jews, which operated from December 1942 under the aegis of the Underground Polish State. Its aim was to provide assistance to Jews in hiding; arranging hideouts, providing forged documents and financial aid (translator’s note).

⁵¹ M. Mariańska, M. Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów...*, p. 29.

ant thing for these women. Therefore, their basic tools of camouflage (apart from the changed name and the baptism certificate) included: a proper characterisation, a change of appearance and gestures, and avoiding places where they had once lived, studied, worked or stayed.

Women of this group were constantly alert, filled with tension and mistrust for every person they encountered. The history of the Goldhamer's marriage, prewar residents of the city, shows how significant that was. He was warned not to appear too often in the streets of Cracow, because he was well known and this could bring blackmailers (*szmalcownicy*) onto him. His wife, however, felt more confident and was, therefore, less cautious. One reads in an account: "No power could keep his wife at home (she even often spent time in a cafe)"⁵². After another such public escapade she was denounced, arrested, and then murdered by the Germans. The same fate befell her husband.

The women who had come to the GG capital from out in the country or from other cities, such as Lwow, Tarnów or Bochnia, to survive the occupation in Cracow, lived in a different manner. Despite many difficult experiences, a kind of anonymity added to their self-confidence. And this feature repeatedly proved to be the most important in the struggle for survival, even in the most difficult circumstances.

The existence of women who stayed with their children on the 'Aryan' side was still different, because it was determined by their care for the offspring⁵³. Often it was the desire to protect the child's life that provided the incentive to leave the ghetto. Having children disturbed the individualism of the survival strategy and prompted acceptance of responsibility not just for oneself. Without a doubt, unmarried and solitary women, and those who maintained no contact with other Jews hiding in Cracow had higher chances of surviving until the end of the German occupation. Particular emphasis should be placed on the heroism of Jewish mothers during the occupation that is shown in available accounts. However, there have also been cases

⁵² AŻIH, *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 301/2393, *Relacja Michała Zellera z dn. 7 XII 1946 r.*, p. 7.

⁵³ See *ibid*, 301/3277, *Relacja Sary Melzer z dn. 3 VII 1947 r.*; R. Ligocka, *Dziewczynka w czerwonym płaszczu*, Cracow 2002.

where women chose to protect their own lives at the expense of their child's life. The abortion of children conceived during the occupation was a special case here. In fact, the account of Donia Katz is the only extensive testimony of a woman who chose abortion on the 'Aryan' side. She had been hiding in Cracow since the autumn of 1942; her husband was also in the city. When their situation stabilised and they both found work and accommodation, they saw each other more often. "I became pregnant. When I came to one doctor asking for an abortion, he asked me how much money I had. I dumped everything I had in my purse. "This is for the anesthetist, but what's for me?" I did not have any more, so he finally said: "You will repay me after the war, but after the surgery you must go home by horse-cab, you cannot walk". My husband ran, borrowed somewhere for a cab and took me to my place, where I then lay for two days on a straw mattress, spread out on the floor"⁵⁴. The account is concise and there is no description of the emotions that accompanied the woman in making such a difficult decision. The will to live prevailed. The woman knew that because of her pregnancy she would lose her job and accommodation. In her situation, with the difficulty of finding a job, and because of all the factors regarding her origin, abortion meant the possibility of further hiding and thus of survival. Absence of other evidence of abortion does not mean that it did not occur in the Jewish community in Cracow during the German occupation.

Essentially, the accounts include no information about sensuality, sexuality, or sexual exploitation that may have been involved in the living on the 'Aryan' side in occupied Cracow and its environs, nor about the birth of children while in hiding⁵⁵. One of the women who stayed on the 'Aryan' side later recalled: "You were at the mercy of any caretaker, any boy, any policeman, and each one thought he could take advantage of a pretty Jewess"⁵⁶. But these are such intimate and painful subjects that many women have decided not to talk about them, even many years later after the war.

⁵⁴ YVA, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, O.3/1334, Testimony of Donia Katz, p. 16.

⁵⁵ See J. Nalewajko-Kulikov, *Survival strategies...*, pp. 41–50.

⁵⁶ YVA, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, O.3/3236, Testimony of Pola Korn née Bek, pp. 11–12.

Religious life

Abortion and sexuality were not the only subjects omitted in the accounts. Another issue that was little mentioned after the war was the religious life of Jewish women. Essentially, the diary of Maria Steczko gives the most information on the subject⁵⁷. The woman thanked God for almost every day that she survived and for a relatively good situation in the place where she, her husband and child were hiding. A kind of appeal to God, formulated during her stay in the country was particularly moving: “Living in constant uncertainty and danger, I so solemnly and earnestly begged God, whose existence I have doubted many times, to save us. There was no such power on earth that could save us, so we lifted our eyes involuntarily and sought God’s help, and we believed that He exists; He must exist, even though such terrible things are happening and He does allow the lawlessness. God, I beg, have pity, save us”⁵⁸. The woman could not celebrate the Sabbath, the Jewish holidays, she did not cook kosher nor showed her attachment to Judaism in any other way, but she often prayed and wrote much about it. The secret of her Jewish origin cast a shadow on her life at the time. As she herself recalled later: “If not for this terrible mystery that we hide in ourselves, if not for the horrible torment of comedy: the inventing of things that had never happened, the telling of stories about the family “what they are doing, where they live”, about the family that is no more. But you say that they are there, they write, etc. And if not for this terrible fear and insecurity... Now we have no one left. I have my husband and my child, and they have me”⁵⁹. With this loneliness and constant struggle with herself, she continuously needed to pretend cheerfulness and an optimistic disposition, to not raise suspicion or risk being questioned about possible causes of her sadness.

Hanna Barnett, raised in a traditional family in Cracow, was another woman who stayed on the ‘Aryan’ side in Cracow and who referred to reli-

⁵⁷ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/66, *Pamiętnik Marii Steczko* [written in February 1946].

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

gion in her accounts⁶⁰. She married in 1935 and moved to Tarnopol. With her son and daughter, and with her mother and sister, she had hidden in the GG capital since 1942, and her 'Aryan' name was Anna Kwiatkowska. Both she, and her mother and sister tried to follow the rules of kosher food. They were religious and they explained many of life's events by God's providence and help. For example, that was how they saw Hanna finding a good job and the saving of her son⁶¹. Hanna recalled that because of her work as a home help with Poles she was not able to prepare kosher meals. In order not to eat meat she told her employers that she had not done so since the prewar period⁶². The woman hid in relatively comfortable conditions, so to some extent she was able to afford a certain selection of the meals that she ate. More often, however, religious Jewish women who were hiding and who might have wanted to follow the kosher rules, abandoned them because of the trouble with obtaining food. They did so in order not to weaken the body additionally by depriving it of meat meals, although these were probably not frequent in their diets, anyway.

Work and accommodation

Apart from the factors mentioned earlier, a job was a very important element of survival of the women on the 'Aryan' side. It gave the proper documents, the means to live, often very modest, but sometimes the employers offered accommodation. Having a job meant that the Jewish women "on the surface" raised no suspicion. Moreover, the work filled the time, drawing their mind away from thinking about the problems and past experiences. It was also a kind of alibi. Jewish women on the 'Aryan' side in Cracow worked mostly as cleaners, cooks, needlewomen, babysitters or as farm assistants. Other jobs that guaranteed financial resources were those in trade or cottage industry. Jewish women were employed by Poles, but also by families of German offi-

⁶⁰ *Mothers, Sisters and Resisters. Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust*, ed. B.Gurewitsch, London, Tuscaloosa (AL) 1998, pp. 53–63 [Hannah Bannett account].

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 59.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 62.

cials, of whom there were many in the GG capital⁶³. The situation of these women varied depending on whether they came from Cracow or just hid in the city, and whether they were alone or with their family, including children. The paradox was that work offered them a chance to earn their living, but at the same time brought danger upon them, especially when working for German families. Any incorrect gesture, word, behaviour, or meeting with other hiding Jews could have contributed to their exposure and, consequently death.

It did happen that any precautions taken would fail or that people, who had previously decided to help, betrayed them. Michał Zeller reported after the war about the case of blackmailing his wife by the householders, who employed and sheltered her at Kurkowa Street in Cracow: “The landlady urged my wife to try to get some entertainment, recommending her specifically to go to the hairdresser and try to improve her appearance. Not suspecting anything wrong this time, my wife followed the advice of the landlady and in the evening she went to a hairdresser’s shop nearby. When she returned home, the landlord stopped her at the entrance, categorically opposing her coming into the apartment. He told her that she had been recognised by somebody and that the Gestapo would be coming soon. So my wife then asked him to give her some personal belongings, which he refused and ordered her to come back in two days”⁶⁴. When she came back again, no argument helped: “The landlady did not want to talk to her at all, letting her know that it would be better if she left immediately. Thus my wife was robbed of everything she still had”⁶⁵. The woman changed her hiding place and began to take strict precautions. They both survived until the end of the German occupation. There was no happy ending to the escape and the attempt to take refuge on the ‘Aryan’ side undertaken by the daughter of a Jewish woman named Wachtel (the account does not mention her first name or her daughter’s). The mother

⁶³ For example, due to Władysław Budyński two Jewish women nicknamed “Andzia” and “Józia” (after the war Wisia Schwarz), who were hiding at the Officers’ Estate in Cracow found jobs. Both were hired by Germans: Willy Koschinski and his superior (AŻIH, *Dział dokumentacji sprawiedliwych*, 349/180, *Dział dokumentacji odznaczeń Yad Vashem, Sprawa Władysława Budyńskiego*).

⁶⁴ AŻIH, *Zbiór relacji Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 301/2393, *Relacja Michała Zellera z dn. 7 XII 1946 r.*, pp. 25–26.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

remained in the ghetto, while her daughter, a beautiful young girl, escaped and stayed with a Polish woman near the Jewish district. She obliged herself to help in housework in exchange for the shelter. The patron “openly and cynically took possession of her things and finally began to blackmail her. At all costs she wanted to throw her out of the apartment to take everything. Despairing, the young Wachtel girl committed suicide”⁶⁶.

The ‘Aryan’ fate of Irena Markiewicz

The diary of Irena Markiewicz is a particular source for the study of the dynamics of a Jewish woman’s life on the ‘Aryan’ side in terms of the extent, consistency and diversity of its content. In this article I will refer to her story only briefly. After the arrest of her husband in the summer of 1942, the woman stayed with her son in the GG capital. And it was mainly his survival that she fought for every day, that fight was the most important thing in her life. For Irena Markiewicz the moment of her husband’s arrest became a landmark event during the German occupation. Already the first pages of her diary included an entry on how the woman’s life had changed from that moment: “Now Mummy must go to work, so that my little Sun [son] is not hungry. [...] And the days drag on, I work till late at night, because it is not only us that must eat, we must send food to Daddy once a week. You, my little son, know no hunger, and Daddy should never know things are hard for your mum, good parcels go to Daddy and even better letters, cheerful ones, because crying, my little son, can be done at work, you can cry at night, just quietly, so that no one can hear, do not let Daddy know that His little Irene is crying”⁶⁷. It follows from this passage that the woman not only accepted the burden of supporting herself and the child, but also her husband. Her fears, anxieties and sorrows could be described on the pages of the diary, but she did not tell her husband about this. Immediately after arriving in Cracow, Irena suffered the greatest blow, the death of her husband. He was

⁶⁶ YVA, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, O.3/1353, Testimony of Eugenia Felicja Myszkowska, p. 41.

⁶⁷ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/96, *Pamiętnik Ireny Markiewicz* [written in April 1945], pp. 122–123.

killed in the camp shortly after his arrest. Irena Markiewicz described her reaction to the news of this event in the diary: “My little son, I live but is my heart not broken? But why live? What for? For whom? Who will kiss me for you? Who will enjoy it that mum has taught the boy so many new words. Well, why live? And how can one live? Never again? We will never see Daddy again? For you, my little son, for you I must. Now I know, my little son, now I understand why I had such a petrified heart [...]. You see in your Mummy the heart of granite, and probably Daddy’s was like this, if it did not break with the thought that he was leaving us. [...] And we must live, without dreams, and without desires”⁶⁸.

Life in Cracow was disappointing for her. Markiewicz had difficulty finding a job and accommodation. It was also troublesome to move around the city because of the danger of exposure: “Without you,” she wrote in her diary to her son, “I cannot take a step outside, and with you I am afraid, too. You are a Jew, a Jew *corpus delicti*. I do not look Jewish at all, but apparently this constant fear has engraved such a thing on my face that I am afraid, I am in a panic of fear”⁶⁹. She was not only afraid of the threat of the occupier. Cracow was not free of *szmalcownicy* (blackmailers) or anti-Semitic attitudes, both of which were also part of the reality of the German occupation in the GG capital. The last few months of the war brought no respite either. An illness of her son was added to the previous problems. Despite varied turmoil both she and her child have survived until the end of the war. The diary ends with a sad reflection, however: “A bitter question was born in my mind. Who will praise me? Who will enjoy the fact that you, my little son, are alive? Who needs us? He is not here; our good, dear Daddy is not here. We have behind us six years of suffering, such a rich harvest of death, six years of physical and moral suffering and six years of tears that rarely dried and sleepless nights, and six years of life that was like a chased dog’s. That is behind us. And what is ahead of us?”⁷⁰ These questions remained unanswered. In the case of Irena Markiewicz the war’s end failed to alleviate her suffering or her sense of loss caused by her husband’s death.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 155–156.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 130.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 169.

The 'Aryan' fate of Pola Korn née Bek

Apart from the memoirs of Maria Steczko and Irena Markiewicz quoted above, the account of Pola Korn née Bek is one of the memoirs that depict not just everyday life and the problems, with which Jewish women who lived on the 'Aryan side' struggled in their work, but also gives a description of the emotional states. After the period of mass deportation from the Tarnów ghetto, in the autumn of 1942, she decided to escape to Cracow and start living on the 'Aryan' side.

"I could only work as a maid, because with my Semitic appearance I could not wander among people. Spiritually, it was the worst period of occupation. [...] There was nothing and no one to lose. On the 'Aryan' side there was constant fear, not to betray myself. [...] I was not able to stay a long time in service, because immediately people started talking about me, from a caretaker up to I don't know who. I changed places often"⁷¹. The woman finally came to work in Cracow, for a family of Germans who questioned her how she spoke German and where she had learned to cook. They wanted to register her residence, too, but her documents were badly forged, so she kept delaying that moment and finally decided to run away again. She did so, even though the work there was not very onerous, it provided accommodation and also guaranteed relative security. "I had no place to stand, no place to sit, no place to sleep, no place to be. I didn't exist and I could not live. It was winter. I found accommodation with a caretaker woman who had one tiny room and she was harbouring a Jewish child. During the day I rode on trams. It was bad that I did not even have my fake papers; they had been left with the German. This caretaker demanded some kind of document. I had no choice but to phone the German to return my papers. He [seemed] terribly surprised that I had run away"⁷².

When trying to collect the documents from the former employer she fell into an ambush. She was arrested and taken to a prison in the Cracow ghetto. This situation occurred in March 1943, just before the final liquidation of the ghetto. "In the prison I saw many Jewish girls who had been on 'Aryan'

⁷¹ YVA, Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors, O.3/3236, Testimony of Pola Korn née Bek, pp. 11–12.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 14.

papers. I had met them before on a tram or in the street. We recognised each other by our eyes, because even the people in the ghetto did not have such animal-like, frightened eyes. In the cell I burst into tears of happiness that I was among Jews again. What happens to everyone happens to me, also. I do not have to play the comedy any more, I do not have to say prayers I do not know, and I do not have to be a servant for Poles”⁷³. The hiding women were not the only ones who recognised them “by their eyes”, this was one of the elements that betrayed them to the *szmalcownicy*⁷⁴(blackmailers). Eventually, Pola Korn was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. She worked in one of its sub-camps, located in the village of Rajsko. The woman survived until the end of the war.

The ‘Aryan’ fate of Fela Szechter

It also happened that women who decided to live on the ‘Aryan’ side, after some time voluntarily returned to the ghetto. The disappointment of living in constant tension, with no certainty about another night’s accommodation, work, or the fear of denunciation decided that even the stay in the closed Jewish district seemed safer to them. This was the fate of Fela Szechter.

The Szechter family was forcedly deported from Cracow to Nowe Brzesko in early 1941. They were there until mid-1942. After the liquidation of the local ghettos and Jewish communities, and following the news of transports that disappeared without notice, it began to dawn upon them that they would share the fate of their compatriots. Fela described the reaction of her parents to these events: “Mother was more upset and father was more and more calm. His calmness worried me more than my mother’s nervousness, because it meant complete resignation. There was still a shy hope in his soul: “But perhaps not to death, after all. Maybe they will actually deport us to some camps in Ukraine.” He did not want to think otherwise and did not wish to save himself. Mother, on the contrary, understood that saving

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 13.

⁷⁴ This was recalled by women hiding on the ‘Aryan’ side, including Maria Steczko, Irena Markiewicz and Fela Szechter.

ourselves together was an impossibility, she wanted to send the children out into the country, and then go into hiding somewhere together with Father”⁷⁵. Two sisters found shelter with a Polish landlady they knew, while Fela and Mania, the third of her sisters, stayed with their parents. This was organised mainly by Fela’s mother. This fact is very important because it shows the changes within Jewish families that have taken place under the German occupation conditions. There was a reevaluation of the positions and roles of Jewish women in the family and, more broadly, in the Jewish community. It is clear from the memories that the men: fathers, brothers and husbands, proved less resistant to the conditions imposed by the German occupiers, and therefore their roles were taken over by women, who were stronger and more persistent than them⁷⁶. These changes have affected almost all areas of life and have become an important factor in shaping a new, wartime reality, both economically and morally. The war has also created many opportunities for women (often forced on them) to change in socio-economic terms: to take up professional jobs and to enter the public sphere⁷⁷. These were short-lived changes, however, usually terminated tragically by deportations.

On 9 November 1942, the day of the final liquidation of the ghetto at Nowe Brzesko, Fela was separated from her parents. The girl and her sister left the town, while their parents were sent in a transport to an extermination camp. When describing the scene of their farewell, Fela recalled her hope that it would only be a short separation. In this description she only referred to her mother, and essentially wrote nothing about her farewell to her father. “Mother hugged and kissed me for a long time, and hot tears ran down her face. That was the last time I saw her”⁷⁸. The escape of her sister and her was helped by a Pole named Kopel, who had known their parents.

⁷⁵ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/60, *Pamiętnik Feli Szechter* [written in 1945], p. 25.

⁷⁶ See S. Müller-Madej, *Dziewczynka z listy Schindlera. Oczami dziecka*, pt. 1, Cracow 2001; H. Nelken, *Pamiętnik z getta w Krakowie*, Toronto 1987.

⁷⁷ For more on the new roles of Jewish women during the German occupation, see: M. Grądzka, *Jewish Women in the Kraków ghetto: An Outline of Research Issues*, “The Person and the Challenges” 2013, no. 2, pp. 123–141.

⁷⁸ AŻIH, *Zbiór pamiętników Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady*, 302/60, *Pamiętnik Feli Szechter* [written in 1945], p. 26.

He arranged clothes, food, and a temporary shelter for them, as he could not bring them to his own house because of the numerous German patrols.

After a few days spent in a group with other refugees from the Nowe Brzesko ghetto, facing the danger of denunciation and falling into the hands of the Germans, Fela decided to travel alone to Wawrzeńczyce, where a friend of her's lived. When she arrived, the woman offered her a meal, allowed her to stay overnight, but failed to give her permanent help and shelter, so the girl had to move on. She left a lengthy description of the emotions that accompanied her at the time: "My 15 years, abandonment, the awareness that I had no home, that my father and mother have surely died, and the world is so bad, because I have no place to hide from death that lurks everywhere, have all mixed up in my brain into a terrible chaos and led to an explosion. I cried, suppressing my sobs so as not to be heard accidentally, and the tears gave me partial relief. In this weeping I matured, I became tough, mature and hardened, and I came to understand that I had to live and survive. [...] The desire to live was so dominant that it made everything fade into the background"⁷⁹. The accelerated maturation mentioned by Fela was an experience shared by many other young Jewish girls during the German occupation. The daily struggle for survival, especially at the point of liquidation operations in the ghettos and during their living on the 'Aryan' side, has motivated them to act.

Fela Szechter has found a way to avoid being conspicuous during her wandering. She made herself up as a peasant girl: "To be more like a village girl, I carried my stuff in a small basket"⁸⁰. During the wandering from one village to another, due to the difficulty in finding accommodation or a place to hide, she decided that the best and at the same time the safest solution would be to return to Cracow, but, rather than to the 'Aryan' side, to the ghetto, where her distant relatives and friends still lived. Despite having taken the decision, the last stage of her trip was not the easiest. "I was returning to Cracow, so much loved, and now so alien, filled with the hateful German speech. How to walk across the street, where there's a tormentor in a green

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 30.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 31.

uniform in every place, or an even worse one in ‘civvies’, still lurking and hunting for their victims? Will I not be betrayed by my intimidated and scared look, the Jewish look of a dog being chased? And where shall I go? How shall I, alone, not knowing the people or relationships, walk into the ghetto that is guarded by high walls and a gang of policemen?”⁸¹ The fear of being exposed and denounced to the police paralysed her. And paradoxically, this fear she mentioned, visible to others in the eyes and the gestures, and audible in the voice, could have betrayed her. Such emotions probably accompanied all the hiding Jewish women. Regardless of their age, appearance, connections, money and many other factors, the fear and uncertainty of tomorrow accompanied their existence on the ‘Aryan’ side day by day.

After numerous troubles, attempts to find refuge with friends and strangers, travelling on foot and on a ship on the Vistula, where she was almost exposed as a Jewess, the girl reached Cracow. “It was snowing. The soft flakes gave a fluffy cover to the trees in the squares and to street lamps that were casting dim light on the high houses and street pavements. It was beautiful, quiet and peaceful around. But in my mind this view aroused sad reflections. Where would I go if I had no place to stay overnight? Certainly not to a stranger’s house, because they will hand me over to the police. So, perhaps my frozen body shall be found tomorrow under a bridge. Who will protect me? Who will warm me up and feed me?”⁸² The quoted fragment shows an intense contrast between the silence and calm of the city covered with white snow, and the emotions of this young woman. The trek of Fela Szechter from Nowe Brzesko ended behind the walls of the ghetto. When she arrived there and found herself in the district with a group of similar people who gave up hiding on the ‘Aryan’ side, she finally felt relief. She recalled later: “When we entered a Jewish street and saw nobody but Jews around, we wanted to kiss the dirty pavement and hug every passerby. No one will say to me: ‘Get the hell out of here you Jewish scum’ or ‘Weg, verfluchter Jude’. Oh, to be among our own kind, to suffer, to go crazy, but to finally put down my bag of the eternal wanderer, to rest to my tired feet”⁸³. And despite the dangers

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 38.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 40.

⁸³ *Ibid*, pp. 41–42.

of staying in the ghetto, Fela felt that she was at home and among her own people, and that she shared their fate.

Summary

Many more stories of women hiding on the 'Aryan' side could be quoted here. And, although they differ in terms of circumstances, of the period of hiding, they have a common denominator: the struggle for life each day. The women who decided to penetrate into the Polish population of Cracow risked a lot, but they could also gain a lot. Cracow, chosen as the capital of the *General Gouvernement* created in October 1939, was going to be a city purged of Jews, and Germanised instead. This was confirmed by the influx of German officials with their families, the presence of Hans Frank and the GG administration, and of numerous German security and military services, which made the conditions even more difficult for Jewish women hiding in the city. However, there are no doubts that the Jews were still present in the city until the last days of the German occupation. The survival strategy on the 'Aryan' side, but 'on the surface', living 'as Poles', chosen by the authors of the memoirs and accounts analysed here, enabled them to survive until the end of the occupation. Although they survived, they often lost the most important people in their lives: their children, parents and husbands during the occupation. Thus, they entered the post-disaster world emotionally crippled, with a sense of an enormous void they could not fill.

Despite the many dangers they were aware of, the women decided to hide their identity and live among the Polish population. It was a very important game with the highest of stakes: life. A game that, unfortunately, was often lost for various reasons. The failure could be caused, for example, by their own carelessness, excessive self-confidence due to the connections they had, but also to the fact that death could come at any moment from the hands of either a German, a Pole, or a Jew. In principle, many factors that made life easier or more difficult could be listed in relation to each of the known life stories of the women on the 'Aryan' side. The expression of the eyes of hiding women, mentioned in the title of the article, was not insignificant. The eyes did not need to express fear or horror; often uncomfortable questions were

caused by the sadness present in the look, which could not be camouflaged by even the warmest smile⁸⁴. The help of Polish people, without which the living of Jewish women on the 'Aryan' side would not have been possible in a significant number of cases, is also an important element of the discussed history⁸⁵. However, this requires further research.

The fates of women and men on the 'Aryan' side have many common points, such as the necessity of renouncing one's own identity, hiding the past of oneself and the family, limiting contact with other Jews and, especially painful, with one's dearest ones. As I have mentioned earlier, the lack of circumcision for women made it possible for them to survive even with a 'bad' appearance. For men, circumcision constituted an indisputable proof of deception, even with strong documents to confirm Polish origin and with excellent skills of masking emotions. In Cracow whole families were often hiding, so the fates of women and men were intertwined. The Mariański couple, in which Maria lived 'on the surface', and was additionally active in the underground resistance, while her husband Mieczysław (Mordechaj Peleg) stayed in hiding due to his appearance, was not unusual⁸⁶. On the other hand, in the case of Irena Markiewicz and Maria Steczko, their husbands had been identified as Jews, while the women were able to live among the Polish population. When referring to everyday life of the Jews who stayed 'on the surface', Monika Stępień has stated correctly: "Every day of the 'paper Jews' was a day of struggle against adversity and of overcoming their own weaknesses"⁸⁷. On the other hand, Małgorzata Melchior has emphasised the changes that could be caused by permanent concealment of one's true self: the influence of the occupation conditions, of the constant need to pretend, to take on new roles, often resulted in 'a new man born', and "some of those who have survived by assimilating someone else's identity claim that this was not a temporary or superficial change"⁸⁸. This was true for both women

⁸⁴ See J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, *Survival strategies...*, pp. 70–72; M. Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość...*, pp. 239–244.

⁸⁵ See L.J. Weitzman, *Living on the Aryan Side...*, pp. 187–222.

⁸⁶ See M. Mariańska, M. Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów...*

⁸⁷ M. Stępień, *Dzień powszedni „papierowych Żydów”...*, p. 15.

⁸⁸ M. Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość...*, p. 276.

and men. Staying inconspicuous, blending in with the surrounding crowd, creating an appearance of a normal life, keeping one's distance from the events, and constant observance of the precautionary principles, combined with the elements already mentioned several times, the most important of which were a good appearance, knowledge of Polish language and possession of the 'Aryan' papers, enabled both women and men to live 'on the surface' and survive. Factors related to age, good health and ability to adapt quickly to changing conditions were important. Every day meant a struggle, and often one wrong move meant, in the best case, a need to change the place of hiding, and in the worst case, death.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the authors of the works mentioned above: Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, Małgorzata Melchior, Emanuel Ringelblum or Gunnar S. Paulsson, did not distinguish the fate of women and men, apart from selected topics such as pregnancy and maternity, they treated the problem as one. In this text, however, I decided, following Lenore J. Weitzman, to look at the survival strategies of Jewish women, because I believe that, despite many points that were shared with the fate of men, their ability to live 'on the surface' on the 'Aryan' side was different because of their sex. Raul Hilberg's important statement: "Yet the road to annihilation was marked by events that specifically affected men as men and women as women. First there were changes of roles. Then there occurred transformations of relationships. Finally there were differences in stresses and trauma"⁸⁹, should also refer to the life in hiding among the Polish community.

My research of the survival strategies and everyday life of women on the 'Aryan' side in Cracow needs to go deeper. Many topics related to everyday life, opportunities and threats, as well as the everyday life of occupied Cracow, so important for the Jewish women blending into the Polish community, were not developed in this article, thus opening up further research areas.

⁸⁹ R. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945*, 1992 p. 126 (Polish edition *Sprawcy, ofiary, świadkowie. Zagłada Żydów 1933–1945*, transl. by J. Giebułtowski, Warsaw 2007, p. 191).

PERSECUTION OF POLISH CITIZENS FOR PROVIDING HELP TO JEWS IN THE LIGHT OF PROCEDURAL FILES OF GERMAN SPECIAL COURTS¹

This text is based on fragmentary results of work carried out by a team of researchers from various institutions and scientific centers, as part of the project called “Memorial Index of Poles Murdered and Persecuted by the Nazis for Helping the Jews During World War II”². As a result of several years of wide-ranging preliminary research at various Polish and foreign institutions; extensive source material was collected, which provides evidence of repressions against the inhabitants of Poland for the assistance they offered to the Jewish population during the German occupation. One of the categories of sources that were used for the project was the material produced and collected by the institutions of the Nazi legal system and of the Third Reich repression system.

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, eds. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012.

² The initiative of launching the project was originated in 2005 by the circle connected with the Cracow-based Instytut Studiów Strategicznych (Institute of Strategic Studies), which until 2008 was the coordinator and the organizational patron of the undertaking. Initial invitations to co-operate on the project were extended to: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych (Chief Directorate of National Archives), Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau (National Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau), Yad Vashem Institute, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance; in 2006) and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (Jewish Historical Institute). In 2009 the project coordination was taken over by the Papieski Uniwersytet Jana Pawła II (Pontifical University of John Paul II) in Cracow, then again by Instytut Studiów Strategicznych in Cracow and from 2016 by Fundacja Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie (the Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation).

They were obtained as a result of research conducted at: the *Bundesarchiv Berlin* (Federal Archive in Berlin, Germany)³, *Derzhavniy arkhiv Lvivskoyi oblasti* (National Archive of the Lviv⁴ District, Ukraine)⁵ and in the Polish archives. The purpose of this text is to present the results of the analysis of the part of the collected material produced by the German special courts (*Sondergerichten*), which includes the procedural files and the material collected by the prosecutor's offices at the special courts.

Characteristics of the source material

The state of preservation and completeness of court files, according to the assessment of the person who carried out the preliminary research, varies significantly. Some cases consist of just a few documents, others amount to several volumes. The latter generally cover all stages of the procedural proceeding: the material that constituted the basis for initiating a trial (denunciations, police reports, and interrogations), the indictment files prepared by the prosecutor's office, and the complete procedural documentation⁶. This mainly concerns the material originating from the *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin.

³ The preliminary research of the special court records kept at the *Bundesarchiv Berlin* (BAB), in file no. 137 *Justizbehörden außerhalb des Gebiets der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, in its part 1 *Justizbehörden in den ehemaligen Reichsgauen Danzig-Westpreussen und Wartheland sowie im Generalgouvernement*, was carried out by Witold Mijał, the Head of Oddział IV Udośćępniania (Department IV – Presentation) of the Archiwum Państwowe (National Archive) in Szczecin. Positive results were obtained from the analysis of the materials covering the area of the GG. The documents were translated from the German by Joanna Beszczyńska, Jakub Grudniewski, and Mirosław Sikora.

⁴ The city was known as Lwów in prewar Poland, as Lemberg or Lwow to the occupying Germans and as Lviv to the Ukrainians. It is now Lviv in Ukraine, and this name is used throughout the text for clarity (translator's note).

⁵ The preliminary research at the National Archive of the Lviv District (NALD), in the file of the Special Court at the German Court in Lviv (hereafter SCL) – P 77 was also conducted by Witold Mijał. However, it cannot be considered complete because the researcher was not allowed access to the entire material on order. At this stage, only the extracts from court records, which contain the basic information about events, were provided, but not the copies of the entire documentation.

⁶ The characteristics of the materials of the German special courts come from the "Report on the preliminary research as part of the INDEX Program at the Bundesarchiv – Berlin Lichterfelde" of December 2005 (in the collection of the author of this text).

On the other hand, the vast majority of the court and prosecutor's files in the Lviv archive are incomplete and the documentation ends at the indictment stage or possibly at the appointment of the date of the trial. It was mostly produced by the *Sicherheitspolizei* (security police) and the *Sicherheitsdienst* (security service) of the Galicia district and by the German prosecutor's office in Lviv, and only few documents were produced by the Lviv Special Court. All of the cases are from 1944, and the judgment was made in just a few of these, which makes it impossible to determine the final consequences of the offense committed. Probably due to the evacuation of the Special Court in Lviv to Görlitz in July 1944, the trials were suspended with the intention of re-instating them at the new location. Only two cases that continue the procedural steps taken earlier in Lviv were found in the Berlin archive so far.

Analysis of the source material

Out of the documentation of the German Special Courts collected so far, the cases selected for the purpose of this text is to cover the act of **harboring and its accompanying activities**, which correspond to the definitions of assistance and repressions adopted for the project. The assistance is understood as documented or authenticated positive actions taken to support the legally isolated Jewish population, which were prohibited by German law at the time. On the other hand, the repressions are understood as actions of military and civil authorities of the Third Reich, including first and foremost those of the courts and prosecutors, police and security services with the participation of the Nazi party and its affiliated and collaborating organizations, against persons who have violated the rules of contact with the Jewish population imposed by the occupant's law. This definition includes, among others, such forms of repression as: criminal, civil and administrative penalties defined as a result of proceedings of judiciary authorities; intentional killing or imprisonment; physical or mental abuse; or deprivation of, damage to or destruction of property.

66 cases were selected for this analysis, which were investigated by special courts in the GG area, and these included 127 persons suspected or accused of harboring members of the Jewish population and accompanying actions. This

applied to 85 people of Polish, 34 of Ukrainian and 5 of German nationality⁷. Table 1 presents the number of analyzed proceedings of special courts and of the involved persons accused of acts of assistance to the Jewish population.

On the basis of a part of the special courts' documentation used in the present text it was possible to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the 'assistance-repression' phenomenon in relation to the complete, closed procedural files, which deals with various related aspects: the causes and circumstances, the motivation of providing the assistance and the consequences of the actions taken. It should be remembered, however, that the court files used in this text cannot be treated as a closed file, and that the results of its analysis cannot be regarded as final, because the ongoing research in archives of various origins may provide supplementary material that will expand or verify the existing knowledge.

Table 1. The number of analyzed proceedings of special courts and of the involved persons accused of acts of assistance to the Jewish population.

Location of the special court	Number of cases	Number of persons
Lwów	37	60
Warsaw	4	9
Tarnopol	3	7
Stanisławów	4	16
Rzeszów	2	3
Piotrków	7	11
Lublin	3	6
Cracow	2	3
Kielce	1	6
Częstochowa	3	6
Total	66	127

Source: Own study.

⁷ In three cases there is no information about the nationality.

Forms of assistance to the Jewish population

Because of the accepted key of selection of the cases examined in this text, the assistance to the Jewish population is meant both as the harboring in the literal sense, and also as any activity that accompanied it or was indirectly related to it. In the nomenclature used by the German special courts, these were called the *Unterschlupfgewährung* (providing shelter), *Judenbegünstigung* (providing assistance to Jews), *Judenbeherbergung* (providing shelter to Jews), *Judenverbergung* (harboring of Jews), *Vorschub leisten der Juden* (support for Jews). Of the 127 people suspected or accused of these acts, the harboring as an independent action applied to 71 persons, while 32 were charged with ancillary activities, which altogether amounted to 82% of all the cases considered. Nineteen persons were suspected of actions that supported or accompanied harboring. These included such actions as: supplying food, correspondence or money to Jews; agency in ‘the handling of matters’ and all activities related to the organization of transport. ‘Assisting’ Jews without a deeper interpretation of this term became the cause for the arrest of five people. The actions mentioned above affected at least 188 people of Jewish nationality, most of them named in the documents by their first and family names⁸.

Types of acts of assistance to the Jewish population, together with the number of persons accused or suspected, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of acts of assistance to the Jewish population, with the number of persons accused or suspected of committing these

Types of acts of assistance to the Jewish population	Number of persons accused or suspected
Harboring	71
Agency in finding a hideout	3
Suggesting a hideout	2

⁸ Records mention either the exact numbers of harbored people, or phrases such as ‘about a dozen’, ‘a family’.

Types of acts of assistance to the Jewish population	Number of persons accused or suspected
Suggesting a hideout, financial assistance, storing property	1
Harboring, agency in finding shelter	1
Leading to a shelter	2
Knowledge of harboring	5
Knowledge of harboring, providing food	3
Harboring, providing correspondence	1
Harboring, providing food	4
Harboring, providing food and correspondence	1
Harboring, agency in the handling of matters	1
Agency in finding a hideout, providing food	1
Harboring, providing fake documents	1
Harboring, providing fake documents, sale of property	1
Harboring, supplying, providing information	1
Harboring, agency in sale	1
Agency in hiding, providing fake documents	1
Leading to a shelter, providing food	1
Harboring and providing a radio set	1
Total	103
Food supply	2
Providing fake documents	3
Providing correspondence	4

Types of acts of assistance to the Jewish population	Number of persons accused or suspected
Providing correspondence, storing property	1
Providing correspondence, transport	1
Total	11
Transport	7
Organizing transport	1
Total	8
Providing assistance	5
Total	5

Source: Own study.

The analysis of the procedural files obtained from the point of view of the nature of acts of assistance to the Jewish population has necessitated the rejection of some of the cases. This was due to a contradicting interpretation of the behavior of the accused, which in the sense of the German criminal law was intended to 'support for the Jews' and was classified as a crime, but the accompanying actions actually denied the definition of assistance. It seemed evident not to include, but to ignore the case conducted by the Special Court in Lviv in October 1943 against four customs officials from Stryj and Skole, who were accused of, among other things, assistance to Jews. According to procedural files, the secretary of the Border Customs Protection HQ at Stryj, Artur Schäfer, at the request of one of the Jews working at the office, decided to organize a transport of several people across the Hungarian border. In order to accomplish this task, Schäfer ensured cooperation of three other officials of the post at Wyzłów, which reported to the State Customs Station at Skole: Johann Pekar, Hugo Grimm and Wilhelm Knobel. The first transport of five people took place on 20 April 1943. Just before crossing the border, Knobel searched the escapers and robbed considerable sums of mon-

ey from them, which he shared with the other officers, but allowed them to cross the border. Since the first transport was successful, the accused undertook to organize another, but according to a different plan. They intended to take any valuable possessions from the escapers (six people) just inside the border and then shoot them. This was done by Knobel and Grimm on 25 May 1943. The trial of Pekar, Knobel, Grimm and Schäfer took place on 18 October 1943. All were sentenced to death: all for helping Jews, plus Schäfer for inciting the murder of six people, Grimm for the murder of four people, and Knobel for the murder of two people⁹.

The verification of court documents also included individual proceedings against persons involved in collective trials categorized as cases of ‘harboring’ or ‘supporting Jews’. However, careful analysis of the facts contained in these materials has shown that the actions of those charged with assisting the Jewish population cannot truly be considered as such. The case of Bronisława Wernerowa, Kazimierz Bojcun, Tadeusz Płaskyj and Wilhelm Bigda, inhabitants of Lviv, who were arrested in January 1944 for sheltering Jews and organizing fake documents for them, may be an example here. The interrogations and a police confrontation between the arrested Jews and the detainees showed that Bigda, Płaskyj and Bojcun had initiated the harboring of six Jews at Bronisława Wernerowa’s place, then either themselves or via hired persons they blackmailed the hiding people, demanding payment in cash or valuables. One of those hiding has also testified that she had paid the accused for fake documents that she eventually never received. The investigation showed that Bigda, Płaskyj and Bojcun deliberately provided shelter to rich Jews to be able to blackmail them later. They were accused of harboring Jews, trading with them and blackmailing them. Wernerowa was only accused of hiding Jews. The documents lack information about the fate of Bigda, Płaskyj and Bojcun, or about any judgment passed on them. On the other hand, the Wernerowa process was postponed several times and it probably never took place due to absence of witnesses, who were unable to reach the place of trial¹⁰.

⁹ BAB, SCL, R. 137–145.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, R. 137–100.

Motivation to provide assistance

The analysis of procedural files has also allowed, for some of the cases, to identify the reasons used by the defendants to explain their conduct. In many cases, the risk was decided by several independent reasons; sometimes the reasons for providing assistance declared in the testimonies were clearly contradictory. It must be borne in mind that not all the motives of the defendants' decisions declared in the interrogations had to be real, in some cases they could have only been a part of the defensive strategy.

For fourteen people, a prewar acquaintance was the reason why they were willing to give shelter to the Jews. Five people treated their behavior as paying off a debt of gratitude for hiding them or their family members during the Soviet occupation. For example, Stanisława Krawczuk from Lviv had met the pharmacist named Edelman, whom she was now harboring, in 1938. They worked together in the same pharmaceutical company at the time. During the Soviet occupation Edelman hid Krawczuk and her husband in his flat, when they were in danger of being deported to Siberia for her husband's negative comments about Joseph Stalin¹¹. The case was similar with the Balicki couple from Siemianówka. The Pasternak brothers whom they harbored, had given shelter to their son during the Soviet occupation, when he was sentenced to be deported to a labor camp for being late for work¹². Wiktor Hubicki and Roman Dąbrowski from Lviv were also motivated by gratitude for the assistance they had received during the Soviet occupation¹³. For Jakub Pachowski and his daughters from Drohobych, relaying correspondence and hiding the property of Izaak Rosenblatt was also a form of gratitude for years of acquaintance and for his financial support¹⁴. On the other hand, Anna Zwarycz from Brody decided to help her prewar employer. She took care of his 18-month-old child, whom she and her sister hid for

¹¹ BAB, SCL, R. 137–134, Judgment of the Special Court of 14 November 1944, no pagination.

¹² *Ibid*, Special Court in Cracow (SSC), R. 13–032, Report of interrogation of Katarzyna and Józef Balicki of 25 May 1944, no pagination.

¹³ *Ibid*, SCL, R. 137–018, Judgment of 8 January 1945, no pagination; NALD, P. 77, p. 847.

¹⁴ BAB, SCL, R. 137–001, Report of interrogation of Jakub Pachowski of 17 June 1943, no pagination.

almost six months¹⁵. Similarly, between August and the end of December 1943 Maria Wężowska from Lviv harbored, 'on Aryan' papers, the daughter of a Jewish woman for whom she had worked as a maid before the war¹⁶. Franciszek Ożegalski, an engineer, issued fake documents and then organized shelter for worker Leopold Manner, employed by his factory, and his wife¹⁷. On the other hand, Edmund Jungowski, employed at the *Warschauer Aufzugsfabrik A.G.* was encouraged to offer shelter in his flat to a Jew from Grójec by a request of his superior¹⁸.

A frequent excuse used by the accused to justify their actions was the lack of awareness of whom they were harboring or of the knowledge what was the penalty for that. Walenty Kępa and Stanisław Widera from Widzówek in the Częstochowa district claimed that the Jews they were harboring used Polish documents, which clearly indicated their origin¹⁹. Michał Szramek from Drohobych also explained that he did not know that the people who rented apartment from him were Jewish, and the woman named Herzig who lived with him was apparently a 'baptized Jewess'²⁰. Julian Stolarski from Pieńki Stolarskie in the Piotrków district hid four Jews at the request of Śniadek, the Polish commander of the local *Gendarmerie* post, who assured him that they were displaced Poles. After a month Stolarski began to guess the nationality of the harbored persons, but Śniadek assured him that he assumed full responsibility for this action. In February 1943, after he had read in the press about the sanctions for harboring of Jews, he apparently refused them further shelter²¹. Eugen Kędzierski, a Lviv resident, hid a Jewess because he was convinced that she was an 'Aryan'. At the moment he learned the truth, he decided to continue doing so because

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, R. 137–113, Copy of the justification of the sentence of Anna Zwarycz, no pagination.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, R. 137–154, Report of interrogation of Maria Wężowska of 15 December 1944, no pagination.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, R. 137–054.

¹⁸ National Archive in Warsaw (AP Warszawa), German Court in Warsaw, 2235.

¹⁹ BAB, Special Court in Częstochowa (SSCz), R. 137–095, Judgment of the Special Court of 1 June 1944, pp. 73–75.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, SCL, R. 137–066, Report of interrogation of Michał Szramek of 6 August 1943, no pagination.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Special Court in Piotrków, R. 137–005, Judgment of 26 May 1943, pp. 18–19.

he needed money to treat his sick child. It was also money that convinced Władysława Sewerin who decided to hide a Jewess despite, as she said, her ‘Semitic appearance’²². Maria Popowicz from Lviv testified that the Jews living with her threatened to kill her if she denounced them to the police, but money was the reason why she was harboring them²³. The subject of ‘harboring for fear’ has appeared in several other testimonies. Kazimierz Dorosz from Bukowina (Biłgoraj County) admitted that he had tried to remove the Jews from his home, but he did not inform the police about harboring them because he feared their vengeance²⁴. Fear was, apparently, the reason why Rozalia Surma from Warchoły (Kamionka Strumiłowa county) was harboring Jews²⁵, while Helena Przygodzka from Częstochowa explained during a police interrogation that she harbored four Jews who had fled from the ghetto in Częstochowa because “they terrorized her and threatened to shoot her and they even beat her up”²⁶. Magdalena Hornung from Kimirze (Złotów county) was forced “by armed men” to deliver correspondence related to organizing transport for Jews, although she acknowledged that she was also driven by her desire to earn money²⁷. Declaration of providing shelter solely for the sake of becoming rich appeared openly in just a few testimonies. However, analysis of the procedural files proves that more than half (71 people) did so “for remuneration”. This term was defined in various ways, sometimes difficult to interpret. Frequently there were differences in the definition of the nature and purpose of the remuneration between the testimony of the harboring and the harbored ones. This is illustrated by the example of the Balicki couple from Siemianówka mentioned above. According to the statements of Józef Balicki, recorded by the Ukrainian police, the harbored Pasternak brothers apparently paid

²² *Ibid*, SCL, R. 137–054, Report of interrogation of Eugen Kędziński of 16 August 1943, no pagination.

²³ *Ibid*, R.137–069, Report of interrogation of Maria Popowicz, p. 7.

²⁴ *Ibid*, Special Court in Lublin, R. 137–063, Report of interrogation of Kazimierz Dorosz, of 28 May 1943, pp. 16–17.

²⁵ NALD, P. 77, description 1. Case 737, pp. 2, 4, 12.

²⁶ BAB, SSCz, R. 137–063, Indictment of Helena Przygodzka of 30 June 1944, pp. 4–6; *Ibid*, Judgment of 20 July 1944, pp. 15–16.

²⁷ *Ibid*, SCL, R. 137–037, Judgment of the Special Court of 16 December 1944, p. 2.

him two thousand zlotys a month. His wife, on the other hand, denied receiving such an amount of money for food supplies. Balicki himself later withdrew his testimony, explaining that they had undertaken to harbor the Pasternaks only in gratitude for the assistance to their son during the Soviet occupation, and it was Rubin Pasternak who offered the remuneration. The latter, however, apparently admitted during the interrogation that he paid Balicki for harboring, and not for support. His brother Moses maintained quite the opposite, that the money they offered to Balicki was intended solely for support²⁸.

The reasons behind the collection of remuneration by the assistance providers in various forms (money, material goods or promise to receive real estate after the war) suggested by the harbored ones were variously justified. Among 71 confirmed cases of collecting remuneration, the following terms appeared: “participation in living expenses”, “support”, “payment for food and lodging”, “renting accommodation at an extraordinarily high fee”, “loan paid for in food supplies”, “loan for business development”, “for coffee and bread offered”. On the other hand, a clear indication that the helper was doing it selflessly appears in the case of four people.

The testimonies of the suspects also included quite strange explanation, such as the statement of Józef Bernatowicz from Lviv who, during an interrogation at his arrest on 9 December 1943 as a result of the suspicion that he was hiding nine Jews, apparently testified that “the reason why he harbored the Jews was the desire of vengeance; he wanted to starve them and denounce them to the police, but he was waiting for the arrival of another Jew. He was pleased that Jews could live in fear for such a long time and be bitten by lice, bed bugs and other insects”²⁹. On the other hand, his wife Anna, who incriminated him during the trial, said that “the main reason they kept the Jews was that times would change and it would then be very

²⁸ *Ibid*, Special Court in Cracow, R. 137–032, Report of interrogation of Józef Balicki of 2 February 1944, p. 7v.; *Ibid*, Report of interrogation of Katarzyna Balicka of 2 February 1944, p. 8v; *Ibid*, Report of interrogation of Rubin Pasternak, p. 9v; *Ibid*, Report of interrogation of Moses Pasternak, of 2 February 1944, p. 10v.

²⁹ *Ibid*, SCL, R. 137–050, Notification about the capture of Józef Bernatowicz, 9 December 1943, pp.16–17.

valuable to be able to prove that they had saved Jews”³⁰. Wasyl Nahacz from Lubaczów said during the police interrogation that he repeatedly tried to get rid of the Jews, but he did not do that, because “Salomon Adler harbored by him was always able to comfort him when he presented his poverty; he said that peace would soon come, and then he would be well. Nahacz was always pleased with these words”³¹.

Direct causes of repression

The analysis of court files in terms of the direct causes of the arrest of persons assisting Jews showed that in at least 22 cases of harboring Jews the practices were revealed as a result of denunciation. In seven cases there is information about “anonymous denunciation” or just “denunciation”. Those who provided shelter were also arrested as a consequence of their being denounced during police interrogations of the harbored themselves. Kędzierski, Ożegalski and Sewerin were identified by Leopold Manner, arrested by Ukrainian policemen. He was moving around the Kajzerwald in Lviv without an armband and used ‘Aryan’ documents with Ożegalski’s company seal³². Adele Maziak from Stryj was arrested after local peasants had caught one of the Jews, whom she had been harboring a few days before, while he was trying to escape from a bunker in nearby woods³³. The address of Michał Szramek from Drohobych was found by the German police in the documents they secured when they arrested Maurycy Ruhrberg, a member of the Drohobych Judenrat. Herzig, a harbored man who was arrested on that occasion, confirmed that Szramek knew he was harboring Jews, even though they used the false name of Białowąż³⁴.

In other situations, neighbors, acquaintances or employees of the harboring one contributed to revealing the shelter location. The Pasternak brothers,

³⁰ *Ibid*, Report of interrogation of Anna Bernatowicz of 9 April 1944, p. 28.

³¹ *Ibid*, R. 137–159, Report of interrogation of Wasyl Nahacz, 18 March 1943, p. 11v.

³² *Ibid*, R. 137–054; Letter from the Ukrainian Police Station in Lviv to the Commander of the Ukrainian Police in Lviv of 11 May 1943, p. 2.

³³ *Ibid*, R. 137–115, Letter from the Commander of the Gendarmerie post at Drohobych to the Police Commander at Drohobych, 3 February 1943, p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid*, R. 137–066; Report of interrogation of Salomon Herzig of 5 July 1943, no pagination.

harbored by the Balickis, were denounced by neighbors³⁵, the Jews harbored by Wasył Hrenkiw at Stanisławów were denounced by a carter employed at his farm³⁶, the denunciation by Rudolf Schwarz employed at the *Badhäuser* plant in Stanisławów was the reason for the arrest of several people responsible for harboring thirteen Jews there³⁷. The plans of Zabudowski and Płowica to transport Jews from Przemyślany to Hungary were revealed to the German police by the Byelorussian, Mikhal Sesomov, who was supposed to organize a truck for this purpose³⁸. On the other hand Michał Malarecki from Daleszyce, who organized the transport of several Jews, reported personally to the Bielany post when the Germans threatened the inhabitants that they would burn the village down³⁹.

Criminal consequences

When police officers discovered the fact of assistance to Jewish people, the immediate consequence of the fact was to arrest those involved in the practices and those suspected of complicity. Most of them, in anticipation of a trial, were taken to police jails, court custody or independent prisons.

According to surviving procedural files, all defendants who had intended to provide or had provided shelter to Jews or who had acted as agents in such practices were charged with the breach of §4 of the directive of restricted residence in the GG of 13 September 1940, in the wording of the directive of 15 October 1941 (*§4b der Verordnung über Aufenthaltbeschränkungen im Generalgouvernement vom 13 September 1940 in der Fassung der Verordnung vom Oktober 1941*) and in conjunction with §3d of the police directive of

³⁵ J. Syrnyk, *Historia Józefa Balickiego* [in:] *Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje... Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej*, ed. A. Namysło, Warsaw 2009, p. 147.

³⁶ BAB, Special Court in Stanisławów, R. 137–009, Information of the post at Stanisławów of 15 October 1943, no pagination.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, R. 137–011, Police information about the notification of 13 December 1943, no pagination.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, SCL, R. 137–037, Sentence of 16 December 1944, no pagination.

³⁹ E. Krężolek, M. Malarecki [in:] *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, eds. A. Namysło, G. Berent, Warsaw 2014, 1st ed., p. 83.

10 November 1942 on the establishment of Jewish quarters in the districts of Radom, Cracow and Galicia (§3d *Polizeianordnung vom 10 November 1942 über die Bildung von Judenwohnbezirken im Distrikt Radom, Krakau und Galizien*). Exceptionally, appropriate paragraphs of the German Penal Code of 1871, amended after 1933, were applied.

When taking the decision about the sentence the court considered, among others, “the level of insubordination against the German administration measures”⁴⁰. In practice, however, this did not matter, and the adjudication was sometimes of random nature. Analysis of court materials showed that the same act was subject to different judgments by different courts in the country. This concerned both the type of penalty imposed and, in the case of imprisonment, the period of sentence. Offenses classified as “harboring Jews” were in principle; punishable by death, but that was not a hard and fast rule.

In the 66 special court proceedings used for this analysis, penalty and sentence information appears in relation to 76 persons. In materials related to 37 persons there is no information whatsoever about a trial and the collected documentation ends with the indictment or the decision to postpone or delay the date of trial. This was particularly true for the proceedings that took place before the special court in Lviv in the second half of 1944. As a result of the evacuation of the court, which took place in July 1944, the trials failed to take place. The trials were resumed in October at the off-site department at Görlitz, which enabled the resumption of four suspended cases in November and December. However, under the new circumstances, not all of the planned follow up trials were initiated, mainly due to inability to contact the witnesses. In January 1945 the head of the Special Court in Lviv decided to suspend all criminal proceedings and to evacuate the court.

Table 3. shows the type of sentence imposed by the special courts, taking into account the nature of the undertaken assistance for the Jewish population.

⁴⁰ BAB, SCL, R. 137–159, Session of the Special Court in Lviv, off-site department at Görlitz, 8 September 1944, no pagination.

Table 3. Sentences of special courts

Form of assistance	Sentence							
	death penalty			imprisonment	acquittal	no information about sentence	dismissal before trial	no information about trial
	executed	no information about execution	commuted to imprisonment					
Harboring or harboring and other forms of assistance	10	18	13	14	7	3	8	30
Agency and supplies				2	1	1		2
Transport and other		1	2	3			2	5
Providing assistance			1	4				
Total	10	19	16	23	8	4	10	37
	45							

Source: Own study.

According to the analysis of procedural files, 45 people have been sentenced to death penalty out of a total of 76 for whom information about the sentence has survived. This represents almost 60 percent of all special court judgments in the 66 cases used in this text. There is no evidence in the court documents to confirm the execution or cancellation of the death penalty against nineteen persons. It is known, however, that the decisions of the court were executed in ten cases, while in sixteen these were converted to imprisonment by an act of grace of the Governor General⁴¹. In three cases, the execution of the judgment was impossible “due to the evacuation of the court and release of the prisoners”. This group included Józef Bernatowicz from Lviv, who was sentenced to death by the decision of the special court in Lviv of 28 April 1944. The evacuation of the Lviv prison took place during the proceedings of pardon conducted by a counselor. Bernatowicz was released along with the rest of the prisoners, because for logistics reasons they could not be transported to other prisons. When in October 1944, already in Görlitz, the prosecutor’s office tried to resume the trial this was not possible due to the unknown place of residence of the accused⁴².

23 defendants were sentenced to prison sentences by the special courts, and they served these in prisons or high-security prisons. The prison sentences ranged between four months and six years, with most of them (as illustrated in Table 4.) being sentenced to three years’ imprisonment.

The special courts also issued eight decisions of acquittal. In most cases the verdict of innocence was dictated by the lack of evidence of ‘supporting Jews’, but occasionally there were other justifications. In the case of the acquittal of Anna Zwarycz, it resulted from a literal comparison of the act with a meticulous interpretation of the law. The accused harbored an eighteen-month-old child from November 1942 to April 1943 at the request of her employer. The court ruled that this action was not subject to §4 of the

⁴¹ In eight cases, the death sentence was changed to three years in prison, in four to one year, in three to five years.

⁴² BAB, SCL, R. 137-050, Letter from the Head of the German state attorney office in Lviv off-site department at Görlitz to the legal department of the GG government of 26 October 1944, no pagination.

regulation of 13 September 1940 in the wording of the regulation of 15 October 1941, in conjunction with §3d of the police regulation of 10 November 1942, because the child that she had accepted was not able to leave the ghetto alone due to its age. In addition, she did not hide it, but she looked after it quite openly. In view of such a decision, the public prosecutor's office submitted an extraordinary objection, but no information was available in the files of the case about the effects of that action⁴³.

Table 4. Imprisonment sentences passed by special courts

Sentence	Number of condemned
4 months	1
6 months	2
1 year	1
1 year 6 months	1
2 years 6 months	1
3 years	11
3 years 6 months	1
5 years	3
6 years	2
Total	23

Source: Own study.

The above examples illustrate the need for careful verification and critical evaluation of the materials collected in court proceedings. Although the very fact of acts of assistance to the Jewish population is not questionable, proper assessment of the actions, including the motives or circumstances of the actual events, is very difficult. The multiplicity of accumulated material,

⁴³ *Ibid*, R. 137–113, Copy of the justification of the sentence of the Special Court in Lviv in the case of Anna Zwarycz, no pagination.

the varying, and sometimes contradictory, testimony of the accused and witnesses make it impossible to interpret the facts unequivocally. Nevertheless, the documentation of the German special courts is an important source for reproducing many aspects of the process of assistance to the Jews and for determining the legal consequences of such actions.

**THE PARTICIPATION OF THE GERMAN GENDARMERIE
IN EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE
GENERAL GOUVERNEMENT (WITH THE NORTH-EASTERN
PART OF THE RADOM DISTRICT AS AN EXAMPLE)¹**

The history of the part of the *General Gouvernement* (GG)² located within the borders of the Radom District during the German occupation has been subject of extensive historical research for years³. The pages of scientific works, regional studies, diaries and memoirs include much information about the structure and functioning of the occupational authority structures, including police formations. However, while it is easy for a person interested in the problem to find papers devoted, for example, to the security police⁴ or to the Polish ‘navy blue’⁵ police⁶, finding data for the organization, the competence, and in particular for the activities, of members of other Ger-

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, ed. A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2012.

² *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator’s note).

³ Principal literature on this issue is summed up by R. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945*, Paderborn 2006.

⁴ See W. Borodziej, *Terror i polityka. Policja niemiecka a polski ruch oporu w GG 1939–1944*, Warsaw 1985; L. Dobroszycki, M. Getter, *Działanie Urzędu Komendanta Policji i Służby Bezpieczeństwa w Radomiu w zakresie zwalczania ruchu oporu*, “Najnowsze Dzieje Polski” 1960, vol. 4, pp. 23–61; J. Franecki, *Hitlerowski aparat policyjny i sądowniczy i jego działalność w dystrykcie radomskim ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Ziemi Radomskiej*, Radom 1978.

⁵ The Polish police force under German occupation was commonly known as ‘granatowa’ (‘navy blue’) for the color of their uniforms (translator’s note).

⁶ See S. Piątkowski, *Między obowiązkiem a kolaboracją. Policja “granatowa” w dystrykcie radomskim w latach 1939–1945* [in:] *Z dziejów policji polskiej w latach 1939–1945*, ed. E. Majcher-Ociesa, Kielce 2010, pp. 163–186.

man police formations in the discussed area is often more than troublesome. There is also no analytical study devoted to the participation of members of individual formations in the process of extermination of the Jewish population⁷. This situation concerns, among others, the German military police (*Gendarmerie*), which had a network of permanent posts in the entire GG area, located in towns and larger villages⁸.

The poor state of research in this area is somewhat surprising for a researcher, as both the analyzes of archival materials and the reading of memoirs and witness accounts show clearly that the *gendarmes* had a significant effect over the lives of many local communities during the occupation. They have written a tragic chapter, as perpetrators of extermination activities directed at the Poles, Jews, Romanys and Soviet PoWs.

Research of the *Gendarmerie* activities at the micro-regional level, i.e. related to the personnel and the broadly understood functioning of individual posts in the discussed area, has caused problems for historians. The vast majority of records produced by this formation were destroyed, and the subject matter of the surviving material is focused on economic and supply issues. Although numerous prosecutors' inquiries into the crimes committed by the *gendarmes* were initiated after the war, few of the suspects were arrested and prosecuted⁹. Unfortunately, these gaps cannot be filled with information taken from testimonies given by witnesses of events, especially by the Jews who lived in the ghettos of the Radom District during the German occupation, as the overwhelming majority of them were murdered. All

⁷ The fate of the Jews in the Radom District is discussed in detail in: J.A. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen. Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945*, Darmstadt 2007. See also: K. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, Cracow 2004; A. Rutkowski, *Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej*, "Biuletyn ŻiH" 1955, no. 15/16, pp. 75–139.

⁸ Many interesting topics that might enable more detailed research of the subject for the Radom District area in the future are presented in: W. Curilla, *Der Judenmord in Polen und die deutsche Ordnungspolizei 1939–1945*, Paderborn 2011.

⁹ As regards the area covered by this work, the only *gendarme* arrested after the war was Alfons Himml, who had served, among others, at the Lipsko post. In 1949 he was sentenced to death by the District Court in Radom and executed. The number of arrested and prosecuted *Gendarmerie* personnel for the entire Radom District can be estimated at 10–15 people.

this makes this essay a preliminary study, the primary purpose of which is to draw the attention of researchers to issues that deserve to be studied in detail in the future.

In the complicated structure of the German police in the GG, the *Ordnungspolizei* (public order police) carried out the basic tasks connected with the preventing common crime. In addition to specialist formations, such as the *Werkschutzpolizei* (industrial guards), *Verkehrspolizei* (traffic police), *Wasserschutzpolizei* (river police), there was also the *Schutzpolizei* (protective police) that operated in towns with a population of over 5,000 inhabitants, and the *Gendarmerie* that we focus on here, which controlled smaller towns and rural areas.

In the Radom District the *Gendarmerie* structure was based on platoons stationed in county (*powiat*) towns. The commander of such a platoon, who reported to the *Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei* (regimental commander) in Radom, acted as the county *Gendarmerie* commander, working closely with the local state official (*starosta*). He also supervised the field posts, manned by *gendarmes* posted there. This formation had strict control over the Polish 'navy blue' police, based on a network of posts located in most communities (*gmina*) and in several so-called mobile posts, whose members regularly visited trade fairs to combat illicit trafficking.

There were 38 permanent *Gendarmerie* posts in the Radom District during the German occupation. Seven of them were located in the area known as "the north-eastern part of the district", covered by the prewar counties of Radom, Iłża and Koźienice, and during the German occupation by the borders of the counties of Radom and Starachowice. Starting in 1940, those were the posts at Radom, Białobrzegi, Koźienice, Szydłowiec and Zwolen, and at Iłża, Lipsko and Starachowice¹⁰. The 'sub-posts' at Błotnica (reporting to the commander at Białobrzegi), Brzóza (reporting to the commander at Koźienice), and Chotcza and Tarłów (reporting to the commander at Starachowice) were established probably in 1942, as was the post at Ciepiałów, its location being a punishment for local farmers who sup-

¹⁰ A part of the Radom District allocated for the needs of the Wehrmacht (*Truppenübungsplatz Mitte Radom*), from which an overwhelming majority of civilian residents were deported, was excluded from the network of the posts discussed here.

ported the underground resistance troops and escapers from ghettos¹¹. Each *Gendarmerie* post was usually manned by 8–12 men. The positions of commanders and their deputies were usually held by Germans from the Reich. Their subordinates included many *gendarmes* who had lived in the Polish Republic before the war: in Pomerania, Silesia and Wielkopolska, and have then signed the Deutsche Volksliste ('German nationality list') following the German invasion. Because of their good knowledge of the Polish language they were the ones who most frequently contacted the local population, and who acted as interpreters during interrogations and repressive actions. Such tasks were also performed by Polish policemen, and sometimes also by the so-called 'colonists', i.e. farmers of German origin who lived in the area¹².

Unfortunately, information about the staff of each post is largely incomplete and only some of the names of the *gendarmes* appear in documents. They included, at Iłża: Oder, Neumann and Batz; at Zwolen: Gross and Kaiser, at Białobrzegi: Klusch, Schmidt, Schnitzler, Augsburg and Pfalzgraf; at Błotnica: Nolte, Schulz and Lück; at Brzóza: Peno and Hoffman; at Kozienice: Henning, Schmidtke, Kühlich and Sommer; at Szydłowiec: Bauer, Bolm, Mokrzyński, Prochaczek vel Prochaczyk, König, Knoll and Messerschmidt¹³.

In order to present the scale of extermination activities carried out by *gendarmes*, it is important to mention three factors (that seem the most important) related to the functioning of the posts in the area. The first one was that the *gendarmes* were well informed about the situation in the local country, due to an extensive network of informers maintained by each post. The informers were recruited from the local population both through black-

¹¹ See J.A. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen...*, pp. 73–83, 88–97; T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945*, Kielce 2011, pp. 70–73; J.A. Młynarczyk, S. Piątkowski, *Cena poświęcenia. Zbrodnie na Polakach za pomoc udzielaną Żydom w rejonie Ciepłowa*, Cracow 2007, p. 89.

¹² See S. Piątkowski, *Ludność niemiecka na terenach wiejskich regionu radomskiego w latach 1939–1944. Z problematyki postaw i losów* [in:] *Spoleczność ewangelicka Radomia podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej*, ed. J. Kłaczko, Radom 2009, pp. 79–93.

¹³ Difficulties in identifying the *gendarmes* are also due to the fact that their names were remembered by the Poles phonetically, often in distorted forms of similar Polish words. For example, Kühlich from the Kozienice *Gendarmerie* post was remembered by many witnesses of his criminal activity as 'Kielich' (Polish for 'Chalice'), while Batz from Iłża was remembered as 'Baca' ('shepherd').

mail and economic incentives, such as alcohol, cigarettes, textiles and money. The information that they provided, combined with that from testimonies of the interrogated persons and from occasional denunciations, gave the Germans considerable knowledge of the situation prevailing among the Polish population, and to a certain extent also among the Jewish population¹⁴. The second factor was the high mobility of the *gendarmes*. Almost every day, the commander of each post split his subordinates into two groups. Members of the first group served at the premises, dealing with administrative matters, supervising the prisoners, etc. The other group was deployed in the country to perform patrols. They used horse-drawn carts or sleighs (in accordance with regulations in force, horse carts with Polish carters had to be on duty, ready to use, around the clock at each *Gendarmerie* station)¹⁵, and also bicycles when the weather was good. One of the very frequent activities of such patrols was to set up ambushes. This was especially the case on trade fair days, when *gendarmes* hid in roadside ditches and groves, searching the horse-drawn carts and checking the documents of people traveling to trade fairs. Patrols also frequently entered individual villages, hamlets and foresters' lodges, checking dwellings and farm buildings in search of arms, illegal publications from the underground resistance, meat from illegal slaughter, and especially of people hiding there. In many cases the operations of the *Gendarmerie* ended with severe beatings, and often also with executions¹⁶.

¹⁴ Alfons Himml, the *gendarme* from Lipsko mentioned above, has testified that the network of informers he supervised included about 18 people of Polish nationality, including 'navy blue' policemen, landed estate managers and shopkeepers (AIPN, Sąd Okręgowy w Radomiu (Radom District Court) [hereinafter: SOR], 137, vol. 1. *Protokół przesłuchania oskarżonego A. Himmla, 25 II 1946 r.*, p. 16).

¹⁵ The duty was carried out, in rotation, by all owners of horses and horse carts resident in the village or town where the *Gendarmerie* post was located. The dates of the performance of the duty were designated by the community authorities. Patrolling activity of the *Gendarmerie* in Radom district became markedly less in 1943–1944 in connection with more and more numerous operations of Polish partisan units and subversive groups. However, in the area discussed in this essay, the presence of thousands of German policemen and soldiers serving in the city of Radom, at the airfield near the city, and at the proving ground made the *gendarmes* feel much safer than in other counties.

¹⁶ AP Radom, Starostwo Powiatowe w Radomiu (Radom County Authority), 117, *Kwestionariusze na temat miejsc kaźni w gminach powiatu radomskiego*, [1947–1948], pp. 7–54; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni, popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach*

The factors mentioned above meant that the *gendarmes* were at the same time feared and hated by the local population. Although each of the stations included some ‘good’ *gendarmes* (i.e. those who maintained relatively good relations with the Poles, avoided physical violence etc.), it was the ‘bad’ ones who were the most conspicuous. Their attachment to Nazi ideology, their contempt for everything non-German, and their tendency to show off to impress their superiors in Radom, were often combined with negative personal qualities: brutality, contempt for human life, and a tendency to abuse alcohol. All this made the *Gendarmerie* (and especially the post commanders and their deputies) the ‘masters of life and death’ in their subordinate territories.

According to surviving documents, since the first months of the German occupation, the Jews were victims of *Gendarmerie* operations carried out in the realities discussed above. During 1940–1941 the *gendarmes*, often using the help of their subordinate Polish police officers, focused primarily on the enforcement of anti-Jewish legislation. For example, the surviving records of the Radom prison include several hundred reference cards of Jewish inhabitants of towns and villages arrested by the *Gendarmerie* for illegal trafficking, price inflation, violation of sanitary regulations, use of means of transport, etc. From the second half of 1941 on, such causes as “not wearing an armband” or “illegally leaving a closed area” began to dominate among the offences of Jewish nationals; in the vast majority of cases these resulted in the prisoner being sentenced to death and murdered in one of the mass execution sites near Radom¹⁷.

It should be emphasized that each of the detainees, before being transported to Radom, was kept for a period of between a couple and twenty days

polskich w latach 1939–1945. Województwo radomskie, Warsaw 1980. See also S. Piątkowski, *Zbrodnie żandarmów z posterunku w Lipsku nad Wisłą na Polakach udzielających pomocy Żydom (1942–1943)* [in:] “Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?...”. *Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej*, ed. A. Namysło, Warsaw 2009, pp. 13–28.

¹⁷ For details on the subject see: K. Jaroszek, S. Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944. Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady*, Radom 1997, p. 13 and subs. The work omitted the names of Jewish nationals released from prison after serving penalties for ‘crimes’ introduced by the occupants’ norms (which often involved fines in the amount of 1,000 zlotys converted, when impossible to enforce, to three months of imprisonment).

in one of *Gendarmerie* jails. They were located at the post stations, in special converted rooms, usually in basements¹⁸. Because it was the *gendarmes* who carried out the first interrogations of the prisoners, the jails quickly gained a reputation of gloomy places of torment among the local people, where one could easily lose one's health or life. The *gendarmes* forced people to testify by starvation, beatings with batons and whips, breaking arms at joints, tearing out whole tufts of hair with special springs, etc. Such tortures often led to permanent physical and mental injuries, or deaths¹⁹.

The task of 'maintaining order' in the territory assigned to each of the posts included, among others, the control over the Jewish population, concentrated in ghettos from 1941 on. This subject, with particular emphasis on both extermination actions and the daily contacts between the Jews and their supervising Germans, certainly deserves detailed research. Post-war testimonies of the Poles who watched the Holocaust often mention robberies committed by the *Gendarmerie* through physical violence, extortions and blackmail on persons considered relatively wealthy. Once the victims were deprived of all of their property, they were killed in executions. These acts can unquestionably be counted among a whole range of activities aimed at the civilian population, especially Polish farmers, which provided the *gendarmes* with excellent food, alcohol and a money supply²⁰.

¹⁸ *Gendarmerie* posts were usually located in brick buildings with basements, surrounded by open space, to allow effective defense in case of a possible attack. The numbers of suitable buildings in small towns and villages were not large. They included noblemen's manors (e.g. at Górkki Ciepiewskie), schools (e.g. at Zwoleń), or presbytery buildings (e.g. at Kozienice), from which their prewar owners or users were removed. The post at Szydłowiec was located in the building of a liquidated cinema.

¹⁹ AIPN, SOR, 137, vol. 1, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Aleksandra Prokopa*, 12 VIII 1947 r., p. 168; *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Ryszarda Zapolskiego*, 16 VII 1947 r., p. 105; AIPN, 68/1, vol. 1, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Romana Peletiera*, 9 XI 1967 r., p. 9.

²⁰ In each of the places described here, the *gendarmes* used the food confiscated at trade fairs for their own needs. Very often they also ordered Polish farmers to deliver poultry, eggs and other products to their posts. A patrol's arrival at a village usually entailed the necessity of hosting the Germans with a sumptuous meal, with a compulsory dose of alcohol, followed by a bribe in the form of meat and other groceries at their departure. Village leaders usually acted as representatives of local communities in this kind of contacts with the Germans.

This harassment was very often intertwined with murders committed in various circumstances by the Germans, acting with premeditation, often under the influence of alcohol. According to postwar estimates, during the existence of the ghetto at Biało-brzegi, local *gendarmes* killed about 40 of its inhabitants in various circumstances²¹. Those people were killed either in the streets or in executions carried out in the Jewish cemetery and on the banks of the River Pilica (to this day the place where Germans used to throw bodies of their victims into the river is known to the local people as the 'Jewish abyss'). Analysis of the certificates from Lipsko shows, in turn, that individual and collective executions were performed there, and the executioners were probably local *gendarmes*. Sura Grynfeld, farmers Moszek and Nojeh Grynberg, and leatherworker Lejbuś Kuperblum were all killed in the town on the same day in March 1942, and the death certificates of all of them recorded that they were shot. The following month the same fate befell the trader Chaskiel Mandelman. In May five more inhabitants of the Lipsko ghetto were shot on one day: Chaja Tajchenblat, Gołda Frydman, and Cyrla, Szmul and Majer Kestenberg²². Death certificates of Jewish nationals also provide evidence of the crimes committed by *gendarmes* from the Iłża post. And so, in December 1941, they shot Icek Liberman, the rabbi from Lipsko, there; in February 1942, in uncertain circumstances, furrier Izrael Mańkus was killed by them; on 8 May of that year at least three people were shot in the ghetto: Ruchla Liwerant, Andzel Cymerman and a butcher named Lejzor. In June and July 1942 the same fate befell: Szlama Wajsfogiel, Lejbuś Flajszer, Motl Lerner, and also Motl Gondar and Icek Kirszenbaum from Sienno²³. These people were probably only some of the Jewish inhabitants of Iłża killed by the Germans before the ghetto was liquidated.

²¹ AIPN, 68/1, t. 1, *Pismo komendanta powiatowego Milicji Obywatelskiej w Biało-brzegach do Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich (OKBZH) w Kielcach*, 29 III 1966 r., p. 22.

²² Archive of the Registry at Lipsko, *Księga zgonów wyznania mojżeszowego za lata 1922–1942, rok 1942: akty zgonu no. 15–18, 28, 34–38, 12 III – 29 V 1942 r.*, no pagination.

²³ S. Piątkowski, *Lata wojny i okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945)* [in:] *Miasto w nowej odświeżeniu. Monografia Iłży*, vol. 1: *Od czasów najdawniejszych do 1945 roku*, ed. S. Piątkowski, Iłża 2014, p. 279.

Since the circumstances of the murders mentioned above, and of many others, remain unknown, one will probably never discover whether they were intended to intimidate local communities, or if they had other causes. For the Poles who witnessed such crimes, they were usually seen as manifestation of the Germans' bestiality, killing people for no reason at all. Let us quote at this point passages from postwar testimonies of two inhabitants of Koziénice, where the *gendarmes* have apparently murdered nearly fifty individuals in individual or collective executions while the ghetto still existed. "In the spring, I do not remember exactly of which year," said one of the Koziénice men, "I saw a Jewish woman named Brandla Zelenberg come out of the ghetto, followed by *gendarme* Sommer, who was pushing and shouting at her in German to walk faster. I was then riding a bicycle; when Sommer noticed me, he shouted at me to leave. After riding about a dozen or so meters I stopped at Krzywa Street and watched what Sommer would do to her, as he was leading her towards the Jewish cemetery. I noticed Zelenberg fall to her knees and catch Sommer by the legs, apparently asking him to let her live, but then he kicked her, and then took out his gun and shot her twice. After which he departed on a bike. I stood there for some time. In a moment Sommer came from the direction of the town with two Jews, who took Zelenberg's corpse on boards and carried it to the Jewish cemetery"²⁴. Another witness testified: "As a young boy I saw during the Nazi occupation, in Koziénice near my home, the *gendarme* Szmídtke [Schmidtke – S.P.] shoot a woman of Jewish nationality aged about 60. She was carrying potato peelings. Szmídtke was riding a horse, and when he saw the woman, he came dismounted, pressed her to the ground with his knee, and shot the gun into the back of her head, killing her on the spot. The body of this woman was buried by the Jewish police in the cemetery, the so-called *kierkut*. Moreover, I saw a *gendarme*, unknown to me, from the Koziénice station shoot a Jew named Jankiel Szmajser, he was a tailor. At that time an older Jewish woman came and, seeing the *gendarme*, tried to hide behind a toilet nearby, but he noticed her and shot her. I would like to add that I observed the event from

²⁴ AIPN Ki, Ds. 12/67, vol. 7, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Jana Hyżniaka, 17 VII 1978 r.*, no pagination.

a hiding place [from] about 15 m distance”²⁵. Another witness remembered three Jews who had left the Kozienice ghetto in search of food, and were shot by the *gendarmes* in the forest near Stara Wieś village²⁶.

Gendarme Peno, serving in the Brzózka post, was also a sadist known for murdering people of Jewish nationality. “Peno was the terror of everybody, he beat people often and for anything” recalled Stanisław Kowalczyk. “For example, he always beat anyone who failed to say ‘Good Morning’ to him. [...] Once, probably in 1942, two Jews were brought to the post. I was there with the cart at the time and saw everything with my own eyes. I did not know these Jews. One of them had a golden ring on his finger. The *gendarmes* ordered him to take the ring off and give it to them. The Jew refused. The *gendarmes*, among whom was Peno, then led two police dogs out and set them loose on the Jew. The dogs were biting and jerking the Jew for quite some time, the Jew cried, his legs and arms were deeply wounded, but he did not take off the ring. The *gendarmes* then dismissed the dogs, ordered the Jews to take a hand barrow and load it with manure from the stables next to the post. Then they told the Jews to go with the hand barrow across the courtyard. When the Jews obeyed the instruction, Peno took out his pistol and shot them in the back, killing both with one bullet”²⁷.

It is significant that cruelty and sadism were not only displayed by single *gendarmes*. The complete impunity of the crime and the peculiar understanding of comradeship meant that even people whose attitude towards the Jews had been neutral, after only a short time of service at a given post, started showing a tendency to violence, committing murders together with their comrades. Helena Mucha, a resident of Szydłowiec, stated years later: “The *gendarmes* from Szydłowiec were known for their ruthlessness and cruelty towards the Jews from the local ghetto and to the Poles who contacted the Jews. It was common knowledge that in the ghetto they often beat and killed people. I personally saw, even before the liquidation of the ghetto,

²⁵ *Ibid*, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Bogusława Połońskiego, 31 VII 1978 r., no pagination.

²⁶ *Ibid*, Pismo GKBZH w Warszawie do OKBZH w Kielcach, 3 V 1978 r., no pagination.

²⁷ AIPN Ra, Ds. 45/67, vol. 1, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Stanisława Kowalczyka, 3 VIII 1977 r., p. 111.

a Jew I knew personally, named Rączka, walking down the street outside the ghetto. Rączka was wearing the Jewish armband. Three *gendarmes* saw him: Bauer, Mokrzyński and the third I do not recall. Without warning, without even trying to stop him, saying nothing to him, they opened fire from their pistols and killed him. [...] On another occasion, also before the ghetto was liquidated, before dawn *gendarmes* from the local post organized a true hunt for the Jews who were secretly leaving the ghetto at this time to obtain food. I was woken up by shooting and screaming. I looked out and saw on my street four fresh corpses and retreating *gendarmes* holding guns ready to fire. The corpses I saw were the bodies of two Jews, one Jewess and one Jewish child. Then a carter appointed by the *gendarmes* collected the corpses using a cart. About twenty Jews were killed at that time; I remember that Karlap, a photographer I knew, was killed²⁸. Such examples are countless.

In the summer and autumn of 1942, *gendarmes* from all the posts in the area discussed here took part in the liquidation of the closed (Jewish) districts. In smaller villages and towns they escorted, together with Polish policemen, columns of Jews deported to towns where ghettos were established. The deportations of the latter's inhabitants to the Treblinka death camp were always accompanied by individual and collective executions of people who were unable to follow the orders of the Germans because of their illnesses or advanced age. Although sources include information about the involvement of the *gendarmes* in the crimes committed by the Germans and the Ukrainian renegades at the time, the subject requires in-depth research²⁹.

Beginning in the autumn of 1942, the *Gendarmerie* opened another chapter in the history of the extermination of the Jewish population of the Radom District. They were the principal executioners of the Jews caught in forest hide-outs, arrested during patrolling of villages and roads, or brought to the posts by the Poles³⁰. Their killings continued ceaselessly, albeit at varying intensity,

²⁸ AIPR Ra, Ds. 38/67, vol. 1, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Heleny Muchy*, 7 IX 1970 r., p. 95.

²⁹ AIPN, SOR, 137, vol. 1, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Ryszarda Zapolskiego*, 16 VII 1947 r., p. 105; vol. 3, *Wyrok SOR w sprawie Alfonsa Himmla*, 21 II 1949 r., pp. 223–227.

³⁰ AIPN, 68/1, vol. 1, *Pismo KP MO w Białobrzegach do OKBZH w Kielcach*, 29 III 1966 r., p. 22; *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Wacława Miecznikowskiego*, 8 IV 1966 r., p. 30; *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Władysława Woźniaka*, 8 IV 1966 r., p. 38. See A. Skibińska, J. Petelewicz, *Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskie-*

until the end of 1944. Poles often became witnesses to the executions of ghetto escapers. This was especially the case at Białobrzegi, where *gendarmes* forced firefighters, on duty in the fire station neighboring their local post, to bury corpses and dig graves for the victims waiting to be executed (the suburban grove called Górkki was the local murder site). A similar situation took place at Zwoleń, where captured Jews were shot in the meadows adjacent to the buildings of a closed agricultural school. In both these places and in other as well, the executions were also carried out in Jewish cemeteries.

Telling evidence of the large scale of these crimes is provided in the post-war testimony of an inhabitant of Mirzec village in Iłża county, who said: “In 1943, in the spring, I do not remember exactly the day and month, the *gendarmes* from Mirzec brought two Jewish women, I do not know their names. When they brought them to the school building, where the *gendarmes* lived, they ordered them to escape. When the Jewesses walked a few steps away, the *gendarmes* fired a couple of shots, killing the Jewesses [...] on the spot. After some time, the *gendarmes* from Starachowice took a Jewish woman who was held in Mirzec community jail, and her name I do not know either, they took her near the cemetery in Mirzec and also shot her. Later on, the *gendarmes* from Mirzec brought two Jews, from where I do not know, whom they shot at Mirzec near the brickyard. Near the school at Mirzec the *gendarmes* from Mirzec shot two more Jews, names unknown, the Jews being first ordered by the *gendarmes* to take out [dig – S. P.] pits for themselves and in those pits they were killed”³¹. Another Pole, living in Kozienice, said: “After the ghetto was liquidated, I do not remember the date, but it was not cold yet, the Jew Matys Uszer returned to Kozienice. Probably he managed to escape. He hid in a barn, but to whom it belonged, I do not know. After some time he was caught in the barn by the Kozienice *gendarmes*. He walked, escorted by *gendarme* Kielich [Kühlich – S.P.]. At the junction of the roads to Radom, Lublin and Warsaw, Kielich shot Uszer”³².

go, “Zagłada Żydów” 2005, vol. 1, pp. 114–147; B. Engelking, “Jest taki piękny, słoneczny dzień...”. *Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945*, Warsaw 2011.

³¹ AIPN, 179/79, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Kosowskiego*, 23 IX 1948, pp. 9–9v.

³² AIPN Ki, Ds. 12/67, vol. 7, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Feliksa Cwyla*, 27 VII 1978 r., no pagination.

Bolesław Sadura, living in Szydłowiec, recalled: “I was a member of a volunteer fire brigade and therefore had a night pass, and sometimes I had night duty on the fire brigade watchtower or I participated in fire patrols in the streets. One night, it was probably in the early spring of 1943, one firefighter that had come back from a patrol told us that they were beating somebody very hard at the post. A moment later I went out on patrol, I and two more firefighters whose names I do not remember. Mid-way between the posts of the ‘navy blue’ police and of the *Gendarmerie* we were stopped by a very tall *gendarme*, probably named Bolm, and he said in Polish: ‘Clean up’. Only then did we see the corpse of a man and of a girl aged about 12, lying on the ground. We took the corpses on our fire vehicle to the Jewish cemetery and buried them there. We took a good look at the corpses and found that it was a Jew from Szydłowiec, a gardener, commonly known as Abramek, and his daughter. They were both shot dead using firearms”³³.

There were also occasional situations in which the *gendarmes* killed Jews together with the Poles who had given them help and refuge. This was the case, among others, at Ciepeliów Stary, where in December 1942 *gendarmes* from the post at Górki Ciepeliowskie murdered the Kowalski, Obuchiewicz and Kosior families, killing them together with ghetto escapers found in hideouts³⁴. A few months later, in the village of Wójtostwo Poduchowne, the *gendarmes* from Kozienice murdered in a gruesome manner (using wooden clubs, among others) four Jews harbored by farmer Wiktoria Paduch, she was then sentenced to death by the Special Court in Radom and executed³⁵. In March 1943 *gendarmes* from the same station murdered the Zysman family of five (parents with three young children) at Mniszewo, who were hiding in the buildings of one of the farmers. The victims of the crime were buried together with three Polish farmers from Mniszewo, killed by Germans during the repressive operation³⁶.

³³ AIPR Ra, Ds. 38/67, vol. 1, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Bolesława Sadury*, 12 X 1970 r., pp. 160–161.

³⁴ See J.A. Młynarczyk, S. Piątkowski, *Cena poświęcenia...*, p. 47 and subs.

³⁵ AIPN Ki, Ds. 12/67, vol. 7, *Pismo GKBZH w Warszawie do OKBZH w Kielcach*, 3 V 1978 r., no pagination.

³⁶ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Lucjana Grądziela*, 14 VIII 1978 r., no pagination.

A most shocking evidence of crimes against the escapers from ghettos is provided in the postwar account of Marian Jargot, living at Zwolen. It shows both the extreme cynicism and ruthlessness of a local *gendarme*, and the tragedy of a young man of unknown name, mentally devastated by many months of hiding: "It was the beginning of June 1944," said the witness, "a beautiful, sunny afternoon. I was busy working in the garden [...], suddenly a German in uniform emerged from behind the fence that separated my farm from the School of Agriculture facilities, where the *Gendarmerie* post was housed. In a harsh and demanding tone he recited in quite correct Polish: 'Jargot, come here, you will help dig a pit for a Jew.' I realized with horror what that meant. I turned and saw a barefoot civilian about thirty, standing calmly, in denim clothes, with a 'skullcap' cap on his head. The German had already taken his shoes from him. Close by, Feliks Pomarański from Zwolen was busy digging a pit. Without revealing my anxiety, I quickly responded: 'Sir, I don't have the time. If I don't work, who will deliver my levy for me..?' 'Well, well, come here,' replied the German. 'Okay, I'll come in a moment, I'll just get a shovel' I said, thinking I could fool the German and not come back. 'Why the walking? Here you have a spade ready for you.' I was even more upset, but I had no other choice. I jumped the fence and started working slowly. It was difficult to dig in the hard, clay soil, but I delayed it deliberately. I asked for a pickaxe. I wanted to give the condemned man a chance to escape. The *gendarme* went, without a word of protest, to a storehouse about a hundred meters away. The Jew stood, watched us indifferently and looked around as if he did not care. The *gendarme* returned with a pickaxe. At one point with his hands in his pockets he turned away and whistled, looking at the pigeons flying above. I looked meaningfully at the Jew, gave him the pickaxe, and indicated with my hand that now he had the right opportunity to kill the German and escape. I was convinced he would do it. The Jew took the pickaxe from me, awkwardly made a slight movement and said: 'Well, so what, I will not live anyway, if not today then tomorrow I'll be done away with.' The German turned around, looked at the Jew and me, nodding significantly. I was frightened and thought: 'It's over for me.' I was so frightened that I didn't know what to say. To save me, Pomarański replied: 'Jargot gave the Jew the pickaxe to dig, but he doesn't want to'. Sweating heavily, I dig fiercely and wait what happens

next. Pomarański tells the German that the pit is ready. The Jew protests: ‘Dig on, because I won’t fit. I want to lie comfortably.’ ‘Well, dig on, if that’s the way he wants it’ replies the German. We improve the pit. The Germany offers the Jew a cigarette. Having smoked it, he asks: ‘Could I get some vodka?’ ‘I’ll give you vodka’ says the German and brings half a liter. He gives it to the Jew, who sits on the edge of the pit. He quietly drinks all the contents of the bottle and says: ‘Alright, I’m ready, but aim accurately.’ ‘Good, don’t worry, I’ll aim well for you’ responds the German. After a moment the *gendarme* killed the man, shooting him in the head with his pistol³⁷.

Although most of the murders committed by *gendarmes* on ghetto escapers were not recorded in documents, surviving evidence indicates that the number of killings was significant. For example, after the end of the war it was found that the *gendarmes* from Białobrzegi had shot nearly 160 people during the German occupation, including over 120 Jews, in the Górki grove alone³⁸. Nearly one hundred women and men were murdered at Zwoleń, including a large number of Jewish nationals³⁹. As already mentioned, numerous escapers from ghettos were also murdered in cemeteries, woods and other places. Such events have been recorded, among others, in a postwar testimony of an inhabitant of Krzyżanowice in Iłża county. He recalled that in the late autumn of 1942 a few *gendarmes* from Iłża came to this village. In the dwelling of one of the farmers, the Germans began removing bloodstains from their hands and uniforms, “bragging” about having shot a group of Jews, and showing money, documents, photographs and jewelry taken from the victims. The insights into the documents made it possible to state that they belonged to members of a Jewish family living at Iłża until the liquidation of the ghetto⁴⁰.

After the end of the Reinhardt Action the Germans left groups of several hundred Jews each in makeshift camps in some smaller locations of the

³⁷ V. Janusz-Stroińska, *Bohaterstwo i... rezygnacja*, “Głos Zwoleński” 1998, no. 20, p. 13.

³⁸ AIPN, 179/76, *Wykaz miejsc kaźni na terenie gminy Białobrzegi pow. radomskiego, d.b. [III 1946 r.]*, p. 5.

³⁹ AIPN, 179/96, *Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych w m. Zwoleniu, d.b. [VIII 1948 r.]*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ AIPN, 179/6, *Kronika bestialstw i morderstw niemieckich w gminie Krzyżanowice, 2 VIII 1946 r.*, pp. 6–7.

area discussed here. However, these camps were liquidated in 1943, and the crimes committed on the prisoners at the time were committed by the *gendarmes*. The Germans from the post at Białobrzegi played a key role in the liquidation of the Jewish camp at Jedlińsk. The *gendarmes* led nearly eighty people, who had not passed the prior selection due to their physical condition, illness and exhaustion, to the meadows near the town and then shot them in a mass execution⁴¹.

Members of the German *Gendarmerie* who served at the posts in the north-eastern part of the Radom District of the GG have written a bloody chapter in the history of the extermination of the Jewish population of this area. Unfortunately, although decades have passed since the end of the war, their criminal activity has not been properly investigated or described. As can be expected, detailed research into the functioning of this formation at the micro-regional level could result in many interesting findings not only for the area defined in the title of this study, but also in other areas of the district. At this point it is hoped that such research will be undertaken soon.

⁴¹ AIPN, 179/108, *Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych, Jedlińsk pow. radomski*, 13 V 1948 r., p. 70. *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945. Informator encyklopedyczny*, eds. C. Pilichowski and others, Warsaw 1979, p. 208; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni...*, p. 74; E. Fąfara, *Gehenna ludności żydowskiej*, Warsaw 1983, pp. 259–261.

AKTION REINHARDT IN THE CRACOW DISTRICT¹

The deportation of the Jewish population from Mielec in March 1942 was a turning point in the anti-Jewish policy of the occupation authorities in the Cracow district. According to Michał Weichert, this was the last deportation carried out by the Department for Civil Affairs and Welfare (*Wydział do Spraw Ludności i Opieki Społecznej*) of the *General Gouvernement*² authorities. There were a few new elements that were definitely different from the Germans' previous practice. Until then, the occupying authorities had warned the *Judenrats* a bit earlier about the planned resettlement, which gave them time to inform the population, and in the initial period they could even allocate food or cash benefits to the trip. Jewish councils usually also knew where the deported persons would be sent, so they could try to find apartments or substitute accommodation for them in the destination municipalities. At the same time, the German authorities informed the Jewish administration in the locations where they were going to arrive. Due to this, the Jewish community had knowledge about the places of stay of the deported persons and about the conditions in which they found themselves.

Meanwhile, the Jews in Mielec were mostly surprised by the resettlement operation, because the *Judenrat* was not officially informed until a few

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2014.

² *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator's note).

hours before the operation. Another novelty of the March operation was the deportation of all residents of the town including members of the Jewish administration and the secrecy of information about where they would be settled.³ Bogdan Musiał has drawn attention to a new aspect of this deportation: sending the Jews from Mielec to the eastern part of the Lublin district, thus close to the extermination camps already being built at the time at Bełżec and Sobibór, which, according to this author, can be linked with the beginning of the *Aktion Reinhardt*.⁴ At the same time, the exceptionally brutal manner in which this operation was implemented, the selections and murders committed during the operation, gave it most of the features typical of the deportations of the climactic period of the Holocaust. All Jews were gathered at the market square in Mielec and divided into three groups. The first one included about 400 people, mostly sick or elderly, the second one consisted of 750 young men and women, and the third one of 3000–4500 people of the remaining Jewish population.⁵ The old, the sick, and those who for various reasons failed to report at the market square were murdered on the spot. Apparently at least 54 people died in the town at that time.⁶ Selected

³ G. Reitlinger, *Die Endlösung Hitlers Versuch der Ausrottung der Juden Europas 1939–1945*, Berlin 1992, p. 283.

⁴ B. Musiał, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum District Lublin 1939–1944*, Wiesbaden 1999, p. 226. The Jews from Mielec were deported to Hrubieszów, Międzyrzecz, Parczew and Susiec, and then moved to nearby locations. For more about the destination of the deported and their fate, see: A. Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich*, 2nd ed. supplemented, Mielec 2013, pp. 65–69. Part of the correspondence regarding the deportation from Mielec to Hrubieszów and Susiec, and to places in the Cracow district, see: Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (*Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*; AIPN), Supreme National Tribunal (*Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy*; NTN), 196/49, *Akta procesu Ludwiga Fischera*, [no page numbering]. See also J. Kermisz, *Dzieje zagłady Żydostwa Warszawskiego (od lipca 1941 do ostatecznej likwidacji getta warszawskiego)* [in:] *Zbrodnie i sprawy. Ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii*, ed. C. Pilichowski, Warsaw 1980, pp. 136–137.

⁵ AIPN, NTN, *Proces Josepha Böhlera* (PJB), 196/484, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Antoniego Wilka*, p. 2; *Ibid*, 196/500, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Schulima Hollendera*, p. 1. See A. Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów...*, pp. 59–62, 66–68; *Relacja anonimowego Żyda o zagładzie społeczności żydowskiej w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. K. Jonca, “Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi” 1990, no. 13 (1072), p. 232.

⁶ A. Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów...*, p. 59.

people from the first group were murdered and buried outside the town, the young men were deported to labour camps, women were assigned to work at the Mielec airfield, and the rest were deported. They were forced to wait several days for the trains, locked in the hangar at the airfield. Chana Lind described the moment in this way: “The thousand-people crowd started to be driven on foot to a hangar at the Berdechów airfield, located some 6 km from Mielec. Along the way, the Germans were shooting those who were not able to walk fast enough, often without any choice. We were confined in the hangar and kept for 4 long days and 4 nights. What was happening is difficult to describe in words. 500 men [...] were shot. My father was among them.”⁷

Information about the pogrom in Mielec spread relatively quickly⁸ among the residents of the Cracow district, although many treated it with disbelief and supposed it was definitely exaggerated.⁹ The incoming confirmation of the crime forced people to change their opinion. However, because no similar situation happened in other places over the next few weeks, with time some people were tempted to accept that this was a one-off operation by local German authorities: “It was expected that the higher authorities, even if they did not punish the bloody prank of those local murderers, at least would find some way of indicating that this happened without the knowledge or approval of the higher authorities. The worst pessimists predicted that these authorities would use lies and slanders [...] to try to justify this unbelievable murder.”¹⁰ This did not happen, however, and that is why the deportation of the Jews from Mielec may be considered a prelude to the Holocaust in the Cracow district. From then on, the Jews started to be gradually resettled to larger towns in this area, and in the summer they were gathered in the so-called collective ghettos. The highest intensity of the liquidation of Jewish clusters in the Cracow district occurred mainly between the summer and autumn of 1942.

As in other parts of the *General Gouvernement* (GG), the entire operation was carried out by counties. It was commenced on 31 May 1942 by the first

⁷ Yad Vashem Institute Archives (YVIA), O.3/2308, Testimony of Chana Lind.

⁸ *Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (AŻIH; Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute), 301/2305, Testimony of Walery Salecki; A. Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów...*, p. 75.

⁹ A. Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów...*, p. 75.

¹⁰ AŻIH, 301/2305, Testimony of Walery Salecki.

deportation of a part of the population from the Cracow ghetto¹¹, in June and July it continued eastwards through the counties at Tarnów, Dębica, Rzeszów and Przemyśl, and in August at Jarosław and Sanok. Subsequently it also covered the Jasło and Krosno counties, as well as those at Nowy Sącz and Nowy Targ in the southern part of the district, and finally, the Miechów one in the north. Initial “deportation actions” of the Jewish population in some counties were sometimes carried out in parallel with the murders of Jews in other regions of the district. In August and September the Jewish population gathered in the transit camps (at Pełkinie near Jarosław and at Zasław near Sanok) was deported. Thus, according to German plans, the vast majority of Jews in the district had been killed by the winter of 1942–1943.¹² The others were kept in the so-called residual ghettos or labour and concentration camps. In March 1943 the Cracow ghetto was liquidated and the small group of Jews at Sieniawa was murdered, and in September the last surviving inhabitants of Bochnia, Przemyśl, Rzeszów and Tarnów ghettos were killed.¹³

The German authorities have developed a certain pattern of conduct, which they then implemented with minor modifications. In the places with large numbers of Jews selections were made, leaving those able to work, while the sick, crippled or infirm, and unfit for transport, were shot. All those people whom the Germans considered unproductive were sent to the extermination camp at Bełżec. In the locations with small numbers of Jews or those too distant from the places of their concentration the younger and

¹¹ The second deportation of people from the Cracow ghetto was carried out on 28 October 1942, and then the district was liquidated on 13–14 March 1943. Some of its residents were imprisoned in the Płaszów camp, while the others were murdered on the spot or taken to the KL Auschwitz [editor’s note].

¹² K.M. Pospieszalski, *Hitlerowskie “prawo” okupacyjne w Polsce*, pt 2: *Generalna Gubernia. Wybór dokumentów i próba syntezy*, Poznań 1958 („Documenta Occupationis”, vol. 6), pp. 580–581.

¹³ A. Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Cracow 1985, pp. 82–94; S. Poradowski, *Zagłada Żydów rzeszowskich*, pt 4, “Biuletyn ŻiH”, 1988, no. 1/2 (145/146), p. 100; F. Kotula, *Losy Żydów rzeszowskich 1939–1944. Kronika tamtych dni*, Rzeszów 1999, pp. 161–165; A. Krochmal, *Żydzi przemyscy w czasie II wojny światowej* [in:] *Pamiętam każdy dzień... Losy Żydów przemyskich podczas II wojny światowej*, eds. J.J. Hartman, J. Krochmal, Przemyśl 2001, p. 270; A. Potocki, *Żydzi w Podkarpackiem*, Rzeszów 2004, p. 179.

healthy were selected, who were then sent to camps or left at their place of residence and used for work, while the others were shot. Therefore, the victims of these executions were mostly the sick, children, mothers with babies and the elderly. It sometimes happened that the entire Jewish population was murdered on the spot. Executions were most often conducted in Jewish cemeteries, in nearby woods or on the outskirts of the villages or towns. Graves were prepared in advance, usually dug by the Jews themselves, or alternatively by Baudienst *junacy*¹⁴ or by local residents forced to do it.¹⁵

Junacy, or sometimes peasants also buried the bodies and masked the crime scene. There were places where, a few days later, the decomposition of bodies made the earth rise, the graves cracked and the contents flowed out of these, and a terrible stench was spreading around. In such cases it was necessary to correct and strengthen the graves. These activities were also performed by Jews or *junacy*, and sometimes by peasants forced to do it. The latter sometimes received clothing and underwear of the murdered in exchange for digging and covering the graves, because the Jews were forced to take off their clothes before the execution, and then they were led to the edge of the prepared pits and murdered there, naked or in their underwear.

As already mentioned, all those who failed to report at the designated gathering place due to their age or illness, were murdered in their own homes. The same fate met those who tried to avoid deportation but were found in their hideouts. The bodies were then buried in mass graves, usually at local Jewish cemeteries, or were transported and buried together with victims of

¹⁴ *Baudienst* – A Construction Service established by the Germans in the *General Gouvernement* in 1940. Recruitment was by drafting men or by voluntary applications. The *Baudienst* members were called *junacy* (*junak* in singular). Because young Poles tended to evade work in the Construction Service, they were billeted in guarded camps. There were separate units for Ukrainians and for Polish highlanders.

¹⁵ Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*; IPN), District Committee for Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (*Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*; OKŚZpNP) in Rzeszów, I Ds. 11/70, *Materiały śledztwa w sprawie rozstrzelania około 300 osób w Siedleczce, Protokoły przesłuchania świadków: Antoniego Mazura* (p. 1), *Władysława Sopla* (p. 2), *Piotra Zajęca* (p. 5); *Ibid*, S 80/10/Zn, *Akta w sprawie zabójstw osób narodowości żydowskiej na terenie powiatu jasielskiego w okresie 1941–1943*, vol. 2, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Józefa Pizsa*, p. 73; J.S. Rączka, *Zagłada Żydów w Jasielskim – 1942 Relacja naocznego świadka*, “*Rocznik Jasielski*” 1999, vol. 4, p. 127.

other executions. All those who tried to resist, who did not follow German orders quickly enough, or who irritated them in any way, were also murdered on the spot.

Shortly before a deportation of the Jews, the ghettos were surrounded by a cordon, and in those places where there were no demarcated districts, the selection sites or even whole villages or small towns were surrounded by members of the German police or its auxiliary formations (the *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement*, the so-called ‘navy blue’¹⁶ police, or the Ukrainian police) or of the *Sonderdienst*.¹⁷ Also Jewish policemen from the (*Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*) were used to enforce order among the gathered people.

In the ghettos, the selections took place in the largest square, and in the towns with no Jewish districts, in the town marketplace, market square or at a meadow on the outskirts. In towns with large Jewish communities a mark that entitled the holder to stay on site was stamped in the documents of selected persons already a few days before the deportation. In villages or small towns this usually took place during the selection.

Every Jew, therefore, tried to obtain employment, even fictitious, or a stamp that allowed them to avoid deportation according to the German authorities’ suggestions. This led to a ruthless struggle for such a saving entry or stamp, which gave the Germans additional benefits. Corruption was widespread: “Huge sums had to be paid to receive the stamp that was supposed to protect against deportation,” remembered an inhabitant of the Przemyśl ghetto.¹⁸ According to the intelligence service of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*; AK)¹⁹, the price for such a stamp in Rzeszów in July 1942 was between 50,000 and 100,000 zlotys per person.²⁰ At Nowy Sącz the cost

¹⁶ The Polish police force under German occupation was commonly known as ‘granatowa’ (‘navy blue’) for the colour of their uniforms (translator’s note).

¹⁷ *Sonderdienst* – German Auxiliary (Police) Service established in 1940 in the *General Gouvernement*. *Sonderdienst* members were used for protection and police duties.

¹⁸ AŻIH, 301/4957, Testimony of Alfred Steinhard.

¹⁹ *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) – the principal armed underground resistance organisation, reporting directly to the exiled Polish Government in London (translator’s note).

²⁰ National Archives (*Archiwum Państwowe*; AP) Rzeszów, *Archiwum Michała Kryczki*, 3, *Dokumenty ośrodka wywiadowczo-dywerysyjnego “Roch” Inspektoratu Rejonowego AK Rzeszów 1942–1943, Sprawozdanie “Gryfa” o sytuacji w Rzeszowie i okolicy z 17 VII 1942*, p. 24.

of a stamp was about 8,000 zlotys.²¹ For comparison: in 1942, the average salary in the GG was about 160 zlotys a month for a Polish manual worker, and 290 zlotys for a white collar worker. A 1 kg loaf of rye bread at that time cost 12 zlotys in Rzeszów. The price of a set of clothes in the GG was between 600 and 1,200 zlotys. Probably the value of the stamp depended on the town, the time when it was obtained and its type. However, it is difficult to state clearly whether the stamp prices actually reached the level quoted by the Home Army Intelligence.

At the last moment, the desperate people even resorted to stealing documents, because in such moments one thought primarily of oneself. Any method was good, therefore, to save one's life. "In the evening", recalled one of the witnesses, "I drove with the registration cards of all the Jews from the *Arbeitsamt* to the *Judenrat*. Everyone rushed to my horse-drawn cab; everyone was looking for their own registration card. There was crying, shouting, people trampled each other, they grabbed registration cards from each other's hands, so that they even tore some up. Those who did not have stamped registration cards began to rob stamped ones from others, removed the photos and applied their own ones."²² On the other hand, the people who were exempted from deportation faced an extremely difficult problem of how to protect their families and relatives who did not have the stamps against being deported. Sara Diller remembered the shock she had experienced when her mother was refused the stamp in her documents: "It seemed to me [...] at that moment that all my life depended on this scrap of paper. This was the mental state to which the Germans were able to bring the Jews."²³ People with deferrals, in their terror, sometimes forced those who were hiding in their homes to 'voluntarily' report to the assembly points, for they were afraid of the consequences that the Germans could have drawn against the whole population in the event of discovering them.²⁴

²¹ AŻIH, 301/ 837, Testimony of Luiza Grüner.

²² IPN, OKŚŻpNP in Cracow, Ds. 1/70, *Akta śledztwa w sprawie zbrodni Gestapo w Tarnowie*, vol. 9, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Izaaka Izraela*, p. 87.

²³ YVIA, O.3/2531, Testimony of Sara Diller.

²⁴ IPN, OKŚŻpNP in Cracow, Ds. 1/70, *Akta w sprawie zbrodni Gestapo w Tarnowie*, vol. 9, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Izaaka Izraela*, p. 88.

The huge stress and widespread terror led some Jews to commit suicide just before or during the operations. Fast-acting poisons or sleeping pills were particularly valued. However, few people had access to these, including doctors. They sometimes administered poison to their dear ones or to bedridden patients to spare them humiliation, fear and pain. Sometimes they were forced by German policemen to kill the sick in hospitals.²⁵ However, there were also reverse situations, when they rescued those who attempted suicide, only for them to be deported or murdered. One of the Jewish doctors aptly noticed: “[...] All ethical and moral notions had a different value then than in normal times, and everyone interpreted them according to their character. What seemed a noble act to one, was a crime to another.”²⁶

In the summer of 1942, after the first deportation actions, the initial anxiety about the fate of the deported turned into a deadly fear of deportation. By that time it had already been realised what this term meant, although the details were not yet known.²⁷ Many people, however, still rejected the idea that in reality ‘deportation’ meant death. “We did not think about escaping”, remembered one of the Wolbrom residents, “because my mother was ill and we imagined that we would go to a labour camp and take mother with us, because she would probably be given a light job there [...]”²⁸ Many people who, in the spring or summer of 1942, had seen the news about the purpose of the deportations as biased and exaggerated, or even as hostile propaganda of the so-called Aryans, had to verify their views.²⁹ The brutality of the alleged displacements and the shooting of the elderly, sick and children, all confirmed the information gradually reaching them about the pre-planned Holocaust of the Jews being carried out by the Germans. Thus, in larger ghettos, hiding places and shelters started to be prepared, where it

²⁵ AŻIH, 301/ 684, Testimony of Marek Schattner.

²⁶ YVIA, O.3/431, Testimony of L. Kessel.

²⁷ For more on what was known about the extermination camp at Bełżec, see: R. Kuwałek, *Obóz Zagłady w Bełżcu*, Lublin 2010, pp. 179–202.

²⁸ AŻIH, 301/3263, Testimony of Henryk Herstein.

²⁹ YVIA, O.3/431, Testimony of L. Kessel; *Ibid.*, 1012, Testimony of Menashe Holender; AŻIH, 302/258, Jacek Joterski, *W XX rocznicę (1942–1962) wymordowania przez hitlerowskiego okupanta współobywateli Żydów*, no location, 1962, typescript.

would be possible to wait through the German operations. The stress under which people in the ghettos lived after the first deportations, that is in the summer and autumn of 1942, is presented in the account of Felicja Schäfler from Brzesko: “Hiding places were built, planks were plucked from floors, underground passages were dug. Life was constant terror, panic. Nobody slept in apartments, one slept in attics and basements. People suffocated in hiding places. An SS man passing on a motorcycle caused fear and panic.”³⁰ The period of deportations was similarly remembered by Halina Nelken from Cracow: “Continuous swing of moods: relaxation, extreme tension; a shred of hope and the bottom of despair. Terrorised beyond all measure, cheated by every decree, every word and every moment, we have become the murderers’ plaything.”³¹ Hideouts built in the ghetto enabled waiting through the deportation operations. It was, however, possible to use this method only for a certain time, until the final liquidation of individual Jewish districts.

Some people left the locations threatened with deportation and went to those in which there were no such operations yet, so they were considered safer. Some have moved several times in this way. “It was said that there would be a deportation in Brzesko, so my mother sent me to my aunt to Cracow with one Polish woman. [...] when the action ceased in Brzesko, I returned [...]. We were only four weeks in the ghetto. It was said that there would be a *Judenrein*³² action. [...] we went to Bochnia because it was said that Bochnia would still go on”, recalled one of the witnesses.³³

This way of trying to save their lives was used, first of all, by the people who failed to secure a job that protected against deportation or a proper stamp in their documents that confirmed this. They also had no possibility of finding shelter on the so-called Aryan side. Moving from place to place, they deflected the spectre of death from themselves. However, this method was only effective for a time. As the *Reinhardt* operation progressed, the number of places to which one could move was shrinking, the room for manoeuvre was limited, and finally completely eliminated.

³⁰ AŻIH, 301/611, Testimony of Felicja Schäfler.

³¹ H. Nelken, *Pamiętnik z getta w Krakowie*, Toronto 1987, p. 242.

³² *Judenrein* (German) – here: purge of Jews.

³³ AŻIH, 301/ 609, Testimony of Mendel Feichtal.

Shortly before a deportation the Germans forced the Jews to pay outstanding taxes and any financial liabilities³⁴, first of all including any loans or other debts. Contributions were also imposed on the Jews, the number and amount of which varied, and the payment deadline was always very short. Such a contribution could have been one-off, but sometimes two more, or even three, were imposed. Failure to pay in time usually resulted in the death of persons responsible for collecting the tribute imposed, and often of even their families or other selected members of the Jewish community. 11 people were shot at Grybów for this reason in April 1942, 17 in Rzeszów on 24 June, and at least 30 at Limanowa on 19 July.³⁵

In addition to money, also jewellery, clothing, footwear, food and industrial goods were often demanded, and the Jews were cheated believing that providing the tribute would suspend the deportation or that it would be carried out without fatalities. At Nowy Sącz, the third contribution, imposed just before the deportation of the population, amounted to one million zlotys. The Jewish community in Przemyśl was charged tribute to the amount of 1,300,000 zlotys; Rzeszów – 1,000,000; Wieliczka – ultimately 500,000; Niepołomice – 300,000; those at Brzozów and Żmigród – 100,000 each; Rzepiennik Strzyżewski – 25,000; Wojnicz – 50,000; Rabka – 250,000 zlotys plus jewellery; Kolbuszowa – 200,000 zlotys and 2 kilogrammes of gold; Limanowa, mentioned above – 75,000 zlotys, 50 litres of alcohol and 50 canned fish; in Mielec the contribution amounted to 500,000 zlotys, 10 kg of coffee, 10 kg of tea plus furs and shoes for the entire Gestapo staff; at Rymanów the Jews were ordered to provide, in addition to money, also 50 pairs of leather boots; while at Dąbrowa Tarnowska – complete furniture for 50 apartments was demanded.³⁶ In Bochnia the Germans ordered the Jews to collect 1,000,000 zlotys,

³⁴ AŻIH, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, Ring/I/1063, *Wypisy z biuletynu "Oneg Szabat" na temat sytuacji Żydów za luty–lipiec 1942*, p. 5; AIPN, NTN, PJB, 191/473, *Protokoły przesłuchań świadków Wincentego Kwiecińskiego* (p. 200), *Wojciecha Jeża* (p. 24); F. Kotula, *Losy Żydów rzeszowskich...*, p. 100.

³⁵ AIPN, NTN, PJB, 191/473, *Pismo Sądu Grodzkiego w Limanowej z 22 XII 1947*, p. 10; *Ibid*, *Protokoły przesłuchania świadków Wincentego Kwiecińskiego* (p. 20), *Wojciecha Jeża* (p. 24); AŻIH, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, Ring I/1063, *Wypisy z biuletynu "Oneg Szabat" na temat sytuacji Żydów za luty–lipiec 1942*, p. 5.

³⁶ AŻIH, 301/1094, *Testimony of Markus Streim*; *Ibid*, 4965, *Testimony of Amalia Fried*;

but the *Judenrat* had to increase this amount by half, because of the estimated amount of bribes, which they were forced to hand to the Germans.³⁷ In many locations, the last money was given just to satisfy the Germans and to dismiss the threat of deportation. In Przemyśl it was finally possible to collect the entire sum two days before the deadline expired, although about 250,000 zlotys were still missing a few days before that. Altogether, the occupation authorities in at least sixteen towns of the Cracow district imposed contributions on the Jews, which amounted to a total of no less than 6,788,000 zlotys, benefits in kind excluded.³⁸

Also during the selection, people were forced to give up the money, jewellery and other valuable things they still had. Those who, despite brutal searches, still managed to keep any property were robbed at the crime scene.

Jews destined for the extermination camp at Bełżec were driven into cattle railway cars sprinkled with lime dust. If the ordered trains failed to arrive on a given day, the selected people were placed in any available, sufficiently large, vacant rooms, such as closed factory halls, community centres, and even in monastery buildings or gardens. If there were no such places in the vicinity, the people were simply kept outdoors. At Jasło, after the selection the people were driven on foot to the monastery of the Visitation Sisters (Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary), located about 500 m from the railway station. The Jews spent their last night in the town at its separate section, previously used as accommodation for Wehrmacht soldiers. The road to the monastery cost the lives of several people who, for various reasons, could not keep up with the column.

It sometimes happened that the selected people were forced to wait at the assembly points for a few days without water or food. This was always an additional hardship, because it also involved new harassment from the

Ibid, 2348, Testimony of Alter Millet; Reder, *Bełżec*, Cracow 1946, p. 16; A. Potocki, *Żydzi rymanowscy*, Krosno 2000, p. 81; M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishaupleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte*, Göttingen 2009, p. 206.

³⁷ AIPN, *Sąd Okręgowy w Krakowie*, 502/1375, *Akta w sprawie karnej Samuela Fischa, Protokół rozprawy głównej z 27 IX 1948*, p. 71.

³⁸ A. Dmitrzak, *Hitlerowskie kontrybucje w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1945*, Poznań 1983, pp. 55–57.

guards, and murders. At Gorlice people were kept in the unused hall of the former shoe factory. During the four days that passed until the departure of the train, at least 100 people were shot there.³⁹ It cannot be determined at present how many Jews died during that time because of the conditions in which they were forced to stay.

On average there were 60-80 people in each wagon that transported them to the extermination camp at Bełżec, but sometimes as many as 100-120 or even 150, so there was a huge crush and the people, crowded to the limit, were suffocating even before the train moved away. Sometimes the transports were kept for several hours or even several days at sidings. In some towns (in Przemyśl, for example), railway wagons were opened and bodies were thrown away, and further groups selected from nearby towns were added, when the transports were collective. It sometimes happened that the deported did not sustain the mental stress, which was reflected in their behaviour. However, few direct witnesses of those events survived. Jakow Jankels, deported in August 1942 from Wieliczka, recalled:

“It’s dark in the cars, it’s stuffy and it smells musty [...]. We sit without moving for hours. But the roof begins to smoulder. The heat is unbearable. In the next wagon someone is banging on the wall [...]. It was madness. The train rolls and stops after thirty metres. We bump into each other, the wagons collide and do not move any more [...]. People are calling for water. [...] the heat is so great that I start to think that my head will burst [...]. Some people faint around me. Others jump, screaming wildly [...].⁴⁰

Similar experiences were shared by the majority of deportation victims. Gusta Berenstein described the transport as follows: “A few [...] SS officers started, with shouting [...] to load us into the railway wagons, standing up, as many as could enter. I do not know how many people fitted in, but we were squeezed together, not thinking about sitting down, because the wagon

³⁹ IPN, OKŚZpNP in Rzeszów, II S 97/71, *Akta śledztwa w sprawie Aloisa Vielliebera*, vol. 5, *Sprawozdanie Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich z 29 XII 1972*, p. 777. According to some witnesses, the number of victims during the deportation amounted to about 800 people (YVIA, O.3, [unreadable], Testimony of Leon Wallach), which seems to be an exaggerated number. See W. Boczoń, *Żydzi gorliccy*, Gorlice 1998, p. 148.

⁴⁰ YVIA, O.33/1097, Testimony of Jakow Jankels.

floor was sprinkled with something white, lime or chloride, which immediately burned in the eyes and throat [...], it became terribly hot [...], one pushed another. We were completely exhausted and savaged. [...] It was stuffy, I was wet with sweat and I wanted to get out of there. [...] people defecated where they stood, there was a stench, heat, despair, crying and wailing [...]”⁴¹ Another of the deported reported after the war: “The train departed on 18 November [1942] in the evening. Nightmarish scenes began in our wagon then. We saw one man hang himself. We cut him down. Then he went into a frenzy, it was difficult to hold him. We could not help it, he hanged himself before our very eyes a while later. Of a few people in the wagon, there was just a shapeless heap of flesh.”⁴² The transports were guarded all the way. Machine guns were installed at the end of the train, and the escort were ordered to shoot people who tried to escape.

On the other hand, executions of people unfit for transport, depending on the number of victims, lasted from several hours to a few days. If they stretched until late night hours, the whole area was lit with specially brought spotlights or a break was made and the shooting continued the following day. Crippled or infirm persons, as well as infants and young children were usually brought to the place of execution by trucks, the rest of the people were driven on foot, or alternatively everybody was brought in by motor vehicles. This depended on the available transport and the distance of the selection site from the place of execution that was chosen. Both during the loading, on the way, and on arrival, anyone who delayed the execution for any reason was subjected to extremely brutal treatment, but people were also maltreated for no particular reason, just to give vent to aggression. Marian Tyralik, who saw such a transport, testified during the trial of one of the perpetrators: “The Gestapo man [...] put these people on a horse-cart like wood logs; each one had to lie down on top of one another, which could not have been imagined, if a human can mistreat another like this, in an unheard-of way.”⁴³ Other eyewitnesses also mentioned how, in the “Garbacz” wood near

⁴¹ YVIA, O.33/187, Testimony of Gusta Berenstein.

⁴² YVIA, O.3/834, Testimony of Józefa Burzmiński (Maksymilian Diamant).

⁴³ AIPN Rz, Sąd Okręgowy w Jaśle (SOJ), 354/107, *Akta w sprawie Wilhelma Schuhmachera, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Mariana Tyralika*, p. 198.

Stróżówka, the Germans rushed the Jews “constantly beating and maltreating them, one by one on the edge of the pit [...]”⁴⁴.

One of such mass executions was witnessed by Bronisław Kaczmarek: “[...] that day I had the opportunity to observe how Jews, arrested at Olszanica and in the immediate vicinity, were brought to the communal house, which was located opposite the manor [agricultural farm – ER] [...]. The arrested persons were taken with these trucks to a place located in the middle of the village of Stefkowa, which is located under a rail bridge [...]. The arrested Jews, brought there, were lined-up in a row above the pit and murdered in sequence using hand-held machine guns in such a way that those standing above the pit fell down into the pit once they were shot. Some of the arrested Jews resisted, refusing to approach the pit, and these Jews were murdered on the spot of their resistance, and their bodies were dragged and thrown into a ditch. [...] Jews were murdered after first removing their clothes from them, so that the Jews went to the execution dressed in underwear.”⁴⁵

It was not uncommon for police officers to shoot inaccurately or fail to kill their victims. Some people were thus buried alive and suffocated in the graves, covered with a layer of lime and earth, and sometimes also cement. This was the reason for information, which appeared in reports of Polish and Jewish witnesses, about moans emerging from under the ground during the covering of graves or about the movement of soil on the graves even many hours after they were covered. Only exceptionally few Jews managed to survive these mass murders and describe what they experienced. One of such people was a resident of Lutowska named Blima. “Blima was among the last dozen or so people who were being liquidated at dusk. She had witnessed the horrendous death of her parents and siblings [...]. She was so shocked and nervously exhausted that it was with a feeling of some strange relief when she stood on the boards of the platform, wanting for it all to end, finally. [...] A shot was fired. She staggered on her legs and fell onto the bodies lying in the

⁴⁴ AIPN Kr, Sąd Powiatowy w Gorlicach, 3/178, *Przesłuchania świadków w sprawie rozstrzelania Żydów w lesie w Stróżówce oraz getta w Bieczu, Protokół przesłuchania świadka Andrzeja Chodaka*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ IPN, OKŚZpNP in Rzeszów, I Ds. 2/67, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Bronisława Kaczmareckiego*, [no page numbering].

grave [...], she did not feel the bullet impact or any pain. Under her, a severely wounded mother was dying, hugging a child that was writhing in agony. [...] after a while, several more shots were fired and a few dead bodies fell on her [...].”⁴⁶ The woman managed to get out of the grave after the execution.

The above description shows the mental state of the people just before an execution. The long-term terror that the Jews had been subjected to, the hunger and the stress of daily struggle for survival, the deportation of their dearest ones into the unknown, followed by a shock caused by the awareness of imminent death and the need to watch their relatives and friends, children and the elderly being murdered – all that caused apathy of the victims or a fear that paralysed them. Some people saw death as a kind of liberation. A prisoner of the Zasław camp remembered the moods after the deportations to Bełżec: “The elders behaved quietly. We all cried, and from time to time loud sobbing broke out from someone’s chest. Each of us had lost somebody [...]. Some strange apathy and aversion to life engulfed everyone. We wished, once and for all, to end this life that actually, since the Germans had come, was one sequence of torture.”⁴⁷

It was probably for such reasons that the vast majority of those sentenced to death did not put up any resistance, and only a few attempted to escape from the place of execution. Moreover, many Jews did not know well enough where they could go had they succeeded in escaping, this also discouraged them from making such decisions. The tactics of terror, starvation and hostile propaganda, prepared and implemented consistently by the Germans, had succeeded, resulting in the indifference of the victims and their passivity towards the crime taking place, and even the dislike or hostility of a part of the milieu towards those who managed to escape from the hands of the German perpetrators.

During the deportation operations and after these ended, members of the German police and of the Jewish *Ordnungsdienst*⁴⁸ searched the ghettos to find any hiding people. Those found were murdered on the spot or

⁴⁶ Quoted from: J. Pawłusiewicz, *Na dnie jeziora*, Krosno 2009, pp. 350–351.

⁴⁷ AŻIH, 301/280, Testimony of Mozes Zwas.

⁴⁸ Properly: *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Order Service), known informally as the Jewish police – a formation established by the Germans to maintain public order within the ghettos. Finally, it was included in the system of German anti-Jewish activities.

in Jewish cemeteries. Various methods were used to force people to leave basements and other “bunkers”. They were promised, for example, that they could remain in the ghetto without any consequences or to depart to work. In some town districts buildings were destroyed in such a way as to destroy the hiding places and kill the people inside.⁴⁹ At the same time, the local *Judenrats* and the *Ordnungsdienst* cleared streets and houses at the orders of the Germans, removing the dead bodies and collecting packages dropped or thrown away by the people being driven along. The victims were transported to Jewish cemeteries and buried in mass graves, and the belongings of the deported people were transported to storehouses under the management of Jewish councils and sorted there.

As a result of *Aktion Reinhardt*, at least 49,500 people were shot dead in the Cracow district.⁵⁰ No less than 138,500 were deported to the German extermination camp at Bełżec⁵¹ and about 14,500 to the KL Auschwitz. Thus, a total of at least 202,500 people died as a result of the ethnic cleansing.⁵²

Those murdered before the *Reinhardt* action commenced and the prisoners who died or were murdered in the camps (at least 3,000⁵³) should also

⁴⁹ YVIA, O.3/1799, Testimony of Irena Mamber.

⁵⁰ According to data of Town Court Forms, about 30,000 Jews were shot dead in the Cracow district from July to December 1942 (AIPN, GKBZH, ASG, 163/33-37, *Województwo rzeszowskie, passim; Ibid*, 163/8–11, *Województwo krakowskie; Ibid*, 163/33–37, *passim*).

⁵¹ According to Yitzhak Arad, almost 177,000 Jews from the Cracow district were deported to Bełżec between 7 July and 15 November 1942 (Y. Arad, *Bełżec, Sobibor, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Bloomington-Indianapolis 1999, p. 126). However, the findings of Martin Gilbert indicate 187,770 (M. Gilbert, *Atlas historii Holocaustu*, Kryspinów [no publication date], *passim*), of Robert Kuwałek – 154,670 (R. Kuwałek, *Obóz zagłady w Bełżcu*, Lublin 2010, pp. 239–250), of Janina Kielboń – 134,700 (J. Kielboń, *Deportacje Żydów do dystryktu lubelskiego (1939–1943)* [in:] *Akcja Reinhardt Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka, Warsaw 2004, p.181). The data about the number of the deported at <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/belzec1/bel901.html>, 234,000 people, are definitely overstated.

⁵² The data coincide with German estimates, according to which there were still 37,000 Jews in the Cracow district on 31 October 1942 (J. Bańbor, *Raport Korherera – Holocaust w ujęciu statystycznym*, “Glaukopis” 2010, no. 19/20, p. 205). It is assumed that there were about 220,000 Jews in the district before the *Reinhardt* action began and that about 183,000 had been murdered by the end of 1942.

⁵³ E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2014, pp. 190–192.

be added to this number, as well as all those who died between the so-called deportation operations, because the Jews were being murdered all the time.

All those who managed to evade death and the escapers from the camps continued to be caught and executed after the main stage of the so-called the final solution. They were usually killed at nearby Jewish cemeteries, at stations of the *gendarmérie* or auxiliary police formations, or simply at the place of capture. This was the so-called third phase of the Holocaust: the *Judenjagd*. I have not been able to determine the exact overall number of these victims. One can only quote a few examples. According to the data of the Jewish Temporary Committee, after the deportations ended about 450 people were murdered at Dębica and in its vicinity alone. They were mostly people who had escaped and hidden on the so-called Aryan side.⁵⁴ Officers of the German police and its auxiliary units captured and murdered at least 20 people at Nowy Targ and in its vicinity before the end of 1942. They murdered no less than 120 hiding Jews in Tarnów between December 1942 and January 1944, according to witnesses.⁵⁵

Many more examples of crimes; committed in parallel with the ongoing Holocaust and after its main stage ended, can be quoted. Without a doubt, non-Jewish inhabitants of the region, who let themselves become involved in the anti-Jewish operation of the German occupation authorities, were responsi-

⁵⁴ AZIH, 301, *Tymczasowy Komitet Dębicki, Informacja Tymczasowego Komitetu Żydowskiego w Dębicy o akcjach likwidacyjnych Żydów (8 IX 1939 – 24 VII 1942)*, p. 1. The OKBZH has ascertained that in December 1942 alone, in Dębica area and in the town, Gestapo officers shot about 60 people, including 40 children who had hid during the liquidation of the ghetto (IPN, OKŚZpNP in Rzeszów, II S 2/69, *Akta śledztwa w sprawie gestapowców dębickich: Julisza Grablera i Artura Berlichowa*, vol. 3, *Protokół przesłuchania świadka Mosze Kammmmera*, p. 491. The prosecutor's office in Hannover has determined the number of people executed between December 1942 and spring 1943 at about 140 people (Final note of the prosecutor's office about closing the proceedings against members of German occupation authorities in the Dębica county attached to IPN OKŚZpNP in Rzeszów, S 58/02/Zn, *Akta śledztwa w sprawie zamordowania kilku osób narodowości żydowskiej i polskiej w Czerminie w powiecie mieleckim*, [no page numbering.]).

⁵⁵ AIPN Rz, OKBZH Tarnów-Rzeszów, *Wyciągi z zeznań świadków w sprawie znęcania się, bicia i mordowania w więzieniach obywateli polskich, Protokół przesłuchania świadków Józefa Weistocka (pp. 117–118) i Edwarda Klapholza (pp. 125–126)*. However, according to data from the record of Jewish birth certificates from Tarnów, 101 Jews were shot dead in 1943 alone (AN Cracow, Tarnów Branch, *Starostwo Powiatowe w Tarnowie*, ST 49, *passim*).

ble for a part of these.⁵⁶ It is worth mentioning here, however, that the German occupation released the lowest instincts of some people. They denounced hiding Jews, blackmailed them, caught them and handed them over to the police, and in extreme cases also murdered them. Without a doubt, these negative behaviours, which contributed to increased numbers of victims of the ‘final solution’, were influenced by several factors. It seems that the anti-Jewish policy of the German occupation authorities was decisive: it dehumanised the Jews in the eyes of the non-Jewish milieu and deprived them of legal protection. Moreover, the occupiers rewarded the negative behaviours among the residents of the occupied Poland. One could receive rewards from the authorities or even take over the movable property of the victims in exchange for denouncing the hiding people. With the worsening poverty of the GG residents, this was probably an additional incentive to denounce Jewish neighbours. The anti-Semitism that had existed before the war was not without significance, either.

Members of auxiliary police units, including the so-called navy blue and Ukrainian police, as well as members of the *Baudienst* and local fire service took part in anti-Jewish actions. This is still a little-known form of activity of members of these formations in the Cracow district.⁵⁷

At the current stage of research it is difficult to establish the total number of Jews murdered by members of auxiliary police units in the Cracow district. Accurate information also is lacking as to how many people who were hiding or who had escaped during the deportation action were caught by the local population and handed over to the Germans.

It may be concluded that the total number of Holocaust victims in the Cracow district was at least 216,000. Assuming that about 225,000 Jews lived in the area before the deportation operations, it should be estimated that the German occupation authorities eventually caused the death of almost 98% of this community resident in the district.

⁵⁶ An analysis of the attitudes of residents of the Cracow district towards Jews is beyond the scope of this work. It is worth mentioning, however, that a part of the Poles and Ukrainians have decided to risk their own lives to save Jews from death.

⁵⁷ For more on the subject see, for example: E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów...*, pp. 340–343. J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów jednego powiatu*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 105–119. Polemics in: B. Musiał, *Judenjagd – “umiejętne działanie” czy zbrodnicza perfidia?*, “Dzieje Najnowsze” 2011, 43, no. 2, pp. 159–170.

GHETTO IN THE TESTIMONIES OF POLES AND GERMANS, INHABITANTS OF LITZMANNSTADT¹

After the outbreak of World War II German troops already occupied Łódź on 8 September 1939. Thus began the German occupation of the city, which, by the decision of the Berlin authorities, was incorporated into the Reich in November 1939. As a symbolic gesture to highlight the new German nature of the city, its name was changed to Litzmannstadt, which honored the German national hero, an active Nazi, General Karl Litzmann.

The Jews who lived in the city played a particular role in the German occupation policy. From the first days of the presence of the new authorities they were subjected to brutal repression. This applied to nearly all the aspects of life of that community. As a particular humiliation, the decree of the President of the Kalisz Authority District (*Regierungsbezirk Kalisch*) of 14 November 1939 ordered all Jews to wear recognition markings that subsequently took the form of yellow Stars of David sewn onto their outer clothes². Other regulations applied, among others, to the confiscation of bank savings, goods and enterprises owned by Jews, which resulted in sudden pauperization of the group, to the ban on changing their place of residence, to the dismissal of all Jewish employees from public institutions and to the ban on trade of certain goods by the Jews³.

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Łódź w latach 1939–1945*, eds. T. Toborek, M. Trębacz, Łódź 2017.

² I. Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto. A History*, transl. and ed. M. Shapiro, Bloomington 2008, pp. 10–11.

³ *Łódź Ghetto/Litzmannstadt Getto 1940–1944*, eds. J. Baranowski, S.M. Nowinowski, Łódź 2014, pp. 10–13; E. Wiatr, *Sytuacja ludności żydowskiej w Łodzi w pierwszych miesiącach okupacji* [in:] *Łódź w 1939 r.*, eds. T. Toborek, P. Waingertner, Łódź 2011, pp. 285–290.

As early as December 1939 it was announced that a closed district for the Jews would be set up in Łódź, and its establishment was based on a telegram issued by Reinhard Heydrich on 21 September 1939, in which the future Head of the Reich Security Office recommended concentration of Jews in designated places, in order to facilitate the implementation of the 'ultimate objective' (*Endziel*), which was still unspecified at the time.⁴ The decision to create a ghetto in the northern part of the city was issued on 8 February 1940 by Johannes Schäfer, the Police President of Łódź. It was accompanied by executive orders, which specified the manner in which the Jews were to be resettled to the 'district of residence'.⁵ By the end of April 1940 over 160,000 people were isolated behind a barbed wire fence in the German-occupied Łódź.

Nearly half a million people were left on the other side of the fence: 367,000 Poles and about 120,000 Germans.⁶ In subsequent years, as a result of the policy of the new rulers of the city, these numbers and proportions would change.⁷ Poles were expelled into the *General Gouvernement*⁸ or deported to Germany as forced labor, and they were replaced by newly arriving German settlers, for example from the Baltic states and Bessarabia. The number of Jews imprisoned in the ghetto was constantly decreasing: until the end of 1941 this was due to the conditions in the 'closed district', and from the beginning of 1942 due to extermination. In spite of this, the Litzmannstadt ghetto existed until mid-1944, the longest of all such places in the occupied Poland.

For less than 5 years the occupants of Łódź were involuntarily witnessing what was happening to the Jews imprisoned in the area of nearly 4 sq. km of the city's northern district. It is impossible to determine how many of the 'Aryan' citizens of Litzmannstadt watched the ghetto, or even knew

⁴ I. Trunk, *Łódź...*, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–26.

⁶ T. Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją niemiecką w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945)*, Łódź 1992, tab. 1, p. 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*; J. Wróbel, *Przemiany ludnościowe spowodowane polityką okupanta hitlerowskiego w tzw. rejencji łódzkiej w latach 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1987, tab. 54, p. 241.

⁸ *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator's note).

of its existence. Preserved testimonies indicate that consciousness of the existence of the 'closed district' was common, and reactions to the tragedy of the Jews varied.

The aim of this paper is to gather and present, on the basis of preserved source testimonies, how the non-Jewish inhabitants of the occupied Łódź perceived the isolation of the group of over 160 thousand fellow citizens of the city. When analyzing documentation, one can refer it to several research problems. It will be helpful to ask how the ghetto was defined and whether it is possible to record certain types of behavior or typical situations in response to the creation of a "closed district" for the Jews. In addition, one can ask whether or not the key events in the history of the ghetto and their chronology were recorded on the 'Aryan' side. By confronting the sources that reflect a certain awareness, one can ask how far the history of the ghetto concerned the citizens of Łódź (Litzmannstadt) who lived on the other side of the fence, next to the largest Jewish concentration in the Third Reich.

So far, the historians of the Łódź ghetto (which already has many publications dedicated to it) have focused on its internal history. Various aspects of the functioning of the 'closed district' and the fates of its inhabitants have been discussed,⁹ but these problems were discussed in isolation from the fate of the city.¹⁰ The problem of depicting the image of the Łódź ghetto in the accounts of non-Jewish inhabitants of the occupied city was of no interest to researchers. This issue, analyzed in terms of contacts between Jews and Poles, was partly included in studies devoted to Polish-Jewish relations in Łódź during the II World War.¹¹ The issue of how the district, separated

⁹ Among others: A. Löw, *Getto łódzkie/Litzmannstadt Getto. Warunki życia i sposoby przetrwania*, Łódź 2012; A. Sitarek, "Otoczone drutem państwo". *Struktura i funkcjonowanie administracji żydowskiej getta łódzkiego*, Łódź 2015; I.(H.) Rubin, *Żydzi w Łodzi pod niemiecką okupacją 1939–1945*, London 1988.

¹⁰ As an exception, the ghetto narrative was included as part of the description of the occupied city in: A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, *Trzy miasta. Dzień powszedni w Litzmannstadt – wybrane problemy* [in:] *Przemoc i dzień powszedni w okupowanej Polsce*, ed. T. Chinciński, Gdańsk 2011. However, the authors of the article have not raised the subject of the reaction of Litzmannstadt residents to the fate of the ghetto.

¹¹ Outstanding here is the detailed study by D. Siepracka, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi podczas okupacji niemieckiej* [in:] *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945. Studia i materiały*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006.

from the rest of the city, and the people imprisoned there were perceived seems a matter worth describing, and this has resulted in the present work.

Not many sources written at the time, during the German occupation of the city, which would enable creating an image of the social consciousness of its inhabitants, have survived to date. The only exceptions are letters and a few reports prepared for the German authorities, and to some extent the local press. Thus, postwar testimonies, submitted and recorded by the Poles and Germans who had survived the period of the German occupation in the city were mainly used in preparing this work. Many of these are emotional, because they refer to particularly traumatic memories. The time that had passed between the wartime events and the time the accounts were written down caused many difficulties: for example, the factual data and the chronology of events become blurred. Nevertheless, their use seems justified as these unique testimonies have not been used previously or analyzed in terms of the awareness of the tragedy that took place in the northern part of Litzmannstadt.

The first German troops entered the city in the evening of 8 September 1939. The next day the occupation of the city began. From the first days, the Jews were victims of repression that preceded their isolation in the so-called closed district. One of the witnesses said: “The Poles and Jews took their [i.e. the Germans’ – A.S.] arrival with fear, while the German part of the population threw flowers to the Nazi soldiers, welcoming them with joy. The next morning hell began for the Jews who had stayed”.¹² The wave of persecution has affected larger and larger groups of Łódź Jews. In the fall, the German police, with the active participation of *Selbschutz* troops composed of local representatives of the German minority, began mass arrests of persons considered to be enemies of the Reich. These included many representatives of Jewish social organizations, political parties and prominent representatives of this community. Many of the arrested were murdered in the following weeks.¹³

¹² Y. Nirenberg, *Memoirs of the Lodz Ghetto*, Toronto 2003, p. 1.

¹³ J. Baranowski, *Zbrodnie na inteligencji i grupach przywódczych ludności żydowskiej w pierwszych miesiącach okupacji* [in:] *Eksterminacja inteligencji Łodzi i okręgu łódzkiego 1939–1940*, eds. A. Galiński, M. Budziarek, Łódź 1992, pp. 55–57.

What happened to the Jews in the first months of the war did not go unnoticed among the non-Jewish inhabitants of the city. Subsequent repressive regulations visibly affected the situation of the Jews, who were dismissed from their jobs and deprived of income.¹⁴ The order of the German occupants of December 1939, that the Jews must wear a recognition marking in the form of the Star of David, could not be ignored. A teenage Łódź girl noted: “At first, we laughed, both the Germans and Poles, at those yellow patches, but it soon dawned on us that something evil was coming”¹⁵. Setting the largest synagogues in Łódź on fire caused a sense of terror not only among the Jews. One of the most disturbing accounts that described this episode was recorded by a Polish worker passing by a burning building on his way to work: “A row of Gestapo men stood along the Więckowskiego Street [...]. I managed, with other people, to pass to Zielona Street surrounded by the *gendarmerie* and army troops. I stopped; I could not believe my eyes. The whole synagogue was in flames. Human cries were coming from within the walls; it was easy to guess who was calling for mercy, and who wasn't going to show it.”¹⁶

Among the inhabitants of the city, witnesses of increasingly brutal repression, there were reactions of compassion towards the fate of the Łódź Jews. Cases of active help provided by Polish friends during the first period of the war are known. Some accounts, however, clearly distinguished the behavior of Poles from that of the compatriots of the new rulers of the city. “The Poles were behaving decently, facing this tragedy. They helped Jews with arranging various things at pawnshops. Anti-Semitism was not yet felt, but all the ‘good-hearted’ Germans turned into jackals. [...] Each of them recalled the slightest resentment he had ever had towards a Jew, and dragged him to the Gestapo.”¹⁷ The question of the active participation of local Germans in the persecution has appeared in many accounts. Prewar acquaintances,

¹⁴ E. Wiatr, *Sytuacja ludności żydowskiej w pierwszych miesiącach wojny* [in:] *Łódź w 1939 roku*, eds. T. Toborek, P. Waingerner, Łódź 2011, p. 287.

¹⁵ A. Scheffel, *Łódź – historia/e. Wspomnienia i epizody z mojego Życia*, transl. D. Czuczwała, M. Półroła, Łódź 2008, p. 84.

¹⁶ S. Baranowski, *Pamiętnik robotnika*, select. and prep. T. Mrozowski, Łódź 1974, p. 95.

¹⁷ *Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (AŻIH; Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute), 301/2274, *Relacja Róży Dobreckiej, 25 XI 1946 r.*, p. 2.

neighbors, a “caretaker, schoolboy, urchin” suddenly proved to be deadly enemies, often motivated by desire for profit or by envy.¹⁸ Dawid Sierakowiak has described in his diary a search carried out in his apartment, during which a Wehrmacht officer was assisted by his teenage son and the caretaker’s son.¹⁹ Cases were also recorded where the “local Christian population” helped the Germans identify who was a Jew.²⁰ It is not certain how many of the cases mentioned above referred to the Poles, but there is no doubt that the Jews also encountered hostility from the Polish population.²¹

The German authorities wanted to influence the negative attitude of the population towards the Jews, seeking to inflame the relations between the nationalities in the city. One method was to direct anti-Semitic propaganda to the Poles living in Łódź. This was done, among other ways, by spreading information about alleged anti-Polish behavior of Jews. These reports were also published in the local press, both in German and in Polish. One of the dailies described the fire of the synagogue as a reaction to the participation of the Jews in the demolition of the monument of Thaddeus Kościuszko in the Wolności (Freedom) Square, which was destroyed on 11 November 1939.²² In fact, the Germans forced the Jews to work on removing the ruins of the monument once it was blown up.

Anti-Semitic articles also appeared in the “Gazeta Łódzka” Polish-language newspaper, which was published from late September to early November 1939. The texts mainly focused on the dishonesty of Jewish sellers and on the campaign against their speculation.²³ A resident of Łódź recorded

¹⁸ *Kronika getta łódzkiego/Litzmannstadt Getto 1941–1944*, vol. 5: *Aneksy*, ed. and prep. J. Baranowski and others, transl. K. Radziszewska and others, Łódź 2009, p. 8.

¹⁹ D. Sierakowiak, *Dziennik*, eds. E. Wiatr, A. Sitarek, Warsaw 2015, p. 86.

²⁰ *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 5..., p. 8.

²¹ AŻIH, 301/5431, *Relacja Feli Wiernik*, no date, p. 8; *Archiwum Instytutu Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego* (AIE; Archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Łódź), B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, pp. 5–6.

²² N.N., *W okupowanej Łodzi* [in:] *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Losy Żydów łódzkich (1939–1942)*, ed. M. Polit, Warsaw 2013, p. 45.

²³ K. Lesiakowski, *Początki okupacji hitlerowskiej w Łodzi na łamach polskojęzycznej “Gazety Łódzkiej” (wrzesień–listopad 1939.)* [in:] *Łódź w 1939 roku*, eds. T. Toborek, P. Waingertner, Łódź 2011, pp. 236–238.

in his memoirs the spreading of anti-Jewish gossip: “There are rumors that the Jews were treacherous towards the Poles, which outrages people, even though no one saw it.” Further down, he wrote: “Who would have taken the trouble of verifying [these] when there was so much prejudice and dislike in the attitude of the Poles towards the Jews?”²⁴ Negative attitudes have also been reported in other accounts, but it is not possible to ascertain which part of these resulted from the activities of the German authorities, and which was closer to the above opinion of *Kolega*.

Due to the failure of the plan to deport all the Jews from the city in December 1939, Friedrich Übelör, the President of the Kalisz Authority District, has proposed the project of temporary concentration of Jews in the northern district of Łódź. The project he prepared has planned the course of the operation precisely and appointed officials responsible for it. The operation itself would also provide another opportunity to loot the property of the Jews.²⁵ The intention of isolating the Jews was officially notified to the inhabitants of the city by the decree of 8 February 1940²⁶ published in the “Lodscher Zeitung” daily. The authorities of the Jewish community probably learned about it two weeks earlier, at the end of January 1940.²⁷

According to the planned schedule, the resettlement was to begin on 12 February, during the following weeks all Jews were to be moved in tight groups into the planned ghetto area. Within two weeks it became obvious that the system was not as efficient as the authorities expected, so the resettlement was stopped for a few days. It was not until the beginning of March 1940, after the brutal action of throwing people out of their apartments, known as the bloody Thursday, during which at least 200 were murdered, that many individuals decided to move on their own to the planned ‘closed district.’²⁸ During the expulsion of Jews from the city and their resettlement

²⁴ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 5.

²⁵ *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Zbiór dokumentów*, prep. T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, A. Rutkowski, Warsaw 1957, pp. 81–83.

²⁶ “Lodscher Zeitung”, 9 February 1940, no. 40, pp. 9–10.

²⁷ A. Sitarek, “Otoczone drutem państwo”..., p. 38.

²⁸ L.G., *Miesiąc marzec 1940. w Łodzi* [in:] *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Losy Żydów łódzkich (1939–1942)*, transl. and prep. M. Polit, P. Kędziołek, Warsaw 2013, p. 117; A. Sitarek, “Otoczone drutem państwo”..., pp. 41–42.

ment to the ghetto, the German authorities informed all the Poles and Germans living in the area that they must leave their apartments and houses. This caused negative reactions of those forced to move, because for many of them it meant abandoning their family homes. To deal with the matters of the property left behind, both private and corporate, a special Jewish ghetto administration unit was set up, which estimated the value of these goods and paid compensation to the 'Aryan' owners.²⁹

The forced transfer of the Jews to the 'closed district' did not escape the attention of their neighbors and friends. A resident of modern blocks of flats in the Chojny district in the south of the city wrote in her memoirs: "Then came the turn of other neighbors: Jews. One day they were told to move to Bałuty, to the ghetto created for them. I remember the lump in my throat as we said goodbye to several Jewish families living in the *lokator*³⁰, and then we looked at the stream of misery that was moving down Rzgowska Street. Men, women, children, great masses of children and old people marked with the Star of David, pulling carts with their poor possessions. And we watched with a sense of total hopelessness and with the awareness that we would follow them."³¹ The forced relocation to the ghetto was also mentioned by authors of other accounts.³²

During the resettlement campaign it was found that the number of apartments in the originally planned area where the ghetto was to be established was insufficient. Representatives of the Jewish community tried to persuade the German authorities to enlarge the area of the ghetto. They drew attention to a number of inconveniences, such as the organization of the burial of the dead, who were transported to the cemetery at Bracka Street, located outside

²⁹ The *Komisja Kontroli Majątku Niemieckiego i Polskiego w Getcie* (Control Commission for the German and Polish Property in the Ghetto), also known as the *Wydział Kontroli Majątków Aryjskich* (Aryan Property Control Department) took care of this. See the extensive correspondence of the Commission in the *Archiwum Państwowe* (National Archives) in Łódź (AP Łódź), PSZ 724, *passim*.

³⁰ The name was used for the housing estate of modern buildings located at Lokatorska Street in the Chojny.

³¹ AIE, B3693, *Relacja Wandy Przepiórkowskiej*, no date, p. 8.

³² Among others L. Kieszczyński, *Pamiętnik z lat młodości wrzesień 1936 – styczeń 1945*, pt. 2: *Pamiętnik młodego robotnika*, Warsaw 1996, pp. 140–141.

the boundaries of the planned ghetto. The officials of the Jewish community, who were complaining about the nuisance, wrote about events of desecration of Jewish bodies and about throwing stones at funeral processions to the cemetery at Bracka. They emphasized that “it was all the more sad that it came from the former local people, who thus manifested the extent of their savagery”³³. Eventually, the area of the ghetto was expanded into the streets to the west of the Old Town and into the Marysin district to the north-east, reaching the new Jewish cemetery. The ghetto eventually covered an area of just over 4 sq. km.

At the end of April the borders of the ghetto were closed; from that moment no one could approach the fence because of the threat of being shot by a German guard.³⁴ The only gate to the ‘closed district’ led through the Bałucki Rynek square.³⁵ Every 50-100 m along the border, posts and stations of the German protective police (*Schutzpolizei*, *Schupo*) from the 6th police district were located. In addition, as necessary, the boundaries were guarded by auxiliary police forces (*Hilfspolizei*, *Hipo*) of the 132nd and 101st Police Reserve Battalions.³⁶ Combating the illegal contacts between the ghetto and the so-called Aryan side, mainly of the smuggling, was also the responsibility of the German criminal police (*Kriminalpolizei*, *Kripo*) station operating in the ghetto, located in the former rectory at Kościelna Street.³⁷ The border was also guarded from the inside by the Jewish Order Service organized by the Superior of the Council of Jewish Elders, who was obliged to enforce the

³³ *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 5..., p. 50.

³⁴ This was regulated by a special instruction of 10 May 1940, issued by the Police President Johannes Schäfer, the *Sonderanweisung für den Verkehr mit dem Ghetto* [in:] *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. 3: *Getto łódzkie*, pt. 1, prep. A. Eisenbach, Warsaw 1946, pp. 84–85.

³⁵ There were offices of the central Jewish ghetto administration institutions and the office of the German Ghetto Administration in the Bałucki Rynek Square. This was the only place of legal contacts between the Jews and the so-called Aryan people, for example between the Jewish and German administration officials (*Encyklopedia getta. Niedokończony projekt archiwistów z getta łódzkiego*, eds. K. Radziszewska and others, Łódź 2014, pp. 22–23).

³⁶ Ch. Browning, *Zwykli ludzie. 101. Policyjny Batalion Rezerwy i “ostateczne rozwiązanie” w Polsce*, Warsaw 2000, pp. 55, 59 (Originally published in 1992 as *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* – translator’s note).

³⁷ M. Cygański, *Policja kryminalna i porządkowa III Rzeszy w Łodzi i rejencji łódzkiej (1939–1945)*, “Rocznik Łódzki” 1972, vol. 16 (19), pp. 36–38.

ban on leaving the ghetto.³⁸ The transit streets in which the tram line ran: Zgierska and Limanowskiego, were excluded from the ghetto area, because closing them could result in a paralysis of the city communication network. In order to enable communication between the various parts of the ghetto, special passages, gates, were initially created, and in mid-1940 three wooden bridges were erected across the streets.³⁹

A tram ride through Zgierska or Limanowskiego Streets was the only possibility to have a look into the 'interior' of the ghetto that was theoretically available to all residents of Litzmannstadt; many testimonies related to the 'closed district' were based on observations made during a short ride of a few minutes through those streets.⁴⁰ A group of Poles and Germans worked in the Bałucki Rynek [market] as drivers or officials, and they could see there what the ghetto was, but no testimony about that was found. Only few high-ranking individuals could enter the ghetto, when accompanying the numerous German military and civilian committees that visited the ghetto.⁴¹

When establishing the boundaries of the ghetto, the German authorities took special care for the border to be relatively easy to guard, and thus to limit and hinder illegal contacts with the so-called Aryan side. The most spectacular way of separating the two parts of the city was to demolish a few blocks of buildings north of Ogródowa and Północna Streets, completed out between April and August 1941, and to create the so-called fire protection zone there.⁴² The topography of the northern district of the city has not always allowed the boundaries to be set according to established rules, a number of buildings inhabited by 'Aryan' families were adjacent to the ghetto, which also provided the opportunity to watch the situation on the other

³⁸ *Encyklopedia getta...*, pp. 153–155.

³⁹ *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 5..., pp. 319–320.

⁴⁰ Among others the account of Erika Carlhoff [in:] *Łódź im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Deutsche Selbstzeugnisse über Alltag, Lebenswelten und NS-Germanisierungspolitik in einer militärischen Stadt*, eds. H.J. Böemelburg, M. Klatt, Onasbrück 2015, p. 193.

⁴¹ Information on the arrival of such committees was recorded in the *Kronika getta*. During one of such visits, on 5 June 1941, the ghetto was visited by the *Reichsführer SS* Heinrich Himmler; *Kronika getta łódzkiego/Litzmannstadt Getto 1941–1944*, vol. 1: 1941, eds. and prep. J. Baranowski and others, transl. K. Radziszewska and others, Łódź 2009, 7–9 June 1941 entry, p. 213; S. Rozensztajn, *Notatnik*, transl. and ed. M. Polit, Warsaw 2008, p. 80.

⁴² *Encyklopedia getta...*, pp. 6–7.

side of the fence.⁴³ Surrounding the extensive area with a barbed wire fence could not escape the attention of the inhabitants of occupied Łódź. Establishing a prominent barrier between the Jewish and 'Aryan' residents of the city, manned with posts of armed policemen, was reflected in surviving accounts, although none of the examined testimonies described the actual moment of erecting the fence or of moving the borders of the ghetto to expand its area, as quoted according to documents of the Jewish administration.⁴⁴

The isolation of the Jews in the ghetto brought the breakdown of many prewar social bonds connecting Łódź residents of different nationalities. The Polish woman mentioned earlier described how her neighbors were thrown out of their homes. Similar information is also included in the accounts of German residents.⁴⁵ Dramatic fates of mixed Polish-Jewish or German-Jewish families, who faced the dilemma of moving to the ghetto or separation, were also recorded.⁴⁶ A few attempted to maintain contact despite the danger: keeping contacts with the Jews isolated in the ghetto was forbidden, those approaching the boundaries of the 'closed district' could be shot by *Schupo* guards, while throwing food parcels or correspondence across the fence, if detected, was punishable by a severe imprisonment.⁴⁷ Those who contacted the ghetto included Ryszard Lerczyński, who sheltered his prewar colleague and the latter's female friend in his home at the beginning of the war, and then, after they chose to move into the ghetto, he provided them with necessary things.⁴⁸

It is impossible to estimate the scale of contacts of residents of the so-called Aryan side with the ghetto. These were certainly noticeable both to the German authorities and to the Jewish administration. This is confirmed, among other things, by the announcement issued by the Superior of the Council of

⁴³ Among others B. Kroll, A. Fritsche, *Wspomnienia łódzkiego Volksdeutscha*, Łódź 2010, p. 31; AIE, B3265, *Relacja Ryszarda Kasprowicza*, no date, p. 18.

⁴⁴ *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 5..., pp. 49–50.

⁴⁵ A. Scheffel, *Łódź – historia/e. Wspomnienia i epizody z mojego życia*, Łódź 2008, p. 84.

⁴⁶ L. Kieszczyński, *Pamiętnik z lat młodości...*, p. 140; A. Janowska, *Krzyżówka*, Warsaw 2010, p. 66.

⁴⁷ D. Siepracka, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi...*, pp. 700–701.

⁴⁸ AŻIH, 349/1469, *Relacja Ryszarda Lerczyńskiego*, no date, p. 7. So far, Ryszard Lerczyński remains the only Righteous decorated for helping Jews in the occupied Łódź.

Jewish Elders Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski less than three months after the closure of the ghetto borders. He reminded that “communicating with the population outside the ghetto across the fence (especially in the transit streets) is strictly prohibited.”⁴⁹ The researched materials suggest that illegal contacts were maintained mainly in connection with trade. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the role played by the Jews in this branch of the Łódź economy before the outbreak of war, and on the other hand, more importantly, by the tragic catering situation of the ghetto in which food was lacking above all, as were other necessities, including medicines. Some of the illegal trade contacts were based on prewar acquaintance, which made them more effective, at least in the first year of the existence of the ‘closed district’. In these contacts, however, the economic ties between the contractors clearly outweighed the social ones.

The trade, mainly exchange, was particularly intense until late 1940 and early 1941, when the German authorities intensified the control of the ghetto borders and intensified repression towards those caught in the illegal dealings. The scale of smuggling may be estimated on the basis of the surviving documentation of the German police apparatus. Litzmannstadt Police President Karl Wilhelm Albert wrote in mid-1940 about the difficulties in guarding the ghetto borders and about dozens of Poles and Jews shot while trying to cross the border illegally.⁵⁰ In the report of 24 January 1942, the Łódź *Kripo* mentioned over one hundred people arrested when caught during illegal contacts. On the other hand, the *Kripo* report informed about entire carts with goods crossing the border. Corruption of German guards was almost a common practice.⁵¹ An image of the scale of the illegal exchange with the ghetto is provided by the files of the cases against the smugglers at the Special Court (*Sondergericht*) in Litzmannstadt.⁵²

⁴⁹ AP Łódź, PSZ, 163, *Obwieszczenie nr 78 z 9 VII 1940*, p. 59.

⁵⁰ D. Siepracka, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi...*, p. 708.

⁵¹ Reports of the German Criminal Police, see. AP Łódź, *Staatliche Kriminalpolizei. Kriminalpolizeistelle-Litzmannstadt*, ref. no. 23–26.

⁵² See AP Łódź, *Sondergericht Litzmannstadt*, case nos. 633, 5536, 6359, 10426. The problem of smuggling has been thoroughly investigated by Dorota Siepracka in the article mentioned above (D. Siepracka, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi...*, pp. 707–712).

Jewish reports and German police reports dominate among the accounts about the smuggling. Some previously unknown testimonies also come from Polish sources. One of the more extensive testimonies about the illegal dealings was made by a smuggler who lived next to the ghetto border, at Adwokacka Street. He described exactly the work of ‘geciarze’, that is smugglers of goods and food into the ghetto. He wrote, among others, “At the end of the [Adwokacka] street there is an ex-Jewish warehouse of scrap, old rags and waste paper. It is to that place that the Germans bring various clothes and books from the ghetto. And the Jews are sorting and baling this. [...] The Jews stealthily wave from the windows of the house where they live, and ask them to buy them food and cigarettes, they have money. It is always possible to buy these goods from the smugglers, but expensively. I risk it several times. I receive 5 marks for a 50 mark purchase. I hide the food and cigarettes underneath my shirt. The *gendarmes* do not watch the Jews, but German civilians are there, one has to use every moment of the Germans’ inattention to get there, deliver the purchase and run back. A lot of people do that, mostly from the house no. 9.”⁵³

Illegal food supply is also mentioned in other accounts.⁵⁴ The dealings concerned not only the ghetto but also the areas outside its borders, where the Jews were employed, such as the labor camp at Olechów near Łódź⁵⁵: “To help the Jews working on railway construction, adults sometimes use children playing in the River Olechówka. Four and five-year-old children display cleverness that one would never have suspected.”⁵⁶ The increased preventive measures of the German authorities against the smugglers have also affected the ‘geciarze’ from Adwokacka Street: “The ‘geciarze’ from no. 1 are dropping off” wrote the author of the account, “it is becoming more and more difficult to enter and leave the ghetto. The *gendarmes* change constantly, they are hard to bribe.”⁵⁷ The effectiveness of the operation was con-

⁵³ AIE, B3265, *Relacja Ryszarda Kasprowicza*, no date, p. 21.

⁵⁴ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 7.

⁵⁵ For more about the camp see W. Klimczak, *Zbrodnie popełnione w latach 1940–1944 na Polakach, Żydach i jeńcach radzieckich zatrudnionych przy budowie węzła kolejowego Łódź–Olechów*, “Rocznik Łódzki” 1972, vol. 16 (19).

⁵⁶ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 23.

firmed by the number of people arrested and interrogated by the *Kripo*, and brought to trial by the Special Court.

All preserved accounts about the smuggling and crossing the borders of the ghetto come from Poles who lived in Łódź. Although German police documents indicate that Germans living in the city were also involved in the smuggling⁵⁸, it has proved impossible to find any testimonies from them. It is not insignificant that the vast majority of the 'geciarze' were members of the Polish population, mostly those who lived before the war in the area where the ghetto was later established, such as Kasprowicz who was quoted above.⁵⁹

Although the documentation of the German occupation authorities and of the Jewish ghetto administration, as well as the testimonies of the smugglers, includes relatively many references to the smuggling, those who participated in it were just a small percentage of all the people who had contacts with the 'closed district'. Among the inhabitants of the city, many people watched the ghetto when passing, primarily by tram, through the separated Zgierska and Limanowskiego Streets mentioned earlier. The traffic in the extraterritorial streets of the northern part of the city involved a special procedure. All vehicles had to cover this section without stopping.

In the case of the tram the carriages were closed after leaving the stop at the ghetto border, a policeman entered one of these, and then the train covered the whole route without stops. The passengers were only allowed to leave the tram when outside the ghetto.⁶⁰ According to regulations of the authorities, the first carriage was for the Germans only and the second one for the Poles.⁶¹ From the beginning of November 1942 a new tram line was started, leading to the Cemeteries at Doły. The Poles and Germans traveling

⁵⁸ D. Siepracka, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi...*, p. 713.

⁵⁹ AIE, B3265, *Relacja Ryszarda Kasprowicza*, no date, pp. 18–23. The *Kronika getta łódzkiego* also mentions the deportation of the Poles living at Żurawia Street who had organized the smuggling through neighboring properties at this street located on both sides of the ghetto border: *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 1..., rumors of 25 July 1941., p. 255.

⁶⁰ AIE, B3702, *Relacja Henryki Zynduł*, no date, p. 9; *Centrum Badań Żydowskich Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego* (CBŻ UŁ; Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Łódź), *Relacja Zofii Banaszczyk*, 2006, p. 2.

⁶¹ J. Poznański, *Dziennik z łódzkiego getta*, Warsaw 2002, p. 20.

on it passed directly through the ghetto via Franciszkańska and Brzezińska Streets.⁶² On this line the procedure was the same as on the sections of Zgierska and Limanowskiego Streets.

The accounts of travels through the ghetto, irrespective of the nationality of the author, contained many repetitive elements: a passage in a closed car without stopping, ruined buildings and human figures with the stars of David sewn onto their clothes visible behind the windows.⁶³

Accounts of people who no doubt knew a lot of details about the ghetto, but deliberately ignored these, who passed through the 'closed district', looked out of the windows but failed to remember what they saw or forgot about it, can be seen as a deviation from this rule. The memories of Hans Preuschoff, the editor of "Litzmannstadter Zeitung", the most important daily newspaper in the occupied city, which is generally rich in details, are an example here. Information about the ghetto is extremely modest in this text and is limited to one sentence about the passage through the ghetto during an expedition to a suburban forest. In the next sentence, Preuschoff proudly stressed that he had refused to accept a fur coat of suspicious origin for his wife (presumably one that had previously belonged to a Jew)⁶⁴, which was probably an attempt to present the author of the memoirs as a person who did not assist in what was happening to the Jews imprisoned in the ghetto.

Those who decided to write down their impressions of the ghetto on the basis of observation from the tram journey often paid attention to the enormous overpopulation of the ghetto. The accounts include descriptions of the incredible crowd in the ghetto.⁶⁵ From the tram windows "people down there [...] seemed small and as if all dressed in black"⁶⁶. The Jews on the other

⁶² *Kronika getta łódzkiego/Litzmannstadt Getto 1941–1944*, vol. 2: 1942, eds. and prep. J. Baranowski and others, transl. J. Ratusińska and others, Łódź 2009, 1 November 1942 entry, p. 573.

⁶³ *Eine Tochter des Reichsstatthalters Greiser berichtet im April 1940 über ihren Besuch in Lodz* [in:] *Lodz...*, pp. 91–92; CBŻ UŁ, *Relacja Zofii Banaszczyk*, 2006, p. 2; A. Scheffel, *Lodz...*, p. 90; H. Schwarz, "Panie Henryku tak się cieszę, jakby własny syn przyjechał" [in:] *Gdzie...*, p. 83; AIE, B3700, *Relacja Anny Baško*, no date, p. 23.

⁶⁴ H. Preuschoff, *Journalist im Dritten Reich*, <http://www.braunsberg-ostpreussen.de/journal-litz.htm> (access 25 January 2017).

⁶⁵ CBŻ UŁ, *Wspomnienia Janiny Sałajczyk*, 2006, p. 1.

⁶⁶ A. Janowska, *Krzyżówka...*, p. 52.

side of the fence were referred to as people “walking with their heads low down”⁶⁷, “in rags, human skeletons, shadows of children”⁶⁸, they seemed to “hug the walls”⁶⁹, and their faces were “grim”⁷⁰, “apathetic and sad”⁷¹

Some of the passers by recognized their prewar acquaintances among the prisoners: “Sometimes in the crowd of Jews we recognized a business man we knew. We wanted to give him a sign, just nod a hand, but that was strictly forbidden for everyone! Jews with yellow stars walked with their heads low, and we looked at them appalled”⁷² wrote a German woman in her memoirs, adding at the end: “For both sides, the situation was very unpleasant”⁷³. The young representative of the ‘master race’ who rode in the first car did not deepen her reflection. She just said that over time she became used to this view. The fear and tension that she mentioned were frequent among those passing through the ghetto and were often associated with fear of being caught while trying to contact the people imprisoned in the ghetto, showing them sympathy or a sense of shame.⁷⁴

This is how the *Kolega* quoted earlier described his trip through the ghetto: “Before the entrance to the ghetto the tram doors are closed. We look at the ghetto with interest through the windows. But the picture is depressing. Faces of the people with yellow stars on their chests and backs are apathetic and sad. I thought with sadness that perhaps at this moment these people were cursing us, passing by in a tram, for their suffering.”⁷⁵ The projection of the feelings of the Jews observed from the so-called Aryan side and their attitude to the observers, not seen in other accounts, is emphasized by comparison with a similar text made on the other side of the fence. However, Alice de Buton from Vienna who wrote the following words did not curse

⁶⁷ A. Scheffel, *Lodz...*, p. 90.

⁶⁸ AIE, B3700, *Relacja Anny Baško*, no date, p. 23.

⁶⁹ CBŻ UŁ, *Wspomnienia Janiny Sałajczyk*, 2006, no pagination.

⁷⁰ M. Müller, A. Döring, *Łódź pozostanie dla nas zawsze kawałkiem ojczyzny* [in:] *Gdzie...*, p. 75.

⁷¹ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 30.

⁷² A. Scheffel, *Lodz...*, p. 90.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ I. Noll, *Chętnie wspominam dawne czasy w tym mieście* [in:] *Gdzie są Niemcy tamtych lat?*, ed. K. Radziszewska, Łódź 1999, p. 79.

⁷⁵ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 30.

the 'Aryan' inhabitants of Litzmannstadt, the sight of them reminded her of freedom: "Tram no. 3, to Aleksandrów, tram [no.] 40 to Ozorków, [no.] 41 to Zgierz, no. 50, 1, 5, 7, tram L. Double-/triple-carriage trains move in front of our eyes: a tram from Łódź. Łódź! Closed, inaccessible to us, means 'the world'. [...] Sunday. Crowds on the tram. Well dressed, free, cheerful people embark on a trip to the suburbs, standing on the platforms or seated behind the blue windows. They impose upon us, who are looking through the bright but yet darkened windows, a comparison with the last blue light of prewar days, days of peace. [...] Yes, beautiful were the days in which one was still a human, a free, equal human, and not just a Jew, a Jew in the present day sense: despised, disregarded, a wanderer-exile driven from one place to another."⁷⁶

Apart from noting the people who attracted the observers' attention, the out-of-ghetto accounts reflect interest in the surroundings. "Destroyed houses"⁷⁷ or "gloomy and dirty" streets⁷⁸ formed the landscape of the "closed district". One account also mentioned the existence of production plants, a very important aspect of the ghetto functioning. According to the will of the German authorities, production was developed in the 'closed district', in a network of factories and workshops, known as *resorty*. These were organized by Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski who believed in the effectiveness of the policy of 'survival by work'⁷⁹. The huge scale of the undertaking, the expansion of production, made it necessary to start *resorty* also in buildings directly adjacent to the ghetto borders. One of the largest ones in such a location was the metal *resort* at 56 Zgierska Street.⁸⁰

The use of the interior of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary for production purposes was stuck in the mind of the author of this account: "[...] when they established the ghetto here, this church in Kościelny (Church) Square [...] was turned into a kind, how to say [...], they have

⁷⁶ A. De Buton, *Rzut oka przez okno.. albo ostatnie światelko niebieskie* [in:] *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 5..., p. 204.

⁷⁷ M. Müller, A. Döring, *Łódź pozostanie dla nas zawsze kawałkiem ojczyzny* [in:] *Gdzie...*, p. 75.

⁷⁸ CBŻ UŁ, *Wspomnienia Janiny Sałajczyk*, 2006, p. 1.

⁷⁹ For more see. A. Sitarek, "Otoczone drutem państwo"..., pp. 151–162.

⁸⁰ *Encyklopedia getta...*, pp. 135–137.

installed some machines that tore, shred the feathers, Jewish featherbeds from the whole ghetto, because when the Jews were thrown out, they did not take anything [...], everybody [went] as they were, and the featherbeds, quilts, or something else, went into those machines that tore them [...]. Then there were tables, when the doors were open, we were passing, I saw it [...] and on these tables there were such whole pieces of fabric stretched, such a green color and only [...] they put the feather [...], a kind of a roller went over it, pressed it into a kind of a layer [...], then covered it with another kind of fabric, they had some machines, so they sewed through it [...] and from this they made such warm clothes.”⁸¹ The exceptionally detailed description does not reflect the actual use of the interior of the church at the Kościelny Square, which was turned into a warehouse.⁸²

Information about the forced labor of the Jews can also be found in other accounts. These do not refer to the ghetto but to people working outside the ghetto.⁸³ Many details about the situation and working conditions of the Jews employed in the construction of the railway embankments near the Chojny station are given by the *Kolega* quoted previously. In the diary included in his testimony he wrote in March 1943 about the escape of a Jewish worker and the searches in the nearby houses in Młynek.⁸⁴ When writing about the working conditions and the treatment of the Jews, the author of the account noted on 21 March 1943: “I am shocked, although I have seen a lot and I have experienced a bit myself.”⁸⁵ Two months later, he wrote down information about the shooting of a group of 6 Jews and added a remark to that note: “For what? The Jews say it’s like this every month. This passiveness of theirs’ is terrible, this accepting their fate, when there is no doubt whatsoever that the Germans have condemned them to destruction.”⁸⁶

The conviction about the tragic fate of the Jews was supported by earlier observations of the author of the account. During the biggest deportation

⁸¹ AIE, B4178, *Relacja T. Muchy*, no date, p. 5.

⁸² *Kronika getta łódzkiego*, vol. 2..., March 1942 entry, p. 66.

⁸³ AIE, B3695, *Relacja Anny Wojciekan*, no date, no pagination; *ibid*, B 3707, *Relacja Eugeniusza Świdorskiego*, no date, pp. 1–2.

⁸⁴ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 28.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 28–29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 32.

operation in the ghetto, the so-called *wielka szpera*, during which more than 15,000 people were deported and murdered in the center at Kulmhof (Chełmno nad Nerem) in less than two weeks from 1 to 12 September 1942⁸⁷, he wrote in his diary: “It is also rumored that there are mass murders of Jews”⁸⁸ (15 September entry). Information reaching the so-called Aryan side had to be numerous, five days later he wrote again: “There is a lot of talk now about the mass removal of Jews from the ghetto by trucks, but where to?”⁸⁹

Similar, although not very numerous, references to the tragic fate of Jews can be found in other testimonies.⁹⁰ Some of these, due to the specific nature of the source, may come from the knowledge obtained by the authors after the war. Apart from the *Kolega*, the September deportation campaign was also noted by Kasproicz, who watched the *wielka szpera* from the roof of the buildings at Adwokacka Street. He wrote in his memoirs about the deportation action: “The adults and adolescents had to lie down on the trucks, one on top of another, the children were thrown in by their arms and legs, as they fell.”⁹¹

The analyzed testimonies also included descriptions of ‘disappearance’ of Jews. “There were less and less of the Jews, they disappeared in the ghetto. We did not believe what we were told about the place of their stay”⁹², noted a German woman living in occupied Łódź. The absence of Jews noted “from the outside” makes a telling confirmation of their tragic fate. The son of Werner Ventzki, the Super-Mayor of Litzmannstadt, recorded a story he had heard from a German woman who regularly passed through the ghetto on a tram: “To this day I can see it clearly, right in front of my eyes: a well-dressed boy aged nine or eleven, who walked fast, in long steps, with his hands on his back. On each occasion his clothes were more torn and soiled, the Star of David was hanging from his sleeve. [...] Until one day the ghetto

⁸⁷ A. Löw, *Getto...*, p. 231.

⁸⁸ AIE, B3696, *Relacja “Kolegi”*, no date, p. 15.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹⁰ For example, AIE, B3708, *Relacja Heleny Gniewicz-Michalskiej*, no date, p. 3; AIE, B3707, *Relacja Eugeniusza Świdorskiego*, no date, p. 2; G.T. Brüntiuk, *Niania uczyła mnie polskiego* [in:] *Gdzie...*, p. 89.

⁹¹ AIE, B3265, *Relacja Ryszarda Kasproicza*, no date, p. 23.

⁹² G.T. Brüntiuk, *Niania...*, p. 89.

was deserted. Only the boy was left. Then he, too, disappeared suddenly.”⁹³ In another account, children under ten, from German families living in the immediate vicinity of the ghetto, remembered the image of a Jewess shot dead while trying to escape from the ghetto: “I remember how [...] a guard shot a Jewish girl who escaped from the ghetto. She lay dead in the grass and weeds behind our sheds. She had fallen on her face and her dress was thrown up onto her head. She lay there like this for two days, without pants, with her naked buttocks uncovered. I remember how I slipped into the attic in secret from my mum and looked at the bare buttocks of the shot girl. She may have been ten or twelve.”⁹⁴ The moving stories of the boy and girl become a symbolic illustration of the fate of Łódź Jews: doomed to death, with no chance of escaping.

The tragedy of the Jews deported to death was not only watched from outside the fence. In the memoirs and reports there are descriptions of trains destined for extermination camps. In the summer of 1944, during the liquidation of the ghetto, a Polish boy living nearby witnessed the departure of a train from Radegast station: “[...] we were at the edge of a cornfield by the railway track near the bridge at Brzezińska Street. There was a German soldier on the bridge. After some time we saw an oncoming train, consisting solely of freight wagons. Human faces, frightened, looked through a tiny window covered with barbed wire. One of the people waved a metal bowl with a hole. We stood petrified.”⁹⁵ Information about trains was also recorded by a German woman from Łódź: “[Father] was employed at the railway station in Łódź, where he was to supervise transport trains passing through there. In cattle carriages, in a horrible crush, Jews and other prisoners were transported to some camp in the east. It was secret, but we knew all about it.”⁹⁶ After the liquidation of the ghetto in the summer of 1944, its area became a reservoir of fuel and other minor movables, including home appliances still suitable for use. Many people ventured into the deserted ‘closed district’, although there were still almost a thousand Jews in the area billeted in two

⁹³ J.J. Ventzki, *Cień ojca*, Warsaw 2012, p. 190.

⁹⁴ B. Kroll, A. Fritsche, *Wspomnienia...*, p. 31.

⁹⁵ AIE, B3706, *Relacja Stefana Kaczmarka*, no date, pp. 4–5.

⁹⁶ A. Scheffel, *Lodz...*, p. 95.

buildings and an unknown number of those hiding in abandoned houses⁹⁷. The *Schupo* guards were no longer so attentive and their number was much less. “That year [1944/1945] the winter was very cold, there was snow and ice in places as late as March. You had to use the *kanonka*⁹⁸. Mum used to go into in the deserted area of the former ghetto and always found something for fuel. Everyone else did that, including the Poles”⁹⁹, wrote a German girl living in Litzmannstadt. According to another account, in the last days before the entry of the Red Army a series of fires broke out in the area of the former ghetto.¹⁰⁰

After the German occupation of Łódź ended, the area looked dramatic: “I walk around the former ghetto, no trace of Jews. In front of some tenement houses there are heaps of pots, furniture and all that you can have in apartments, snow-covered. The Jews had thrown everything through the windows in despair. People scout around the apartments; take away everything that can still be useful. They take it to their homes, carry it on their backs, or load it on sleds, a lot of feathers flying around [...]”¹⁰¹ The deserted ghetto became a ghost town, roamed by groups of survivors and looters.¹⁰²

The image of the Łódź ghetto and the fate of its inhabitants have been reflected in many accounts about the history of Łódź under the German occupation, written by both the Polish people and the Germans living in Litzmannstadt. Two main motifs can be found in the accounts of interest here: first, the fate of the Jews in the first months of the occupation, including the forced relocation into the ghetto, and the second: a look at the ghetto from the other side of the boundary, above all from the trams that crossed the ghetto. The accounts of those who had been in close contact with the Jews before the war showed compassion and concern for the fate of those incarcerated behind the barbed wire fence. Not all of the city inhabitants

⁹⁷ D. Siepracka, *Żydzi łódzcy po likwidacji getta (wrzesień 1944 – styczeń 1945)* [in:] *Rok 1945 w Łodzi. Studia i szkice*, ed. J. Żelazko, Łódź 2008, pp. 41–42.

⁹⁸ Small freestanding cast iron stove for wood or charcoal.

⁹⁹ A. Scheffel, *Lodz...*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁰ AIE, B3265, *Relacja Ryszarda Kasprowicza*, no date, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁰² CBŻ UŁ, *Wspomnienia Janiny Sałajczyk*, 2006, no pagination; A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, *Życie codzienne w Łodzi w 1945 r.* [in:] *Rok 1945...*, p. 173.

had close ties with the Jews. For some of them, especially for the Germans who moved to Łódź during the war, the Jews were alien, both literally and symbolically. There was no identification with their fate, just the awareness of their presence or (after the extermination started) absence. Only a few testimonies have caught the chronology of events or the significant moments in the history of the ghetto (such as the September 1942 deportations or the liquidation of the ghetto). The relatively modest source base does not give grounds for general conclusions about the behavior or reaction of the entire population of occupied Łódź, especially since it was not a homogeneous group. More answers might be given by an in-depth analysis of private correspondence of the residents of the occupied city, which I consider to be a research postulate.

CRIMES AGAINST THE JEWISH POPULATION AT MARKOWA IN 1942 IN THE CONTEXT OF 1949–1954 CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS¹

Local communities under German occupation

Joint military operations of the aggressors (Germany, the USSR and Slovakia) in 1939 made it impossible for the Republic of Poland to effectively protect her citizens against the terror of the invaders. Since 1939, the German state exercised complete control over nearly half of the territory of the Republic of Poland. In 1941 this power was extended to almost all of Polish territory.

The Polish exiled authorities and their secret representations in the occupied country, which operated during the entire war, had only limited opportunities to counteract the terror of the occupying forces. The initiatives undertaken in international circles and the gathering of evidence of the crimes committed could not replace the military force needed to protect the population against violence. The statements issued by the Polish Underground State consistently warned against engaging in any form of collaboration with the occupant against fellow citizens, and expressly called it “treason, within the meaning of the applicable Polish regulations, for which the severest penalties may be imposed, including the death penalty”².

Germany introduced its own legislation in the occupied territories, quite contrary to international laws. They imposed new restrictions and obligations

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in “Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u” 2014, no. 40.

² Declaration of the *Delegat Rządu RP na Kraj* (Delegate of the Exiled Polish Government) Jan Piekalkiewicz of 15 October 1942 [in:] *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach*, vol. 6: *Uzupełnienia*, Wrocław 1991, eds. T. Pęcznyiński and others, p. 260.

on the population, according to their ideological objectives. They enforced them against Polish citizens of various nationalities by measures of compulsion, imprisonment, deportation to concentration camps, and also public and secret executions. They used a variety of other methods to intimidate and force obedience to new, often Draconian orders. The disintegration of the population, and the attempts to deepen the existing divisions and to create new ones, were to serve the occupying power in the spirit of ‘divide et impera.’

The Germans implemented their criminal program in the occupied country, despite the fact that under the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, which the Third Reich had ratified, they were fully responsible not only for maintaining public order, but also for ensuring the security of the civilian population in the area they controlled.³ However, the years of the German occupation proved to be quite the opposite: the invaders, through their legislation and criminal practice, condemned at their discretion entire groups of the population to annihilation. One of the priority objectives of Germany during the period of the Third Reich’s greatest victories was to completely exterminate the Jewish people. As a result of the German plans at European level, genocide projects were implemented in a local scale.

To counteract any form of support to the Jewish people, on 15 October 1941 the Germans issued a regulation on restrictions of residence in the *General Gouvernement*⁴. It announced that death penalty would apply not only to the Jews who “leave their designated area without authority”, but also to all those who harbor them⁵. A regulation issued a year later extended the

³ Article 43 of the Regulations respecting the laws and customs of war on land, which is an Annex to the Convention “Laws and Customs of War on Land” (Fourth Hague Convention) of 1907, stated: “The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in its power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country”. (English quote from: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000001-0631.pdf>, accessed December 2017).

⁴ *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany (translator’s note).

⁵ The third regulation on restrictions of residence in the *General Gouvernement*, of 15 October 1941 [in:] *Polacy – Żydzi 1939–1945. Wybór źródeł/Polen – Juden 1939–1945. Quelle-nauswahl/Poles – Jews 1939–1945. Selection of documents*, prep. by A.K. Kunert, introduction by W. Bartoszewski, Warsaw 2001, pp. 484–485.

restriction: “Whoever obtains information that a Jew is unlawfully staying outside the area of residence, and does not report this to police, will be subjected to police security measures”⁶.

Under threat of persecution, the occupants also demanded that the civilian population cooperate in the enforcement of the orders, both against the hiding Jews and against other people whom they regarded as opposed to the Third Reich, including those who sought shelter in the forests. On the other hand, they tried to reward all those who participated in the collaboration, including the collaborators who informed about illegal activities or cases of sabotaging German orders. Thus, even individual persons, who were trusted collaborators of the Germans, widened the scale of intimidation and provided the occupying forces with more control over small locations⁷.

A special place in the German occupation administration was assigned to the local state official (*starosta*). These posts were entrusted to their own people, often to Germans coming from the Reich. As part of the occupation administration, they made the *starosta* a strong authority with very broad powers. In the implementation of extensive military and occupation tasks, they were unable to provide new people for the thousands of lower local administration posts at municipal and local levels. They decided to retain a number of previous officials in the *General Gouvernement*, imposing upon them new rules of functioning and new duties in accordance with the occupants’ orders.

The Germans have removed only a part of the former aldermen. In many places these were replaced by *Volksdeutsche* (German nationals). Village headmen, however, who were inhabitants of the individual villages, were generally not replaced. On the contrary, they were forbidden from resigning their posts under penalty of imprisonment. Full obedience to the new orders was also forced by the threat of severe repression. This is how it was proclaimed in posters by the *Kreishauptmann* of Rzeszów: “[...] Polish officials were re-ap-

⁶ Order of the Supreme Commander of the SS and Police in the GG on the formation of Jewish residential districts in the Radom, Krakau and Galizien Districts of 14 November 1942 [in:] „*Żegota*”. *Rada Pomocy Żydom 1942–1945. Wybór dokumentów poprzedzony wywiadem A. Friszke z W. Bartoszewskim*, prep. by A.K. Kunert, Warsaw 2002, p. 52.

⁷ Announcement of the *Kreishauptmann* promising rewards for help in denouncing the Jews and those Poles who harbor them, Grójec, 19 December 1941 [in:] *Polacy ratujący Żydów. Teka edukacyjna IPN*, Warsaw 2008, p. 9.

pointed into service. They perform their duties using the means ordered by their superior authorities. There are cases of resisting and hindering the work of these Polish officials (e.g. aldermen, village headmen, tax officials, etc.). [...] those resisting the orders of the authorities will be punished with strict imprisonment or even the death penalty. Such authority is also possessed by those Polish officials who act on the basis of a direct or indirect order from the German authorities”⁸. Transmitting the orders of the occupant to local people became the principal responsibility of the village headmen. They were personally responsible for making sure these were implemented. Under the conditions of the time the Germans tolerated no form of contestation of the occupying power’s orders. Large villages were further divided by the Germans into areas (*rejony*), for which the so-called area leaders (*rejonowi*) were responsible. They were subordinated to the village headman and co-responsible for the enforcement of the occupation authorities’ orders.

The Germans often treated the potential of a village as an additional free logistics facility for their undertakings in the area. For example, village headmen often received orders to provide a sufficient number of carters with horse-carts. In 1941 these formed additional means of transporting military equipment to the eastern front. Similar orders were sent to village headmen in 1942. This time the carts were to be used to transport Jews to railway stations or directly to labor camps.

Rural communities were often given the duty to search for Jews or partisans according to German orders⁹. At the request of the Germans, village headmen had to organize manhunts or searches for indicated groups of ‘criminals’ on their own. Neither the village headmen nor the people were allowed to evade executing such orders. Collective refusal to do so would be

⁸ Announcement of the *Kreishauptmann* on hindering the work of aldermen, village headmen, tax officials, etc., Rzeszów, 11 May 1940 [in:] *Propaganda i rzeczywistość*, albums of exhibitions: „*Życie na papierze. Niemiecka okupacja Rzeszowszczyzny w afiszach, obwieszczeniach i plakatach (1939–1944)*”, „*Wczorajsze dzisiaj. Rzeszów z lat okupacji 1939–1945. Ze zbiorów Bogusława Kotuli*”, introduction by M. Krzanicki, consult. K. Kaczmarek, Rzeszów 2007, p. 29.

⁹ For a description of this kind of manhunt against the partisans organized by local population forced by German orders see, for example, M. Korcuć, *Józef Kuraś „Ogień”*. *Podhalańska wojna 1939–1945*, Cracow 2011, pp. 177–178.

treated as a rebellion against the occupying authorities and the whole place would be exposed to a ruthless pacification carried out by the Germans according to the collective responsibility principle. If the occupant's orders were executed, the scale of real involvement and zeal of the people participating in such searches was of particular importance. After the war, it was also the subject of criminal proceedings and court hearings.

In order to help fulfill these duties, the village headmen had night guards, also known as rural guards, appointed since 1942. These were supposed to support the maintenance of peace and order in the village and prevent crime. In German practice, the latter meant any form of non-observance of the occupant's regulations, and thus also harboring Jewish people.

Such a guard reported to the village headman, and was led by a man called commandant (*komendant*) or decurion (*dziesiętnik*). The latter would hold the post for a prolonged time and was therefore remunerated from rural funds. They also recruited the ordinary members of the guard, who were periodically changed, and were to guard certain parts of their villages. The guards were appointed from among the population for a specified time, after which they were replaced in rotation. Many larger villages also had separate guard troops made up of firemen.

The Germans realized that a part of the population may carry out some of the regulations with reluctance or only pretend to do so. To terrorize the people and force the observance of the occupant's legislation, they additionally applied a specific form of personalized collective responsibility. They named groups of hostages who would guarantee with their lives the complete execution of the authorities' orders. The hostages among the villagers were designated by the 'navy blue' policemen¹⁰ or by the village headman. The latter had to identify the potential victims, he had no right to refuse or refrain from executing such orders. In the practice of the occupation, the hostages became a group used to perform particular tasks. Their lack of cooperation could result in deportation to a labor camp, and in the event of major misconduct the hostages were the first to be shot¹¹.

¹⁰ The Polish police force under German occupation was commonly known as 'granatowa' ('navy blue') for the color of their uniforms (translator's note).

¹¹ J. Grabowski, *Społeczność wiejska, policja granatowa i ukrywający się Żydzi: powiat Dąbro-*

It was a sophisticated method of using the fear for one's own personal safety and that of one's family as a form of psychological pressure. Thus, all residents were preventively warned about who would be the first to pay for any potential insubordination. Subsequently, the responsibility could also be borne by the rest of the population.

Orders to start a manhunt or search for any hiding people were given to the village headmen by the Germans or by the aldermen. They were responsible for effective mobilization of the guards, the firemen, the hostages. If necessary, they also had to appoint ordinary residents of the village. The execution of the orders was often supervised by 'navy blue' policemen and Also sometimes also German policemen or *gendarmes*.

The farmers appointed by the village headman were obliged to bring the captured people to the 'navy blue' police stations or to a kind of communal jail in the village. Once captured, they were supposed to await the arrival of representatives of the occupying authorities. These searches usually ended tragically for those who had been found. At the time of the 'final solution', the Germans usually carried out individual or collective executions. Most of the shootings were carried out by themselves. Sometimes they also used the 'navy blue' police.

The tragedy of those days, which resulted from the behavior of the German authorities, often consisted in the fact that even the sympathy of some of the village headmen, guards or hostages to those who were wanted could not be exposed in the form of phony searches or of attempts to free those already captured. If the group charged with executing the orders included just one informer or collaborator of the Germans, it was enough to threaten that such conduct would be punished by death for sabotaging the orders¹². The eager collaborators were just as dangerous as the occupants.

Still, there were cases of sabotaging German orders. These always involved risking one's own life or that of others. In this context, it is worth pointing out a part of the justification for one postwar judgment relevant to participating in arresting people who had been hiding: "[...] The court notes a dif-

wa Tarnowska 1942-1945 [in:] *Zarys krajobrazu. Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów 1942-1945*, eds. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, Warsaw 2011, pp. 143-153.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 154-159.

ference between the passive participation in catching or escorting and the participation in arresting. During the German occupation at least 1/4 of the total Polish rural population was forced to take part in raids against themselves. Often the whole partisan part of the population took part in raids against themselves [i.e. participated in the searches of partisans – M.Sz.] and found nobody, of course. Often, the peasants performing a manhunt made it easier for those hiding to avoid being caught. Many people, including Jews, owed their lives to the fact that Polish peasants pursued them or escorted those already captured in such a way that they helped them hide or escape once caught”¹³.

The extermination of the Jews at Markowa in 1942 – an attempt to reconstruct the events¹⁴

Markowa was one of thousands of Polish villages and towns where the Germans implemented the principles of the criminal ideology. During the war the village had about 4,500 inhabitants. In the interwar period it had a well-organized co-operative movement (the first rural Health Service Co-operative in Poland was established at Markowa in 1935). In political terms the peasant movement was the most influential. The vast majority of the inhabitants were Polish, but there was also a small Jewish community. According to the 1921 census 126 people living at Markowa declared their religion as Jewish. This number could have dropped to about 120 by the outbreak of the war. The topography of Jewish families at Markowa indicated that their houses did not form a major group. With the exception of two places these were simply

¹³ AIPN Rz, 357/106/DVD, *Akta Sądu Okręgowego w Rzeszowie dot. Władysława Szpunara, Uzasadnienie wyroku w sprawie IV K 168/48 dot. Władysława Szpunara, Stanisława Ruszła, Stanisława Pasierba*, Rzeszów, 11 March 1949, p. 264. This sentence should be taken into particular account since it was formulated by the court (composed of Judge Władysław Piątkowski and jury members Jan Gliwa and Władysław Gońko) that planned to sentence Władysław Szpunar, the chief defendant, to death for denouncing Estera Goldberg, captured at Sonin (a village neighboring Markowa), and it was solely because Szpunar had earlier helped a Jewish child, Abraham Segal, that the penalty was reduced to life imprisonment.

¹⁴ This subchapter is based primarily on the findings made on the basis of the criminal proceedings described below. To avoid multiplying the already extensive footnotes, I only refer to those sources and quotes from literature that were not included there.

scattered throughout the village. Most of the Markowa Jews were in trading businesses. Two families were farmers. The relations between the Poles and the Jews were generally correct. For religious and cultural reasons, the two communities chose to live side by side, without interfering with one another. This did not apply to relations between children, who naturally undertook shared fun activities and who also attended the same school. According to data from the last years before the war, in the school year of 1938/1939 the village school at Markowa had 22 pupils of Jewish origin. No major conflict in the relations between Polish and Jewish children had ever been recorded. The division could only be remembered during the Holy Week by the habit of hanging a 'Judas puppet' on trees in front of Jewish homes by youngsters, which was a primitive and impertinent reference to biblical history.

During the war the Germans liquidated the Przeworsk county. Markowa remained the seat of the community, but it became part of the occupation-time Jarosław county¹⁵. As a large village, Markowa was divided into several areas. There was a 'navy blue' police post in the village. 3 to 5 policemen served there. One of them was a particularly dangerous *Volksdeutsch* Konstanty Kindler¹⁶ from Wielkopolska. He quickly became known as an

¹⁵ Germans held the *starosta* post: Carl Hermann Rieger, Georg Eisenlohr, Julius, Michael Andreas Zuzic. For their biographical information, see: M. Roth, *Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte*, Göttingen 2009, pp. 444, 470, 496, 513. Until March 1942 the post of alderman of the Community of Markowa was held by Józef Szatkowski, who had performed the duties before the war; then until March 1943 by Władysław Urban; and later, until the end of the German occupation, by Michał Baraksza. None of them had originated from Markowa.

¹⁶ Konstanty Kindler, son of Karol, born on 20 July 1914 at Grodziec, an officer of the Polish State Police from September 1938, and from July 1939, at the post at Czarna near Łañcut, during the war he was, in sequence, a 'navy blue' policeman at Czarna, at Markowa, a German *gendarme* at Dobromil, at Górnio near Kolbuszowa, at Słomniki, a *Wehrmacht* soldier. In 1947 he was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Rzeszów District Court, released in 1955 (AIPN Rz, 11/26, *Akta Sądu Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, o IV K 69/47 dotyczące Konstantego Kindlera*). Crimes against the Jewish inhabitants of Markowa were not the subject of the proceedings; it appears from the files that this *Volksdeutsche* from Wielkopolska served at Markowa until June 1942, and then as German *gendarme* in another area. On the other hand, records of the underground resistance (and accounts of residents) indicate a different period of Kindler's stay at Markowa: "from spring to fall 1942"; they also say: "He acted as an executioner of the Jews (an individual deprived of any human feelings, he used to confiscate food from the inhabitants, smashed the quern, etc." (AP Przemysł, 891,

over-eager executor of German orders. Among others, he participated personally in shooting the captives. He saw it as a way to obtain a promotion and a possibility of transfer to service with the German *Gendarmerie*.

From 1 January 1941 the policemen from Markowa were supervised by a newly formed, 10 km distant, German police post at Łańcut. It was commanded by Lt. Eilert Dieken¹⁷, a German from the north-western regions of the Reich. In subsequent years, Dieken led a number of pacification actions in the area of Łańcut. He participated directly in murders of Jews and Poles.¹⁸ He was the main executor and organizer of the anti-Jewish operation 'Reinhardt'¹⁹ in the area. The main part of the operation in the Jarosław county took place in the summer and fall of 1942. Its objective was to gather all the Jews from the area into the camp at Pełkinie, and murder them in its vicinity. The Germans were going to take a group of those captured from Pełkinie to the death camp at Bełżec²⁰. From the beginning of August 1942 Jews were being deported from Łańcut and its neighboring villages, including Markowa. In the same month the Germans banned residence at Markowa for the Jews. The German *Gendarmerie*, who arrived every few days, ensured that the orders were executed

Teki Stanisława Kojdra, teczka 13, Wykazy policjantów granatowych w powiecie Przeworsk wraz z charakterystyką [first half of 1944], p. 14).

¹⁷ Eilert Dieken, born on 23 September 1898, died 23 September 1960. From 1 January 1941 to the summer of 1944 he commanded (at the rank of Lieutenant) of the German police post at Łańcut. He was responsible for the shooting of hundreds of Jews at Łańcut and surrounding villages. He led, among others, the execution of the Ulma family and the Jews they harbored. After the war he served in the German police at Esens, West Germany. He was never punished (author's own findings, including an interview with his daughter, Grete Wilbers).

¹⁸ Bundesarchiv, Ludwigsburg department, Files of the Prosecutor's Office at the Land Court in Dortmund, Justification for dismissal of the investigation o 45 Js 7/67 on crimes against Jews and Poles in the occupied Jarosław county, Dortmund, 15 July 1971. It also covered the activities of Eilert Dieken; the investigation into his case was discontinued due to Dieken's earlier death. Those who were not brought to justice in connection with the dismissal probably included the *gendarmes* who shot the Jews at Markowa on 14 December 1942.

¹⁹ *Aktion Reinhardt* was a codename for the German operation launched on 16 March 1942, intended for the extermination of Jews living in the *General Gouvernement*. For more information see *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka, Warsaw 2004.

²⁰ M. Szpytma, *Sprawiedliwi i ich świat. Markowa w fotografii Józefa Ulmy*, Warsaw-Cracow 2007, pp. 17–24; E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945*, Rzeszów 2014, pp. 309–312.

precisely. The *gendarmes* monitored the conduct of the 'navy blue' police, as well as the execution of the occupation forces' orders by the village headman and his subordinates, that is the area leaders, the guardsmen and the hostages.

At the same time, the Germans ordered local peasants to report with horse-carts, which were to provide a means of transport for the Jews. Although it was announced that the latter would depart to work, it should be assumed that most of the Jews already understood that it would be their road to death. Despite this, according to varying data, six or eight Jews from Markowa reported upon the German order to leave²¹.

Several dozen others, expecting repression for failure to carry out the orders, escaped from their homes into the fields and woods, or hid in buildings of various farmers. They tried to wait until the end of the uncertain time. There were those who managed to persuade some farmers to provide permanent assistance by harboring them in their houses, while others hid in barns or stables without permission from the owners. Still others hid in the fields, and only came to the village in the evenings, asking for food and overnight accommodation. One group stayed in the woods at Husów, while the family of Ryfka Tencer/Trinczer²² with the help of Józef Ulma²³ made a shelter for themselves in the ravines near a stream. At least one Jewish family, the Riesenbachs²⁴ was warned about the deportation by two 'navy blue' policemen from a local police post.

²¹ Audio and written account of Edward Szpytma: recording of 22 February 2010, written report: *Żydzi w Markowej*, Cracow, October 2014, typescript, in the author's collection. Some of the Jews left Markowa shortly after the beginning of the war, so their number was probably reduced to several dozen.

²² That is Rywka/Ryfka Tencer/Trinczer her two daughters and a granddaughter. More about them and a photo of the daughters and the granddaughter of Rywka in: P. Zychowicz, *Kropki krwi na starej fotografii*, "Rzeczpospolita", 11 February 2011. In this article it was reported that one of Rywka's daughters was named Fredzia. Perhaps it is this family that is covered by the data from the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, ran by Yad Vashem, where the murdered Jews associated with Markowa include Roza/Roiza Trinczer born 1890, Rywka Trinczer born 1907; Miriam Trinczer born 1924; Mania Trinczer born 1934 (<http://db.yadvashem.org/names/nameResults.html?lastName=trinczer&lastNameType=THESAURUS&place=Markowa&placeType=THESAURUS&language=en>, accessed December 2012).

²³ More about Józef Ulma and his family further down in the text.

²⁴ More about this family further down in the text.

Many peasants, however, were afraid to provide any help because they knew that this was punishable by death. On occasion, German *gendarmes* with 'navy blue' policemen conducted ad hoc searches in one or several houses. It also happened that a hiding Jew, unable to find a suitable hiding place before the onset of bitter cold weather, gave up and reported to the police post himself. At least one hiding woman died of exhaustion. It is difficult to say how many Markowa Jews were murdered in 1942 between the beginning of August and 13 December. Some of them were shot by the policeman mentioned above, *Volksdeutsch* Kindler. When he was promoted to a *gendarme* and given another post, the murders were carried out by German *gendarmes*, arriving from Łańcut on each occasion. Considering the number of bodies exhumed after the war and the fact that executions of Jews at Markowa had already taken place before the deportation action, less than twenty Jews may have been killed during that period²⁵.

The Germans were aware that despite the earlier orders many Jews were hiding at Markowa, as well as in other villages in the area and in the nearby fields and woods. In early December 1942 they organized a search for the hiding Jews at Husów nearby. Immediately afterwards, similar activities were organized at Markowa. The village headman Andrzej Kud²⁶ was ordered by the Germans to conduct a search for the hiding Jews on Sunday, 13 December. He could not refuse executing the order but, importantly, before noon on that day he publicly informed the inhabitants about this order as part of

²⁵ Probably even before August 1942, seven Jews were murdered, among others. For the exhumation of their bodies from the garden of Bienio Miller (the true name was probably Benjamin Müller) see T. Markiel, A. Skibińska, „*Jakie to ma znaczenie, czy zrobili to z chciwości?*”. *Zagłada domu Tryncherów*, Warsaw 2011, p. 185. The fact that the execution took place before the order to move to Pełkinie was stated by Edward Szytma (Audio and written account of Edward Szytma: recording of 22 February 2010, written report: *Żydzi w Markowej*, Cracow, October 2014, typescript, in the author's collection). The people shot on the so-called trench included at least one Jew from outside Markowa, Chaim Lempel from Sietesz (AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD, *Akta sprawy karnej dot. Augustyna Wiglusza i innych* [hereinafter: AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD], *Protokół przesłuchania Kreindli Frieder*, Szczecin, 11 July 1948, p. 41; *Ibid*, *Zeznania Jakuba Einhorna przed Sądem Apelacyjnym*, Rzeszów, 21 April 1950, p. 338).

²⁶ Andrzej Kud, son of Jan, born 4 July 1891 at Markowa, was the village headman at Markowa at least from 1939 to 1943 (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

the announcements that he made to the inhabitants in front of the church every Sunday.²⁷ This way of warning about the search enabled the farmers who were harboring Jews to take extra care and to better camouflage the hideouts. It is known that immediately upon returning from the church the family of Józef and Julia Bar²⁸, who were harboring the Riesenbachs, did just that, while Franciszek Bar²⁹ prepared a new hiding place for Jakub Einhorn³⁰.

²⁷ J. Riesenbach, *The Story of the Survival of the Riesenbach family* (<http://www.riesenbach.com/riesenbachsto-ry.html>, accessed December 2012). Riesenbach reports that the information about the search was announced by the priest in the church. In fact, this was done by Andrzej Kud from the place where the announcements were made, and which was located next to the church.

²⁸ Józef Bar, son of Walenty, born 24 January 1898 at Markowa; Julia Bar, daughter of Kazimierz, born 1 January 1902 at Markowa (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

²⁹ Franciszek Bar, son of Katarzyna, born 30 November 1919 (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Akta Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie dot. Andrzeja Rewera* [hereinafter: AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD], *Protokół przesłuchania Franciszka Bara*, Markowa, 2 June 1950, p. 19; *Ibid*, *Protokół rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Markowa, 21 April 1952, pp. 176–177).

³⁰ Jakub Einhorn (known at Markowa as Jankiel Wrona), son of Samuel, born 17 November 1907 at Markowa (according to other data at Sietesz), he lived at Markowa until 1938, then he married at Husów, where he lived with his wife Klara/Keira and daughter Sabina. After they were murdered by the Germans, he hid at Husów, Markowa and Sietesz. After the war he settled in Szczecin, where he worked with the *Państwowa Komunikacja Samochodowa* (PKS; National Automotive Transport). He was married twice more (his photograph was published in: M. Szpytma, *The Risk of Survival. The rescue of the Jews by the Poles and the tragic consequences for the Ulma family from Markowa*, Warsaw–Cracow 2009, p. 68) (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania J[akuba] Einhorna*, Rzeszów, 16 December 1950, p. 15; AIPN Rz, 358/142/DVD, *Akta Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie dotyczące Bonifacego Sloty* [hereinafter: AIPN Rz, 358/142/DVD], *Protokół przesłuchania Jakuba Einhorna*, Szczecin, 14 November 1952, p. 116; *Ibid*, *Akt oskarżenia Bonifacego Sloty*, Łańcut, 22 November 1952, p. 138; AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Jakuba Einhorna*, Przemysł, 11 August 1949, p. 97; AIPN, 2912/1, 1479, *Karta z kartoteki odtworzeniowej Biura „C” MSW dot. Jakuba Einhorna*, dated 10 June 1974). The following note was found in the documentation related to Einhorn: “The above named was suspected of collaboration with the occupying forces and of illicit trafficking of various articles in the Przeworsk county area. Records show that after the liberation, during several criminal trials taking place in Rzeszów, the above named was a witness who wrongly charged people, causing them to be arrested for alleged participation in capturing Jews during the German occupation. On the basis of court hearings it was found that the above named testified untruthfully, and as a result those arrested were released from custody. During 1951–1955 he was investigated by Dept. II of the *Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego* (WUBP; Province Authority of Public Security, the political police) in Szczecin as a member of the *Zarząd*

When executing the German order, the village headman involved the firefighters, guardsmen and area leaders in the search. The latter ones were to name the people in their areas who would participate in the action. When interrogated after the war, the witnesses most frequently reported that firefighters were involved in these activities (it was reported similarly in later accounts, collected in 2003), but also guards, hostages, area leaders and sometimes civilians were also mentioned. The latter would certainly include the above-mentioned hostages and area leaders. It is difficult to ascertain how many people participated in this operation, but probably there were at least 26³¹. Considering what happened a few days earlier at Husów, the searchers understood that any people found would be murdered by the Germans.

There is no certainty that ‘navy blue’ policemen were involved in the search as such. Their participation was only pointed out during subsequent stages of postwar criminal proceedings concerning persons involved in the search for Jews³². Andrzej Rewer³³, one of those tried after the war, testified, as did some witnesses, that a Gestapo officer named Fryszko³⁴ was at Markowa during the search for Jews on 13 December. Regardless of whether this information is true, there is no doubt that the search for hidden Jews took place on the orders of the Germans. And it was the latter that shot the captives. The exact number of Jews found that day could not be determined.

Kongregacji Wyznaniowej (Religious Congregation Board) for the City of Szczecin” (AIPN, 2912/1, 1479, *Karta z kartoteki odtworzeniowej Biura „C” MSW dot. Jakuba Einhorna*, dated 10 June 1974). The first statement in this note probably echoes the testimonies of Husów residents who claimed that before 1942 Einhorn informed the Germans about persons who illegally slaughtered livestock, but he denied these accusations (AIPN Rz, 358/142/DVD, *Zeznania Pawła Kota przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Rzeszów, 14 March 1953, p. 337; *Ibid*, *Zeznania Jakuba Einhorna przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Łańcut, 22 June 1954, p. 547). About Einhorn see also T. Markiel, A. Skibińska, „*Jakie to ma znaczenie, czy zrobili to z chciwości?*”... p. 246.

³¹ The group involved in the search was described as the largest by Franciszek Bar who stated: “Nearly from every apartment somebody had to joint this raid” (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania F. Bara*, Markowa, 2 June 1950, p. 19). However, this statement is not confirmed in other sources.

³² Edward Szpytma, in turn, says in his audio account that, apart from the firefighters and 2–3 other residents of Markowa, ‘navy blue’ policemen from Markowa and Jarosław took part in that search (Recording of 22 February 2010, in the author’s collection).

³³ For more information about him see further down in the text.

³⁴ No details could be found, probably the name was distorted.

Various documents include the numbers of 25, 20, 17 or the term *kilkunastu* (a dozen or so). Probably the number of “about 17” given by Jakub Einhorn is closest to the truth. One could say that the number included his siblings: three brothers Markieł, Abraham, Nuchym³⁵ and two sisters³⁶; Rywka/Ryfka Tencer/Trinczer with two daughters and a granddaughter; Zelik/Zelig/Zeilig with his wife and two children³⁷; the Najderg/Neüberg family³⁸ and a person hiding with false documents of ‘Stanisław Ciołkosz’³⁹. The ‘navy blue’ policemen incarcerated the Jews in the so-called communal jail, located at the main road intersection in the village. They were held there all the night of 13 December. The next morning German *gendarmes* arrived at Markowa. They took all those prisoners out of the building and shot them in the former trench (turned into a burial ground for animals), used during the war as an execution place.

There are no reports that any such searches were organized at a later date.⁴⁰ From the point of view of the Germans these would have been justified, since even after December 1942 many farmers at Markowa continued to harbor Jews against the German ban. Michał and Maria Bar, who lived with their children Stefania, Janina, Weronika, Antonina and Antoni, har-

³⁵ Martek/Markieł Einhorn, no details could be found; Abraham Einhorn, son of Samuel, born 11 May 1909 at Markowa (AP Przemysł, *Akta gminy Markowa, 116, Wnioski o wystawienie karty rozpoznawczej dla mieszkańców gromady Markowa, 1942–1944* [hereinafter: AP Przemysł, *Wnioski o wystawienie karty rozpoznawczej*], *Wniosek Abrahama Einhorna*, Markowa, 30 April 1942, pp. 57–58); Nuchym Einhorn, son of Samuel, born 12 September 1913 at Markowa (*Ibid*, *Wniosek Nuchyma Einhorna*, Markowa, 30 April 1942, pp. 33–34).

³⁶ It is possible that three sisters (Libka, Gołda, Freuda/Fredzia) and two brothers of Jakub Einhorn were caught. The names of the sisters are based on a conversation with their neighbor (Note from an interview with Weronika Bar, Markowa, 10 November 2003, in the author’s collection).

³⁷ No details could be found. Perhaps two persons from the family: Sora or Layka and Mania Zeilig, were pictured in the photo published at <http://www.riesenbach.com/riesenbach-story.html> (accessed December 2012) as an illustration of the account in: J. Riesenbach, *The story...*

³⁸ No details of this family could be found.

³⁹ No details of this person could be found.

⁴⁰ Joseph Riesenbach points out that on 1 April 1944 the farm where he was hiding was approached by several people with dogs, but they did not enter due to the absence of the hosts. It is difficult to say whether this was related to the harboring of Jews in that house or Markowa in general (J. Riesenbach, *The story...*).

bored Chaim and Ruzia Lorbenfeld and their baby Pesia⁴¹. Julia and Józef Bar, who lived with their daughter Janina, harbored the Riesenbach family: Jakub and Ita with their son Josek and daughters Gienia and Mania⁴². The house of Antoni and Dorota Szylar, who lived with their children Zofia, Helena, Eugeniusz, Franciszek and Janina, was the hiding place for six members of the Weltz family from January 1943: Miriam with her children Moniek, Abraham, Reška, Aron and the latter's wife Shirley, and after a few months they were joined by Leon, the son of Aron and Shirley who was several years old⁴³. The home of Michał and Katarzyna Cwynar, who were raising

⁴¹ Michał Bar, son of Walenty, born 5 September 1881; Maria Bar, daughter of Antoni, born 27 August 1887; Stefania Bar, born 15 September 1922 at Markowa (a photo of Michał, Maria and Stefania in: M. Szyptma, *The Risk...*, p. 67); Janina Bar, born 20 August 1924 at Markowa; Weronika Bar, born 16 April 1927 at Markowa; Antonina Bar, born 16 February 1930 at Markowa; Antoni Bar, born 11 February 1933 at Markowa; Chaim Lorbenfeld, son of Wolf, born in 1899; Ruzia Lorbenfeld, daughter of Samson, born in 1899; Pesia Lorbenfeld, born in 1936. (Note from an interview with Weronika Bar, Markowa, 10 November 2003, in the author's collection; Note from an interview with Antoni Kuźniar, Markowa, 9 November 2003, in the author's collection; Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records. After the war, the Lorbenfeld family reported to the Jewish Committee that they had survived at Markowa, I wish to thank Elżbieta Rączy for providing me with a copy of this list, found in the archives of the *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* (ŻIH; Jewish Historical Institute)).

⁴² Janina Bar, born 23 February 1924 at Markowa; Jacob/Jakub Riesenbach, son of Izaak, born 1 June 1903; Ita Riesenbach, daughter of Dawid, born 7 September 1907; Joseph/Josek Riesenbach, born 8 June 1929 at Markowa; Jenni/Gienia Riesenbach, born 8 November 1931; Marion/Mania Riesenbach, born 27 February 1932 (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records; J. Riesenbach, *The story...; Księga sprawiedliwych wśród narodów świata: ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu: Polska 1, Polska 2*, ed. I. Gutman, Cracow 2009, p. 21). After the war, the Riesenbach family (who quoted the name Fedmaus used many years earlier) reported to the Jewish Committee that they had survived at Markowa (I wish to thank Elżbieta Rączy for providing me with a copy of this list, found in the archives of the ŻIH). It is worth mentioning that for the first few months Gienia and Mania were harbored by the Kielar family and only later they joined their parents and brother (J. Matusz, *Kto ratuje jedno życie*, "Rzeczpospolita" 24 March 2004).

⁴³ Antoni Szylar, son of Wojciech, born 11 November 1894 at Markowa; Dorota Szylar, daughter of Paweł, born 21 January 1902 at Markowa; Zofia Szylar, born 21 March 1923 at Markowa; Helena Szylar, born 16 October 1927 at Markowa; Eugeniusz Szylar, born 12 January 1932 at Markowa; Franciszek Szylar, born 16 June 1935 at Markowa; Janina Szylar, born 27 May 1940 at Markowa; Miriam Weltz, born in 1887; Moniek Weltz, born in 1907; Aron Weltz, born in 1911; Shirley Weltz, born in 1910; Abraham Weltz, born in 1916; Reška Weltz, born in 1920; Leon Weltz, born in 1939 (Verbal account of Helena Kielar, Janina Kluz, Anna Olszak, Markowa, 24 March 2004; *Księga sprawiedliwych...*,

their grandson Jan⁴⁴, was the shelter were a Jew who, used the first name of Władysław⁴⁵, has survived. This may have been Mozes Reich⁴⁶, who testified after the war that he was hiding at Markowa. Jakub Einhorn was originally hiding alternately at Husów, Sietesz and Markowa. In the latter village he had several hiding places. First, he used the hospitality of Michał and Wiktoria Drewniak, who lived with their children Antoni and Józef, and of Katarzyna Bar, her son Franciszek Bar and daughter Stefania Bar (the latter was raising her daughter Helena at the time). After the death of Michał Drewniak in 1943, Einhorn found a new hideout with Jan and Weronika Przybylak, who were raising their children Bronisław and Zofia⁴⁷. According to a postwar account of Eugenia Einhorn, Einhorn's widow, a Jewish family of three, who were his friends, was also hiding with the Przybylak family⁴⁸. From the sum-

pp. 730–731; a photo of Helena Kielar with Aron Weltz and his daughter Sarah and the deed of donation of land for Antoni Szylar [in:] M. Szyptma, *The Risk...*, p. 114; Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

⁴⁴ Michał Cwynar, son of Paweł, born 7 July 1879 at Markowa; Katarzyna Cwynar, daughter of Antoni, born 16 February 1888 at Markowa; Jan Cwynar, son of Antoni, born 15 May 1931 at Markowa (audio account of Jan Cwynar, in the author's collection; AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *akta Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku, Sm 295/53/P przeciwko Franciszkowi Hawro* [hereinafter: 383/14/DVD], *Protokół przesłuchania Mozesa Reicha*, Rzeszów, 8 July 1952, p. 4).

⁴⁵ No details of this person could be found.

⁴⁶ Mozes Reich, son of Dawid, born 15 September 1930 at Trzeboś (AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Mozesa Reicha*, Rzeszów, 8 July 1952, p. 4).

⁴⁷ Michał Drewniak, son of Kasper, born 9 September 1903, died 14 November 1943; Wiktoria Drewniak, daughter of Wojciech, born 24 November 1915 at Markowa; Antoni Drewniak, born 28 July 1939 at Markowa; Józef Drewniak, born 5 January 1941 at Markowa; Katarzyna Bar, daughter of Józef, born 23 October 1891 at Markowa; Stefania Bar, daughter of Katarzyna, born 1 December 1915; Helena Katarzyna Bar, born 2 January 1942 at Markowa; Jan Przybylak, son of Szymon, born 20 July 1911 at Markowa [his photo in: M. Szyptma, *The Risk...*, p. 68]; Weronika Przybylak, daughter of Jan, born 10 June 1913 at Markowa; Bronisław Przybylak, born 22 February 1939 at Markowa; Zofia Przybylak, born 14 February 1942 at Markowa (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records; AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Rzeszów, 26 March 1952, pp. 105–108; *Ibid*, *Protokół rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Markowa, 21 April 1952, pp. 175–177; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania Jana Przybylaka*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, p. 25; AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Jakuba Einhorna*, Przemyśl, 11 August 1949, p. 97).

⁴⁸ Eugenia Einhorn, daughter of Mojżesz, born 22 June 1922 in Kiev (Archiwum ŻIH, *Oświadczenie Eugenii Einhorn*, Szczecin, 1 July 1993. A copy of this document is displayed in the exhibition of the IPN branch office in Rzeszów, Righteous Among the Nations.

mer of 1943 Abraham Segal lived and worked on the farm of Jan and Helena Cwynar, who lived with their daughters Maria and Czesława. He used the name of Roman Kaliszewski. The account suggests that the employers continued to harbor him once they realized his Jewish origin after some time. It was even more dangerous because at that time Cwynar was a member of the leadership of the underground resistance peasants' movement in the Przeworsk county, and one of the intercepted denunciations said that "he is a subversive and a peasant ringleader"⁴⁹.

The largest group of Jews was harbored by Józef and Wiktoria Ulma, who were raising their children Stanisława, Barbara, Władysław, Franciszek, Antoni and Maria⁵⁰. They gave shelter in their house to Saul Goldman with four sons (known at Łańcut under the name of Szallami)⁵¹ and two daughters and a granddaughter of Chaim Goldman from Markowa, probably Lea

Poles' Assistance for the Jewish people in Małopolska during 1939–1945, first shown in Cracow on 27 January 2008) According to Weronika Przybylak, the names of the harbored Jewish family were: married couple Szmul and Sianga, and their daughter Pesa (*Polacy Ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie*, prep. by E. Rączy, I. Witowicz, Rzeszów 2011, p. 14).

⁴⁹ Jan Cwynar, son of Antoni, born 25 April 1891 at Markowa, an activist of the peasant movement, during the war a member of the County Trio of the *Ruch Oporu Chłopskiego* (ROCh; Peasants' Resistance Movement); Helena Cwynar, daughter of Wojciech, born 20 September 1910 at Markowa; Maria Cwynar, born 10 June 1932 at Markowa; Czesława Cwynar, born 3 May 1934 at Markowa; Abraham Izaak Segal, son of Ozjasz, born 14 May 1930 at Łańcut (E. Augustyn, *Romek, czyli Abraham*, www.forum-znak.org.pl, accessed December 2012; J. Matusz, *Parciane portki Michała*, "Rzeczpospolita", 2–3 April 2005; Letter of A. Segal to the Cwynar family [in:] E. Rączy, *Pomoc...*, p. 255; A. Fitowa, J. Marcinkowski, *Ruch ludowy w Małopolsce i na Śląsku 1939–1945*, Warsaw 1987, pp. 643–644; A. Balawejder, *Jan Cwynar (1891–1968)* [in:] *Z dziejów wsi Markowa*, ed. J. Półciwiatek, Rzeszów 1993, pp. 443–445; Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

⁵⁰ Józef Ulma, son of Marcin, born 2 March 1900 at Markowa; Wiktoria Ulma, daughter of Jan, born 10 December 1912 at Markowa; the Ulma children: Stanisława, born 18 July 1936 at Markowa; Barbara, born 6 October 1937 at Markowa; Władysław, born 5 December 1938 at Markowa; Franciszek, born 3 April 1940 at Markowa; Antoni, born 6 June 1941 at Markowa; Maria, born 16 September 1942 at Markowa (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records). Wiktoria Ulma neé Niemczak was the sister of my father's mother.

⁵¹ No details could be found regarding the Goldmans from Łańcut. Photos of Saul and his sons in: M. Szpytma, *The Risk...*, pp. 40, 94–95; Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records. The real name of the Jews from Łańcut who were harbored by the Ulmas was identified by Stanisław Niemczak in 2013. At the monument in Markowa, all the names of the Jews are in the form that had been in common use.

(also called Layka) Didner with a daughter of unknown name, and Gienia (also called Gołda) Grünfeld⁵². All these harbored people, and the whole family who gave them shelter, including Wiktoria who was pregnant at the time, were murdered by the German *gendarmarie* on 24 March 1944⁵³.

Despite such dramatic manifestations of German cruelty, the remaining 21 Jews mentioned above could continue to rely on the support of the inhabitants of Markowa. They survived until the end of the German occupation, which ended in this village on 27 July 1944.

In their postwar court testimonies, the Jews who survived spoke of the varied attitudes of the inhabitants of Markowa. Although there were those among the farmers who secretly and illegally helped them, the few thousand residents of the village also included people zealously engaged in the execution of the German orders.

The activities of the latter have been the subject of several criminal proceedings in the postwar period.

⁵² Chaim Goldman had at least four daughters who were still alive in the spring of 1942. They were: Lea Didner, born 1 July 1907 (AP Przemyśl, *Wnioski o wystawienie karty rozpoznawczej, Wniosek Lai Didner*, Markowa, 30 April 1942, pp. 15–16); Gienia Grünfeld, born 24 January 1913 (*Ibid, Wniosek Gieni Grünfeld*, Markowa, [30 April 1942], pp. 21–22); Hana Goldman, born 9 March 1916 (*Ibid, Wniosek Hany Goldman*, Markowa, 30 April 1942, pp. 25–26); Matylda Goldman, born 5 April 1918 (*Ibid, Wniosek Matyldy Goldman*, Markowa, 30 April 1942, pp. 17–18). An interview with Helena Szpytma, the closest neighbor of the Goldmans, suggests that those harbored with the Ulma certainly included Gienia (Note from an interview with Helena Szpytma, Markowa, 10 November 2003, in the author's collection). For information about Gołda Goldman see AIPN Rz, 107/1608, *Akta Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie dotyczące Józefa Kokota, Protokół przesłuchania Franciszka Szylara*, Rzeszów, 1 March 1958, p. 191. The data provided by Alina Skibińska indicate that six women's and two men's bodies were found during the exhumation in the garden of Józef Ulma (T. Markiel, A. Skibińska, „*Jakie to ma znaczenie, czy zrobili to z chciwości?*”..., p. 185). If this last finding was not due to an error of the persons who completed the exhumation report, it might indicate that the Ulmas harbored Chaim's wife (her name is not known), four daughters and a granddaughter, and Saul Goldman and one of his sons. This, however, would contradict many other sources; the Ulmas were supported in the harboring of the Jews by Antoni Szpytma, son of Jan, born 4 October 1902 at Markowa, known as 'Pisarz' ('Writer'), who was the closest friend of Józef Ulma (Note from an interview with Stanisława Kuźniar, Markowa, 27 July 2003; Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

⁵³ For more information about the Ulma family and the Jews they harbored see, among others: M. Szpytma, *Sprawiedliwi i ich świat...; Księga sprawiedliwych...*, p. 777.

Source research

For several decades the topic of the annihilation of the Jewish community at Markowa in 1942, including the search for Jews, remained unresearched. The number of Jews murdered at Markowa and the dates of their executions were mentioned in the *Register of places and facts of the crimes committed by the Nazi German occupant of Poland during 1939–1945. Rzeszów Province*⁵⁴ The monograph of Markowa published in 1993 summed the subject up in one sentence, stating that the Germans shot 30 Jews from Markowa and its surrounding areas at the animal burial ground. The problem of the search for Jews who were hiding following the main wave of extermination was mentioned only marginally in the context of neighboring villages: “The Jewish population also found refuge [apart from peasants’ houses] in woods and groves somewhat distant from the buildings. And those, too, used various forms of assistance from the local population. At the village of Gać a family of four was hiding for a year in a dugout at in Ziębowe Wały in the so-called Wielki Dół. At Chodakówka, 11 Jews lived in identical conditions. Despite the precautions taken, the *gendarmierie* discovered them in July 1941 [this should probably read 1943] and shot them on the spot”⁵⁵.

In 2003, in connection with the construction of the Ulma family memorial, I decided to examine in detail the history of the assistance given to the Jews by that family. At that time I encountered not only other cases of hiding Jews in Markowa, but also other elements of the Markowa Jews’ history

⁵⁴ *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945. Województwo rzeszowskie*, Warsaw 1984, pp. 114–115. This book says that at Markowa the German *gendarmierie* shot 67 Jews in 1942: 10 on 28 September, 14 on 7 October, 18 on 18 October, 25 in the fall, and 2 Jewish families, name Szal and Goldman, harbored by the Ulmas. According to the book „*Jakie to ma znaczenie, czy zrobili to z chciwości?*”... by Markiel and Skibińska the number of 67 Jewish victims is overstated. Skibińska says in pp. 185–186 that, according to the exhumation reports, bodies of 48 Jews were found in 1947 at Markowa: 8 at the house of the Ulmas, 7 in the garden of Bienio Miller and 33 at the dead animal burial ground, which was used by the Germans to murder Jews during the war. The exhumed remains were deposited in the cemetery at Jagiełła-Niechciałki (documents related to this burial held at the Community Authority at Tryńcza suggest that 49 bodies were found at Markowa; Skibińska has stated mistakenly that 33 were found in the dead animal burial ground, while in fact there were 34).

⁵⁵ S. Dobosz, *W walce z okupantem hitlerowskim* [in:] *Z dziejów wsi...*, p. 95.

during the war. In the first scientific study on this subject, which I published in 2005, I wrote that in July 1942 the Germans ordered the Jews to report in Łańcut, from where they would be transported to a labor camp located in the village of Pełkinie, but most of them remained where they were. The same year the German occupants have exterminated them at Markowa. I have determined that murders of Jews took place in the summer and fall of that year, which involved the German *gendarmérie* and possibly other formations as well. Many of the Jews, including one family forewarned by the 'navy blue' policemen, hid in the fields shortly before the first search operation. They were searched, arrested in the so-called communal jail, and then shot by the Germans on the outskirts of the village. When, after a few months, the German occupants realized that they had not killed all the local Jews, in November 1942 they issued orders to the *Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna* (OSP; Voluntary Fire Brigade) to search all houses, farm buildings and hideouts in the fields, and to find and deliver any Jews who were still alive. I have also stated that the firefighters carried out these orders in groups of several people each. However, I noted that the effects of these searches were not known. The question, of how many Jews were found, remained open⁵⁶. That description and other ones included in subsequent publications were based primarily on the accounts, not always precise, collected in 2003 from persons who had lived at Markowa during the war⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ M. Szpytma, *Stracili życie – uratowali świat. Rozstrzelanie 24 marca 1944 r. Józefa i Wiktorii Ulmów i ich dzieci za ukrywanie Żydów* [in:] *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich. Polityka – gospodarka – kultura – społeczeństwo*, eds. J. Wijaczka, G. Miernik, Cracow 2005, pp. 215–218. This period was presented similarly in the books: M. Szpytma, *The Risk...*, pp. 56–57; *idem*, *Sprawiedliwi i ich świat...*, p. 23.

⁵⁷ Inaccurate or misleading details are also found in some Jewish accounts. In one of them, Yehuda Erlich who was hiding at Sietesz wrote that on the day after the crime against the Ulma family “bodies of 24 Jews murdered by Polish peasants were found in the fields”. No sources other than this account mention Jewish bodies found in the fields, but at the orders of the Germans some inhabitants of Sietesz captured about a dozen in a manhunt during 1942. In my opinion, the manhunt or the search for Jews at Markowa in December 1942 and the murder of Ulmas in 1944 have blended into one in his memory (especially so as he had heard about these, but had not witnessed them). Jan Grabowski differs in his opinion about this (J. Grabowski, *Prawda leży w mogiłach*, “Więź” 2011, nr 8/9, p. 104. See also the polemic with this text: M. Szpytma, *Sprawiedliwi i inni*, “Więź” 2011, nr 10, pp. 100–10_1. I have recently found another account, of Mosze Weltsch, held at the Yad

As these publications began to reach a broad audience and the story of the Ulma family became well known, I began to receive signals from the inhabitants of Markowa that a few years after the end of the war criminal proceedings were held, related to the liquidation action against the Jews in 1942, and that Markowa residents were also tried in these proceedings. In connection with this, I decided to resume the earlier archival research of 2003. I have acquainted myself again with the documentation gathered in the archives of the branch office of *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (IPN; Institute of National Remembrance) in Rzeszów, the *Archiwum Państwowe* (AP; National Archives) in Rzeszów and Przemyśl, and (randomly, because the huge collection had not been sorted in order at the time) at the *Biuro Udostępniania i Archiwizacji Dokumentów IPN* (BUiAD IPN; IPN Office of Presentation and Archiving of Documents) in the collection of the former *Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* (GKBZHWp; Chief Commission for the Study of Nazi Crimes in Poland). Once again the research failed to give the results I had expected; I have only found a few entries, unclear for me at the time, in various prosecutors' and court repertoires. On 22 October 2010, at the scientific conference: Irena Sendler. Humanism of the heart, pt. 2: The Remembrance of the Righteous and the Holocaust, organized by Warsaw University, the European Centre for Penological Studies and the Celestynów Cultural Society, I said that records unknown to researchers may still exist, but have not been accessed yet, and I have repeated that a year later in 'Więź' magazine. In the latter publication I wrote: "[At Markowa] German *gendarmes* and the 'navy blue' police took part in the anti-Jewish operations in the second half of 1942. Were other people involved, in addition to the firefighters (whose participation in the November search has been confirmed)? I cannot answer this question. Criminal proceedings on the crime against the Jewish inhabitants of Markowa were

Vashem archives in the M.I.E collection of accounts, reference number 1369. Weltsch stated that he had heard that the Poles had murdered 18 Jews at Markowa. The number was not clear, he may have quoted the number as 28. It is certainly echoing the participation of some residents in the search for Jews in 1942. Weltsch reports that the action he described was led by Antoni Cyran. The low credibility of the information is also suggested by the fact that it also includes a passage about a mass grave at Markowa, which holds "bodies of up to 200 Jews from all over the area, who were shot by Poles throughout the time". In fact, as mentioned above, the bodies of 34 Jews shot by the Germans were placed there.

probably held after the war. Files of this case could explain a lot. Therefore, many years ago I have looked for documentation on the subject in the archives in Przemyśl and Rzeszów. I have found files related to crimes against Jews in other nearby towns, I failed to come across those related to Markowa. Perhaps there were no such proceedings, after all, or their files have not survived. It is also possible that they are in the huge collection of files collected in Warsaw by the former GKBZHwP. Due to the enormous amount of material in this collection, it has not yet been subjected to a full scale research even by those persons, connected to the Center for the Study of the Holocaust of Jews, who have been working on it for many years⁵⁸. In 2011 the Association connected with the latter center has published the work of Tadeusz Markiel and Alina Skibińska on the participation of the inhabitants of Gniewczyna Łańcucka in crimes against the Jews. That publication has also included references to court trial material related to Husów, which is near Markowa⁵⁹.

After a break resulting from the transfer of the records of the so-called ‘sierpniówki’ (‘August cases’), that is the proceedings against those charged on the basis of the decree of the *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego* (Polish National Liberation Committee) of 31 August 1944 on “the sentences for the Fascist-Hitler’s criminals” from the BUiAD IPN to the IPN branch offices, I was able to proceed with further research. As a result, I managed to find the files of court proceedings against four Markowa residents and of the prosecutor’s investigation against another one, all taking part in the German-ordered search for Jews in 1942 and delivering them to the provisional jail in a communal building. Based on these documents, it can be stated that 22 other people related to Markowa were also initially suspected, but for 20 of them prosecution was quickly denied or proceedings were dismissed, probably due to lack of evidence, while the cases of two others continued for a longer time but were dismissed also⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ Conference material from that session has not been published yet (M. Szpytma, *Kilka uwag dotyczących badania i upamiętniania Polaków Ratujących Żydów oraz problemów związanych z tą działalnością* [in:] *Humanizm serca. Pamięć o Zagładzie i Sprawiedliwych* [in print]; *idem*, *Markowa po „Złoty Żniwach”*, “Więź” 2011, nr 7, pp. 71–72).

⁵⁹ T. Markiel, A. Skibińska, „Jakie to ma znaczenie, czy zrobili to z chciwości?”..., pp. 246–249.

⁶⁰ I have ordered them in May and June 2013, and received them in succession from July 2013 to February 2014. They enabled me to access further archive material, including many repertoires and files of the Supreme Court.

Postwar criminal proceedings regarding complicity of residents in German crimes

1. Case with subsequent reference numbers: 1525-S/49 and 2441-S/49; III S 59/49/A, Sz 12/49, III S 36/50/A, I K 57/50

The first known proceedings regarding the crime against Jewish people committed at Markowa in 1942 were conducted in 1949 by the *Referat Śledczy* (Investigative Section) of the *Komenda Powiatowa* (County Command) of the *Milicja Obywatelska* (MO; Citizens' Militia – the criminal police) at Przeworsk, reference numbers 1525-S/49 and 2441-S/49. These were collateral cases of the same *Komenda* investigation, ref. no. 1183-S/49, related to the crimes against the Jewish population at Sietesz near Markowa. The part related to Markowa included the name of Andrzej Rewer, who lived at Sietesz after the war, suspected of “catching the people of Jewish nationality in the community of Markowa and handing them over into the hands of the occupant”⁶¹. Rewer came from Markowa, but upon

⁶¹ The files of the cases concerning Sietesz and Markowa were handed over in August and December 1949 for further action to the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów and registered there originally with reference number III S 59/49/A. This unit then transferred these on 3 September and 1 December 1949 to the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Przemyśl, which on 17 December 1949 excluded the part related to Markowa from Sz 12/49 and handed it back to the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, where it was registered with ref. number III S 36/50/A. In February 1950 the files of this investigation were submitted to the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, where they were given the ref. no. of IK 57/50 (AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Akta Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie dot. Andrzeja Rewera* [hereinafter: AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD], *Pismo Komendy Powiatowej MO w Przeworsku do Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie*, Przeworsk, 29 August 1949, p. 3; *Ibid*, *Pismo Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie do Prokuratora Sądu Okręgowego w Przemyślu*, Rzeszów, 3 September 1949, p. 24; *Ibid*, *Pismo Komendy Powiatowej MO w Przeworsku do Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie*, Przeworsk, 1 December 1949, p. 27; AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD, *Pismo Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie do Prokuratury Sądu Okręgowego w Przemyślu*, [Rzeszów], 9 December 1949, p. 154; *Ibid*, *Postanowienie Prokuratury Sądu Okręgowego w Przemyślu o wyłączeniu do odrębnego postępowania sprawy przeciwko Janowi Gałuszce, Andrzejowi Rewerowi i Franciszkowi Homie*, [Przemyśl], 17 December 1949 r, p. 175). Under the excluded proceedings, registered with ref. no. III S 36/50/A, it was found that Franciszek Homa had died, while Jan Gałuszka was hiding. The author failed to find out whether Gałuszka was suspected of any crime other than those committed at Sietesz, or what was his further fate or the of any proceedings against him.

graduating from elementary school he moved to Sułkowice to study at an industrial school for three years. Then he worked as a fitter at the Łańcut power plant, and after his military service at Jarosław he was employed, also as a fitter, at the Zakłady Zieleniewskiego factory in Cracow. In 1928 he left for France, where he was employed consecutively at Citroen and Renault car factories. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War he and ten of his colleagues went to that country and fought for more than two years in the ranks of the 13th International Brigade 'Jarosław Dąbrowski'. After leaving Spain he briefly stayed in Paris, and then he returned to Poland in the summer of 1939. Until the outbreak of the war he worked at Sarzyna in a factory of the Central Industrial District. During the war he lived at Markowa. In 1942 he commanded the communal guard and was a hostage, and from 1944 he was a soldier of the *Bataliony Chłopskie*⁶². In 1945 he married a girl from Sietesz and settled there, working from then on in the Rural Construction Co-operative at Sośnica near Radymno, and since 1950 in Cracow-Nowa Huta⁶³.

It is difficult to say whose direct report or testimony resulted in charges against Rewer. Chronologically, the first document in the file of the case is the report of his interrogation on 23 March 1949, already as a suspect. Its contents show that Rewer was suspected at the time of "catching Jews at Markowa", as it was formulated. During the interrogation he did not admit guilt of the charge, but said that, being a guardsman, at the order of a 'navy blue' policeman named Kuśnierz⁶⁴, along with two other guardsmen, he was forced to assist him in the search for Jews apparently hiding at the yard

⁶² *Bataliony Chłopskie* (BCh; Peasants' Battalions) – an armed underground resistance organization of the peasant movement (translator's note).

⁶³ Andrzej Rewer, son of Franciszka, born 16 October 1905 at Markowa, was single during the war (AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Andrzeja Rewera*, Gryfino, 23 July 1949; AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, [Rzeszów], 26 March 1952, p. 103).

⁶⁴ Michał Kuśnierz, born 13 September 1900 at Wólka Małkowa, served in 1942 at Markowa at the rank of *starszy posterunkowy* of the 'navy blue' police. Rewer stated that he was the deputy commandant of the police post at Markowa, and that he was shot by 'illegal organizations' before the end of the war (AP Przemyśl, *Wnioski o wystawienie karty rozpoznawczej. Wniosek Michała Kuśnierza*, Markowa, 29 April 1942, pp. 647–648; AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Rewera*, Przeworsk, 23 March 1949, p. 5).

of Michał Bar⁶⁵. Rewer also added that there was no indication of the Jews being there at the time⁶⁶.

He was probably aware, however, what threat the undergoing investigation could be for him, as he left his place of residence in June 1949 and hid with his sisters, in turn in the Inowrocław and Gryfino counties. However, he was arrested there in July of that year. He was transported to Przeworsk, where after another interrogation he was detained. The report stated that he had testified that he was on guard in front of the jail where the Jews were imprisoned, but he did so only because of the order of Kuśnierz, the ‘navy blue’ policeman. He also stated that the policeman threatened him with a “death sentence” in case he refused to guard or released the detained Jews. He has also added that after some time Franciszek Homa⁶⁷, at the time the head of the OSP at Markowa, released him from the guard duty. Rewer also upheld his explanation of 23 March 1949 as regarded the search in the house of Michał Bar⁶⁸.

Many actions in the case of the crime against the Jews at Markowa, including the participation of Andrzej Rewer, were conducted in October 1949. It was not possible to question Michał Kuśnierz or Franciszek Homa, who were both dead by then. Testimonies were taken from four other inhabitants of Markowa: Jan Przybylak, Antoni Kuźniar⁶⁹, Józef Rusinek⁷⁰ and Stanisław Hawer⁷¹. They stated that Kud, the village headman, announced that on that

⁶⁵ Michał Bar, probably referring to the person mentioned above, in whose home the Lorbenfelds were harbored.

⁶⁶ AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Rewera*, Przeworsk, 23 March 1949, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁷ Franciszek Homa, son of Kasper, born 1 October 1895 at Markowa. During 1940–1943 he was the commandant of the OSP at Markowa. He was murdered on 17 June 1943 at Konotopy near Sokal by Ukrainian nationalists (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records; L. Cyran, J. Lonc, *Kronika OSP w Markowej 1911–1961*, http://www.markowa.osp.org.pl/downloads.php?cat_id=1, accessed December 2012).

⁶⁸ AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Rewera*, Przeworsk, 11 August 1949, pp. 6–7.

⁶⁹ Antoni Kuźniar, son of Jan, born 20 May 1896 at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Antoniego Kuźniara*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, p. 27).

⁷⁰ Józef Rusinek, son of Antoni, born 23 January 1912 at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Józefa Rusinka*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, p. 29).

⁷¹ Stanisław Hawer, son of Andrzej, born 5 May 1905 at Gać, after the war he was a policeman at the police post at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Stanisława Hawera*, Markowa, 21 October 1949, p. 25).

day, 13 December 1942, a search for Jews hiding at Markowa would be conducted, in the peasants' houses and in the fields and near streams⁷². The search took place, as can be deduced from Rusinek's interrogation, among others, on the order of the "German police", this name being used interchangeably with the word "Gestapo" to refer to the German *gendarmierie*. It was recorded in the report of Hawer's interrogation that the area leaders were tasked by the village headman to appoint the persons who would search for the Jews. Przybylak said: "members of the Fire Brigade were going to participate in the roundup, and, so I heard, [...] Rewer Andrzej, Cznadel Michał⁷³, Wojciech Krauz⁷⁴, all resided at Markowa, and Orzechowski N.⁷⁵ [*sic*, M.Sz.] resident at Gać" and he added that the caught Jews were guarded by Rewer. Kuźniar testified that the search, in which the firefighters and civilians took place, resulted in arresting about 20 men. He said that three brothers of Jakub Einhorn were among those arrested. In his opinion one of them, Martek, was taken to the so-called jail by Wojciech Krauz. Einhorn was unable to tell, however, who had caught Abraham and Nuchym at the house of Wojciech Kluz⁷⁶. Rewer's participation in guarding the detainees was confirmed by Rusinek. He has also added that he had heard that Wojciech Krauz, Stanisław Orzechowski and Franciszek Antoni Homa⁷⁷ (a young man, not to be confused with the head of the OSP) took part in the search. Hawer confirmed the latter's participation, and said that, as he was sent by the area leader to assist in the action,

⁷² The interrogations most often stated that the search took place in the fall of 1942, other documents make it possible to ascertain that it was the Sunday, 13 December 1942.

⁷³ In fact Michał Trznadel, son of Stanisław, in December 1942 he was one of the area leaders at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Franciszka Bara*, Markowa, 2 June 1950, p. 19).

⁷⁴ Wojciech Krauz, son of Stanisław, born 18 April 1907 at Markowa. He has completed three classes of the primary school, he was a farmer, owner of 56 ares of land (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Akt oskarżenia Wojciecha Krauza, Antoniego Bara, Michała Szpytmy, Rzeszów*, 26 February 1951, p. 39).

⁷⁵ N. Orzechowski, in fact Stanisław Orzechowski, lived at Gać during the war, his wife came from Markowa, no details could be found.

⁷⁶ Wojciech Kluz, probably the son of Antoni, born about 1898, in a hearing before the court he denied that the Einhorn brothers were harbored in his house (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Wojciecha Kluza*, Przeworsk, 21 December 1951, p. 53).

⁷⁷ Franciszek Antoni Homa, son of Jan, born 23 March 1921 at Markowa (Archive of the Roman Catholic Parish of St Dorothea at Markowa, register records).

he saw Homa point out, near the streams, the hiding place of three women known at Markowa as Ryfki, and of one child. Witnesses also stated that all arrested Jews were placed in the so-called communal jail, which was located in the house at the main crossroads, rented (already since prewar times) by the community authorities from Franciszek Niemczak⁷⁸, where they were guarded by Rewer, and the next day they were shot by the German *gendarmarie* at the so-called horse-trench place at Markowa⁷⁹.

Andrzej Rewer was interrogated for the last time during the investigation on 28 January 1950. He stated at the time "I do not feel guilty of taking part in a roundup of the Jews, but only I was forced by the order of the 'navy blue' policeman Kuźnierz to guard them after they were caught and imprisoned in the basement, and that was at the order of the policeman Kuźnierz, who made me do it". Subsequently, the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal drew up an indictment in which Rewer was accused that: "I. working with other perpetrators, he took part in a manhunt, which resulted in the capture of 25 persons, Polish citizens of Jewish origin; II. at the same time and place, during a period of 5 hours, he stood guard next to the house where the persons captured during the manhunt were imprisoned. [...] Justification. In June [error, it should read December – M.Sz.] 1942 at Markowa at the instructions of the German authorities, a manhunt was organized, with participation of a number of inhabitants, so-called hostages, members of the fire brigade and other citizens. As a result of this manhunt which, having surrounded the whole village, searched the neighboring fields in detail, about 25 persons were arrested, and these were exclusively Jews who had been hiding, and who were then brought in groups into the communal jail [...]"⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ Franciszek Niemczak, son of Jan, born 28 December 1912 at Markowa, brother of Wiktor Ulma (*Ibid*).

⁷⁹ AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Przybyłaka*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, pp. 28–29; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Kuźniara*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, pp. 30–31; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Rusinka*, Przeworsk, 13 October 1949, pp. 32–33; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania S. Hawera*, Przeworsk, 21 October 1949, pp. 25–26; Contract between F. Niemczak and the Community Management Board at Markowa for renting the premises for the Markowa Community, Markowa, 18 October 1935, in the author's collection.

⁸⁰ AIPN Rz, 358/81/DVD, *Protokół końcowego przesłuchania A. Rewera*, Przeworsk, 28 January 1950, p. 41; *Ibid*, *Akt oskarżenia o III S 36/50/A wobec A. Rewera przygotowany przez*

It may be added that the indictment described the events of 13 December 1942 in exaggeration as “a manhunt that surrounded the whole village”, since Markowa with its fields has about 20 square kilometers. In order to “search the neighboring fields in detail” a much bigger force would need to be employed than the one at the disposal of the village headman that day, as it is shown from the files of other investigations into the case (see below).

The Court of Appeal in Rzeszów ordered that the hearing be held on 23 May 1950 at an off-site session in Przeworsk. Rewer defended himself there by saying that he took no part in the search whatsoever, and that he was forced to guard the jail as a hostage by the ‘navy blue’ policeman under the death penalty: “it had been announced that if a hostage fails to carry out instructions, he would face the death penalty”. He has also added, having initially not said that during the investigation, that he did not know that Jews were being held in the jail and that a Gestapo man named Fryszko was at Markowa that day, and that was the man who told him and Franciszek Homa, also present at the jail that they were guarding Jews. He also pointed out that there were ‘navy blue’ policemen present there. Moreover, he has added that after a few hours he deserted from the guard. When giving testimony at the court Jan Przybylak, Antoni Kuźniar, Józef Rusinek, unlike during the investigation, said that the search was organized by “some police”. As regarded Andrzej Rewer’s participation in this action they said that there was talk in the village that he had taken part in it, but they themselves had not seen that.

During the hearing before the court, the matter of Rewer’s participation in the war in Spain and in the anti-German resistance movement was mentioned for the first time. Three inhabitants of Markowa and Rewer’s wife said that before 1939 he had served under Gen. Karol Świerczewski and had fought in the ‘Dąbrowski’ Brigade, and that during the war he was in the BCh.⁸¹ It is impossible to say, based on the court files, whether the

Prokuraturę Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie, [Rzeszów], 30 January 1950, p. 45. The investigation, which includes the name of Wojciech Krauz and most other names mentioned in the October 1949 witness interrogation reports, shall be discussed further below.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, *Protokół z rozprawy głównej Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie o I K 57/50 w sprawie Andrzeja Rewera na sesji wyjazdowej w Przeworsku 23 V 1950*, Przeworsk, 23 May 1950, pp. 86–91.

service in the 13th Brigade ‘Jarosław Dąbrowski’ has influenced the content of the court ruling.

The judgment passed on 23 May 1950 acquitted Andrzej Rewer. In the justification, the court essentially fully agreed with the arguments of the defense and stated, among others: “The court has found that in the fall of 1942, when the Germans had already shot the Jews, some police came to Markowa and organized a manhunt against the hiding Jews”. It was also said that Rewer was a hostage, but did not know that Jews were being hunted, and his participation in guarding the prisoners was explained as follows: “It is notorious that the hostage was under threat of the death penalty for failure to carry out police instructions”⁸². The next day Rewer was released from custody. As it happened, he was soon arrested again in connection with another investigation that concerned the search for the Jews.

2. Case with subsequent reference numbers: 2141/49, 1380/50, III S 739/50/A, VI K 31/51, II K 716/51, III KO 15/53, VI K 56/53

The crime against the Jewish population at Markowa in 1942 became the subject of yet another prosecutorial proceeding in 1950. Since the main files of this investigation and trial have not been located, and only the Supreme Court files and copies in other proceedings are known, it is difficult to state what decided that it was started⁸³. As part of it, Wojciech Krauz, Antoni Bar⁸⁴ and Michał Szpytma⁸⁵ were arrested on 12 September 1950. Little is

⁸² *Ibid*, *Sentencja wyroku z 23 V 1950 Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie wraz z uzasadnieniem, I K 57/50 w sprawie Andrzeja Rewera*, Przeworsk, 23 May 1950, pp. 92–93.

⁸³ It was conducted initially by the County Command of the MO at Przeworsk with ref. nos. 2141/49 and 1380/50, then briefly with III S 739/50/A from 10 August 1950 by the Prosecutor’s Office of the Court of Appeal in Rzeszów, and then by the Provincial Prosecutor’s Office in Rzeszów that replaced it (AIPN Rz, 67/11, *Repertorium „S” Wydziału II Śledczego Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie za rok 1950*, pp. 5–6). I have acquainted myself with this repertoire a few years ago, but it was only after it was compared with the transcripts of the investigation that it was possible to link this entry with the proceedings concerning the search for Jews.

⁸⁴ Antoni Bar, son of Jan, born 9 October 1907 at Markowa. He completed three classes of the primary school; he was a farmer, owned 3 hectares of land (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Akt oskarżenia Wojciecha Krauz, Antoniego Bara, Michała Szpytmy*, Rzeszów, 26 February 1951, p. 39).

⁸⁵ Michał Szpytma, son of Andrzej, born 19 August 1919 at Markowa, after the war he lived at Kosina. He completed four classes of the primary school. During the war he was

known about them except that they were farmers from Markowa. The latter one had served as a firefighter during the war, after the war he lived in the village of Kosina near Markowa.

Jakub Einhorn was certainly a key witness in this proceeding; he was interrogated on 16 December 1950 by the Provincial Prosecutor's Office. He testified at the time very broadly about the events at Markowa in late 1942. He reported that after his wife and child were arrested by the inhabitants of Husów and murdered by the Germans, he was hiding with his sisters and brothers at Markowa with the family of Katarzyna Bar, Franciszek Bar and in the house of Michał Drewniak. He stated that on Sunday 13 December 1942 he witnessed the search for Jews at Markowa. He said that this was organized by the then guards' commandant Andrzej Rewer and that he could see from his hiding place Wojciech Krauz and Stanislaw Orzechowski arrest his two brothers in the house of Wojciech Kluza. One of them, injured in the head, was beaten by Wojciech Krauz. Antoni Bar then reacted: "Why are you beating him? Isn't it enough that you're turning him in for death?" The sisters of Jakub Einhorn were also arrested. All the Jews who were found were placed in the communal jail. According to Einhorn, the same evening Andrzej Rewer, Wojciech Krauz and Franciszek Antoni Homa also arrested a Jew who was hiding using the so-called 'Aryan' papers, under the name Stanisław Ciołkosz. He has also listed Michał Trznadel and Franciszek Ingot⁸⁶ among those involved in the search for Jews, and he has also mentioned that the entire Fire Brigade was involved in it. He said that Rywka Tencer, her two daughters and a little baby were arrested the same day. Einhorn added that no one wanted to search for Zelik, who was hiding with his wife and children at Albigowa, as they were armed, apparently. As a result, the German *gendarmierie* was called with a request to send in an 'assist'. The *gendarmes*, however, most likely ordered the firefighters to take care of the matter. Final-

single, a farmer, owned 1 hectare 12 ares of land. He was the brother of my mother's father (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Akt oskarżenia Wojciecha Krauza, Antoniego Bara, Michała Szpytmy*, Rzeszów, 26 February 1951, p. 39). Between 24 March and 27 July 1944 the father of Michał Szpytma received an anonymous note with threats and a demand that he removes the Jews his family harbored. However, I found no information confirming that the Szpytmas harbored any Jews (*M. Szpytma, The Risk...*, p. 74).

⁸⁶ Franciszek Ingot, no details could be found.

ly, as Einhorn says, on the night of 13 December Zelik and his family were escorted into the jail by Andrzej Rewer, Michał Szpytma and other members of the Fire Brigade⁸⁷. Einhorn talked most about Rewer in his testimony. He testified that the latter had a rifle and guarded the arrested ones and that he had heard from others, that he said he could personally shoot the arrested if he got 50 zlotys for each of them⁸⁸.

The file included a copy of Stanislaw Hawer's interrogation of 20 December 1949. This document contained information that Hawer had heard from other people that Andrzej Rewer and Franciszek Homa had been involved in the search for members of the Zelik family, and that after they were arrested and detained in the jail with other Jews, he guarded them, he maltreated them, and that earlier, during the search, he prevented Zelik's daughter from escaping. Hawer has also confirmed what he said during the interrogation in October 1949 that he had seen with his own eyes Franciszek Antoni Homa taking part in the arrest of the Jewesses near the streams⁸⁹.

By February 1951, the investigation with ref. no. III S 739/50/A covered 26 people. On 26 and 28 February 1951 the prosecutor made three substantive decisions. The proceedings for Andrzej Kuda, Andrzej Rewer and Stanisław Orzechowski, were suspended in connection with them being hiding, while the indictment was filed in reference to Wojciech Krauz, Antoni Bar and Michał Szpytma⁹⁰. Less is known about the fate of other people, the entry for them in the prosecutor's repertoire is to be found under the heading of "investigation dismissed or prosecution rejected"⁹¹. Krauz and Bar were accused

⁸⁷ Andrzej Rewer was not a member of the fire brigade.

⁸⁸ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Odpis protokołu przesłuchania Jakuba Einhorna przez Prokuraturę Wojewódzką w Rzeszowie w dniu 16 XII 1950 do III S 739/50/A*, Przeworsk, 17 August 1951, pp. 15-17.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, *Odpis protokołu przesłuchania Stanisława Hawera przez Prokuraturę Wojewódzką w Rzeszowie w dniu 20 XII 1949*, Przeworsk, 17 August 1951, p. 18.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, *Odpis wniosku Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie z 26 II 1951 o zawieszenie śledztwa w sprawie Andrzeja Kuda, Andrzeja Rewera i Stanisława Orzechowskiego*, Rzeszów, 30 November 1951, pp. 11-12. The case of Rewer was continued after his arrest with a different reference number (see further down in the text).

⁹¹ AIPN Rz, 67/11, *Repertorium „S” Wydziału II Śledczego Prokuratury Sądu Apelacyjnego w Rzeszowie za rok 1950*, pp. 5-6. It was noted in the "notes" field that file III 739/50/A was archived with the number 9/364/57, and on 10 May 1961 it was re-categorized as waste paper.

that “together with other perpetrators they arrested 2 Einhorn brothers and 3 sisters, and unidentified ‘Stanisław’, harbored by Katarzyna Bar, who after being detained throughout the night in the basement, were shot the next day by the arriving [German] police, and M[ichał] Szpytma that, together with other perpetrators he has arrested the ‘Zelik’ family of four, and Rywka Tencer, who, also, were shot the next day by the police after an overnight stay in the basement”. In the justification based on Jakub Einhorn’s testimony of 16 December 1950, as quoted above, the prosecutor has also described the problems he had in the course of the proceedings: “At the time of the start of the investigation, and then in the course of the investigation, difficulties were encountered in the unearthing and gathering of evidence of guilt of the captors of those people. It is a fact that about a dozen local citizens have participated in the manhunt, and the investigators, despite a partial identification of the names of those people, faced the solidarity in defense in the form of unanimous blaming the persons who were hiding or dead. Only on the basis of the testimony of the witness Jakub Einhorn was it possible to identify the active participation of persons subject to indictment”⁹².

The case of Wojciech Krauz, Antoni Bar and Michał Szpytma took place at the Provincial Court in Rzeszów, Center at Przemyśl with the reference number VI K 31/51. The verdict was issued on 4 May 1951. The court found that Krauz “along with other perpetrators arrested 2 Einhorn brothers and 3 sisters, and the unidentified ‘Stanisław’ who were hiding with Katarzyna Bar, and sentenced him to 6 years in prison. At the same time the court explained that the punishment was so mild because “before the critical roundup the defendant had helped the Jews like others, and was not hostile towards them”⁹³, and he took the part in the roundup in question at the instructions of the police and the village headman in the same manner as the others”. In the case of Antoni Bar, the court stated that he did not participate in the search for Jews. As for Michał Szpytma, the court found that there was insufficient evi-

⁹² AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Odpis aktu oskarżenia wraz z uzasadnieniem Wojciecha Krauz, Antoniego Bara, Michała Szpytmy przez Prokuraturę Wojewódzką w Rzeszowie z 26 XII 1951*, Rzeszów, 14 March 1951, pp. 39–41.

⁹³ There are no documents to confirm this information, perhaps these were included in the investigation files that have not been found.

dence to support his participation in the arrest of Zelik and his family⁹⁴. The acquitted were released after almost 8 months of imprisonment.

Krauz decided to appeal to the Supreme Court. His defense attorney, in his revision speech, took the precaution of pleading his client guilty, but not of capturing, just merely of escorting to jail the Jews found by others, which was an offense punishable by a lower penalty. While demanding abrogation of the sentence, he also questioned the reliability of Jakub Einhorn's testimony and accused the Court in Przemyśl of not hearing the witnesses filed by the defense⁹⁵. The Supreme Court, by a verdict of 6 March 1952, dismissed all reservations of the defense attorney and upheld the current judgment⁹⁶. In the summer of 1952, the defense attorney of Wojciech Krauz submitted to the Supreme Court a motion for the resumption of proceedings terminated by a final judgment. The lawyer was persuaded to file the motion by the acquittal verdict of 21 April 1952, ref. no. IV K 48/52, concerning Andrzej Rewer. The Supreme Court upheld the defense claim, and at the meeting on 8 October 1953 it annulled the previous rulings in the part relevant to Krauz, and referred the case to the Provincial Court in Rzeszów, to the Centre in Przemyśl for a re-trial. It also ordered the release of Wojciech Krauz from prison (including his period of temporary detention he had spent over three years there). The justification for the judgment shows that the result of the crime scene visit at Markowa carried out in Andrzej Rewer's case was decisive for the court⁹⁷.

At the Regional Court in Rzeszów, in the Center in Przemyśl, the case of Wojciech Krauz was conducted with the reference number VI K 56/53. According to the records of the court, Krauz was acquitted on 6 September 1954. Absence of the files of the case makes it impossible to state precisely what were the reasons of the court when issuing the judgment. However,

⁹⁴ AAN, 932, *Sąd Najwyższy* (Supreme Court) [hereinafter: AAN, 932], 2/17628, *Akta Izby Karnej II K 716/51 dot. Wojciecha Krauza* [hereinafter: 2/17628], *Odpis wyroku Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie Ośrodek w Przemyślu o VI K 31/51*, Przemyśl, 4 May 1951, pp. 4–7.

⁹⁵ AAN, 932, 2/17628, *Wывód rewizji sprawy VI 31/51*, [no location, no date], *wpłynął do Sądu Woj. w Rzeszowie, Ośrodek w Przemyślu*, 8 June 1951, pp. 1–3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, *Wyrok Sądu Najwyższego II K 715/51*, Warsaw, 6 March 1952, pp. 24–26.

⁹⁷ AAN, 932, 2/21314, *Akta Izby Karnej III KO 13/53 dot. Wojciecha Krauza* [hereinafter: 2/21314], *Postanowienie Sądu Najwyższego o III KO 13/53*, Warsaw, 8 October 1953, pp. 19–20.

it may be assumed that it followed the earlier judgment of the court in the case of Andrzej Rewer⁹⁸.

Andrzej Kud and Stanisław Orzechowski were arrested in July 1953. The investigation against them, resumed on 8 August 1953, was conducted by the County Prosecutor's Office in Przeworsk. It was dismissed on 18 November 1953⁹⁹. Absence of the files makes it impossible to state the reason for this decision. However, it can be assumed that since the prosecutor's office used the Supreme Court files re. Wojciech Krauz, it was probably based on the findings of the crime scene visit at Markowa mentioned above¹⁰⁰.

Case with reference numbers: Sm 215/51/P and IV K 48/52

The investigation regarding Andrzej Rewer, suspended on 26 February 1951, may have been resumed after several months. The suspect was arrested in July 1951 in Cracow and transported to Rzeszów, where he was temporarily detained¹⁰¹. Since in the meantime the main case was already in court, the

⁹⁸ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Pismo Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie Ośrodek w Przemyślu do Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie*, [Przemyśl], 31 March 1954, p. 221; *Sąd Okręgowy w Rzeszowie, II Wydział Karny, Repertorium Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie, Ośrodek w Przemyślu za lata 1951–1953*, pp. 8, 54. Due to the impossibility to access the files of the case VI K 56/53 nothing more can be established on the subject. The inscription in the repertoire in the 'notes' field: *Podjęto do VI Kow. 17/57. 28 II 1957* also remains unclear. Since the Kow repertoire of the Rzeszów Provincial Court of that period covers, among others, the indemnification cases, it can be assumed that Wojciech Krauz has applied for compensation for his imprisonment.

⁹⁹ The files concerning Stanisław Orzechowski and Andrzej Kuda were transferred to the Rzeszów Provincial Prosecutor's Office on 24 March 1966, which on 23 April 1966 sent these to the GKBZHWP. These files have not yet been found in the archival collections of the IPN (AP Przemyśl, *Zespół 1894, Prokuratura Powiatowa w Przeworsku*, 6, *Repertorium Sb i Sm 1951–1953*, wpis Sm 237 z 1953, pp. 212–213; AIPN Rz, 66/37, vol. 1, *Repertorium Smn za 1953 Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie*, wpis 66 dot. Stanisława Orzechowskiego i Andrzeja Kuda, pp. 118–119; *Archiwum Prokuratury Okręgowej w Rzeszowie, Repertorium Prez. Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie z 1966*, wpis 659, p. 34; *Ibid*, *Pismo Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie przekazujące akta spraw postępowań w sprawie zbrodni hitlerowskich do GKBZH*, Rzeszów, 23 April 1966).

¹⁰⁰ AAN, 932, 2/21314, *Pismo Sądu Najwyższego w Warszawie do Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie*, Warsaw, 31 July 1953, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Pismo informujące Prokuraturę Wojewódzką w Rzeszowie o doprowadzeniu przez KW MO w Krakowie do KW MO w Rzeszowie A. Rewera poszukiwanego pismem z dnia 23 IV 1951 o II S 739/50/4*, Rzeszów, 19 July 1951, p 2; *Ibid*, *Odpis postano-*

Rzeszów Provincial Prosecutor's Office decided that the part relevant to Rewer would be run separately by the County Prosecutor's Office in Przeworsk¹⁰². The case was given the reference number of Sm 215/51/P. When interrogated in prison, Andrzej Rewer did not admit to the charges alleged by witnesses, claiming that Jakub Einhorn and others who had charged him in their testimony were lying. He added that he had already been tried and acquitted in this case¹⁰³. The latter convinced the prosecutors to take action to verify whether this was true. When, after reviewing the proceedings of the previous court trial (I K 57/50), the prosecutor's office was inclined to dismiss the investigation in accordance with the *res iudicata* principle, but it was decided to hear Jakub Einhorn once again¹⁰⁴. He upheld his testimony of 16 December 1950 (as quoted above), and provided details of the arrests of Jews, and he also stated that during the search, which Michał Trznadel called 'hare catching', 17 Jews were arrested (including the Najdger and Tencer families). Einhorn also added new information about Rewer: "Three Gestapo men came the next morning and Andrzej Rewer himself tied the hands of all of them [the Jews – M.Sz.] in the basement and they were taken to the horse-trench place where they were murdered. Andrzej Rewer was there during the murdering until the end. As I noticed, Andrzej Rewer was only involved in a rounding up Jews all the time. Michał Drewniak described all this to me exactly"¹⁰⁵. Einhorn's testimony decided that the prosecutor's office applied to the Supreme Court for the resumption of the trial of Andrzej Rewer, previously ended by acquittal. The application was granted positively and the case was referred to the Provincial Court in Rzeszów for re-trial¹⁰⁶.

wienie Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie z 19 VII 1951 o tymczasowym aresztowaniu Andrzeja Rewera, Rzeszów, 19 July 1951, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, Pismo Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie do Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku, Rzeszów, 30 July 1951, p. 13.

¹⁰³ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego Andrzeja Rewera przez Prokuratora Miasta i Powiatu w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów, 30 August 1951, pp. 23–24.

¹⁰⁴ AIPN Rz, 383/5/DVD, Akta Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku dot. Andrzeja Rewera [hereinafter: AIPN Rz, 383/5/DVD], Pismo Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku do Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów, 30 August 1951, p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, Protokół przesłuchania J. Einhorna przez Prokuraturę Miasta i Powiatu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin, 21 November 1951, pp. 35–36.

¹⁰⁶ AIPN Rz, 383/5/DVD, Pismo Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku do Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie o przedstawienie sprawy A. Rewera Sądowi Najwyższemu z wnioskiem o wznowienie postępowania I K 57/50, Przeworsk, 22 December 1951, p. 40; *Ibid*,

Prior to the hearing Rewer's lawyer motioned for numerous witnesses to be heard. Some of them had been accused in earlier years by Einhorn of participating in searches and round-ups of Jews in villages neighboring Markowa, but they were acquitted by courts. The defendant also asked to accept evidence from the files of the trial in which Einhorn had testified earlier¹⁰⁷. The first hearing, with the new reference number IV K 48/52, took place in Rzeszów on 26 March 1952. Rewer repeated what he had said during the last interrogations during the investigation and added that he was forced to stand guard not only by the 'navy blue' policeman, but also by Fryszko the Gestapo man, also has presented his biography in detail, this time pointing out the fact that before the war he had fought in Spain with the Dąbrowski Army, and that since 1944¹⁰⁸ he belonged to the BCh. In turn, Jakub Einhorn repeated his statements from the investigations and explained in detail that he had seen with his own eyes from his hideout what was happening at Markowa on the critical day. He also added, not having mentioned that earlier, that he persuaded Michał Drewniak to go and check in the evening who was guarding the Jews imprisoned in the basement. He also testified that when Maria Hajduk¹⁰⁹ asked Józef Rusinek how he could have watched the shooting of the Jews by the Germans, he replied that he could shoot them himself (Hajduk denied before the court that such a conversation had taken place). At the request of the defense, Einhorn had to explain in detail from what part of the house where he had been hiding. He had watched the search and the Jews being led into custody. The court then ordered a crime scene visit at the house of Katarzyna Bar, in which Einhorn was hiding during the search, agreed to call witnesses for the defense and to examine the trial files as proposed by the defense and postponed the hearing, stating that it would be continued at Markowa¹¹⁰.

Odpis postanowienia wraz z uzasadnieniem Sądu Najwyższego z 26 II 1952 nr akt KO 44/52 dot. wznowienia postępowania karnego przeciwko A. Rewerowi, pp. 47–49.

¹⁰⁷ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Pismo adwokata Józefa Szczepanika do Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie*, [no location, submitted to the court on 25 March 1952], pp. 72–73.

¹⁰⁸ The report stated 1945 and that was probably a misspelling, as in other testimonies they was quote as 1944.

¹⁰⁹ No details could be found.

¹¹⁰ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół z rozprawy głównej z 26 III 1952 przeciwko A. Rewerowi*, [Rzeszów], 26 March 1952, pp. 101–108.

The trial at Markowa took place on 21 April 1952. The defendant Andrzej Rewer was questioned first. Compared to the previous testimonies he explained the differences in his interrogations in a different way than before (certainly referring to the fact that during some interrogations he had admitted that he was aware that Jews were held in the jail he was guarding, while during others he had said he did not know that and showed no interest in this), claiming he had been beaten during the investigation. A large proportion of the witnesses testified that they did not know anything about the subject matter of the trial; some denied what they had said during the investigation. Katarzyna Bar and Stefania Bar said that Jakub Einhorn could not see what was happening at that time from the henhouse in which he was hiding. Bar pointed out that the search for Jews was led by 'navy blue' policemen and by Franciszek Homa. Jan Przybylak testified that he had not told Einhorn that Rewer was apparently capturing the Jews and that he had not seen him carry a rifle with him at the time. Teofil Kielar¹¹¹ and Jan Szylar¹¹² confirmed the words of Rewer that he deserted from the guard and was wanted by the 'navy blue' police. Szylar also testified that on the day of the search, the question of imprisoning the Jews was not only undertaken by the 'navy blue' police but also by a German. Władysław Nycz from Sietesz¹¹³ said that Einhorn had wrongly accused him of arresting the Jews, claiming that he had seen it with his own eyes, while the trial showed that this was not true. Antonina Szpunar from Husów¹¹⁴, on the other hand, testified that when she was hiding Einhorn he wanted her, for his own security, to get rid of his sister-in-law and her husband, who were hiding with him (Einhorn denied persuading her to do so). A crime scene

¹¹¹ Teofil Kielar, son of Wojciech, born 2 October 1897, Markowa village headman of 1943 (AIPN Rz, 052/317/DVD, *Akta kontrolno-śledcze dotyczące Józefa Kokota, Protokół przesłuchania Teofila Kielara*, 21 March 1958, p. 77).

¹¹² Jan Szylar, nicknamed "Francuz" ("Frenchman"), born about 1890 at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie*, Markowa, 21 April 1952, p. 175).

¹¹³ Władysław Nycz, son of Antoni, born 11 June 1904 at Husów (AIPN Rz, 353/114/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Władysława Nycza*, Przeworsk, 21 January 1949, p. 12).

¹¹⁴ Antonina Szpunar, born in 1902, during the war she lived at Husów (AIPN Rz, 358/142/DVD, *Protokół z rozprawy przed Sądem Wojewódzkim w Rzeszowie dotyczącej Bonifacego Słoty*, Rzeszów, 9 January 1953, p. 229).

visit was also made at Katarzyna Bar's house. On the basis of these examinations, the court found that the possibility of observing the Markowa crossroads from the hiding place was very limited and only after leaving it and lying down, one could see the place where the jail was located. It is impossible to determine whether Einhorn, risking his own life, watched what was happening there or, as Katarzyna and Stefania Bar testified, he was hiding in a henhouse where he was safer, but from where he could not see the events he was describing. In any event, having testified after the crime scene visit and despite the fact that the witnesses had denied his version, he merely stated that he sustained his testimony made before the court on 26 March 1952. The court also examined the file of the VI K 33/51 case and the judgment of the IV K 236/51 case¹¹⁵.

On 21 April 1952 the court announced a verdict, which acquitted Rewer. The justification said, among others, "Comparing the above testimony of witness Jakub Einhorn with the testimony of witnesses questioned in the course of the trial and with the results of the court's eyewitness findings [crime scene visit – M.Sz.], and, moreover, taking into account the fact, as determined by the Court based on the files of this Court ref. nos. VI K 33/51 and IV K 236/51, that the witness Einhorn Jakub had charged the defendants with his testimony, but in both cases the Court did not give credence to the testimony of Jakub Einhorn, in the present case the Court similarly could not give credence to the testimony of witness Jakub Einhorn, which not only was not supported by testimony of [other] witnesses but also contradicted the results of the court's eyewitness findings. It is unlikely, according to the Court, that the witness, hiding during a roundup, left his hideout and watched what was going on, knowing that at any moment he might be captured by the Germans or the 'navy blue' police, and knowing that in such case he would be punishable by death, which had already happened to his child, wife, brothers and sisters"¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁵ AIPN Rz, 358/80/DVD, *Protokół z rozprawy głównej 21 III 1952 przeciwko A. Rewerowi*, Markowa, 21 April 1952, pp. 172–182.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, *Wyrok wraz z uzasadnieniem w sprawie IV K 48/52 dot. A. Rewera*, Markowa, 21 April 1952, pp. 182–189.

This verdict and the files of the case regarding Andrzej Rewer were further analyzed by the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Rzeszów. In July 1952 it informed the Provincial Court at Rzeszów that it would not request a revision of the judgment¹¹⁷.

Case with reference number: Sm 295/53/P

The last investigation into the crimes against the Jewish population at Markowa in 1942 involved Franciszek Hawro. He was a resident of Markowa, who had completed four years of tuition at a local school. After serving in the Austrian army he worked on a 1-hectare farm and dealt in leather making. Before 1939 he went to Germany for seasonal work. During the war, because he knew German, the German *gendarmierie* often visited him. In 1950 he was sentenced to half a year at a labor camp for illegal slaughter of livestock by the Special Commission for Combating Fraud and Economic Pest¹¹⁸. His name was mentioned during the interrogation of Mozes Reich, who was hiding at Markowa during the war. Reich was probably already arrested in 1952 by the *Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego* (WUBP; Provincial Authority of Public Security, the political police) in Rzeszów in connection with suspicions of financial fraud¹¹⁹ and on 8 July of the year he was interrogated by an officer from the KW MO in Rzeszów. He testified that during the German occupation Franciszek Hawro was catching Jews at Markowa. He added that he saw with his own eyes how, after the harvest in the summer of 1942, within a few days Hawro arrested Hersz Lorbenfeld¹²⁰ and Dawid Sajtelbach¹²¹, and took them, one by one, beating them on the way, to the Gestapo at Markowa, where they were shot. He also said that there were many more such cases, but he did not see them, only heard from those

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, *Pismo Prokuratury Wojewódzkiej w Rzeszowie do Sądu Wojewódzkiego w Rzeszowie*, Rzeszów, 12 July 1953 [in fact 1952], p. 226.

¹¹⁸ Franciszek Hawro, son of Stanisław, born 19 November 1892 at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Franciszka Hawro*, Markowa, 14 October 1953, pp. 55–56; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania Józefa Kuda*, Markowa, 22 October 1953, p. 62).

¹¹⁹ AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Uwagi dla referenta*, [Przeworski], 18 November [1953], p. 54.

¹²⁰ Hersz Lorbenfeld, born about 1897, resident of Markowa, no details could be found (AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania Mozesa Reicha*, Rzeszów, 8 July 1952, p. 5).

¹²¹ Dawid Sajtelbach, lived at Markowa, no details could be found.

who were hiding with him at the time, and who immigrated to Israel after the war. He listed Abraham Kiesten¹²², Bronisław Homa¹²³ and Jan Cwynar¹²⁴ as other witnesses of these events, and added that “other residents of Markowa commune are fully aware of this”¹²⁵. During the interrogation, Jan Cwynar provided the most information, describing the case of the murder of Efraim Korblau¹²⁶ by the Germans in 1941. He has also added that the inhabitants of Markowa did not participate in the subsequent detentions and murders of the Jews¹²⁷. Little was added by the testimony taken in Wrocław from Kiesten. He stated that during the war he was hiding at Albigowa and possibly also for a while at Markowa, but he could say nothing on the subject. He suggested, as recorded in the report, that Jakub Ajnhorn (meaning Einhorn) from Szczecin should be interrogated. Due to this misspelling the search for this witness failed¹²⁸.

In March 1953 the investigation was handed over to the County Prosecutor’s Office in Przeworsk, which started an investigation against Franciszek Hawro on 9 September 1953, suspecting him that “[one day] of an undetermined date of 1953 [misspelling, this should read 1942 – M.Sz.] at Markowa, acting hand in hand with the German state authorities, he arrested several citizens of Jewish nationality and handed them over to the police, thereby acting to the detriment of them as ones persecuted for racial reasons”¹²⁹. The prosecutor’s office then commissioned the County Headquarters of

¹²² Abraham Kiesten, son of Chaim, born 8 September 1909 at Albigowa, in 1952 worked as a carter in Wrocław (AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Kiestena*, Wrocław, 11 November 1952, pp. 25–26).

¹²³ Bronisław Homa, resident at Markowa, no details could be found. The files do not mention him being interrogated.

¹²⁴ Jan Cwynar, son of Michał, born 14 July 1912 at Markowa (AIPN Rz, 383/14/DVD, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Cwynara*, Markowa, 22 September 1952, pp. 18–19).

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania Mozesa Reicha w KW MO w Rzeszowie*, Rzeszów, 8 July 1952, pp. 4–7.

¹²⁶ Efraim Korblau, no details could be found; perhaps the name was distorted (e.g. Kornblau).

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Cwynara*, Markowa, 22 September 1952, pp. 18–19.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania A. Kiestena*, Wrocław, 11 November 1952, pp. 25–26.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, *Pismo komendy MO w Przeworsku do Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku*, Przeworsk, 1 March 1953, p. 32; *Ibid*, *Postanowienie Sm 295/53 Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku o wszczęciu śledztwa przeciwko F. Hawro*, Przeworsk, 9 September 1953, p. 51.

the MO in Przeworsk to conduct an interrogation of Franciszek Hawro. He pleaded not guilty of the charges. A few days later, his version was upheld by four other residents of Markowa, who were interrogated at his request¹³⁰. The prosecutor's office received the report of the interrogation of Franciszek Hawro with the following letter: "[...] the above named was not detained and not brought to the County Prosecutor's Office there because the above named is close to us in class terms and is elderly, and also there is no evidence of guilt, of him committing the above mentioned offense, since only one witness has charged him, while the witnesses indicated by the witness of the indictment have strongly denied possession of information about this case, and no other evidence has been collected in the investigation"¹³¹.

Absence of documents to indicate a reaction of the prosecutor's office to this letter indicates that it was simply accepted. In this situation, in December 1953 the office decided to conduct a confrontation between Mozes Reich and Franciszek Hawro, and since Reich was in prison in Rzeszów, the procedure was ordered to the County Prosecutor's Office of the City and County of Rzeszów¹³². The efforts of the prosecutor's office in this respect ended in a fiasco. To each of the two calls the family presented information that Hawro was ill. The last one showed that he was on medical leave until the end of April 1954¹³³. Documents in the file do not enable inferring why the prosecutor's office did not wait until then but dismissed the investigation on 5 March 1954. The justification of the dismissal said: "The testimony of Mozes Reich, as isolated in the light of the outcome of the investigation, cannot provide sufficient evidence, and more so since witness Mozes Reich was at that time a juvenile boy 12 years old. The above circumstance, based on

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania F. Hawro*, Markowa, 14 October 1953, pp. 55–56; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Homy*, Markowa, 22 October 1953, pp. 59–60; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Kuda*, Markowa, 22 October 1953, pp. 61–62; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Szylara*, Markowa, 22 October 1953, pp. 55–56; *Ibid*, *Protokół przesłuchania J. Flejszara*, Markowa, 22 October 1953, pp. 65–66.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, *Pismo posterunku MO w Markowej do Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku*, Markowa, 14 October 1953, p. 53.

¹³² *Ibid*, *Wniosek Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku do Prokuratury Miasta i Powiatu*, Przeworsk, 17 December 1953, pp. 68–69.

¹³³ *Ibid*, *Zapisek urzędowy*, Rzeszów, 14 January 1954, p. 72; *Ibid*, *Zapisek urzędowy*, Rzeszów, 27 February 1954, p. 78.

the fact that Mozes Reich only informed the authorities in 1952, thus eight years after the liberation, raises doubts as to whether the testimony of Mozes Reich's witness is fully objective, especially since the witnesses brought in by Mozes Reich did not confirm the allegations against the suspect, and no other evidence was collected during the investigation. In the absence of grounds for initiating the court proceedings, the investigation had to be discontinued due to lack of evidence of an offense¹³⁴.

Summary

No one was finally convicted in the above-mentioned postwar criminal proceedings concerning the extermination of Markowa Jews. The newly discovered records of these cases are, nevertheless, an extremely valuable historical source. Bearing in mind the shortcomings of the investigative and judicial documents and the acquitting sentences, it is difficult to make strong conclusions about the scale of the involvement of individuals in the execution of German orders¹³⁵. Most charges against the participants of the searches were based solely on the testimony of Jakub Einhorn, whose credibility was weakened by the fact that the courts proved his partial misrepresentation. Careful analysis of the files shows that, indeed, Einhorn sometimes testified that he saw certain events with his own eyes, while in fact he only knew of them from accounts of eyewitnesses. The fact that other witnesses were reluctant to discuss these subjects and denied certain parts of their investigation testimony before the court also does not make it any easier to ascertain the truth. How complicated the situation was and how difficult it was to understand the relations between the Poles and the Jews, is shown by the fact that when in November 1943 the prayers for the deceased Michał Drewniak took place at his home, Jakub Einhorn arrived there from yet another of

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, *Wniosek Prokuratury Powiatowej w Przeworsku Sm 295/53 o umorzenie śledztwa w sprawie F. Hawro*, Przeworsk, 5 March 1954, pp. 80–82.

¹³⁵ For more information about this type of source, see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Protokół przesłuchania jako źródło historyczne* [in:] *Wokół teczek bezpieki – zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłoznawcze*, ed. F. Musiał, Cracow 2006, pp. 357–366; A. Skibińska, „*Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?*”. *Analiza motywacji sprawców zbrodni na Żydach na wsi kieleckiej w latach 1942–1944* [in:] *Zarys krajobrazu...*, pp. 327–335.

his hideouts. The rosary was attended by many inhabitants of the village, almost certainly including those who had been involved in the search for Jews 11 months earlier. No one denounced Einhorn¹³⁶.

On the basis of various testimonies, however, it can be stated that in December 1942, besides the village headman Andrzej Kuda who ordered the search because the Germans ordered him to, an important role in managing it and in the imprisoning of the Jews was played by Andrzej Rewer, a hostage and the commandant of the communal guard at the time, and by Franciszek Homa, the head of the local OSP (in the latter case, however, it is not impossible that attempts were made to blame him for actions of others, since the criminal proceedings took place after his death). Wojciech Krauz was a person who took part in the search with personal commitment, but who was also beating the Jews. Who were the other people searching for Jews? Most of the witness testimonies and accounts that mentioned this subject indicated the firefighters. Apart from Franciszek Homa, already mentioned, Michał Szpytma was a firefighter as were probably some other persons whose names appear as suspects in the files. Was their participation in the search mandatory, as it was for the communal guard, and was refusal punishable by death or other penalty? The files of the proceedings analyzed here do not enable a final answer to these questions. The firefighters wrote on the subject in the OSP diary after the war: "In 1941 [it should read '1942'] the Fire Brigade as an organization was drawn into a round-up of the Jews, which was a great trouble for the Brigade. Later, however, the Brigade was acquitted, because it was seeking so as to find no one"¹³⁷.

It is impossible today to determine beyond doubt what was the responsibility of individuals for what happened at Markowa in the summer and fall of 1942, but there is no doubt that those were among the most tragic days in the history of the village.

¹³⁶ Recording of an interview with Antoni Drewniak, in the author's collection.

¹³⁷ L. Cyran, J. Lonc, *Kronika OSP w Markowej 1911–1961...*

**ORGANIZED AND INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE OF POLES
FOR JEWISH PEOPLE EXTERMINATED BY THE GERMAN
OCCUPANTS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR¹**

Few issues in the history of Polish-Jewish relations have been as neglected as the problem of the assistance from the Polish people towards the Jews being exterminated by the German occupant of Poland. This was influenced both by the postwar history of Poland and by the general neglect in historical research, and that of the history of Polish Jews in particular. These neglects resulted from many causes: firstly, issues related to the history of the Jewish population were left to the *Żydowska Komisja Historyczna* (ŻKH; Jewish Historical Commission)² after the war; secondly, Polish researchers were as well not prepared to deal with the history of Jews quite as the historians coming from that background; thirdly, the anti-Polish rather than anti-Jewish activities of the occupants were focused upon. As time went on, the scientific potential to deal with the subject matter of the assistance was reduced, as Jewish historians were fading away, and no well-prepared researchers from other backgrounds emerged. As a result of all this, the issue of the assistance, among other topics of mutual relations, such as the activities of the *szmalcownicy*³, was left somewhere in between the areas of interests of both parties. Nechama Tec thus explains why Jewish historians did not

¹ The text has appeared in Polish in the volume *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945. Studia i materiały*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006.

² One could even risk the supposition that the Jewish Historical Commission became, informally, a kind of counterpart for the *Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* (GKBZHwP; Chief Commission for the Study of Nazi Crimes in Poland), investigating the crimes committed against the Jewish population.

³ The word *szmalcownik* (plural: *szmalcownicy*) is a Polish neologism coined during the war

conduct proper research: “This prolonged silence was not surprising. The Holocaust was dominated by extreme suffering and devastation. The compassion and help that were a part of this cruel environment were atypical, easily overshadowed by the enormity of the crimes. It is only natural and to be expected that those who studied these tragic events focused first on the typical experience rather than the rare exception. Only when this tragic story had been told, would chroniclers begin to notice the less visible...”⁴. Anyone with a deep understanding of the tragedy that touched the Jewish population under the German occupation, will be able to appreciate even more the contribution of the, generally speaking, “Jewish side” to the study of this subject as being the more valuable.

The first studies on this subject started to appear many years after the war⁵. They were written by Jewish historians or by persons who had provided the assistance or those who had been forced to use it. The publications in the “*Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*” (“Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute”) were of great importance⁶. The first monograph was

to denote people who blackmailed the hiding Jews and those people who helped them. The activity was known as *szmalcownictwo* (translator’s note).

⁴ N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness. Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland*, New York–Oxford 1986, p. 5.

⁵ On the other hand, there were often press articles in the postwar period that discussed not only the assistance to the Jews, but generally the German crimes committed against these people. This was relatively broadly discussed by the press of the PSL (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*/Polish People’s Party). It is worth remembering, however, that due to cases of brutal anti-Semitism often encountered in the postwar years, the rescuers of Jews were not interested in their activities being written about, especially if their names or specific details that identified them were mentioned. See A. Keiner, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, „Spotkania” 1985, no. 29/30, p. 50.

⁶ B. Bermanowa-Temkin, *Akcja pomocy Żydom w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, „Biuletyn ŻIH” 1957, no. 22; T. Berenstein, A. Rutkowski, *O ratownictwie w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, *ibid* 1960, no. 35; J. Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Wspomnienia o akcji pomocy Żydom podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej w Polsce (1939–1945)*, *ibid* 1963, no. 45/46; I. Sendlarowa, *Ci, którzy pomagali Żydom. (Wspomnienia z czasów okupacji hitlerowskiej)*, *ibid*; *Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”). Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych działaczy RPŻ*, *ibid* 1968, no. 65/66; E. Chańczyński, *Pomoc Żydom udzielana przez konspiracyjne biuro fałszywych dokumentów w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (1939–1945)*, *ibid* 1970, no. 75; T. Czar-nomorski, *Pomoc ludności żydowskiej udzielana przez pracowników Wydziału Ewidencji Ludności Zarządu m.st. Warszawy w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (1939–1945)*, *ibid*. For the sake of accuracy it should be noted that already the first quarterly of the *Żydowski*

published almost 20 years after the end of the war⁷. This was followed by more works, but there are still relatively few of these.⁸ For many years the subject was only rarely written about. It was after the political transformations in 1989 that the interest in the subject reemerged⁹ and new publications began to appear¹⁰. This has not improved the situation, as evidenced by the fact that to this day there is no monograph in Polish about the Poles who were murdered or oppressed for providing the assistance¹¹. The same is true of the Polish "Righteous Among the Nations"¹². The first monographic study of any of them was not published until 2003, although virtually every one of

Instytut Historyczny (ŻIH; Jewish Historical Institute): "Bleter far Geszichte" ("Pages of History"), published in Yiddish since 1948, included articles on this subject.

⁷ T. Berenstein, A. Rutkowski, *Pomoc Żydom w Polsce 1939-1945*, Warsaw 1963.

⁸ W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej. Polacy z pomocą Żydom 1939-1945*, Cracow 1966 (2nd ed.: Cracow 1969), the quotations in the text come from the second edition; S. Datner, *Las Sprawiedliwych*, Warsaw 1968; K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje jedno życie... Polacy i Żydzi 1939-1945*, London 1968; *Polacy - Żydzi 1939-1945*, prep. by S. Wroński, M. Zwołakowa, Warsaw 1971; M. Arczyński, W. Balcerak, *Kryptonim „Żegota”. Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939-1945*, Warsaw 1979; T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942-1945*, Warsaw 1982. Publications of Władysław Smólski are also worth noting, although these are not of scientific nature: *Losy dziecka*, Warsaw 1961; *Zakłete lata*, Warsaw 1964; *Za to groziła śmierć. Polacy z pomocą Żydom w czasie okupacji*, Warsaw 1981. The author was involved in the operation of the Rada Pomocy Żydom (RPŻ; Council of Assistance to the Jews).

⁹ Unfortunately, such initiatives are generally late and artificially inflated, as was the case in the 1960s (when Jews were accused of being ungrateful towards Poland) or in 2000 after discussions about the pogrom at Jedwabne. In the latter case, it was that discussion, which has become a direct impulse to intensify the work of the *Komitet dla Upamiętnienia Polaków Ratujących Żydów* (Committee for the Commemoration of the Poles who Rescued Jews) and to start preparations for the construction of a memorial to these Poles.

¹⁰ *Polacy - Żydzi 1939-1945*, prep. by A.K. Kunert, Warsaw 2001; E. Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach. Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce w latach 1939-1945*, Lublin 2001; „Żegota” *Rada Pomocy Żydom 1942-1945. Wybór dokumentów*, prep. by A.K. Kunert, Warsaw 2002.

¹¹ The only publication so far is merely a list of victims and places of execution, compiled from investigations conducted by the GKBZHWP: W. Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom*, Warsaw 1987. Following the pattern of Bielawski, Dr Waclaw Zajaczkowski attempted to compile a list of people murdered in Europe for their assistance to the Jews: *Martyrs of Charity*, Washington DC 1988.

¹² Notes containing data of just 1,200, out of a total of around 6,000 Poles awarded the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" by the Yad Vashem Institute, have been prepared only partially. See. M. Grynberg, *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, Warsaw 1993.

them deserves a separate study¹³. A book about Irena Sendler was published the following year¹⁴. Bibliographic aids are lacking, too. Only one, miniature size, brochure was published in the Polish language that discussed materials related to the assistance to the Jews¹⁵. The research must be conducted indirectly, in the general bibliographical material on the extermination of European Jews¹⁶.

The consequences of this state of affairs reach far beyond the historical research as such. Abroad, the expansion of research into the extermination of Jews has resulted in the discovery of many dark aspects of the attitude of the Polish population, and even of the underground and émigré Polish authorities, towards the Jewish people murdered on Polish soil¹⁷. At last, attention is paid to the collaborative behavior of some groups, resulting in studies, articles and books about *szmalcownicy*, about widespread denunciations¹⁸. As a reaction to this, there are attempts to show that the shameful

¹³ One could call it a phenomenon that two books about the Polish "Righteous" Henryk Ślawik, who saved thousands of Polish Jews in Hungary, were published within one year: G. Łubczyk, *Polski Wallenberg. Rzecz o Henryku Ślawiku*, Warsaw 2003; E. Isakiewicz, *Czerwony ołówek. O Polaku, który uratował tysiące Żydów*, Warsaw 2003.

¹⁴ *Matka dzieci Holocaustu. Historia Ireny Sendlerowej*, prep. by A. Mieszkowska, Warsaw 2004.

¹⁵ J. Gajowniczek, *Pomoc udzielana Żydom przez Polaków w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Materiały do bibliografii. Piśmiennictwo polskie*, Warsaw 1983.

¹⁶ See D. Libionka, *Polskie piśmiennictwo na temat zorganizowanej i indywidualnej pomocy Żydom (1945–2008)* [in:] „Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały” Warsaw 2008, no. 4, pp. 17–80.

¹⁷ The publication by Jan Tomasz Gross *Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*, Sejny 2000, is a leading example here, as it has triggered a nationwide discussion about the moral attitudes of the Polish population under the German occupation. As a consequence, an investigation was initiated by the investigative arm of the IPN and a special publication prepared: *Wokół Jedwabnego*, v. 1: *Studia*, v. 2: *Dokumenty*, eds. P. Machcewicz, K. Persak, Warsaw 2002. For the attitude of the Polish authorities to the Jewish question, see e.g. D. Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz. The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews 1939–1942*, Chapel Hill–London 1987; *ibid*, *Facing a Holocaust. The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1943–1945*, Chapel Hill–London 1993; D. Stola, *Nadzieja i Zagłada. Ignacy Schwarzbart – żydowski przedstawiciel w Radzie Narodowej RP (1940–1945)*, Warsaw 1995; A. Puławski, *W obliczu Zagłady. Rząd RP na uchodźstwie, Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj, ZWZ-AK wobec deportacji Żydów do obozów zagłady (1941–1942)*, Lublin 2009, p. 583.

¹⁸ Among others J. Grabowski, *Szmalcownicy warszawscy 1939–1942*, „Zeszyty Historyczne” 2003, v. 143, pp. 85–117; *ibid*, „Ja tego Żyda znam!” *Szantażowanie Żydów w Warszawie 1939–1943*, Warsaw 2004; B. Engelking-Boni, *Donosy do władz niemieckich w Warszawie i okolicach w latach 1940–41*, Warsaw 2003.

attitudes constituted only a small margin when compared to the uniform, heroic attitude of the general public, or even that such behavior did not exist at all. At the same time, it is noticeable that researchers, who wish to defend Polish people against accusations of anti-Semitism at all costs, actually write in a way that does not always take into account the uniqueness of the Holocaust. They try to equate the suffering of the Polish and Jewish populations under the German occupation, or justify the negative actions of some Poles¹⁹. They also are sometimes overcome by emotions, which have little to do with matter-of-fact historical research²⁰.

There is still a lack of research, in Poland and abroad, based on detailed and thorough analysis of archival material. Only a few authors have dealt with the assistance for the Jews²¹. It is not impossible, however, that other studies addressing this issue will be published in the near future²².

Research work on the subject of assistance to the Jews conducted now, although essential and necessary, is definitely delayed. Celina Tyszko, one of few surviving members of the *Rada Pomocy Żydom* (RPŻ; Council of Assistance to the Jews), said, rightly, in an interview with the author of this text,

¹⁹ R. Lukas, *Zapomniani Holocaust: Polacy pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1944*, Kielce 1995; J.M. Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955. Współistnienie – zagłada – komunizm*, Warsaw 2000.

²⁰ S. Korboński, *Polacy, Żydzi i Holocaust*, Warsaw–Komorów 1999; T. Bednarczyk, *Obowiązek silniejszy od śmierci: wspomnienia z lat 1939–1944 o polskiej pomocy dla Żydów w Warszawie*, Warsaw 1986; *ibid*, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta. Warszawskie getto i ludzie (1939–1945 i dalej): [jakimi ich znałem]*, Warsaw 1995; B. Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych*, Warsaw 1997. Regarding the latter title, see the review of Prof. F. Tych and J. Sacharewicz in the “Biuletyn ŻIH” 1998, no. 185/186, pp. 138–139. The reviewers accuse the author of a biased selection of examples that present only the cases of lack of gratitude of the saved ones towards their helpers and of the use of historical sources of dubious quality. It seems that, although critics are right, it should be emphasized that Stanisławczyk has raised a very important issue of the bond between people in the situation of total dependence on assistance from one side and the consequences of this relationship. In my opinion this problem will require further research in the future, but more strictly under the rules of historical science. Researchers of extremely dissenting opinion have also come to the fore (M. Urynowicz, *O pomocy Żydom w IFiS PAN – kilka uwag*, “Biuletyn IPN” 2009, no. 3 [98], pp. 109–112).

²¹ E.g. P. Friedman, *Their Brother's Keepers*, New York 1978; N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness...*

²² The Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem has now published special issues dedicated to all the “Righteous”. Materials on the Polish “Righteous” were published in 2004.

“This initiative to collect data on the activity of ‘Żegota’ is, in my opinion, too late by decades. It has been 60 years since ‘Żegota’ was established, and almost all its members are dead. And in my case, it is very difficult to separate my activity in the underground resistance from the activity in ‘Żegota’. For example, the contacts with secret printing shops, with underground press distribution points and with those where fake IDs were provided”²³.

Many Poles have paid with their lives. They were shot dead along with those they helped, or died in concentration camps or German prisons, or in individual cases they were murdered by bandit gangs who, knowing their activities, expected to find Jewish property and rob it from them²⁴. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind constantly that, when studying the issue of assistance, one is able to describe only a part of it, since the memory of these events has often died with the participants already after the war. Today, sixty years later, virtually all that can be properly described is the assistance evidence recorded in writing, which documents only a small part of the phenomenon²⁵.

The initiative of the *Komitet dla Upamiętnienia Polaków Ratujących Żydów* (Committee for the Commemoration of the Poles who Rescued Jews) is worth mentioning here. It was established in the late 1990s and one of its objectives, beside the erection of the memorial, has been to collect as many testimonies as possible²⁶. By mid-2002, the committee had managed to accumulate over five hundred accounts, which mention about 2,000 persons who provided such assistance. These materials are largely unknown, so they require verification, as all such accounts collected latterly.

The main sources I used in my research of the assistance provided by Polish people to Jews are held in three archives. Primarily, it is the *Archiwum*

²³ Interview in February 2004. See document no. 18 (in the Polish language volume) in: M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej eks-terminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej* [in:] *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, ed. A. Żbikowski, Warsaw 2006, pp. 305–308.

²⁴ See document no. 28 in: *ibid.*, p. 323. See the case of Antonina Wyrzykowska, very badly beaten after the war by Polish partisans in the vicinity of Jedwabne for her assistance to Jews (*Wokół Jedwabnego...*, v. 2, pp. 232–233).

²⁵ See W. Bielawski, *Zbrodnie...*, p. 7. I write more on the subject further in my text.

²⁶ For more on the subject see J. Żaryn, *Elity obozu narodowego wobec zagłady Żydów* [in:] *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką...*, pp. 365–399.

Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (AŻIH; Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute). There are materials there that are useful for researching both individual and organized forms of assistance. The *Archiwum Akt Nowych* (AAN; Archive of Modern Records) collects archival documents concerning the history of the RPŻ, and the *Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (AIPN; Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance) has, practically exclusively, records for research of cases of individual assistance.

By ‘institutional assistance’ I understand, mostly but not exclusively, that undertaken by the RPŻ, which has, since its establishment, concentrated the activities of political parties that supported the Jewish population. Many photographic copies of RPŻ letters survive at the AŻIH in the group “*Varia okupacyjne*” (“Occupation period varia”). This is primarily the correspondence with the *Delegatura Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraj* (DR; Delegation of the Exiled Government of the Republic of Poland for the Home Country), minutes of meetings, memoranda to the Exiled Polish Government in London. These are letters signed by the RPŻ or by individual activists acting on behalf of it or of the parties represented in it. Many of the documents have never entered scientific circulation, especially those that indicate the problems that accompanied relations between the RPŻ and the DR that controlled its activities. I have studied most of these unknown texts and published them among other documents in the annex that follows this article.

The material from the “*Varia okupacyjne*” group informs us primarily about the activities of the RPŻ, to a lesser extent about the issues related to its establishment and organizational structure. Much more about this is included in the documents held at the AAN in the “*Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj*” group²⁷. Information can be found there related to the establishment of the *Tymczasowa Rada Pomocy Żydom* (TRPŻ; Temporary Council of Assistance to the Jews) and its transformation into a permanent body, and to the staff of the RPŻ. The majority, however, consists of correspondence between the RPŻ and the DR and internal letters of the Polish authorities on the functioning of the RPŻ, the general situation of the Jewish population, the German extermination operation and the Polish-Jewish relations.

²⁷ The reference numbers are 202/XV-1 and 202/XV-2.

I have researched the issue of individual assistance on the basis of the materials held at the ŻIH and the IPN. The ŻIH holds at least several useful groups of documents. The principal one is the “*Yad Vashem – Sprawiedliwi*” (“Yad Vashem – Righteous”) group, which has been expanded until 2004. New material for cases of assistance was collected. Since 2004 it has been subjected to archiving-ordering work. It covers over 2,500 cases.

The collection of reports gathered after the war by the ŻKH is another group that includes many descriptions of assistance. It includes over 7,000 documents. Of course, only some of these contain descriptions of assistance. Descriptions of the anti-Semitic attitudes of Polish population are found there equally, or perhaps even more often (because of the understandable and natural focus of survivors on the suffering they experienced during the German occupation).

The files of the *Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce* (CKŻP; Central Committee of Jews in Poland) are the third group at the AŻIH, where relatively much material about the assistance is to be found; documents of two departments: legal and social welfare, are particularly interesting. This is due, among other reasons, to the fact that in the postwar years the legal department of CKŻP had a *Komisja Pomocy Polakom* (Commission for the Assistance to the Poles) that helped those who had assisted Jews during the war. Many Poles and often Jewish survivors requested the CKŻP for material support for those who had rescued the Jews, and who found themselves in a very difficult financial situation after the war. These requests were often addressed to the department of social welfare, especially before the creation of the Commission for the Assistance to the Poles in 1948.

In addition to the legal and social welfare departments, a considerable amount of information, mainly about Jewish children harbored by Poles, is to be found at the education department of the CKŻP. The documents surviving there include, among others, correspondence with local Jewish committees, Polish institutions or private persons, letters from Jews who notified about the stay of children with Poles, letters from Poles, requests for money to buy children out, requests of the education department to the CKŻP for help for the Poles who had saved Jews, and others. Primarily, the lists of children staying with Polish families after the war and those who

found shelter during wartime with Poles unknown to the CKŻP or in monasteries, are very interesting.

The AIPN also has a detached group of documents that includes material related to the provision of assistance to the Jewish population. These are the files of an investigation conducted by Waław Bielawski, working for the GKBZHwP, on the crimes committed by officers of the Nazi German occupation administration against the Poles who provided assistance to the Jews subjected to extermination. The group includes various kinds of records²⁸. Documents of the investigation (ref. no. 23/68) have been described in a much abbreviated manner (name, surname and timeframe dates) in the IPN BU 392 handover-acceptance listing. A proper description, an electronic database, is being worked upon²⁹. Approximately 5 linear meters of the investigation material have already been processed, with 3 more still to be processed. Some of these cases have been sent by the GKBZHwP directly to the Yad Vashem Institute with a request to consider whether they were eligible for the title of the "Righteous Among the Nations"³⁰.

The question of murdering and repressing Poles by the Germans for the help provided to Jews requires a separate elaboration. Such crimes have taken place too often to be described in this material. Several hundred cases of repression and murder can be proved at the moment. There were certainly many more such facts, however³¹.

²⁸ According to Waław Bielawski, these files consist of "46 volumes, which contain 2,288 witness testimony reports, hundreds of letters and many other documents, including announcements (posters) of German occupation authorities, kept in the archives of the GKBZHwP-IPN, the *Biblioteka Narodowa* (National Library) and the *Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego* (Polish Scouting Association), the sentences of Nazi German occupation authorities in the provincial archives in Rzeszów, Łódź, Radom, Piotrków and Warsaw, as well as monographs and press releases" (*ibid*, *Zbrodnie...*, p. 8).

²⁹ I had the opportunity to see the unfinished and unpublished database, for which I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mrs Michalina Wysocka and the database author Mr Maciej Frydrychowicz.

³⁰ It happens, however, that this has not been the only investigation conducted by the former GKBZHwP, the files of which include information about assistance provided to Jews. For example, such facts were also established in the investigation with reference number Ds. 131/67.

³¹ So far, information about 506 such events has been published. See *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*,

In addition to archive material that described the question of assistance directly or indirectly, I wish to point out here the material, which quite incidentally includes data on the subject discussed here. The extensive archival resources of the former postwar communist security services kept by the IPN can be especially important. In some cases these include information about surveillance, investigation or interrogation by the security services of persons who, while being active in the resistance movement sought to regain Poland's independence, maintained contacts with Jewish communities or private persons during the war and helped them.

Various types of postwar court cases prosecuting those who cooperated with the Germans in the extermination of the Jewish population, the so-called *szmalcownicy* or other kinds of collaborators may also prove interesting³². They also include names and details of persons who helped the oppressed Jews.

Much about assistance to the Jews provided by Polish people can be found in foreign archives, especially those in Israel, which was not used when writing this text. The Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, which collects information about the "Righteous" from all over the world, and the archives of Adolf Berman kept at the Lohamei HaGeta'ot kibbutz, are at the forefront³³.

eds., A. Namysło, G. Berent, Warsaw 2014. The publication is also available online: http://represje.iss.krakow.pl/bundles/core/pdf/REJESTR_faktow_Represji_pomniejszony.pdf.

³² The so-called 'sierpniówki' ('August cases') investigative cases conducted on the basis of art. 1 p. 1 of the decree of the *Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego* (Polish National Liberation Committee) of 31 August 1944. By the decree of the Minister of Justice of 9 February 1966 the files of these cases should have been transferred to the GKBZHWP Archive, from where they eventually went to the IPN. However, as practice shows, not all the files were transferred. See P. Machcewicz, „Wokół Jedwabnego” [in:] *Wokół Jedwabnego...*, v. 1, p. 22. In 2002 a master's degree thesis about *szmalcownicy* was prepared under the supervision of Prof. Dr hab. Marian Wojciechowski at the Faculty of History of the Warsaw University: A. Rodek, *Tzw. „Szmalcownicy” – Warszawa i okolice (1940–1944)*. It was written on the basis of the file of the Regional Court of Justice in Warsaw, Department V Criminal, kept at the Archive of the City of Warsaw, which theoretically also should have been among the material of the former GKBZHWP, now in the AIPN.

³³ The materials kept there were partially used by G. Paulsson, *Secret City: the Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945*, London 2002. It should be noted that since the Polish language version of this article was prepared, the IPN and the Yad Vashem Institute have established cooperation, which results in the mutual exchange of information and archival material. Unfortunately, the archives concerning those Poles who have been denied recognition for the assistance to Jews remain reserved.

This text is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the activity of the RPŻ, as the most specialized section of the Polish underground resistance movement that provided institutionalized aid to the Jews being exterminated by the Nazi Germans. In this part I have discussed mainly the issues that have so far been scarcely or not addressed at all by researchers, such as the politicization of the RPŻ, problems in relations with the DR. I have drawn attention to the lack of studies on the activities of political parties and social organizations, and also to a large gap in our knowledge of the assistance provided abroad. I have tried to emphasize and show how important it is to study the situation of the Polish population. It was only to a small extent that I have focused on issues that had already been discussed in scientific writing. This text is intended not only to describe the activity of assistance but above all to designate new directions of research. In the separate subsections I have emphasized the need to focus the research on those organizations that worked on providing assistance to the Jewish population before and after the establishment of the RPŻ, sometimes very loosely related to it, or not at all. I have also used the latest findings of the researchers who deal with Polish-Jewish relations, which was particularly useful when discussing financial issues.

In the second part, I have focused on individual assistance provided by the Poles who were not members of the underground resistance, and who provided assistance without official support of the resistance movement. I devoted much space here to the Polish “Righteous”, officially recognized by the Yad Vashem Institute. I have tried to show at the same time how small this group has been (even though it is the largest in the world when compared to the number of “Righteous” in other countries) in relation to all the cases that we have been able to identify with more or less accuracy³⁴.

³⁴ 53 source texts presenting various aspects of organized and individual assistance are attached to the Polish version of this text. More emphasis was put on documents showing examples of individual assistance. The source material comes from three archives: the ŻIH, IPN and AAN, with the majority from the former. In one case, sources published in the so-called memory books and a memoir of a person who took part in the RPŻ activities work obtained by the author were used. Four documents were translated from Yiddish and two from English.

Organized assistance

Activity of political parties, social and military organizations before the establishment of the RPŻ

It is no coincidence that the RPŻ was established and commenced its activity in Warsaw, while becoming at the same time the centre of the action of assistance to the Jews for all other similar centers in Poland. This resulted from the special role that Warsaw played in both prewar times and during the German occupation.

Organizing the assistance for the Jewish population persecuted by the German occupants began from the very beginning of the occupation, regardless of any anti-Semitic moods that could be felt quite strongly both in the streets of Warsaw and among the leaders of underground political life in the occupied country. Initially, while the situation was not yet dramatic, it was primarily based on personal contacts of acquaintances, friends or even families. It was a bilateral movement, i.e. the Poles were seeking ways to come to the aid of the Jews, almost exclusively their friends or family members, and at the same time the Jews were seeking contacts with the 'Aryan' side. Often these were just trade deals profitable to both sides³⁵. In addition to this, there were extensive, although difficult and dangerous, underground contacts between Polish and Jewish groups: a resistance movement within the ghetto was formed as part of the Polish underground resistance³⁶. Virtually every Polish political party or group, if they had any Jews in their ranks, tried to assist them in organizing their lives, either on the 'Aryan' side or in the ghetto. Before progressing to describing the activity of RPŻ itself, it is worthwhile to look at organized activities conducted before it was established.

It is notable at first glance that the assistance provided before the establishment of the RPŻ was sufficient to meet the expectations of the needy, and so diverse that the 'Żegota' did not need to initiate new, hitherto unknown activities, but just sought to scale up, increase territorial coverage or facilitate the previous work of the political parties and groups, and of the under-

³⁵ See documents nos. 19 and 20 in: M. Urynowicz, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* [in:] *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką...*, pp. 665–666.

³⁶ See documents nos. 15 and 16 in: *ibid.*, pp. 657–660.

ground social organizations. Moreover, in many areas the RPŻ as such did not have such opportunities as the party groups had. For example, it could only request the DR to combat blackmailers, while the organizations often had trained men and equipment to carry out such actions.

Therefore, the parties took care of material aid, provision of appropriate documents, leading people out of ghettos, sheltering them, suppression and liquidation of blackmailers, proper motivation of the Polish population to provide assistance, combat instruction, transfer of chemicals necessary for weapon production, assistance in capturing and purchase of arms, providing appropriate maps (such as those of the sewers in the Warsaw Ghetto) and also conducted direct combat operations at the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto³⁷.

Of course, the assistance of various Polish organizations for the benefit of the Jewish population was not limited to Warsaw. Very interesting information about the help of the *Stronnictwo Ludowe* (SL; People's Party) in the Białystok area was provided by Jakub Antoniuk 'Światowid', who had been the commander of the Białystok district of the *Bataliony Chłopskie*³⁸ since April 1943. According to his account, the idea of helping the Jewish population was born in this area, which had been occupied by the Soviet Union until June 1941, just after the German troops invaded and the Germans organized pogroms and killings of Jewish people in such places as Radziłów, Wąsosz, Szczuczyn and Wizna³⁹. Antoniuk reported that definite plans were discussed on 15 August of that year at his home in the village of Dobrzniewo Duże near Białystok, by a group of the leading peasant movement activists of the Białystok region, led by the former Member of Polish Parliament Władysław Praga⁴⁰. First and foremost, food was provided to the Białystok ghetto, the largest one in the

³⁷ W. Balcerak, *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne w akcji pomocy Żydom*, „Biuletyn ŻIH” 1987, no. 142; J. Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Wspomnienia o akcji pomocy Żydom...*; K. Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Polski ruch socjalistyczny wobec walki i zagłady warszawskiego getta*, „Biuletyn ŻIH” 1973, no. 86/87.

³⁸ *Bataliony Chłopskie* (BCh; Peasants' Battalions) – an armed underground resistance organization of the peasant movement (translator's note).

³⁹ This information is not only interesting, but in fact surprising, if we take into account the fact that this was the period when the murder of the Jewish population at Jedwabne has occurred!

⁴⁰ J. Antoniuk, *Pomoc działaczy ludowych i organizacji BCh dla ludności żydowskiej w okolicach Białegostoku w latach 1941–1943*, „Biuletyn ŻIH” 1974, no. 89.

region. Assistance was provided only by persons who expressed readiness to do so. Antoniuk admits that there were also those who believed that assistance should only be provided to 'our folk', i.e. the Poles. At that time, the Polish extreme anti-communist underground resistance murdered several peasant families for the help they gave to the Jews. The SL did not succeed in supplying weapons to the ghetto because, firstly, they did not have much themselves (only about a dozen blocks of explosives, known as 'tol', were handed over) and, secondly, the cooperating peasants were afraid to carry arms because that was too risky. In case of exposure of such cargo, unlike with illegal food supplies, there was no way to evade the death penalty. After the outbreak of the uprising in the Białystok Ghetto Antoniuk issued orders stressing the necessity of helping the Jews saved from the devastation⁴¹.

Activities of political parties and groups for the benefit of the Jewish population, especially their own members, have developed, as already mentioned, primarily in Warsaw. The *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (PPS; Polish Socialist Party) in all its factions, "*Barykada Wolności*" ("Barricade of Freedom"), "*Wolność*" ("Freedom"), *Związek Walki Wyzwoleńczej* (Union of Liberation Struggle), *Polscy Socjaliści* (Polish Socialists), *Komenda Obrońców Polski* (Command of Defenders of Poland), *Socjalistyczna Organizacja Bojowa* (SOB; Socialist Combat Organization) and many others⁴².

This assistance was, in my opinion, clearly underestimated and overlooked by both Polish and foreign historiography. It is only a question of time before

⁴¹ The orders read, among others, "The inhabitants of the Białystok ghetto are dying, but they are fighting. And all those who fight have many chances to save their lives. There is no doubt that many inhabitants of the ghetto will be able to escape from this place of hunger and death. And it is our human duty to come to the aid of these brave and courageous Jews. Let these Jews, once they escape from the burning ghetto, find friends and defenders in us, the Poles. Do not let your conscience reproach you one day that for some reason or another you have not come to the aid of cruelly oppressed and perishing people! It is the duty of us, the Poles, to do everything to resist not only the crimes, but also all the intentions of the German occupants. Every adversary of the Germans is our natural friend and ally in the battle for the freedom of all the peoples of Europe, in the battle for Germany's imminent defeat. The monstrous German crimes committed against the Jews and other enslaved peoples of Europe cannot escape and certainly shall not escape without punishment for the degenerate Nazi murderers, so it is important to carefully record and collect all evidence of Nazi crimes in these areas. No German crime in Białystok region can escape without punishment" (*ibid.*, p. 132).

⁴² For more on the subject see in: M. Urynowicz, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie...*

further of research of this subject results in a monographic publication. It is obvious to me that historical publications identified the assistance for the Jewish population in the Polish territory solely with the functioning of the RPŻ and with the 'Żegota' operation. This has come about both because of the insufficient development of the research and, as I mentioned above, from the most common political reasons: the predominance of ideology over reliable historical research.

Meanwhile, at least three operations conducted on Polish soil should be distinguished: the first would cover the organized activities independent of the RPŻ, primarily but not limited to those before its establishment; the second would be the operation of the RPŻ; and the third would cover all forms of individual assistance, obviously the most common one, which helped save the most people. Therefore there are at least three 'Żegota' operations, each one involving ever increasing numbers of aid-recipients. These operations, however, as am going to describe further, do not take into account all the activities undertaken by the broadly seen Polish side to rescue the Jewish population from the hands of German murderers. But now let us look at the second of the operations I mentioned. At the present stage of research the activities of the RPŻ can be described and critically analyzed most broadly, because of the relatively better state of preservation of archival sources (compared to the other two forms of assistance).

Rada Pomocy Żydom (Council of Assistance to the Jews) 'Żegota'

Three Polish organizations that conducted direct talks with the DR about the assistance to the Jews had a decisive influence on the establishment of the RPŻ. First of all, it was the Jewish section within the information department of the *Biuro Informacji i Propagandy* (BIP; Information and Propaganda Bureau) of the headquarters of the ZWZ (later the AK)⁴³, detached from the section of national minorities in February 1942, led by Henryk Woliński. The BIP was one of the first to understand the need for a special institution subsidized by the Polish authorities. Co-operation with the DR was necessary in this area. In August 1942 Henryk Woliński had his first discussion with Jan

⁴³ *Związek Walki Zbrojnej* (ZWZ; Union of Armed Struggle) – the principal armed underground resistance organization, reporting directly to the exiled Polish Government in London. Subsequently renamed *Armia Krajowa* (AK; Home Army) (translator's note).

Stanisław Jankowski, at the time the director of the social welfare department, later the Delegate of the Exiled Polish Government. In total, three meetings devoted to the problem were held during this period, during which the DR was represented by other persons, not known by their names. Unfortunately, they had no satisfactory results, so that even the Chief Commandant of the AK, Gen. Stefan Rowecki ‘Grot’ was impatient and considered that they were taking too long. At that time the Germans carried out their ‘great operation’, they deported and murdered about 300,000 Jews from Warsaw⁴⁴.

In addition to the Jewish section of the AK HQ, talks with the DR were also held by the *Polska Organizacja Demokratyczna* (POD; Polish Democratic Organization), represented by Wanda Kraheńska-Filipowicz who, notably, was not a member of the group⁴⁵.

The third movement that influenced the establishment of the RPŻ was the Roman-Catholic *Front Odrodzenia Polski* (FOP; Front of Poland’s Rebirth)⁴⁶. It was led by the well-known writer Zofia Kossak⁴⁷. Her contacts with the prewar army officer circles and the RC clergy enabled, among others, production of fake documents, and placing women and children in convents. In early August 1942 the FOP published 5,000 copies of Zofia Kossak’s leaflet called “Protest”, in which she wrote, among contents “Who remains silent when witnessing murder, becomes the murderer’s accomplice. Who does not condemn, consents.”

In the DR there was no shortage of members of the *Stronnictwo Narodowe* (SN; National Party), who did not support assistance to the Jews, or even opposed it.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Leopold Rutkowski ‘Trojanowski’, the director of the home affairs department, and Jan Stanisław Jankowski, the

⁴⁴ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 51–52.

⁴⁶ The FOP was a group of Roman Catholic activists detached from the KOP. See. AŻIH, Bernard Marek collection, 70, Fragments of memoirs of Henryk Borucki “Czarni” *Notatki i wspomnienia z lat 1939–1945*, p. 73.

⁴⁷ Zofia Kossak-Szczucka (1890–1968) – writer, active member of the underground resistance, since 1941 co-founder of the FOP, in 1942 chairwoman of the TRPŻ.

⁴⁸ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 53–54; G.S. Paulsson, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w okupowanej Warszawie (1940–1945)* [in:] *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*, ed. D. Libionka, Warsaw 2004, p. 305.

director of the social welfare department, supported it. They were influenced by Czesława and Teofil Wojeński from the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (SD; Democratic Party) and by Stefan Szwedowski, the President of the *Związek Syndykalistów Polskich* (ZSP; Union of Polish Syndicalists), who all actively helped the Jews⁴⁹. Eventually, due to Rutkowski's decision to grant a subsidy on 27 September 1942, a committee was created called the *Komisja Pomocy Społecznej dla Ludności Żydowskiej* (Commission of Social Assistance for the Jewish People) or the *Społeczny Komitet Pomocy Ludności Żydowskiej* (Social Committee for Assistance to the Jewish People), known for security reasons as the *Komitet im. Konrada Żegoty* ('Konrad Żegota' Committee). In subsequent years, after its liquidation and the establishment of the RPŻ, it became known as the *Tymczasowy Komitet Pomocy Żydom* (TKPŻ; Temporary Committee of Assistance to the Jews) or *Tymczasowa Rada Pomocy Żydom* (TRPŻ).

According to instructions of the DR, the committee was led by Zofia Kossak (chairwoman) and Wanda Krahelska-Filipowiczowa. Maria Lasocka, Witold Bieńkowski, Władysław Bartoszewski, Ignacy Barski (all from the FOP) and Janina Raabe-Wąsowiczowa and Czesław Wojeńska (from the SD) were the main activists. Representatives of the ZSP (known as "Sprawa", after the magazine it published): Stefan Szwedowski and Zofia Demciuch (who later became his wife) also worked closely with them⁵⁰.

Information about the establishment of the committee was published on 14 October 1942 in "Rzeczpospolita Polska", the paper of the DR. For security reasons this was the only news in the underground press about the existence of such a cell.

As Teresa Prekerowa has noted, the committee was essentially a merger of two centers, numerically small, who had their roots in Roman Catholic and democratic circles. Their combination alone could not expand the assistance. Funds were needed in the first place. It was expected that the operation would be supported the PPS "*Wolność-Równość-Niepodległość*" (PPS-WRN; PPS "Liberty-Equality-Independence"), which helped its own members of Jewish

⁴⁹ See AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5703, Account of Witold Bieńkowski.

⁵⁰ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 54. Girl guides, e.g. Zofia Janiczek "Zosia", Aleksandra Mackiewiczówna "Halinka", Maria Tomaszewska "Urszula" and Stanisława Wdońska "Irena", cooperated with them.

descent. On 28 September 1942, the day after the TKPŻ was formed; the party issued an appeal that called for providing care to escapers from the ghetto⁵¹. On 31 October a radiogram was sent to Deputy Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk in London, announcing the establishment of the committee to help Jews and requesting an allowance of half a million zlotys per month⁵². Thus, it took place no less than a month after the TKPŻ was established, and the first subsidies did not start coming until after its liquidation. The DR allocated only 70,000 zlotys for the committee's goal, paid in two installments, of 50,000 and 20,000 zlotys. In addition, the organization failed, Zofia Kossak wanted to conduct the assistance activities as a spontaneous movement, without the need for coordination; this view was shared by many of her co-workers. As a result, the lack of closer contacts between activists resulted in the dissipation of efforts, duplication of activities, and devoting much energy to achieving single objectives. In total, only 180 people were assisted during two months, ninety of them in Warsaw. Nevertheless, this was an organization that constituted the basis, which enabled the creation of the RPŻ⁵³.

Probably already since late October 1942, various conspiracy centers started considering a reorganization of the committee. Perhaps the DR treated it as a temporary body from the outset. During the discussions about its new formula the PPS-WRN was represented by Julian Grobelny and the SD by Marek Arczyński (who came from Cracow). The DR delegated the latter to the FOP, where he met Ignacy Barski, Witold Bieńkowski and Władysław Bartoszewski. It was decided that the new committee would rely on political organizations. This idea was supported by the DR and therefore the discussions, held mainly at the FOP premises at Radna 4 and at the SD premises

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 55–56.

⁵² Full text: “On the initiative of the *Delegatura*, the *Spółeczny Komitet Pomocy Ludności Żydowskiej* was organized from among Polish organizations. We request a benefit of half a million zlotys a month. *Delegatura* funds are not enough. Maybe Jewish organizations will give” (*ibid*, p. 55).

⁵³ Information about the initial activity of the council, very limited both in terms of the scope and the area, is confirmed by Marek Arczyński: “In the first few months the council actually functioned as a Warsaw institution, providing material aid mostly to the Jews who were outside the ghetto (on the so-called Aryan side), of course, in a very modest scale, because of the completely inadequate subsidies allocated to the council by the *Delegatura Rządu*” (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński).

at Czczota 22, were attended by representatives of Jewish organizations: initially Leon Feiner, then also Adolf Berman. Emilia Hiżowa (POD), Stefan Szwedowski („Sprawa”) and Władysław Bartoszewski (FOP) joined the group. The DR was very interested in the composition of the presidium of the organization that would be established, with seats (and most likely posts) reserved for representatives of the PPS-WRN and SL.

Following an organizational period of several weeks, the RPŻ was established on 4 December 1942. It included: Julian Grobelny “Trojan” from WRN; Ferdynand Arczyński “Marek”⁵⁴ from SD; Emilia Hiżowa “Barbara” and Stefan Szwedowski from POD; Witold Bieńkowski “Jan”/“Wencki”, Ignacy Barski “Józef” and Władysław Bartoszewski “Ludwik” from FOP; Adolf Berman “Borowski” from the *Żydowski Komitet Narodowy* (ŻKN; Jewish National Committee); Leon Feiner ‘Mikołaj’/ ‘Lasocki’ from the Bund⁵⁵. The main difference between the TKPŻ that operated until December 1942 and its successor was that, while TKPŻ was mainly a distribution center for the funds it received⁵⁶ and a kind of contact point for representatives of sever-

⁵⁴ For security reasons, he did not use his real first name in wartime, and after the war he retained the pseudonym and was known as Marek Arczyński. I have also accepted this version for this text.

⁵⁵ Throughout the existence of the RPŻ, the presidium was as follows: 1) chairmen: Julian Grobelny (WRN) January 1943 – February 1944; Roman Jabłonowski (socialist; no party member) May–July 1944; Leon Feiner (Bund) November(?) 1944 – January 1945; 2) vice-chairmen: Tadeusz Rek (SL) January 1943 – July 1944; Leon Feiner (Bund) January 1943 – July 1944; 3) secretaries: Adolf Berman (ŻKN) January 1943 – January 1944, May–July 1944; Szymon Gottesman (ŻKN) November(?) 1944 – January 1945; 4) treasurer: Marek Arczyński (SD-SPD) January 1943 – January 1945; 5) members of the council: Ignacy Barski (FOP) winter 1942/1943; Władysław Bartoszewski (FOP) December 1942 – July 1944; Piotr Gajewski (*Robotnicza Partia Polskich Socjalistów*/Workers Party of Polish Socialists) April–July 1944; 6) heads of sections: housing, Emilia Hiżowa (POD-SPD) summer 1943; children, Aleksandra Dargielowa, summer 1943, Irena Sendlerowa (RPPS) autumn 1943, July 1944; countryside, Stefan Sendłak (WRN) July 1943 – July 1944; medical, Ludwik Rostkowski October 1943 – July 1944; Emilia Hiżowa (SPD) October X 1943 – July 1944; 7) council office: Zofia Rudnicka (SD-SPD) December 1942 – July 1944; Janina Raabe-Wąsowiczowa (SD-SPD) December 1942 – January 1945; Celina Jezierska-Tyszko (SD-SPD) autumn 1943 – July 1944; Władysława Paszkiewicz (SD SPD) autumn 1943 – July 1944; representative of the DR to the RPŻ: Witold Bieńkowski (FOP) December 1942 – July 1944; 8) Audit Committee: Tadeusz Rek; Leon Feiner (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 67–68).

⁵⁶ It is worth mentioning here that the distribution of funds was not without disputes. A committee composed of Arczyński, Berman and Feiner was appointed for this purpose (*ibid.*, pp. 79–81).

al small social/political organizations, the RPŻ became a coordinating and decision making center for a wide network of field activists. The secretariat (*Biuro Wykonawcze/Executive Office*) played a very important role, as the point of contact for the members of the RPŻ and cooperating members of other organizations or institutions, such as the *Rada Główna Opiekuńcza* (RGO; Chief Welfare Council) and the City Board, and also for persons coming from other parts of Poland. Zofia Rudnicka managed the office⁵⁷.

Witold Bieńkowski informed DR about the establishment of the RPŻ and requested to send this information on to the exiled authorities in London, to appoint a permanent DR representative, and to grant permanent subsidies. This was a prerequisite for starting full activity. However, in order not to waste time, the temporary presidium of the RPŻ was appointed with Feiner as the chairman, Berman as the secretary and Arczyński as the treasurer.

On 12 January 1943, after Tadeusz Rek joined the work as the representative of the SL, the permanent (although incomplete) presidium was formed: Grobelny (WRN) as the chairman, Rek (SL) and Feiner (Bund) as the vice-chairmen, Berman (ŻKN) as the secretary and Arczyński as the treasurer (from 30 January).

Szwedowski, the syndicalist representative, was not able to take up his mandate in the RPŻ leadership structures, most probably for political reasons. The selection was dictated by a political party hierarchy and the post was determined by the rank of the represented party, rather than by previous personal merits in assisting the Jews. As a result, none of the TKPŻ members (liquidated on the day the RPŻ was established, 4 December 1942) entered the strict leadership of the RPŻ, although many of them joined the new structure.

Funds obtained from the exiled Polish Government in London and means collected among the Polish and Jewish communities in Poland and abroad provided the financial basis for the RPŻ activity. The RPŻ was in fact a 'liai-

⁵⁷ The main office premises were located at Eugenia Wąsowska's apartment at Żurawia 24 m. 4. Other premises included: Radna 4, Czczota 22, Puławska 14, Lipowa 4a, Chłodna 24, 6 Sierpnia, Marszałkowska 74 (Mrs Duglasowa), Filtrowa (Twardo), Wilcza 23, Wilcza 21 (three Chmielewska sisters, tailors), Koszykowa 32 (a power station employee). One meeting was held at the "Jak w domu" ("Like Home") restaurant on the corner of Świętokrzyska and Jasna streets, with the consent of the owner Ola Heptingerowa. In addition, other trusted places were used (*ibid*, pp. 82–83).

son committee' of the parties. It was to concentrate the efforts of political organizations, social groups and individuals. It was designed to set up local councils at district delegations in other parts of occupied Poland. The Council played a dual role: central for the local structures of other parts of Poland, and local for Warsaw and the surrounding region, because there was no separate structure for this area. Eventually, however, independent councils were only formed in Cracow and Lwów⁵⁸. Decisions were taken at meetings of the presidium or in a broader team of co-workers. In order to streamline operations, the Executive Office (secretariat) was already formed in December 1942. In later months, sections dealing with the various aid departments were created. In 1943, the following sections were organized: housing on 1 April, countryside⁵⁹ on 10 July, children on 16 August, medical on 5 October. Creating the sections was a proof of the good organization of the RPŻ. This prevented scattering forces or duplication of activities. One of the most important tasks was to provide the hiding people with documents essential for functioning on the 'Aryan' side. To this end, the RPŻ cooperated with underground resistance organizations, which could provide such services, mainly with the ZWZ-AK legalization cell. It is worth mentioning that these cells had already provided similar services long before that⁶⁰. For some

⁵⁸ Now Lviv, Ukraine (translator's note).

⁵⁹ The tasks of the countryside section were closely connected with the RPŻ contacts outside Warsaw, such as the care for the camps where the Jewish population was concentrated. Due to such contacts, among others, as a result of the initiative of the RPŻ, Tadeusz Pajewski, an officer of the AK was able to take Emanuel Ringelblum from Trawniki to Warsaw. (*ibid*, p. 229).

⁶⁰ Waclaw Zagórski, a member of the "Wolność" organization, recalled the legalization activity of AK cells for the Jewish population:

"The issue of helping the Jews under Nazi German occupation during the Second World War became current and urgent long before the mass extermination started and before special cells and committees were created at the delegations of the exiled Polish Government, based on the organizational network of the AK and of the political parties. The extermination of the Jewish population began first in the eastern lands in the autumn of 1941, but already in the spring of 1940, after the announcement of the first German orders about the resettlement of Jews to special districts in larger towns of the *General Gouvernement*, the problem of sabotaging the segregation arose.

"Among my charges, sworn into the 'Wolność' organization, I already had a significant proportion of Jews. Several of them immediately decided to move to the Jewish quarter, regardless of the consequences, motivated either by personal reasons, which we had to respect, or because they foresaw the need to carry out political work and combat also in

time, the RPŻ was associated with the legalization cell of Henryk Aleksander Weiss, known as the *Międzyorganizacyjny Biuro Dokumentarne* (Inter-Organization Documentary Office). It served many organizations, but the RPŻ was one of its most important clients. The cooperation was so strict that in September 1943 the office asked the DR via the RPŻ to be recognized as the official legalization office of the Polish underground resistance, with the RPŻ as the financial supervisor, i.e. the principal contractor. The cooperation was terminated when members of the office were arrested.⁶¹ Marek Arczyński has estimated that by the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising (1 August 1944) up to 40,000 documents of various types were provided to hiding Jews⁶².

After supplying documents for hiding persons, it was necessary to find them shelter. This was much more difficult. The council used the so-called transitional accommodation until a permanent one was found. As noted by Teresa Prekerowa, housing for the aid-recipients was sought by everybody: members of the presidium, offices, liaison persons, group carers and representatives of the cooperating parties. Private and family contacts were used

the ghetto. But a large majority of the ‘Wolność’ Jews decided to stay with us on the ‘Aryan side’. They included two members of the ‘Wolność’ Principal Committee: Andrzej Fejgin and Henryk Greniecki, as well as several actors led by Waław Modrzewski. In order to stay, they all had to have ‘Aryan’ documents, and almost all had to move to new addresses. At first I had no difficulty obtaining fake documents for them. On the basis of an agreement with representatives of the headquarters of the ZWZ I was authorized to obtain a fake identity card for each member of the organization from the legalization cell, without explanations. This cell operated very efficiently, it had a large stock of authentic blank ID cards obtained when Warsaw surrendered in September 1939, authentic prewar seals, and sometimes even used handwritten signatures of the same officials who used to sign the ID cards before the war. I would send photographs, with descriptions and fictitious names and personal data on attached pieces of paper, to a pre-arranged contact point via a special liaison person re-sworn in at the HQ of the ZWZ, actress Jaga Boryta, who after two days would bring back the documents. As the ghetto closure deadline approached, the number of my requirements for personal ID cards grew sharply. Needless to say, I could not refuse ‘Aryan’ legalization not only to members of ‘Wolność’, but also to their wives, parents and children. Also leaders of the Jewish socialist ‘Bund’ asked me for documents, even those who were about to move to the ghetto, but wanted to be able to stay in touch with us, and thus to move on the ‘Aryan’ side without an armband, after illegally crossing the walls. More and more often the photos I sent included ones that left no doubt as to the Jewish origin of the people in question.” (W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, pp. 217–220).

⁶¹ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 149–156.

⁶² W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, p. 125.

most frequently. While people with a so-called 'good appearance' had chances of finding an apartment themselves, those with prominent Jewish features were mostly dependent solely on members of the RPŻ. Despite insistence of 'Żegota' workers, it was difficult to convince apartment owners, who were frightened by the occupant's threat of capital punishment⁶³. Often, therefore, if a private home could not be found and it was no longer possible to wait for with the person's move, the "business" premises of the RPŻ cooperating organizations were used⁶⁴. This was extremely dangerous because it endangered not only private individuals but also the entire organization to which the premises belonged. It did happen that private individuals offered their homes not only for the council but also for political parties, including the Jewish ones. For example, Eugenia Wąsowska-Leszczynska agreed in the second half of December 1942 that not only the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* and the RPŻ could use her home for their activities, but also the central committee of the 'Bund' and the Jewish *Komisja Koordynacyjna* (KK; Coordination Committee). After the fall of the uprising in the ghetto, she sheltered Jewish insurgents at her home⁶⁵.

It is worth emphasizing that in addition to finding apartments where the hiding people could live, they were also assisted in building concealed shelters by arranging the interiors in such a way that if necessary the person could hide inside. Emilia Hiżowa and Leon Bigdowski were among the specialists in this type of secure shelters⁶⁶.

The RPŻ tried to provide comprehensive support to the people in their care. For this purpose contact was made with a group of doctors and a medical section was established in October 1943. Most of the cooperating doctors were recruited from the *Komitet Porozumiewawczy Lekarzy Demokratów i Socjalistów* (Liaison Committee of Democratic and Socialist Doctors) founded in

⁶³ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 171. The problems of Jews hiding on the 'Aryan' side and related forms of survival were described recently in at least two works: J. Nalewajko-Kulikov, *Strategie przetrwania. Żydzi po aryjskiej stronie Warszawy*, Warsaw 2004 and M. Cobel-Tokarska, *Bezludna wyspa, nora, grób. Wojenne kryjówki Żydów w okupowanej Polsce*, Warsaw 2012.

⁶⁴ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 177.

⁶⁵ W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, pp. 149–151.

⁶⁶ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 181.

1940 in Warsaw. A somewhat complicated 'trio' system was used, intended to protect against possible exposure. Among three cooperating doctors only one was in touch with the higher-level 'trio', but each of them formed his own 'trio', which he directed and to which he forwarded the tasks ordered from the higher level⁶⁷. Ludwik Rostkowski (father) was the head of the medical section. From October 1943 until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, the work was organized as follows: the RPŻ liaison person (Celina Jezierska) forwarded all calls for medical help to Ludwik Rostkowski (son). He then either reported these to his father, or went to the hiding person himself to decide whether a specialist was needed or if general care was sufficient⁶⁸.

One of the most important issues for the RPŻ was to expand the work to all of the occupied Polish territories, wherever it was necessary to provide assistance to the persecuted Jews. Without a doubt, this intention has remained one of the least successful undertakings. As I have already mentioned, independent councils were eventually established in Cracow and Lwów only. Nevertheless, the RPŻ from Warsaw tried to reach the countryside whenever there was a chance for real help. To this end, the countryside section was established in July 1943, led by Stefan Sendłak, the leader of the *Komitet Zamojsko-Lubelski Niesienia Pomocy Żydom* (KZLNPNŻ; Zamość-Lublin Committee for Providing Assistance to Jews). This section's activity was quite extensive. It was possible to ensure co-operation of many active emissaries, including Tadeusz Sarnecki and his wife, who visited the regions of Piotrków, Kielce and Lublin, and the cities and towns of Białystok, Częstochowa, Radom, Pionki, Skarżysko-Kamienna and Łódź. Relevant organizational contacts were also established with the PPS-WRN and the *Socjalistyczna Organizacja Bojowa* (Socialist Combat Organization)⁶⁹.

The full name of the RPŻ was: *Rada Pomocy Żydom przy Pełnomocniku Rządu RP w Kraju* (Council of Assistance to the Jews at the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Republic of Poland in the Home Country). With time, however, the full name was less and less often used, and since the autumn of

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 218.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 221–222. See also document no. 18 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 305–308.

⁶⁹ For more on the subject see T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 227–245.

1943 the “Plenipotentiary of the Government in the Home Country” part ceased to appear in documents. The codenames were: *Rada Żegoty* (Żegota Council), *Rada Opieki Żegoty* (Żegota Council of Care), *Główna Rada Opieki Żegoty* (Żegota Chief Council of Care). The codename ‘Żegota’ was probably created by Zofia Kossak. It was such a comfortable name that it started to be used for other organizational units and issues related to Jews: i.e. it was applied to the Jewish section of the AK and the Jewish section of the DR. As I have already mentioned, the name: ‘Żegota’s action’ has become synonymous with any activity to help Jews, even unrelated to the RPŻ, provided by various people from their own resources and for their own purposes⁷⁰.

The activity of the RPŻ depended on political factors. Throughout its existence, the DR carefully maintained the “correctness” of the political composition of the presidium. From the outset, the circles, which discussed with the DR the possible establishment of institutions for assistance to Jews, avoided the inclusion of representatives of the groups that the DR might have reservations about⁷¹. Although the RPŻ did not include as many political parties as it wished⁷², no representative of the *Polska Partia Robotnicza* (PPR; Polish Workers Party)⁷³ was allowed to join it. Government authorities expressed a categorical protest “under the threat of suspension of funds”⁷⁴. On the other hand, it proved possible to accept Piotr Gajewski, a representative of the *Robotnicza Partia Polskich Socjalistów* (RPPS; Workers Party of Polish Socialists). The party-oriented organization of the council is also shown by the fact that membership in its bureau was allocated not to specific persons, but to political organizations. After Grobelny was arrested in March 1944,

⁷⁰ Prekerowa writes about it, see *ibid*, pp. 62–63.

⁷¹ Lack of a *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* representative, for example, is mentioned by Witold Bienkowski: “Why did no representative of the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* participate in the delegation? It was about the possibility of political success of the action, and the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* at the time was neither directly nor indirectly in the government coalition, so participation of the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* was not advisable at this time. It must be borne in mind, however, that the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* was a potential political opposition, as was well known by government authorities” (*AŻIH, Relacje*, 301/5703).

⁷² T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 68–69.

⁷³ The PPR was a communist party and was Stalin’s subversive (translator’s note).

⁷⁴ This is what Marek Arczyński claims, but this information is not confirmed in documents (*ibid*, pp. 70–71).

nobody took over his post until late March/early April 1944, when the RPŻ asked the WRN to appoint a successor⁷⁵.

The politicization of the RPŻ was largely connected with the DR's desire to control all underground resistance activity in the country and was closely linked to its propaganda objectives. The intention was, when providing assistance to the Jewish people, to show how much the underground in Poland did for them. Of course that underground could not be the communist one or any other hostile or opposed to the exiled Polish Government in London. That would have meant using state funds to subsidize the activity of groups that could subsequently use it in for their own propaganda purposes. The establishment of the RPŻ was intended to emphasize the efforts of the Polish government to save Poland's citizens of Jewish nationality. If necessary, the Government could refer to such efforts, as it did at the first meeting of the *Rada do spraw Ratowania Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce* (Council for the Rescue of Jewish People in Poland)⁷⁶, when Władysław Banaczyk, the Home Minister, stated: "To those authorities that try questioning the good name of the Poles by accusing them of intolerance, we say: look at the reality of the Home Country!"⁷⁷.

In my opinion, the DR's work to help the Jewish population was subordinated to political considerations, and saving lives as such was not its most important objective. Political calculations, personal arguments and the desire to secure power in the future, even at the expense of human casualties, were a normal part of the political struggle of the time, equally frequent in the Polish and Jewish underground resistance movements⁷⁸. Understanding this issue enables one to clarify the decisions taken and the position of the DR in the discussions with the RPŻ. It is necessary to refer to three aspects of the

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.

⁷⁶ The council was established in May 1944. It was headed by Adam Ciołkosz (PPS), Dr Emanuel Scherer (Bund) was the secretary, Witold Kulerski, Stanisław Sopiccki, Anzelm Reiss and Rabbi Abraham Babad were members (*ibid.*, p. 302).

⁷⁷ AŻIH, *Varia okupacyjne*, 230/150, pp. 55–56.

⁷⁸ It is enough to point out the lack of political and military unity even in the face of death, as evidenced by the military rivalry between the *Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (ŻOB; Jewish Combat Organization) and the *Żydowski Związek Wojskowy* (ŻZW; Jewish Military Union) armed resistance organizations and the political rivalry between the ŻKN and the 'Bund'.

Polish underground policy: the DR's financial policy towards the RPŻ; the attitude of the DR to the armed resistance of the Jews and the struggle against anti-Semitism, including first of all the *szmalcownictwo*; and the attitudes of the Polish underground political parties towards the 'Żegota operation'.

First, one may look at the funds of the RPŻ. Teresa Prekerowa claims that the activity of the RPŻ during its two-year activity was financed approximately 90 per cent by the Polish government and about 10 per cent by Jewish organizations⁷⁹. No other sources of funds were possible. It may be assumed, therefore, with certainty that any sum not provided in the budget came from Jewish organizations. However, there are reasons to suppose that the ratio of amounts received from the Polish government and from Jewish organizations was not 9 to 1.

Subsidies from the Polish Government were, respectively: 150,000 zlotys in January 1943, 300,000 in February 1943, 250,000 in March 1943, 900,000 in April 1943 (including an extraordinary donation due to the fighting in the ghetto), 400,000 in May 1943, 550 thousand monthly from June to October 1943, 750 thousand monthly in November and December 1943, 1 million monthly from January to March 1944, 1.5 million in April 1944, 1,000,000 monthly in May and June 1944, 2,000,000 in July 1944, 8,000,000 in November 1944, 6,000,000 in December 1944⁸⁰. Very similar data is given by Władysław Bartoszewski⁸¹. This totals 28,750,000 zlotys. However, according to the findings of Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, the RPŻ apparently received 37,400,000 zlotys and 50,000 dollars from the state budget during the entire period of its operation⁸². Both Prekerowa and Osmecki agree that Jewish organizations received about one million dollars via the DR from their overseas offices or other Jewish organizations⁸³.

⁷⁹ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 125.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸¹ For 1943: January – 150,000, February – 300,000, March – 250,000, April – 900,000, May – 400,000, from June to October – 550,000 monthly (including 150,000 for places outside Warsaw), November and December – 750,000 monthly; for 1944: from January to July – 1,000,000 million monthly, from August – 2,000,000 monthly, plus the aid of Jewish organizations (W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, p. 37).

⁸² K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, p. 243.

⁸³ K. Iranek Osmecki states in one place that it was about 400,000 dollars each for the 'Bund' as well as for the ŻKN (*ibid.*, pp. 239–241), and in another place that it was over 1,000,000 dollars for all Jewish organizations (*ibid.*, p. 243). T. Prekerowa accepts the former as cre-

In light of recent research, however, the data appears substantially exaggerated. Dariusz Stola has determined that the sums assigned by the Polish Government and the Jewish organizations, which were ordered to be paid via the DR amounted to about 1,300,000 dollars. However, receipt of only about 600,000 dollars has been confirmed!⁸⁴ Of course, this sum should be considered in comparison with all the funds that the Polish Government was able to devote to DR activities in occupied Poland. In 1942 the sums that the DR had at its disposal were relatively modest⁸⁵. The situation improved in the following years, however. According to Waldemar Grabowski's findings, in 1943 the budget was 4,337,800 dollars, and in 1944 it was 12,000,000 dollars. The social welfare budget, from which the money was allocated to the RPŻ⁸⁶, amounted to 1,213,800 dollars in 1943 and 4,672,600 dollars in 1944⁸⁷. If we accepted the amounts quoted by Prekerowa as true, we could calculate (taking into account the average 1943–1944 exchange rate of 100 zlotys for 1 dollar) that in 1943 the DR allocated about 5 percent of the social welfare budget for the RPŻ purposes, i.e. approximately 1.5 percent of the total DR budget⁸⁸. For 1944, when the DR allocated 22,500,000 zlotys for the RPŻ, this amounted to about 4.8 percent and about 1.8 per cent, respectively. Thus, in total during 1943–1944 the DR funds for the RPŻ amounted to about 5 per-

dible and mentions about 420,000 dollars for the 'Bund' and a roughly similar sum for the ŻKN (*ibid*, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 123).

⁸⁴ D. Stola, *Nadzieja...*, p. 208.

⁸⁵ According to Bienkowski, in mid-1942 the dollar-based DR budget totaled at 60–80,000,000 zlotys. This depended on the black stock exchange rate (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5703, Account of Witold Bienkowski).

⁸⁶ Accounts of Tadeusz Rek [in:] *Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”)*. *Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych działaczy RPŻ*, „Biuletyn ŻIH” 1968, no. 65/66.

⁸⁷ See W. Grabowski, *Delegatura Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraj 1940–1945*, Warsaw 1995, p. 118.

⁸⁸ D. Stola, *Nadzieja...*, p. 208. He states that the average exchange rate during 1943–1944 was about 100 zlotys per dollar. Teresa Prekerowa differs, as she says that 400,000 dollars was equal in the black market to about 30,000,000 zlotys, i.e. the average value would be about 75 zlotys per dollar. The dollar exchange rate during the occupation was steadily rising, however: for example, in April 1944, one dollar bill was worth 160 zlotys on the black market and one dollar in golden coin was worth 860 zlotys. See. S. Wachowiak, *Czas, które przeżyłem*, Warsaw 1991, p. 237. It is easy to count that 400,000 dollars in paper bills would cost about 64,000,000 zlotys in April 1944, or twice as much as assumed by Prekerowa. In these calculations I use the exchange rate given by Dariusz Stola.

cent of the welfare budget and about 1.7 percent of the total budget. If one were to accept the higher amount, quoted by Iranek-Osmecki that would be about 6 percent and about 2.2 percent, respectively. Thus, even in this most optimistic case, the amounts spent on the purposes of assistance for the Jewish population were very low in the overall budget.

Table no. 1. Amounts transferred from the Polish state budget through the DR for assistance to the Jewish population

Authors	Percentage of sums allocated to the RPŻ in yearly DR budgets in 1943 and 1944 at an average rate of 100 zlotys for 1 dollar				Total during 1943–1944	
	1943		1944		social welfare budget	DR budget
	social welfare budget	DR budget	social welfare budget	DR budget		
Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki	5.1 percent	1.44 percent	6.6 percent	2.5 percent	6.3 percent	2.2 percent
Teresa Prekerowa and Władysław Bartoszewski	5.1 percent	1.44 percent	4.8 percent	1.8 percent	4.8 percent	1.7 percent
Dariusz Stola, amounts for the RPŻ, 'Bund', ŻKN*	49.4 percent	13.80 percent	12.8 percent	5.0 percent	10.1 percent	3.6 percent

* This row shows the percentage of the budget that would be constituted by the amount of 600,000 dollars, i.e. the total amount of money transferred by the DR, both from the Polish Government and from Jewish organizations, to the RPŻ, 'Bund' and ŻKN in 1943 and 1944,

The question arises: why so little? Could the Polish Government not be more generous, realizing the tragedy of the Jewish people?⁸⁹

⁸⁹ See S. Krakowski, *The Attitude of the Polish Underground to the Jewish Question during the Second World War* [in:] *Contested Memories. Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, prep. by J.D. Zimmerman, New Brunswick, New Jersey–London 2003, p. 99.

Was this state of affairs purely due to objective reasons? Or perhaps the Polish Government, knowing the sums transferred also by foreign Jewish organizations, decided that it could limit its own funds to rescue its Jewish citizens? Or maybe the cause was anti-Semitism or a cool political calculation? Perhaps reports about the ongoing Holocaust were taken into account and the funds were adjusted to the actual numbers of the Jewish population, decimated in 1943 and 1944? It is difficult to answer these questions, but knowing the amount of money from both the Polish Government and foreign Jewish organizations, there being no doubt that all of the latter went to the Jewish population in Poland; one can risk a preliminary hypothesis. If the amount of funds that the DR transferred to the Jewish population is compared to the total budget, it is seen that, although these sums were only about 3.6 percent in relation to the total budget of the Polish Underground State in 1943 and 1944, they were about 10 percent of the social welfare budget. In my opinion, it cannot be excluded that this was not just a coincidence. It can be assumed that the percentage of these sums was roughly equal to the demographic proportion of the Jewish population in the prewar period! This would mean that the Polish authorities⁹⁰ decided to give the Jewish population only as much of the social care money as they considered “just”, i.e. in accordance with the prewar demographic proportions, while the rest, if it reached Poland, would be used for other objectives.

However, regardless of how much money sent for Jewish purposes actually went to Jewish organizations or the RPŻ, it seems obvious in the current state of knowledge that some part of the money sent to Poland was never transferred to the designated beneficiary. This throws a very dubious light on the part played by the *Polskie Państwo Podziemne* (Polish Underground State) in the financial aid to the Jewish population. The next step is to suppose that hundreds of thousands of dollars that never went to Jewish organizations in Poland were allocated by the DR for other purposes, and the activity of the RPŻ was in fact not financed by the state treasury, but above all with money intended for Jewish organizations. The DR itself would thus

⁹⁰ Or rather the DR, as it seems that the issue of the amount of payments remained within its discretion, while the authorities in London only contented themselves with inquiries of how much was paid. See D. Stola, *Nadzieja...*, p. 211.

limit itself to transferring these funds, labeling them falsely as coming from the Polish state treasury⁹¹. However, the matter is very complicated and needs further research⁹².

There are serious indications that such suppositions are correct. It is difficult not to notice that such a state of affairs would correspond with the opinions of the Polish Government authorities at that time, who perceived the persecution of the Jewish population as a part of the general extermination policy of the occupying power and who opposed the request to treat the Jewish question in a particular manner (as was requested by the RPŻ) considering this to be a certain “privilege”⁹³. Moreover, the reluctance of official authorities to subsidize the activities of the RPŻ in general, displayed more than once, is also known. Witold Bienkowski, a worker of the Jewish section, said that provisioning higher amounts than was necessary for the minimum level of work could end with a complete suspension of financial support from the DR⁹⁴. Additional doubts are found in the diary of Ignacy Schwarzbart, who claims that Mikołajczyk lied to him about money sent for Jewish purposes (at least in 1941 and 1942). It is also a fact that copies of

⁹¹ See B. Temkin-Bermanowa, *Dziennik z podziemia*, prep. by A. Grupińska, P. Szapiro, Warsaw 2000, p. 251, note 27. Thus the official Polish aid for the RPŻ would be limited only to organizational help! It would therefore be at least doubly unfair, as not only the money donated by Jewish organizations was taken away but also the special situation of the exterminated Jews was not taken into account and they were allocated only as much from the social welfare budget as if the Jews were treated equally with the Polish people by the Nazis.

⁹² D. Stola, *Nadzieja...*, p. 208.

⁹³ See document no. 9 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 290.

⁹⁴ “The budget allocations for councils provided by the DR were regulated by the need to meet the minimum needs of the council in its work. Leaders of the DR were of the opinion that the council ought to raise the budgets by the real indication of its work. During every discussion with the head of the ‘Żegota’ section the Delegate of the Government emphasized that any budget amount formed in inflated size would be the end of the council’s work. In that statement I saw and still see, with full personal consent, a genuine concern for the most important part of the council’s work, which was to break the reluctance of the Polish society toward the Jews that had accumulated over years, and to change the Polish opinion in favor of those who were hurt most. I agreed and still agree with the opinion of the official authorities that it was less important, although very important, in the work of the council to save a hundred more or a hundred less Jewish lives, than it was to create a climate in the society that would enable saving thousands” (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5703, Account of Witold Bienkowski).

signals from Poland and London are quite often different from each other as are, consequently, the amounts of money mentioned therein⁹⁵.

Another issue worth attention is the funds received by the RPŻ from Jewish sources, i.e. from Jewish parties in Poland. According to the findings of Teresa Prekerowa, from July 1943 to June 1944 these subsidies, together with a one-off foreign direct subsidy in October 1943, amounted to 5,300,000 zlotys, which constituted about 33 percent of the annual budget⁹⁶. At the same time, she claims that in the first half of 1943 and in the third quarter of 1944, the RPŻ obtained funds only from the Polish Government⁹⁷. In my opinion this last piece of information is not reliable. A surviving letter from the RPŻ to the DR of 10 May 1943, with a request to increase the subsidies for the activities of the planned district councils, includes the unequivocal statement: "It is not possible to designate the assistance requested by the districts from the amounts received by the Chief Council, because the current level of the **fixed expenditure** of the Chief Council exceeds the monthly subsidy received so far by about 40 percent"⁹⁸.

How to explain this? It is hard to believe that the RPŻ would decide to make such a far-reaching distortion by claiming that almost half of the funds were sourced outside the budget. Of course, it can be considered probable that, in order to obtain an increase in subsidies, the RPŻ has slightly inflated the percentage of the fixed non-budgetary expenditures, but still it should be assumed that at least 30 percent of the fixed expenditures were obtained from non-budgetary sources. Which ones? Where did the funds come from

⁹⁵ D. Stola, *Nadzieja...*, pp. 209, 211, p. 338 note 83.

⁹⁶ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 124.

⁹⁷ See M. Arczyński, W. Balcerak, *Kryptonim „Żegota”*. *Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939-1945*, Warsaw 1979, p. 78 – they write that until July 1943, the RPŻ budget was based only on government funds.

⁹⁸ See document no. 2 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 281. The letter was signed by Arczyński, among others. Thus, there is a significant contradiction between what Arczyński wrote after the war and what he signed with his own name during the war. I am much more inclined to believe the wartime documents than the postwar publication, both because the author's memory might have failed him and because when writing in the communist period he not only considered the discussion about Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation, but also the communist censorship.

to cover those 30 or 40 percent? In my opinion, the Jewish organizations were the only possible source. If this document is true, it would mean that funds amounting to about 30 percent of the budget were received from Jewish organizations not only since the summer of 1943, but that also in the earlier period a substantial part of the funds came from this source. Thus, the amounts transferred to the RPŻ by Jewish organizations, whether directly from the West or through Jewish organizations grouped in the KK, were probably in excess of the 10 percent as identified by Prekerowa. If one adds that already in 1943 Jewish organizations were providing assistance to at least the same number of aid-recipients as the RPŻ (and there are many indications that to an even greater number) and that among the groups within the RPŻ two were Jewish (the ŻKN and the 'Bund'), it may be assumed that, altogether, the Jewish organizations were much more active than the Polish parties in the entire organizational and institutional 'Żegota' operation, and not only in the activities of the RPŻ. This is logical: first of all, the Jewish parties were naturally more interested in caring for the Jewish population; secondly, they often simply looked after their own members; thirdly, they received much more funds from the Jewish organizations than the RPŻ from the Polish Government, and fourthly: Polish parties had many other objectives besides the assistance to the Jewish population. There is no doubt, however, that since the summer of 1944, Jewish organizations have ceased to support the RPŻ with subsidies, because they themselves have experienced financial problems due to the lack of transfers from abroad⁹⁹.

When discussing the funds of the RPŻ, one more important issue should be addressed. It should be realized that the transfer of funds was dependent on the DR courier network. These missions were not always successful. According to Iranek-Osmecki, many people have died, and nearly two million dollars were lost¹⁰⁰. However, no question was more important for the RPŻ. According to Prekerowa, about 50 percent of all the correspondence

⁹⁹ See document no. 7 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 287–288.

¹⁰⁰ Transferring money was quite risky, only 483 sorties were successful out of 858, 63 aircraft failed to return, and out of 345 agents sent 11 died en route or during parachute drop. 1,763,000 dollars were lost (K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, p. 237).

with the DR concerned the money transferred. Mostly it included requests to increase the subsidies or to transfer the funds that were known to have been sent by Jewish organizations, but their transfer was delayed. In addition, most of the money from the West was handed over to the RPŻ and Jewish organizations not in dollars but in zlotys, so the DR controlled the price at which the dollars would be exchanged. It is probable that misappropriations happened in the process. The RPŻ was not happy about it, as it could have sold the dollars on the black market at a higher rate, but did not protest, in order to maintain good relations with the DR¹⁰¹.

Many consignments failed to reach the Jewish organizations that waited for these, or were handed over with long delays. Needless to say, this was primarily due to objective conditions, the huge risk that must be taken to bring the money to occupied Poland. But was that always the case? In March 1944 Witold Bieńkowski, the DR representative at the RPŻ, informed Leopold Rutkowski, the director of the home affairs department: "The sums transferred so far have been exhausted. I believe that London should be alerted from the DR side, as the failure to send the, presumably, accumulated money may have a fatal effect on the political side of the section as well. In the present situation, so far relieved with much effort, I consider it advisable and desirable that representatives of the Jewish Coordination Committee or representatives of the Council are met by "Doktor"¹⁰². I insistently ask you,

¹⁰¹ Icchak Cukierman mentions settlements between the Polish underground and Jewish organizations: "they kept for weeks the money sent to us from London. Not to mention that they cheated us, as the money came from London in pounds sterling or dollars, they sold it on the black market and then gave us only a small part in foreign currency, and the rest in zloty according to the official German rate, which was maybe 10 percent of the black market rate. That was the reality of the underground Poland at the time." (I. Cukierman, *Nadmiar pamięci. Siedem owych lat. Wspomnienia 1939–1946*, Warsaw 2000, p. 298). Some of the funds, however, were certainly handed over in dollars. Helena Merenholt personally exchanged dollars for zlotys, as she has stated: "These funds came from the subsidies of the exiled government and from subsidies of the Joint, the Trade Unions in the USA, and other Jewish social organizations from abroad." (*Dyskusja uczestników sympozjum poświęconego 35 rocznicy powstania w getcie warszawskim (20–21 IV 1978)*. *Wypowiedzi Mariana Fuksa, Piotra Matusaka, Wisły Pankiewicz, Ruty Sakowskiej, Heleny Merenholt i Władysława Świdowskiego*, "Biuletyn ŻIH" 1978, no. 3/4 (107/108), pp. 139–162).

¹⁰² "Doktor" ("Doctor") was one of the pseudonyms of Jan Stanisław Jankowski, who since December 1942 was the Deputy Delegate. After Jan Piekalkiewicz was arrested on

Director, to kindly elicit an audience. The reception will calm the mood for some time, until the arrival of the consignments.”¹⁰³ In December 1944 the RPŻ awaited sums larger than originally requested to be sent from abroad, but in vain. Although it was confirmed that these sums were allocated by the Polish Government, they did not reach the recipient in late December 1944 or early January 1945. The earliest money transferred via the DR was that earmarked for the ‘Bund’, already from the autumn of 1942, while that for other Jewish organizations only from mid-1943¹⁰⁴.

The RPŻ has repeatedly requested the DR, and via it the Polish Government in London, to increase financial assistance, from the very beginning of its functioning virtually until the end of the German occupation. In April 1943 a memorandum connected with the allocation of 250,000 zlotys for March of that year said that this amount was disproportionate to the needs: “not only is it insufficient to satisfy these even in a modest way, but it does not allow any activity that could be treated seriously at all”. At the same time, it was stated that such a state of affairs threatens the further existence of the RPŻ, and the DR would be entirely to blame for any consequences¹⁰⁵. The following month, when the subsidy from the state budget amounted to only 400,000 zlotys, the RPŻ applied for several times more, 6–8,000,000 zlotys, “if the assistance action is to be something real, rather than fiction”¹⁰⁶.

Even if it is assumed that these were exaggerated statements, it is clear that the funds at the disposal of the RPŻ constituted only a small percentage of what was really needed¹⁰⁷.

19 February 1943 he took over his duties, but his appointment was approved on 21 April 1943 (W. Grabowski, *Delegatura...*, p. 43).

¹⁰³ At the same time he suggested the following text of a telegram to London: “Situation of hiding Jews in Poland disastrous. Thousands need help. Complete exhaustion of personal reserves. Sums sent were spent entirely by Bund and Zionists for charity help. Necessity to send v[ery] large transfers from American, English and Palestinian Jews. Lack of transfers threatens with political complications. So far relations in this area very good. Number of Jews alive in GG area assessed at quarter million” (AAN, DR, 202/XV-2, p. 142).

¹⁰⁴ K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, pp. 238–239.

¹⁰⁵ See document no. 1, [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 280.

¹⁰⁶ See document no. 3 [in:] *ibid.*, p. 282.

¹⁰⁷ The discrepancies between the needs of the RPŻ and the funds available to it are shown, among others, by a January 1943 letter to the DR. It mentions that 5,000,000 zlotys per

In September of the same year the RPŻ emphasized again that the sums it received were completely insufficient, did not enable performance of its “cardinal duties” and were in fact not real aid but a symbol of it.¹⁰⁸ There was a warning that if the subsidies were not raised, the whole operation would be fiction rather than reality¹⁰⁹. Even in December 1944 the assistance operation, which had already been continuing for two years, was called by the council an “irregular action, not involving all the people, or the needs of the most underprivileged part of Polish society”¹¹⁰. The funds that the RPŻ was able to devote for its aid-recipients were only enough for modest food, “provided that the ghetto escaper did not live alone but ran the household together with other people or based on the household of the family he lived with”¹¹¹. The situation was so bad that many people who had applied for aid could not receive it, and the existence of local centers was at risk¹¹². In February 1944 support was refused to nearly 1,000 people, for example. It was a huge number considering that then, the RPŻ, Jewish organizations aside, took care of only about 3,500 people in Warsaw and in the countryside¹¹³.

Let us move now on to another question, the DR’s attitude towards the armed struggle of the Jews and the fight against anti-Semitism. The opinions of the DR were, it seems, in line with the views of the main armed force of the Polish underground resistance, the AK. Without a doubt this

month were needed just for the assistance to the children of the Warsaw ghetto, while the total budget of the RPŻ was 150,000 zlotys (AŻIH, *Varia okupacyjne*, 150, p. 9).

¹⁰⁸ Account of Marek Arczyński [in:] *Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”). Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych działaczy...*

¹⁰⁹ See document no. 4 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 283.

¹¹⁰ See document no. 7 [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 287–288.

¹¹¹ At the end of 1942/beginning of 1943 it decided that the minimum amount of subsidies must be 500 zlotys per month if it was to be a real aid. In practice it was not always possible to maintain that level, even later, when prices continued to rise. This amount was therefore absolutely insufficient to survive, even though it was more than, for example, an average Polish pension of that period. Of course, no pensioner would survive without the help of family or of an extra income, something that the hiding Jews could not do (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 125, 129–131). It is worth adding that, for example, in September 1943, about one thousand of the aid-recipients received 250–500 zlotys, and only few received larger sums. See document no. 5 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 284–285.

¹¹² See document no. 4 [in:] *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹¹³ See document no. 6 [in:] *ibid.*, p. 286.

did not interfere with the guidelines of the Polish Government in London. As the funds flowed through the DR, it tried to influence the purpose for which they were allocated. It should be emphasized that this involved both the state money, officially signed as coming from the state budget, and the money that Jewish organizations from abroad sent to Jewish organizations in Poland. It is difficult not to notice the connection with the politicization of the RPŻ. It is obvious that the DR wished to fully control the activities of the council¹¹⁴, as well as the activity of all Polish resistance groups in general¹¹⁵. In connection with suspicions that the money received by the RPŻ may have been used for the purposes of armed struggle of the Jewish people, in August and September 1943 there was a sharp crisis in its relations with the DR¹¹⁶. In a report it received, the DR found an entry entitled “Direct action in the ghetto” and demanded an immediate explanation, suspecting that money was used for purposes other than assistance, such as the purchase of weapons. The RPŻ explained that it was a care operation for escapers from the ghetto, and not a military operation¹¹⁷. The Jewish Coordination Committee sent a very sharp protest to the DR on this issue, in which it declared that “in no case will it give up its right to defend the life and honor of the Jewish nation or to defend these highest values”¹¹⁸. It is easy to guess that the RPŻ lied in this case; in fact money had been spent on the purchase of weapons for the ghetto fighters¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁴ It cannot be excluded that perhaps the DR was primarily concerned with controlling the operations of Jewish organizations. This is how one could interpret Witold Bienkowski’s letter to the director of the DR home affairs department of 1 February 1943 (AŻIH, Bernard Marek collection, 709, pp. 14–15).

¹¹⁵ I. Gutman, S. Krakowski, *Unequal Victims. Poles and Jews during World War Two*, New York 1986, p. 40.

¹¹⁶ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 299.

¹¹⁷ See document no. 10 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 291.

¹¹⁸ See document no. 11 [in:] *ibid*, pp. 292–293.

¹¹⁹ “The RPŻ was thoroughly informed about the situation in the Warsaw ghetto, it was aware long before the uprising that the Warsaw ghetto was preparing an armed action under the direction of the social left. Consequently, the democratic parties in the council, despite the apparent formal apolitical nature of the council, cooperated in the supply of weapons to the Warsaw ghetto. Immediately before the outbreak of the uprising, when the reports informed that the uprising was going to break out any day, the council allocated 200,000 zlotys for the so-called special objectives, without specifying those objectives more closely,

It seems that the DR was equally restrained as regards the fight against anti-Semitism and *szmalcownictwo*. However, when considering this issue, one should not forget the general conditions of the German occupation. As does every underground resistance organization, the DR, first and foremost, had to take care of protecting its own members, without which it would not be able to operate. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of denunciation was very widespread in the Polish society. According to Janusz Marszałec, from 5 to even 10 percent of the inhabitants of Warsaw were more or less satisfied with the policy of the occupiers or collaborated with them in some way, and were not interested in the defeat of Germany¹²⁰. If we consider that Warsaw had a population of about a million, it is easy to count that there were tens of thousands of such people. Each of them could be a potential informer and pose a threat to the Polish underground¹²¹. To this were added the operations of the German police and its supporting organizations, such as the Polish police known as the ‘navy blue’¹²², which, despite the initial attitude and the presence of few noble individuals in its ranks, was gradually demoralized as a whole. Enormous pressure of the German authorities was also applied, for example, on caretakers, who were responsible for the registration of people living in their buildings¹²³.

which were in fact allocated by the democratic members of the council for procurement of weapons. This case was brought to the DR, who requested more precise definition of this reporting item, which led to a serious conflict between the council and the DR. Of course, the allocation of this amount did not follow the political objectives of the London-based government. At the time of the uprising, the council, without any military force, resumed its activity in another field, in accepting those who had managed to escape from the burning ghetto, in maintaining all cells of the RPŻ at full readiness, in preparing a plan of their re-location” (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński).

¹²⁰ J. Marszałec, *Koncepcje zapewnienia porządku publicznego przez służby i agendy Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego podczas okupacji i planowanego powstania zbrojnego i po wywalczeniu niepodległości* [in:] *Organy bezpieczeństwa i wymiar sprawiedliwości Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego*, ed. W. Grabowski, Warsaw 2005, p. 35.

¹²¹ In all of occupied Poland, the number of DR workers reached about 50,000. In Warsaw alone, therefore, the number of potential informants was at least equal. This enables us to better understand how dangerous the underground resistance work was, in general, and even more so in relation to Jewish matters.

¹²² The Polish police force under German occupation was commonly known as ‘granatowa’ (‘navy blue’) for the color of their uniforms (translator’s note).

¹²³ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 270.

Cases of exposure or provocation were frequent in the occupied country. In February 1943 Jan Piekalkiewicz, the Government Delegate was denounced, and four months later, in June 1943, General Stefan Rowecki “Grot”, commanding the AK¹²⁴. Informers could be found wherever underground resistance was. What was worse, sometimes people with genuine merits for the resistance became traitors, also those active in partisan units. If not for the counteraction of the Polish underground, the denouncing would probably have spread much more¹²⁵. The DR needed to protect itself first and foremost, so that it could help others. By default, therefore, the campaign against *szmalcownictwo* could only be a secondary task. Besides, in my opinion, the latter was often the more difficult, since the most visible ones, the ones who could be punished most quickly, were very young people, mostly teenage, and this must have also generated moral doubts¹²⁶.

It was similar with spreading propaganda among the Polish population to promote support for the Jewish population, i.e. to risk one’s life for the part of the prewar Polish population that was not well liked. On the contrary, as I have mentioned, there were reservations in the DR itself as regards any kind of help to the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism played an important role because it made it difficult to make decisions that could not wait. Needless to say, by ‘anti-Semitism’ I do not mean the Nazi German edition, but the prewar anti-Semitism, whose supporters dreamed of Poland without Jews, which was a normal, i.e. acceptable, element of the political scene. It seems to be the main reason why the DR, apart from all the objective limitations, did not wish to be involved more actively in the struggle against blackmail and propaganda, in favor of the Jewish population. Due to the strong internal divisions of the political scene in occupied Poland and to the threat of communism, a greater support for the Jewish cause could cause reduction of popularity of the exiled government in London, represented by the DR,

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 265; W. Grabowski, *Delegatura...*, p. 43; A.K. Kunert, *Słownik biograficzny konspiracji warszawskiej 1939–1944*, v. 1, Warsaw 1987, pp. 134–135.

¹²⁵ B. Skaradziński, *Korzenie naszego losu*, Warsaw 1985, pp. 360–362.

¹²⁶ As Emanuel Ringelblum wrote (*Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w czasie drugiej wojny światowej*, prep. by A. Eisenbach, Warsaw 1988, p. 96): “*Szmalcownicy* are mostly demoralized youths up to the age of 20, who took to hunting the Jews for lack of other occupation.”

among the Polish population. This is indicated by the surviving account of Marek Arczyński: “The position of the DR in this case was delaying and two-faced. It did not refuse openly, but by creating procedural difficulties it failed to provide effective help. It came to a point, where the council, seeing that the DR had a negative attitude to prosecution and execution of death sentences on criminals of this type, resolved to ask the Delegation to publish fake death sentences to deter active blackmailers. [...] It had to become clear that the DR, which always sought popularity¹²⁷, thought that the best way not to lose it was not to engage in the action to eliminate the blackmailers. Until the end, the DR was not able to take a manly attitude”¹²⁸.

The Council has repeatedly requested the DR for active participation in the campaign against *szmalcownictwo*, and has even asked for the publication of fake death sentences on *szmalcownicy* that could influence the behavior of others¹²⁹.

To this day, we are not sure how many verdicts, if any at all, were actually issued and executed. The information given varies distinctly. For example, Witold Bieńkowski, a representative of the DR at the RPŻ claimed in 1968 that he personally signed 117 death sentences for the blackmailers in the country, and 89 were executed. This seems quite incredible¹³⁰. On the other hand Marek Arczyński and Tadeusz Rek, two members of the RPŻ presidium,

¹²⁷ Word crossed out, “flattering” added.

¹²⁸ AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński.

¹²⁹ For more information on the efforts of the RPŻ to fight *szmalcownictwo*, see T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 276–286.

¹³⁰ See *Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”). Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych działaczy...*, p. 190. The credibility of the account is undermined not only by the moment when it was published (the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland and the strenuous efforts of the propaganda to show the greatest possible assistance that the Poles had provided to the Jews during the German occupation), but above all by the fact that there is nothing to show that Bieńkowski was authorized to issue such verdicts. The underground special courts dealt with that (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 294, 353 note 43). Besides, elsewhere in the same text, in a fragment that was not published, Bieńkowski gives information that suggests just a few blackmail sentences: “Repeated appeals of the council to the government authorities have resulted in official statements about the blackmail crimes and established the investigation apparatus for detection of the crimes, brought a number of verdicts and liquidations, which were published in official periodicals” (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5703, Account of Witold Bieńkowski).

claimed that not only no such verdict was ever executed, but also no fake one was announced¹³¹. This assertion is confirmed by Jewish accounts.¹³² According to the findings of Teresa Prekerowa, the Polish underground issued about 60–70 death sentences in Warsaw, of which about 30 percent were supposed to be cases of *szmalcownicy*¹³³. Perhaps she is right, because we know several people who were executed, but whose actions against the Jewish population constituted only one of the charges, certainly not the most important one¹³⁴. So, maybe it was so that if a *szmalcownik* did nothing else to fall foul of the Polish resistance, the latter was not interested in eliminating him¹³⁵, because there were enough other problems.

It is worth noting here that DR was reluctant to comment on Jewish topics at all¹³⁶. Even as regards commemoration of the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and of the heroism of the Jewish fighters, despite the fact that the Polish Government in London celebrated this anniversary solemnly, the

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński. Tadeusz Rek wrote: “Korboński S[tefan] from the *Kierownictwo Walki Cywilnej* (KWC; Civil Struggle Directorate) argued that tactical considerations did not permit the solving of these problems. I think it was just an excuse. I, along with ‘Mikołaj’ [Leon Feiner – M.U.] have intervened repeatedly in this matter of responding to proven, documented cases of extortion, and unfortunately all the efforts remained fruitless. We even suggested the idea of announcing fictitious verdicts in the underground press, in order to at least in this way clean up the atmosphere in this section. [...] In my opinion, as regards the section discussed here, factors of reprehensible indifference were possibly the explanation regarding the DR, [...] a complete lack of responsibility and understanding of the sense behind opposing anti-Semitism, the latter being an element of the decomposition of the Polish Republic. The fear of repression, which without a doubt played an enormous role in achieving the modest results in the struggle for the lives of the Jewish fellow citizens, would not have been such a destructive force had the underground authority stood on the side of the most disadvantaged ones” (*ibid*, 301/5702).

¹³² See, for example, document no. 29 in: *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie...*, p. 680.

¹³³ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 294.

¹³⁴ More on the subject in the article by Andrzej Żbikowski: *Antysemityzm, szmalcownictwo, współpraca z Niemcami a stosunki polsko-żydowskie pod okupacją niemiecką* elsewhere in this publication.

¹³⁵ It should not be forgotten that it was not easy to prove someone’s guilt in the conditions of the German occupation. See AŻIH, *Varia okupacyjne*, 230/150, pp. 31–32.

¹³⁶ Only two statements by Jan Stanisław Jankowski, the Delegate, were largely devoted to Jewish issues. More often these issues appeared in the announcements of the KWC or the articles in “Rzeczpospolita Polska”, the official DR periodical (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 251).

DR has behaved in a very restrained way¹³⁷. The appeals and efforts of the RPŻ were therefore largely in vain. It was similar with the propaganda of the Jewish issue among the Poles, despite the fact that leaflets and pamphlets were issued, and the press of the RPŻ member parties printed articles about the fate of the persecuted Jews¹³⁸.

According to some accounts, the attitude towards the Jewish cause that did not match the needs of the time was not limited to the people, the DR, the AK and other political organizations that did not join the ‘Żegota’ campaign, but was even displayed by some organizations that formed part of the RPŻ. The SL leaders were unable to find anyone willing to work for the rescue of the Jewish population. The problem was explained to Tadeusz Rek as follows: “all those chosen for the relevant posts refrain from accepting the posts. The main motive is the reluctance of SL members towards this area of work”¹³⁹. There are reasons to argue that at least some parties took this action only for political reasons, and not because they were really convinced that it was right. Tadeusz Rek has formulated very serious allegations against his own party and others that formed part of the RPŻ: “Political reasons prevailed among the leadership. The essence of the ‘Żegota’ campaign was the following thesis: ‘it is necessary to do it, because the good of Poland requires it’ (rather than: because a cultural and democratic nation should act this way). Later, when we in the RPŻ came to the conclusion that the council should definitely become independent and take the initiative to intensify this work through party channels, the time of holding conferences with party representatives began. It must be said bluntly that generally the parties that participated in the council did not pay due attention to this matter. As regards party affili-

¹³⁷ See document no. 13 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 296.

¹³⁸ E.g. periodicals of the PPS-WRN: “WRN”, “Wolność” (“Liberty”), “Robotnik w Walce” (“Worker in Combat”), “Gwardia Ludowa” (“People’s Guard”); of the SD: “Nowe Drogi” (“New Paths”); of the SPD: “Głos Demokracji” (“Voice of Democracy”); of the FOP: “Prawda” (“Truth”); of the SL: “Przez walkę do zwycięstwa” (“Through Combat to Victory”), “Agencja Informacyjna Wies” (“Village Information agency”) (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 256–257). However, according to Tadeusz Rek, this was far too little, and there was hardly any response from other Polish groups to the appeals and efforts to devote more space to the Jewish tragedy in the underground press (AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5702, Account of Tadeusz Rek).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

ations the results were none. The same may be said about the SL. Although the structures were organized and there was no 'bust' in the headquarters, nothing was done to expand the rescue action to the areas where the party was influential. I informed the party leadership thoroughly about all the accomplishments and difficulties of the council. I was given complete freedom of action. I received no instructions. It should be assumed that the SL treated the RPŻ quite marginally. Any laurels would go to the party, but the same party did not sacrifice anything for that issue, except one activist"¹⁴⁰.

If Rek's account is true, and there is much to support it, this would confirm the speculation that both the DR and the parties that had decided to join the 'Żegota' operation campaign were driven not only by humanitarian motives¹⁴¹. This does not diminish the importance of assistance and of putting own lives in danger to rescue the exterminated Jews, but it makes one look in a different way at the activities of the DR as well as of the parties and organizations, at least some of those, that operated in the RPŻ.

Neither the DR nor the parties operating in RPŻ, nor even the 'Żegota' operation itself should be idealized, as there are reasons for arguing that politics played no less a role in their actions than humanitarian reasons. As I have already mentioned, even the Jewish parties were unable to renounce their own temporary political interests in the matter of helping the Jewish population¹⁴². This enables us to better understand the position of the Polish side. After all, Polish political groups could not be more involved in Jewish affairs than the Jews themselves.

According to letter of the RPŻ, the great influence of politics and propaganda on the activities of the RPŻ was additionally evident in the fact that

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* For more information on the participation of the SL members in the action of aid for the Jewish population see T. Rek, *Ludowcy w akcji "Żegota". Ze wspomnień*, "Roczniki Dziejów Ruchu Ludowego" 1967, no. 9, pp. 319–334.

¹⁴¹ The minutes of the meeting of the presidium of the RPŻ also mentioned a similar attitude of the parties active in the RPŻ, see document no. 12 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 294–295.

¹⁴² Even the KK had to unite the actions of the 'Bund' and the ŻKN. Each party tried to help its own members above all, often ignoring persons who were not party members, if the party interest demanded it. For information about the financial misunderstandings between the Jewish parties, see e.g. B. Temkin-Bermanowa, *Dziennik...*, p. 161 and note 276, which clearly shows that the funds for people outside the party were much smaller.

the DR was not interested in establishing local branches or field committees. It stated that it would only agree to provide care to the assistance centers that would be created by other organizations¹⁴³. It is not easy to give a clear answer why that was so. Probably the reluctance to bear the financial and personnel costs of such activity was most important. This is suggested, among other things, by the fact that outside Warsaw the DR made the RPŻ, rather than the district delegations, responsible for assistance to those people who reported to resistance structures¹⁴⁴. The Jewish section of the DR was in fact the *Komórka Więzienna* (Prisons' Cell) to which these issues were also allocated, so no new body to deal with the Jewish affairs was created, but the same persons performed double duties¹⁴⁵. According to Marek Arczyński, a leading activist of the RPŻ, the DR may have simply been worried about its reputation, should it completely refuse assistance to those parties and movements that had initiated the 'Żegota' action. It can be assumed that this is why the subsequent DR representative at the RPŻ, Witold Bieńkowski, postulated during the first meeting of the parties in September 1942 that action should only be taken in Warsaw. He considered that there were not enough funds to expand the action, which could additionally endanger other underground anti-German activities out in the country¹⁴⁶. It is difficult to say

¹⁴³ On 4 March 1943 the DR explained, in reply to a letter from the RPŻ: "As for the postulate to issue instructions to the District Delegations on the formation of district RPŻs, the DR explains that appropriate explanation and possibly instructions may be issued at the request of a District Delegate only after a relevant social authority is established in a given district and is associated with the District Delegation" (M. Arczyński, W. Balcerak, *Kryptonim...*, p. 205)..

¹⁴⁴ See document no. 4 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 283.

¹⁴⁵ W. Bartoszewski, *75 lat w XX wieku. Pamiętnik mówiony* (6, 8). *Fragmety*, "Więź" 1998, special issue: *Pod wspólnym niebem. Tematy polsko-żydowskie*, p. 232.

¹⁴⁶ Arczyński recalled: "The representative of the FOP spoke and asked not to take any resolutions as regards organizing a country-wide aid cell. In justification he explained that the increasing danger on the one hand, and the exhaustion of material resources on the other turn all the efforts to help the Sisyphian labor and pose a threat to anti-German activities. The existing organization beginnings should be liquidated and no aid institution should be established. (The remaining amount of 70,000 zlotys has already been spent, and the DR does not promise any further financial assistance). 'Marek, the Representative of the SD, opposed categorically this kind of motion and stated that only a collective, wide-ranging political-social spectrum from the extreme left to the moderate groups could create an efficient aid cell, that if official authorities indeed deny their financial support, then it

whether he was already presenting the opinion of the DR, or just that of the FOP, or of both organizations at the same time¹⁴⁷. The fact is that just two weeks later he was the unofficial representative of the DR at the RPŻ, while the FOP did not send a representative after the first meeting. It took several months until the FOP delegated Władysław Bartoszewski¹⁴⁸.

It seems, therefore, that the DR could not avoid joining the aid operation because of the pressure of the organizations, which found this aid important, and because of the international opinion that was respected by the Polish Government in London. Probably there was also a sense of loyalty to exterminated fellow citizens, but in my opinion it was the least important factor, while the Government and the DR did not wish to detach this section of the work in the struggle against the German terror directed at the Polish population¹⁴⁹. The DR, therefore, limited its participation in the ‘Żegota’ operation

will be a matter of the entire democratic underground in the country to undertake a wide, universal and nationwide action to obtain funds, accommodation, documents, clothing, food etc. **Such a spontaneous action would discredit the official authority** [emphasis – M.U.]. The voices of all those present against the FOP representative adopted the establishment of a broad-based organization called the RPŻ. The date of the next meeting was set in 2 weeks "(AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński).

¹⁴⁷ It does not seem likely that the absence of the FOP delegate signified the FOP distancing itself from the TKPŻ action because of the lack of support for its motion at the first meeting of the parties. See the account of Marek Arczyński [in:] *Rada Pomocy Żydom w Polsce („Żegota”). Wspomnienia centralnych i terenowych działaczy...*, pp. 174–175. Władysław Bartoszewski confirms the double representation: “Bieńkowski, when he was not coming, said: ‘you will be there anyway, to you will also represent the section’. It was sometimes very difficult to delineate, sometimes a little schizophrenic, because with time, in some cases there was a difference in views between the Delegation and the social body that the Council was. It was about organizational matters, tactical, practical. So I needed to make a statement when I was going to make a statement that, for example, from this point on I would stop representing the Delegation” (W. Bartoszewski, *75 lat w XX wieku. Pamiętnik mówiony...*, p. 231).

¹⁴⁸ AŻIH, *Relacje*, 301/5701, Account of Marek Arczyński. Without a doubt he held this post even before the official approval by the government authorities, as mentioned by the RPŻ in its letters to the DR (AŻIH, *Varia okupacyjne*, 230/150, p. 4).

¹⁴⁹ For example, in March 1943 the DR protested in this way against the issuing a special proclamation: “Because of the impossibility of separating the Jewish section from the general extermination operation that affects all citizens of the Polish Republic, a special appeal to the Polish people regarding the aid to the Jews shall not be published” (M. Arczyński, W. Balcerak, *Kryptonim...*, p. 205). As regards the reluctance to treat in a special way the issue of extermination of the Jewish people, see document no. 16 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 300–301.

to what was essential for the functioning of the RPŻ. In fact, acting as the supervisor and intermediary in transferring funds and exchanging information between the parties, active in the RPŻ and the Polish Government, it tried to influence the way in which the money received was used. In short, it is difficult to resist the impression that the DR, with minimal involvement of human and financial resources, wished to use its participation in the aid for the Jews primarily for propaganda purposes, mainly to strengthen the position of the Polish Government vis-à-vis international opinion. Although it was well aware of the situation of the Polish population subjected to the German terror, which also required aid, it understood that as a result of the war, ethnic relations had intensified, nationalism and anti-Semitism had spread widely among the Polish people, so it avoided any decisive action that might have contributed to a decline of its popular support. Even some publications of the DR itself, such as the pamphlet of the Agriculture Department of the DR entitled *'Nowy wspólny dom'* ('New Common House') published in December 1943, authored by the department director Zygmunt Załęski¹⁵⁰, included explicitly anti-Semitic texts¹⁵¹.

Despite this, the DR actions were decisive for the very existence of the RPŻ, which, if not for the efforts of its activists, would probably never have been able to develop so widely. Besides, the financial aid was not the only kind of support. Due to official assistance, the RPŻ was able to use contacts and communication of the underground resistance, e.g. in the legalization activity, i.e. when obtaining illegal identity documents for its aid-recipients and workers. Up to the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising it acquired about 50,000 such documents, of which probably at least 80 percent went to the hiding Jews¹⁵².

For all those who wanted to help the Jewish people, and above all for the Jews, the very support of the DR was of great political and moral significance. Due to it, extensive contacts were made, and even the assistance of resistance organizations and institutions was sometimes used without them knowing

¹⁵⁰ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 254.

¹⁵¹ See document no. 16 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 300–301.

¹⁵² T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 161.

exactly who they supported¹⁵³. It is necessary to realize how many groups and ordinary Poles were interested in the fate of the exterminated Jews. One of the most numerous was the PPS-WRN cell, which numbered about forty people and provided care to hundreds of hiding people¹⁵⁴. About three hundred people received assistance from the SL cell¹⁵⁵, several hundred from the SD-SPD cell, and a similar number from the FOP cell¹⁵⁶.

However, there were also groups outside the RPŻ that formed spontaneously, gathering people from one circle. They presented the so-called 'wild lists' of aid-recipients in order to obtain financial subsidies. They were subjected to the same principles of reporting and financial settlements as the cells of political parties. First of all, the cell of 'Felicja' should be mentioned here,

¹⁵³ For example, many people who were not even aware of the existence of the RPŻ cooperated in the assistance to Jewish children with Irena Sendlerowa, an employee of the municipal Social Welfare Department (*ibid*, p. 214).

¹⁵⁴ The co-workers included, among others: Władysław Lizuraj, PPS-WRN; Adela Purtalowa, a widow of a PPS member; Kazimiera Dubois, a widow of PPS activist Stanisław Dubois; Maria Dąbrowska and Stanisław Stempowski; Edward Strzelecki; Leonard Borkowski, PPS WRN, employee of the management of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative in Żoliborz; brothers Karol and Józef Wysokiński, PPS WRN, with cooperation of their third brother, Stanisław Wysokiński, a member of the PPR; Wanda Bodalska, PPR; Kazimierz Młynarski; sister Makryna from the Mariavite Congregation (she helped Ludwik Landau's family, among others); Włodzimierz Graliński, administrative manager of the so-called Quarantine, an institution affiliated to the municipal Health Department (an RGO employee since the beginning of 1943); Natalia Zarembina (mainly due to her efforts the PPS-WRN took part in the establishment of the RPŻ, delegating Grobelny); Zofia Kołodziejska, she provided medicines as an employee of the Institute of Hygiene; Maria Maliszewska, employed by Siess, she provided drugs; Hanna Kołodziejska-Wertheim (daughter of Zofia Kołodziejska), provided medical help; Krystyna Staweno, provided medical assistance; Staweno family, whose apartment at Spiska 8 was a contact point; Jarzab, a railway cashier, PPS WRN, who helped transport the aid-recipients to Siedlce; Władysław Miszczyński, PPS-WRN, who helped locate the aid-recipients in Siedlce; Irena Staškowa, an acquaintance of Grobelny (*ibid*, pp. 92–95).

¹⁵⁵ According to Tadeusz Rek, the co-workers included, among others: his wife Wanda Rek; Barbara Poniatowska; Zygmunt Oberbek; Franciszek Kamiński "Trawiński", Chief Commandant of the BCh; Kazimierz Maj; Karol Pędowski; Aleksander Bogusławski; Henryk and Halina Adamszy; wife of Jan Górski, victims of Auschwitz (*ibid*, p. 97).

¹⁵⁶ The SD-SPD group included, among others: Emilia Hiżowa, Zofia Rudnicka, Janina Raabe-Wąsowiczowa, Andrzej Klimowicz, Zbigniew Rachwałd. The FOP group included, among others: Ignacy Barski, Władysław Bartoszewski, Witold Bieńkowski, Zofia Barska (daughter of Ignacy Barski), Zofia Janiczek, Maria Tomaszewska, Stanisława Wdowińska, Aleksandra Mackiewiczówna, Zofia Kossak, Maria Lasocka (*ibid*, pp. 96–97).

which in May 1944 provided care to almost five hundred people¹⁵⁷, and the 'democratic stream AK cell', which in 1944 provided care to nearly three hundred people¹⁵⁸, and then also the cells of Zofia Dębicka and Jan Żabiński¹⁵⁹.

The Council also cooperated with organizations independent of it, which, although not subordinated to it in any way, often used its financial resources. Unlike the organizations referred to above, they had no financial settlements with the RPŻ. It is worth mentioning here the ZSP¹⁶⁰, the KZL-NPŻ¹⁶¹, and the SOB¹⁶². Children were also looked after by the *Spółeczna Organizacja Samoobrony* (SOS; Social Self-Defense Organization)¹⁶³. The Council also maintained informal links with the PPR.¹⁶⁴ Besides, it provided assistance in the legalization and sometimes in financial affairs to all

¹⁵⁷ It was led by Maurycy Herling-Grudziński. The co-workers included: Jerzy Finkielkraut, Adolf Helman, Irena Górzowa, Marek Rzędowski, Roman Weinbaum, Adolf Bryczkowski, Irena Sturm, Anna, Marysia, Elżbieta, Antosia, Szymon (*ibid*, pp. 103–105). See T. Prekerowa, *Komórka "Felicji". Nieznane archiwum działacza Rady Pomocy Żydom, "Rocznik Warszawski" 1979, v. 15, pp. 519–556.*

¹⁵⁸ They were mainly workers of the Headquarters, concentrated around Jerzy Makowiecki and Ludwik Widerszal. The cell was led by Henryk Woliński from the Jewish section of the AK HQ. In 1944 he had about 280 people in his records. Other people involved in the work were: Stanisław Herbst, Aleksander Gieysztor, Kazimierz Moczarski, "Gozdawa", a worker of the Jewish section.

¹⁵⁹ The former provided assistance to about 85 people, and the latter to about 25. For information about other aid cells, see in: J. Żaryn, *Elity obozu narodowego wobec zagłady Żydów [in:] Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką...*

¹⁶⁰ Stefan Szwedowski was the leading activist. The subsidies from the RPŻ, collected via Wanda Krahelska-Filipowiczowa and distributed by Zofia Demciuch (then Szwedowska), covered the needs of about sixty aid-recipients in Warsaw (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 196).

¹⁶¹ Founded and led by Stefan Sendłak (he was also the head of the countryside section of the RPŻ) in 1941 in Zamość as the *Komitet Zamojski* (Zamość Committee). After Sendłak escaped to Warsaw (a few Jews came with him), he resumed and expanded his activity. He helped about a hundred aid-recipients, initially due to private persons. He received his first aid from the TKPŻ via Ignacy Barski. Sendłak had documents made in PPS legalization cells. At the end of 1943 the number of aid-recipients rose to about 270.

¹⁶² Leszek Raabe was the chairman of the SOB. The organization was politically linked to the PPS-WRN, and in military terms subordinated to the AK. For more on the subject see *Leszek Raabe we wspomnieniach przyjaciół*, ed. K. Dunin-Wąsowicz, Warsaw 1963.

¹⁶³ Established in the winter of 1942/1943, as a result of the agreement of about a dozen small resistance groups (including the FOP).

¹⁶⁴ As I wrote earlier, formal ties were not possible due to the position of the DR. The PPR received some monetary donations from Jewish organizations (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 107).

secret professional union groups, such as the unions of teachers, journalists, doctors, lawyers¹⁶⁵.

However, the widest aid operation was carried out by Jewish organizations. They had better contacts with the people hiding on the 'Aryan' side and, albeit this varied at various times, significant financial resources. They assisted the RPŻ financially, although sometimes they received support from it.¹⁶⁶ The ŻKN alone created more than one hundred care provision groups that could not have functioned so efficiently without the help of many Poles¹⁶⁷. Before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising (1 August 1944), altogether about 12,000 people in Warsaw used the financial assistance from the three organizations: the RPŻ, ŻKN and 'Bund', of which about 6,500 were apparently the aid-recipients of the ŻKN¹⁶⁸. If the remaining number is split evenly between the 'Bund' and RPŻ,

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, the account of L. Dobroszycki *Komitet Porozumiewawczy Lekarzy Demokratów i Socjalistów* [in:] W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, pp. 241–244.

¹⁶⁶ According to statements made by representatives of the 'Bund' and the ŻKN, the money received from the RPŻ was almost exclusively used to help persons who were not party members. The Jewish parties also tried to save, first of all, "valuable individuals from the social, cultural, scientific and artistic circles". Initially, as long as there were relatively many ghettos and labor camps, they concentrated on work in these, while the RPŻ helped the people who were already hiding on the 'Aryan' side. As time went by, and as more and more camps and ghettos were liquidated, the working area of the Jewish parties and the RPŻ began to overlap. (T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 107–110).

¹⁶⁷ Adolf Berman mentioned many Poles who cooperated with the ŻKN cell (and possibly with the 'Bund'); he says there were more of them. Among others: Janina Buchholtz-Bukolska, psychologist; Aleksandra Dargielowa; Maria Derwisz-Parnowska; Zofia Dębicka; Regina Flaszerowa; Prof. Dr Maria Grzegorzewska, former senator; Paweł Harmuszko, peasant; Kajszczyk, peasant from Łomianki; Kazimierz Kuc, worker; Janina Kunicka, psychologist; Irena Kurowska; Julianna Larisz, restaurant owner; Zofia Latałło; Maria Łaska; Jadwiga Łeszeżanka, librarian in the Population Register Department; Waleria Malaczewska; Stanisław Michalski, tailor; Prof. Maria Ossowska; Prof. Stanisław Ossowski; Stanisław Papużyński; Pętkowska, employee of a small hotel 'Pero'; Zofia Podkowińska, associated with the PPR; Irena Próchnik, wife of Dr Adam Próchnik; Feliks Rajszczyk, associated with the PPR; Zofia Rodziewicz; Antonina Roguska, head of the Women's Labor Office; Ewa Rybicka, scouting activist; Sylwia Rzeczycka; Irena Sawicka, associated with the PPR; Maria Sawicka; Antonina Sempolowska; Irena Solska; Helena Ściborowska; Anna Wąchalaska, who "adopted" Władka Międzyrzeczka (Meed) as Stanisława Wąchalaska; Jan Wesołowski, theatre director associated with the PPR; Wanda Wnorowska; Wyróbkowa; Róża Zawadzka; Antonina Żabińska; Jan Żabiński, the Warsaw ZOO manager. As can be seen, some names were repeated in various aid cells.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–112. This number is confirmed in the memoirs of I. Cukierman, *Nadmiar...*, p. 297.

it shows that the council at the time may have had about 3,000 people under its care in Warsaw. This calculation is confirmed by a letter of February 1944, which informed the DR that, including the countryside, the RPŻ had about 3,500 people under its care and a similar number was under the care of Jewish organizations¹⁶⁹. This means that in mid-1944 the RPŻ directly assisted only about 25 percent of the Jews hiding in Warsaw. Several factors determined this. First of all, due to the conditions of the underground conspiracy direct contacts and acquaintances played a very important role in the whole of the aid action. Primarily, the Council supported Polish organizations that helped their prewar members rather than casual individuals, simply because it was more difficult to reach the latter. For the Jewish organizations, on the other hand, it was easier to find other Jews who lived in hiding¹⁷⁰. Without a doubt, had the degree of mutual integration of the Polish and Jewish communities been greater before the war, the council would have been able to aid a much larger number of people, even if not financially (due to lack of funds) then in other ways, such as legalization.

So, for many reasons, also of an objective nature, the entire institution-alized ‘Żegota’ operation at the level of direct contact with those people in hiding can be described, at least in Warsaw, as an action conducted primarily by Jewish organizations (about 70 percent) and to a lesser extent by Polish ones (about 30 percent). The former would not have been able to do much, though, if not for the RPŻ who represented them vis-à-vis the Jewish section of the home affairs department of the DR. The latter, in turn, may have not undertaken the aid action if not for the Polish Government in London. It was the attitude of its members that resulted in the decision to provide financial and organizational assistance to the Jewish population.

However, not all of the ‘Żegota’ operation can be described, at the present state of research. It should be borne in mind that in addition to the activities that were organizationally linked with the RPŻ, there were also individual deeds of many Poles that are difficult to estimate and that have never been recorded anywhere, or such evidence has not come to light so far¹⁷¹. These

¹⁶⁹ See document no. 6 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 286.

¹⁷⁰ Beside that, the fact that Jewish organizations received substantial sums from abroad via the DR, which enabled them to expand their care activities, must have played an important role.

¹⁷¹ For example, as I wrote earlier, before the Warsaw Uprising assistance was provided in an

included help given in return for cash payments. I do not mean using the Jews to become rich easily, for example by providing accommodation at a very high rent, but the situation when a hiding person was paying for food, care or rent according to contemporary prices. All the Poles who decided to help risked their own lives and those of their families. One cannot, therefore, exclude them from the group of people who assisted the Jewish people even if they did not do so selflessly. No hiding person would be able to survive without many individual or random acts of help, often from complete strangers. But many people who had experienced this did not survive the war, while many Poles and Jews never bothered to document these events, because they considered them to be so natural that there was no point recording them¹⁷².

During the Warsaw Uprising, the activity of the RPŻ and Jewish organizations almost ceased due to the chaos, which made it impossible to reach the previous aid-recipients¹⁷³. Nevertheless, its activists often intervened when Jewish people were accused of espionage for the occupant. Situations similar to those of September 1939 were repeated, when people of Semitic appearance were not admitted to shelters¹⁷⁴. According to Stefan Sendłak, the RPŻ called a special meeting devoted to the attitude of the Polish population to the surviving Jewish population. At that time “Feiner was authorized to address the matter and discuss it with the central authorities of the uprising”¹⁷⁵. According to Goldsztejn, a ‘Bund’ activist, permission was granted to allow RPŻ activists to participate in investigations where Jews were accused of espionage. A little later it was decided to set up a special office, to deal with such cases independently. But that would not happen until the end of the uprising, by which time many people had been killed without any investigation¹⁷⁶.

organized manner to about 12,000 people in Warsaw, while about 20,000 were in hiding (I. Cukierman, *Nadmiar...*, p. 336, and G. Paulsson, *Hiding in Warsaw. The Jews on the “Aryan Side” in the Polish capital. 1940–1945*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1998, p. VIII). It is obvious that at least some of them had to receive occasional help from the Poles, because they would not be able to survive otherwise.

¹⁷² I discuss individual help later in the text.

¹⁷³ See I. Cukierman, *Nadmiar...*, p. 337.

¹⁷⁴ See document no. 33 in: *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie...*, p. 686.

¹⁷⁵ See document no. 34 in: *ibid*, pp. 687–688.

¹⁷⁶ See document no. 33 in: *ibid*, p. 686. This applied not only to the Jewish population; many people were shot during the uprising under various appearances, often to settle perso-

After the fall of the uprising, the RPŻ was re-established in a residual form at Milanówek¹⁷⁷. It was there that the November subsidy was received from the DR, as were the amounts due for the previous three months, and the December subsidy plus a two month advance payment (until the end of February)¹⁷⁸. In January 1945 the Soviet troops entered Warsaw. According to reports from the first days after the liberation from the German occupation, about 2,700 people hid in the suburbs of Warsaw at that time, including 1,500–1,800 on the left bank of the Vistula. The existence of the RPŻ was no longer necessary.

Assistance outside the Polish territory

It is now important to mention the assistance to the Jewish population, mostly Polish citizens, but not limited to them, provided by the Poles and Polish organizations outside occupied Poland. It seems to me that this is one of the issues that are still virtually unresearched and therefore unknown. This became particularly apparent in recently, when two books about Henryk Sławik, a Pole who saved thousands of Polish Jews in Hungary, were published simultaneously¹⁷⁹.

According to Michał Szulkin, saving the Jewish population in occupied Poland was started in 1940 by the *Międzystowarzyszeniowa Rada Żydów Polskich* (MRŻP; Inter-Association Council of Polish Jews) in Britain due to the initiative of Ignacy Schwarzbart and Emanuel Scherer, members of the *Rada Narodowa* (National Council) in London¹⁸⁰. During the same year the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London also made special efforts to rescue prominent persons under the Soviet occupation. This matter, as well

nal accounts this way. For more information on public security during the uprising, see J. Marszałec, *Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim*, Warsaw 1999.

¹⁷⁷ A lot of information about the activity of the RPŻ after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising is included in the previously quoted diary of B. Temkin-Bermanowa.

¹⁷⁸ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, pp. 122–123.

¹⁷⁹ See note 11.

¹⁸⁰ M. Szulkin, *Londyńska Rada do spraw Ratowania Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce*, “Biuletyn ŻIH” 1983, no. 126/127.

as other issues concerning Polish Jews, was dealt with by the Jewish section organized in the ministry and led by Józef Bociński¹⁸¹.

The Polish Government in London was active throughout the war period, both in the occupied country and abroad, for the benefit of Polish citizens of Jewish nationality¹⁸². Its diplomatic offices undertook cooperation with all kinds of Jewish organizations that have asked for assistance. Evidence of that is not always easy to find. In some cases they have only survived in the records of the relevant Jewish organizations, such as the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States, the World Agudath Israel orthodox organization, and in the materials of two aid committees: Vaad Hatzalah in New York and HIJEFS in Zurich¹⁸³. There were also interventions in matters of much lesser importance. Dr Karol Poznański, the Polish Consul General in London, made attempts, for example, to release Polish Jews from British camps for interned foreigners¹⁸⁴.

A very interesting story was described by Szymon Datner in 1978. He has found evidence to prove that even in a German camp for Polish officers, Christian prisoners of war were able to stand up for their Jewish colleagues. The matter concerned 86 Jewish officers of the Polish Army held at the largest PoW camp for Polish officers, the Oflag II C Woldenberg. The Polish prisoners consistently opposed the separation of the Jews by the camp authorities, and their greatest achievement was to inform the International Red Cross about the situation in the camp and thus initiate its intervention.¹⁸⁵ This case may have never been known of if not for a surviving account of a Jewish officer¹⁸⁶. In another Oflag, due to the help of a Pole, a Jewish soldier managed to save his wife who was hiding in Warsaw on the 'Aryan' side at the time. The woman needed a certifi-

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 201.

¹⁸² It does not matter here how instrumentally the Polish Government treated the Jewish question and how much it tried to use the assistance to the Jews for its other purposes. This is a subject that needs a separate discussion. The Polish Government, like all Allied governments, had its political priorities to which it subordinated the remaining issues. It would be difficult to demand greater involvement from Polish politicians.

¹⁸³ I. Lewin, *Próby ratowania Żydów europejskich przy pomocy polskich placówek dyplomatycznych podczas drugiej wojny światowej*, "Biuletyn ŻIH" 1977, no. 101.

¹⁸⁴ M. Szulkin, *Londyńska Rada do spraw...*, p. 201.

¹⁸⁵ S. Datner, *Udział polskich jeńców wojennych w ratowaniu Żydów w okresie II wojny światowej*, "Biuletyn ŻIH" 1978, no. 107/108.

¹⁸⁶ It was published in Hebrew in 1965 in the "Mosheshet" magazine in Tel Aviv (*ibid*, p. 78).

icate that she was married to an 'Aryan' officer held in the camp in order to be able to procure legal documents. The Polish officer made an appropriate document with a notary. This enabled the woman to survive the occupation¹⁸⁷.

The last stage of the Polish Government's activity in London, despite the fact that the RPŻ was active in occupied Poland, was the establishment, in April 1944, of the *Rada do spraw Ratowania Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce* (Council for the Rescue of Jewish People in Poland). This was, unfortunately, the period when most Jews in Poland had already been murdered. However, if one considers that in wartime the losses could only be estimated, that the Allies still did not react to the Jewish tragedy in the occupied Polish territories, and that most of Europe was still under German occupation and it was unknown how long the war would last, the establishment of this new council can be considered an important event, confirming the interest of the Polish authorities in the fate of their Jewish citizens¹⁸⁸. The motion to form it was made by Dr Scherer and Dr Schwarzbart, who called for the establishment of an inter-allied *Rada Ocalenia Krajów Okupowanych* (Occupied Countries Rescue Council) at one of the Polish National Council meetings in London¹⁸⁹. Adam Ciołkosz (PPS), was appointed the head of the Council, it also included two Poles: Witold Kulerski and Stanisław Sopicki, and representatives of Jewish organizations: Emanuel Scherer, Anzelm Reiss, Abraham Babad, R. Merkin, Dr M. Dogilewski and M. Goldstein (and later also J. Cymmerman and H. Gudman). Dr Manfred Lachs, a former co-worker of numerous government teams, was appointed the Secretary¹⁹⁰.

The tasks of the council were defined by a resolution of the Council of Ministers. These included: 1) preparing plans to rescue the Jewish people in Poland in the following areas: a) providing food to the Jewish people in the Home Country; b) providing weapons to those Jewish people able to fight the Germans; c) sheltering the Jewish people in villages and towns; d) providing

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 85–86.

¹⁸⁸ It is another matter to what extent this interest was sincere, and to what extent it was propaganda.

¹⁸⁹ K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, p. 220.

¹⁹⁰ M. Szulkin, *Londyńska Rada do spraw...*, p. 205. According to Iranek-Osmecki, Scherer was the secretary of the Council (K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, p. 220).

the Jewish people with documents that could protect them from deportation and murder; e) transferring funds to the country to cover expenses related to the action there; f) organizing the transit of a certain part of the Jewish people to neighboring countries; g) securing the existence of those Polish Jews who managed to get abroad; h) organizing assistance to Jews who are Polish citizens, who find themselves in areas occupied or threatened by the enemy outside the state; i) undertaking any other steps to improve the situation of the Jewish people in Poland and implementing these plans with use of any means available in the area where the board operates; 2) cooperation with Polish Government authorities and private organizations in the rescue of the Jewish people in Poland; 3) Maintaining, via the Polish authorities, communication with foreign organizations formed to help the Jews, and cooperating in saving Jews, both Polish citizens and aliens or stateless persons deported to Poland¹⁹¹. The council's budget was set at 100,000 pounds sterling.¹⁹² Eighteen plenary and several presidium meetings were held until the end of the war. The functioning of this body is still only known fragmentarily¹⁹³.

Finding new threads of aid outside the occupied Poland will probably continue¹⁹⁴.

Individual assistance

The individual assistance has been by far the least researched matter of all the issues discussed here. Of all kinds of underground resistance activities, it had the least chance of being recorded¹⁹⁵ because the conditions of German

¹⁹¹ M. Szulkin, *Londyńska Rada do spraw...*, pp. 205–206.

¹⁹² K. Iranek-Osmecki, *Kto ratuje...*, p. 220.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹⁹⁴ The issue of assistance outside occupied Poland has appeared recently in various publications. See. P. Stauffer, *Polacy Żydzi Szwajcarzy*, Warsaw 2008; K. Odrzywołek, P. Trojański, *Dzieci Teheranu – od mrozów Syberii do słońca Palestyny. Rola delegatur Ambasady RP w ZSRR i Armii gen. Andersa w ratowaniu dzieci żydowskich*, “Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały” 2015, no. 11, pp. 144–172; A. Haska, “Proszę Pana Ministra o energiczną interwencję”. Aleksander Ładoś (1891–1963) i ratowanie Żydów przez Poselstwo RP w Bernie, “Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały” 2015, no. 11, pp. 299–309.

¹⁹⁵ It is a paradox of the period of occupation that those who were servile to the occupying forces had a greater chance of their activity being recorded, as listings of such people were

occupation forced all those involved to leave as little trace of their activity as possible. Individual acts of constant or temporary assistance mostly survived only in the memory of the participants of the events and vanished irrevocably with their passing away. What we are able to extract from the surviving documentation may be only a small part of all such cases.

There is much to suggest that individual acts of help, which saved Jewish people from death at the hands of the German occupants, were far more frequent than the organized aid. This is not, in my opinion, a coincidence, but a consequence of the reality of the occupation in the Polish territory. Organized aid was only born with the awareness of the Holocaust, some years after the outbreak of World War II. Individual support was most often based on an impulse of kindness, a desire to help a friend or a stranger in a dangerous situation. There was no room for political calculation. It was not necessary to wait for the decisions of superiors and the authorities. Everyone could decide at once whether he or she would take the risk or not. Among the Poles awarded the “Righteous Among the Nations” medal by the Israeli Yad Vashem Institute, most have been unrelated to any underground resistance organization and acted on their own¹⁹⁶.

It should not be forgotten here that the situation of a person who decided individually to provide the assistance was in many ways much worse than of somebody who offered aid on behalf of an underground organization. The former individuals faced the whole repressive apparatus of the occupants. They could not expect outside support, and in the event of failure they were left to their own devices. The atmosphere of horror and fear, which often accompanied the provision of harbor, was described by the Holcman sisters, who, after escaping from the ghetto in Łomża, stayed with a Pole named Przechodzień: “We are already at Przechodzień’s apartment. A minute has passed, ten minutes, an hour, no one else comes. It seems to us that an eterni-

made by the Polish underground resistance. No one, except for the occupant’s collaborators, was interested in recording those who helped the Jews. Information about persons collaborating with the occupant is contained in the materials of the AK, such as: AAN, AK, 203/XI-9, 203/XI-21, 203/XI-26, 203/X-82, 203/X-83, 203/X-84.

¹⁹⁶ S. Krakowski, *The Attitude of the Polish Underground...*, p. 102. See N. Tec, *When the Light Pierced the Darkness...*, pp. 70-71.

ty has passed. We do not know what has happened. We become increasingly nervous. A child is crying. We do not know what to do. The Pole leaves to investigate the situation somehow. He comes back and tells us to go down to the basement. We can see his horror. Our stomachs turn, we move nervously. Przechodzień tries to calm us down and points to a corner in the basement saying: 'Do what you've got to do there'. In the morning he comes to the basement and says that announcement posters were put up throughout the city in which Germans threatened Christians that their entire family would be murdered in retaliation for one harbored Jew. On the other hand, everybody who denounces a Jew will get 3 kg of sugar and 1 kg of salt. We are silent, not knowing what Przechodzień intends to do with us, but he calms us down and promises to recommend us to his peasant friend in a village"¹⁹⁷.

As Szymon Datner has pointed out rightly, there were four attitudes that average Poles assumed when confronted with a fugitive Jew: a) to act according to the "law" imposed by the occupant, that is, to denounce the escaper, condemning him or her to death; b) not to denounce the person, but neither offer any help; c) provide temporary aid; d) take care of the person and offer shelter for a longer time¹⁹⁸.

It is difficult to say at today's stage of research as to what behavior was the most frequent. We do not know if this will ever be possible. In my opinion, the situation described in b) was the most frequent, possibly also c), while those described in a) and d) were much less frequent. Of course, one can argue whether the situation in b) should be counted as cooperation with the occupant, or rather as a form of passive help. However, in this paper we deal only with the situations described in c) and d), i.e. those in which there is no doubt that assistance was provided.

So far, there have been only occasional attempts at analysis of the forms of assistance and the motivation of people who decided to risk not only their own lives, but also the lives of their dear ones in order to help a friend or even a complete stranger¹⁹⁹. The basic questions in the study of this issue

¹⁹⁷ *Księga Żydów ostrołęckich*, Ostrołęka-Tel Aviv 2002, p. 387.

¹⁹⁸ S. Datner, *Las...*, p. 27.

¹⁹⁹ Szymon Datner, mentioned above, has dealt with this issue in a contributory way, using very little factual background (*ibid.*, pp. 11–16).

are: where was the help provided, who did it, how, what were the motives of the helper, and who was the help provided to?

A research questionnaire based on 2,473 reported cases of assistance to the Jews during the occupation, recorded in documents held in the “*Yad Vashem – Sprawiedliwi*” section of the ŻIH, is an attempt to answer the above questions²⁰⁰. I have to state two reservations of an essential nature here. First of all, I wish to emphasize that this study concerns a specific group of people, Poles and Jews, who mostly survived the war and were therefore able to report the fact of assistance. In addition, the Poles mostly had reasons to believe or certainty that the person they had helped has indeed survived. So this is a special group that can be fundamentally different from other rescuers and rescued, and certainly different from the ‘average’ Polish-Jewish contacts during the German occupation. Secondly, the Poles who have reported such acts should not be mistaken with those who were awarded the “Righteous Among the Nations” title, as might be confusingly implied by the name of the archive department where the documents were collected. This section includes all cases of assistance reported directly by the rescuers or the rescued. Only in justified cases, i.e. where for formal reasons there was hope of a positive decision, the reports were used as the basis to prepare applications for the title, submitted to the Yad Vashem Institute. But even well-documented cases were not always positively decided; altogether about 30 percent of the applications collected in this section were not awarded the title. However, because the rules adopted by the Yad Vashem Institute are very strict, there is absolutely no reason why, when analyzing individual aid, one should not use those cases not positively decided²⁰¹.

In trying to answer the question of where the aid was given, I did not distinguish between geographic regions of Polish territory, but I was interested in other kinds of relationships, such as that between the degree of urbanization of the area and the number of reported cases. It is immediately apparent that most of the entries concern cases outside the largest cities. In

²⁰⁰ Hereinafter ‘YVS’. This also includes cases of organized help but they are a decided minority, so I treated all the data as a whole.

²⁰¹ Further below I write more about the procedure and problems related to the award of the “Righteous Among the Nations” title.

my selection of eleven Polish towns/cities (I tried to select relatively large urban centers, known as Jewish communities: Warsaw, Cracow, Białystok, Lublin, Kielce, Częstochowa, Radom, Otwock, Przemyśl, Lwów and Wilno²⁰²) only 785 cases of assistance were recorded, which is about 32 percent of the whole study group. Of this, 507 cases were recorded in Warsaw. This means that only about 11 percent of help cases recorded in the Yad Vashem section took place in my selected group of cities, except Warsaw. Less than 10 cases were reported in each of three centers: Kielce (6), Białystok (8) and Otwock (9). In four the numbers were between 10 and 20: Radom and Lublin (13 each), Częstochowa (15), Przemyśl (19). Only in two cities were there significant numbers of cases: Lwów (77) and Cracow (91). 27 cases were reported in Wilno.

Where, then, was the help provided most usually? There are two possibilities: either in smaller towns or in villages. There is little to support the former option. In the towns I have researched, small or even negligible numbers of assistance cases were reported. For example, Bydgoszcz, Sandomierz and Toruń had only one case each; Biała Podlaska, Kalisz, Łuków, Łódź, Radzymin, Baranowicze and Poznań, two each; Łomża and Góra Kalwaria, three; Legionowo and Mińsk Mazowiecki, four; Siedlce, Mielec and Rzeszów, five; Tarnów, seven, and Brześć nad Bugiem, nine²⁰³.

So, only the village is left, and this does not seem surprising. Why? First of all, in small towns the prewar Polish-Jewish professional/business competition was important, and it is known that it had antagonized both communities strongly. This is indicated by the fact that in such places professional solidarity was the least commonly quoted cause of the assistance (only about 1 percent of all cases). Secondly, problems with hiding of the Jews were greater there, as there was no anonymity so characteristic of large cities, but also less space and distance than in the villages. In all, a small town was, for objec-

²⁰² Now Vilnius, Lithuania (translator's note).

²⁰³ All calculations quoted in this text cannot be regarded as exact because I have not had the opportunity to become acquainted with all the reported cases of assistance, and I was forced to rely on the information sheets drawn up by the ŻIH staff and on the electronic database, where I have not always been able to obtain answers to all my questions. The final conclusions, however, will certainly remain unchanged.

tive reasons, the least advantageous place, and since in Poland most of the towns had a population of up to 10,000 inhabitants, it is no wonder that the assistance concentrated more frequently in large cities (with Warsaw having the central place, as I mentioned above) or in villages.

In the group that I have researched, the most common form of help was to offer shelter to the persecuted person. This was the description that 1,636 people used for their action, or 67 percent of all helpers. In 399 cases, provision of documents was mentioned (17 percent of all cases), assistance for hiding people in 139 cases (about 6 percent), temporary assistance in 84 cases (3 percent). However, the second largest category is an unspecified “other assistance”: 464 cases or almost 19 percent of the total.

What was the situation in the eleven cities I selected? In 490 cases harboring was reported as a means of rescue; this represents 29.9 percent of all reported cases of harboring. Provision of documents, 229 cases, i.e. 57.3 percent of all reported cases of this type. Assistance to the hiding people, 37 cases or 27 percent of all reported. Temporary assistance in escape, 45 cases, which means 54 percent! 209 cases of “other assistance” were reported, or 45 percent.

Table no. 2. Ways of providing assistance

Type of assistance	Total number of reports	Selected cities	
		number of cases	per cent of all cases of this type
harboring	1,636	490	29.9
other assistance	464	209	45.0
provision of documents	399	229	57.3
assistance for hiding people	139	37	26.6
temporary assistance in escape	84	45	53.5

It is possible to use this data for some preliminary hypotheses that will require confirmation in future research. First of all, and that seems somewhat obvious, documents were provided more often in cities than in smaller towns or rural areas. In the countryside it was more frequent to provide assistance to people who were hiding themselves. Probably those were such cases as providing food to partisans or civilians seeking refuge in forests. It can also be assumed that those in need of shelter were harbored in villages much more often than in towns. This can also be explained by the nature of a village, the greater distance between neighbors and the greater number of possible hiding places as compared to the town. But does this mean that more Jews were rescued in the countryside than in big cities? The question must remain unanswered for now. However, I wish to point out that the relatively better conditions for hiding in the countryside did necessarily translate into more rescued people. In other words, the fact that refuge was provided more often in the countryside does not mean that it provided a sufficient guarantee of survival. There is no doubt that most of those who sought shelter did not survive the German occupation, and to **help** does not automatically mean to **save**²⁰⁴. Also, the city, because of the anonymity, offered a much greater chance of functioning without attracting the attention of anyone. In the countryside, in villages where everyone knew each other well, any new face was immediately noticed. Thus, it was much rarer for inhabitants of villages to contact hiding Jews without knowing who they were dealing with.

We also must remember that most of the Polish population lived in the countryside, so more people from such areas reported acts of assistance, while most Polish Jews lived in towns before the war. If a ghetto was created in a town or city, they needed to seek shelter outside their place of residence, i.e. outside the town. Perhaps the only exception was Warsaw, which due to its size offered the possibility of successful hiding on the 'Aryan' side. About 4 percent of the entire population of Poland and about 10 percent (during the war even more) of the whole Jewish population lived in Warsaw. These factors: the size of the city and the size of the Jewish commu-

²⁰⁴ Shmuel Krakowski has calculated the number of Jewish escapers from the ghettos and camps at over 300,000 (*ibid*, *The Attitude of the Polish Underground...*, p. 100).

nity, determined the unique position of Warsaw among the places where the Jewish people sought refuge. 507 reported acts of assistance, i.e. 20.5 percent of all, come from Warsaw, while; for example, only two were from the second largest Jewish community in Poland, from Łódź! Of course, Łódź was in the territory incorporated into the Reich, and the Łódź ghetto differed greatly in its special nature from the other ghettos, but the comparison with the towns in the *General Gouvernement* (GG)²⁰⁵ also shows a significant disproportion: the second city after Warsaw was Cracow with 91 reports, 6 percent of the total.

It is worth noting here that the frequency of various forms of assistance was very similar in Warsaw and in the other cities I selected. Harboring people prevailed: 60.5 percent of the reported acts of assistance in Warsaw, and 65 percent in other selected cities. Providing documents was next (31.9 and 24.1 percent, respectively) and then the “other assistance” (29.7 and 21.9 percent, respectively). There was only a difference with two least common forms of assistance. In Warsaw, temporary assistance in escaping accounted for just 5.9 percent of all reported cases, and assistance to the hiding people for 3.3 percent. In the other selected cities, the temporary help in escaping was the least common kind of assistance, at 5.3 percent, while assistance to the hiding was somewhat more frequent and accounted for 7.1 percent²⁰⁶.

Let us proceed now to reported motives of rescue. Definitely most frequently, in 1,229 applications, that are almost 50 percent of all, humanitarian considerations were invoked. The second most important factor was acquaintance from the prewar period: 676 declarations, or 27 percent. Next came: other reasons: 291 applications (12 percent), religious reasons – 81 (4 percent), and least frequently the professional solidarity, 26 applications (1 percent). It is worth looking at the situation in the cities/towns I selected. The sequence: humanitarian – 410 applications (33 percent of all cases), former

²⁰⁵ *General Gouvernement* (GG) was the term used by the Germans for those parts of the prewar Poland that they considered an occupied Polish territory, as opposed to the parts of Poland that they annexed and incorporated into Germany in 1939 (translator’s note).

²⁰⁶ As can be easily seen, the number of reported forms of assistance far exceeds the number of reported acts of assistance. This is because a reported act of assistance might include several types of aid.

acquaintance – 244 (36 percent), other – 132 (45 percent), religious – 22 (27 percent), professional solidarity – 19 (73 percent). So it can be seen that the proportions are slightly different here.

Table no. 3. Motives for providing assistance

Motive	Total number of reports	Selected cities	
		number of cases	per cent of all cases of this type
humanitarian	1,229	410	33.3
former acquaintance	676	244	36,0
other	291	132	45.2
religious	81	22	27.1
professional solidarity	26	19	73,0

In absolute numbers, therefore, the motives reported in the selected cities are exactly in the same order as for all applications: humanitarian, past acquaintance, other, religious, and professional solidarity. Significant differences are only revealed when examining the percentage of the total number of cases with the given motive. For example, as many as 73 percent of all cases of professional solidarity came from the selected cities, the motives identified as “other” are second at 45.2 percent, then the former acquaintance (36 percent), humanitarian (33.3 percent) and religious reasons (27.1 percent). What does this mean? If these data were to be confirmed for the other researched groups, this would mean that all the motives mentioned above were more frequently the reason for assistance in the countryside than in the selected cities, with the exception of professional solidarity. The latter seems very likely and further confirms the reliability of the calculations. In smaller towns and in the countryside to work in the same profession most often meant competition between the Poles and the

Jews. It was only in large cities that there was a chance that work would be a factor that helped build close Polish-Jewish relations, for example among workers. That was the area where it was easiest to break the barrier of national and religious alienation.

Table no. 4. Motives of rescue and the form of assistance

Motive	Type of assistance				
	harboring	provision of documents	assistance for hiding people	temporary assistance in escape	other
humanitarian	1035	250	80	48	246
former acquaintance	571	137	54	33	137
other	176	50	31	18	165
religious	70	17	8	4	20
professional solidarity	16	8	1	3	10

The results of comparison of the replies regarding the forms of assistance with those for the motive are interesting. From the table below, it can be concluded that in the absolute numbers, the most common link was harboring for humanitarian reasons. The rarest was the provision of assistance to the hiding on the grounds of professional solidarity, only one such case was recorded.

The table enables many initial conclusions, first of all in trying to answer the question of why a particular form of assistance was provided. It is clear that harboring was provided primarily for humanitarian reasons (55 percent), then because of a former acquaintance (30 percent), then for “other” reasons (9 percent), then for religious reasons (3 percent), and least often because of professional solidarity (1 percent). The sequence of the reasons for providing documents is identical as it is for nearly all the listed forms of

assistance: humanitarian reasons (53 percent), former acquaintance (29 percent), “other” (11 percent), religious (4 percent), and finally the professional solidarity (2 percent). Help in hiding: humanitarian reasons (46 percent), former acquaintance (31 percent), “other” (18 percent), religious (6 percent), professional solidarity (0.5 percent). Temporary assistance in escaping: 45 percent, 31 percent, 17 percent, 4 percent, 3 percent, respectively. Only “other” assistance deviates from this scheme: humanitarian reasons – 43 percent, “other” reasons – 29 percent, former acquaintance – 24 percent, religious reasons – 3 percent, professional solidarity – 2 percent. It is interesting that for all types of aid, humanitarian reasons account for about half of all motives, and in the case of harboring and provision of documents, i.e. the two most important types of assistance in Polish conditions, for even more than half. This demonstrates the great selflessness and dedication of the people who decided to help.

The situation in Warsaw was similar. There were also cases of harboring for humanitarian reasons, but there was no case of harboring because of professional solidarity or for religious reasons. Should the group I have researched be representative for the entire Polish territory, one could say that throughout the country assistance for religious reasons or due to professional solidarity was the least frequent.

Table no. 5. Motives of rescue and the form of assistance in Warsaw

Motive	Type of assistance				
	harboring	provision of documents	assistance for hiding people	temporary assistance in escape	other
humanitarian	221	99	10	19	77
former acquaintance	111	50	7	7	35
other	54	89	5	9	62
religious	9	4	0	1	3
professional solidarity	7	5	0	1	7

The cases where the rescuers quoted more than one motive for the rescue action also seem very interesting to me. The most common combination, easy to guess, is that of humanitarian reasons and former acquaintance. There was no case of quoting professional solidarity and religious reasons at the same time. Detailed data is presented in the table below.

Table no. 6. More than one motive for rescue

	former acquaintance	professional solidarity	humanitarian	religious	other
former acquaintance	–	6	249	20	32
professional solidarity	6	–	9	0	4
humanitarian	249	9	–	47	73
religious	20	0	47	–	3
other	32	4	73	3	–

It is also worth comparing the number of reported cases of assistance in the cities I selected with the declared forms and motives of rescue²⁰⁷.

Table no. 7. Motives and forms of assistance in the selected cities

City/town	Number of applications	Type of assistance					Motives				
		a	b	c	d	e	a	b	c	d	e
Warsaw	507	307	162	17	30	148	138	12	276	12	89

²⁰⁷ The difference between the number of cases reported and the numbers in the “type of assistance” and “motives” sections results from the fact that in many cases various kinds of help were provided and not necessarily for just one reason. Often not all the fields were filled in the information sheets and in the database that served as the basis for calculations.

City/town	Number of applications	Type of assistance					Motives				
		a	b	c	d	e	a	b	c	d	e
Cracow	91	54	27	7	4	23	32	3	45	3	15
Lwów	77	59	21	4	3	12	34	1	39	1	6
Wilno	27	20	5	1	2	6	12	2	11	5	2
Przemyśl	19	15	2	2	1	0	8	0	9	1	4
Częstochowa	15	11	1	1	0	3	2	0	8	0	2
Lublin	13	9	1	1	0	5	2	0	9	0	5
Radom	13	5	4	1	2	4	7	1	5	0	1
Otwock	9	6	1	0	2	2	3	0	3	0	4
Białystok	8	3	3	2	1	4	4	0	4	0	2
Kielce	6	1	2	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	2

Notes: the letters in the “Type of assistance” column are: a) harboring, b) provision of documents, c) assistance for hiding people, d) temporary assistance in escape, e) other assistance. In the “Motives” column: a) former acquaintance, b) professional solidarity, c) humanitarian, d) religious, e) other.

It would be particularly interesting to find out how many people were covered by the reported acts of assistance. In many cases, the number of people rescued has exceeded significantly, perhaps even many times, the number of rescuers²⁰⁸. This was simply because the assistance was provided not

²⁰⁸ In fact, throughout the whole country it could have been the opposite, i.e. the number of rescuers could be many times higher than that of the rescued ones, because in general, efforts of many rescuers were needed to rescue one person. Gunnar Paulsson has recently pointed out the differences in these calculations, depending on two ways of calculating: 1) paying attention to the fact that one Jew needed many non-Jews to survive, or

just to one person or several, but even to a dozen or several dozen. That is why Szymon Datner has introduced the concept of collective and mass help. According to his criterion, cases of simultaneous assistance to between two and ten people should be regarded as collective help, and if the number of aid-recipients exceeded ten people, it was a case of mass help²⁰⁹. Numerous examples of this can be found in the materials collected by the former GKB-ZHwP and by the YVS section of the ŻIH. Here are some of the more or less credible accounts. Ludwik Zdun recalled that he, with his colleagues, PPR activists, managed to take about 120 people out of the Warsaw ghetto²¹⁰. On 13 June 1984 Czesława Małoszczyk testified before Władysław Grędziński, a judge of the Provincial Court that her father, Czesław Małoszczyk, as an employee of the Water and Sewerage Company, had established contact with Jews living in the Warsaw Ghetto, and led eight Jewish children through the sewers to the 'Aryan' side. Just before the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto he helped the escape of about 300 Jews²¹¹. Likewise, Teodor Niewiadomski, as an employee of the Warsaw City Cleaning Company apparently took about 200 people out of the ghetto.²¹² Father Mieczysław Michalski baptized at least 12 Jewish women who wanted to save their lives in this way. Together with his colleague Fr. Michał Dudkowski in Lublin he issued about 2,000 blank forms of baptism certificates, collected by Poles who provided care to Jewish people²¹³.

2) emphasizing that the same people provided assistance to many Jews. His calculations confirm that the number of rescuers was higher (*ibid*, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w okupowanej Warszawie...*, pp. 300–301).

²⁰⁹ S. Datner, *Las...*, p. 42.

²¹⁰ AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 133.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 23/68, P. 115.

²¹² AŻIH, YVS, 1521.

²¹³ AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 845. In my opinion, it is difficult to question the credibility of Fr. Michalski's testimony. Knowing the realities of the occupation, however, makes it incredible that 2,000 baptism certificates were used to rescue Jewish people. Of course, some of these could have been used for this purpose. However, in my opinion, they were intended primarily for the Polish underground resistance movement, because one should not forget that also a large number of Poles, seeking security against the German terror, used fake documents, which required fake baptism certificates. That was not about changing the faith but the identity, however.

One of the most tragic and most shocking cases of mass help is the story of the Łodej family, connected with a partisan troop, who took care of about 40 Jews, including women and children, hiding in a forest at Klamochy in the Kutery Forest District (Iłża District). As a result of the manhunt conducted by the German *gendarmérie*, most of the hiding people were killed. One of the captured persons was forced by the Nazis to indicate other hiding places and the Łodej family. As stated in the report of the investigation conducted in 1972: “This news caused the Nazis [...] to surround the village of Lubienia and gather its inhabitants, questioning about the place where Władysław Łodej was hiding. The Germans took Władysław Łodej’s wife, Wiktoria, aged 36, with four children: Edward (12), Janina (9), Władysław (6), and Stanisław (3), whom they imprisoned at the police station in Iłża. Two weeks after the arrest, Wiktoria Łodej and her children were shot by the Germans in the woods near the Marcule Forest District. Even before they were shot, two gendarmes and one civilian came by car to the house of the Łodej family, where they shot the parents of Władysław Łodej: Wojciech and Marianna aged 90 and 78”²¹⁴.

In a letter dated 29 March 1984 Tadeusz Pastuszko informed the GKBZHWP that he had harbored sixteen Jews during 1943–1945. At the time he lived in Chmielów near Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski and worked in the steelworks at Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. He was contacted by a Jewish worker in the steelworks who asked him to harbor several people. In 1984 Pastuszko was still in touch with four of the people. He wrote to ŻIH about this, but, as he claims, they were not sufficiently interested in his history²¹⁵.

As already said, to provide individual help it was not necessary to appreciate the Holocaust of the Jewish nation. In such case, it was not about res-

²¹⁴ AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 1068. The fate of eight members of the Ulma family from Markowa near Łańcut is well-known: they were shot for harboring eight Jews, and so were the latter. On the 60th anniversary of this crime, on 24 March 2004, a memorial to honor them was unveiled at Markowa.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23/68, P. 268. As early as 1969 Szymon Datner described the matter, based on an account of a person he had rescued, see *ibid.*, *Relacje o pomocy Żydom w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*, “Biuletyn ŻIH” 1969, no. 71/72, pp. 232–233. This account has reference number 3787 in the ŻIH collection. In 1984 Tadeusz Pastuszko and his wife Maria were, however, awarded the title of the “Righteous”.

cuing the whole people, but about helping an individual, or perhaps several persons. Therefore, individual assistance was provided from the beginning of the German occupation and continued until its very end. A comparison of the numbers of assistance actions started and of those finished brings very interesting information²¹⁶. It is evident from this that until 1942, when the German occupants had murdered a substantial part of the Jewish population, the number of initiated help actions was rising rapidly, while the number of finished help operations increased very slowly, and until 1942 it did not exceed 8 percent of the number of started actions. The situation changed fundamentally in 1943, but even then the number of initiated actions was twice that of the finished ones. Only in 1944 and 1945 there was a sharp increase in the number of finished actions, both due to the entry of Soviet troops into Polish territory and to the fact that the vast majority of the Jewish population had been murdered by the occupying forces. In absolute figures, this data is as follows: 43 commenced help operations were recorded for 1939, two of which ended in the same year; 133 started and 8 finished were recorded in 1940, 299 started and 22 finished in 1941; 946 started and 73 finished in 1942. In total, therefore, in the group that I studied, 1,421 help actions had been started and 105 finished by the end of 1942. 460 started and 228 finished help actions were recorded in 1943; 65 started and 851 finished in 1944; 12 started and 692 finished in 1945.

It was very similar in Warsaw. 23 help actions were started there in 1939, and none was finished before the end of that year. Next year 47 actions were started and only one was finished; 70 started, 7 finished in 1941; 222 started and 10 finished in 1942. In total, 362 help actions had been started and 18 finished in Warsaw by the end of 1942. 85 actions were started and none finished in 1943. 13 started, 208 finished in 1944; none started and 159 finished in 1945. In principle, the situation in Warsaw was clearly different only in 1943, when not a single help action was finished, while almost half ended in the whole examined group. Probably the situation in Warsaw this year was influenced by the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, which further

²¹⁶ By 'finishing' of the help action I understand the cessation of assistance, which may have been due to many reasons: aversion to further risk, loss of contact, departure of the harassed person from the place where the help was provided, etc.

sensitized the Poles who helped the Jewish population. Due to the fighting in the city and the toughening of the anti-Jewish policy, it was more difficult to complete the help action in a way that would allow the hiding persons to start independent life.

The above calculations did not tell us how many of the help actions started in a given year had their finish in the following years, and a closer look at this gives somewhat surprising results. It turns out that these relatively few help actions, which were undertaken at the very beginning of the German occupation, still in 1939, were very long-lasting. Almost 70 percent of the help actions that started at the time would continue until 1945! This state of affairs appears to have had two main reasons. First of all, starting the help in 1939, when the anti-Jewish repression was slight compared to that in the following years, provided good chances of organizing it in such way that it would not be exposed during the creation of the ghettos and the physical destruction of the Jewish population. Secondly, it seems obvious that since the help was given already at an early stage, when it was not so much a matter of saving lives, but protection against harassment and persecution, then there must have been a very strong personal bond between the harbored and the helper, which very rarely happened between Poles and Jews at that time. Therefore, there have been relatively few cases of starting the help in such an early period of occupation.

Subsequent years bring equally, if not more, surprising results. It is shown that beyond 1940, when over 60 percent of the help actions started at the time would be finished in 1944–1945, in the next two years the percentage of actions that would end in 1944 and 1945 grew!²¹⁷

About 71 percent of the actions commenced in 1941 and almost 80 percent of those started in 1942 ended in 1944–1945. It is shown that, with the intensification of the extermination of the Jewish population by the occupant, an increasing percentage of the help actions was planned for survival until the final defeat of Germany. In other words, long-term help was becoming increasingly important. At this point one might wonder to what extent

²¹⁷ I only use these calculations until 1942 (inclusive), because 1943 could artificially inflate the percentage of actions that lasted until 1944–1945 due to the too short period.

it was due to the desperation of the people who wanted to survive, and to what extent to the generosity and compassion of the Poles. If, however, the motives for giving help are credible in the group I study, there is no doubt that at least in these instances the selflessness and humanitarian considerations played a decisive role.

This is confirmed by the number of Poles honored with the “Righteous Among the Nations” title. Let us remember here that in 1953 the Israeli parliament (Knesset) passed the Act on the Memory of the Holocaust and Heroism, which became the basis for the establishment of the Yad Vashem Institute of National Remembrance in Jerusalem. Since 1963 it has appointed a committee led by a Judge of the Supreme Court of Israel, composed of social activists, who investigate documents related to saving Jews and makes decisions to award the title of the “Righteous Among the Nations”. According to the official criteria the title may be awarded to a person who provided assistance to the Jewish population from humanitarian motives with the risk of life. Poles are in the first place. According to the data from 2017, the statistics are as follows: Poland 6,706, Netherlands 5,595, France 3,995, Ukraine 2,573, Belgium 1,731, Lithuania 891, Hungary 844, Belarus 641, Slovakia 572, Germany 601, Italy 682, Greece 335, Russia 204, (Yugoslavia) Serbia 135, Czech Republic 116, Croatia 115, Latvia 136, Austria 109, Moldavia 79, Albania 75, Norway 67, Romania 60, Switzerland 49, Bosnia 43, Armenia 24, Denmark²¹⁸ 22, United Kingdom 22, Bulgaria 20, Sweden 10, Macedonia 10, Slovenia 10, Spain 9, USA 5, Estonia 3, Portugal 3, China 2, Brazil 2, Indonesia 2, Japan 1, Luxembourg 1, and Turkey 1.

The presented analysis of the reported cases of aid may be compared with the studies of Nechama Tec, who attempted to answer similar questions. Unlike me, however, she did not study the reported acts of help, but specific groups of the rescued and the rescuers. Without a doubt, the advantage of this approach was that, in most cases, through direct interviews with members of both groups, she was able to ask questions that a dry text cannot answer, and also that she worked over twenty years ago, when both these groups

²¹⁸ The Danish wartime underground resistance has demanded that all of its members who participated in the rescue of Jews be listed as one group, not individually.

were much larger than today and the memory of these events was naturally more vivid. The weakness of her research was that both groups that she studied were small in numbers in relation to all the witnesses of the events who were still alive at the time. Tec reached 189 Polish rescuers and 308 Jews.²¹⁹

The conclusions reached by Nechama Tec confirm my basic findings and hypotheses. The fact that providing shelter was the most common form of assistance seems the most important statement²²⁰. Relatively similar conclusions were drawn by the author as to the time of the assistance provided. The vast majority of her respondents defined it as a few months at least, while only 15 percent said that these were single, incidental cases²²¹. Her conclusions about the role played by money in the rescue operation were also similar to mine. According to the information from 308 of the rescued, it turns out that only 16 percent of the Poles, who agreed to help, made it conditional on receiving money. Only 10 percent of the rest took some money, but the money was not the main motive for their actions²²². It is true that money was not entered as a motive in the questionnaires I studied, but I assume that in most of the cases where the “other” motive was quoted, without defining what it was exactly, this was in fact the financial motive. Of course, I cannot say that for certain, so those 12 percent of cases are rather the upper limit. It is roughly the same order as quoted by Nechama Tec who, through direct interviews with rescued and rescuers, was able to arrive at much more precise findings. As may be guessed, the answers to the same questions regarding the financial matter were slightly different among the rescuers and rescued. Nevertheless, both groups agreed that most people who hurried to the rescue supported their aid-recipients without asking any money from them!²²³

²¹⁹ N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness...*, p. 75.

²²⁰ I remind here the objections I have made. We refer to specific groups, not to the whole population. These results cannot be generalized, therefore, as the discussed people are those who have survived the war, and obviously those who were given shelter were the ones with the greatest chances of survival. Other kinds of temporary assistance could not help save human lives to the same degree.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 217, note 13.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²²³ Not counting the rescuers who were paid in advance, for whom this was the only motive for action (*ibid.*, p. 218, note 3).

Tec has also studied the social-economic status of the rescuers. It turns out that in the group of people who decided to help for financial reasons only, the paid helpers, the vast majority, over 80 percent, were poorly educated, poor and earned their living from farming. On the other hand, among those who helped for reasons other than financial, people with the same social-economic status accounted for less than 50 percent²²⁴. It was also very interesting to compare the information from the rescued Jews about the treatment they received from the group of rescuers and paid helpers²²⁵.

Table no. 8. Summary of information about the treatment of harbored Jews

Type of treatment	Paid helpers	Rescuers
very good treatment	33 percent	96 percent
unsatisfactory treatment	9 percent	2 percent
very bad conditions	13 percent	1 percent
raising prices, hunger, cases of robbery	42 percent	0 percent

Nechama Tec also found that in total only 18 percent of the paid helpers were perceived by their aid-recipients as good-natured persons, and over 60 percent were seen as greedy of money²²⁶. Up to 14 percent of the paid helpers threatened their aid-recipients with denunciation, and 12 percent of these made such denunciations, even though all the money that belonged to the Jews was given to them; in 19 percent of cases such denunciation was feared, but it did not occur. At the same time, the aid-recipients of only about 1 percent of rescuers said they were afraid of a denunciation, but that did not happen²²⁷.

²²⁴ N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness...*, p. 219, note 6.

²²⁵ The group included 76 paid helpers and 415 rescuers.

²²⁶ N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness...*, p. 220, note 12.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 220, note 13. This fear was probably more a result of subjective feelings of the aid-recipients than of an actual threat from the rescuer, although the latter was not impossible, of course.

I do not know what is the proportion of the number of people who provided aid to the number of persons awarded the title in other countries, but I have no doubt that the Polish “Righteous” are only a small group among the people who deserved such title. Most historical sources, both Polish and Jewish, indicate this. Names of the Poles who saved the lives of Jews during the German occupation, but are not on the list of the “Righteous” can be found in these²²⁸. Equally often they include information about people who are completely anonymous or named only by first name, which makes it virtually impossible to identify them.²²⁹ However, the award of the title is not based on historical sources, but on an account by a Jewish witness who received the assistance. Thus, neither the accounts of Jewish witnesses who are no longer alive, nor the accounts of non-Jews can decide. The committee responsible for the decision about the award of the title does not act as a historical commission, but rather as a court of law. Sometimes, in my opinion, paradoxes happen here, which emphasize particularly how inadequate the number of Polish “Righteous” is compared to the number of people who actually provided help. The list does not include persons described in the writings of Emanuel Ringelblum, the most important Jewish historian of the

²²⁸ See documents no.: 19–29, 31–42, 44, 50, 52.

²²⁹ This is a fragment of one of the books of remembrance: “At this point we must also pay due tribute to those noble and brave Poles who, by exposing their own lives and those of their families, helped, supported and saved the lives of Jews condemned to death. They helped by feeding, providing accommodation, and especially by keeping for longer time and harboring the persecuted in homes and farms. Many have paid this with their lives, bringing the penalty on themselves not only from the Germans but also from their brothers: anti-Semite Poles. We believe that these noble Poles were guided not only by mercy and good heart but, first of all, by higher ideals. Thanks to these Poles not only us, three sisters, but also many other Jews, both from Ostrołęka and from elsewhere, were saved. We will remember them eternally and we will pray for Their holy souls!... For Gołąbieścicha, a poor peasant woman who, although she was afraid of the Gestapo, sometimes cursed, threatened and even sometimes forced the hiding Jews out from her home, but nevertheless many of them found shelter with her for a long time. For the Pole Zyskien, who during the search by the Gestapo hid our remaining surviving sister in his bed, not expecting that at that moment his twelve-year-old daughter would be raped by the Germans. After this incident, he allowed our sister to stay at his place until liberation. For a young Pole, Stasiek, from the village of Trzaska, who allowed himself tortured to death by German *gendarmes* to save the life of a young Jewish woman”. (*Księga Żydów ostrołęckich...*, pp. 391–392).

Second World War, the creator of the Warsaw Ghetto Archives²³⁰. It does not even include the Marczak family, who harbored Ringelblum in Warsaw in a specially built shelter with over thirty other people! This is a well-known fact, described by Ringelblum, confirmed by others who knew it or even temporarily found themselves in this shelter.

Nechama Tec has also stressed that the majority of the Poles who deserved the title were not among those to whom it was awarded: “there is no disputing that those who have been recognized by Yad Vashem represent but a fraction of those who deserve to be. Of the 189 rescuers in my study, all of whom fit the definition of righteous, less than a quarter have this official title. Of the survivors, very few refer to the Yad Vashem distinction. Of those who did, few say that their helpers received this title”²³¹.

More examples like this can be found in the postwar memoir literature. For example, Lucjan Dobroszycki lists more than sixty people among the members of the medical committee that cooperated with the RPŻ²³². Only thirteen of them are listed among the decorated. On a list of 255 names of women from Warsaw who saved Jews, published in 1969 by Szymon Datner, there are at most²³³ 54 Polish women who have been awarded the “Righteous” title²³⁴.

However, Gunnar Paulsson and Teresa Prekerowa went furthest in their calculations. According to them, the number of Poles involved in helping Jews reaches 280–360,000. If we accepted, therefore, that it was 300,000 people, then the nearly 6,000 Poles honored with the title of the “Righteous” would make only 2 percent of those who deserved it.²³⁵

Very interesting information about people who would qualify for the “Righteous Among the Nations” title can also be found in the documenta-

²³⁰ They are, among others: Barbara Wiśniewska, Ignacy Kasprzykowski, Witold Benedyktowicz, Prof. Dr Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Gerhard Gadejski, Julian Kudasiewicz (E. Ringelblum, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie...*, pp. 165, 167, 168, 170, 172, 175).

²³¹ N. Tec, *When the Light Pierced...*, p. 84.

²³² W. Bartoszewski, Z. Lewinówna, *Ten jest...*, pp. 241–242.

²³³ I have included all the doubtful cases in the group of people honored with the title. Thus, the number of awards may have actually been even smaller.

²³⁴ S. Datner, *Polki warszawskie z pomocą Żydom*, “Biuletyn ŻIH” 1969, no. 70, pp. 113–116.

²³⁵ G. Paulsson, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w okupowanej Warszawie...*, pp. 301–302. He also claims that it cannot be ruled out that the number of all the “Righteous”, instead of about 20,000, should be between 400,000 and 1,000,000.

tion of Jewish institutions operating in Poland after the Second World War, and these are of the most official nature. Material related to Jewish children provides examples here. It points clearly to many hitherto unknown cases of assistance. It confirms that an unspecified number of Jewish children found refuge and care with Polish families, Polish care and religious institutions during the war. The activities of female religious congregations are relatively best described²³⁶. In the works devoted to the RPŻ, this issue was also partially discussed. Cases of individual assistance are the least known ones.

According to the statements of persons, who were among the most active in this field: Irena Sendlerowa, Jadwiga Piotrkowska, Izabela Kuczkowska and Wanda Drozdowska-Rogowiczowa²³⁷, over 2,500 Jewish children were saved from the Warsaw ghetto alone. This was done by organizations directly involved in the work of the RPŻ, as well as by the municipal Social Welfare Department (about 500 children)²³⁸, the City Emergency Shelter at the Father Baudouin House (about 200), RGO (about 500) and, in the case of youngsters, by partisan troops (about 100 people). About 1,300 children were sent to Polish foster families. There were, however, also families who took care of Jewish children by themselves and without any links with underground resistance organizations, families “who took children out of the ghetto through their personal contacts or took them from the streets (the children begging in private homes). These families, on their own initiative, have undertaken the work of full care of the children. This category sometimes only had to be helped in medical care or medications, and sometimes there even was the need to place a child in a hospital.”²³⁹ It is also very likely that the number of rescued children could be much higher than 2,500²⁴⁰.

²³⁶ E. Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach...*

²³⁷ Of these four women, only Irena Sendlerowa was awarded the title of the “Righteous Among the Nations”.

²³⁸ In this case, it was also an indirect way to place children in religious convents.

²³⁹ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada...*, p. 216.

²⁴⁰ According to the above mentioned authors of the statement, who said in the last sentence: “We also believe that many more children from the Warsaw Ghetto were saved than the number we quote, because there were various, sometimes even very surprising, ways of helping, apart from Żegota” (*ibid*, p. 217). According to the findings of Ewa Kurek, the minimum limit of the number of children harbored in Polish female convents alone was about 1,200. (*eadem*, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach...*, p. 90).

While not trying to accurately estimate the number of surviving children whose traces we are able to find in archival sources, I wish to discuss the activities of the Poles who provided the assistance individually. To see how many of them remain unknown, it is sufficient to look at the lists of surviving children, prepared in the first postwar years by the CKŻP. On one of these, entitled “List of names of children who survived the occupation in monasteries or with Poles” only in 46 cases, out of a total of 161 children, it was known who had helped. In other cases, the column for the place where the child was saved has the entry: “with Poles, no details”²⁴¹. If the proportion of known to unknown places where the children were harbored is confirmed by subsequent, broader studies, this will mean that we only know about 30 percent of the Poles who took care of Jewish children during the German occupation. But even those who are known by name and surname have rarely been honored for their work. The quoted list mentions names of 29 Poles, of whom no more than 16 people were honored with the title of the “Righteous”. One cannot be sure in all the cases because there may be cases of accidental similarity of names. In order to verify this, one should undertake appropriate research in the Yad Vashem archives²⁴². In only two cases there is no doubt that the rescuers have been awarded the title.

However, I do not base my assumptions on just one list. Some other examples are worth mentioning. Gizela Alterwajn, born in 1941, was taken from the Warsaw ghetto in a backpack, and was harbored by various people, before she was finally taken to the Children’s Home in Otwock, from where she was taken by her uncle in July 1947 and left for Łódź. Aleksander Blum, born in 1936 in Warsaw, was harbored by the Borowski family in the Żoliborz district of Warsaw. Tadeusz Bober was harbored by Mrs Poniewierska in Radość, Hersz and Justyna Lichtarz were hiding in the same house, but with other care providers, Justyna’s was taken care of by a clerk and his wife who was a teacher.

Salomon Cetnarski stayed with primary school teachers. An unidentified “drunkard” (as stated in the document) took care of Felicja Cukier in

²⁴¹ AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 651, *Akta personalne. Wykaz imienny dzieci, które przeżyły okupację w klasztorach lub u Polaków.*

²⁴² The YVS section at the ŻIH has a very incomplete collection compared to what the archives of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem contain.

Legionowo for a year, and then she was taken in by a forester's family, with whom she survived until the end of the war. Hanna Federman was rescued after the death of her parents by the headmaster of the school at Legionowo, and after the war she was sent to the Children's Home in Otwock. Eugenia Furmańska, after she reached the 'Aryan' side, was rescued by a member of the underground organization together with her sister and mother. Jerzy Glass was placed with Mrs Bielecka, a Warsaw teacher, and after the Warsaw Uprising he was evacuated with her through Pruszków to a place near Częstochowa; there the carer sold out her last valuables to support herself and her aid-recipients. Before the liberation they also survived a German pacification operation at the village where they had taken refuge.

Jadwiga Gruszka and her brother were taken from the Warsaw ghetto by her nanny Rozalia Król, who worked to support the children. Due to her very poor financial situation, the nanny passed the girl to peasants she knew. After the village was deported by the Germans, she was taken care of by another farmer, and after the liberation the nanny bought her out for her last savings and placed her in a children's home.²⁴³ In this case, too, most of the Polish care providers named in the documents are not on the list of the "Righteous Among the Nations". They are, therefore, heroes who remain nameless today. Many more similar examples may be quoted. Not only from Warsaw. There are also lists of children from Cracow, Lublin, Przemyśl, Katowice, and Białystok²⁴⁴.

Much evidence about Jewish children staying with Poles, not only during the occupation but also after the war, was preserved in the correspondence of the CKŻP. This documentation may be divided into two main thematic sections: information sent by third parties and lists of carers who demanded reimbursement for the support of Jewish children or compensation for the hardships they had suffered.

²⁴³ AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 655, *Akta personalne. Wykaz imienny dzieci, które po wyzwoleniu zgłosiły się same lub zostały skierowane przez opiekunów Polaków do Domu Dziecka CKŻP (informacja o przeżyciach dziecka w czasie okupacji)*. [List of names of children who after the liberation reported themselves or were directed by Poles-carers to the Children's Home of the CKŻP (information about the child's experiences during the occupation)].

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 653, 654; see document no. 23 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 317.

The material sent by third parties came from individuals or from institutions in Poland, and also from abroad in a few cases. For example, in early June 1947, the CKŻP department of education was informed by the department of child care that Maks Glasberg, a resident of Warsaw, reported to them to inform that a five-year-old Jewish girl, daughter of a doctor from Warsaw, was staying with Stefan Nowak at Stoczek Węgrowski near Małkina, Sadowne railway station. The child's mother had been killed at Treblinka, and the father with the daughter had taken refuge at Stoczek, where he died of a heart stroke. Since then, the child has remained constantly at the place of the village headman²⁴⁵. Similar issues were also notified to Jewish committees by Poles. At the beginning of March 1948 Barbara Gajewska, a resident of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, reported to the CKŻP and informed, asking for discretion, that an eight-year-old Jewish girl from the Warsaw ghetto was living with Maria Affek at Nowy Dwór. According to Gajewska, the girl did not have proper material or moral conditions there and needed to be placed in a children's home. She also identified a witness who apparently knew the situation²⁴⁶.

There were also replies to Jewish institutions' announcements in the press and radio. On 28 August 1946 the CKŻP informed a family living in Jelenia Góra, who had been searching for a lost child, that Helena Stachowicz from Warsaw has reported after a radio announcement and informed that she had looked after Michał Urich during the German occupation. After the Warsaw Uprising she was deported, with the boy, to Germany where she worked in a factory. After liberation she handed him over to a Jewish organization²⁴⁷.

On 24 February 1947 Jan Urbanek from Warsaw wrote to the CKŻP: "In connection with the announcement of you, Dear Sirs, in 'Życie Warszawy' daily dated the 23rd inst., I inform you that Stefan Woźniak has died after

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 673, p. 27.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 1. However, there are doubts as to whether this information was true, because a handwritten annotation on the left side of the script reads: "Already done. WKŻ [Warszawski Komitet Żydowski; Warsaw Jewish Committee], the child is not Jewish", followed by an illegible signature.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 786, p. 54. Helena Stachowicz has also reported the boy's current address: "Michał Urich, Zugerberg, Felsunegg, Switzerland, Kinderheim". Since 2001 her name has featured in the "Righteous Among the Nations" list.

his return from Oświęcim in the summer of 1945 and is buried in the Płock area (I have seen an obituary in ‘*Życie Warszawy*’ and, if I remember correctly, it was September 1945). His wife Wanda lives in Poznań, I cannot find her address so far. The girl that you, Dear Sirs, are interested in has luckily survived the [Warsaw] uprising, but where she is now, I do not know”²⁴⁸.

Information about children harbored by Poles was also provided mutually to each other by provincial and county Jewish committees in order to facilitate their search. The survivor lists collected by the CKŻP in Warsaw are another group of material that enabled the identification of carers of Jewish children. According to the surviving correspondence, information was collected both from larger and smaller centers of Jewish population. One of the letters mentioned Jewish children in Garwolin, for example²⁴⁹. Information was often obtained in a completely random way. On 24 July 1947 the county committee at Wałbrzych informed the CKŻP that a Jewish soldier who was serving in Wałbrzych reported with a notice that, having visited his colleague Władysław Miazga living in Mińsk Mazowiecki, he learned from him that two Jewish children were staying with his neighbor in Mińsk Mazowiecki²⁵⁰.

It should be stressed that taking the Jewish children back was often accompanied by the need to make financial settlements with the Poles who had been taking care of them. In the vast majority of cases, it was not a question of paying for the harboring from the German occupant, but of compensating the cost of living. Sometimes the unpaid bills were a major obstacle to the taking back of a child. On 21 August 1946 Berl Ellenbogen stated in a letter to the CKŻP in Warsaw: “A farmer from Majdan (Tarnobrzeg county) has contacted me and informed me that some Christian women in the Tarnobrzeg county are harboring 2 Jewish children, survivors of the German occupation. These women declare their readiness to release these children upon repayment of the cost of living in the amount of 50,000 zlotys. I have

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 671, p. 22. The name of Stefan Woźniak is not on the list of the “Righteous Among the Nations”.

²⁴⁹ “To the Jewish Committee, to citizen Symrowicz in Garwolin. The central department of child care at the CKŻP kindly asks you to communicate with us about Jewish children who are with Polish carers in the Garwolin area”. (*ibid*, 671, p. 55).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 34.

appealed to the *Wojewódzki Komitet Żydów Polskich* (Provincial Committee of Polish Jews) in Szczecin, where I was told that the *Wojew[ódzki] Kom[itet] Żyd[ów] Pol[skich]* did not have such a large sum of money at their disposal for this purpose. On this basis, I ask the Central Committee to send the above mentioned sum to the *Wojewódzki Komitet Żydów Polskich* in Szczecin to buy these children out”²⁵¹.

A letter from the CKŻP to Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski to raise the issue of ‘buying out’ Jewish children was even prepared (it is not known whether it was sent), in which the Polish carers were accused of self-interest when handing the children over to Jewish organizations. In this letter one may read that they often do not want to give the children back: “They are, in most cases, driven not by being attached to the child but by the hope of getting a great compensation from the, possibly found, family of the child”²⁵².

In my opinion there is no doubt that there were such cases²⁵³. I do not think, however, that the CKŻP was right in their opinion that most carers were primarily driven by financial interest. The material I have read indicated that the reason for the requests to reimburse the costs were primarily due to the very poor financial situation of the carers. At the time no honorary titles were awarded for the rescue of the Jewish population, so financial compensation was the only kind of satisfaction, even if partial, for those who had risked their lives to save the Jewish people. In many cases, even the cost of traveling to Warsaw with the child in their care exceeded the finan-

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 16.

²⁵² *Ibid*, p. 7. For information about the intervention of Polish authorities, see also *ibid*, p. 10.

²⁵³ See, for example, AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 673, p. 17. However, it should be remembered that the quoted letter, addressed to the Prime Minister, may have presented the problem in a way that did not quite correspond to reality. All the more so because, as is well known, Jewish organizations competed with each other for children, wanting to educate them according to the ideology that suited the organization. The acquisition of children, irrespective of national-patriotic reasons, also had a financial dimension, as the level of subsidies that an organization could expect from other, most often foreign, Jewish organizations rose with the number of its members. This is certainly a topic that deserves a broader study. It may be assumed that the initiative to pay for the transfer of a child did not always come from the carer. The CKŻP, and presumably also other Jewish organizations, had in fact no legal basis for taking the children. Such matters, according to the letter of the Ministry of Education of 5 February 1947, were to be settled by the board of education (AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 671, p. 29).

cial capacity of the carers²⁵⁴. Sometimes financial help was only asked for because of poverty, but there was no will to give the children back, because of the emotional attachment to them²⁵⁵. In some cases, however, it is not known whether the sums paid were the compensation of the costs incurred or a kind of remuneration²⁵⁶.

The payment of monetary compensation for damages or loss resulting from the harboring of a Jewish child was obvious in the postwar years both for the Poles and the Jews. As in the case of assistance to adults, the Jewish organizations themselves often applied for this to the CKŻP. These requests are another group of material, in which we not only learn the names of the Poles, but also learn about the tragic fates of their families, murdered by the Germans for their noble deeds. The letter of the department of child care of the CKŻP to the *Wojewódzki Komitet Żydowski* (WKŻ; Provincial Jewish Committee) in Katowice read, for example: “The central department of child care asks kindly to provide as much assistance as possible to the Polish family of Jarosińska, Gliwice, ul. Krzywa 14, 3rd floor. The family of citizen Jarosińska was killed for providing assistance to Jews. This incident took place in Stryj and is widely known. The murdered persons were survived by 3 children who are supported by their aunt”²⁵⁷. Similarly, on 3 October 1945 the same department requested the WKŻ in Kielce to provide care for a resident of Kielce, the wife of a Polish officer, Gąsiorowska, whose husband had “laid great merit for the Jews during the German occupation”²⁵⁸. This is perhaps the only trace of the activity of these families. The names of Jarosiński and Gąsiorowski are not included in the list of the “Righteous Among the Nations”, although (if the above documents are true) we cannot deny their merits.

There are interesting cases where the harboring of Jewish children by Polish families came to light due to an intervention of a person from outside Poland or a foreign institution looking for a particular child. For example, in August 1947, the United Service for New Americans, a US immigration

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 673, pp. 86, 78.

²⁵⁵ See document no. 24 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 318.

²⁵⁶ AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 671, pp. 17–18; *ibid*, 673, p. 24.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 11.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

institution, wrote to the CKŻP in Warsaw that a Polish Jew, one Barney Shapanka, had contacted their New York office, having learned from a Polish woman he knew, named Mazurek, about a Jewish boy named Franek, saved and raised by her sister, Maria Pantola, who resided in Poland. According to the letter, this woman, for financial reasons, felt that she was unable to raise the boy anymore, so Shapanka expressed his willingness to adopt him. It is also known that during the war Maria Pantola's mother took care of the boy, but she died and transferred the care of the child to her daughter²⁵⁹. None of these women are on the list of the "Righteous Among the Nations".

Similarly, in April 1947, the Regional Committee of Liberated Jews in Hessen wrote a letter to the CKŻP with the following information: "We were approached by Mrs Schmuckler vel Leokadia Krawczyk, currently resident in Germany, in the US-controlled part, Lampartheim, Mathildastrasse 1, who declared that her niece Alina Ungerman, b. in 1939, is with a Christian family in Poland at the following address: Jan Kos, kol. Bogoria, Bogoria post office, Wiśniowa community, Sandomierz county, Kielce province. It can be inferred from letters received by Mrs Schmuckler recently from Mr Kos that he is ready to hand the child over into Jewish hands after receiving some compensation. Notably, the father of this child, named Ungerman, is well known by your co-worker, Mr Sonnenschein. We request urgent action to take this child into Jewish hands, and to give us the address where the child will be placed temporarily"²⁶⁰.

It is not known, of course, how many Polish families contributed in any way to the rescue of Jewish children. It is even difficult to give an order of magnitude here. Władysław Świdomski, during a discussion on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, stated that the lists of surviving Jewish children and his own calculations showed that there should have been about 4,500 of such Polish families²⁶¹.

²⁵⁹ See document no. 41 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 342.

²⁶⁰ AŻIH, CKŻP, *Wydział Oświaty*, 786, p. 35, written in Yiddish, in Latin alphabet. Jan Kos is not on the list of the "Righteous". Another case of handing children over into Polish hands during the German occupation is described in the letter of Mrs Kurower, a French resident who searched for her two nieces (*ibid.*, p. 22).

²⁶¹ See *Dyskusja uczestników sympozjum poświęconego 35 rocznicy powstania w getcie warszawskim (20–21 IV 1978)...*, p. 158.

People who were never included in the list of the “Righteous” were mentioned above. The procedure of awarding the title is, as I said, rigorous, as evidenced by the fact that one third of the cases gathered in the “*Yad Vashem – Sprawiedliwi*” group at the ŻIH have not been assessed positively for procedural reasons. Even worse was the case with the material collected by the GKBZHwP, which, in the 1980s, carried out intensive activities to collect testimonies from persons who provided assistance. The Commission sent to the Yad Vashem Institute 217 requests to award the title²⁶², or just under 18 percent of the 1,208 cases opened, so it seems that this was not done hastily. The title was awarded in 107 cases and refused in 119²⁶³. This means that only less than 9 percent of all the cases of assistance to the Jewish population registered and processed by the GKBZHwP were qualified as meeting the Yad Vashem Institute criteria, while more than 50 percent of the applications were rejected by the Institute in Jerusalem.

In some cases, however, even though all the formal criteria were met, the matter went on for years, which led to easily understandable bitterness. Many such examples may be found, such as the story of Franciszek Uciurkiewicz, who during the German occupation helped Stanisław Jackowski (Jacków) in harboring more than thirty people. Jackowski was awarded the title in 1968. In March 1984, following an appeal of the GKBZHwP, Franciszek Uciurkiewicz decided to tell of his participation in the saving of the Jewish population. In November of the same year he was interviewed by a judge of the local court at Goleniów who was delegated to the *Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich* (District Commission for the Study of Nazi Crimes) in Szczecin. It took more than a year to collect relevant doc-

²⁶² According to information provided in March 1988 by prosecutor Waclaw Bielawski to Julian Grzesik from Lublin, about 200 cases sent to Yad Vashem were “in progress”. Another 25 had already been sent in 1988 (AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 902, p. 2). The number of Poles murdered for helping Jews was assessed by Bielawski at over 2,400, of which 969 were named in his books (W. Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach...*).

²⁶³ The data cannot be treated as precise. The sum of the awarded and non-awarded medals exceeds the number of applications sent, because sometimes in the same case some people were decorated and others were not. This meant that the same case was identified as both positively and negatively concluded.

umentation and on 16 January 1986 the GKBZHwP sent a request to award the title of the “Righteous Among the Nations” to Franciszek Uciurkiewicz to the Yad Vashem Institute, personally to Dr Yitzhak Arad. However, the case went on for quite a long time. In March 1990 Uciurkiewicz wrote very disappointed: “I ask for clarification of the efforts made with Yad Vashem in Jerusalem [...], because the case drags on despite the fact that I have provided evidence, whether this was unreal, I do not know, perhaps we are waiting for everyone to die and this will be the end of it. The question of aid had been solved right away [...] I made no problems, and now with official evidence, I am surprised that this case is so delayed. Currently I am losing contacts; maybe these are the deaths of the people I had helped survive”²⁶⁴. Eventually, however, a year later, in 1991, the case was finalized and the merits of Francis Uciurkiewicz were recognized. It took the Yad Vashem Institute five years. It is worth noting that probably he and Stanisław Jackowski were not the only ones who deserved to be recognised. A statement made in this case by one of the survivors, reads: “One of Jackowski’s main assistants in rescuing us and supplying us was Mr Franciszek Uciurkiewicz, now residing in Poland, Bohaterów Warszawy 13, 72–100 Goleniów. He was risking his life for a long time and I have no words to express my, our gratitude”²⁶⁵. Perhaps the phrase: “One of the main assistants” was just a slip of the tongue of the witness, but it might indicate the involvement of more people in this activity. It is difficult, for example, to assume that the family of the principal carer, Jackowski, did not help him harbor 31 people.

During the German occupation the Radziwanowski married couple from the village of Dworzysk near Supraśl provided help, among others, to Jewish partisans from the “Forojs” troop. A well-known postwar historian Szymon Datner was one of its members. In September 1984 he wrote a statement that confirmed the Radziwanowskis activity under the German occupation and submitted it to the ŻIH so that it sent a request to the Yad Vashem Institute to decorate them. In June 1985 Yad Vashem confirmed the receipt of a rele-

²⁶⁴ AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 127, Letter of Franciszek Uciurkiewicz to the GKBZHwP, 21 III 1990.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, Statement of Luise Kupner.

vant request in this case²⁶⁶. The title was never awarded; the Radziwanowskis have now been dead for many years. So has their only surviving witness, Szymon Datner. It is unlikely that anything else could be done after both the rescuing and the rescued have died. It remains to be hoped that this was merely a case of bureaucratic negligence. It is not known how many similar situations there have been so far.

The story of the family of Fryderyk Czerwień from Rawa Ruska is similar. Together with his wife, he built a shelter under his own apartment, where he hid eleven people. He provided them with food, gave other necessary help, so eventually they all survived the war. Fryderyk's wife, Maria Czerwień testified: "together with my husband I harbored 11 people of Jewish nationality in a shelter belonging to our building. So they were: Herman Graf aged about 40, Helen Lewin aged 20, her husband Możesz Lewin aged 30, a furrier by profession, Dawid Post aged 35, a furrier by profession, Efraim Post aged 18, a furrier by profession, Abraham Klag aged 43, teacher and his wife Róża Klag aged 30, teacher, Łazar Diler aged 50, a furrier by profession, and his wife Helena Diler aged 35, a furrier by profession, and Mendel Hoch aged 52, a merchant trader by profession [...] No outsiders knew that my husband and I were harboring people of Jewish nationality"²⁶⁷. When the GKBZHWP sent a request to the Yad Vashem Institute to honor the Czerwień family with the "Righteous" title, this was not based solely on the above testimony. Included were very warm letters that the rescuers had received from the survivors, and above all the statement by Sam Essig and Moses Katz that the story of the Czerwień family was known to them and that they confirmed the fact of saving Jews by these people during the German occupation. They emphasized the selflessness and nobleness of this family²⁶⁸.

As may be seen, receiving the title even in a justified case, that is one that met the criteria of the Yad Vashem Institute, could prove quite diffi-

²⁶⁶ See document no. 45 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 351.

²⁶⁷ AIPN, *Akta dotyczące pomocy udzielanej przez Polaków Żydom w latach 1939–1945*, 23/68, P. 31/32. The testimony was made in September 1970. The account of Maria Czerwień was also published earlier by Szymon Datner, *Relacje o pomocy Żydom w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej...*, pp. 229–230.

²⁶⁸ See document no. 42 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, p. 343.

cult, and sometimes impossible. However, it should be noted that it did not depend entirely on the institute itself. I have found a surprising number of cases, where the Poles who wanted to receive the award gave the address of the person they had rescued, and yet the matter was not proceeded with²⁶⁹, because the person did not want to make a relevant statement. It was not always the case that both sides saw the events and relationships of the war period the same way. In a few cases, at least, the survivors denied their Jewish origin after the war, arguing that the situation described by the person who filed the account had never occurred²⁷⁰.

In at least a few cases, the Polish party for some unknown reason terminated the correspondence or failed to re-request the title²⁷¹. The most telling example here is Celina Tyszko, an activist of the RPŻ, a well-known person whose participation in the council's work is undisputed, but who has not been decorated and never sought it.²⁷² And sometimes it happens that the Yad Vashem Institute, upon the request of a rescued person who asks for recognizing somebody, cannot locate them and the matter has no positive ending²⁷³.

When researching the question of assistance, much attention should be paid to both parties, who were both victims of the occupant. To understand the Polish-Jewish relations of the Second World War, their negative and positive aspects, it is necessary to thoroughly know the reality of those times, all the conditions that affected both the Jewish and Polish population. I am inclined to argue that this is rather underrated and omitted. The historiography of the Holocaust does not give much importance to the situation of the Polish population, treating it as irrelevant to the situation of the exterminated Jewish population. And yet, factors that affected the Poles are of great importance in my opinion, not only to understand the situation of Jews who tried to survive on the 'Aryan' side, but also for the whole of Holocaust

²⁶⁹ AŻIH, YVS, 403, 414, 597, 802, 885, 914, 968, 1068, 1200, 1232, 1377, 1551.

²⁷⁰ This, of course, was due to fears that the Holocaust survivors also harbored in the postwar period in the face of frequent anti-Semitic attitudes among Polish people.

²⁷¹ AŻIH, YVS, 542, 627, 704, 798, 887, 906, 971, 1071, 1156, 1277, 1707.

²⁷² See document no. 18 [in:] M. Urynowicz, *Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc...*, pp. 305–308.

²⁷³ AŻIH, YVS, 1766, 1767.

research. However, it is not a question of finding any 'competition in suffering' or even about comparing the Polish and Jewish fates, but only to examine the geographical background of the Holocaust. In general, the differences in Germany's occupation policy in the conquered territories of Europe are often forgotten. The attitude of the Germans to the Scandinavians and to the Slavs may be a good example here. The scale of prewar anti-Semitism, the numbers of Jewish population in individual countries, the degree of their assimilation, are all forgotten. It is not often noticed, either, that in various areas of Europe, and even individual countries, the anti-Jewish regulations were introduced at different times. All this was extremely important for the ability to provide assistance, as the necessary effort varied, depending on the time and place²⁷⁴. For comparison, in the Polish territory an 'act of help' alone could cost one's life, and entire villages were subjected to cruel pacifications for helping the Jews, while in the Netherlands, for example, a farmer harboring Jewish children was arrested and sent to a concentration camp only after he was caught committing this 'crime' for the third time²⁷⁵.

The insufficient development of research of the subject of rescuing has resulted in a significant gap in our knowledge of the Holocaust that is beginning to emerge more and more clearly and needs filling. This seems to me to be due to the lack of reflection on the fate of the Polish population and to comparing it solely with the fate of the Jewish population, rather than studying it as a completely separate phenomenon. This is a false approach because it leads to the blurring of the image of an environment in which few survivors of ghettos and camps tried to survive until the end of the war. Nechama Tec has already noted that Poland, as the geographic centre of the Holocaust, was the key to understanding the Holocaust and the rescuing of Jews in particular²⁷⁶.

So, one cannot write about the rescue without looking closely at the 'witness' society. Let us, therefore, briefly describe the situation of the Polish population, and above all those phenomena that had or may have had an effect on the rescuing of the Jews. I am of the opinion that it is impossible in

²⁷⁴ N. Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness...*, pp. 6–7.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 8.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 5, 11.

this case to use only the methodology and skills of a historian, because we are touching much broader issues, it is necessary to use the achievements of sociology, social psychology, ethics, etc.²⁷⁷ The facts alone are not enough to reconstruct the real world, history needs to use the achievements of other disciplines of knowledge sometimes.

Considering the situation of a Pole, a person potentially providing help to an escaper from a ghetto or a camp, it is necessary to reflect first on his or her situation, wartime experience, and draw conclusions. What strikes primarily in the study of the Polish war experience is the difference between the real situation of the Poles under the German occupation and its traumatic image from the postwar years. This is an extremely important factor that may be essential for understanding numerous Polish-Jewish issues of the period discussed here. It is shown that, contrary to the often generalized opinions about the experience of 1939–1945, apparently common and identical for the entire Polish nation, the reality ‘depended primarily on the place of stay, the Nazi German policy in that territory, the nature of contacts with the Germans, the fate of one’s own family, the period one spent under the occupant’s control, the scope of information about the latter’s crimes’²⁷⁸. In spite of that, already during wartime, and also after the war, the image of the war and occupation in the social consciousness of the Poles was shaped under the influence of the most dramatic experiences, becoming a synthesis of the Nazi German crimes committed against the Polish nation²⁷⁹. The phenomenon is understandable and in a way natural, it was influenced by at least two factors: first, that almost every Polish family lost someone as a result of the war, almost everyone was either a direct victim of cruelty or

²⁷⁷ Obviously, already many people have noticed that, e.g. J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii. Wpływ okupacji na zjawiska negatywne i naganne w postawach społeczeństwa polskiego w latach 1939–1945 (na przykładzie Krakowa)*, “Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny. Prace Historyczne XIII. Studia z dziejów Małopolski w XIX i XX wieku”, v. 13, b. 126, p. 248.

²⁷⁸ T. Szarota, *Niemcy w oczach Polaków podczas II wojny światowej*, “Dzieje Najnowsze” 1978, R. 10, no. 2, p. 144.

²⁷⁹ This issue was researched by Dr A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, and she published the results in two works: *Chaos i przymus. Trajektorie wojenne Polaków – analiza biograficzna*, Łódź 2002, pp. 172–173; *Biografia a tożsamość narodowa*, eds. M. Czyżewski, A. Piotrowski, A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, Łódź 1996, p. 24. See also E. Dmitrów, *Niemcy i okupacja hitlerowska w oczach Polaków*, Warsaw 1987, p. 87.

had witnessed such an event, or heard about it from a victim or from an eyewitness; secondly, it was influenced by postwar propaganda²⁸⁰.

We, however, are only interested in what did take place during the Nazi German occupation, not afterwards. Why was there the process of dramatizing a situation that was bad, indeed, but was seen as an even worse one? Many factors could be mentioned, but in my opinion the most important one, and yet one that was not fully realized, even if it was often mentioned, was the terror to which the Polish society was subjected. The word is most often associated with the feeling of fear, familiar to everyone, but in fact it is a much broader and deeper concept. By terror one should understand not only a strong but also prolonged anxiety stress, which in the long run becomes an unbearable feeling. Józef Pieter described it this way: "The Nazi German regime spread terror. What does that mean? Street round-ups, tortures, executions, concentration camps and monstrous methods of coercing testimonies, many have seen this and many have experienced it. Nobody was sure of their life or freedom, even if they were not under direct threat at a particular moment. The atmosphere of terror, that is of a permanent and strong anxiety stress, influenced by specific interpersonal situations, reigned and lasted"²⁸¹.

In my opinion this has a special importance for the issue of assistance, as well as for many others. Due to the understanding of this phenomenon we can better understand the situation of a Pole who faced the dilemma whether to provide assistance to a person in danger or not. It no longer mattered much whether the person from whom assistance was requested was in fact at risk at a given time or place. What mattered was whether this person, subjected to long-term stress and anxiety tension, was able to overcome his or her own weaknesses, overcome something far deeper than the feeling of fear, survive the terror of the occupant aimed directly at him or her and their loved ones. I am inclined to assume that in this respect the Polish population was little different from the Jewish one. I wish to say that, although by German decisions the Polish and Jewish fates and the respective degree of

²⁸⁰ A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek; *Chaos i przymus...*, p. 173; *eadem, Biografia a tożsamość...*, p. 13.

²⁸¹ J. Pieter, *Strach i odwaga*, Warsaw 1971, p. 101.

threat of losing one's life or the chances of surviving the war were completely different, there is no doubt that the intimidation and terrorization of both groups were similar. Even if we find small differences, in my opinion they will not have much significance, because in each case the stress was great enough to paralyze the actions of an average person.

As noted in his article, Jacek Chrobaczyński, a citizen of a dictatorial state lives in an endless, morbid fear. You may ask, therefore: if this is the situation of an average citizen, what is the situation of a man who does not even have the status of citizen, but only a pariah. What heroic deeds, if any at all, is such a man capable of? In fact, Polish people enjoyed no legal rights in the territories incorporated into the Reich nor in the *General Gouvernement*²⁸². Let us remember here that, apart from the destruction of the Polish intelligentsia (planned since the beginning of the war), the murders of civilians, capturing and deporting people for labor in the Reich, 1941 saw the beginning of intensified brutalization of the occupant's action against the civilians, and 1942, i.e. the year in which the extermination of Polish Jews from the GG began, attempts were made to expel the Polish population and use the areas thus vacated to settle a German population (Zamość region is an example). This was a direct and clear signal to the Poles that their physical existence was at least threatened. The number of deployed German police and military forces was increasing steadily²⁸³. In 1943, the whole of GG was declared 'partisan combat zones'²⁸⁴ (*Bandenkampfgebiete*), and the Polish territory was still hundreds and thousands of miles from the front line, with no hope of a quick change in the war situation²⁸⁵.

It is also well known that the Nazi order was enforced not only by German forces. From the point of view of the Poles, all sorts of agents and informers

²⁸² A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, *Biografia a tożsamość...*, p. 14.

²⁸³ For exact data regarding the numbers of German troops see: K. Radziwończyk, *Niemieckie siły zbrojne w okupowanej Polsce. 22.6.1941 – wiosna 1944*, "Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny" 1962, R. 7, no. 3, pp. 103–159.

²⁸⁴ This is an exact translation of the Polish term *obszary walki partyzanckiej* used by the author, but the German term *Bandenkampfgebiete* in fact meant "bandit combat zones", because the Germans regarded the underground resistance as common criminals (*banditen*) (translator's note).

²⁸⁵ B. Skaradziński, *Korzenie...*, pp. 363, 374, 389–390.

should be added to this group, as they were an integral part of the German terror machinery²⁸⁶. Those were probably the most dangerous enemies of the Polish population because they knew it best, and it was easiest for them to detect any illegal activity. They were recruited in practically all social classes, there was no such environment where the Germans did not try to recruit collaborators. According to the findings of Józef Bratko, who studied this issue for Cracow, the informers can be divided into three basic groups. The first and most numerous were those who, when arrested by the Germans, feared being sent to a camp or punished by death and agreed to collaborate or even offered collaboration themselves. The second group included people recruited under pressure and coercion, but also some from the group of arrested ones who were offered freedom in return for certain services. The third, least numerous group included those who, without being arrested, offered their willingness to collaborate. According to the author, the latter were the most effective collaborators²⁸⁷. Bratko has also distinguished a separate category of collaborators recruited from the hoi polloi, bribed people, devoid of moral restraints. Altogether, he found the number of informers surprisingly large.

Bratko tried to answer the question of where have so many collaborators come from, and on the basis of the German documentation he came to the following conclusions. First and foremost, the Nazi German police apparatus used all the experience of the former Prussian police during the partition of Poland before WWI, as well as the latest achievements of the studies of human psychology and of society. It is found that it was not only in relation to the Jewish population that the German authorities were able to apply quite effectively the science known today as social psychology. Bratko's observation

²⁸⁶ Only Polish informers are discussed here, because Jewish ones operated usually, although not exclusively, in the ghettos for as long as these existed, so they could not pose a major threat to the Polish population. The Polish ones were harmful primarily to the Poles, but also to the Jews.

²⁸⁷ J. Bratko, *Gestapowcy*, Cracow 1985, pp. 170–171. Those in the first two groups most often decided to collaborate in the hope that once released, they would be able to break contact with the German police. However, the German authorities used their own internal rules and instructions that governed such cases. For example, when an agent moved to another district or another country occupied by the Reich, all his or her files were sent to the local Sipo or SD department, which identified the place of residence and renewed contact (*ibid.*, p. 173).

that in fact the last category of informers, recruited from the *hoi polloi*, had a slightly different task to fulfill than anyone would have expected, is very interesting for us. The German authorities not only showed the least consideration for this category, but also, throughout the period of occupation, allowed exposure of this agent network, even though it often meant that an agent would be punished by death by the Polish underground resistance. There could have been only one reason, as Bratko notes. In the case of this type of informers, information about the underground resistance was not the one that was expected. In fact, the German authorities wanted that “the exposed agent network caused the conviction among the Polish population that agents were operating everywhere, that they could be met in the least expected circumstances”; the intention was to create a general psychosis of betrayal and uncertainty. It was thought that at least to some extent it would prevent the Poles from participating in the resistance movement. The blame for arrests and executions went to those agents who acted semi-openly. [...] Meanwhile, the most valuable agents operated quite differently. Time and resources, sometimes very substantial, were dedicated to those agents”²⁸⁸.

This situation was, in my opinion, very important for the issue of assistance. As it proves to be, the Polish population was not only intimidated by real acts of police-military terror but also subjected to psycho-social manipulations intended to increase distrust and suspicion. It is easy to imagine how this influenced an average Pole. Every stranger, everyone outside the narrow circle of the immediate family, also among neighbors and friends, was seen as a possible collaborator, provocateur, or German agent. The same was true of a ghetto or camp escaper whose very presence created danger of the highest level. The Polish population was largely subjected to feelings of fear, distrust and panic. Sometimes a tiniest rumor was enough to make crowds panic. Such a situation was described by Halina Krahelska in her diary: “A good illustration of the panicked bourgeois circles is provided by this fact. In the big house where I live, there are several stairwells and over 100 apartments. Last Wednesday a German came to one of the apartments on the lower floor in my stairwell, apparently looking for a flat. Presumably he

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 176.

had seen the janitor before and considered the apartment as being 'ex-Jewish' or something like that. Anyway, he found the apartment too dark. He did not like it, he left, did not enter any other apartment and did not return. Such was the actual course of events, as I later established. The repercussions of this fact in the house were as follows: the servants and the ladies of the apartments on all floors were immediately running in the stairwell, communicating to each other that the Germans were going to occupy the apartments, they had already been here, there and elsewhere, and all the tenants of the house up to the 4th floor would eventually be displaced. The Germans would also take over this whole street and the neighboring ones. It was referred to the authority of the janitor, who had apparently said that all apartments up to the 4th floor would be requisitioned, or maybe even the higher floors as well, because it seems that Germans went as high as the 6th, etc. There was great commotion immediately. It was midday. Some of the servants immediately gave up their lunch preparations and rushed to pack their suitcases, especially those with 'wartime' enriched lingerie, dresses, etc. They also decided not to wait for any further developments and take their things to friends, relatives, etc."²⁸⁹

In the light of the findings of Bratko we can try to re-interpret some issues, little known to date. For example, if the underground authorities were aware of the methods employed by the occupant, then perhaps the lack of significant interest in combating *szmalcownictwo* becomes easier to understand. The *szmalcownicy*, just like the whole category of street informers, usually conspicuous to an average inhabitant of the occupied Poland, did not pose a real threat to the underground resistance organizations. Any action against them, including the execution of death sentences, not only exposed the direct participants of such actions, but was also actually useful for the German authorities, as it must echo throughout the public and thus contribute to spreading the conviction about the presence of agents, and thus to increase the intimidation. Meanwhile, the real danger of exposure lurked elsewhere, and that was what members of the underground needed to focus

²⁸⁹ AAN, 383/II-3, *Kronika Agaty*, p. 153. Roman Jabrzemski recounts a similar reaction in the book by Bartoszewski and Lewinówna *Ten jest...*, pp. 601-604.

on. If we add to this the not infrequent feeling of dislike towards Jews and the anti-Semitism of some members of the Polish resistance movement, then the actions of the Polish underground authorities on this issue become completely clear and comprehensible. I think that also explains another phenomenon: while quite a few of the *szmalcownicy* and blackmailers who hunted Jews were not underclass people, they have practically not been recorded in the common opinion of Polish witnesses. Quite the opposite: it was generally assumed that only people from the underworld and all sorts of social dregs were the *szmalcownicy*²⁹⁰. In my view, the relative impunity of *szmalcownicy* and blackmailers, recruited from the category of informers built among the social dregs, was an incentive for degenerate individuals from other social classes. However, because the activity of the former was the most conspicuous, they became the symbol of *szmalcownictwo* and blackmail, while the latter could blend in with them.

It should also be remembered that there are different forms of collaboration; several groups of collaborators can be distinguished depending on the type of cooperation with the occupant. *Szmalcownicy*, if they served the Germans, belonged to just one group of informers, which we call the 'agent collaboration'. Such divisions are, however, a postwar product in the social consciousness and historiography. In the occupied Poland the concept of 'collaboration' was not particularly differentiated, so the term referred to every form of voluntary cooperation with the occupant that was harmful to Poland and to fellow citizens. *Szmalcownicy*, as all those who served the occupants, were included in one group described contemptuously as 'social outcasts', which included not only the so-called dregs of the society, but also those who, by their wartime activities, have dissociated themselves from the Polish nation. In other words, during the occupation the opinion about the social dregs or outcasts was likely to characterize the individual's attitude, not just his or her social background. Some people were called this because they were informers of the Germans, rather than because they were drunkards or thieves. So probably two parallel processes took place, which in

²⁹⁰ See the latest findings regarding the phenomenon of *szmalcownictwo* and blackmail against the Jews in Warsaw in the book by J. Grabowski *Ja tego Żyda...*

a complex war situation served one purpose: to distinguish the 'alien' from the 'healthy' part of the population. It took the postwar, more and more detailed research into the problem, to separate the group of people who traced the Jews from all other informer groups. Also, it seems obvious that the temptation to whitewash our own people, and to categorize all traitors and informers into an anonymous group of social outcasts and dregs must have played an important role in this process of 'forgetting about the *szmalcownicy*' during the war and after the war²⁹¹.

The reaction of the Polish people to the war situation described above was the attitude, which was referred to as 'the attitude of adaptation' by Jacek Chrobaczyński, whom I have already mentioned. It consisted in reducing social norms and concentrating above all on living provisions, on the willingness to give up everything in exchange for staying alive²⁹². He has also noticed that there was a kind of "protective armor" among city dwellers, its creation being indispensable, as the immediate threat was growing and developing²⁹³. In my opinion, this phenomenon was not unrelated to the process of extermination of the Jewish population, observed especially in the towns and cities. It was obvious in the Polish consciousness that the Germans would not content themselves with the Jews and that if the war would not end, the Poles would face the same fate. There are many indications that the public opinion was not wrong in this matter²⁹⁴. Thus the influence of social norms on the behavior of individuals disappeared or diminished, everybody was focused upon themselves, and especially those responsible for others were forced to systemize their values in such a way as to endure, survive, protect

²⁹¹ This phenomenon was described by Hannah Arendt in her book about the Eichmann trial. While sitting in the courtroom and listening to the testimony of witnesses, she noted that when the Jewish traitors were discussed, it was always emphasized that there were very few of them, and they were anonymous people unknown to anyone, "like those from whom any underground resistance movement against the Nazis had suffered." In this way, it was attempted to reduce their participation and to whitewash one's own people (H. Arendt, *Eichmann w Jerozolimie. Rzecz o banalności zła*, Cracow 1998, pp. 157–158) (Originally published in 1963 as *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* – translator's note).

²⁹² J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, pp. 248–249.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalizmu*, Warsaw 1989, pp. 314, 336.

themselves and save their loved ones first, and only then (possibly) engage in some kind of combat, resistance, self-defense²⁹⁵.

Moral erosion occurring in any environment was a consequence and in spite of appearances it is not surprising that almost every locality had its collaborator, thief, *szmalcownik*, prostitute, etc. "Without any exaggeration, morality can be considered as a cornerstone of group bonds and a factor of integration of human communities, both small and great"²⁹⁶. This is a very important observation for the issue discussed here. We can better understand what was happening to the Polish people, especially with respect to the Jewish population, traditionally perceived as different, alien, not 'our folk'. The occupant's actions weakened the morale of the population, which in turn translated into the breakup of social integration, which in turn facilitated the demoralization. This led to a closed circle, which could not be interrupted until the end of the German occupation and long afterwards. The war itself demoralized, whether or not an individual's conduct was negative or positive. Even noble acts were demoralizing, like stealing or easy profit from smuggling to help a hungry family, or killing a German in combat²⁹⁷. As Kazimierz Wyka has observed, people in such realities must succumb to depravation "generally not culpable, caused by the mere necessity of survival in a system based on fiction as a service to the ruled ones, on harm as a principle"²⁹⁸. All previous values have been subjected to such deep relativization that one can discuss the emergence of a completely new perspective of the world under its influence. New moral criteria started to be applied to oneself and to others, based on one's own emotions, shaped by personal experiences²⁹⁹.

Altogether, it was impossible to survive the wartime period and remain untouched by some degree of demoralization. This was all the more so as regards the attitude towards the Jewish people, who, as I have mentioned, were traditionally perceived as alien. Since the Jews, in the common perception of an average Pole, were not an integral part of the Polish population,

²⁹⁵ J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, pp. 250–251.

²⁹⁶ K. Kiciński, *Sytuacje zagrożenia a przemiany idei moralnych*, Warsaw 1990, pp. 422–423.

²⁹⁷ J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, p. 252.

²⁹⁸ Quoted from: A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, *Biografia a tożsamość...*, pp. 16–17.

²⁹⁹ K. Kiciński, *Sytuacje zagrożenia a przemiany idei...*, pp. 103, 112.

moral brakes were often lacking in regard to them. Therefore, apart from other factors (such as the Nazi German propaganda), in spite of the German extermination policy and the martyrdom of the Jewish population, it was possible over time to increase the radicalism of some of the anti-Semitic Polish groups who sometimes proclaimed not only the necessity that the remaining Jews emigrate, but actually praised the German operation against the Jewish population.

The demoralization of the Polish masses under the influence of the realities of the Nazi German occupation was understood by the leadership of the Polish Underground State. The special “M” action was even undertaken, intended to influence those who were most at risk, the youth. It was understood that any killing, even killing the Germans in combat, would have a negative moral impact. It was taught that revenge and retaliation against the enemy could not be approved by a young resistance member. It was attempted to educate young people, as much as possible, ‘for the future’ so that people who were fighting during the German occupation could then find their place in the postwar reality³⁰⁰. It must also be stressed that, regardless of this activity, oriented towards a particular social group, the very existence of the underground resistance helped suppress the moral erosion of the society. The underground state fulfilled in some way the role of ‘the presence of society within the individual’, obliged one to respect social norms, reminded, educated, disciplined, legalized, and also enforced and punished³⁰¹. Thus, from a certain point of view, its very existence was a phenomenon of great benefit to a Jewish escaper seeking Polish assistance. It reminded the persons he or she referred to about their social responsibilities, about loyalty to fellow citizens, did not allow them to reject the needs of others without any inner resistance and completely painlessly. At the same time, it reminded of the possible punishment for those who wanted or planned to harm the escaper. The underground state operated not only for the present moment but also for the future, its existence testified to the fact that it was only a matter of time when independent Poland would be reborn and those who had sinned

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 48–49.

³⁰¹ J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, p. 251.

during the German occupation would be called to account. Regardless of how bad the reality was in this respect, how much impunity was enjoyed by the blackmailers and *szmalcownicy*, one could expect that it would have been much worse if there was no such disciplinary factor³⁰².

The need to reach for the achievements of other humanities, not just history, in the study of the Polish reaction to the Holocaust was also suggested by Michael Steinlauf. He emphasized in particular the usefulness of systematic analysis of the psychological perspective³⁰³. Although even before him the similarity of the Polish anti-Semitism to a kind of ‘collective psychosis’ had been pointed out and it had been indicated that the Polish reactions to the Holocaust were as if drawn from a psychology manual, but no sufficiently detailed research was undertaken³⁰⁴. Among those involved in the study of traumatic collective experience Steinlauf mentions such people, among others, as Eric Santner and Robert Jay Lifton³⁰⁵. The former has shown that collective traumatic experiences should be confronted and analyzed in terms of how far they may dominate and threaten “the composition and coherence of individual and collective identities that enter their deadly field of force”. The latter applied this kind of analysis to the study of the traumatic experience of threat to life during the Holocaust, among others³⁰⁶. He distinguished several conflicts experienced by people who survived a collective traumatic threat of death. First and foremost, is the phenomenon, which he termed the “death imprint”. In addition to the experience of the nearness of death, there is the “death guilt” that arises when no physical or even psychic

³⁰² See B. Skaradziński, *Korzenie...*, p. 362.

³⁰³ M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona*, Warsaw 2001, p. 70 (Originally published in 1997 as *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* – translator’s note).

³⁰⁴ *Problem antysemityzmu*, “Kultura” (Paris) 1957, no. 1/2 (111/112), pp. 56–57; Z. Bauman, *A social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, “Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies” 1988, no. 3, pp. 440–441. Bibliography according to: M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona...*, p. 70.

³⁰⁵ E. Santner, *History beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma* [in:] *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”*, ed. S. Friedlander, Cambridge 1992; R.J. Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and Continuity of Life*, New York 1979; *ibid*, *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*, New York 1967; *ibid*, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, New York 1986. Bibliography according to: M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona...*, p. 70.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

reaction is possible. A person begins to feel guilty for what they have failed to do. The essence of the trauma is the “psychic numbing”, which not only limits the ability to feel what is happening, but also causes the “inability to identify with the victim”, on the principle of “I can see you are dying, but nothing associates me with you or your death”. The “I” of the witness is cut off from higher emotions such as empathy, compassion, pro-social stance, etc. Moreover, this “psychic numbing” is usually accompanied by anger, rage, aggression, due to which the victims of the experience try to regain the vital force. And then there is the phenomenon that Freud called the “compulsion of repetition”: the point is that the victim obsessively repeats the images that accompanied the traumatic experience in an attempt to reconstruct the psyche in such a way as to be able to grasp the traumatic image³⁰⁷.

According to Steinlauf, this scheme can be used to understand the situation in Poland after introducing a few modifications, which do not weaken the scheme at all, but they even strengthen it in fact. According to him, they enable a better understanding of the Polish “sense of guilt”, which has as its source not only the helplessness when faced with the German extermination plan, but also the feeling of resentment against the Jews felt already before the war. Besides, the extermination of the Jewish population has brought many economic benefits to Poles, and the inheritance of even just a part of their neighbors’ property must have increased the sense of guilt. While the blame for the murder fell upon Germans, the Poles were to blame for their reaction to this murder. This has triggered a psychological and moral trap; the Poles as a community found themselves in it, even though they did not commit any crime as a nation and thus had nothing to expiate. Only the sense of guilt was left, which could be neither accepted nor rejected. It was therefore suppressed, so that later it would “make itself felt in distorted forms”³⁰⁸. Thus, Steinlauf comes to at least a partial understanding of both the wartime and postwar anti-Semitic reaction of the Polish population to the events taking place: “the Poles, who had no hope of healing the wounds under conditions of increasing political cooling, could only, according to

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 70–71.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 72–73.

Lifton, transform themselves from passive victims into active oppressors, while maintaining a sense of injustice. Thus conditions were created for the future 'rivalry in suffering', expressed in the constantly returning claims of the Poles that they had suffered the same as the Jews in the war, and also in the 'anti-Semitism without Jews', which has so amazed and fascinated Western observers. To the Poles, in the world perceived from the angle of their own eternal injustice, the Holocaust has finally begun to appear as their persecution by the Jews³⁰⁹.

Among the factors that influenced the situation in which assistance was given or not, apart from the threat of severe penalties at the hands of the occupant and the specific psycho-social transformations taking place within the Polish population, a few other important issues should be mentioned in my opinion. Among the problems that an average Pole who provided assistance had to deal with, Nechama Tec has stressed the anti-Jewish prejudices contained in traditional Polish culture, which inevitably must have had an influence in the mentality of even the noblest Poles and those most friendly to the Jews. However, she considered this to be the weakest factor. The strongest was the fear of German legislation and penalties and the Polish anti-Semitism, which in many cases made assistance to the Jews not only dangerous but even condemned³¹⁰. This condemnation did not end with the end of the war, it came to the point that there were people who contacted the ŻIH and forbade the publication of their personal data due to the fear of the reaction of their environment³¹¹. If one could count on someone, it was most often one's own family. Among the cases of assistance researched by Nechama Tec 60 percent of the families helped people who decided to risk their life for somebody while as few (or as many!) as 12 percent were against it.³¹²

It seems that the question of anti-Jewish prejudices rooted in Polish culture is rightly raised by the author. Nevertheless, this very argument confirms that the Polish anti-Semitism had nothing to do with German barbarity

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 74.

³¹⁰ N. Tec, *When the Light Pierced...*, p. 69.

³¹¹ M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona...*, pp. 69–70.

³¹² N. Tec, *When the Light Pierced...*, p. 68, note 26.

against the Jews. Although most of the Polish population wanted the Jews to leave Poland, this did not mean that the former approved in any way of the manner in which the latter were treated. This is best shown on the example of the attitude of such a meritorious person in the field of assistance to Jews as Zofia Kossak-Szczucka³¹³. The research of Nechama Tec shows such attitudes both directly and indirectly. How else can one interpret the fact that in the group she researched, 50 percent of the saved persons had at least once encountered a refusal of assistance? This is astounding, at least, if you think about it. But not the fact that in this group no less than half of the people met at least once with a refusal of assistance, but because half of them had not encountered such refusal! It was similar with the people who were the first to ask for help. Nechama Tec reports that 62 percent of the rescued group had asked for help first, 20 percent were directed to their rescuers by other people, and for about 15 percent it was the Poles who were the first to offer assistance. In the group of rescuers, 29 percent stated that they were the first to initiate the assistance, 30 percent confirmed that they were asked for help, 25 percent said that the aid-recipients came to them via a go-between, and the rest could not be established³¹⁴. Even if we take into account the fact that we are dealing with a particular group, because both the rescuers and the rescued have survived the war, so it can be presumed that in many respects their situation was better than that of others, still, it is astounding that under the Nazi German terror, despite of all the dangers and the moral erosion, despite the prewar anti-Semitism and the psycho-social phenomena described above, there was a group of people where between 15 and 29 percent of the Poles chose to voluntarily expose themselves to deadly danger **on their own initiative**.

This confirms the assumption that the image of the Polish population was neither quite white nor quite black, and Jacek Chrobaczyński's thesis that the Polish population under the Nazi German occupation should be regard-

³¹³ M. Steinlauf, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona...*, pp. 69–70. He quotes a passage from an essay by Jan Błoński: "She was ready to give her life for the Jews; but if, by some miracle, they disappeared without any particular harm to them, she would be relieved because she saw neither the need nor the possibility of coexistence."

³¹⁴ N. Tec, *When the Light Pierced...*, p. 70.

ed as “normal”, that is one in which both positive and negative phenomena were present. He wrote as follows: “We cannot idealize the attitudes of the occupied population [...] But also let us not demonize or scourge the population”³¹⁵. That is why, in the wartime account of just one person, we often find information so seemingly contradictory, mentioning both “good” and “bad” Poles, German deception, intimidation, etc.

The fate of Rywka Helfgot, resident of Góra Kalwaria (described in the memorial book of Jews from Góra Kalwaria) can be a model example of the complicated war situation in many respects. After ordering the Jews from that town to resettle to Warsaw, the whole family, fearing bad conditions in the Warsaw ghetto, went to the ghetto at Otwock. The family’s material situation was becoming more and more difficult and the parents were no longer able to earn their living. It resulted out that the only chance to survive was provided by maintaining contact with the Poles. Rywka, eight years old, began to earn money in nearby villages, bringing shoes to repair, and her brother was temporarily sent to work with a Catholic clergyman they knew, staying with him under a Polish name. The girl also traveled to Warsaw, where she sold products obtained in the countryside to the inhabitants of the ghetto at a higher price than in the remaining parts of the city. One day, in the Otwock ghetto, an announcement was made about the resettlement of people who owned devices enabling them to work. Many people enjoyed the opportunity to travel and prospects of improving their fortunes. When, on the designated day, the Jewish people came to the square from where they were going to be taken to work, they were all loaded by armed *gendarmes* into carts pre-requisitioned from the Poles and taken to the railway station from which they were transported in cattle cars to the Treblinka death camp. A few families, including the Helfgots, hid in a camouflaged cellar. Rywka’s brother, who for some reason had to leave the priest’s house, failed to reach the hideout. Perhaps the clergyman believed in the possibility of the family leaving together to work, but in my opinion the most likely possibility is that he could not stand the tension and sent the boy home. After some time the boy found the camouflaged cellar. The parents wanted to let him

³¹⁵ J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, p. 247.

in or leave the cellar to be with him, but their companions did not let them do it, fearing that opening the hideout would disturb the camouflage of the cellar and result in exposing them all. Soon German soldiers arrived there and, when they heard the boy cry, came close to the cellar. The family had to listen in silence as he was killed...

The same evening some German discovered the hideout but, instead of denouncing the Jews, he warned them to leave because the *gendarmes* could return at any moment, knowing that someone was hiding. At night, after three days spent in the closed space without a drop of water, the family slipped out and headed for a village called Gliniecka Kępa. On the way they were attacked by Polish peasants with wooden clubs. They managed to escape, but Rywka's sister named Elka died later from head injuries. Because the peasants were far less friendly than expected, the family feared they would be handed over to the Germans and therefore escaped to the ghetto at Sobina³¹⁶. From there, as in Otwock, Rywka managed to get out and go to the peasants, her father's acquaintances, who commissioned small jobs to her. Later on her father also sneaked away to work with them.

In the spring of 1942, when visiting a peasant they knew, Rywka and her father learned that the Germans ordered him to deliver a cart to the ghetto. They already knew what that meant. They did not return the same day, but the day after, to see if perhaps somebody from their family managed to hide from the deportation. Sadly, they did not find anybody, they had to flee. A period of constant wandering and pursuit by German *gendarmes* began. In the winter Rywka lost contact with her father when, during one of the raids, a German who was chasing her fired a shot and she fell into the snow, so all the others were sure she was killed. Her father found shelter with a peasant they knew. When dusk fell, Rywka went further on, hungry, exhausted and cold. She came to a village, but did not risk entering the cottages because of the fear that Germans might be stationed there. Too weak to go on, she fell asleep between the graves at the Christian cemetery. This is her description of what happened next: "I look around, perhaps it's a village I know, [but

³¹⁶ Probably in fact Sobienie Jeziory, south of Otwock, near Góra Kalwaria, but on the right bank of the River Vistula. One of the ghettos in the Warsaw district was located there.

no], it was the village of Ostrowiec, where I had never been before. What should I do? Suddenly a peasant appeared. He looks at me with astonishment and asks me: 'What are you doing here between the graves?' I stopped, I froze and could not answer because of the fear that he might hand me over to *gendarmes*, but suddenly a scream came from me: 'I am a Jewess!'³¹⁷. And I wept... The peasant opened his kind eyes with astonishment and said to me, 'Don't be afraid my child, there is a Jew in our village whom we harbor, I will take you to him.' I stand between the graves where my nocturnal bed was, and I wonder: go or run away? But I have no other choice, I go with this peasant, and soon I see from a distance a Jew, whose face seems familiar to me, after a while I come to myself, and a wild scream comes from my chest: 'Uncle Moshe-Joseph, you're alive!'. [He replies:] 'You're alive, Rywka?!' And with tears he hugs me. The peasant stood at a distance and wiped his eyes with a handkerchief...³¹⁸

The story described above shows how different were the attitudes of the Poles towards exterminated Jews. Without a doubt, Rywka's family owed much to the Poles. They earned money due to Polish friends, found shelter because of them and Rywka survived the German occupation due to them. Her sister, however, died because she was beaten by Polish peasants³¹⁹. Rywka herself experienced many terrible moments before she found a permanent shelter. She knew that she could not trust everyone, and that she could be handed over into German hands by the Poles. Between her sister's death and the help to her family, there is a whole range of diverse attitudes of the Poles, of their indifference, but also of their intimidation by the occupant, of their villainy, but also of heroism and kindness of heart³²⁰. Describing these behaviors is extremely difficult, the mere comparison of examples gives us

³¹⁷ In original text these were Polish words, transcribed with Hebrew characters.

³¹⁸ *Megilas Ger*, Buenos Aires 1975, pp. 288–293.

³¹⁹ In fact this happened after she was captured by the Germans and loaded into a wagon destined to a death camp (which I omitted in the story), but this fact does not change the moral assessment of the behavior of the attackers.

³²⁰ As regards accusations of indifference of the Polish population, see e.g. G. Paulsson, *Sto-sunki polsko-żydowskie w okupowanej Warszawie...*, p. 302; J. Błoński, *Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto*, Cracow 1996; B. Engelking, *Zagłada i pamięć. Doświadczenie Holocaustu i jego konsekwencje opisane na podstawie relacji autobiograficznych*, Warsaw 1994, pp. 52–53.

little more than purely statistical information, and it is difficult to resist the temptation of selecting these in such way that they match the researcher's imagination of the past³²¹.

To broaden our knowledge and to show other aspects of wartime reality, it seems helpful, as postulated by me in this text and by other researchers earlier on, to go beyond strictly historical research and use the achievements of other related sciences, such as sociology or psychology. Describing the assistance given to the Jewish population by the Poles is incomplete when using only the historical methodology. How to describe, for example, the situation when someone was, simultaneously, a rescuer for some and a murderer for others? Should we categorize such person as a rescuer and award the title of the "Righteous Among the Nations" or the opposite: label him or her as a murderer of the Jews and condemn? An example is provided by the fate of the Berman family from Koziencie. Zelik Berman was sheltered in the cellar of a Pole he knew. Having discovered that his brother Chaim and the latter's family were in a forced labor camp at Wolanów, he sent someone with fake papers to his brother to take him out of there. This mission failed. Then the wife of the host who harbored them went there with the same purpose. She managed to take Chaim out of the camp with his son Amos (the other son and wife had been shot earlier by the Germans) and brought them to her home, to the brother already harbored there. This took place in the winter of 1941/1942. Unfortunately, in the early months of 1942 Chaim Berman fell ill with typhus, and the sanitary conditions in the cellar were dramatic, they lacked medicines that could alleviate his sufferings: "His screams were so loud [in the original text: 'reached the skies' – M.U.] that the person who harbored them went down to the cellar and sent Zelik and Amos up to the apartment. What was done to Chaim, remained a mystery that Chaim took with him to the grave. When Zelik and Amos returned to the cellar, they did not hear Chaim's screams any more. He was no longer alive"³²².

³²¹ It is worth mentioning the words of Prof. Feliks Tycha here: "truth is not constructed on the basis of arbitrarily chosen fragments of reality, but on the principle of real proportions, and solely, rather than selectively, on the basis of credible sources" (see note 17).

³²² *Sefer Koznic*, Tel Aviv 1969, p. 242 (Memory Book of the Jews from Koziencie).

So, we have in this story a Pole who both rescued the Jews, and directly contributed to the death of one of the rescued. You can look at that person as a murderer. One can condemn the lack of courage and consider the individual a weak person who, for fear of own safety, killed a sick man. But you can also say that by killing Chaim, the person cared not only for own life, but also for the lives of the other harbored people, who would perish if they were discovered. In addition, there are two other characters who risked their lives to get Chaim out of the labor camp. Was their behavior just an episode or did it result from empathy towards those so cruelly oppressed? Personality type explanations would not help much here. This case can be understood and exhaustively described only with the use of sociological and psychological tools³²³.

This is the thesis presented by Tomasz Grosse in his work on the basic values in the Warsaw ghetto³²⁴. According to him, in the extremely difficult situation of a community enclosed behind the walls of the Warsaw ghetto, the defense of life and the desire to survive were the natural and most important basic values that determined the behavior of individuals and groups. Due to the methodology of such sciences as sociology and psychology, he was able to show and explain why the hierarchy of values of the Jewish population underwent such great changes. In my opinion, one can clearly see the analogy between what was happening inside the ghetto walls and beyond. There was no such phenomenon in the 'Aryan' side of the city, which would not have taken place in the ghetto; differences can only be seen in their intensity and concentration. Both populations, the Polish and the Jewish, were "normal" ones, i.e. those in which both positive and negative phenomena existed, but they lived in abnormal times³²⁵. Both populations were forced to play an imposed role, unwanted by anyone. Many people failed the examination that fate forced upon them. Without a doubt, the Polish "Righteous" and the people who provided assistance to the Jewish population, oppressed in a particular way, may be counted among the group that passed the exam.

³²³ To complete the story, I will add that Zelik survived the German occupation, but Amos was denounced in Warsaw by *szmalcownicy* to the Germans who shot him (*ibid*).

³²⁴ T. Grosse, *Przeżyć. Obrona życia jako wartość podstawowa społeczności getta warszawskiego*, Warsaw 1998.

³²⁵ See J. Chrobaczyński, *Stan anomii...*, p. 247.

Conclusion

The help provided by the Poles to the Jewish population during the German occupation of 1939–1945 still requires detailed research. The negligence in this area means that particularly the individual assistance, unrelated to underground organizations, will never be studied in a way that was possible in the immediate postwar period, when a relatively large group of witnesses was still alive. Nevertheless, some important conclusions can be formulated, even with the state of research on this subject that still leaves much to be desired.

First of all, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between organized and individual assistance. It is wrong to consider the ‘Żegota’ activity as being the same as that of the Council of Assistance to the Jews (RPŻ), as has often been the case in the scientific publications devoted to the wartime Polish-Jewish relations so far. This term was used not only by the RPŻ but also by other organizations, and sometimes even by individual persons who provided assistance. In my opinion, bearing in mind that this activity was not identical to the activities of the RPŻ, at least three ‘Żegota’ operations can be distinguished, organized for Polish Jews in the occupied territory by members of Polish population. The first of these is individual help, which includes not only periodic support but also any little assistance provided by the Poles to their friends and sometimes also to complete strangers, victims of anti-Jewish policy of the German occupant. Without a doubt, the scale of these activities was much greater than what can be proved today. This is obvious if one considers that most of the Polish “Righteous Among the Nations” were not in any way affiliated with underground resistance organizations.

The second ‘Żegota’ operation is the assistance provided by Polish underground organizations before the “great action” period and the establishment of the RPŻ. This does not mean, however, that it did not continue later, because not all underground organizations that had provided assistance to the Jewish population joined the council. Zofia Kossak-Szczucka is the best example here, as she was considered an initiator of the RPŻ, but for political reasons she did not join the RPŻ and established another organization for assistance to the Jews, called the SOS (Social Self-Defense Organization).

The activity of the RPŻ proper and its associated groups is only the third 'Żegota' operation. To these three operations one should add all the Polish efforts focused outside the country on helping Jews, primarily Polish citizens, but not limited to them. Thus, we can say that there were at least four 'Żegota' actions, including three in the country and one abroad. This realization enables better understanding of the ties between both these communities in prewar Poland and the divisions between them. Where there was a possibility of assistance due to social and personal contacts or organizational relationships, there it was often provided. However, this was virtually impossible if such contacts had not existed in the prewar period. Therefore, in the activities of the RPŻ, participation of Jewish groups was necessary, as they were the only ones who had appropriate insight into the Jewish population. Without them, supporting those who did not know the Poles or who were not assimilated, would have been impossible in the inhuman conditions of the German occupation.

Both in the field of organized and individual assistance many problems have only been barely mentioned. First of all, as stressed above, organized assistance is usually attributed almost exclusively to the RPŻ. Work of other organizations, such as the AK, socialist and peasants' cells, are little known or completely equated with the RPŻ. It may be said that all the Polish help provided to the Jewish population was linked with the RPŻ. For this and other reasons, the problems that the council faced in its contacts with the official Polish underground authorities were not appreciated. And yet, these authorities sought to closely control its actions and ensured a correct composition of the political leadership.

There is much to suggest that the Delegation of the Polish Government in Exile in occupied Poland was primarily concerned with the propaganda use of the action of assistance to the Jewish population, and neglected many activities that could have increased the effectiveness of the work. Despite the very modest resources provided to the RPŻ, the DR transferred some of its social responsibilities to it, showed no interest in expanding the work, and scrupulously tried to control expenses. In addition, many financial matters remain unclear to us. We do not know, for example, how much money the DR really provided to the RPŻ and what were their sources. The fact is that

the total sum of money that has certainly reached the representatives of the RPŻ or Jewish organizations is close to 10 percent of the general budget of social welfare of the DR in 1943 and 1944, although much larger funds were apparently paid by the Polish government and worldwide Jewish organizations. One should even wonder whether the amounts allocated for Jewish purposes were not limited to what was proportional to the demographic share of the Jewish population in the prewar period. If this were true, it would not only mean that the exceptionally tragic situation of the Jewish people (even in comparison with that of the Poles) was not considered, but also that some of the money was used differently. This is supported by the conclusion of one of the leading members of the RPŻ that Polish official authorities would be discredited in the eyes of a part of the Polish underground resistance if they failed to join the assistance. In other words, it is possible to imagine a situation in which the DR's cooperation with the Polish and Jewish underground organizations interested in helping the Jewish population was started more because of the necessity of taking into account political benefits than because of a real sense of loyalty towards the exterminated citizens of Jewish nationality. This is likely since, when controlling the RPŻ's actions, the DR was determined not to recognize the uniqueness of the situation of the Jewish population in any way, but wished at all costs to perceive the ongoing Holocaust as an element of the persecution of the whole Polish population. In addition, the DR, probably due to the fear of losing popularity among the Polish people, did not try to change the atmosphere that was generally unfriendly towards the Jews. This was a very unfavorable situation for the RPŻ. It is therefore admirable that, despite such a difficult situation, it developed and intensified its activities as much as it could, providing care to increasing numbers of people.

So far, the individual assistance has been the least researched. I am convinced that proportions in the Polish historiography were out of balance when describing the importance of organized assistance, identified with the RPŻ, to the disadvantage of the individual assistance. This situation seems to have arisen in connection with the special context of Polish-Jewish relations during the war, which favored politicization of research on this issue. It was easier to refer to a well-known institution whose authority was unquestioned,

rather than conducting painstaking and detailed research, less and less likely to succeed as the years passed since the end of the German occupation. This happened despite the fact that most of the cases of assistance given to Jews on Polish soil were provided as individual aid. Using the example of about 2,500 acts of assistance I have collected and the research of Nechama Tec one may draw some interesting conclusions. In this group assistance was most often provided for humanitarian reasons, more often in the countryside than in large cities. This assistance intensified as the Holocaust progressed and it was only the imminent end of the war, and the liberation of Polish territories by the Red Army that caused a decline in the number of assistance acts. From the beginning of the German occupation to its end, despite the risk of loss of freedom, health or life, support was provided to the Jews in all available forms. At any place and at any time there was a chance they would meet a person who, for humanitarian reasons only, provided unselfish assistance to the needy, most often organizing shelter for them. More detailed and possibly corrective findings shall be possible after conducting comprehensive research on the Polish "Righteous". However, this is only possible after material from the Israeli Yad Vashem Institute is used.

The people reached by Jewish escapers, if they chose to provide care, were very generous in their actions. Needless to say, we are not in a position to say how many Poles have helped Jews selflessly irrespective of the deadly dangers they and their families faced. We will never know how many helped for material profit or in the hope of receiving it after the war. It does not seem that this was a large group, because if it is true that only about 300,000, or less than 10 percent, of Polish Jews decided to escape from the ghettos or camps, then how many Poles could they have met on the way, and rather how many have they asked for help? Some were captured immediately after the escape; some were handed over to the Germans by unfriendly persons, and some robbed or murdered by bandits or partisan groups operating in the forests. How many of these escapers had any means that gave them a chance to buy food or pay for accommodation?

Regardless of the problems with answering these questions, there is no doubt that the assistance was provided, and the Poles are definitely ahead of other nations in the number of the "Righteous Among the Nations" titles

awarded by the Yad Vashem Institute. The number of awards is nearly 6,000, and the number of people they saved is probably significantly greater. According to my analysis of only a selected group of Polish and Jewish archival material, six thousand is a considerably underestimated number when compared to the number of Poles who provided assistance to Jews and whose names are recorded in archival material. On the other hand, one may speculate that only some of the Poles were mentioned in any way by their first name or family name in documents surviving to date. The collection of Jewish accounts recorded after the war, stored in the archives of the ŻIH, is an example here, as many of these mention names of Poles who have never been honored with the title. And yet, it is known that only a small proportion of the saved Jews left such accounts; this collection has just over seven thousand texts, while the lowest of the quoted numbers of Jews who survived in Polish territory is 30,000. In total, the Poles involved in helping Jews should be counted in hundreds of thousands, the most likely number being about 300,000.

Such relatively minute preservation of the memory of the Poles who provided support to the Jewish population is not only due to the neglect of Polish and Jewish historians but, there is much to suggest that, it is also due to the neglect of the Yad Vashem Institute. The award procedure is rigorous, requiring multiple formalities. In addition, it is often prolonged, sometimes it takes up to eight years. The title is usually given only when there is still a living Jewish witness willing to make a relevant statement. As may be seen in the documents added to this text, even the completion of all formalities does not guarantee the title being awarded.

It seems at the same time that we pay less attention to the “acts of assistance”, that is cases of one-time assistance to a person being persecuted, than to periodic or permanent assistance. Usually they are treated as being not very important. This is reflected in the accounts and memories from the time of the German occupation when the Holocaust victims naturally focused on examples of negative behavior toward them. The assistance provided to them seemed natural, unlike hostility. Meanwhile, under the conditions of the German occupation, especially since the introduction of the death penalty for any assistance to the ghetto escapers, the situation of Holocaust witnesses has changed radically. Therefore, helpful acts are as important as

acts of hostility, because they could have saved someone's life to the same extent as acts of hostility could have killed. In this sense, any support could have cost lives and be equivalent to, for example, the acts of blackmail, which were not rare, either.

We will certainly continue to unearth information about acts of assistance, both in Polish and in Jewish accounts. If we believe, for example, a story of meeting a *szmalcownik*, then there is no reason not to believe the same text when it speaks of assistance provided by a known or anonymous Pole. Everything needs to be done to consolidate and appreciate the efforts of those who risked their lives, and thus wrote the most beautiful chapters in Polish history, following the best ideals of Poland.

New information on this subject may be provided by analyzing the judicial proceedings of members of the Polish underground resistance and material collected by the communist security services, in part relating to the wartime activities of the accused. These often include descriptions of assistance to the Jewish population, most often 'as side notes' to underground resistance activities. As Józef Przybyszewski wrote about the AK: "The gap in this section is an injustice to the great organization and its dedicated fighters. These people have the right to expect that their daily 'dicing with death' should leave a trace in history."³²⁶

³²⁶ BUW, *Rękopisy*, 2231, "Przedwojenny antysemita", p. 571. See document 17 and 44.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAN	– Archiwum Akt Nowych, Central Archives of Modern Records
AIE	– Archiwum Instytutu Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Archives of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Łódź
AIPN	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Warszawa), Institute of National Remembrance Archives (Warsaw)
AIPN GK	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej – Główna Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Institute of National Remembrance Archives – Main Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation
AIPN Ki	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Krakowie Delegatura w Kielcach, Institute of National Remembrance Archives of Branch Office in Krakow, Kielce Bureau
AIPN Lu	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Lublinie, Institute of National Remembrance Archives of Branch Office in Lublin
AIPN Ra	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Lublinie Delegatura w Radomiu, Institute of National Remembrance Archives of Branch Office in Lublin, Radom Bureau
AIPN Rz	– Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Rzeszowie, Institute of National Remembrance Archives of Branch Office in Rzeszów
AK	– Armia Krajowa, Home Army
AKM	– Archiwum Kurii Metropolitarnej w Krakowie, Metropolitan Curia Archives in Cracow
AN Kr	– Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, National Archives in Cracow

AP	– Archiwum Państwowe, State Archives
AŻIH	– Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, Jewish Historical Institute Archives
BAB	– Bundesarchiv Berlin, German Federal Archives
BCh	– Bataliony Chłopskie, Peasants' Battalions
BIP	– Biuro Informacji i Propagandy, Information and Propaganda Bureau
BN	– Biblioteka Narodowa, National Library
BUW	– Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, University of Warsaw Library
CBŻ UŁ	– Centrum Badań Żydowskich Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Łódź
CKŻP	– Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce, Central Committee of Jews in Poland
DR	– Delegatura Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraj, Delegate's Office of the Polish Government in Exile
FOP	– Front Odrodzenia Polski, Front of Poland's Rebirth
GG	– Generalne Gubernatorstwo, General Gouvernement
GL	– Gwardia Ludowa, People's Guard
KdS	– Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Commander of the Security Police and of the Security Service (SD)
KP	– Kriminalpolizei, Policja kryminalna
MO	– Milicja Obywatelska, Citizens' Militia
NALD	– National Archives of the Lviv District
NSZ	– Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, National Armed Forces
NTN	– Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy, Supreme National Tribunal
OKŚZpNP	– Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, District Committee for Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation
Orpo	– Ordnungspolizei, Policja Porządkowa
OSP	– Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna, Voluntary Fire Brigade
POD	– Polska Organizacja Demokratyczna, Polish Democratic Organization
PP	– Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement, Polish Police, so-called navy-blue police
PPP	– Polskie Państwo Podziemne, Polish Underground State
PPS	– Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, Polish Socialist Party
PPS-WRN	– PPS „Wolność-Równość-Niepodległość”, PPS “Liberty-Equality-Independence”

PPR	– Polska Partia Robotnicza, Polish Workers' Party
ROCh	– Ruch Oporu Chłopskiego, Peasants' Resistance Movement
RPŻ	– Rada Pomocy Żydom, Council of Assistance to the Jews
Sipo	– Sicherheitspolizei, Security Police
SD	– Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, Democratic Party
SL	– Stronnictwo Ludowe, People's Party
SN	– Stronnictwo Narodowe, National Party
TRPŻ	– Tymczasowa Rada Pomocy Żydom, Temporary Council of Assistance to the Jews
UB	– Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, Security Office
WUBP	– Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, Provincial State Security Office
YVA	– Yad Vashem Archives
ZWZ	– Związek Walki Zbrojnej, Union of Armed Struggle
ŻIH	– Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, Jewish Historical Institute
ŻKH	– Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, Jewish Historical Commission
ŻKN	– Żydowski Komitet Narodowy, Jewish National Committee

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