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volume 4/2023

Polish-Jewish STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

The texts collected in issue four of the journal *Polish-Jewish Studies* (PJS 4) are published in three sections: Studies, Reviews/Discussion, and Chronicles. The first contains articles that result from two academic conferences organised by the Institute of National Remembrance: *Czas okupacji i zniewolenia. Żydzi i Polacy w obliczu totalitaryzmów 1939–1956* (Time of Occupation and Subjugation. Jews and Poles in the Face of Totalitarian Regimes 1939–1956), Warsaw, 6–7 July 2021, and *Aktion »Reinhardt« i Zagłada polskich Żydów – w kręgu mechanizmów i sprawców* (*Aktion Reinhardt* and the Holocaust of Polish Jews – Mechanisms and Perpetrators), Warsaw, 9 March 2022. Thus, the volume is dominated by the subject of the German Occupation and bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes against Jews.

At the beginning of the Studies section, we publish two texts devoted to Polish-Jewish relations in the interbellum. In the first, Konrad Zieliński presented a socio-demographic picture of the Jewish population in Poland in the second half of the 1930s, taking a critical look at Polish-Jewish relations that is in part due to the decade chosen. Among other topics, the author focused on state policy

towards Jews, including emigration policy and the so-called Jewish question in the context of the Catholic Church. Moreover, Zieliński assessed the actions of the Polish authorities in Jewish affairs as ones tolerating violence against Jews. The second article, by Marek Wierzbicki, is devoted to the state of research on Polish-Jewish relations on Polish soil under Soviet occupation between 1939 and 1941 – one of the most controversial topics in recent Polish history that has seen various interpretations both by Polish and Jewish community leaders as well as Polish historians and those abroad.

The section devoted to the German occupation opens with an article by Karolina Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "German Persecution and Repression of the Jewish Population in the Kreis Busko District between 1939 and 1942: Selected Issues." Here, the author discusses the fundamental manifestations of the German authorities' persecution of Jews in the first phase of the Holocaust in the area under study. This relates to instantaneous pogroms and other forms of repression in the first weeks of the war, the policy of establishing ghettos, as well as human and economic exploitation – all constituting an indirect form of extermination. Trzeskowska-Kubasik furthermore outlined the structures of the German civil and military-police administration in the Kreis Busko District, responsible for the crimes against Jews between 1939 and 1942.

The subsequent text on the occupation is that of Tomasz Domański, "The German Municipality-Level Administration in the General Government and Its Surviving Records for the Study of Polish-Jewish Relations. The Example of the Radom District." The study argues that an analysis of the documentation produced by the German local government authorities, extant in the archives, clearly proves that the Polish population was purposefully embroiled in anti-Jewish policy and forced to participate accordingly. The most common method was the selective utilisation of fear using threats, intimidation, as well as collective and individual responsibility. The article also draws attention to the role of the village head (*sołtys*) and their office, whom the German authorities often made hostage to their operations. Domański's findings, emphasising the role of the German factor, are also extremely important for research into the context of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War, which is sometimes overlooked or marginalised by many scholars.

One of the thousands of cases where Poles helped Jews during the Second World War was discussed by Kinga Czechowska. The author brings to life as it were the remarkable landowner Hipolit Aleksandrowicz and his accomplishments in offering assistance to Jews. The aforementioned, unlike many landowners from the lands incorporated into the German Reich in 1939, avoided death and persecution at the hands of his German neighbours. In the following years, he supported Poles and Jews. Furthermore, Czechowska outlines the motivations behind the landowner's actions and the circumstances relating to his assistance.

Roman Gieroń's article, "The Trial of Willi Haase before the Cracow Voivodeship Court in 1951," opens this part of PJS 4, devoted to research into the prosecution of crimes committed against Jews during the Second World War. Monika Tomkiewicz presents another brief study on this issue, "The Prosecution and Punishment of the Perpetrators of Crimes Committed against Jews in Ponary and other Execution Sites in the Vilnius Region." Both works refer to an extremely important trend in recent years of analysing post-war judicial and investigative materials, which – given the destruction of a vast number of documents by the Germans at that time – make it possible to establish the course of the Holocaust and to examine its perpetrators. Significantly, the conclusions of both authors are quite convergent – arguing that the results of the legal process pertaining to these crimes are, to the highest degree, unsatisfactory.

Another text in this section, integral to research into the perpetrators of crimes committed against Jews, is that of Maciej Korkuć, "'Yes, I plead guilty.' The Murder of Jankiel Lieberman in the Village of Rogów on 1 February 1943: A Case Study."[1] In the article, the author focuses on a single event concerning the hiding of a Jew by a Pole and his neighbours, which ended with the murder of the Jew. Maciej Korkuć, while by no means justifying the murder, attempts to discern the reasons for this dramatic decision through a multifaceted analysis of occupation conditions and their impact on Poles who were faced with singular choices (that sometimes resulted in terrible consequences for Polish-Jewish relations).

The post-war period was the subject of studies by Roman Gieroń and Mateusz Lisak. In the first, "Anti-Jewish Collective Violence in Rzeszów and Cracow in

[1] First published in the journal *Wieś Polska w Czasie II Wojny Światowej*, 2020, nr 1.

1945: A Comparison in the Context of Criminal Prosecutions," Roman Gieron used surviving investigative materials from the anti-Jewish events, known as pogroms, of 11 August 1945 in Cracow and 11–12 June 1945 in Rzeszów. The documents were used to compare the course and extent of these events. At the same time, the scholar attempted to answer the question of the extent of the prosecution of the 1945 crimes committed against Jews in Cracow and Rzeszów – in communist Poland immediately after these tragic events and already after 1989. Mateusz Lisak, on the other hand, focused on the analysis of the pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946. His "Review of English-Language Studies of the Kielce Pogrom: 1946–1992," is a comprehensive study in which the author concluded that the number of works published up to the early 1990s was exceedingly modest. According to Lisak, however, the focus of the works to date has been more on background findings than on a detailed analysis of the course of the event *per se*.

As in previous issues of *Polish-Jewish Studies*, extremely important – from the perspective of Holocaust Studies and Jewish Studies – respective points of view and literature are appraised in the Reviews/Discussion section, where five reviews are included. Some are pretty extensive studies with an insightful and detailed analysis of the issues raised by the authors of the publications in question. The reviewers are especially interested in well-known and well-publicised studies on Polish-Jewish relations in Poland and abroad in recent years.

Particularly noteworthy in this context are the polemical texts by Piotr Gontarczyk ("Jan Grabowski's *Judenjagd*: A Case in Point for the Study of Holocaust Distortion") and Paweł Kornacki's review of the book by Anna Bikont ("The Holocaust Without the Germans: *Cena. W poszukiwaniu żydowskich dzieci po wojnie* [The Price. In Search of Jewish Children After the War"). In addition, Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki appraised Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book *Umarły cmentarz. Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku* (The Lifeless Cemetery: Introduction to the Study of the Causes and Course of the Massacre of Jews in Kielce on 4 July 1946), while Martyna Grądzka-Rejak analysed the biography of Jakob Steinhardt by Dominik Flisiak, and Kinga Czechowska discussed the publication *Shtetl Lubicz* by Karolina Famulska-Ciesielska.

The last section, Chronicle, contains texts describing the activities of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow concerning the commemoration of Holocaust victims in connection with the eightieth anniversary of *Aktion Reinhardt* in 2022 (Roman Gieroń), a series of book promotions and debates around the book, *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa* (State of Research on Assistance Offered in Polish Territories to Jewish People During the German Occupation – A Review of the Literature) by Michał Siekierka and the conference, '*Warszawo ma…' 79th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, Warsaw, 14 April 2022, related by Dawid Chomej.

Tomasz Domański
Alicja Gontarek

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THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN POLAND IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1930S

The great economic crisis, the progression of fascism across Europe, the rise of nationalist and xenophobic sentiments, and finally, the escalation of radical anti-Semitism in the 1930s did not leave the situation of Jews in Poland unaffected. The public mood and the political situation in the final years before the war were not conducive to stability, nor did they give a sense of security to the Jews living here. This was compounded by identity tensions accompanying the processes of secularisation, emancipation and modernisation of society, particularly noticeable among the younger generation of Polish Jews. It should also be remembered that in 1939, despite the post-partition unification of the country and the passage of almost 20 years since Poland regained its independence, Polish Jews did not form a single and cohesive community. Internal divisions were considerable, and the legacy of the partitions was still visible in, among other things, the nature of the communities, the model of religiosity, occupational traditions, the level of wealth, political sympathies and antipathies, and, finally, relations with the non-Jewish population.[1]

[1] See G. Bacon, "One Jewish Street? Reflections on Unity and Disunity in Interwar Polish Jewry," in *New Directions in the History of the Jews in the Polish Lands*, ed. by A. Polonsky, H. Węgrzynek, and A. Żbikowski (Boston, 2018), pp. 324–337.

The article outlines the demographic and socio-economic situation of the Jewish population in Poland in the second half of the 1930s. The activity of the participants in political life, the "state of possession" of individual parties and organisations or their policy assumptions are not analysed. Nonetheless, the national policy of the state affected the situation of the Jewish population and its economic position, and behind some laws, there was a solid ethnic prejudice. Therefore, more attention is paid to the phenomena of social life and to the pieces of legislation whose implementation, regardless of the motives behind their adoption, directly affected the situation of Jews and Jewish religious communities towards the end of the Second Polish Republic.

In the last dozen years, many valuable publications have appeared on the publishing market on, among other things, the demographic relations of the Jewish population in Poland. This study draws primarily on works whose authors cite statistical data. Reference was most often made to a study by Andrzej Gawryszewski, who analysed, among other things, the results of censuses.[2] Also very helpful were Bina Garncarska-Kadary's book on Jewish workers,[3] Tomasz Kawski's study on Jewish communities in interwar Poland,[4] and Szymon Rudnicki's work on Jewish parliamentarians in the Second Polish Republic.[5] The works of Jerzy Tomaszewski are also instrumental in researching the Jewish population's social situation and economic condition in the interwar period.[6] Of the studies published before the war, reference has been made, among others, to the two-volume work *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej* (Jews in the Reborn Poland) and the statistics compiled by Bohdan Wasiutyński.[7]

As the 1931 census was the last one taken in the Second Republic, the results of the 1931 census were most often relied upon, with a possible reference to the 1921

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[2] A. Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski w XX wieku* (Warsaw, 2005).

[3] B. Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność pracująca w Polsce 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 2001).

[4] T. Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej. Studium historyczno-administracyjne* (Bydgoszcz, 2014).

[5] S. Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 2004).

[6] See their selection published in the Klasycy Historiografii Warszawskiej Series, J. Tomaszewski, *Żydzi w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by A. Markowski and S. Rudnicki (Warsaw, 2016).

[7] *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej*, ed. by I. Schiper, A. Tartakower, and A. Hafftka, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1936); B. Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX. Studjum statystyczne* (Warsaw, 1930).

census, to compare certain phenomena and processes. Available statistics from 1931–1939 were also considered, although these concerned only specific sectors. The death of Józef Piłsudski and the so-called decomposition of the ruling camp mark the conventional lower boundary of the work. However, many references were made to data from before 1935 for understandable reasons. Attempts were made to consider the historical and socio-cultural context of the processes in question and to present the cited data on the Jewish population against the background of the country's demographic situation and national structure.

Share of Jewish Population in Poland's Total Population

According to the 1931 census, the state's 387,000 sq km territory was inhabited by slightly more than 32 million people, with a population density of 82.6 persons per sq km. As much as 72.6% of the population lived in villages, although given the actual level of urbanisation of small rural-urban settlements, this percentage is probably higher.

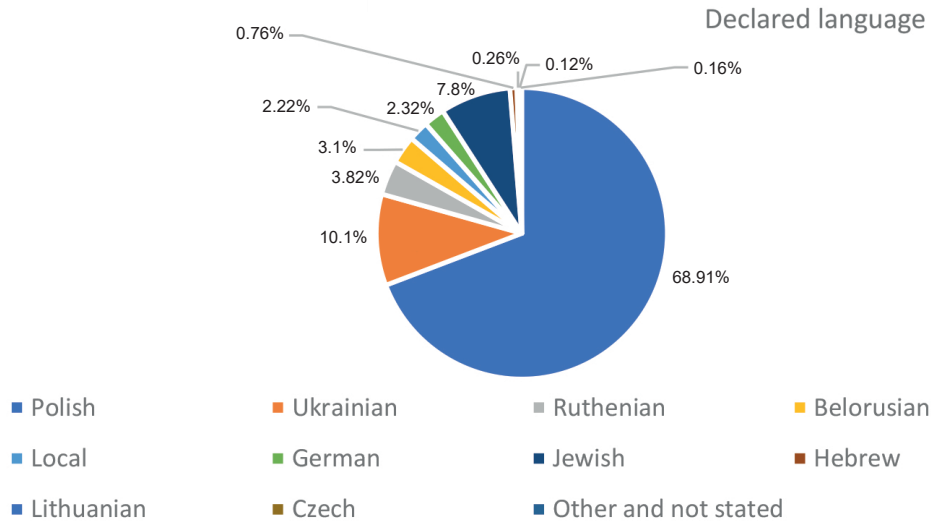
In 1931, the nationality question was not asked, as in 1921, but respondents were asked about their mother tongue. The census results were published in 1938–1939 according to the administrative division as of 1 January 1933 (for central and eastern voivodeships) and 1 August 1934 (for western and southern voivodeships). Polish was declared by nearly 69% of respondents, Ukrainian by 10.1%, Ruthenian by 3.82% (languages of Ruthenian ethnic groups, mainly Lemkos and Boykos), Belarusian by 3.1%, German by 2.32%, "local" (which was asked about only in the Voivodeship of Polesie) by 2.22%, Russian by 0.43%, Jewish (Yiddish) by 7.8%, and Hebrew by 0.76%.[8] The latter was often an ideological and political statement rather than the language of the family home.[9] The other languages spoken daily by other nationality groups in Poland did not exceed the figures for Russian (this predominantly applied to Czech and Lithuanian). As in 1921, the reliability of the 1931 data concerning nationality statistics, especially in the eastern territories, was

[8] *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 30 XII 1931 r. Mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe. Ludność* (Warsaw, 1938), p. 15.

[9] Z. Landau and J. Tomaszewski, *Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 1999), pp. 31–32; J. Żarnowski, "Epoka dwóch wojen," in *Społeczeństwo polskie od X do XX wieku*, ed. I. Ihnatowicz, A. Mączak, B. Zientara, and J. Żarnowski (Warsaw, 1988), p. 632.

disputed by Polish statisticians and historians and by researchers or commentators speaking on behalf of minorities.[10]

Fig. 1. Language Structure of Poland's Population according to the 1931 Census (in percentage terms)

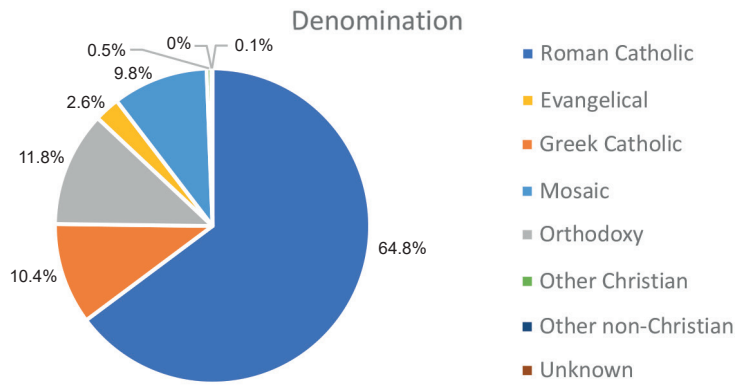


Source: *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 30 XII 1931 r. Mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe. Ludność* (Warsaw, 1938), p. 15.

[10] The 1921 census form contained questions on nationality, mother tongue (these results were not published) and denomination. Still, it was conducted before the new state's borders were finally established, so it did not cover the entire territory of Poland. The figures for national minorities were underestimated, and some respondents equated the question on nationality with citizenship, which had the effect of overestimating the number of Poles. For this reason, in the 1931 census, the question on nationality was eliminated, while the ethnic structure was to be established on the basis of answers to the question on the mother tongue. The reliability of the data on the minorities in the 1931 census was also questioned, among other things, due to manipulation and falsification both during the census and in the data processing process. This mainly concerned Slavic minorities (the census takers crossed out the words "Belarusian" or "Ukrainian" in the mother tongue column and wrote down "Polish" instead). One of the languages that could be indicated was Ruthenian, which was spoken, apart from Lemkos, by a part of the Ukrainian population. The separate inclusion of Ukrainian and Ruthenian in the official census results was favourable from the point of view of the policy of the Polish authorities of the time, as it reduced the number of Ukrainians. In the form for the Voivodeship of Polesie, the word "Ruthenian" was omitted since most of the local Orthodox population used it to describe Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian nationality, and it was replaced by the term "the local language." This enabled the number of Poles to be overestimated (M. Barwiński, "Spisy powszechne w Polsce 1921–2011. Określanie czy kreowanie struktury narodowościowej?," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Geographica Socio-Oeconomica* 21 [2015], pp. 54–59).

Therefore, those declaring Jewish (Yiddish) or Hebrew accounted for 8.6% of the country's population, and 12.3% of the population of Mosaic faith did not list Jewish or Hebrew as their mother tongues – half as many as in the 1921 census. Such figures indirectly indicate the unreliability of the first census regarding nationality relations and that declaring Polish as the mother tongue was not equivalent to assimilation. Nationality relations in the Second Republic were closely linked to matters of religion. The Roman Catholic religion was the religion of the vast majority of the ethnically Polish population (in 1931, about 21 million people belonged to the Roman Catholic Church). The Greek Catholic Church, to which the vast majority of Ukrainians in the former Austrian partition belonged, was a forge of national and political cadres for the leaders of the Ukrainian national movement. After the dissolution of the church union in 1875, Ukrainians in the former Russian partition were mainly adherents of the Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy was also the religion of most Belarusians and those identifying as 'locals' in the eastern provinces, although some were Roman Catholics. Evangelicals of various denominations were grouped in several church communities, with Lutherans and Calvinists having the most significant number of believers. Of the 835,000 Evangelicals in 1931, some 600,000 declared themselves as German-speaking and 220,000 as Polish-speaking.[11]

Fig. 2. Poland's Population in 1931 by Denomination (in percentage terms)



Source: C. Leszczyńska, *Polska 1918–2018* (Warsaw, 2018), p. 97.

[11] Żarnowski, *Epoka dwóch wojen*, p. 639.

Religion and nationality coincided to the greatest extent in the case of the Jewish minority of around three million. Although the last decades of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of an ideology that preached a national revival of the Jewish people, in the form of Zionism and made great strides in the struggle for the "rule of the Jewish souls," for many Jews, religion remained the sole or primary determinant of their identity.[12] The attitude towards the Mosaic faith and religion notwithstanding, every Jew was still, by the first significant legal act regulating the question of Jewish communities, specifically the decree of the Chief of State of 7 February 1919, a member of the Jewish community in a given town or covering several localities, and belonged to the Jewish Religious Union, which was given the nature of a compulsory corporation.[13]

Determinants of the Demographic Situation of the Jewish Population in Poland

After repatriation and post-war emigration ended, the main factor determining demographic change was the birth rate, which was consistently higher in the eastern voivodeships. By December 1931, the Jewish population had grown by 352,500 to 3,113,900 persons. This growth rate of 12.8%, calculated from the 1921 census, was lower than that of the Roman Catholics (30.9%) or the Orthodox (34.8%), although higher than that of the Greek Catholics (10.1%). The highest dynamics of the Jewish population occurred in the western voivodeships due to the inclusion in the census of the Voivodeship of Silesia, annexed to Poland after 1921. A similar situation happened in the Voivodeship of Vilnius (the previous census covered only the Vilnius Administrative District without so-called Central Lithuania). In central Poland and the southern voivodeships, the number of Jews

[12] The movement that represented the religious supporters of Herzl's ideology and advocated building a Jewish state in Palestine, based on the Torah and Talmud, was the 'Mizrachi' organisation founded in Vilnius in 1902, but the development of secular Zionism, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century, occurred at the expense of, among others, religious milieus (K. Zieliński, "Between tradition and modernity: the Polish shtetl in the first two decades of the 20th century," in *Jewish Space in Central and Eastern Europe: Day-to-Day History*, ed. by J. Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė and L. Lempertienė [Newcastle, 2007], pp. 121–133).

[13] A. Lewicka, "Status formalnoprawny żydowskich gmin wyznaniowych w II Rzeczypospolitej," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 2/2 (2012), p. 32.

increased, while it decreased in the Voivodeships of Poznań and Stanisławów, mainly due to emigration.[14]

Between 1927 and 1938, official emigration from Poland to non-European countries reached over 398 thousand people, of which the most significant number went to Argentina (over 113 thousand), Canada (over 100 thousand), Palestine (over 73 thousand), USA (over 46 thousand), Brazil (over 32 thousand) and Uruguay (8 thousand). Jewish emigrants numbered around 179,000, and apart from Palestine, where Jewish emigration covered almost 100% of emigrants, they went mainly to the USA, Argentina, and Canada. The latter as a destination country was popular among the Ukrainian-speaking population, while Poles from the former Kingdom of Poland mainly emigrated to Brazil. Emigration was mostly "for bread," with overseas emigration being permanent and family-based, whereas emigration to European countries was primarily seasonal. The exception was the Jews, who also left for European countries permanently or treated their stay there as a stopover on their way to the Americas. As a result of the migration restrictions imposed by individual countries and connected with the economic crisis, it was not until 1937–1938 that the volume of emigration, especially European emigration, increased. In the period mentioned above, just over 19,000 Jews left for European countries permanently, mainly France and Belgium.[15]

In the case of Jews, emigrants came from all over the country,[16] whereas in the population of Christian denominations, the inhabitants of the most overpopulated rural areas in the south and east of the country prevailed; it was also where agricultural labourers for seasonal work in German agriculture and the Baltic countries most often came from. Inhabitants of Silesia and the Zagłębie region found work in the mining and metallurgical industries of France, Belgium and Germany.[17] In

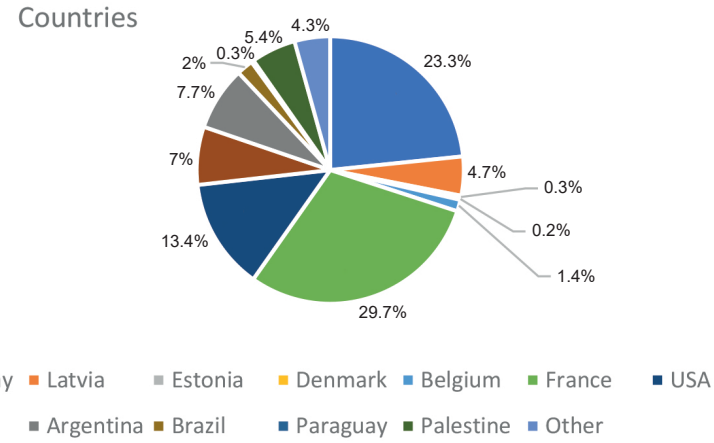
[14] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 287–288.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 425–427.

[16] In the 1930s, when the demand for the emigration of Jews from Poland became widespread because the government saw it as the primary means of "solving the Jewish question," it was pointed out that, due to the socio-occupational structure, emigration should primarily concern the Jewish inhabitants of the Voivodeships of Łódź, Białystok, Lublin, and Polesie (Z. Trębacz, *Nie tylko Palestyna. Polskie play emigracyjne wobec Żydów 1935–1939* [Warsaw, 2018], pp. 362–363).

[17] If we omit individual persons, graduates of Western universities of technology, until the outbreak of the First World War, the only major group of Jewish labourers employed in the German heavy industry

Fig. 3. Main Directions of Seasonal and Permanent Emigration from Poland between 1918 and 1938 (in percentage terms)



Source: P. Kusiak, "U źródeł idei kolonialnych. Wychodźstwo z Polski 1918–1939," in *Człowiek wobec problemów XIX i XX wieku*, ed. by M. Franz and M. Kardas (Toruń, 2011), p. 184.

general, there were relatively few emigrants professionally connected with mining and industry (about 58,000), but during the period in question, nearly 13,000 of them went to Palestine, and they were Jews.

The economic impact of the emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine was significant, not only in the form of funds sent to families remaining in the "old country," in addition to business ties between entrepreneurs in Poland and the Middle East, the emigrants brought with them certain consumer habits, resulting in a marked increase in the value of Polish exports to Palestine.[18] Professionals and teachers were the minor groups of emigrants; the directions of their emigration were scattered, but the exceptions were those going to Palestine.[19]

were Polish Jews working under an experimental programme of the Prussian government in the mines of Silesia (N.L. Green, *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora* [Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1998], pp. 56–58).

[18] M. Sroka, "Emigracja Żydów polskich w latach 1918–1939. Zarys problematyki," *Państwo i Społeczeństwo* 2 (2010), pp. 117–120.

[19] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 427–428; P. Kusiak, "U źródeł idei kolonialnych. Wychodźstwo z Polski 1918–1939," in *Człowiek wobec problemów XIX i XX wieku*, ed. M. Franz and M. Kardas (Toruń, 2011), pp. 179–180.

The gender structure in Poland in the first decade of independence was heavily distorted, which was the outcome not only of the generally more extended life expectancy of women but also of wartime activities and increased emigration. In 1931, the ratio of women to men increased somewhat, with 106.9 women per 100 men. The predominance of women was noticeable above all in the cities, which had a total of 112.8 women per 100 men, while for the countryside, the feminisation ratio was 104.7. Similar values also applied to the Jewish population. The war left lasting traces also in the age structure – in 1931, the low numbers of those born during the war stood out, being part of the group aged 10–14 and partly 15–19. "The group of children aged 5–9 was almost as numerous as the 0–4 group, reflecting the increase in the number of births in the post-war years and the renewed decline in the later years."[20]

Between 1936 and 1939, the birth rate for the Jewish population was 8.5‰, lower than the rate recorded for the general population, which was 11.2‰. The lower birth rate among Jews was offset by a lower death rate, 18.9 (births) and 10.4 (deaths). The figures for the non-Jewish population were 25.3 and 14.1, respectively.[21]

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, life expectancy for newborns in Poland was 49.8 years, one of the shortest in Europe; only the USSR and Bulgaria had a lower life expectancy of 46.3.[22] On the other hand, infant mortality in Poland in the second half of the 1920s (1927–1928) dropped, but it remained high. The situation was particularly dire in the eastern voivodeships, where 216 infants per 1,000 live births died annually. In the remaining voivodeships, infant mortality was much lower but twice as high as in many European countries. In 1930, the percentage of deaths of infants and children under one year of age was 14.3‰, including 11.9‰ in Warsaw alone, whereas in Czech Prague and Vienna, these figures were 9.0‰ and 7.1‰ respectively.[23] It must be remembered, however, that the data on infant mortality, except for the rates for the western voivodeships, are unreliable. The duty to report births and deaths to the registry offices was disregarded in villages and small towns, especially in the Eastern Borderlands, both by the rural Christian

[20] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 208, 220–221.
[21] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, p. 259; Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska*, pp. 183–190.
[22] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, p. 196.
[23] J. Sadowska, *Lecznictwo ubezpieczeniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Łódź, 1990), p. 152.

population and by Jews.[24] In the central and eastern voivodeships, for example, only 55–67% of the actual number of births of children of the Mosaic faith were registered due to delays in registration or a failure to report births of girls and infant deaths. An example of the inaccuracy of the official data can be seen in the results of a survey conducted in 54 cities of the central voivodeships among the population of the Mosaic faith, according to which in 1927–1930, the number of births was even 60–80% higher than that registered by the Central Statistical Office.[25]

The incompleteness of the data on the natural movement of the country's population also applied to deaths. In the first half of the twentieth century, statistics on the causes of death in Poland were very inaccurate, which was due to the lack of medical personnel (in many regions, it was common to use folk healers, patients often died without getting any medical help and, therefore, without the diagnosis of the disease, etc.), but also to the lack of organisation of medical statistics. However, even inaccurate data allow us to claim that poor sanitary and hygienic conditions were accompanied by infectious diseases, which took a hefty toll during epidemics caused, among other things, by migrations (as in the years of the First World War and in the post-war years, when cholera ravaged many shtetls in the Congress Kingdom). Although the situation in this regard improved with the progress of medicine and the spread of ambulatory and medical care, the so-called "dirty hands" diseases, such as dysentery and typhoid fever, continued to take a heavy toll. Smallpox, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis were among the most common causes of death as late as the 1930s.[26] A gradual increase in the significance of cardiovascular diseases and cancer could be observed in the structure of deaths. In 1938, only in towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants, for which we have statistical data, the death rate was 110.9 per 10,000. The most common causes were infectious and parasitic diseases – 25.6; tuberculosis – 13.4; circulatory diseases – 21.2; respiratory diseases – 13.5; cancer – 10.7; gastrointestinal diseases – 9.8. The rate of deaths caused by external causes was 4.4, half of which were suicides.[27]

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[24] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, p. 190.

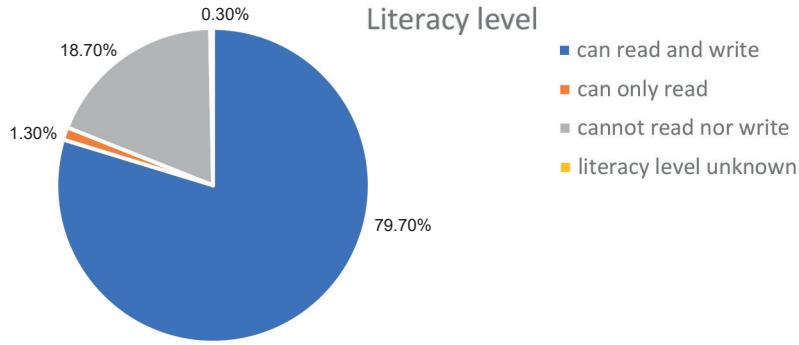
[25] T. Wysocki, "Zaawansowanie przejścia demograficznego w grupach narodowościowych i wyznaniowych w Polsce okresu międzywojennego," *Studia Demograficzne* 153–154/1–2 (2008), p. 57.

[26] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 181, 186, 188.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

Another indicator of the civilisational development of societies is the level of illiteracy. Independent Poland made up for the losses from the time of the partitions within a relatively short period. Although the differences between individual neighbourhoods, religious and national groups or rural and urban areas did not disappear, there was a significant improvement. This had to do with the spread of primary education and enforcing compulsory schooling. In the first decade of Poland's independence, illiteracy dropped from 44.5% to 27.6%. This was also noticeable in the least developed and most backwards eastern voivodeships, where the percentage decreased from 71.7% to 45.8% for the population over nine. Taking into account the denominational criterion, the lowest level of education and the highest rate of illiterates were registered among the Orthodox and Greek Catholic populations. According to the 1931 census, 69.6% of the Polish population aged five and over could read and write, and the highest percentage declaring both skills was characteristic of Protestant and Mosaic believers, 83.3% and 79.7%, respectively. In the case of Jews aged five and over, 18.7% could not read and write, and girls slightly prevailed in this age group.[28] However, we do not know whether the census counters considered the knowledge of Jewish languages in each case. It is also unclear how to approach an even passive knowledge of Old Hebrew used in the liturgy.

Fig. 4. Literacy among Jews aged five and over (in percentage terms)



Source: T. Wysocki, "Umiejętność czytania i pisania w grupach wyznaniowych zamieszkujących Polskę w świetle wyników spisu powszechnego z 1931 roku," *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 44 (2005), p. 108.

[28] T. Wysocki, "Umiejętność czytania i pisania w grupach wyznaniowych zamieszkujących Polskę w świetle wyników spisu powszechnego z 1931 roku," *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 44 (2005), pp. 106–114.

In the interwar period, there was a significant increase in the number of secondary school graduates (although the number of schools remained at a level similar to that of 1921 and the time of the partitions). After the so-called Jędrzejowicz reform, an increase in the number of vocational school pupils was observed. The so-called high school diploma (a secondary school graduation diploma, Polish: *matura*), obtained by some 250,000 people in the interwar period, opened up considerable opportunities for social advancement (although this advancement was available to a lesser extent to representatives of national minorities). They were then severely restricted in the wake of the economic crisis. Compared to the decade before and the 1924/1925 academic year, the number of students, despite the appearance of new universities, was declining, linked to the impoverishment of a part of the population and the shrinking labour market. On the other hand, in that same period, ca. 83,000 people in Poland completed higher education.[29]

In the academic year of 1934/1935, the number of Jews who studied at 24 Polish universities was 7,114, which accounted for 14.9% of all students.[30] However, in the case of Jewish students, the decline was close to 16%, against about 3% for all students. This should be linked to the emigration of many well-educated, "idealistic" young people to Palestine, as well as to the increasing discrimination and harassment encountered by Jewish students at Polish universities. The academic and state authorities also tried to limit the number of places in certain faculties, especially medicine and law, which were traditionally popular with the Jewish youth. Jewish students in technical faculties were very few, not least because of poor employment prospects in the large industries owned mainly by the state. In any case, the rate of decline in the percentage of Jewish students was systematic in the mid-1930s and amounted to about 0.6% annually.[31] We do not know the number of Jews studying at universities abroad. Still,

[29] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 319–326.

[30] Z. Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci na polskich uczelniach wyższych w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej – próba statystycznego ujęcia," *Vade Nobiscum* 7 (2011), pp. 95–96.

[31] *Ibid.*

fragmentary data allow us to claim that chemistry studies in Switzerland, medical and pharmaceutical studies in Czechoslovakia, technical studies in Latvia and – until the Nazis came to power – in Germany, as well as the traditional universities and art academies of Vienna and Paris were quite popular. Studying abroad was, of course, associated with high costs and, as such, was accessible to few.

Distribution of the Jewish Population

For Poland as a whole, migration from rural to urban areas resulted in a faster urban population growth than the rural population. However, as Gawryszewski points out, it did not change the distribution pattern of the population.[32] Also, Jews participated in the migration to the more developed western voivodeships, taking place vacated by Germans of Jewish origin. Although the influx of newcomers from Galicia, the Congress Kingdom and the Eastern Borderlands did not compensate for the losses, it did break the stagnation prevailing in the religious communities there.[33]

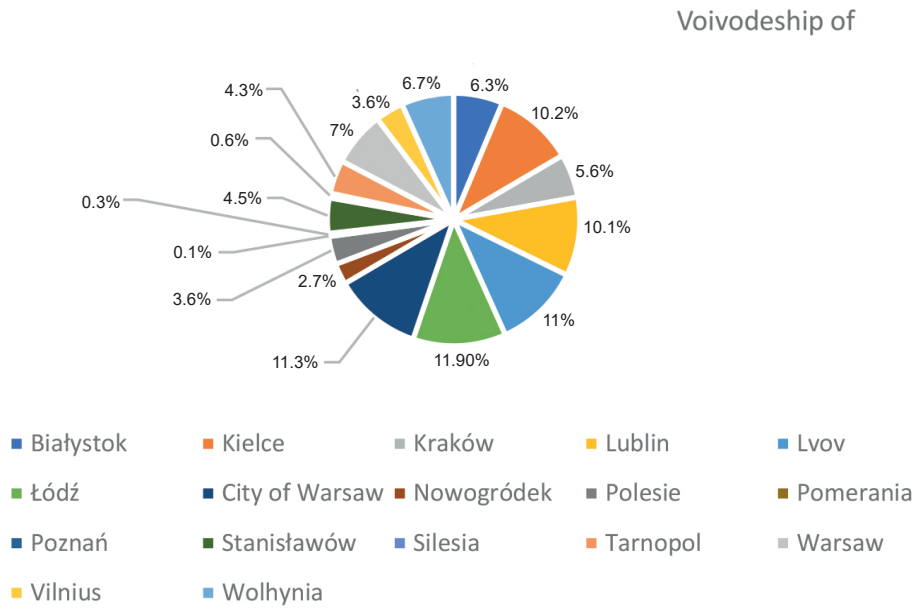
Jews lived dispersed throughout the country, with the most significant percentage of the total population in a given voivodeship in the Voivodeships of Łódź, Lublin, Białystok, Lvov and Polesie (over 10% of the population). In the Voivodeship of Warsaw, Jews accounted for 8.7% of the total population. Still, in the capital itself, which had the largest Jewish population in Europe, they accounted for 30.1%.[34]

[32] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, p. 85.

[33] A. Skupień, "Ludność żydowska w województwie poznańskim 1919–1938," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 37/2 (2005), p. 137.

[34] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 63.

Fig. 5. The Share of the Jewish Population by Voivodeships in 1931 (in percentage terms)

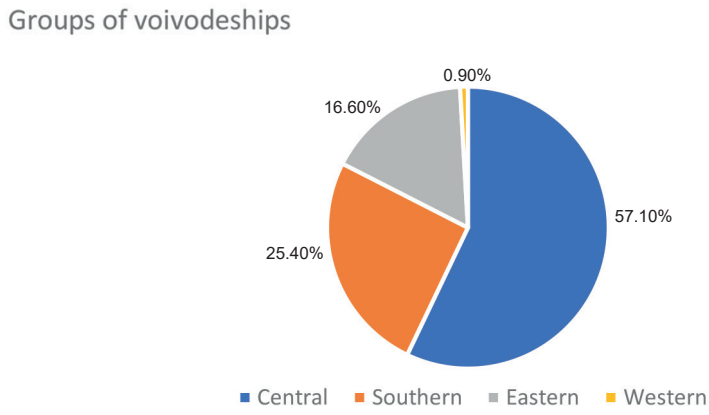


Source: T. Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej. Studium historyczno-administracyjne* (Bydgoszcz, 2014), p. 63.

Broken down into groups of voivodeships, the most significant percentage of the Jewish population lived in the central voivodeships (Warsaw, Łódź, Kielce, Lublin, Białystok), which reached 57.1%, then southern voivodeships (Cracow, Lvov, Stanisławów, Tarnopol) – 25.4%, eastern voivodeships (Vilnius, Nowogródek, Volhynia, Polesie) – 16.6%. The smallest percentage was in the western voivodeships (Poznań, Pomerania, Silesia) – 0.9%.[35]

[35] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, p. 257.

Fig. 6. Distribution of the Jewish Population in Poland in 1931 by Voivodeship Group (in percentage terms)



Source: B. Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność pracująca w Polsce 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 2001), p. 257.

When analysed by county, no distinct concentrations could be discerned; in none of the counties did the population of this religion constitute a majority. In 1931, the highest percentage of the population of the Mosaic faith by county was found in 11 urban counties: Białystok – 43.0% of the population, Lublin – 34.7%, Łódź – 33.5%, Radom – 32.3%, Lvov – 31.9%, Warsaw – 30.1%, Vilnius – 28.2%, Cracow – 25.8%, Częstochowa – 21.8%, Bielsko – 19.8%, and Sosnowiec – 19.1%. In five rural counties, the population of this religious group exceeded 15% of the total population: Brzeziny – 16.8%, Grodno – 16.7%, Włodawa – 16.0%, Radzyń – 15.7%, and Siedlce – 15.2%. The lowest share of this population was characteristic of the counties of the western voivodeships, where, in principle, it did not exceed 1% of the total population, except four urban counties (Grudziądz – 1.3%, Bydgoszcz – 1.4%, Chorzów – 2.8%, and Katowice – 4.5%) and two rural counties (Bielsko – 2.0% and Cieszyn – 2.4%). The smallest population of the Mosaic religion was in the counties of Międzychód (11 persons per 31 thousand inhabitants) and Kościan (24 persons per 78.9 thousand inhabitants).[36]

[36] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 254–257, 287–288; Wasiutyński, *Ludność żydowska*, pp. 5, 179–188.

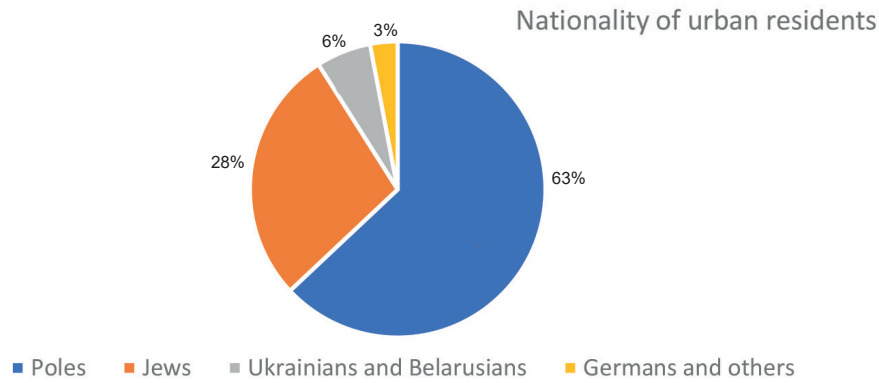
In terms of town and country distribution, the concentration of Jews in the central parts of the cities was striking, which was particularly evident in smaller towns. In the metropolises and large cities, it was not difficult to find nationally mixed streets and neighbourhoods (this applied mainly to prestigious, "better" streets and labourers' districts). Still, also specific "urban shtetls" existed, inhabited almost exclusively by Jews, examples being Warsaw's Nalewki, Cracow's Kazimierz or Lublin's Podzamcze. In the interwar period, the boundaries between the Jewish ghetto and areas traditionally inhabited by non-Jews slowly became blurred, but they remained clear until 1939. A characteristic phenomenon was the shtetls in central and eastern Poland, towns whose centres were inhabited mainly by Jews. In some of them, such as Bereźne and Lubomla in the Voivodeship of Volhynia, the percentage of Jewish inhabitants exceeded 90%.[37]

Jews were the most urbanised population group in the Second Republic. 76.4% of all Jews in Poland lived in cities, and – according to the 1931 census – they constituted nearly 28% of all urban residents. At the time of the census, almost a quarter of the Jewish population lived in five major Polish cities, comprising a fourth and a third of the total population. These were Warsaw, Łódź, Lvov, Vilnius and Cracow. In contrast, according to Szyja Bronsztejn's findings, the highest percentage of Jews living in the countryside was in the Voivodeships of Volhynia and Lublin, at 4.6% and 6.4%, respectively.[38] Jewish agricultural settlements were very few, mainly in the Voivodeships of Lvov, Polesie, and Nowogródek.

[37] *Szlakami sztetli. Podróże przez zapomniany kontynent*, ed. by E. Majuk (Lublin, 2015), pp. 358, 381.

[38] As cited in J. Tomaszewski, *Zarys dziejów Żydów w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 1990), pp. 11–12.

Fig. 7. Nationality Structure of the Urban Population, Compiled from the 1931 Census Data (in percentage terms)



Source: B. Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność pracująca w Polsce 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 2001), pp. 65–66.

Membership in the Jewish community of people of this nationality in the Second Republic was obligatory. Although there were ways to leave it, they were not used often (this usually involved a change of religion). In the early 1920s, the number of Jewish communities ranged between 770 and 780; by the end of that decade, their number had risen to over 900, only to drop to 825 on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War; 83 of these were large communities, with more than 5,000 members. The most significant number of large communities existed in the Voivodeships of Warsaw (14), Lvov, and Łódź (10 each). It should be remembered that the group of large communities included both the Warsaw community, in which over 11% of Poland's Jewish population lived (352,000) in 1931, and the Płońsk community, situated in the same voivodeship, which had 5,300 members.[39]

Occupational Structure of the Jewish Population

Pre-war Poland was a country full of contrasts – the living conditions, the standard of the transport infrastructure, the saturation with schools in the metropolitan areas of Warsaw and Łódź or in heavily industrialised Silesia differed enormously

[39] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, pp. 62, 73.

not only from the muddy Polesie but also from central voivodeships, such as that of Lublin or Kielce. The wealth and standard of living of the various social strata were no less different, which also applied to the Jewish population.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the employment structure in Poland did not change much compared to the time of the partitions. The 1931 census, despite all its faults, provided data on the occupational structure of the population by religion and social status. The Jewish population was characterised by a high percentage of those employed in industry (this term also covered craftsmen using mechanical machinery) and commerce. However, this most often meant stalls, small businesses and workshops, either one-man or of a family nature, and persons working in the liberal professions. However, the first decade of independence brought little change in the primary sources of livelihood for the Jewish population – there was a slight increase in the proportion of making a living from industry at the expense of trade. Regardless, commodity trading and the clothing industry (tailoring, shoemaking, making shoe uppers, tricot-making, hat-making) remained the primary livelihood source for many Jews.[40]

In 1931, only 2% of Jewish workers were employed in large-scale industry and mining, while 10% were employed in medium-sized enterprises. About 88% of the Jewish industrial workforce worked in small-scale industry and craft workshops. One can, therefore, speak of a kind of "labour ghetto" of Jewish labourers.[41] By comparison, 29% of the Roman Catholic population of the total working population in this category were employed in industry and mining. Cottagers had the weakest position, being the lowest group in the occupational hierarchy – 41% of them were Jews employed in the broadly defined garment industry. In addition, not counting trade and insurance, Jews prevailed in the structure of those working in watchmaking, jewellery, tinsmithing and glassmaking industries.[42] Over 42% of the Jewish working population was employed in industry and mining (Fig. 8), and this industry consisted mainly of grocery, clothing, chemical and small-scale factories.

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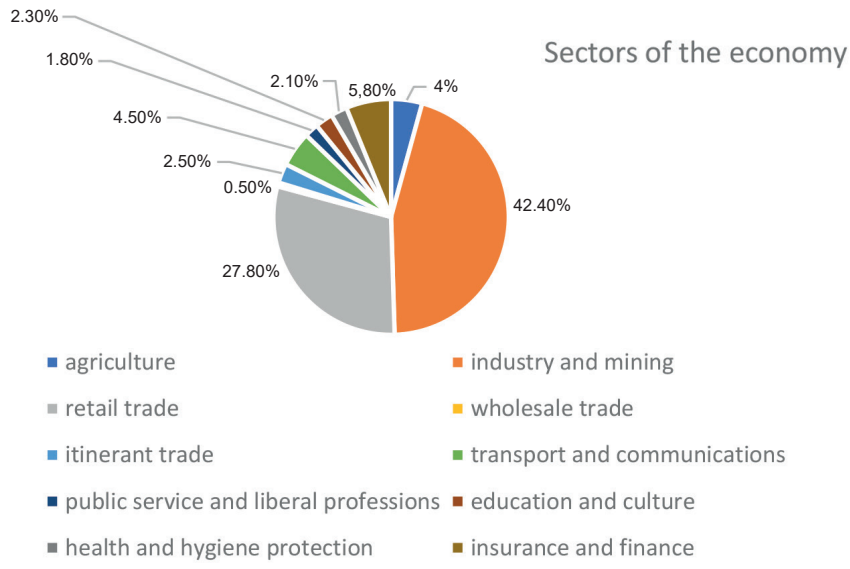
[40] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 347–349; C. Leszczyńska, *Polska 1918–2018* (Warsaw, 2018), p. 99.

[41] J. Tomaszewski, "Robotnicy żydowscy w Polsce w latach 1921–1939 (Szkic statystyczny)," in *id.*, *Żydzi w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, pp. 229–230, 241.

[42] Leszczyńska, *Polska 1918–2018*, p. 99.

Fig. 8. Employment structure of the Jewish working population by sectors of the economy in 1931 (in percentage terms)



Source: R. Szuchta, *1000 lat historii Żydów polskich. Podróż przez wieki* (Warsaw, 2015), p. 167.

The concentration of Jews in selected sectors and industries stemmed from socio-historical and religious conditions (for example the prohibition of work on Saturdays). However, the reluctance to employ Jews in state and local government establishments and institutions or the uniformed services also had an impact.[43] This discrimination also applied to representatives of other national minorities, especially in the Eastern Borderlands.[44] For example, the share of minority workers in the employment structure in public sectors, such as the postal service, telegraph service, telephone service and railways, during the year 1921 was 4.2%, 3% and 1.9% for Belarusians, Ukrainians and Jews respectively. Among those earning their living from a job in the postal, telegraph and telephone service, Poles accounted for 88.5% during that year, and this percentage did not change much throughout

[43] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, pp. 58–59.

[44] See for example E. Horoch, "Plan eliminacji Ukraińców ze służb publicznych i ważniejszych gałęzi własności prywatnej w województwie lubelskim 1939–1941," in *Pogranicze. Studia z dziejów stosunków polsko-ukraińskich w XX wieku*, ed. by Z. Mańkowski (Lublin, 1992), pp. 43–45.

the interwar period.[45] This expulsion of minorities from state-owned enterprises or their exclusion from specific employment sectors was nothing unique in the Europe of the 1930s. During the construction of the Central Industrial District (Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy, COP), which began in 1935, very few Jews, Ukrainians or Ruthenians living in the municipalities and counties where the COP's investments were being built found employment in the industrial plants established then. The ethnically and religiously heterogeneous Second Republic, whose inhabitants enjoyed equal rights under the Constitution and other legal acts, was nevertheless a nation-state, a state of and for the Polish nation. The nation was treated primarily in ethnic terms, which determined the situation of all minorities in the state.

A problem the Second Republic faced throughout its existence was mass unemployment, which also affected the Jewish population. Under the Unemployment Security Act, introduced in 1924, only labourers in enterprises employing more than five people were liable to compulsory insurance, and an unemployment benefit of 30–50% of earnings, but no more than 2.50 zlotys per day, was paid only for 13 weeks.[46] Workers in smaller establishments were not included in the insurance system, and these made up the majority of Jewish businesses, which were often family-run or employed workers unofficially. Nearly two-thirds of the Jewish labourers are estimated to have been employed in establishments not covered by collective bargaining agreements.[47]

In the case of Jews, the assistance provided by the state and local authorities in the form of public works played little role. In the 1930s, an increase in the percentage of women employed in various branches of small industry and various jobs could be observed throughout the country. It is worth noting, however, that women were generally paid lower wages than men. This professional activation of women also involved Jewish women.[48] Unemployment, however – despite the relatively good economic situation in the final years before the outbreak of the war – remained high throughout the interwar period. The smaller and

[45] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 351–352; Żarnowski, "Epoka dwóch wojen," p. 637.

[46] Gawryszewski, *Ludność Polski*, pp. 368–370.

[47] J. Tomaszewski, "Sytuacja Żydów w Polsce," in *id.*, *Żydzi w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, p. 202.

[48] J. Dufrat, "W okresie powolnej modernizacji. Kobieta w II Rzeczypospolitej – próba bilansu," *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 147/4 (2020), pp. 817–819.

larger state and private investments of the Second Republic could not keep up with the rapidly growing labour supply, much of which joined the ranks of the unemployed. In the first half of the 1930s, this resulted in rapid pauperisation and severe social unrest.

While a small percentage of the Jewish population made a living from agricultural work, among the labourers in some urban centres, the rate of Jews was sometimes considerable. This was the case in the textile industries of Łódź or Białystok, among others. However, there, too, the Jewish owners preferred to employ Christians, who were less organised than the Jewish workers, who were under the strong influence of the socialist Bund.[49] In general, the post-war social welfare benefits and real wage increases most often did not apply to Jewish labourers, whose percentage in large-scale industry, most often state-owned, was low. Although the restructuring of the employment structure also took place in private enterprises and pro-worker social provisions appeared, the process was very slow. Tomaszewski argued that "the surge in state investment perpetuated the existence of the 'labour ghetto' for Jewish workers."[50] Those employed in the brush industry in Międzyrzec Podlaski or small grocery manufacturing factories, such as the cigarette tubes factory or the mineral water factory in Lublin, had no chance of real wage increases if they managed to maintain employment stability at all.

Garncarska-Kadary argues, too, that the situation of the Jewish working population had deteriorated in the last years leading up to the war – despite the gradual easing of the Great Depression. While industrial wages improved between 1938 and 1939, this did not extend to all workers in large and medium-sized industrial plants and only marginally affected those employed in small factories and craft workshops. Thus, due to the employment structure of Jewish workers, not only did their situation deteriorate in comparison with non-Jewish workers, who made up the majority of those employed in large and medium-sized industries, but their fundamental purchasing power also declined.[51] Jewish cottage industry workers

[49] I. Chorosz, *Podróż po przemysłowej strefie osiedlenia (Szkice podróżnicze technika). Polski przemysł włókienniczy. Żydowskie wytwórnie i żydowscy robotnicy*, transl. by J. Szumski, ed. by A. Markowski (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 86, 99, 118, 163–173.

[50] Tomaszewski, "Robotnicy żydowscy w Polsce," p. 244.

[51] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, pp. 145–146.

covered the depreciation cost of their tools and workshops. Still, according to the 1935 law excluding folk and home-based industry and cottage industry work from the provisions of the industrial law, they had to purchase licences on their own, pay taxes and, as they were deprived of social insurance, cover the costs of medical care in case of illness themselves.[52]

On the other hand, in 1931, for example, 51.5% of all enterprises in chemical, mineral, timber, paper, textile, leather, clothing, printing, construction, metal and food industries in Warsaw belonged to Jews, whereas in Łódź it was 60.2%, in the Voivodeship of Białystok – 55% and the Voivodeship of Kielce – 49.7%.[53] Category IV–VI establishments, staffed by working family members or employing a minimum number of salaried workers, were by far the predominant category, but the proportion of Jews – employers, owners and shareholders of companies – should be considered high.[54] In earlier historiography, the social stratum referred to as the bourgeoisie, according to the 1931 census data, comprised 3.3% of all economically active Jews (excluding agriculture). In relation to the total bourgeoisie, estimated at 81,000, Jews accounted for 45%.[55] Separate research is required to establish the actual number of Jewish urban property owners and rentiers, of whom there was a general perception that there were relatively many.

It was probably thanks to this that the basic socio-economic activity of the Polish Jewry was possible and that the minimum conditions of existence of a significant part of the Jewish population were maintained. It is estimated that in 1929, 10% of the income of the wealthier half of the Jewish community consisted of financial transfers to the poorer half, which, despite generational, ideological, religious or

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[52] *Dziennik Ustaw* (The Journal of Laws) 42 (1935), items 282, 283.

[53] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, p. 254. For more on the Kielce voivodeship, see E. Majcher-Ociesa, *Aktywność gospodarcza ludności żydowskiej w województwie kieleckim w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce, 2013).

[54] "The economic character of Polish Jewry was determined by the existence of a large majority of petty merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and *luft-mentshn* […]. There was also a narrow but important stratum of wealthy businessmen, industrialists, professionals, and intellectuals. The penury of the Jewish masses was proverbial, but at the same time, it was undeniable that the Jews played a major role in the economy and in cultural life." These words referred to the 1920s; nevertheless, one can similarly characterise the socio-economic situation of Jews in Poland in the following decade (see E. Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915–1926* [New Haven–London, 1981], p. 7).

[55] J. Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów stosunków polsko-żydowskich 1918–1949* (Szczecin, 1983), p. 50.

party disputes, united many sectors of the Jewish community in Poland.[56] Centos (Union of Associations for the Care of Jewish Orphans), founded in 1924, stood out among the many non-religious charities. In addition to the aid provided by the American Joint, it benefitted from the financial support of its members, whose number in the inter-war period never fell below 40,000. Thanks to them, nearly 30,000 children were supported in 1937, and the aid provided ranged from educational subsidies, the organisation of extracurricular activities and the financing of summer camps to food or clothing. Centos supported nearly 10,000 orphans in 205 of its institutions the following year.[57]

Vagrancy and beggary, which increased during the Great Depression, resulted from the economic situation. The Jewish population also experienced them, although the broader network of charitable institutions and the systemic support of the Jewish community were more effective in reducing these phenomena among the Jews than among the Christians. A permanent feature of the urban landscape was, according to press reports, the scourge of prostitution.[58] Women of all religions and nationalities practised registered and illegal fornication, although fragmentary data indicate that the percentage of Jewish women proportionally exceeded that of Christian women.[59] Prostitution was an 'urban' phenomenon, so the high degree of urbanisation characterising the Jewish population was reflected in the statistics. The bad reputation of the Varsovia Association, a criminal organisation more widely known as the Cwi Migdal, also reinforced the view that behind prostitution were mainly Jews. The members of the organisation, founded in Argentina by pimps and brothel owners specialising in trafficking women from Eastern Europe, were mostly Jews from Polish lands.[60] Indeed, in the second half of the 1930s (1937), in the category of offences against personal rights, only pimping and pandering were more prevalent among Jews than among

[56] Bacon, "One Jewish Street?," p. 337.

[57] S. Martin, "How to house a child: providing homes for Jewish children in interwar Poland," *East European Jewish Affairs* 41/1 (2015), p. 30.

[58] U. Glensk, *Historia słabych. Reportaż i życie w dwudziestoleciu (1918–1939)* (Cracow, 2014), pp. 81–196.

[59] See for example M. Rodak, *Przestępczość osób narodowości żydowskiej w II Rzeczypospolitej. Casus województwa lubelskiego* (Warsaw, 2012), pp. 59–93.

[60] Glensk, *Historia słabych*, pp. 102–106. For more, see A. Jakubczak, *Polacy, Żydzi i mit handlu kobietami* (Warsaw, 2020).

non-Jews, and far less common among Jews were the most severe crimes, such as murder and robbery.[61]

Interwar Poland was a poor country. Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, using the national income per capita in Poland in 1929 as a baseline and setting it at 100, determined that in the same year, Great Britain's national income per capita was significantly higher at 551. Meanwhile, Germany's stood at 308, and Latvia and Hungary had a similar national income per capita, each at 126. The index was still lower in Greece and Romania (91 each), but Poland was at the bottom of the table. These researchers argue that the rural population's material situation worsened considerably compared to the pre-independence period; in the case of workers, the wage improvement mainly concerned highly qualified professionals, i.e., the "workers' aristocracy" employed most often in state-owned enterprises. This group was also covered by social legislation and pension security, but, as mentioned above, it was not numerous. The profound unemployment among workers held economic implications and bore significant psychological weight. This high unemployment rate posed challenges to personal milestones such as starting a family, a struggle that isn't easily quantifiable compared to more tangible measures of workers' living conditions or consumption levels.[62]

Among the national groups in Poland, the Jewish minority boasted the highest percentage of intelligentsia, estimated at 6.6% of the group's total population. In comparison, this figure was about 6% for Germans, 5% for Poles, and did not exceed 2% for Slavic minorities.[63] The situation of the intelligentsia improved thanks to the establishment of the independent state and the replacement of the administration, courts or schools of the partitioning states with Polish ones. However, the enormous economic crisis and economic stagnation of the 1930s caused high unemployment among this group and made it difficult for secondary and higher education graduates to find employment. As for large-scale industrial workers, we must remember that Jews were reluctantly employed in state and local administrations. Therefore, a representative of the Jewish intelligentsia in

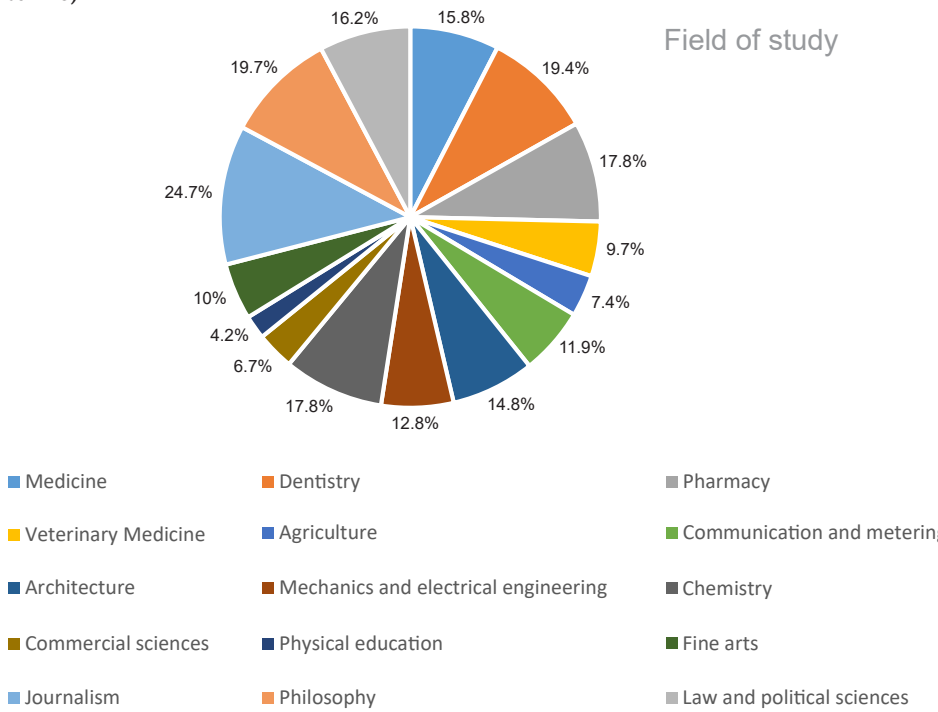
[61] S. Bronsztejn, "O przestępczości wśród Żydów w Polsce w latach dwudziestych XX wieku (w pięćdziesięciolecie ukazania się książki Liebmana Herscha)," *Biuletyn ŻIH* 3–4 (1988), pp. 135–147.

[62] Landau and Tomaszewski, *Zarys historii gospodarczej*, pp. 308–311.

[63] Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 50.

the 1930s was most often a teacher in Jewish schools, a private property manager, a journalist, or a liberal professional, usually a lawyer or a doctor. In the latter case, in 1931, Jews accounted for 46% of all medical doctors in Poland and 55% of all practitioners, although they most often provided services in private practice and Jewish institutions.[64] State-run health care funds employed them far less often.

Fig. 9. Jewish students by field of study in the 1934/1935 academic year (in percentage terms)



Source: Z. Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci na polskich uczelniach wyższych w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej – próba statystycznego ujęcia," *Vade Nobiscum* 7 (2011), p. 101.

After 1935, demands already raised in the 1920s for introducing a *numerus clausus* for Jewish students were increasingly replaced by demands to introduce

[64] For example, the Jewish Health Care Society, the popular TOZ, until 1939, managed 368 hospitals and establishments in 72 towns and employed 1,000 doctors, nurses and social workers (K. Steffen, "Contested Jewish Polishness: Language and Health as Markers for the Position of Jews in Polish Culture and Society in the Interwar Period" in *New Directions*, pp. 378–379).

a *numerus nullus*.[65] The academic national youth resorted to blackmailing the rectoral authorities with the threat of disrupting the universities' operations, and this threat sometimes proved effective. Although not legally sanctioned, attempts to introduce a *numerus clausus* at universities and in professional corporations worsened the Jewish intelligentsia's situation, and the difficulties that school graduates had to overcome to obtain jobs matching their education became incomparably more significant.

The "overproduction of the intelligentsia" in the 1930s led to unemployment, and declining wages affected even the traditionally not-so-badly-paid lawyers. By the end of the 1930s, some barristers earned little more than an average labourer.[66] In Galicia, already after 1918, as part of the unofficial re-Polonisation of the clerical corps, some Jewish clerks and about 3,000 railwaymen were dismissed, while among the 27,000 postal clerks, only about 200 were Jewish.[67] In 1931, Jews accounted for 5% of those employed in the central and local government, including the judiciary and the bar. We do not have complete data for the later period. Still, after 1935, when the *Sanacja* regime was already fully implementing this unique alliance with national politicians, and the situation of the Jewish population had deteriorated, there were probably even fewer Jewish officials or teachers in state schools and those maintained by the local government.

The non-employment of Jews in state-owned enterprises and institutions was particularly acute for graduates in engineering. Nearly half of the engineers in Poland at that time worked in positions dependent on the state and often linked to the defence industry, where there was no place for representatives of minorities. The same was true of professional corporations, including those for technical workers, in which Jews were never numerous. In 1937, for example, engineers from the State Engineering Works (Państwowe Zakłady Inżynierii) in Warsaw

[65] The authors of a leaflet advertising an organisational meeting of the National Party's Academic Department of the Young, distributed at the University of Poznań in 1932, informed: "We are fighting for the complete removal of the Jewry from the nation's life. Remember that every 6th student – is a Jew who takes away the bread in Poland from the lawyer, the medic, the humanist and even the farmer" (as cited in W. Mądry, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na Uniwersytecie Poznańskim w latach 1919–1939 w świetle materiałów archiwalnych," *Sprawy Narodowościowe. Seria nowa* 52 [2020], p. 11).

[66] Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci," p. 99.

[67] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 155.

and Czechowice submitted a motion to remove Jews and persons of Jewish origin from the Association of Polish Mechanical Engineers. This demand was put into effect by introducing, on 30 November 1937, the so-called Aryan provision into the by-laws of the Association.[68]

The liberal professions, especially the legal profession, in which the proportion of people of Jewish origin was high, resorted to similar practices. Nevertheless, some corporations and associations condemned anti-Semitism, which sometimes led to splits.[69]

It was rare to encounter Jews in the police and among professional military men – they were generally not wanted in the uniformed services, but for various reasons did not flock to them themselves. Like all citizens of the Republic, they were liable for compulsory military service. However, the percentage of Jews drafted and serving in the Polish army was never representative of the rate of the total Jewish population in the country. In 1937, it reached 6.55%, and the following year – 6.08%. An officer's career for a Jew in peacetime was rare; apart from the field rabbis, Jews usually served in the medical or veterinary corps and were involved in administration. The proportion of Jewish trainees in other branches of the army was even lower, and it was almost zero in the air force, liaison corps, armoured troops, and the navy.[70]

Military service forced the use of the Polish language. Compulsory education, the establishment of the Polish statehood and the Polish administration meant that the Polish language was no longer foreign, especially for the younger generation. Although Polish was increasingly heard on the Jewish streets in addition to Yiddish, Yiddish continued to be used in the internal correspondence of the Jewish communities. In 1925, the governor of Lvov wrote to the Ministry of the Interior: "Any regulation that affirms the rights of this language (jargon) is bound to reinforce Jewish separatism in relation to the Polish State. It will also inadvertently lead to greater dissemination of the jargon among the Jews. It will, in any case,

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[68] J. Piłatowicz, "Żydzi na wyższych uczelniach technicznych w Polsce do 1939 r.," *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 42/2 (2001), p. 108.

[69] Tomaszewski, "Sytuacja Żydów w Polsce," p. 218.

[70] T. Gąsowski, "Żydzi w siłach zbrojnych II Rzeczpospolitej – czas pokoju i wojny," in *Udział mniejszości narodowych w różnych formacjach wojskowych w czasie kampanii wrześniowej 1939 r.*, ed. by T. Muś and L.M. Nijakowski (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 16–17.

obstruct and delay the development of a sense of citizenship towards the Republic of Poland within the Jewish masses."[71]

Leaving aside the terms of the so-called Little Treaty of Versailles and the minority language obligations imposed on Poland, little was done to forge "this sense of citizenship towards the Republic of Poland within the Jewish masses," in the following years, the voivode questioned the legitimacy of the obligation for civil servants and police officers to be trained to use Yiddish.[72]

The elimination of Jews from schools and state institutions may have been a catalyst for developing their own culture and education. It is difficult to answer unequivocally whether access to employment by state agencies and local government institutions, free from discrimination based on religion and nationality, would have slowed down the development of Jewish culture and education. Still, the participation of Jews in culture in its most comprehensive sense was significant. Suffice it to mention that almost the entire cinema industry in Poland was in the hands of Jewish producers and producers of Jewish origin, and of the 103 theatres operating in Poland in 1936, fifteen were Jewish, of which eight were permanent stages.[73] An analysis of the data concerning the budgets of Polish and Jewish workers' families in Warsaw for 1938 makes it possible to conclude that, overall, expenditure for "culture, education and social purposes" for Polish families in the respective income groups (from the lowest to the highest), amounted to 1.7, 3.5 and 5.8%, while for Jewish families it reached 5.5, 7.3 and 6.6% of monthly income respectively.[74] This highlights the comparatively more significant emphasis on education and training within the Jewish community, as opposed to the Polish population, leading to a higher level of Jewish engagement in a wide range of cultural activities. Such engagement could be as straightforward, yet impactful, as the regular purchase of newspapers. It is worth remembering that at the turn of 1938 and 1939, the legally published, multilingual Jewish press in Poland numbered 160 titles, with a daily circulation of 790,000

[71] As cited in Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 152.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[73] Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 50.
[74] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, pp. 59, 243, 267.

copies.[75] Another example is the reading statistics at the Main Judaic Library at the Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street in Warsaw. Between 1 January and 1 June 1937, 6,628 volumes were borrowed and read, of which nearly 2,000 loans were made by "workers, traders, merchants and craftsmen."[76] It is worth adding that the library was a specialist and scholarly institution. In contrast, the Jewish working class used party and private lending libraries, and religious Jews tended to use hundreds of synagogue book collections.

Jewish Religious Communities in Poland in the 1930s

In 1939, there were over 800 Jewish communities in the Republic of Poland, whose financial condition varied considerably, although it – in most cases – deteriorated in the last years before the war. The creation and liquidation of communities was a part of the process of unification and streamlining of the functioning of the state, but, as Kawski demonstrates, the authorities interfered in the structure of the community network with extreme caution. This was most often caused by demographic changes, associated with the depopulation of some rural settlements and towns and migration to larger urban centres or emigration abroad, as well as the enlargement of the administrative borders of large cities and metropolises by absorbing neighbouring localities and, consequently, merging of communities. Communities that could not exist independently, for example, due to the destruction of the community infrastructure, were liquidated or connected with the neighbouring communities when those belonging to the community could not bear the financial burden of rebuilding the synagogue or a bath. However, this was more often the case in the first years after independence and was related to the war and its aftermath. Essential community institutions and a streamlined administrative structure were crucial for the operations of the community. For that reason, the process of depopulation often led to a community's liquidation or a merger with a community in a neighbouring locality. On the other hand, it meant a rise in the demographic potential of the larger communities, especially in the intensively developing urban centres.[77]

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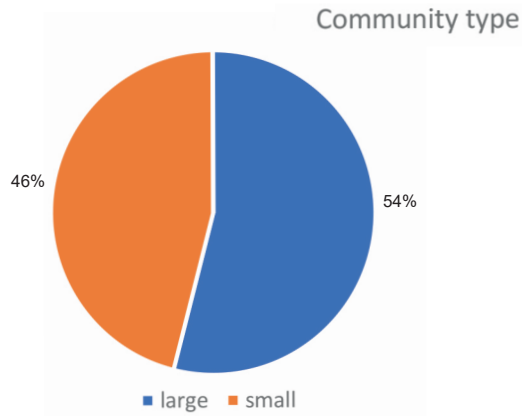
[75] Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 50.
[76] *Głos Gminy Żydowskiej* 1 (1937), p. 27.
[77] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, pp. 58–59, 71, 82–83.

Fig. 10. Members of religious communities, large (over five thousand) and small in 1931 (in percentage terms)



Source: Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 63.

The increase in the demographic potential generally benefitted the latter, although it posed new challenges for their boards. This included not only the need to expand the community's infrastructure but also to deal with various local separatisms, which became apparent in the compilation of lists of synagogue contribution payers and the setting of the amount of the contribution, the election of a rabbi or the allocation of the budget funds. In the communities in the north-eastern voivodeships, groups of adherents of traditional Judaism conflicted with immigrant Hasidic groups; in Greater Poland and Pomerania, a small number of German Jews and newcomers from the former Congress Poland and Galicia remained after 1918. These disputes lost their importance shortly before the outbreak of war; the escalation of nationalist sentiment and the worsening international situation eventually overshadowed local conflicts."[78]

Unifying legal and administrative systems within the state also impacted Jewish communities, leading to improvements such as rationalising their financial management. This was often associated with the emergence of new elites, drawn to some extent from secular and progressive circles, increasingly successfully vying for seats on the community's boards. In central and south-eastern Poland, this

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82, 112–113.

was a continuation of the emancipation of the Jewish population from the influence of orthodox spheres, which had already begun during the years of the First World War and even before 1914. One could observe this in larger communities; the process was slower in towns scattered across the Eastern Borderlands. Jewish communities did not employ women, although they occasionally employed them as typists and shorthand typists in larger cities. Still, the position of the secretary of the Jewish community, held by a woman in Brody, was an exception. Nonetheless, the community still supported female doctors, dentists and nurses in Jewish hospitals. The electoral law for boards and councils and the rules for the rabbis' election excluded women, besides which Orthodox circles expressed resistance to their employment.[79]

Irrespective of the local conditions and the history of the partitions, the foundation for the communities' operations was their self-financing, the main elements of which were the synagogue contribution and ritual slaughter. However, some communities also derived significant income from leasing or renting property. The former Prussian partition communities enjoyed the best and relatively stable financial situation. They had rather large movables and immovables at their disposal and had little or no debt. Before the Great Depression, it even happened that, faced with a deteriorating financial situation, the community clerks resigned from receiving salaries and fees from people engaged in ritual slaughter or religious teaching. Communities in Greater Poland, Kuyavia, Pomerania and Silesia had relatively few members, but their wealth level was usually higher than in other regions of the country.[80]

An examination of the budgets of Jewish religious communities from the 1930s reveals that nearly all of them allocated specific funds not only for the upkeep of community institutions such as asylums, hospitals, or Talmud Torahs but also provided direct support to the most impoverished, particularly during the period leading up to holidays.[81] When discussing the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Salomon Seidenman, MP for the last parliamen-

[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 287–288.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[81] S. Piątkowski, "Żydowska Gmina Wyznaniowa w Radomiu," in *Życie codzienne w międzywojennym Radomiu*, ed. by G. Łuszkiewicz-Dzierżawska (Radom, 2009), p. 129.

tary term, pointed out that while in 1936, 24.6% of all Jews applied for holiday support, in 1937, the figure was already 26.2%. At the same time, the support amounted to only a few zlotys per person.[82] The occasional aid given to the community members on Passover in 1934 went to 23.3% of all small-town residents; by 1937, almost one-third of the community had already benefitted from this form of philanthropy.[83]

The financial situation of many communities was still aggravated by the still quite common practice whereby entrepreneurs and wealthier individuals living in large cities and owning businesses or properties in small towns paid the synagogue contribution in these towns, as it was generally lower there. This was a frequent reason for complaints from the boards of the affected communities. During the crisis, the synagogue contribution, even at a minimum amount, was an unbearable burden for many indigent craftsmen and merchants. By the end of the 1930s, problems with closing the community budget were widespread, lists of debtors lengthened, and auctions of the community properties occurred. This affected almost all Jewish communities, although, in the western voivodeships, it translated to a lesser extent into the livelihood of the community members. On the other hand, the provisions of the law on ritual slaughter[84] affected the communities in the Voivodeships of Pomerania and Poznań, where the percentage of the Jewish population did not exceed 3% of the total population. Therefore, there was a complete ban on slaughter outside designated municipal slaughterhouses.[85]

As indicated above, there were significant differences in income between the communities. Of course, the larger the community, the more potential sources of income it had, but there were also higher expenses. For example, in the religious

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[82] Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, p. 402.

[83] It is estimated that from 1930 onwards, the value of foreign currency remittances from abroad to the residents of small religious communities reached 150 million zlotys per year (Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 52).

[84] In 1937, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment issued a regulation ordering that the salaries of rabbis should be set at the level of the emoluments provided for in the 1935 budgets, which resulted in mass demands for an increase in their current emoluments, as these had declined between 1935 and 1937 due to the reduction in income from ritual slaughter (T. Kowalik, "Żydowskie partie i organizacje społeczne w Puławach okresu międzywojennego," in *Historia i kultura Żydów Janowca nad Wisłą, Kazimierza Dolnego i Puław. Fenomen kulturowy miasteczka – sztetl*, ed. by F. Jaroszyński [Janowiec nad Wisłą, 2003], p. 144).

[85] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 215.

community of Łódź, which had about 200,000 members, the income in 1926 amounted to 882,000 zlotys; in the community of Cracow (excluding Podgórze), which had about 50,000 members, the revenue amounted to 73,000; and in the community of Lvov, which was less than twice as large, the income was more than three times higher and amounted to 258,000 zlotys. The situation regarding the community's property was similar, although this was no longer the rule. For example, the community of Brzezany had assets worth almost half a million zlotys, while in the much larger community of Będzin, they were valued at 277,000.[86] However, the community's assets were not always indicative of the wealth of its members.[87]

While carrying out reforms in community administration, primarily concerning accounting and the regulation of slaughtering practices, existing boards were occasionally disbanded and replaced with temporary ones. This was due to the inability to meet the financial obligations of the community but also to conflicts on political, religious or personal grounds. It does not seem, however, that the appointment of new boards was unduly exploited by the state authorities for political purposes, although there were probably fewer objections to the candidature of an Agudist rabbi, a general Zionist or a supporter of integration supporting the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government than of people nominated by the workers' Bund or Poale Zion.

The situation became more complicated during the election of a rabbi. The law stipulated that a candidate for this position had to demonstrate a fluent knowledge of the Polish language, both spoken and written, which was sometimes difficult to achieve. In the eyes of an Orthodox voter, a rabbi candidate's knowledge of Polish was far less important than his knowledge of the Torah and Gemara. The

[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 231, 280.

[87] An example from Łódź: in 1933, the local religious community, regarded as one of the wealthiest in Poland, managed, after a long struggle, to persuade the rabbi of Lublin and the rector of the local Yeshiva to take the position of senior rabbi. In return, the citizens of Łódź agreed to donate 100,000 zlotys to the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva synagogue, to contribute 3,000 to its maintenance every month, and to pay the rabbi himself a salary of 5,000 per month. This was a very high salary, considering that a sub-rabbi, acting as a rabbi, received 920 zlotys. The willingness of Łódź residents to cover the high costs associated with the recruitment of the well-known and popular Majer Szapira testified to the wealth of the local community and the influence of the orthodox spheres, although it did not mean that the financial situation of all the Jews of Łódź was good (K. Zieliński and N. Zielińska, *Jeszywas Chachmej Lublin* [Lublin, 2003], p. 144).

community's operations and interactions with the local administration were hindered, mainly due to the rabbis' limited proficiency in Polish. This was especially true for older rabbis and those serving in smaller towns. Unfamiliarity with the official language was a significant obstacle to taking up a rabbinical post. Although the authorities provided the possibility of waiving this requirement or granting a temporary dispensation, they did not always use it. One can understand the attitude of the state authorities since, from the point of view of the modern state, the traditional filling of the position of a rabbi by members of distinguished rabbinical families or the not-always-fair pushing of their candidacies in elections, regardless of the formal requirements, undermined the dignity of the office and lowered the authority of the state. On the other hand, it allowed the authorities to interfere in the lives of the communities, which for many was unacceptable and contravened customs that had been established for centuries. The problem was most often solved in the same way as in Russian times and in the years of the Kingdom of Poland held by the Central Powers – a rabbi who was not approved by the authorities performed the function of a private or "clerical" rabbi or was approved as a sub-rabbi. Officially, the office of a rabbi became vacant.[88] The problem of staffing rabbinical offices in a way that would satisfy all parties involved could not be solved between the wars. Still, in 1936, the payments and pensions of rabbis and their families were regulated.[89]

The Polish administration complained about the lack of transparent procedures, how accounting and records were kept, the widespread use of Yiddish, and the inability to vet the communities. Still, very few non-Jewish officers knew Yiddish and the Hebrew alphabet, and even then, their knowledge of the language was most often limited to the spoken form. Jews were hired reluctantly, and the state administration showed little interest in educating its officers in minority languages. This problem most often affected the smaller communities, although not exclusively – in Vilnius, Polish did not appear in the accounts until 1938.[90] Discussions concerning the recognition and use of Yiddish continued throughout the interwar period.

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[88] K. Zieliński, *Żydzi Lubelszczyzny 1914–1918* (Lublin, 1999), pp. 155–161.

[89] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, pp. 186–187.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Legal Regulations in the 1930s and the Situation of the Jewish Minority

The legal status of the Jewish minority in Poland and its protection was set out in many acts of domestic and international law, which do not need to be discussed here.[91] Let us point out that despite the abolition of the laws of the partitioning states and the obligations imposed on Poland in the so-called Little Treaty of Versailles, the newly enacted laws contained provisions that directly or indirectly discriminated against the Jewish population. Some of them, such as the law on the so-called Sunday rest, came into force even before the May coup (in 1924), and others – in the 1930s.

Under the Act of 13 March 1931, exceptional provisions related to the origin, nationality, language, race or religion of the citizens of the Republic expired. This was an essential piece of legislation from the Jewish communities and their members' point of view. Until then, despite the enactment of the March Constitution, for example, provisions of Russian legislation discriminating against the Jewish minority were in force in the area of the former Russian partition. Admittedly, they were not always applied literally, but with the officials' ill will, they could make the operation of the communities and the lives of its members difficult. Notably, under the law above, the provisions from the partition times lost their validity even if separate legal acts did not repeal them. [92] Another thing to note is that almost immediately after it was passed, National Democracy MPs tabled several motions, which had to be dealt with by the relevant parliamentary committees, concerning issues such as the *numerus clausus* in academic schools or the so-called "Jewish corpses."[93] The 1935 Constitution did not significantly change the legal situation of religious unions; most of the provisions relating to this issue contained in the 1921 Constitution were upheld.[94]

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[91] See for instance M. Łysko, "Ochrona praw mniejszości w II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w świetle postanowień tzw. małego traktatu wersalskiego z 1919 r.," *Miscellanea Historico-Iuridica* 18/1 (2019), pp. 109–132.

[92] *Dziennik Ustaw* 31 (1931), item 214.

[93] N. Aleksiun, "Christian Corpses for Christians!: Dissecting the Anti-Semitism behind the Cadaver Affair of the Second Polish Republic," *East European Politics and Societies* 25/3 (2011), pp. 393–409; Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci," p. 97; Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, pp. 347–348.

[94] Lewicka, "Status formalnoprawny," pp. 35–36.

In 1932, the educational situation also changed, and although this was not the legislature's intention, the school reforms hit the minority school system in a particular way. The Act on the System of Schooling and the Act on Private Schools and Scientific and Educational Establishments passed by the Sejm on 11 March 1932 created the legal basis for a new school reform. The reform, unifying school education, introduced three types of schools: a seven-year primary school, a four-year lower general secondary school and a two-year upper general secondary school; upon completing this and obtaining a maturity certificate, one could apply for entry into a higher education institution. The new legislation increased control over private education and gave the authorities broader powers to close down schools, which was criticised especially by minority communities. In addition, creating a separate upper general secondary school and the unification of lower general secondary schools made it difficult for existing private educational establishments to obtain public school rights. There were also protests against the reduction of subsidies for Jewish vocational schools, whose legal situation the reform, after all, failed to regulate.[95] In turn, it was not until July 1939 that detailed rules were introduced to define the competencies of teachers of the Mosaic religion in schools.[96]

Criticised in many circles, the reform, called the Jędrzejowicz's reform after the minister in charge, unified the school system in Poland and was intended to raise the level of education. Still, it made further education much more difficult for rural children and many children from minority backgrounds, for whom public schools were often the only facilities allowing them to acquire knowledge in their mother tongue. Furthermore, the reform was implemented during a financial crisis. This decreased the competitiveness of private schools relative to public schools, which were progressively becoming less available to Jewish students. This situation was detrimental to both the proprietors of the schools and the pupils.[97] Irrespective of this, the state and local governments avoided subsidising minority schools, just as they sought to avoid supporting cultural and educational institutions or charities.

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[95] Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, pp. 358–359.

[96] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, pp. 186–187.

[97] K. Zieliński, "Jaka szkoła? O oświacie i wychowaniu dzieci i młodzieży żydowskiej w Polsce międzywojennej," *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 54 (2019), pp. 199–200.

In 1936, regulations on ritual slaughter were introduced, with adverse consequences for the communities' finances. Detailed, often difficult to comply with requirements and restrictions on the marketing of kosher meat forced communities to change the way they collected slaughter fees.[98] The competence of the voivodes in setting slaughterhouse rates and the financial resources that the communities had to allocate to, among other things, the training of personnel, were reflected in the budget. The press, and not necessarily the National Socialist press, moulded public opinion and wrote extensively about the cruelty to animals that was supposed to characterise slaughter according to the principles of shechita. Articles in its defence appeared in the Jewish press, and some columnists realised that non-ritual slaughter in the Polish reality was usually at least equally inhumane and, at the same time, carried out in conditions that violated the principles of hygiene. Still, the false concept of "humane slaughter," namely non-ritual slaughter, appealed to the readers. What is more, it went to the chagrin of those who, through the law, wanted to undermine an essential part of Jewish commerce and strike at one of the fundamental principles of Judaism.[99] As it seems, any move that might have contributed to the nationalisation, or "Polonisation" of trade and industry, and induced Jews to emigrate was welcome.

The Slaughter Act was enacted in 1937, coinciding with the passage that same year of a law that restricted the production and distribution of religious artefacts by individuals who do not belong to the respective faith. The duty from the same year to place the business owner's name next to the business's name on the signboards of shops, workshops and service outlets met the demands of the National Socialist militias. At their discretion, some town halls moved market days to Saturdays, which excluded many Jewish merchants and traders from access to the market. Similarly, the provisions on the bar, the introduction of the *numerus clausus* and *numerus nullus* for Jewish youth in some faculties, the bench ghettos, the non-admission of Jews to professional and student corporations, the minimal chances of Jewish academics and secondary school graduates to obtain jobs in administration or public education were part of the trend of economic anti-Semitism.[100]

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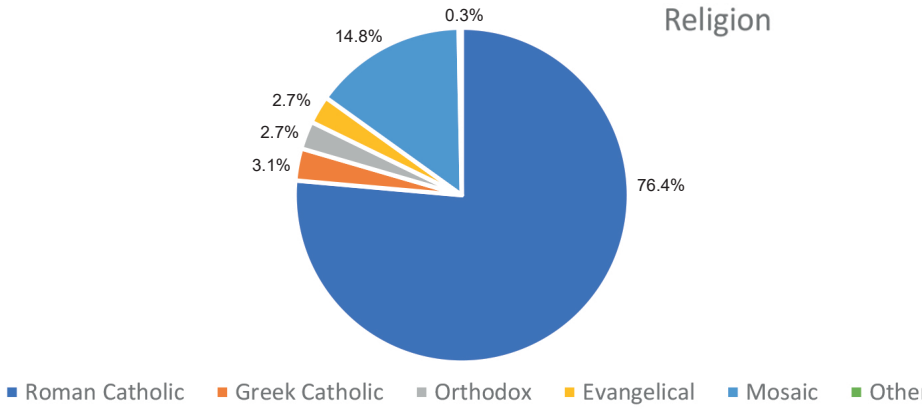
[98] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, pp. 158–159.
[99] Glensk, *Historia słabych*, pp. 222–226.
[100] Kawski, *Żydowskie gminy wyznaniowe*, p. 155.

Fig. 11. Students of state-owned and private higher education institutions in Poland in the 1934/1935 academic year by religion (in percentage terms)



Source: Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci," p. 100.

The Jewish Population and the Political Situation in the Second Half of the 1930s

The national camp, and after 1935, openly also the ruling camp, saw getting rid of the Jews from the country as the best solution to the so-called Jewish question. It was a solution desired by Zionist Revisionists, whose military training and illegal emigration to Palestine were co-financed by the Polish government. Still, it does not alter the fact that the concept of state consolidation and assimilation, in which – at least in theory – minorities remained loyal to the state and interested in its reinforcement in exchange for security and opportunities for development after 1935, became a thing of the past.

The political ideology of the Piłsudski faction experienced notable shifts compared to earlier times, primarily due to a redefinition of the nation's identity: The Polish nation was no longer seen as a political entity but rather as an ethnocultural community.[101] There was no place for Jews in a thus-conceived community (or at least not for all). The economic situation, the geopolitical situation, the need to reckon with the growing national right, and the popularity of fascist slogans meant

[101] W. Paruch, "Myśl polityczna formacji piłsudczykowskiej w Polsce (1926–1939) – cechy podstawowe," *Annales UMCS* 21/2 (2014), Sectio K, p. 129.

that xenophobia, nationalism and emigration pressures were increasingly evident in the *Sanacja* regime's policy. The differences between the Piłsudski-ites and the National Right were about the pace of migration and the scale of administrative measures to be used. On economic issues, the postulates of the National Party and the *Sanacja's* Camp of National Unity coincided – the goal was to remove the Jews. The Declaration, pronounced by Colonel Adam Koc on the radio and printed in newspapers throughout the country, read:

> About the Jewish population, our position is as follows: we value too highly the level and content of our cultural life, as well as law, order and peace, without which no state can do without – to be able to approve of acts of arbitrariness and violent anti-Jewish impulses which offend the dignity and solemnity of a great nation. On the other hand, the instinct for cultural self-defence is understandable, and the desire of Polish society for economic independence is natural.[102]

Government plans for Jewish emigration have become a part of the political culture, including the political scene outside the Parliament.[103] The great pilgrimage of academics to Jasna Góra, under the patronage of the National-Radical Camp, and the so-called Jasna Góra vows took place in the same year, 1936, which saw mob attacks on Jewish shops and workshops in cities and towns. Ksawery Pruszyński, in a reportage published in *Wiadomości Literackie*, entitled "Przytyk i stragan" (Przytyk and a Stall), wrote as follows:

> The movement, which rolled across the Opoczno and Radom lands, was not opposed – it must be noted – by any force. There was only a policeman. A representative of the intelligentsia was missing. A rural teacher was missing. And yet, the villages all over the Przytyk region have teachers and schools. Przytyk, after all, has a teacher. […]. The little Korczaks and the little Minkowskis are fighting at their best. Hatred from the street moves onto the school bench. It encounters no dam on its way […].[104]

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[102] *Echa Pracownika Śląskiego* 2 (1937), p. 16.

[103] Trębacz, *Nie tylko Palestyna*, p. 362.

[104] Korczak and Minkowski are the names of one of the perpetrators and one of the victims, respectively, of the pogrom at Przytyk (as cited in C. Miłosz, *Wyprawa w Dwudziestolecie* [Cracow, 2011], p. 515).

Objectively, the direction of the state's economic growth made it difficult for the Jewish community to continue its traditional income-generating activities in trade, services and various forms of intermediation. Even socialists saw an opportunity to improve the economic situation in (voluntary) Jewish emigration. Jan M. Borski (real name: Essigman), in a brochure published by the PPS's *Robotnik* in 1937, entitled "Sprawa żydowska a socjalizm" (The Jewish Case and Socialism), stated: "We do not see a single solution to the Jewish question in Poland. […] a part of the Jews deeply connected with the Polish country and culture will remain forever. A large part, however, should emigrate. […] And Polish socialists, sooner or later, will adopt an emigration programme."[105]

The provisions mentioned above of the 1935 Law on the Exclusion of Folk and Household Industries and Cottage Industry Work from the Industrial Law hit many Jewish wage earners. They cannot be regarded as "deliberately anti-Jewish," as they also harmed, for example, the agricultural population, which earned its living by producing on farms. However, the many Jewish workers employed in the garment industry probably felt their effects most severely.[106] "The shifts in the economic structure, whether they were the result of natural evolution or government efforts to modernise the country, had a significant impact on the smaller sectors. These sectors were the very ones that a large portion of the Jewish population relied on for their livelihood."[107]

In turn, the systemic restriction of participation in the liberal professions by limits on access to corporations and the non-employment of Jews in administration, large state industry, transport and communications affected their situation in the labour market. This phenomenon intensified in the second half of the 1930s. The statement from the new Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski in his June 1936 exposé is viewed as a pivotal moment in government policy, marking a shift towards anti-Jewish positions: "My government believes that no one in

[105] As cited in Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 96.

[106] The problematic situation of subcontractors in the clothing industry and independent tailors-craftsmen was, to some extent, exacerbated by parcels of old clothes sent in bulk from the USA and Canada. In the second half of the 1930s, this was pointed out by the Jewish press abroad and by the Polish consul general in New York (*ibidem*, p. 52).

[107] Tomaszewski, "Sytuacja Żydów w Polsce," p. 201.

Poland can be harmed. […] Economic struggle, yes, but no harm."[108] Irrespective of the fact that the Prime Minister's opinion on the issue of relations with the Jewish community was placed in a speech, as it were on the margin of his attack directed against the National Democrats and his condemnation of the pogroms, it was interpreted as an acceptance of the boycott and a "green light" for economic nationalism. The words were said, whatever the Prime Minister's intentions, ill will or lack of political imagination. They coincided with the government's foray into formal and informal restrictions on national minorities.[109]

The projects to adapt the Jewish population's socio-occupational structure to the country's economic realities and thereby eliminate the causes of prejudice and conflict were eventually replaced by a programme of Jewish emigration.[110] It is difficult to estimate the losses that Jewish merchants, traders, entrepreneurs and craftsmen suffered due to these professional adjustment attempts and the nationalisation of the economy combined with a boycott campaign. For example, the head of the Zamość garrison not only cut off Jews from supplies to the army but also actively joined the movement of harassing soldiers of non-Polish nationality, which from the autumn of 1937 was seconded by the new voivode of Lublin and Polesie, Jerzy de Tramecourt.[111]

However, the *Sanacja* regime condemned the violence, sought to prevent it, and punished its perpetrators, especially when its political opponents initiated it.[112] In a high-profile march on Myślenice by members of the National Party led by Adam

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[108] Przybysz, "Żydowscy studenci," p. 98.

[109] A. Adamczyk, "Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski i Bogusław Miedziński wobec kwestii żydowskiej w ostatnich latach Drugiej Rzeczypospolite," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica* 66 (1999), pp. 160–164.

[110] P. Waingertner, "'Naprawiacze' w Obozie Zjednoczenia Narodowego," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica* 66 (1999), pp. 143–144, 152.

[111] G. Krzywiec, "Życie codzienne, 'walka o stragan' i 'unarodowienie' polskiej twórczości. Przypadek prowincjonalnego Szczebrzeszyna (1935–1939)," in *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, vol. 3: *Lokalność. Wsie, miasteczka, miasta na ziemiach polskich od XVI do XX wieku*, ed. by A. Landau-Czajka (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 231–232.

[112] Senator Konstanty Terlikowski said at a meeting in March 1936 that the anti-Semitism the National Democrats were reaching for was the only way for the party to reach the broader masses of society. He also blamed the riots and accused the Nationalists of not putting forward any constructive solution to the Jewish question. "The national camp […] has come up only with a bludgeon and a knuckle. But this method will not solve the Jewish issues […]." (as cited in Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 97; see also: Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, p. 375).

Doboszyński on the night of 22–23 June 1936, a synagogue was burnt down, many Jewish shops were demolished, and a police station was smashed, from which the protesters stole several weapons. It is symptomatic that official communiqués generally failed to mention that the direct victims were mainly Jews – they wrote about "an attack at night on the sleeping and defenceless" without underlining their nationality. Nevertheless, a police raid ordered by Składkowski led to the capture of the leaders of the attack, who were sent to Bereza Kartuska under an administrative procedure. In contrast, the county division of the National Party in Cracow was dissolved.[113]

In the wake of the events in Myślenice, there were often declarations that lacked effective measures to prevent acts of aggression. Until the outbreak of the war, the government and the parliamentary majority did not accept the formal segregation of the population. Still, only communists and activists of the Polish Socialist Party stood up for the civil rights of the Jews, with few exceptions.[114] Protests were also voiced by members of the Democratic Party, gathered in democratic clubs formed from 1937 onwards, bringing together a section of the Polish intelligentsia, often of the Polish Legions' and Piłsudskiite origin, including university staff.[115] Despite the authority some of its members enjoyed, the Party was not very influential. The participants of pogroms were criticised in articles and mocked in satirical illustrations published in liberal and left-wing magazines, in which acts of anti-Semitic aggression were presented as a manifestation of dehumanisation and savagery, but – perhaps because of censorship – the authorities were usually not criticised for failing to react.[116]

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[113] Adamczyk, "Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski," p. 167.

[114] See for example M. Skwara, "Żydowskie wspomnienia i polskie archiwalia. O stosunkach polsko-żydowskich w międzywojennym Pruszkowie," in *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, vol. 3, p. 134; M. Trębacz, "Polska lewica wobec antyżydowskiej przemocy lat 30. XX wieku," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 3: *Historiografia, polityka, recepcja społeczna (do 1939 roku)*, ed. by K. Kijek, A. Markowski, and K. Zieliński (Warsaw, 2019), p. 404.

[115] Tomaszewski, "Sytuacja Żydów w Polsce," p. 216; D. Winiarska-Twaróg, "Mniejszości narodowe w myśli politycznej Stronnictwa Demokratycznego," in *Mniejszości narodowe w polskiej myśli politycznej XX wieku*, ed. by J. Jachymek (Lublin, 1992), pp. 196–207.

[116] D. Konstantynów, "Pogromy i inne akty przemocy fizycznej wobec Żydów w zwierciadle rysunków z prasy polskiej (1919–1939)," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 1: *Literatura i sztuka*, ed. by S. Buryła (Warsaw, 2018), p. 362.

The Catholic Church and the "Jewish Question"

The importance and role of the Catholic Church in forming the attitudes of the population of interwar Poland cannot be overestimated, and the views of probably the majority of the lower clergy towards the Jews do not require extensive comment. The writings of Father Józef Kruszyński, Father Stanislaw Trzeciak or Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe enjoyed tremendous popularity, regardless of what themes prevailed in them: anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism or unsophisticated proselytism.[117]

It should be noted, however, that while after 1918 the Church supported the National Democracy, Nationalist and Christian-Democratic parties on many issues, in the second half of the 1930s, the Church's ties with the ruling *Sanacja* regime became increasingly close. The platform of agreement here was not only the recognition of the unique position of the Catholic Church in Poland but also the attitude towards the so-called Jewish question. The Koc's Programmatic Declaration stated that the Polish nation was "spiritually bound with the Catholic Church." Simultaneously, when it comes to other religions, it "adheres to the principles outlined in the Constitution and those derived from Poland's traditional religious tolerance."[118] This tolerance varied, and statements by Catholic clergy and publicists left little space for illusions. Father Franciszek Dyżewski, active in organising the parish life and editor of *Dzwon Żbikowa* (The Bell of Żbików) monthly published by the Catholic Action, declared in a poem of his authorship: "Neither Freemasonry nor a wicked Jew will rip Christ out of our Polish soul".[119] Examples of similar, though not always equally graphomaniacal statements can be multiplied. The editor of the widely read *Rycerz Niepokalanej* (Knight of the Immaculate Virgin Mary) reported in the May 1938 issue that "de-Judaisation" was beginning in Hungary. The prelude will be a law removing the excessive number of Jews employed in the press, theatres and film companies."[120] The circulation of this magazine, which was distributed, among others, in churches and parishes all over the country in the final years before the war, was as high as

[117] D. Libionka, "Obcy, wrodzy, niebezpieczni. Obraz Żydów i 'kwestii żydowskiej' w prasie inteligencji katolickiej lat trzydziestych w Polsce," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 3 (2002), pp. 320–322.

[118] *Nasza Praca* 9 (1937), p. 2.

[119] Skwara, "Żydowskie wspomnienia," p. 132.

[120] As cited in A. Juszczak, "Obraz Żyda na łamach Rycerza Niepokalanej 1922–1939," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 5/5 (2015), p. 93.

800,000. He was echoed by the editor of *Przewodnik Katolicki*, who demanded that Jews leave Poland not out of fear, as in Germany, but "out of gratitude for the long-standing hospitality," and stated that he would "gladly escort them to the railway station."[121]

The higher ecclesiastical hierarchy, in the persons of, among others, the Primate of Poland August Hlond and the Metropolitan of Cracow, Bishop Adam Sapieha, called for an end to violence against Jews. Adam Sapieha called for an end to violence against Jews, but at the same time, the hierarchy's segregationist demands "were usually perceived as an endorsement of the boycott campaign."[122] It is impossible to read otherwise, for example, in Hlond's pastoral letter of 1936, in which the Church dignitary states that "very many Jews are believers, honest, just, merciful, charitable people," but "it is true that Jews fight against the Catholic Church, are stuck in free-thinking, are the vanguard of godlessness, the Bolshevik movement and subversive action".[123] In merchant relations, instructs Hlond, "it is good to consider one's own before others, to avoid Jewish shops and stalls at the fair, but it is not allowed to ravage a Jewish shop". Moreover, the influence of Jews on "morality" was stated to be pernicious; they promoted pornography, committed fraud and usury, and engaged in human trafficking, and the impact of the Jewish youth on Catholics was "generally religiously and ethically negative."[124] It's not by chance he noted that synods of diocesan bishops advocated for discontinuing the practice of educating Polish and Jewish children and youth together in the same schools.

In the fight against sectarianism, which, among other things, the activity of the Bible Students was considered to be, the Church resorted to arguments and slogans taken straight from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The Diocesan Institute of the Catholic Action in Łódź, which the Church had included in the fight against sectarianism, lectured in August 1938 that the students were utterly submissive to the Jewish influence and "form a Jewish cell within Christianity,

[121] As cited in Trębacz, *Nie tylko Palestyna*, p. 319.

[122] G. Krzywiec, "Narodowa Demokracja wobec pogromów i zbiorowej przemocy antyżydowskiej od odzyskania niepodległości do 1939 roku," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, vol. 3, pp. 388–389.

[123] As cited in A. Molisak, "'Zapisywanie pogromów' – kilka uwag o języku prasy polskiej doby międzywojnia," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, vol. 1, pp. 86–87.

[124] *Ibid.*

proclaiming the beginning of a new era – the era of Jewish rule over the world."[125] With all might, a Polish Catholic should oppose such temptations, as it was often called for by, among others, the activist of the Academic Union "All-Polish Youth" Wiktor Nowosad.[126] He wrote: "As Poles, we fight against the Jewish people, and as Catholics against the Talmudic Jewish religion. Hence, the whole Catholic-national revival is aimed at the Jews and will force them sooner or later to leave Poland."[127]

Escalation of the Anti-Semitic Sentiment on the Eve of the War

The concerns brought up by Jewish parliamentarians during the Sejm's final term of office in their interpellations aptly highlight the challenges Jews in Poland were confronting on the brink of war. They also tell a lot about the situation and the sentiment prevailing in the country.[128]

After the electoral law amendment allowed the government to push its 'own' candidates effectively, there were five Jewish deputies in the 208-seat parliament and two Jewish senators in the senate. The representation was, therefore, very modest,

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[125] D. Pałka, "Warunki dialogu Kościoła katolickiego z Żydami w II Rzeczypospolitej," *Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne* 18 (2005), pp. 151–152.

[126] D. Waniek, *Ruch narodowy w Polsce wczoraj i dziś. Ideologia, organizacja, praktyka działania* (Warsaw, 2014), p. 36.

[127] As cited in A. Dawidowicz, "Problematyka mniejszości żydowskiej w myśli politycznej Stronnictwa Narodowego (1928–1939)," *Wschód Europy* 3/1 (2017), p. 74.

[128] Elections to the Sejm of the fifth term of office were held on 6 November 1938. The amendment of the electoral law following the adoption of the so-called April Constitution de facto gave the Government control over the electoral assemblies, which selected the names of the candidates. The assemblies were attended by representatives of the local government and professional self-government, as well as by delegates nominated by 500 voters, and at a time of the increasing omnipotence of the state and the dependence of many institutions of social life on the *Sanacja* regime, such a structure gave the government control over the assemblies and thus often effectively prevented the election of deputies who did not suit the authorities. The regression of democracy in Poland did not, of course, hit only ethnic and national minorities. Despite this, their generally weak position in the state, with the growing resentment of a large part of society, meant that any restrictions affected them in a particular way. This is why, the critical attitude towards the electoral law of some Jewish parties notwithstanding, most Zionist organisations, Aguda, the Orthodox, as well as the Central Union of Merchants and the Central Chamber of Retail and Small Merchants, appealed to their members and supporters to take part in the elections, with different motivations. The Folkists, the Bund, and the Central Committee of the Zionist Organisation in Poland called for a boycott of the elections. In the face of the boycott of the elections by the Polish opposition parties, Jews tried to justify their participation by pointing out the different positions of the minorities and the fact that – regardless of the political situation – no one forced the Polish peasants and workers to emigrate. For this reason, the position was taken that the Jewish minority could not afford to be pushed entirely outside the country's socio-political life (see Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, pp. 397–399).

with those elected representing general Zionists, Agudists and assimilationists. The Fifth Sejm was in session only for a few months. In their addresses, Jewish parliamentarians emphasised the importance of societal mobilisation and unity in the face of the impending war. They also appealed to the displaced individuals from Germany residing in a camp in Zbąszyń.[129] Nevertheless, the personal safety of Jews remained one of the most critical issues. In many cities and towns, the daily routine was disrupted by picketing in front of stores, the destruction of market stalls, and frequent incidents of verbal and physical aggression. Although their scale was incomparably smaller, these scenes were reminiscent of what was going on in Nazi Germany.

Jewish MPs' interpellations also concerned security at universities (in November, two Jewish students were murdered at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov).[130] The attitude of the police and law enforcement officers pacifying anti-Semitic riots at the universities towards the students initiating them, regardless of the level of thuggery they represented, was relatively lenient and permissive, and the administrative authorities often waived criminal proceedings.[131] Anti-Semitism was apparently a mitigating circumstance and "justified" the aggression. At the same time, participants in peasant revolts, workers' demonstrations and unemployed protesters were treated with the full severity of the law. At times, extreme actions were taken to soothe the public's sentiments.[132]

It was not only students who were harassed but also primary and secondary school pupils, which was often accompanied by a passive attitude of the manage-

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[129] In April 1938, the Polish government announced in *Dziennik Ustaw* the new citizenship law passed by the Sejm in March of that year, invalidating the passports of Polish citizens who had been continuously residing abroad for more than five years. This was a reaction to the deterioration of the situation of Jews with Polish citizenship in the Reich and their possible mass return to the country. The final date for carrying out the directive of the Minister of the Interior regarding passport registration and the inclusion of a validity note was 29 October 1938; meanwhile, on 26 October, a decree was announced in Germany on the immediate expulsion of all Polish Jews from the country. This so-called *Polenaktion* was halted, but several thousand people were declared stateless and camped at the Polish-German border and in the transit camp at Zbąszyń. Their unclear situation was the subject of an interpellation by the members of the Jewish Circle (see *Dziennik Ustaw* 22 [1938], item 191).

[130] In May of the following year, a few months before the outbreak of war, a student of the University of Technology was also murdered in Lvov (Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, p. 400).

[131] P. Cichoracki, J. Dufrat, and J. Mierzwa, *Oblicza buntu społecznego w II Rzeczypospolitej doby wielkiego kryzysu (1930–1935). Uwarunkowania, skala, konsekwencje* (Cracow, 2019), p. 257.

[132] A. Leszczyński, *Ludowa historia Polski. Historia wyzysku i oporu. Mitologia panowania* (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 463–465, 472–473.

ment and teaching staff. What is more, there were cases of harassment by the teaching staff. The treatment of soldiers of Jewish origin in the Polish Army was also the reason for numerous interpellations by the Club of Jewish Deputies.[133] It should be recalled that the immediate cause of the anti-Jewish incidents in Mińsk Mazowiecki in 1936 was alleged to be the killing of the sergeant-master Jan Bujak by his former subordinate.

Those affected began to regard attacks of various kinds and the ubiquitous anti-Semitic propaganda in the last years before the war as "an organic part of the hostile environment and reality of the time."[134] Incidents and assaults on Jews should not, however, be solely associated with the members of the National Democrats and extreme nationalist organisations. Members of other groups, predominantly rural or urban dwellers, also took part in them, driven by a desire to accumulate wealth, eliminate competition, or for other personal reasons. Importantly, as highlighted by the authors of the extensive study, *Oblicza buntu społecznego w II Rzeczypospolitej* (The Face of the Social Revolt in the Second Republic), during the period of anti-Semitic rhetoric from 1935 to 1939, confrontations between the instigators and law enforcement, such as clashes that arose as a result of attempts to reclaim detainees, were typically not documented, unlike in previous times. Admittedly, during the 1936 march on Myślenice, a State Police station was attacked, but, for example, in Mińsk Mazowiecki, Przytyk or Brest clashes with the intervening officers did occur; however, it was not the police representing the *Sanacja*-ruled state who were the target.[135]

The liberal and ideologically "neutral" press tended to downplay reports of pogroms and anti-Jewish riots, while titles published by supporters of the right identified the culprits and provocateurs, who were always … Jews.[136] In the 1930s, press drawings and caricatures were readily used as an effective and visually appealing tool to spread anti-Semitic propaganda.[137]

In 1938–1939, an interpellation was also tabled on the anti-Jewish propaganda broadcast by the Polish Radio. Jewish parliamentarians intervened in person with

[133] Gąsowski, "Żydzi w siłach zbrojnych," p. 16.
[134] Krzywiec, "Życie codzienne," pp. 227, 229.
[135] Cichoracki, Dufrat, and Mierzwa, *Oblicza buntu społecznego*, pp. 201–204.
[136] Molisak, "'Zapisywanie' pogromów," pp. 73–94.
[137] Konstantynów, "Pogromy i inne akty przemocy," pp. 321–323.

Prime Minister Składkowski, rectifying the inflated data regarding the participation of Jews in economic life, which were supposed to speak in favour of more decisive steps to be taken by the government administration in the area of emigration of Jews and the introduction of economic restrictions for Jewish merchants and entrepreneurs. The purpose, nature and manner in which similar demands were made by the Camp of National Unity (Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZN) MPs are well-illustrated by the words of Wojciech Wydra in February 1939: "Point number one. The Jews of Poland must go. Point number two. The sooner they go, the better for them. Point number three. Since they are not very eager to go, it seems they must be helped by special legislation. I do not see any other solution."[138]

Zionist MPs, while calling for support for the Jewish emigration to Palestine, at the same time stated that it could not be combined with civil and legal discrimination. In doing so, they cited Marshal Piłsudski's authority and his declared and implemented policy towards minorities. However, in the second half of the 1930s, this did not make much of an impression on anyone.[139] In the last months of the Sejm, attacks on the Jewish population by the OZN deputies intensified, and the common denominator of most speeches was the postulated emigration of Jews from Poland. This was advocated by government representatives, who asserted that they believed that the only practical solution to the Jewish question was to reduce the number of Jews in the country significantly. They claimed this aligned with "the Polish public opinion" expectations. The MPs also voiced demands for the drafting of appropriate laws that would cause Jews to leave their positions in public life and close down their workplaces, deprive them of citizenship, or grant "separate citizenship" to specific groups. In official spheres, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were also ideas of revising citizenship and imposing a particular "emigration" tax on Jews. MP Juliusz Dudziński of the OZN, previously a staunch critic of the *Sanacja*, even proposed that 600,000 Jews aged 18–40 should

[138] As cited in Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, p. 401.

[139] The cult of Piłsudski among Jews, present at least since the Great War, flourished after his death. "He was to justify, by invoking the highest authority of the state, that the persecution of the Jews was more than just discrimination against this minority – it was a misappropriation of the idea of the founder of independent Poland." Anti-Semitism thus profaned the memory of Marshal. See A. Landau-Czajka, "Wodzu nasz, Piłsudski! Postać Marszałka w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej okresu międzywojennego," *Studia Żydowskie. Almanach* 3/3 (2013), p. 55.

be mobilised and sent to labour battalions. Earthworks, land drainage, and roadworks were the best ways for them to prepare for work already in exile.[140]

It was only a short way from similar proposals to Poland following in the footsteps of Germany, Hungary or Romania. [141] The Jewish question, specifically the desire to rid the country of Jews, united the hitherto strongly antagonised *Sanacja*, the People's Party and the National Democrats. The latter, as we read in the Ideological Declaration of the National Camp of the National Democratic councillors from Łódź in 1937, openly proclaimed that the Jews were the source of the greatest misfortune of contemporary Poland.[142] For some National Democratic journalists, the measures used in neighbouring Germany to "solve" the Jewish question were a source of unabashed admiration.[143] On the other hand, interestingly, the *Sanacja* regime, which had the entire administrative apparatus of the state at its disposal and did not shy away in its political struggle from electoral manipulation, intimidation or incarceration of opposition leaders in detention camps (see the elections of 1930), was able to suppress the anti-Jewish rhetoric much more effectively. Alicja Gontarek argues that the ruling camp, treating anti-Semitism in an instrumental and objectified manner in its fight against the opposition, is co-responsible for the wave of anti-Jewish incidents in 1935–1939.[144]

Closing Remarks

The years succeeding the Great Depression and the transformation in ethnic and political dynamics determined the livelihood of a typical Jewish merchant or

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[140] Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie*, pp. 401–405.

[141] E. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 112–126, 202–211; P.T. Nagy, "The first anti-Jewish law in inter-war Europe," in *The numerus clausus in Hungary. Studies on the First Anti-Jewish Law and Academic Anti-Semitism in Modern Central Europe*, ed. by V. Karady and P.T. Nagy (Budapest, 2012), pp. 63–65; J. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle–London, 1998), pp. 177–199, 293–296, 307–318; L. Volovici, *Nacjonalizm i "kwestia żydowska" w Rumunii lat trzydziestych XX wieku*, transl. and ed. by K. Jurczak (Cracow–Budapest, 2016), pp. 126–127, 136–139, 145, 198–204.

[142] Dawidowicz, "Problematyka mniejszości żydowskiej," p. 69.

[143] K. Kocik, "Problem przemocy wobec ludności żydowskiej na łamach *Myśli Narodowej* w latach 1921–1939," in *Przemoc antyżydowska i konteksty akcji pogromowych na ziemiach polskich w XX wieku*, ed. by K. Zieliński and K. Kijek (Lublin, 2016), pp. 141–145.

[144] A. Gontarek, "Polityka sanacji wobec ruchu narodowego w latach 1926–1935 a kwestia współodpowiedzialności obozu rządowego w rozpowszechnianiu idei antysemickich," in *Przemoc antyżydowska*, pp. 155–189.

artisan. The job security system, the catastrophic effects of the economic crisis, the competitive pressures, and the impediments and restrictions imposed on the pursuit of professional activities led to the massive pauperisation of Jews in Poland. It is estimated that one in six small-town Jews relied partly or entirely on the help of his relatives who had emigrated from Poland.[145]

Poverty affected everyone, regardless of party affiliation or worldview. One of the entrants in a competition for autobiographies of Jewish youth announced by the Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut (Yiddish Scientific Institute) in Vilnius wrote in a letter to Max Weinreich:

> I can conclude that our reds here are mainly in a good material situation by today's standards. They work and earn, although it is true that their earnings suffice for only one man and do not offer the prospect of marriage. Their fear of the future is expressed in their hope for a social revolution. By contrast, the more significant part of today's HeHalutz is an element that cannot wait long, suffers from chronic unemployment, cannot be lulled to sleep by the music of the future and is already ready to emigrate.[146]

In the case of the two groups cited by the embittered author, social revolution or emigration was supposed to be the only solution to this plight. Still, he admitted that both options were "music of the future." The author of the letter, a resident of Bielsk Podlaski writing under the pen name of Beniamin R. (Beniamin Brawerman), calls his views "the Zionism of despair." In its Polish translation, the author who penned the introduction to Brawerman's autobiography asserts that the source of his views was not strictly ideological, so "it was not the aspiration to migrate to Palestine to build a new individual and a new Hebrew nation in the sole 'Jewish homeland'". Instead, it was the escalating loss of confidence in the 1930s in the potential for bettering the situation of Jews in Poland and Europe.[147]

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[145] Orlicki, *Szkice z dziejów*, p. 52.

[146] Beniamin R., *"Płonęli gniewem". Autobiografia młodego Żyda*, transl. by A. Kałużna and A. Szyba, ed. and introd. by K. Kijek (Warsaw, 2021), p. 108.

[147] *Ibid.*, p. LV.

Not infrequently, similar were the reasons for Jewish youth joining the ranks of Communist parties and organisations, in which the proportion of Jewish people, especially at neighbourhood, city or district leadership levels, was indeed high.[148] As it seems, the most common reason why young people from specific backgrounds decided to join a party or a far-left organisation was their material situation and the lack of life prospects. Also, a sense of exclusion and informal discrimination made those who rejected the possibility of emigration and Zionist ideology look for a place for themselves.[149] There were more people disillusioned with the new Poland: the idea of equality and social justice or the desire to oppose xenophobia and growing anti-Semitism also attracted young people from the Jewish intelligentsia, merchant families, and wealthy entrepreneurs.[150] The growing popularity of the Bund, Communists or Zionist Revisionists was indicative of the ferment in Jewish society and its progressive secularisation, as well as the declining popularity of political parties perceived as more or less conservative, including the general Zionists or Agudists, not to mention the assimilationists. Such trends were observable throughout the country: in the workers' city of Radom and the town of Puławy, between Warsaw and Lublin, the borderland city of Vilnius and the Galician city of Drohobycz.[151] Another thing is that far-reaching factionalism remained a permanent feature of Jewish political life in Poland until the end of the Second Polish Republic. [152]

It should also be remembered that the representatives of the generation entering adulthood in the 1930s already lived in a world of values and symbols entirely dif-

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[148] H. Cimek, *Mniejszości narodowe w ruchu rewolucyjnym w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Rzeszów, 2011), pp. 145–150; J. Potaczek, "Żydzi w strukturach Komunistycznej Partii Zachodniej Ukrainy i na terenie międzywojennego powiatu sanockiego i leskiego," in *Polscy Żydzi dla Niepodległej (1918–1939)*, ed. S.J. Żurek (Lublin, 2020), pp. 287–289.

[149] K. Zieliński, "Uwiedzeni, zmanipulowani, zdesperowani? Młodzież komunistyczna w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1914–1939," in *Metamorfozy społeczne 7. Procesy socjalizacji w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by A. Landau-Czajka and K. Sierakowska (Warsaw, 2013), pp. 76–84, 90.

[150] S. and W. Leder, *Czerwona nić. Ze wspomnień i prac rodziny Lederów* (Warsaw, 2005), pp. 7–11.

[151] E. Kirwiel, "Życie polityczne mniejszości żydowskiej na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w okresie międzywojennym. Zarys problematyki," *Wschód Europy* 3/1 (2017), pp. 132–133; Kowalik, "Żydowskie partie," pp. 111, 115–121, 133–136; K. Thomas, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Drohobyczu 1918–1939," in *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie*, vol. 3, pp. 109–111; P.A. Tusiński, "Żydowskie życie polityczne w Radomiu przed drugą wojną światową," in *Społeczność żydowska Radomia w I połowie XX wieku. Kultura – Zagłada – Rozproszenie*, ed. by Z. Wieczorek (Radom, 2008), pp. 117, 120–121.

[152] Bacon, "One Jewish Street?," p. 329.

ferent from those of their parents. In the life of this generation, suspended between tradition and progress, a party, a youth organisation, a sports club or a Hashomer Hatzair team played an increasingly important role.[153] Kamil Kijek notes that in the 1930s, the description of the Jewish community was already escaping the traditional criteria of division into Zionists and opponents of Zionism, religious and secular, national and assimilationist. Increasingly, especially for young people, they were confronted with identity tensions.[154] These people were torn between religiosity and irreligiosity, Polishness and Jewishness, youth or party organisation and the attachment to religion and tradition they had acquired at home. And few expected the problems to be solved in the foreseeable future. The fact that this generation was brought up in the Polish school system and was familiar with the Polish language and culture probably exacerbated their frustrations.

As mentioned, it is difficult to determine the economic significance of anti-Semitism for the Jewish minority in Poland, but it intensified the sense of threat. Slogans about the separate identity of Jews and the urgent need to solve the Jewish question, which for a long time had been the domain of mainly the National Democrats, officially became an element of the Piłsudski camp's[155] political ideology. Stanisław Pawłowski, a geographer and the rector of the University of Poznań, wrote in a brochure *O emigracji Żydów z Polski i o ich kolonizacji* (On the Emigration of Jews from Poland and their Colonisation) published in 1937 by the Maritime and Colonial League:

> A country where the indigenous population is beginning to be cramped cannot look indifferently at who emigrates from the country and who stays there. After all, besides the country's economic development, its national character and defence are at stake. Not only can Poland not increase the number of Jews in the country because of the considerable tightness of space, but on the contrary, it is the only country which has and experiences an excess of them. For this reason, Poland is now the most important Jewish emigration country.[156]

[153] Garncarska-Kadary, *Żydowska ludność*, pp. 226–233.
[154] Introduction to Beniamin R., *"Płonęli gniewem,"* pp. XXXIV, XXXIX.
[155] Adamczyk, "Felicjan Sławoj Składkowski," p. 161.
[156] S. Pawłowski, *O emigracji Żydów z Polski i o ich kolonizacji* (Warsaw, 1937), p. 29.

Only emigration could improve the situation of the Jewish population in rural and overpopulated Poland, where, he argued, "competition for the Jewish population increases with each passing day, both among the Jews themselves and among the non-Jewish population, the impoverishment of the Jewish population makes intimidating progress, the concentration of the Jews in the cities becomes greater and greater, the possibilities of proper dispersion throughout Poland diminish".[157] The solution, according to the rector, could be a departure to Palestine, Birobidzhan, the United States, Canada, and South American countries. He also pointed to specific, eased passport procedures and the need for consular care for the refugees. He suggested further cooperation with Zionist circles and increased diplomatic action.

It may be said that the atmosphere in Poland in the last years before the outbreak of war was becoming increasingly stuffy. The editor of *Głos Pruszkowa* reported with satisfaction in 1938 that "today all Poles, irrespective of the party and position, recognise the necessity of organising the Polish state of affairs," a manifestation of which was, for example, the establishment of circles of the Polish Union in Poznań.[158]

In his article on the provincial Szczebrzeszyn, Grzegorz Krzywiec writes that in the final years before the war, the "cold neighbourhood" began to be replaced by a "hot conflict."[159] The situation became increasingly dangerous, and the boycott campaign, intense in many regions of the country after 1935, was ever more often accompanied by active attacks on Jews, including destruction and theft of their property.[160] Some of them, as in Mińsk Mazowiecki or Przytyk, became pogroms. It is no coincidence that the question of the physical safety of the Jewish population and interventions in specific cases were a constant subject of Jewish MPs' interpellations in the Sejm of the last term. Poland did not introduce laws and regulations that openly discriminated against minority groups, in this case, Jews, as happened in the neighbouring countries, nevertheless tolerating acts of violence or not responding firmly enough to them, as well as the actual clerical practices

[157] *Ibid.*, pp. 60–61.

[158] Skwara, "Żydowskie wspomnienia," p. 129.

[159] Krzywiec, "Życie codzienne," pp. 218–219.

[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 228–233; Z. Trębacz, "'Tłum jak oszalały pędził ulicą'. Pogrom w Bielsku-Białej, wrzesień 1937 r.," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 2: *Studia przypadków (do 1939 roku)*, ed. by K. Kijek, A. Markowski, and K. Zieliński (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 431–447.

taking place in many areas of life, was far from the democratic principles declared in the Basic Law and other legal acts.

The reality of Polish Jewry in the final years before the outbreak of war was very complex. Gershon Bacon writes it was a community which was:

> Internally torn and divided by ideological and political rivalry, but maintaining social solidarity in the face of economic crisis, growing poverty and government inaction; a community unable to unite even in the face of severe political threats, but having a strong sense of separate identity and a growing sense of belonging to Poland.[161]

This community numbered 3.3 to 3.35 million people on the eve of the war. The losses it suffered during war and occupation are estimated at 2.7 to 2.9 million. Approximately 425,000 survived.[162]

[161] Bacon, "One Jewish Street?," p. 337.
[162] Leszczyńska, *Polska 1918–2018*, p. 96.

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SUMMARY

The Jewish community of the Second Polish Republic on the eve of the outbreak of war numbered 3.3–3.35 million people. Jews, who were the most urbanised ethnic and religious group in Poland, were spread out across the country. However, their highest concentration in proportion to the total population was in the central voivodeships, which encompassed the regions of the former Russian partition and Galicia. In 1939, there were more than 800 Jewish communities whose nature and financial condition varied greatly, but the latter usually deteriorated in the final years before the outbreak of the war.

Even though unification efforts had been underway since 1918, by 1939, Polish Jewry was fragmented and lacked cohesion. In the latter half of the 1930s, this community, characterised by internal diversity and economic challenges, faced increasing hostility and anti-Semitic attacks. Despite political divisions and differing views on the future of Jews, the Polish Jewish community maintained a distinct identity and a sense of relative solidarity. The article outlines the demographic and socio-economic situation of the Jewish population in Poland in the second half of the 1930s, referring mainly to the results of the 1931 census and the available statistics from the later period.

KEYWORDS

Jews • Second Republic of Poland • minority • statistical picture • economy • demography

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THE STATE OF RESEARCH ON POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS IN POLISH LANDS UNDER THE SOVIET OCCUPATION BETWEEN 1939 AND 1941

Introduction

Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation are among the most controversial topics in Poland's recent history. Due to the complicated relations between Poles and Jews in the first half of the twentieth century, they are perceived differently by each community. The topic also leads to conflicting opinions among Polish and foreign historians.

Our knowledge about this topic is derived from various primary historical sources. These include institutional documents, memoirs and testimonies from witnesses of the era, press articles, photographs, films, and scholarly or popular works authored by journalists, researchers, or writers. Each of the significant social, ethnic or national groups inhabiting the area of eastern Poland occupied by the Soviet state (apart from the Belarusians, of whom more than 90% were peasants with no or limited literacy skills) left behind one of the sources mentioned above or many monographic or popular studies written on their basis. These subjective testimonies primarily reflect the point of view of the representatives of the ethnic group concerned, showing only part of the reality of the time or interpreting it ac-

cording to the community's historical experience. Few works go beyond the pattern set by national or group historiographies (for example, the landed gentry) created in this way. Therefore, such scholarly publications usually meet with the support of their community and the disapproval of others. The most significant controversies are caused by views of the past inherent in Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Israeli historiography. Soviet historiography can also be added to this group, which, although no longer developing, has left behind numerous publications with strongly outlined or exaggerated theses.

In this article, I will focus on the most critical scholarly publications by historians from the abovementioned groups. I will also consider American historiography. The character and substantive value of these publications were affected by the fact that research on the issues of interest to us was not undertaken in Poland for many years after the end of the Second World War. The policies of the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland and the Soviet Union prevented dealing with these topics until 1989. For this reason, relations between Jews and Poles under the occupying Soviet authorities were terra incognita until the collapse of the communist system. The lack of reliable knowledge, underpinned by proper scholarly research, perpetuated many negative stereotypes and prejudices and, eventually, engrained numerous omissions, half-truths and outright lies, which shaped the thinking of subsequent generations about the attitudes of the Polish and Jewish populations under the Soviet occupation of Polish lands in 1939–1941.

Polish Historiography

The research gaps were filled by Polish historians in exile and Israeli historians. In their understanding of the issue, the former considered mainly (although not always) Polish and the latter Jewish sources. As far as Polish historiography is concerned, a pioneering role was played by the research carried out by Jan Tomasz Gross, the author of the first scholarly accounts of the Soviet occupation of the period in question. Among his most important publications is the monograph *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 1988), in which – through an analysis of the political and social changes set in motion by the Soviet conquest of the territory of the Polish state – he also presented the evolution of Polish-Jewish relations in the Soviet

occupation zone. The same author prepared a collection of Polish testimonies of repressions – in this case, of deportations deep into the USSR – against Polish citizens, and in the introduction to this collection, he pointed out the participation of some Borderland Jews in the implementation of the Soviet repressive policy in the occupied territories in 1939–1941. He also published two essays on the elections to the People's Assemblies of the so-called Western Belarus and Western Ukraine, organised by the Soviet occupation authorities on 22 October 1939, and on the deportations of 1940–1941 ("Wybory 22X 1939" [Elections of 22 October 1939] and "Wywózki do Rosji" [Deportations to Russia]), published in the 1980s in the émigré magazine *Aneks* (45 and 46–47 [1987] and 51–52 [1988]).[1]

In 1986, the same periodical (issues 41–42) published an essay by Aleksander Smolar, an opposition activist, political émigré and political scientist, entitled "Tabu i niewinność" (Taboo and Innocence), in which the author addressed the issue of the attitude of Jews (Polish citizens) towards the Polish state in the eastern territories of the Second Republic in September 1939. In doing so, he cited the various reasons why a significant, or, at any rate, well-visible section of the Jewish community supported the policy of the Soviets, at least at the beginning of their rule in the occupied territories. He also described the sense of injustice with which the Poles reacted, hugely surprised by this disloyalty. But at the same time, they were unwilling to acknowledge their pre-war Polish guilt towards their Jewish fellow citizens.

The research on Polish-Jewish issues, also devoted to Polish-Jewish relations in the Soviet occupation zone, could develop thanks to the activities of the academic journal *Polin*, published by the Centre for Judaic Studies at the University of Oxford. Publications on this topic also appeared in other academic journals.[2]

The first of the works devoted to Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation and written in Poland (after the fall of the communist regime in 1989)

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[1] See J.T. Gross, "Wstęp," in *"W czterdziestym nas, Matko, na Sibir zesłali." Rosja a Polska 1939–1942*, comp. and ed. by I. Grudzińska-Gross and J.T. Gross (Warszawa, 1989), pp. 28–29.

[2] See i.a. A. Żbikowski, "Jewish reactions to the Soviet arrival in the Kresy in September 1939," *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 13 (2000), pp. 66–68; M. Wierzbicki, "Polish-Jewish relations in Vilna and the Region of Western Vilna under Soviet occupation, 1939–1941," *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 19 (2006), pp. 487–516; A. Żbikowski, "Poles and Jews in the Vilnius Region in 1939–1941," *Darbai ir dienos* 67 (2017), pp. 151–161 (DOI:10.7220/2335-8769.67.6).

was Jerzy Robert Nowak's *Przemilczane zbrodnie* (Silenced Crimes) (Warsaw, 2017), which deals with the attacking, murdering and repressing of Polish citizens by the Soviet authorities and their supporters. The author focused on the fate of the victims, emphasising that they were mainly ethnic Poles because the Polish population had been the mainstay of the Polish rule in the eastern lands of the Second Polish Republic before the outbreak of the Second World War. Among the perpetrators, he named Soviet soldiers and officials but also emphasised the infamous role of some sympathisers of the Soviet power, drawn from the local Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Jewish populations. He described at length the involvement of pro-Soviet Jews in exterminating the Polish political and social elite, represented primarily by the intelligentsia, specifically landowners, teachers, Catholic clergy, policemen, Polish Army officers, military settlers and civil servants. In particular, he portrayed the Jewish population in the context of their mass support for the Soviet occupation authorities and their hostile or indifferent attitude towards the Polish state and its leadership strata. This, in turn, was to lead, the author writes, to increased antagonism between Poles and Jews and, above all, to the hostility of the Polish population towards the Jewish community of the Borderlands. The study lacked a critical reflection on the reasons for the hostile or indifferent attitudes of Polish Jewish citizens towards Poles and Poland and a critique of the sources on which the claims about the anti-Polish attitude of representatives of the Jewish community were based, according to the author. Indeed, the accounts, memoirs and documents generated by the Polish side were accepted *en bloc* as credible. At the same time, the vision of Polish-Jewish relations proposed in this monograph was presented from the point of view of the Polish victims of repression and murder.

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz presented a similar picture of Polish-Jewish relations in his monograph *Polacy i Żydzi. Współistnienie – Zagłada – komunizm 1918–1955* (Poles and Jews. Coexistence – Holocaust – Communism 1918–1955) (Warsaw, 2001). Writing extensively on Polish-Jewish relations before and during the outbreak of the Second World War, he focused primarily on the characteristics of the situation of the Jewish population in the Second Republic and its attitude towards the Polish state and Poles. Moreover, he analysed the perception of Jews by the prewar Polish authorities and Poland's neighbours, clearly separating the political and social relations between the elites of both nations from Polish-Jewish relations in

everyday life, which were often imbued with a greater pragmatism leading to consensual coexistence than would appear from a political or ideological perspective. He did not mention the rise of anti-Semitism during the great economic crisis of the early 1930s, when Polish and Jewish communities had to find ways to mitigate the adverse effects of the economic downturn. Jews, especially young Jews, sought rescue mainly in emigration to Palestine or in radical political activity, including in the ranks of communist organisations. Poles, on the other hand – deprived of the possibility to emigrate to the West – tried to broaden the scope of their economic activities, entering areas hitherto reserved for Jews, such as trade, services and the liberal professions. This led to quarrels and conflicts in which Poles, determined to get rid of the Jewish competition or convinced of the rightness of the ideology of nationalism, which made them put the interests of the Polish nation before the interests of the national minorities of the Second Republic, were the attacking and more numerous party.

While describing Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation, Chodakiewicz tried to avoid generalising about the attitudes of the Jewish population. Still, he argued that Jews in the Soviet occupation zone had considerable pro-Soviet sympathies. He portrayed the dramatic fate of Jewish refugees from the German occupation zone, the so-called *byezhency* (refugees in Russia during the First World War), and also showed the activities of Jewish supporters of communism, particularly officials of the Soviet occupation apparatus, which were harmful to Poland and Poles. Consequently, according to Chodakiewicz, anti-Semitic sentiments grew among Poles, eventually culminating in acts of aggression against Jews after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war on 22 June 1941.

Foreign Historiography

From the end of the Second World War until the end of the twentieth century, Polish-Jewish relations were not central to historians' interest outside Poland. The topic was mainly raised on the margins of scholarly works concerning the situation of the Jewish population during the Soviet occupation or the fate of Jews during the Holocaust. Examples include works by Israeli historians, such as Ben Cion Pinchuk's *Shtetl Jews under Soviet Rule*, Cambridge (Massachusetts, 1990), and Dov Levin's *The Lesser of Two Evils. East European Jewry under Soviet Rule*

(Philadelphia–Jerusalem, 1995), *Baltic Jews under the Soviets 1940–1946* (Jerusalem, 1994) and *Żydzi wschodnioeuropejscy podczas II wojny światowej* (East European Jews during the Second World War) (Warsaw, 2005) by the same author. These historians, while focusing on the fate of the Jewish population in the areas of the Second Polish Republic occupied by the USSR, presented the Soviet policy in these areas, the different attitudes of Jews (Polish citizens) towards the Soviets, including the social advancement of some of the Jewish population in the Soviet reality along with the degradation of members of the wealthier strata. Against this background, they provided examples confirming the thesis of deteriorating Polish-Jewish relations in the period and territory in question. They concluded, however, that the leading cause of this phenomenon was not the collaboration of a part of the Jewish population with the Soviets or their pro-Soviet attitude but rather the reluctance of the non-Jewish inhabitants of the occupied territories towards the process of Jewish emancipation under Soviet rule. The monographs discussed here provide an insight into the point of view of the Jewish population of the Eastern Borderlands. They show a picture of the questions of interest presented in Israeli historiography, which will be outlined later in this article.

Another publication presenting the attitude of non-Polish historians to Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation in 1939–1941 is the collective work *Shared History – Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet Occupied Poland* (ed. by Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, and Kai Struve, Leipzig, 2007). These are the proceedings of an international academic conference held in Leipzig in January 2005, which brought together a large group of historians researching the history of the Second World War in Central and Eastern Europe, the Third German Reich and the Holocaust. Among them were Omer Bartov, Amir Winer, Timothy Snyder, Anthony Polonsky, Norman Naimark, Yevgeny Rosenblat, Andrzej Żbikowski, Anna Bikont, Martyna Grądzka, Grzegorz Hryciuk, Rafał Wnuk, and Marek Wierzbicki. The papers presented diverse views on the issue of nationality relations under Soviet rule, and the discussion focused mainly on the situation of Jews and the attitude of other nations to their role under Soviet occupation and the frequent acts of anti-Jewish violence, often carried out on a mass scale. The subject of the exchange of views became mainly the cause of the wave of assaults, self-judgements, pogroms and mass murders that rolled across the Soviet-occupied

territories shortly after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war (22 June 1941), and to which other local Jews, in addition to collaborators of the Soviet authorities, fell victim. The conference debate revealed the diversity of historians' opinions on ethnic and social relations in the Polish lands occupied by the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, often formed by differences in national cultures, the collective memory of individual nations and preferred interpretations of disputed events.

Two Viewpoints on Polish-Jewish Relations During the Soviet Occupation of Poland from 1939 to 1941

The publication *Shared History – Divided Memory…* brings to light the fact that after 1989, significant discrepancies emerged among historians, including Polish historians, regarding the assessment of Polish-Jewish relations under Soviet occupation. Over time, two different viewpoints on this issue took root and have competed for the "rule of souls" of readers from Poland and other countries for the last twenty years or so. The first can be described as a traditional Polish historiographical approach, and the second as a revisionist approach. The conventional approach emphasises the impact of the events of the Soviet occupation on the deterioration of national relations in the former Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, including relations between Poles and Jews. It was due to the collaboration of a large part of this national minority with the occupying authorities, which hit the interests of the Polish population. The collaboration, for example, involved backing the Soviet anti-Polish policies, which included the repression or even eradication of Polish political and social elites (such as landed gentry, Polish Army officers, administrative personnel, educators, clergy, and social and political activists), and the dismantling of Polish state institutions in the occupied territories.

Within this trend, a more radical version can be distinguished, whose representatives (for example Jerzy Robert Nowak, Bogdan Musiał[3]) place emphasis mainly on the above aspect of the history of Jews and Polish-Jewish relations, and a moderate one, whose proponents (for example Tomasz Strzembosz, Tomasz Szarota, Marek

[3] See B. Musiał, *"Elementy kontrrewolucyjne rozstrzelać". Brutalizacja wojny niemiecko-sowieckiej latem 1941 roku* (Warsaw, 2001).

Wierzbicki[4]) point out many other factors determining the attitudes of Jews towards the Soviet authorities and the Polish population, for example their discrimination in the interwar period, their fear of the arrival of the Germans, as well as the diversity of these attitudes. The aforementioned historian's work seeks to elucidate the rise in anti-Semitic feelings among the Polish population. The historian posits that this surge was due to the common social tendency to blame an entire national, cultural, or ethnic group for the misdeeds committed by a few members. Its validity is confirmed by contemporary social behaviour towards, for example, Muslims or Arabs in the wake of the terrorist attacks carried out by relatively few extreme Islamist groups.

Wierzbicki underlines that the emergence of pro-Soviet attitudes among some Jews was rooted in a combination of factors. The first was the unfavourable experience of the Jewish population in pre-war Poland, in which various spheres of public life were characterised by anti-Semitic prejudice. The acute economic crisis of 1929–1933 in agriculture, lasting until 1936, intensified the economic rivalry between Poles and Jews. Its consequence was a growing conviction in many Polish circles that the Jewish population was unnecessary and should be removed from Poland by more or less forced emigration. This rhetoric was adopted after the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski in 1935 by the *Sanacja* authorities competing with the national movement (National Democracy). Therefore, Soviet rule, offering the possibility of social advancement irrespective of race and nationality (at least in the first months of the occupation), encountered favourable reactions from the Jewish population. Another determinant of Polish-Jewish relations was the fear of the arrival of German troops or the fact that many Jews were terrified by the policy of the German occupying authorities in central and western Poland. It should be stressed that the attitudes of Jews towards the Soviets, Poles and the Polish state varied and evolved between 1939 and 1941 – from relatively broad support for the occupying authorities (in the autumn of 1939) to increasingly numerous expressions of dissatisfaction. As Jewish refugees, known as *byezhency*, from the German-occupied

[4] M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim. Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II RP pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941* (Warsaw, 2007); T. Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita Podziemna. Społeczeństwo polskie a państwo podziemn*e (Warsaw, 2000); T. Szarota, *U progu Zagłady. Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie. Warszawa, Paryż, Amsterdam, Antwerpia, Kowno* (Warsaw, 2000).

zone struggled to adapt to their new circumstances (most of whom were eventually deported deep into the USSR), Jews began to distance themselves from the policies of the Soviet occupying authorities. This new reality, which included the nationalisation of industry, crafts, and trade and repressive policies such as those against black market activity, further exacerbated their challenges.

The supporters of the revisionist position emphasise, however, that at the source of accusations against Jews for their participation in the anti-Polish policy of the Soviet occupiers lies Polish anti-Semitism, that is the conviction, stemming from racial prejudice, that Jews were enchanted with communism and therefore betrayed Poland – consequently, they deserved to face consequences from the local population (Belarusians, Lithuanians, Poles and Ukrainians). Concurrently, Jewish perspectives on the realities of the occupation, including their views on Poles, were diverse and evolved based on the changing circumstances of the Jewish community under Soviet rule. This necessitated selecting an effective adaptation strategy to their new living conditions. Consequently, the Jews adopted various adaptation strategies, taking advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the Soviet power. On the other hand, Poles could not see the motivation behind the Jewish population's behaviour because of their anti-Semitism, seeing in it mainly an anti-Polish bias. For example, supporters of the revisionist position present Polish accusations of enthusiastic and mass welcoming of the Red Army by Jews as an illusion that could only have arisen from dislike or even hostility towards the Jews. They react similarly to the ascription to the Jewish community of widespread collaboration with the Soviets or other expressions of pro-Soviet sentiment. This could be seen, for instance, in the enthusiastic participation of Jewish youth representatives in the communist youth organisation, the Komsomol.

The leading representatives of this historiographical trend include Jan Tomasz Gross, Andrzej Żbikowski, Krzysztof Jasiewicz and Witold Mędykowski. The first of these scholars can even be regarded as the founder of this current – for in the 1990s, he changed his views and departed from the interpretative patterns preferred in traditional Polish historiography. In his book *Upiorna dekada. Trzy eseje na temat stereotypów wobec Polaków, Żydów, Niemców i komunistów* (The Ghastly Decade. Three Essays on Stereotypes about Poles, Jews, Germans and Communists) (Warsaw, 1999), the author posits that the allegations of Jewish collaboration with

the Soviets against Poles stemmed from the Polish population's perpetuation of the "Jewish communist" stereotype, also known as the "Judeo-commie conspiracy" (Żydokomuna). These accusations, he argues, did not mirror the actual state of affairs. He repeated a similar opinion in his most famous publication, *Sąsiedzi. Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka* (Neighbours. The History of Destruction of a Jewish Town), which – although it discusses the crime against the Jews of Jedwabne after the end of the Soviet occupation – contains a chapter interpreting the events of 1939–1941 as a confirmation of the anti-Semitic stereotype functioning in Polish mentality. His later monograph, *Opowieści kresowe 1939–1941. Żydzi i Sowieci* (Tales from the Borderlands 1939–1941: Jews and Soviets) (Cracow–Budapest–Syracuse, 2019) already contains a more balanced assessment of the phenomenon of Jewish collaboration with the Soviet occupation authorities, combined with the correct observation that, although it undoubtedly occurred, it nevertheless involved a relatively small part of the Borderland Jewish community.

This trend was referred to for some time by Krzysztof Jasiewicz, who in his monograph *Pierwsi po diable. Elity sowieckie w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1941* (The First after the Devil. Soviet Elites in Occupied Poland 1939–1941) (Warsaw, 2001) formulated far-reaching theses on Polish anti-Semitism, which was to deform the image of Soviet reality in the eyes of Poles, deeply (and, according to Jasiewicz, wrongly) convinced of the Jewish population's collaboration with the Soviets to the detriment of the Second Republic and its citizens. His views on the subject evolved, however, and in subsequent monographic studies, took on a form that was strongly critical of the attitudes of the Jewish population towards Poland and the Poles. For example, in his work *Rzeczywistość sowiecka w świadectwach polskich Żydów* (Soviet Reality in the Testimonies of Polish Jews) (Warsaw, 2009), he no longer downplayed the phenomenon of Jewish collaboration with the Soviet occupation authorities, but, in an unequivocal and sometimes even categorical manner, he considered it to be a commonplace phenomenon, arousing justified anger of the Polish population, and crucial for shaping the attitudes of Poles towards Jews during the Holocaust (between 1941 and 1945). According to Jasiewicz, the memory of Jewish ingratitude towards Poland "during the time of the first Soviet" (as the period of the Soviet occupation was commonly referred to) played a vital role in the decision of many Poles to refuse to help the persecuted Jews. However,

the author did not present convincing evidence to support his thesis (although he meticulously documented the phenomenon of collaboration of some Jews with the Soviet authorities in 1939–1941, using Polish sources for this purpose). Furthermore, in his analysis of the accounts of Polish Jews from this period, he referred only to the testimonies given by them to the Polish Army in the USSR in 1941–1942, while he omitted the equally important collection of testimonies of Jewish refugees from central Poland, deposited in the collections of the so-called (Emanuel) Ringelblum Archive (Oneg Shabbat).[5]

The most prominent publication of this historiographical trend concerning Polish-Jewish relations is Andrzej Żbikowski's monograph *U genezy Jedwabnego. Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej. Wrzesień 1939 – lipiec 1941* (Concerning the Genesis of Jedwabne. Jews in the North-Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic. September 1939 – July 1941) (Warsaw, 2006). The book aims to present the fate of the Jewish community in the north-eastern territories of the Second Polish Republic and in the Białystok and Łomża regions during the Soviet occupation of the Polish territories in 1939–1941 and in the first months of the German occupation of this area, that is in the summer of 1941. The author assumed that the chapters dealing with this period would separately present the Polish, Jewish and Soviet discourses on the situation of Jews and the relations between them and the Poles. In doing so, he did not attempt to construct a comprehensive, coherent picture of the history of this occupation. He believed that the memories of these nations were so different that a historian could not find points of contact within them. Consequently, each of the above chapters contains an overview of the sources produced within a nationality group or the Soviet occupation apparatus along with a description of the version presented by each group (Poles, Jews and Soviet officials). Thus, this part of the monograph is more like a material-based paper on the content of individual historical sources. Conversely, the depiction of "various truths about the Soviet occupation, derived from diverse sources" in a manner diverging from the conventional narrative structure used in this book resulted in noticeable disarray and inconsistencies.

[5] See *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 3: *Relacje z Kresów*, ed. by A. Żbikowski (Warsaw, 2000).

Concerning the first months of the German occupation of the Łomża region and the Białystok area, Żbikowski applied the classical, traditional method of building a historical narrative using Polish, Jewish and German sources. In this way, the description of the events of this period, especially the murders and pogroms committed against the Jewish population, takes the form of a logically connected sequence of events according to a cause-and-effect pattern. The author argues it was not the pro-Soviet attitude of a part of the Jewish population that caused the rise of anti-Semitism on the Polish side but the anti-Semitism deeply rooted in Polish culture, which, given favourable conditions, led to the outbreak of hatred and violence against Jews. Żbikowski, however, did not explain why the Polish population, barring the criminals who targeted both Jews and Poles for robbery, refrained from committing widespread atrocities against Jews in September 1939 when the Germans had temporary control over the region. Furthermore, it remains unclear why, following the commencement of the German-Soviet war in June 1941, there was a marked increase in hostility towards Jews, often manifesting in brutal acts of violence. He blamed Poles for the murders and pogroms against the Jewish population, attributing to Germans only the role of the catalyst for these events.

So where does the truth lie, and who is right in this dispute? It is not easy to resolve this controversy, but it can be potentially clarified by consulting sources and scholarly works that originate outside of Polish historiography. Such an approach makes it possible to verify the views of Polish historians and to check whether the historiographic output of other nations or milieus contains elements identical to the Polish discourse on the Soviet occupation of the lands of the Second Polish Republic in 1939–1941. The content we are looking for can be found, for example, in the monographs mentioned above and scholarly articles written in the circle of Israeli historiography, especially the works of Pinchuk and Levin. Both authors have shown that the Jewish community of the occupied territories had to adapt to the changes under Soviet rule to ensure optimal living conditions. At the same time, it took advantage of the opportunities for social advancement created by the Soviet reality, which eliminated (and often exterminated) the previous, mainly Polish political and social elites. Upon entering the structures of the occupying power, representatives of the Jewish community (as well as Belarusian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Polish) replaced Polish officials, teachers, police officers and local government

activists while implementing the policy imposed by the Soviet authorities. This policy, in turn, was anti-Polish for a significant part of the period in question and aimed to remove all traces of Polish statehood, including its structures, institutions, regulations and elites. This caused dissatisfaction among Poles, which often deepened their reluctance and sometimes even hostility towards the Jewish population.

Among the publications containing an analysis of the attitudes of Polish Jews under Soviet occupation, Dov Levin's work is noteworthy, especially his article on the situation of the Jews of Wilno during the Soviet occupation of Wilno between 19 September and 28 October 1939. It is clear from the study that in the political and military situation of the time, partly due to a sense of threat of anarchy and the prospect of German occupation, the Jewish community of the city on the banks of the Vilnia River was mostly sympathetic to the new authorities. Pro-Soviet sentiments were widespread among supporters of the social left and the local proletariat, petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. It was hoped that equality in political and social relations would be introduced for all national and social groups, including the Jews. Such expectations led to the mass participation of Jews in the enthusiastic welcoming of the Red Army units and the favourable treatment of the policy of the Soviet authorities in the city and region.

The relatively widespread involvement of Jews in organisations and institutions set up by the occupation authorities was intended to safeguard the interests of the Jewish community in uncertain times of war. For example, according to Dr. Shlomo Katz, deputy commander of the Wilno Workers' Guard (a police-like formation used to combat political opponents of the new authorities), representatives of the Jewish population made up about 90% of its membership. Such data may explain the reasons for Polish resentment against the city's Jewish inhabitants – as the units of the Workers' Guard were responsible for numerous arrests of the Wilno-based Polish, Belarusian and Jewish social and political elite. This, in turn, deepened the fear of the Wilno-based Jews and made them even more dependent on the Soviet occupying authorities.[6]

Another publication that touches on the issue of Jewish attitudes towards the Soviet authorities is an article by the American historian Anthony Polonsky,

[6] D. Levin, "Wileńscy Żydzi w dobie władzy radzieckiej, 19 IX – 28 X 1939 r.," in *id.*, *Żydzi wschodnioeuropejscy podczas II wojny światowej* (Warsaw, 2005), pp. 11–53.

a renowned scholar of the history of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe in the twentieth century and the author, among other works, of the multi-volume monographic series *Jews in Poland and Russia*. In it, he described the attitude of the Jewish population to the Soviet reality after the October Revolution in the context of the Jews's situation in the Russian Empire before 1914, during the First World War and the Russian Civil War. He showed that many representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia, especially of the younger generation, willingly participated in the construction of a new order which, by removing previous administrative and cultural barriers (for example anti-Semitic prejudices and restrictions), allowed them to participate fully in socio-political life, to receive education and to realise their aspirations. By aligning themselves with the Soviet system, the Jewish intelligentsia secured a prominent role in cultural, administrative, and artistic domains. This, in turn, often provoked hostile reactions from representatives of the other peoples of Russia, especially the Russians, who were accustomed to their dominant position under the Tsar and the permanent marginalisation of the Jews.

A similar mechanism, according to Polonsky, appeared in the Polish lands after the end of the Second World War, which to some extent confirms the statements of Polish historians about the involvement of some Jews (Polish citizens) in the political goals of the Soviet state, which contradicted the Polish raison d'état. These Jews accepted the new socio-political landscape in Russia and Poland as a natural process of changes in the world order. However, their active endorsement of or empathy towards the communist regime was perceived as an act of betrayal against the previously dominant nation by many representatives of Central and Eastern European countries, particularly in regions where the Soviet dictatorship had been installed. This leads to the conclusion that the divergence of interests between Poles and Jews, combined with a different assessment of the situation, choice of survival strategies and racial prejudice, led to mutual hostility and hatred. Although Polonsky's article does not refer to the period of the Soviet occupation of Polish lands in 1939–1941, it can be assumed that the same mechanisms that shaped Polish-Jewish relations were at work there during that period.[7]

[7] A. Polonsky, "Jews and Communism in the Soviet Union and Poland," in *Jews and Leftist Politics: Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism, and Gender*, ed. by J. Jacobs (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 147–168.

Another publication representing non-Polish historiography and analysing the attitudes of the Jewish population of the Eastern Borderlands towards the Soviet occupation authorities and the Poles in 1939–1941 is an article by Yevgeny Rozenblat (a Jewish historian from Brest-on-the-Bug, in the Republic of Belarus) entitled "Yevrei v sisteme myezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenyi v zapadnykh oblastyakh Belarusi. 1939–1941 g.," published in *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne* (13 [2000]). The author describes the attitude of some of the Jewish population towards the Soviet authorities in the occupied territories as follows:

> The prevailing internationalism [under Soviet rule], the equality of nations and nationalities, forever removed all restrictions and prohibitions, made the Jews equal in rights to the native population of the republic [of the Belarusian SSR]. For that reason, the Jewish masses enthusiastically participated in the reconstruction of the political life in the incorporated territories, expressing their pro-Soviet sentiments. It was mainly left-wing elements [former members of the CPSU, the Polish Communist Party (KPP) and others] who collaborated with the authorities at this stage [in the autumn of 1939]. However, traditional Jewish authorities often supported them, especially in towns.

The instances mentioned are not meant to measure the breadth and depth of the intricate occurrence of a segment of the Jewish population collaborating with the Soviets and their stance towards the Soviet leadership during the time in question. This is particularly significant as this occurrence transformed in tandem with the evolution of Polish anti-Semitism towards Polish Jews in territories under Soviet control. They only indicate the presence of collaboration between representatives of Jewish circles and the Soviet occupation apparatus and the negative judgment of such an attitude by many local Poles. Similar processes could be observed, for example, among the Belarusian, Lithuanian, or Ukrainian communities in the territories of the Second Polish Republic annexed by the USSR, which also led to increased tension and hostility between Poles and Belarusians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians. However, contemporary Belarusian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian historiography does not deny these facts, seeing that they have found confirmation in numerous primary sources (Polish, Soviet, Jewish, Belarusian, Lithuanian and

Ukrainian). Polish historiography treats these facts similarly when speaking of collaborators of the Soviet authorities of Polish nationality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that research on Polish-Jewish relations has developed considerably over the last 30 years. This was brought about by the fall of communism in 1989 and the lifting of political restrictions which, after the end of the Second World War, obstructed and, in practice, effectively prevented the development of academic research on issues such as the Soviet occupation of the Polish lands and relations between Poles and Jews under Soviet rule. Thanks to these changes, the first works on these issues began to appear as early as the 1990s, and with them, the first differences of opinion arose. The breakthrough came with the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross's book *Sąsiedzi* (Neighbours) in 2000, which triggered a nationwide debate in Poland about the Jedwabne crime and the collective memory of Poles, in which Polish-Jewish relations played an important role. During this discussion, the thread on the Soviet occupation and its impact on the mutual relations between Poles and Jews, as well as the dispute over the effects of the events of 1939–1941 on the history of the murders of Jews in the Soviet-occupied territories after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, came up frequently.

By their very nature, the attitudes of Poles and Jews under the Soviet occupation took on a particular significance. For some, they justified or at least explained the hostility towards the Jewish population after 22 June 1941, while for others, they provided evidence of the racial prejudices of Poles that would predetermine their participation in the Holocaust. The debate stemming from this matter has shaped the progression of academic research by introducing novel resources and discoveries into scholarly discourse. As a result, our knowledge of Polish-Jewish relations during the Soviet occupation is much better today than it was thirty years ago. The scholarly monographs by Marek Wierzbicki and Andrzej Żbikowski have played a vital role in this, providing a structured, comprehensive and exhaustive account of the most critical aspects of this issue, including its genesis, course and consequences. Moreover – and this is extremely valuable from a scientific point of view – they have proposed different interpretations of the same facts, using different methodological approaches and, as a result, widely different conclusions.

The divergent perspectives on Polish-Jewish relations presented in these monographs indicate the existence of two distinct historiographical schools. Each proposes its own comprehensive interpretation of the interactions between Poles and Jews in the territories of the Second Republic, which were under Soviet occupation during the initial phase of the Second World War. One of them, based on traditional interpretations of the issue, proposes to recognise a causal link between the collaboration of a relatively small proportion of Jews with the Soviets, to the detriment of Poland and the Poles, and the noticeable rise of anti-Semitism among Poles. The second school of thought, referred to as the revisionist school, posits that inherent anti-Semitism, firmly embedded in Polish mentality and culture, led to the collective accusation of Borderland Jews that they betrayed Poland. These allegations served as a justification to strip the Jewish community of their rightful privileges and to inflict physical, moral, or symbolic harm upon its members, even to the extent of taking their lives. Therefore, any attempt to attribute a pro-Soviet attitude to the Jewish population and their acts to the detriment of the Polish population is supposedly only an expression of anti-Jewish prejudice and stems from the Poles' sense of guilt for their complicity in the Holocaust.

This raises the question of whether it is possible to reconcile such divergent positions and thus create a coherent vision of Polish-Jewish relations and what else should be investigated to enrich our knowledge of the subject. Our present knowledge of this part of the Polish-Jewish affairs should be treated as a working hypothesis to be verified during new scholarly research. The research itself should begin by abandoning event-based political history in favour of social history, understood as the study of the history of the society of the Second Republic of Poland under the Soviet occupation, through an analysis of the development or disappearance of social structures, economic factors, the "long duration" of private, state and local government institutions, collective and individual social practices, survival strategies, and anthropological factors, such as mentality, customs and the organisation of collective and personal existence. The perspective of everyday life, showing the real problems and choices of all social and ethnic groups in the occupied territories, and the mechanism of bottom-up formation of political attitudes (according to the bottom-up method popular in Anglo-Saxon historiography) should play a unique role in such research. It would then be pos-

sible to use the achievements of the social sciences (sociology, psychology, cultural anthropology or political science) in historical research, thus enriching its narrative and interpretive possibilities. Interdisciplinarity has long been an essential requirement in Holocaust research, so it seems natural that it could also broaden the scholarly workshop of historians dealing with Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation.

Such bottom-up research should be complemented by micro-historical analyses, which aim to trace broad historical processes at the micro level, that is at the lowest levels of social life, such as the village, the municipality, the parish, the local association, or the agricultural or consumer cooperative. In recent decades, several new historiographical trends have emerged that challenge the status of traditional research methods. Nevertheless, the application of micro-historical research to questions of nationality relations seems most appropriate. At the micro level, it is easiest to answer how things really were, which is at the heart of the study of ethnic relations. This is because it raises questions about who was to blame, who were the perpetrators and who were the victims, and why there were acts of violence, cooperation or indifference to the suffering of members of another nationality group. Micro-historical research would help to verify the current view of Polish-Jewish relations, provided that the principle of honesty in research is respected, which consists in recognising the meaning of the facts from the sources analysed and not bending them to fit preconceived theses.

Another proposition involves the advancement of comparative research that would enable an objective examination of the attitudes of Jews and Poles. It should take various directions, for example, comparing Polish-Jewish relations with the relations of the Jewish population with other nations of Central and Eastern Europe occupied by the Soviets, specifically Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Romanians. Research by historians such as Ben Cion Pinchuk, Dov Levin, Yevgeny Rozenblat, Marek Wierzbicki or Witold Mędykowski could be helpful in this regard. Comparisons could also include different periods, for example September 1939 and June–July 1941, or the attitudes of Poles and Jews towards different experiences and events of the Soviet occupation, such as repression (for example deportation deep into the USSR), legal, cultural and social life, participation in economic life, as well as the perception of Soviet reality.

In my opinion, the study of Polish-Jewish relations should also be extended to an analysis of the relations of the Polish population with other nations of the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic to be able to observe their dynamics, specificity and the determinants of their development during the period in question. Marek Wierzbicki initiated this research, the results of which were published in a monograph on Polish-Belarusian relations in the north-eastern territories of the pre-war Polish state between 1939 and 1941.[8]

One of the results of this research is the observation of two critical trends. The first turned out to be the cooperation of some of the Belarusian population with the Soviet occupation authorities in various fields, including the establishment of structures of the new government or the extermination of the Polish Borderland elites. The second tendency resulted from the impact of this process (combined with the increased role of Belarusians in the political and social life of the occupied territories) on the deterioration of relations between Poles and Belarusians. The study also uncovered a notable decline in relations between Poles and Lithuanians and between Poles and Ukrainians. These findings suggest a similar mechanism of rapid and significant deterioration of nationality relations in the Soviet-occupied territories. This universal mechanism affected all national and ethnic groups, including Poles and Jews. Its understanding helps to develop a broader and more distanced view of Polish-Jewish relations, in which the same mechanisms of conflict of interests were at work as in the case of all the Borderland nations of the Second Polish Republic. Such an apparent change for the worse in nationality relations meant the failure of the nationality policy of pre-war Poland. This issue requires continued research.

Another example of comparative research that can shed more light on the fate of Jews in the territories occupied by the USSR in 1939–1941 is Levin's article on the situation of the Jewish population in Latvia under Soviet rule in 1940–1941. According to the author, the satisfaction of many Jews with communist, leftist or politically non-aligned convictions connected with the invasion of the Red Army units in June 1940, which was expressed in the enthusiastic reception of Soviet

[8] See for example M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini w zaborze sowieckim. Stosunki polsko-białoruskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką w latach 1939–1941* (Warsaw, 2007).

troops and, in some cases, in their active support against Latvian army units, was one of the reasons for the growing hostility towards Jews in wide circles of the Latvian population. There were numerous attacks on Jews and other acts of violence that created a pogrom atmosphere in Latvian cities. On the one hand, the Soviet occupation authorities dissolved traditional Jewish organisations. On the other hand, many Jews, especially young ones, tried to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new socio-political system. They joined the universities, the Communist Party and the Komsomol, and the aforementioned Workers' Guard in large numbers. This kind of involvement further deepened the hostility of the Latvian population towards the Jews. It led to the consolidation of the belief among most Latvians that the Jewish population were directly backing Communist power.

No account was taken of the fact that a significant proportion of Jews regarded the new authorities with distaste and were merely trying to adapt to the new reality. Anti-Semitic feelings were reinforced by the participation of Soviet officers of Jewish nationality in mass repressions, such as the arrests and deportations of June 1941. The deportation of thousands of Jews, considered by the Soviet authorities to be a hostile or unsafe element, did not change this attitude. Thus, at the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, Latvian Jews were subjected to violence first by the Latvians and only later by the German occupying authorities. The mechanism of deterioration of the Lithuanian-Jewish relations in the Soviet-occupied Lithuania and the incorporated Wilno region, which was part of the Polish state before the Second World War, was similar.[9]

The approach to historical sources in this context also seems essential. The revisionist school proposes to treat the testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors "with confidence", that is without the criticism traditionally postulated in the methodology of historical research, which seems risky because it questions the sense of science as a critical reflection on the world and the existing body of knowledge. Much more intellectually fruitful, and therefore more helpful from a scientific point of view, is,

[9] D. Levin, "Żydzi w okresie władzy sowieckiej na Łotwie, 1940–1941," in *id.*, *Żydzi wschodnioeuropejscy*, pp. 55–82; V. Sirutavicius, "'A close, but very suspicious and dangerous neighbour': Outbreaks of antisemitism in inter-war Lithuania," *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 25 (2013), pp. 245–262; A. Edintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius, 2003), pp. 82–88; D. Levin, "The Jews of Vilna under Soviet Rule, 19 September – 28 October 1939," *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 9 (1996), pp. 107–137; Wierzbicki, "Polish-Jewish Relations," pp. 487–516.

in my opinion, the postulate of criticism towards all sources, which by their very nature are subjective and, as such, require careful verification. This scenario would involve the mutual comparative analysis of historical sources generated within distinct national groups, such as Polish, Jewish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Latvian, or Estonian. While these sources mirror the subjective historical recollections of each national community, they not only construct individual subjective historical narratives but also contribute to the objectification of varying interpretations of the past. The deliberate abandonment of this approach deprives us of the possibility of getting closer to the truth on issues that are still hotly disputed.

Therefore, researchers must try to reduce the "ethnic" viewpoint of the past, in other words researchers must develop a distance towards historical narratives produced on the basis of the memory of ethnic and national groups. Instead, it is a matter of using the sources and perceptions created within individual national and ethnic communities to reduce subjectivity as much as possible, specifcially to develop as objective a view as possible of the history of Polish-Jewish relations and, more broadly, of nationality relations in the eastern lands of the Second Polish Republic. This should mainly concern such a complex and controversial subject as the history of the Soviet occupation of Polish lands in 1939–1941.

The first attempts in this field show that, for example, the stereotypically denigrated Polish testimonies produced by Poles oppressed by the Soviet occupation authorities are more objective than was previously thought. As Krzysztof Jasiewicz and Marek Wierzbicki found in their work, Poles who gave an account of the course of Soviet repression did not focus exclusively on the involvement of the Jewish population but also saw perpetrators from other national and ethnic communities of the Eastern Borderlands, not excluding representatives of the Polish population. Jewish sources likely have considerable potential for objectivity. Still, they should nevertheless undergo the same verification and objectivisation as Polish sources to comply with the fundamental rule of critical analysis of historical documents on which any authentic scholarly study is based.

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SUMMARY

This article attempts to juxtapose, present and analyse the standpoints of Polish, Anglo-Saxon (Western) and Israeli historiography on the nature of Polish-Jewish relations in the territories of the Second Polish Republic during the Soviet occupation (1939–1941).

It outlines the state of scholarly (historical) research on Polish-Jewish relations since the 1980s. It discusses the main research trends, publications, and views on the most important and controversial events related to this topic. Among other things, it demonstrates the presence of two competing schools of historical thought in Polish historiography, which interpret and evaluate the most important issues of Polish-Jewish relations in that period differently. The article's conclusions contain research postulates that may further deepen the analysis and knowledge of the matter in question.

KEYWORDS

Poles • Jews • Soviet occupation • anti-Semitism • collaboration • historical research

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GERMAN PERSECUTION AND REPRESSION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE KREIS BUSKO DISTRICT BETWEEN 1939 AND 1942: SELECTED ISSUES

State of Research

German persecution and repression of the Jewish population in the Kreis Busko district[1] between 1939 and 1942 is an issue that has rarely been addressed in Polish historiography. There are no comprehensive publications dealing with this topic not only at the level of the *Kreis* but also at the level of the municipalities. As far as towns are concerned, researchers have paid the most attention to Chmielnik.[2] The number of studies presenting the history of the Jews during the German occupation of Busko-Zdrój is remarkably small. In the introduction to Matylda Engelman's book entitled *Podróż bez końca* (A Journey Without End), I briefly presented the various forms of German persecution and repression of the Jews of Busko-Zdrój between 1939 and

[1] The information presented in this article also concerns the pre-war county of Stopnica.

[2] S. Bender, *"Żydzi z Chmielnika w czasie okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1943)," Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2 (2007), p. 42–63; P. Krawczyk and M. Maciągowski, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika* (Kielce, 2006); M. Maciągowski, *Społeczność żydowska w Chmielniku w XIX–XX wieku* (Poznań, 2012).

1942.[3] The issue of forced labour has been addressed by Piotr Owsiński in his article entitled "Jüdische Bevölkerung von Busko-Zdrój während des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Lichte der ausgewählten örtlichen NS-Dokumente."[4] A book by Henryk Smarzyński can also hardly be considered a comprehensive study of the history of the Jews in Busko-Zdrój. The author selectively presents the repressions and persecutions in the Busko-Zdrój district before 1 September 1939 and during the German occupation between 1939 and 1945.[5] Moreover, the list of names of the inhabitants of the Busko district murdered between 1939 and 1945, which is included in this publication, does not include the Jewish population. Dariusz Kalina in his book *Busko-Zdrój. Dzieje miasta w XIX–XX wieku sytuacji Żydów w czasie II wojny światowej* (Busko-Zdrój. The History of the Town in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries) devotes only one sentence to the situation of the Jews during the Second World War.[6] The article by Stanisław Meducki, published in the post-conference publication *Tradycje walk o wyzwolenie narodowe i społeczne na ziemi buskiej. Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 11 IV 1987 r.* (Traditions of the Struggle for National and Social Liberation in the Land of Busko. Proceedings of the Popular Science Session of 11 April 1987) is glaringly general.[7] At the same time, it should be noted that thanks to the digital revolution, a great deal of information on the history of the Jews in Busko-Zdrój during the German occupation has been published on individual websites.[8]

Although the Jewish community made up more than 60% of the population of Nowy Korczyn in the pre-war period, regionalists have given a very brief account

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[3] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Wstęp," in M. Engelman, *Podróż bez końca* (Kazimierza Wielka, 2022), pp. 3–12.

[4] P. Owsiński, "Jüdische Bevölkerung von Busko-Zdrój während des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Lichte der ausgewählten örtlichen NS-Dokumente," *Studia Niemcoznawcze* 61 (2018), pp. 351–359.

[5] H. Smarzyński, *Powiat Busko-Zdrój przed 1 IX 1939 r. i w okresie okupacji niemieckiej w latach 1939–1945* (Cracow, 1960).

[6] D. Kalina, *Busko-Zdrój. Dzieje miasta w XIX–XX wieku* (Busko-Zdrój, 2017).

[7] S. Meducki, "Busko w latach wojny i okupacji (1939–1945)," in *Tradycje walk o wyzwolenie narodowe i społeczne na ziemi buskiej. Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 11 IV 1987 r.*, ed. by Z. Guldon (Kielce, 1988).

[8] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Getto w Busku-Zdroju (Kreishauptmannschaft Busko, dystrykt Radom)," https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/87746,Getto-w-Busku-Zdroju-Kreishauptmannschaft-Busko-dystrykt-Radom.html (accessed 10 November 2022); R. Szklany, "Powiat buski 1939–1945," https://www.powiatbuski1939-1945.pl/ (accessed 10 November 2022).

of the history of the local Jews during the war conflagration. Andrzej Bienias and Stanisław M. Przybyszewski devoted only three pages to the subject.[9] Teresa Ginalska in her study *Nowy Korczyn. Gmina u zbiegu Wisły i Nidy* (Nowy Korczyn. Gmina at the Confluence of the Vistula and Nida) laconically presented the forced labour and elimination of Jews from economic life, focusing mainly on the displacement action from the Nowy Korczyn ghetto carried out on 2 October 1942.[10] Andrzej Bienias and Stanisław M. Przybyszewski presented the same aspects of the terror in their next book, *Nowy Korczyn przez stulecia. Szkice z dziejów Nowego Korczyna i okolic* (Nowy Korczyn Through the Centuries. Sketches from the History of Nowy Korczyn and the Surrounding Area).[11]

The state of research into the history of the Jews in Stopnica during the Second World War is equally modest. Both Jarosław Tadeusz Leszczyński in his study *Stopnica. Szkic monograficzny* (Stopnica. A Monographic Sketch), Aleksandra Salomon in *Rys historyczny dziejów Stopnicy* (Historical Outline of the History of Stopnica) and Jarosław Banasik in *Królewska Stopnica wczoraj i dziś* (Stopnica Yesterday and Today) focus mainly on the discussion of the expulsion that took place in the Stopnica ghetto on 5 and 6 November 1942.[12]

The situation of Jews in Szydłów during the Second World War was also presented in a non-exhaustive way in the book entitled *Szydłów przez stulecia: monografia gminy Szydłów* (Szydłów Through the Centuries: a Monograph of the Municipality of Szydłów).[13] As in the case of Nowy Korczyn and Stopnica, the expulsion from Szydłów in October 1942 drew the most attention from regionalists.[14] It should be noted that there are virtually no publications on the Jews of Pacanów and Wiślica.

The state of research into the history of the Jews of Pińczów during the German occupation is as modest as that of Busko-Zdrój, Nowy Korczyn, Stopnica and Szydłów. Andrzej Dziubiński's article in *Pińczowskie Spotkania Historyczne* briefly

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[9] A. Bienias and S.M. Przybyszewski, *Nowy Korczyn* (Kazimierza Wielka, 2018).

[10] T. Ginalska, *Nowy Korczyn. Gmina u zbiegu Wisły i Nidy* (Krosno, 1999).

[11] A. Bienias and S.M. Przybyszewski, *Nowy Korczyn przez stulecia. Szkice z dziejów Nowego Korczyna i okolic* (Kielce, 2001).

[12] J. Banasik, *Królewska Stopnica wczoraj i dziś* (Krosno, 2000); J.T. Leszczyński, *Stopnica. Szkic monograficzny* (Kielce, 2003); A. Salomon, *Rys historyczny dziejów Stopnicy* (Kielce, 1999).

[13] *Szydłów przez stulecia. Monografia gminy Szydłów*, ed. by C. Jastrzębski (Szydłów, 2011).

[14] J. Poniewierska and P. Mazanka, "Zagłada Żydów z Szydłowa," *Kurier Ziemi Szydłowskiej* 1 (2019), pp. 18–19; P. Mazanka, "Z historii szydłowskich Żydów," *Kurier Ziemi Szydłowskiej* 2 (2015), pp. 33–34.

discusses the forced labour and expulsion action carried out in the Pińczów ghetto on 4 October 1942.[15] These themes are presented in the brochures *Społeczeństwo żydowskie w Pińczowie* (Jewish Society in Pińczów)[16] and *Historia społeczności żydowskiej w Pińczowie* (History of the Jewish Community in Pińczów).[17] The publication, written by Renata Urban and Piotr Żak, focuses mainly on the issue of the help given to the Jews by the inhabitants of the Pińczów region.[18]

Information on the history of the Jews in the Kreis Busko district during the German occupation can also be found in publications dealing with the occupied territories as a whole. Among Polish publications, the most important is Krzysztof Urbański's *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (The Holocaust of Jews in the Radom District), in which the author describes the various methods of German repression and persecution in the Kreis Busko district, the conditions in the ghettos in this area, and the conduct of the "Reinhardt" operation. The same topics are dealt with in English-language publications: *Encyclopaedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2: *Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe: Part A*,[19] *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos During the Holocaust*,[20] and a German-language: *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945,* authored by Robert Seidel.[21] A great deal of information about Jews in Chmielnik and Pińczów during the German occupation is provided by Jewish memory books (*jizkor buch*).[22] Due to the language barrier, they have not yet been of interest to scholars.

The authors of all the publications mentioned above did not attempt to estimate the deaths of Jews residing permanently or temporarily in the Kreis Busko district during the German occupation. Thanks to the Internet, every reader has

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[15] A. Dziubiński, "Wojna i okupacja na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945 (na przykładzie Pińczowa)," *Pińczowskie Spotkania Historyczne* 9 (2005), pp. 6–14.

[16] J. Tambor, *Społeczeństwo żydowskie w Pińczowie* (Pińczów, 1998).

[17] *Historia społeczności żydowskiej w Pińczowie*, ed. by R. Urban (Pińczów, 2022).

[18] R. Urban and P. Żak, *Żydzi w historii okolic Pińczowa* (Busko-Zdrój, 2022).

[19] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2: *Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe: Part A*, ed. by M. Dean and M. Hecker (Bloomington, 2012).

[20] *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos During the Holocaust*, ed. by G. Miron and Sh. Shulhani, vol. 1–2 (Jerusalem, 2009).

[21] R. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn, 2006).

[22] *Pinkas Chmielnik: yizkor book in memory of the annihilated Jewish community*, ed. by E. Shedletski (Tel Aviv, 1960); *A Book of Memory of the Jewish Community of Pinczow, Poland (Pińczów, Poland)*, ed. by M. Shinar (Tel Aviv, 1970).

access to both Polish-language databases [these include: "Informacja o więźniach KL Auschwitz-Birkenau" (Information about Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp Prisoners) "Księga imion. Baza ofiar Treblinki" (Book of Names. Database of Treblinka Victims), "Baza zmarłych więźniów KL Gross-Rosen" (Database of Deceased Inmates of the Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp), "Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod okupacją niemiecką w latach 1939–1945" (Deaths and Victims of Repressions under the German occupation in the Years 1939–1945), as well as English-language ones ("Arolsen Archives," "The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names" at Yad Vashem, "Jewish Gen," "The Memorial Archives")]. The civil registration records of the residents of the Mosaic faith in Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Stopnica, Pacanów and Szydłów were also not used. The authors did not search in the archives of Yad Vashem, in the Bundesarchiv in Ludwigsburg and in the Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, where the records of the following investigations, among others, were deposited: the investigation against the Kreishauptmann, Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, undertaken in connection with his participation in the extermination of Jews in the area of Busko-Zdrój and the deportation of Jews to Treblinka, the investigation against Wilhelm Schäfer and Johann Hansel, and the investigation against Bernhard Krause.

In discussing the state of research on the Jewish population between 1939 and 1942 in the Kreis Busko district, it is also necessary to cite the memoirs of Poles and Jews. They were published as separate books or printed in various collections. Jewish memoirs broadly describe the struggle for survival. They also describe German persecution and repression of the Jews and the living conditions in the town (locality) in question. In the case of Kreis Busko, we have, among other things, memoirs of Jews who resided in Busko-Zdrój,[23] Chmielnik,[24] Pińczów,[25] and Stopnica.[26] In Polish memoirist literature, the fate of Jews is usually merely hinted at. On the subject of Busko-Zdrój, we have a study by Leopold Wojnakowski entitled *Z dala od Wykusu* (Far from Wykus),[27] on Stopnica we have Bogumił Hetnar-

[23] Engelman, *Podróż bez końca*.

[24] S.E. Hagstrom, *Sara's Children. The Destruction of Chmielnik* (Spotsylvania, 2001); *Ukryci, aby przeżyć. Historia Esther Gutman Lederman i Ezjel Lederman* (Chmielnik–Busko-Zdrój, 2019).

[25] S. Rubinek, *So many miracles* (Markham, 1988).

[26] J. Bainvoll, *Wielki mrok* (Warsaw, 2013).

[27] J. Wojnakowski, *Z dala od Wykusu* (Łódź, 1988).

ski's *Ze Stopnicy do Itaki* (From Stopnica to Ithaca)[28] and Franciszek Faliszewski's *Kartki z przeszłości ruchu ludowego w byłym powiecie stopnickim* (Pages from the Past of the People's Movement in the Former Stopnica County),[29] whereas on Wiślica we have the memoirs of Szymon and Wanda Starkiewicz.[30]

The presented state of research indicates a lack of knowledge about the German persecution and repression of the Jewish population between 1939 and 1942 in the Kreis Busko district. The aim of this article is, therefore, to fill this research gap. The use of the period 1939-1942 in the article is deliberate. The starting date is, of course, linked to the outbreak of the Second World War and the ending date to the implementation of the "Reinhardt" Operation.

The starting point of this paper is an account of the persecution of Jews by the Germans during the 1939 campaign. Next, selected forms of persecution specific to this phase of German anti-Jewish policy are presented, specifically forced labour and the exclusion of Jews from economic life, as well as restrictions imposed on their freedoms. The author gives a brief description of the ghettos in the Kreis Busko and describes the persecution of the Jewish population within the area. An attempt is also made to estimate the deaths of Jews from the beginning of the war until the summer of 1942. The incarceration of Jews in prisons and jails in Kreis Busko is also discussed. The study is supplemented by a table of the names of Jews who died in the area between 1939 and 1942, based on Jewish civil registration records from the archives in Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów, Stopnica, and Szydłów.[31]

Murders of Jews by the Wehrmacht in September 1939

From the very first days of hostilities, the German occupiers persecuted the Polish and Jewish populations. The way of thinking and the behaviour of German commanders and soldiers were heavily influenced by anti-Semitism. Wehrmacht

[28] B. Hetnarski, *Ze Stopnicy do Itaki. Pamiętniki chemika* (Krosno, 2009).

[29] F. Faliszewski, *Kartki z przeszłości ruchu ludowego w byłym powiecie stopnickim* (Warsaw, 1965).

[30] *Szymon i Wanda Starkiewiczowie. Czyn i łza. Wspomnienie z Górki*, ed. by B.M. Dołęgowska-Wysocka (Warsaw, 2004).

[31] A full list of names of Jews who resided permanently or temporarily in the Kreis Busko area during the German occupation and suffered deaths is included in the following publication: K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, *Ofiary terroru i działań wojennych w latach 1939–1945 z terenu Kreishauptmannschaft Busko* (Warsaw, 2023).

soldiers perceived Jews through the prism of the stereotype of a Jew from the East, which had been widespread in Germany since the First World War. They, therefore, described their impressions of the Polish villages and towns they invaded in September 1939 according to this stereotype. In the first report of the Third Squadron of the 29th Artillery Regiment, the opinion of the Jews in Stopnica, described as a "Jewish town," was presented: "a swarm of innumerable Jews, driven by false politeness, wanted to give us boiled eggs."[32]

On 4 September 1939, Wehrmacht soldiers committed their first crimes in Chmielnik, which were an example of uncontrolled individual violence. While entering Chmielnik, Wehrmacht soldiers shot a Jewish woman named Rydelnik (the first name undetermined), who was looking out of the window of her house by the road. On the same day, another murder took place. We have two versions of the circumstances of the death of the 24-year-old carpenter – Chaim-Wolf Moszkowicz. According to one of them, the young Jew, convinced that there were French soldiers in the tank, ran out onto the road and stopped the vehicle with German soldiers.[33] According to another, one of the soldiers, sitting on a tank heading for the market square, saw Moszkowicz walking down the street with a rifle on his shoulder. The German called out to him, and when he did not respond, he shot him.[34] In the first days of September 1939, four Jews were hanged in Chmielnik: "When the Germans entered Chmielnik, they immediately killed four Jews; they hung them on a beam in the gate of a house, next to the hospital. They forbade us to take them down."[35]

A common phenomenon accompanying the advance of the German army was the mass terrorisation of the population and the breaking of resistance by

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[32] J. Böhler, *Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu w Polsce. Wrzesień 1939 – wojna totalna* (Cracow, 2009), p. 22.

[33] Delegatura IPN w Kielcach – Wydział Archiwalny [Institute of National Remembrance Delegation in Kielce – Archival Department, hereinafter AIPN Ki], Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu – Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Kielcach [District Commission for the Persecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation – Institute of National Remembrance in Kielce, hereinafter OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce], The Crimes Committed by Wehrmacht on the Territory of Chmielnik and the Village of Suchowola, County of Busko-Zdrój, 53/5143, Report on the Murder of Poles and Jews in Chmielnik and the Village of Suchowola, County of Busko-Zdrój, in September 1939 by the Invading Wehrmacht Troops, no date, fol. 3; Registry Office in Chmielnik, Civil Status Records of the Mosaic Faith in Chmielnik, Certificate of Death of Chaim-Wolf Moszkowicz, Chmielnik, 27 September 1939, no. 38, no page numbers.

[34] Hagstrom, *Sara's Children*, p. 50.

[35] *Nasi sąsiedzi Żydzi. Z dziejów relacji polsko-żydowskich na Kielecczyźnie w XX wieku*, ed. by A. Dziarmaga, D. Koczwańska-Kalita, and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Warsaw, 2018), p. 138.

taking hostages whose fate was to secure the actions of the occupiers. On the night of 4–5 September 1939, fourteen people of Jewish nationality were arrested, along with Father Władysław Kwieciński. Also arrested were the organist and two young Poles from nearby villages, whose identities have not been established. The detainees were taken to the Jewish prayer house in Chmielnik at 4 Sienkiewicza Street. The organist and the two young men were soon released. The Jewish prayer house was doused with petrol and set on fire. Only Father Kwieciński, who jumped out of a window from a height of three metres and fled the scene of the tragedy, was saved from the burning building. The remaining fourteen Jews were either burned to death or killed while trying to escape.[36] Among the murdered Jews were Goldsztajn (the first name undetermined), Chaim Margules, 61-year-old Berek Trombecki, 54-year-old Joel Ungier, Szmul Elja Wajl and two rabbis from Chęciny.[37] A few days after the outbreak of war, the hostages in Chmielnik were arrested again. Wehrmacht soldiers then took four or five Jewish families (including the Garfinkels and Kaufmans) from their homes. These people were held before a firing squad for about 30 minutes. After that, they were chased away to their homes.[38] It is estimated that in the first days of September 1939, up to seventy Jews may have died in Chmielnik.[39]

In Stopnica, Wehrmacht soldiers shot dead four Jews.[40] In Wiślica, on 9 September 1939, they murdered a Jewish woman named Bukiet, who was a grain trader. Other ten Jews also fell victim to Wehrmacht soldiers.[41]

The crimes committed by German soldiers in September 1939 included looting and rape. In the second half of September 1939, three soldiers of the motorised field gendarmerie, Siegfried Baudisch, Andreas Kerner and Franz Rothe, looted several Jewish flats in Busko-Zdrój, including those of Josek Topiol – owner of a printing house, Kala Cukiermanowa and Szlam Zylbersztajn: "About eight days

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[36] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu we wrześniu 1939 r. na terenie powiatu stopnickiego," https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/64278,Zbrodnie-Wehrmachtu-we-wrzesniu-1939-r-na-terenie-powiatu-stopnickiego-buskiego.html (accessed 15 June 2020).

[37] Krawczyk and Maciągowski, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika*, pp. 158–159.

[38] Hagstrom, *Sara's Children*, p. 50.

[39] Bender, "*Żydzi z Chmielnika,*" p. 45.

[40] "Stopnica," *Kielce–Radom Special Interest Group Journal* 5/2 (2001), p. 7.

[41] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, The Shooting of 15 Persons in 1939 in Wiślica, 53/5286, Statement of Reasons for the Suspension of the Investigation, 29 November 1973, fol. 34.

ago, at night, they ordered money to be given to them in three Jewish flats and businesses. They forced the Jewish owners of the flats or shops to hand over the money under the threat of a gun. According to their testimony, they got about 8,000–9,000 zloty that night."[42] Baudisch's colleagues persuaded him to take part in this criminal activity, arguing that crimes against Jews were nothing improper and not punishable. Therefore, the victims of the robberies, perpetrated by three German soldiers, were exclusively Jews.[43] On the night of 27–28 September 1939, Baudisch, Kerner and Rothe severely beat Szaja Kaufman, who lived on Stopnicka Street in Busko-Zdrój. The Germans shaved off his beard, ordered him to strip naked and then lie down in a puddle on command. His daughter, 20-year-old Hinda, was raped.[44]

Germans persecuted the Jewish population consistently from the first days of the war. According to the findings of the author of this article, at least 135 Jews were killed on the territory of the future Kreis Busko in September 1939.

Territory, Population Statistics, German Authorities

Kreis Busko was created by an order of the German occupying forces on 10 February 1940.[45] The district included 25 rural and two urban municipalities of the pre-war County of Stopnica. In addition, it absorbed eight municipalities of the pre-war County of Pińczów (the city of Pińczów, the municipalities of Chotel, Chroberz, Góry, Kliszów, Pińczów, Zagość and Złota).[46] Its capital was Busko-Zdrój.

The area of Kreis Busko in March 1940 had a population of 190,511 people,[47] including 22,406 Jews. In 1941, due to the influx of deported Jews, this number rose

[42] "Meldunek pododdziału 3 kompanii batalionu żandarmerii polowej o grabieży i gwałtach dokonanych przez żołnierzy Wehrmachtu," in *Okupacja i ruch oporu w dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939–1945*, vol. 1: *1939–1942* (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 108–109.

[43] Böhler, *Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu w Polsce*, p. 215.

[44] J. Chruśliński, *Życie wpisane w historię* (Warsaw, 2012), p. 34.

[45] The publication adopts the administrative boundaries of the war period. Kreis Busko and nine others: Jędrzejów, Kielce, Końskie, Opatów, Radom, Radomsko, Starachowice, Piotrków and Tomaszów, were part of the Radom district in the General Government (GG).

[46] Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach [State Archives in Kielce, hereinafter APK], Związek Gmin w Busku [Union of Municipalities in Busko], 21/2123/10, The Order of Dr. Schäfer, Busko-Zdrój, fol. 1.

[47] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, hereinafter GK], 179/40, Population Figures in the Former Radom District as of 10 March 1940 – Extract from a Book by Dr. Max du Prel, no date, fol. 2.

to 26,459 people.[48] By 1942, the number had increased to 32,274 people. The Jewish population then accounted for 16.9% of the total population living in the area.[49]

The most significant number of Jews lived in the areas of Chmielnik, Pińczów and Busko-Zdrój, as well as in the municipalities of Pacanów, Nowy Korczyn and Stopnica. The population of Kreis Busko in 1943 decreased to 181,725 people.[50] These data need to be approached with a dose of criticism. In fact, due to the displacement operations carried out from October 1942 to January 1943 in the Kreis Busko area, the number of inhabitants in 1943 decreased by approximately 26,000. Therefore, it appears that the area was inhabited by fewer people then.

Table 1. Population Statistics for the Individual Urban and Rural Municipalities of Kreis Busko as of 1 February 1941[51]

Municipality name	Polish population	Jewish population	Total
Town of Busko-Zdrój	5,490	1,695	7,185
Town of Chmielnik	2,884	7,280	10,164
Town of Pińczów	3,843	2,726	6,569
Busko (rural municipality)	4,274	6	4,280
Chmielnik (rural municipality)	8,283	124	8,407
Chroberz	7,083	84	7,167
Drugnia	4,726	182	4,908
Gnojno	6,980	40	7,020
Góry	8,358	121	8,479
Grabki	5,661	124	5,785

[48] A. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 15–16 (1955), p. 76.

[49] According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), in 1931, its territory was inhabited by 153,091 inhabitants. 17,157 were Jews (see *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dnia 9 XII 1931 r.* [Warsaw, 1938], fol. 34). The largest concentration of the Jewish population was in Chmielnik, where approximately 7,500 Jews lived. Jews also made up more than a half of the inhabitants of Nowy Korczyn, Pińczów, and Stopnica. In 1939, 16,800 Jews lived in the County of Stopnica.

[50] *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsbestandsaufnahme am 1. März 1943* (Cracow, 1943), pp. 51–52.

[51] APK, Union of Municipalities in Busko, 21/2123/625, Quantitative List of the Polish and Jewish Population as at 1 February 1941.

Municipality name	Polish population	Jewish population	Total
Grotniki	5,717	45	5,762
Kliszów	6,919	73	6,992
Kurozwęki	5,423	242	5,665
Łubnice	5,226	10	5,236
Maleszowa	5,934	222	6,156
Nowy Korczyn	1,971	3,597	5,568
Oględów	8,580	–	8,580
Oleśnica	8,059	133	8,192
Pacanów	11,236	2,612	13,848
Pawłów	6,080	6	6,086
Pęczelice	5,722	15	5,737
Pińczów	5,134	51	5,185
Potok	4,612	52	4,664
Radzanów	5,884	54	5,938
Stopnica	1,998	3,772	5,770
Szaniec	8,957	48	9,005
Szczytniki	5,871	98	5,969
Szydłów	5,872	792	6,664
Tuczępy	7,912	98	8,010
Wolica	7,550[52]	151	7,701
Wójcza	6,949	24	6,973
Zagość	5,372	29	5,401
Zborów	4,863	301	5,164
Złota	6,077	44	6,121

Wilhelm Schäfer held the post of Kreishautpmann Busko between 1939 and 1945.[53] At the beginning of November 1939, he established four departments of the Kreishauptmannschaft. The employee of Department I was Erich Berthold, born on 20 July 1893 in Berlin.[54] He arrived in Busko-Zdrój in February 1940. After

[52] In 1943, the municipality of Wolica was inhabited by 6,442 people (*Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis*, p. 52).

[53] Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg [hereinafter STAL], Investigations against unknown persons, Wilhelm Schäfer and Johann Hansel, 1938–1944, 1959, EL 317 III Bü 902 [hereinafter EL 317 III Bü 902], Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Wilhelm Schäfer, 15 February 1969, fol. 203. In 1963, the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg launched an investigation against Schäfer in connection with his activity on the territory of Kreis Busko. In 1967, the proceedings were discontinued.

[54] STAL, Investigations against unknown persons, Wilhelm Schäfer and Johann Hansel (1956) 1963–1966, EL 317 III Bü 903, List of Kreishauptmannschaft's employees, no date, fol. 539.

the dismissal of Emil Philipp, Berthold took over the leadership of Department I in December 1940. He supervised Polish and Jewish social welfare organisations. Division II was managed by Bela von Christen,[55] whose responsibilities included criminal matters and the registration and supervision of former Polish officials. Gustav Sawatzki headed Department III. He was responsible for issuing identity and service cards, and dealt with official fees and military matters. Ludwik Korz most likely worked in Department III. In January 1940, he was posted to Busko-Zdrój, where he was responsible for issuing identity cards and *Kennkarten*.[56] He was also in charge of Jewish matters. Department IV was headed until 1940 by Siegfried Hoffman, the deputy for food and agriculture (Kreislandwirt). He was succeeded by Heinrich Wagner, who held this position until the end of the German occupation.

In April 1941, the structure of the Kreishauptmannschaft was unified. It comprised four main offices: internal affairs, economy, food and agriculture and school.

The German gendarmerie in the area of each district constituted a platoon (Zug), with its commander acting as district gendarmerie commander.[57] Within the Kreis Busko district, the gendarmerie headquarters were situated in Busko-Zdrój.[58] The stations in Chmielnik[59] and Nowy Korczyn[60] were subordinate to it.

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] STAL, EL 317 III Bü 902, Minutes of the interrogation of Ludwika Korz, 12 June 1963, fol. 55.

[57] His name was Paul König (STAL, EL 317 III Bü 902, Note, 8 August 1964, fol. 21).

[58] The post of commander of the gendarmerie station in Busko-Zdrój was held by Johann Brzezińczyk (*ibid.*). The gendarmerie officers were also Corts, Gutzeit, Jan Sołyga *vel* Soliga, Heinrich Dux, Reinhold Kuhn, Franz Milke, Niedermack, Wilhelm Predel, Bruno Sibeneichler, Socher, Schwenke and Richard Weichbrodt.

[59] The station personnel in Chmielnik consisted of 10–15 people on average. According to the periodic report of 31 December 1943, 11 gendarmes served there: 6 Germans and 5 *Volksdeutsche* from Pomerania (AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Crimes committed by Hitlerite gendarmes [Haas, Orłowski, Wreide and others] from the station in Chmielnik between 1939 and 1945, 53/5237, Periodic report no. 11/43, 5 January 1944, no page numbers). Its commander was Ernst Hass. Other officers who also served there were Józef Cieślik, Feldberg, Hilke, Bernhard Krause, Lachman, Leon Orłowski, Julian Świątek and Wreide.

[60] In the Kreis Busko area, there was also a gendarmerie post in Słupia and Złota. The latter usually consisted of 12 gendarmes (AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, 53/131, Information on the network of the former Nazi gendarmerie stations and posts of other police formations and their personnel, Letter of the District Commission for the Persecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation in Kielce, 6 August 1968, fol. 8).

Assuming that 10 to 20 people manned each post, the number of gendarmes in the Kreis Busko area was around 60. This group had an enormous influence on the terror policy of the Kreis Busko area, which in 1943 had a population of – as already mentioned – 181,725. Also under the authority of the gendarmerie was the Polish Police of the General Government (*Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement*), commonly referred to as the Blue Police. Its headquarters were also located in Busko-Zdrój. Bolesław Stefanowicz headed the formation.[61] Blue police stations were established, among others, in the following towns and villages: Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Chroberz, Dobrowoda, Kije, Pińczów, Nowy Korczyn, Raczyce, Pińczów, Stopnica, Szydłów and Złota.[62] According to German accounting records, 104 officers served in the Kreis Busko Blue Police in 1941,[63] whereas in 1943 there were 135.[64]

Busko-Zdrój also housed the headquarters of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*). According to the findings of the author of this article, it consisted of at least ten people. The head was Emil Fischer.[65] The Polish Criminal Police, whose headquarters were in Busko-Zdrój, was under the control of the Security Police. It consisted of at least nine officers.[66]

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[61] AIPN, GK, Lists of Polish police officers in the Radom district; correspondence relating to the verification of Polish police cadres, especially senior officers; lists of Polish police officers involved in the resistance movement; list of senior Polish police officers; a letter containing a list of senior Polish police officers known to be loyal to the German authorities, 105/260, Letter concerning Blue Police, 30 April 1943, fol. 202.

[62] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, *Zbrodnie niemieckie w Lesie Wełeckim koło Buska-Zdroju* (Warsaw, 2022); see AIPN, GK, Staffing of positions in offices in the County of Busko, 639/1, List of Blue Police officers in the Kreis Busko area, no date, fols 111–114.

[63] AIPN, GK, Der Kreishauptmann Busko, 639/68, Numerical breakdown of Polish and Ukrainian policemen in the Radom district on 1 April 1941, fol. 11.

[64] *Ibid.*, fol. 167.

[65] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Operational materials concerning German crimes committed in the voivodeship of Kielce during World War Two, 15/10, part 1, External posts of the commander of Security Police and SD for the Radom district, no date, fol. 33.

[66] From the spring of 1943, detachments of militarised units of the Order Police were stationed in the Kreis Busko area, which the local population called the "punitive expedition." They belonged to the 3rd Battalion of the 17th SS Police Regiment. The 11th company was stationed in Busko-Zdrój at the primary school on Mickiewicza and 3 Maja Streets. The 3rd Battalion of the 17th SS Police Regiment was also stationed in the Wielopolski Palace in Chroberz from the spring of 1943 until the first half of 1944. (K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Zbrodnie III Batalionu 17 Pułku Policji SS na Ponidziu", https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/74399,Zbrodnie-III-Batalionu-17-pulku-policji-SS-na-Ponidziu-w-czasie-okupacji-niemiec.html (accessed 12 April 2021).

Before Ghettos Were Created

A regulation issued by Governor General Hans Frank on 26 October 1939 introduced compulsory labour for the Jewish population.[67] The second executive order, published on 12 December 1939, specified the age of the Jews to be subjected to forced labour – from 14 years to 60 years of age. In particular, the first phase of the extermination campaign aimed at destroying the material and economic basis of the Jewish population's existence.[68] Jews were forced to pay high monetary contributions and other tributes. They were also made to work as forced labourers.

In the beginning, labour offices supervised the employment of Jews. In the first period, people were taken to work mainly from round-ups. After the German occupation authorities became more robust, the Councils of Elders (Judenrats) were obliged to constantly supply a certain number of Jewish labourers daily. The Judenrat in Chmielnik, under the leadership of Abraham Langwald, provided the Germans with Jewish labourers for work within the town and its surrounding areas from the second half of 1940. Pinchas Rozen – a resident of Chmielnik, recalled: "The Germans abolished all Jewish institutions and started taking young people to do slave labour, to shovelling the snow from the streets in winter and to work in the quarry and in the fields in the summer. When I was 17, I was forced to appear in person every morning for forced labour."[69] The German demand for labour was so huge that the local Judenrat struggled to supply an adequate number of workers. About 300 Jews were sent to the camp in Słupia.[70]

The Jews of Busko-Zdrój worked 18 hours a day on the peat bog located behind the Polish cemetery.[71] Józef Rozenberg testified as follows: "We worked at various forced labour sites, such as peat extraction, in wet, rotten swamps. People caught malaria from the hard 20-hour labour and died of exhaustion. SD soldiers beat us

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[67] *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, ed. by M. Rejak-Grądzka and A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 15–16.

[68] Smarzyński, *Powiat Busko-Zdrój*, p. 213.

[69] Krawczyk and Maciągowski, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika*, p. 248.

[70] Bender, "*Żydzi z Chmielnika*," p. 47.

[71] AIPN, 2323/1085, A collection of microfilm copies of testimonies by Jewish individuals concerning the occupation and extermination of the Jewish people in occupied Poland during Second World War, obtained from the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, The Testimony of Rozenberg Josef, no date, fol. 10.

cruelly at work until we lost consciousness."[72] Jews from Busko-Zdrój were also forced to work at a construction site of a shooting range on the outskirts of the town. They did the work for the German gendarmerie: "Every morning, ranked groups of Jews with shovels on their shoulders would walk towards the mudflats. A young SS man with a submachine gun on his shoulder and a whip would order them to sing. It was summer. The Jews, stripped down to their skivvies, were digging a shooting range, the slopes of which they had to cover with the green turf brought in by peasant carts."[73] The Jews who worked too slowly were murdered. After the war, at least two mass graves were discovered at the shooting range. Wiesław Dytkowski reported: "I recognised from the clothes and beards that only Jews were buried there."[74]

The Jews of Pińczów worked in the forests and did road repairs. They were paid in the form of a portion of flour:[75]

> I worked in the forest cutting peat, which the Germans sold for firewood. Every morning, around 5.00 a.m., we set off and walked through the forest, 9 kilometres we had to walk like that. Our shoes would be a waste. We reached the cemetery, where everyone had graves; we hid our shoes and continued barefoot. We were all starving. Sometimes, we managed to pick a kohlrabi or a few blueberries in the forest.[76]

Stopnica's Jews worked in road construction and built the Strumień Canal; 60% to 70% of Stopnica's Jewish population gathered in the square every morning and then marched about 8 kilometres to work. They received 1 kilogram of wheat and 1 litre of skimmed milk daily for their work.[77] The Jews of Pińczów repaired roads

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[72] STAL, EL 317 III Bü 902, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Józef Rozenberg, 15 June 1964, fol. 122.

[73] Wojnakowski, *Z dala od Wykusu*, p. 70.

[74] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Files of the investigations into crimes committed by the occupying authorities, in particular the Sipo, the SD and the Gendarmerie in Busko and the surrounding area between 1939 and 1945, 53/5350, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Wiesław Dytkowski, fol. 121.

[75] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 277.

[76] Dziubiński, "Wojna i okupacja na Kielecczyźnie," p. 11.

[77] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 321.

and did drainage work. The German guards often made them sing songs on the way to the site to humiliate them. According to Stanisław Jaklewicz, an excerpt from one of these songs went as follows: "Marshal Śmigły Rydz taught the Jews nothing, Hitler, the golden one came, taught the Jews how to work."*[78] From 1940, Jews from Wiślica were employed in paving the road on the Busko-Zdrój-Wiślica route and in agriculture. Jews from Szydłów and Pacanów worked in agriculture. The latter picked strawberries in the summer of 1940. Each was then allowed to take a small portion of strawberries home as a form of payment.

One of the occupying authorities' first and most important tasks was confiscating the immovable property of Poles and Jews. Flats, shops and commercial properties were taken away from Jews. For example, Aron Lorber, a resident of Busko-Zdrój, was ordered to vacate his flat and business premises within seven days. Otherwise, he was threatened with forced removal.[79] Jews were also required to deliver a contribution. One of the first tasks of the Judenrat in Nowy Korczyn was to collect it in the amount of 20,000 zlotys. Before long, the Germans demanded an extra contribution – twice as high as the previous one.[80] In Wiślica, the contribution amounted to 30,000 zlotys.[81] During October or November of 1939, the Judenrat, under the leadership of Moshe Aron, made a plea to the Jewish community of Pacanów to surrender all their valuables. These were to be handed over to the Germans as part of the contribution.[82] In Stopnica, on the other hand, Jews had to surrender their money or gold. Laja Blusztejn reminisced: "In my time, such contributions were made five or six times."[83]

On 23 November 1939, by order of Governor General Hans Frank, all Jews over the age of 10 were required to wear white armbands on their right sleeve

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* The original is rhymed: "Marszałek Śmigły Rydz, nie nauczył Żydów nic, przyszedł Hitler złoty, nauczył Żydków roboty" [translator's note].

[78] https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=pi%C5%84cz%C3%B3w+getto+wspomnienia (accessed 12 February 2021).

[79] APK, Files of the town of Busko, 1216, Letter from the commissary mayor of Busko-Zdrój to Aaron Lorber, 9 April 1940, fol. 56.

[80] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 262.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[83] AIPN, GK, The case files of, among other things, the investigation against Herbert Böttcher, former SS general and SS and Police commander (SS und Polizeiführer) in the former Radom District, 179/114, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Laja Blusztejn, 6 May 1947, fol. 141.

with a minimum width of 10 centimetres, bearing a Star of David. A regulation on marking shops in the General Government, issued on 23 November 1939, ordered their Jewish owners to mark their outlets with the Star of David in a way visible from the street.[84] The policy of "Aryanisation" is illustrated perfectly by the memoirs of Jan Wojciechowski:

> Only the Jewish population was forbidden to run businesses, which were placed under Poles' management. In the interim period, Poles were assigned control of a few shops at a time, with the sales clerks being Jews. Armbands were introduced for the Jewish population, and bowing was compulsory. Eventually, the Jewish population was forbidden to walk in particular streets, especially the market square.[85]

The restriction of free movement within the GG was regulated by an executive order of the Labour Compulsion Regulation of 26 October 1939, issued on 11 December that year by Hans Frank. Starting January 1, 1940, the Jewish population was prohibited from altering their residence or location without obtaining written authorisation from the relevant administrative authority. For example, the Jews of Busko-Zdrój, to get a pass, had to apply to the town's mayor – Stanisław Sikorski.[86] Jews applying for a pass had to present a medical certificate attesting to their good health. These were issued to them by, among others, Dr. Aniela Żwan-Golschmied[87] and Dr. Zygmunt Żubr.

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[84] *Represje za pomoc Żydom*, p. 19.

[85] AIPN, GK, Investigative materials of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Radom concerning Nazi crimes committed in the municipalities: Grabki, Szczytniki, Stopnica, Potok. Minutes of interrogations of witnesses, lists of German crimes (including location, date of crime, type of crime and names of witnesses), questionnaires about executions and mass graves, and correspondence. The case files of, among other things, the investigation against Herbert Böttcher, former SS general and SS and Police commander (SS und Polizeiführer) in the former Radom District, 179/114, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Wojciechowski, 14 March 1946, fol. 125.

[86] These were submitted by Josek Pacanowski, among others, on 29 July 1941: "I kindly ask the Lord Mayor to give me permission to leave Busko for Chmielnik to visit my sister, Gitla Rozencwajg, who is seriously ill and needs my help." (APK, Files of the town of Busko, 1296, Letter by Josek Pacanowski, 29 July 1941, fol. 6).

[87] APK, Files of the town of Busko, 1296, Certificate issued by Dr. Aniela Żwan-Golschmied, 1941, fol. 8.

From 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., Jews were prohibited from using roads, streets and squares.[88] The food ration card standards established in mid-October 1939 allocated only half the provisions to the Jewish population compared to the Polish people. They included only bread, cereal, coffee and sugar. The German occupying forces followed the principle of first providing food for the Germans, then for the Polish population and finally for the Jews.[89] According to Siegfried Hoffman's order, "The bakeries designated for the provisioning of the Jews will be given via the Agricultural-Commercial Cooperative only rye flour for 100 grams of bread per person per day."[90]

In the Kreis Busko area, as in other parts of the Radom district, the Germans constantly used individual violence against Jews. Daniel Fischgarten from Busko-Zdrój reported: Once, the gendarmerie abruptly stormed into a bakery demanding bread. When the baker could not provide any, they subjected him to a brutal beating and trampling that ultimately led to his death.[91] It was also the custom of the gendarmes from Busko-Zdrój to organise attacks on Jews leaving the synagogue on Saturdays.[92]

The Judenrats from Stopnica and Pinczów collected money from the local population to bribe the Germans and, as a result, to limit the arrivals of the gendarmes from Busko-Zdrój. On the initiative of Jankiel Taubelblat, the chairman of the Judenrat in Stopnica, every German arriving in the town was taken to a Polish restaurant, where refreshments spiked with vodka were organised. A bribe was then handed to him by Taubelblat. Joseph Bainvoll recalled after the war: "After such a visit, the Germans would leave the town or rarely hang around in the streets. No one doubted that the Germans' gentle behaviour resulted from a generous bribe, which Reb Jankiel did not begrudge. One must admit he knew

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[88] APK, Files of the municipality of Busko, 1266, Letter to all mayors of the county of Busko, 13 January 1940, fol. 503. By order of Kreishauptmann Schäfer, a curfew was imposed for Poles, which lasted from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. (APK, Files of the municipality of Busko, 1267, Schäfer's order, 8 April 1940, fol. 442).

[89] K. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Cracow, 2004), p. 59.

[90] AIPN, GK, Der Kreishauptmann Busko [Starosta Powiatowy w Busku] 639/8, Letter to mayors in Busko, Chmielnik, Pińczów, Stopnica, Pacanów, Nowy Korczyn, Wiślica, 8 January 1940, fol. 6.

[91] Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie [Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, hereinafter AŻIH], A collection of testimonies of the Jewish Holocaust survivors, 301/254, The Testimony of Daniel Fischgarten, no date, fol. 1.

[92] Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, p. 150.

whom to pay off and how."[93] These activities, however, did not stop the Busko-based gendarmes from committing crimes in Stopnica. One of them, Gutzeit Niedermack, shot a Jew who was crossing the street in the town in November 1939.[94] A man called Bruchman (the first name undetermined) was also his victim. In April 1940, during the Passover celebrations, gendarmes from Busko-Zdrój murdered thirteen Jews in Stopnica.[95] In 1941, Germans shot three wealthy Jews and plundered their property.[96] Numerous crimes against Chmielnik's Jews were committed by German gendarmes from Chmielnik. According to the testimony given by Michał Stępień:

> The Germans didn't segregate that this one had some consideration; this one was younger or older. If he wanted to, he would shoot, and that was it. I witnessed an incident where a German military policeman, referred to as Kleuzer [the correct name is Krause], shot a Jewish woman named Pasternakówna, who was between 25 and 30 years old, right before my eyes. [He killed] because his son was killed at the front. He said he would shoot two hundred Poles and kill four hundred Jews because his son died at the front.[97]

One of the persecutors of the Jewish population in the spa town was Johann Hansel of the Security Police. He used violence against the Jews of Busko regularly: "At the end of 1940, my father Jacob, returning from the synagogue, was stopped by Hans. Hans started to tug at his beard with a handkerchief, threw him to the ground and kicked him with his boots, leaving him bleeding and unconscious in the street. My father has been paralysed ever since."[98] In April

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[93] Bainvoll, *Wielki mrok*, p. 63.

[94] AIPN, Questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland and the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw Collected between 1968 and 1972. Questionnaires concerning the Voivodeship of Kielce – V. County of Busko-Zdrój – questionnaires, encyclopaedic notes [hereinafter Questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, 1968–1972], 2448/321, part 1, Questionnaire, no date, fols 389–390.

[95] "Stopnica," *Kielce–Radom Special Interest Group Journal* 5/2 (2001), p. 7.

[96] Bainvoll, *Wielki mrok*, p. 63.

[97] *Nasi sąsiedzi Żydzi*, p. 129.

[98] STAL, EL 317 III Bü 902, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Józef Rozenberg, 15 June 1964, fol. 123.

1940, Hansel executed the Jewish baker Avigdon Birenbaum on the pretext that he was baking bread before Passover. His body was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Busko-Zdrój. In 1941, Hansel also shot an unnamed Jew for not wearing a Star of David armband.[99] The inhabitants of Busko-Zdrój knew of his role in the executions of Jews in the Jewish cemetery: "Every time he appeared at the Jewish cemetery, shots could be heard. He always went there with somebody and came back alone."[100] Hansel, together with gendarmes from Busko-Zdrój, also came to Pińczów. He used to walk around the town with his wolfhound that he set on the local people: "Upon his command, the dog would typically assault Jews walking down the street, biting and injuring them, and tearing at their clothes, until it was called off."[101]

Ghettos and Labour Camps

The legal status of the Jews was definitively established by an order issued by Reinhard Heydrich on 21 September 1939, commonly referred to as the "Schnellbrief." According to it, all Jews would be concentrated in separate and isolated quarters of the larger cities near the railway lines. The ghettoisation process in the Radom district accelerated considerably in 1941, and the number of ghettos created is estimated to be at least 120.[102]

In the Kreis Busko area, at a conference on 3 April 1941, Erich Berthold, an employee of Department I of the Kreishauptmannschaft, informed the chairmen of the delegations of the Jewish Social Self-Help (ŻSS) and the Judenrats about the establishment of Jewish quarters. According to a decree by Kreishauptmann Wilhelm Schäfer, they were to be established by 15 April 1941.[103] A total of eight

[99] Bundesarchiv in Ludwigsburg, Investigation against Johann Hansel, B 162/6207, Letter of the Ministry of the Interior, 19 January 1966, fol. 818.

[100] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Files of the investigations into crimes committed by the occupying authorities, in particular the Sipo, the SD and the Gendarmerie in Busko and the surrounding area between 1939 and 1945, 5349, Letter of the District Commission for the Persecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation in Kielce, 10 March 1967, fol. 48.

[101] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Reference files of the investigation concerning crimes committed by Hitlerites in Pińczów, 53/4907, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Piotr Lech, no date, fol. 86.

[102] There were 10 ghettos in the Kreis Piotrków area, 11 in the Kreis Radomsko area and 19 in the Kreis Tomaszów area (Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, p. 114).

[103] Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen*, p. 240.

were established, located in Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów, Pińczów, Stopnica, Szydłów and Wiślica.

Initially, all ghettos were open, i.e., no physical barriers were erected to separate the so-called Jewish residential quarters from the so-called Aryan zone. Jews, however, were forbidden to leave them. Escape from the ghetto was initially punishable by a fine. For example, for the escape of two Jews from the Busko ghetto, the community had to pay a ransom of 1,000 zlotys for each fugitive.[104] From Order No. 3 concerning the Restrictions on Residence in the GG of 15 October 1941 onwards, arbitrary departure from the ghetto was punishable by death.[105]

The territory of the ghetto varied from town to town. The Jews of Chmielnik, living in the city centre, were ordered to move to a ghetto covering Bednarska, Furmańska and Magistracka Streets.[106] The square happened to be outside the ghetto's territory. In Busko-Zdrój, the ghetto was mainly located on Kościuszki and Kilińskiego Streets. It also covered the present Partyzantów Street, where the synagogue was located.[107] The ghetto in Wiślica (established in May 1941), on the other hand, comprised 76 one-storey houses housing 1,500 local Jews and around 500 Jews from Łódź, Płock, Radom, Sandomierz and Warsaw. Unlike other ghettos, it was not located in a quarter previously inhabited by Jewish people but in another one – arbitrarily chosen by the Germans. Due to the houses being constructed of weeping stone, there was a widespread occurrence of mould and mildew, creating conditions favourable for the spread of diseases. This neighbourhood had no access to a well, so the local population drew water from the nearby Nida River.[108] The Jews of Pacanów lived in 125 houses in the town's centre. Water was drawn from a well.[109]

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[104] AŻIH, A collection of testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors, 301/254, The Testimony of Daniel Fischgarten, no date, fol. 1.

[105] B. Musiał, O. Musiał (collab.), *Kto dopomoże Żydowi…* (Poznań, 2019), pp. 80–81.

[106] STAL, EL 317 III 902, The Testimonies of Kalman Żelaznik, Mosze Kleinhendler and Ben Icchak Anszel, 21 June 1964, no page numbers.

[107] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 124.

[108] Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, p. 150.

[109] AŻIH, Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna [Jewish Social Self-Help Organisation, hereinafter ŻSS], Correspondence between the Presidium of the ŻSS and the ŻSS Delegation in Pacanów, 211/778, Note concerning the ghetto in Pacanów, 1942, fol. 17.

Table 2. Demographic Situation of Ghettos in Kreis Busko between 1941 and 1942[110]

Locality	Number of inhabitants in 1941	Number of inhabitants in 1942
Busko-Zdrój	1,728	no data available
Chmielnik	8,000	13,000
Nowy Korczyn	3,559	4,200
Pacanów	2,645	2,785
Pińczów	2,991	3,554
Stopnica	4,600	5,300
Szydłów	770	1,270
Wiślica	no data available	2,165

A commonplace phenomenon in the occupied Polish territories was the displacement of Jews from one village to another. Repeated relocation of the same group and looting of the Jewish property destroyed them economically. The Kreis Busko stood out against other administrative units referred to as Kreis in the Radom district for the relatively high number of refugees – in 1941, it reached 7,756 people.[111] In this respect, it ranked third after Kreis Tomaszów and the city of Częstochowa. At the same time, it is worth noting that the capital of Kreis Busko, Busko-Zdrój, remained the town with the smallest number of displaced persons (16.3% of new arrivals). This was the outcome of a conscious decision by Kreishauptmann Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, who decided that Busko-Zdrój was to remain a town free of Jews.[112]

On 1 December 1940, an order was issued for the deportation of some 2,000 Jews from Radom to the Busko and Opatów districts. These people had arrived in the

[110] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 212. According to Adam Rutkowski, the number of Jews in each town was as follows: Busko-Zdrój in September 1941 was inhabited by 1,728 Jews, in June 1942 – 1,587; in Chmielnik in September 1941 – 8,292, and in April 1942 – 8,510. In Nowy Korczyn in September 1941, there were 3,700 Jews, and in April 1942 – 3,834. In Pacanów in July 1941, there were 2,612 Jews, and in April 1942 – 2,828. In Pińczów in September 1941, there were 2,991 Jews, and in June 1942 – 3,554. In Stopnica in September 1941, there were 4,600 Jewish people, and in April 1942 – 5,300. 1,004 Jews lived in Szydłów in September 1941 and 1,257 in June 1942. In Wiślica, there were 2,200 Jews in November 1941 and April 1942 – 2,165 (Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada," pp. 147–148).

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[112] *Encyklopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 206.

district capital in 1940, unemployed and suspected of criminal activities. Only the Jewish poor were expelled from Radom; under the leadership of Józef Diament, the Judenrat put on the list of expellees those who had previously applied for an allowance, even unsuccessfully. Under the threat of punishment, they were forbidden to return to town.[113] Between 5 and 12 December 1940, around 200 Jews were displaced from Radom to Dwikozy and Chmielnik.[114] In December 1940, 1,500 Jews from Radom arrived in Busko-Zdrój,[115] and on 6 December 1940, 300 Jews arrived in Stopnica. 300 Jews residing in Radom were deported in the spring of 1941 to the ghetto in Nowy Korczyn.[116]

In February and March 1941, around 10,000 Jews from Płock were resettled in the Radom district. In February 1941, 400 Jews from Płock arrived in Chmielnik. In the civil registration records of the Jewish community in Chmielnik for 1941, 26 death certificates were registered for Jews deported from Płock to Chmielnik.[117] On 24 February 1941, 966 Jews from Płock were resettled to Busko-Zdrój. They had neither luggage nor livelihood, having previously passed through the camp in Działdów. Most of them suffered from influenza, 11 had physical injuries, and two died of heart attacks during the transport.[118] On 25 February 1941, 200–250 Jews from Płock (mainly women and children) were deported to Stopnica. At the end of 1940 or the beginning of 1941, 150 arrived in Wiślica.[119]

The most significant number of deported Jews was in the Chmielnik ghetto. In the summer of 1940, 1,150 Jews were deported to Chmielnik, coming mainly from Glinice and from Łódź. Transports of deportees from Cracow and Warsaw also

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[113] Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim*, pp. 138–139.

[114] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[115] "Radom ghetto," http://www.deathcamps.org/occupation/radom%20ghetto.html (accessed 1 February 2021).

[116] *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, p. 532.

[117] The death certificates of the following persons were registered: Ita Estera Bocian, Abram Lejzor Cynaber, Ita Eliasz, Jankiel Aron Feder, Gołda Falek, Henoch Fudałowicz, Icek Gajzler, Binem Groner, Symcha Jakub Jakubowicz, Chana Łaja Kronenberg, Chaim Kuten, Moszek Josef Kuten, Uryn Jankiel Kuten, Dacha Lewitan, Abram Litman, Jakub Lejb Litman, Josef Litman, Czarna Lejzorowicz, Maks Palusiak, Jojne Szklarek, Chaja Bajla Szymanicka, Bajla Szwarc, Gitla Szwarc, Nuzyn Szwarc, Szmul Tangzuz and Juda Waserman (Registry Office in Stopnica, Civil status records of the Mosaic Faith in Chmielnik, 1941, no page numbers).

[118] Krawczyk and Maciągowski, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika*, p. 139.

[119] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 341.

arrived in the Chmielnik ghetto. The Jews from the surrounding villages of Drugnia, Piotrkowice, Przededworze and Śladków were also sent there. At the end of 1941, the number of inhabitants of the Chmielnik ghetto reached 8,000. In October 1942, it rose to 13,000 people.[120] Jews from various parts of occupied Poland were also deported to Stopnica. In 1941, Jews from Łódź and Cracow were brought to the town. On 8 March 1941, the Jewish Social Self-Help reported: "The situation of all the displaced persons staying here – disastrous. They are all staying all the time in three collective points: in one synagogue, there are 110 people; in another, there are 50 people; and in one large room, there are about 40 people. They are all lying on the floor […] Several adults and children are sick. Two persons have died."[121] In 1942, additional Jews from the surrounding villages were brought in. In April 1942, about 5,300 Jews lived in the Stopnica ghetto.[122]

As for Nowy Korczyn, in the first half of 1941, Jews from Łódź, Kielce, Radom, and Warsaw came to the town. The number of Jews in May 1941 oscillated around 3,559.[123] In October 1942, 4,200 Jews lived in Nowy Korczyn. Jews from Głowno near Łódź, Cracow, Łódź, Radom and Warsaw were also deported to Pacanów. In May 1941, the number of Jews in Pacanów reached 2,645 (including 785 refugees).[124]

Unlike Stopnica or Chmielnik, the ghetto in Pińczów was inhabited by far fewer Jews – in June 1942, 3,554 people lived there.[125] Compared to the ghettos in the first two towns, the ghetto in Pińczów was characterised by a relatively small number of deportees. Undoubtedly, the conditions there were much more difficult. In September 1939, 82% of Pińczów was destroyed as a result of the criminal activities of the Germans. The city was deprived of its numerous bakeries, shops and

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[120] AIPN, GK, Questionnaires. Executions. Graves: Kielce voivodeship, vol. 1: Questionnaires concerning mass executions and mass graves – Kielce voivodeship, 163/47, Questionnaires concerning camps, 24 October 1945, fols 367–368.

[121] AŻIH, ŻSS, Correspondence between the Presidium of the ŻSS and the Delegation of the ŻSS in Stopnica, 211/933, Letter to the Advisor of the ŻSS to the Head of the District in Radom, 8 March 1941, fol. 1.

[122] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 322.

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[125] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

warehouses.[126] The situation of the local Jews was tragic; the number of deportees was 197 in November 1940. In January 1941, it rose to 218.[127]

Wiślica was the destination of deportations of Jews from Cracow, Łódź, Sandomierz and Warsaw. In April 1942, 2,165 Jews lived in the Wiślica ghetto, including 728 deportees.[128] A low number of deportees also characterised the Szydłów ghetto. In May 1941, it was inhabited by 770 Jews (including 170 deportees). In September 1941, this number went up to 1,004 people.[129]

As a result of the numerous deportations, the ghettos in Kreis Busko became overcrowded, which subsequently led to the proliferation of diseases. In the ghetto in Pacanów, 12–13 people lived in one room, while in Nowy Korczyn, 12.[130] In Busko-Zdrój, there were as many as 20. Due to the high population density and the terrible sanitary conditions, a typhus epidemic broke out in almost all the ghettos. In 1941, 100 people died of typhus in Chmielnik. Most of those who fell ill were displaced persons and the poorest of the town's inhabitants. To combat the epidemic, the Jewish Council opened a hospital. In May 1941, it had 27 patients.[131]

Gradual isolation from the outside world and deteriorating material conditions forced ghetto inhabitants to establish contacts with the Aryan side, primarily to obtain food. Despite the looming threat of capital punishment for leaving the ghetto, some Jews ventured out to purchase food. Food was also smuggled into the ghettos by Polish peasants. Jews from the Pacanów ghetto bought fish, eggs and tomatoes from local farmers.[132] In the Stopnica ghetto alone, 400 people,[133] i.e. 8.6% of its inhabitants, died in 1941 of starvation and disease. The figures appear to be inflated. According to the civil registration records of the Jewish community in Stopnica, in the Stopnica ghetto, compared to 1940, the Jewish

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[126] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Zbrodnie Wehrmachtu we wrześniu 1939 r. na terenie Pińczowa," https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/85883,Zbrodnie-Wehrmachtu-we-wrzesniu-1939-r-na-terenie-Pinczowa.html (accessed 16 January 2023).

[127] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 276.

[128] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[131] AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/301, Letter to the Presidium of the Jewish Social Self-Help Organisation, 20 May 1941, p. 30.

[132] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 274.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

death rate in 1941 increased by half (48 death certificates for 1940 and 96 for 1941).[134] In the Chmielnik ghetto, compared to 1939, the mortality rate almost tripled in 1941 (71 registered death certificates in 1939 and 196 in 1941). Death certificates of Jews from Nowy Korczyn also show an increase in mortality. In 1939, 26 deaths were registered, and in 1940 – 34, 1941 – 34, and 1942 – 56. In 1942, the last death certificate was registered on 24 March. In the civil status records of the Jewish denomination in Pacanów, 19 death certificates were found for 1940 and 1941 – 34.

Living conditions in the ghettos of the Kreis Busko area were generally no different from those in the ghettos of the entire Radom district. Overcrowding, collective and individual murders, confiscation of property, displacement and heavy labour were the order of the day. To determine the mortality rate in the ghettos in the Kreis Busko area, the author analysed the civil status records of the Jewish community in Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów, Stopnica and Szydłów. Unfortunately, no records have survived from Pińczów and Wiślica. It should also be noted that the deaths for 1942 are only documented by the Jewish registry office in Nowy Korczyn. Given that the German policies resulted in a severe decline in the living conditions of the Jewish community (escalating hunger, impoverishment, and lack of medical care), the author of this article viewed all individuals who passed away between 1939 and 1942 (even those from natural causes) as casualties of German crimes. As part of a project entitled "The Terror of the Occupation in the Polish Lands 1939–1945," the author researched the fatal victims in the Kreis Busko area. According to her findings, at least 60 Jews were killed in 1939,[135] 71 in 1940, 332 in 1941, and 80 between the beginning of 1942 and the summer of that year. These figures must be increased by the deaths of those who could not be identified by name. It can be assumed that the number of deaths of Jews who lived permanently or temporarily on the territory of the Kreis Busko from September 1939 to mid-1942 was much higher.

[134] Urząd Stanu Cywilnego w Stopnicy [Registry Office in Stopnica], Civil status records of the Mosaic faith of the synagogue district in Stopnica, 1941, no page numbers.

[135] We are talking about people whose personalities have been established. As mentioned above, in September 1939, at least 135 Jews were killed in the area of the future Kreis Busko.

In late 1939 and early 1940, the first forced labour camps for the Jewish population (*Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden*, *Julag*) were established.[136] The operation of the camps was also regulated by an order of 20 November 1939 issued by Karl Lasch, the head of the Radom district. Jewish individuals ranging in age from 12 to 60 were compelled to perform forced labour. They had to work in the camps for two years. However, the stay could be extended indefinitely, according to Lasch's order. One of the first labour camps in the Kreis Busko area was established in Słupia in 1941.[137]

It was located in Błonie Ratajskie, about 3 kilometres from Pacanów. Initially, the camp housed Jews from Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów and Stopnica. The Romani were also sent there. The camp was supervised by German military police officers from the outposts in Słupia and Busko-Zdrój.[138] On average, 180 to 200 prisoners were held there. Its area was fenced off with a triple barbed wire fence 2.5 metres high. Behind the wall on the western side was a 3-metre wide and 3.5-metre deep canal dug out. Inside the camp, there were five barracks. The three smaller ones were designated for the functionary prisoners, as well as the kitchen, storerooms and the guardhouse. The two more extensive barracks housed the prisoners. They slept on bunk beds of wood and straw.

The conditions in Słupia were harsh. Washing was done in tin troughs filled with water from the canal. As a result of the poor hygienic conditions, an epidemic of typhus broke out in the camp, and the prisoners often suffered from stomach problems. The food was terrible. After the morning roll call, prisoners were given sliced black bread, a spoonful of jam or fish paste, and black cereal coffee without sugar. Dinner consisted of beetroot or turnip soup. Supper was the same as breakfast. They also ate chestnut soup. The prisoners worked on the construction of drainage canals.[139] Violence was used often. Jan Zdyb, who worked on the

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[136] M. Wardzyńska, "Obozy niemieckie na okupowanych terenach polskich," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* 4 (2009), p. 28.

[137] J. Marszałek, *Obozy pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin, 1988), p. 152; see *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945. Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw, 1979), p. 457.

[138] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Działalność obozu pracy w Słupi na terenie Kreishauptmannschaft Busko," https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/78082,Dzialalnosc-obozu-pracy-w-Slupi-na-terenie-Kreishaup-tmannschaft-Busko-w-latach-1.html (accessed 3 February 2020).

[139] AIPN, Questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, 1968–1972, 2448/321, part 2, Questionnaires relating to camps, no date, fol. 743.

construction of the barracks, testified: "I even saw a German knock a Jew into the mud and cut his throat in the mud."[140]

In 1941, the Judenrat in Chmielnik was ordered to deliver 300 people to the camp in Słupia. Under pressure from their families, Mosze (Monik) Pasternak went to Słupia. When he returned to Chmielnik, he told them about the workers' tragic situation. After some time, some of the workers returned to the town. Eventually, they all returned.[141] From the second half of 1942, Poles began to be incarcerated in the Słupia camp. At that time, its character was changed to penal (Straflager). Mainly, farmers who failed to meet their quota deliveries were imprisoned there.

The next *Julag* in the Kreis Busko area was the Biechów Dolny camp, which operated from spring to autumn 1942.[142] It was located next to the road, probably in the stables that had belonged to Jan Popiel before the war. Mainly, Jewish men from Stopnica and Pacanów were incarcerated in the camp. The average number of prisoners was 200. The gendarmerie from Nowy Korczyn exercised supervision. The camp consisted of two wooden barracks. The living conditions, just like in Słupia, were harsh. The prisoners slept on the ground, on straw. They worked at excavating canals. Violence was often used against them. The food was terrible. The local population provided food for the Jews.[143] In the autumn of 1942, the Jews were rushed to Szczucin to the railway station, from where they were transported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Jews in Jails and Prisons (1941–1942)

Alongside the concentration camps, the prison system was a vital part of the German terror machine. During the German occupation, prisons played a central role in the extermination of the Polish nation between 1939 and 1945. They

[140] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Murders committed against Poles and Jews in the Słupia Pacanowska labour camp 1941–1944, 53/4970, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Marcin Zdyb, 18 February 1970, fol. 18.

[141] Bender, "*Żydzi z Chmielnika*," p. 47.

[142] AIPN, Questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, 1968–1972, 2448/321, part 2, Questionnaires concerning camps, no date, fol. 734.

[143] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Files concerning crimes committed in the camp in the village of Biechów Dolny between 1942 and 1943, County of Busko-Zdrój, 53/4966, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Stanisław Kobos, 23 February 1970, fol. 14.

were used to isolate, torture and murder Poles and Jews. Prisoners were also sent to concentration camps. The most critical prisons in the Radom district had the status of a German Penal Institution (Deutsche Strafanstalt) and were part of the judicial prison system. Prisons in Częstochowa, Kielce, Pińczów, Piotrków, Radom and Sandomierz had such a profile. At the same time, in the territory of the Radom district, there were numerous county and town detention centres, as well as impromptu detention facilities for abducted persons (detention centres of full-time and extra-time gendarmerie stations).[144]

According to the research conducted by the author of this article, Jews in the Kreis Busko area were incarcerated in the pre-trial detention centre in Busko-Zdrój and the prison in Pińczów. They were not detained in Busko-Zdrój in Dr. Byrkowski's villa, in the "Versailles" villa and in the building on Kościelna Street.

The pre-trial detention centre in Busko-Zdrój was used for investigative and administrative purposes.[145] It was not uncommon for prisoners to serve short-term administrative sentences there. The detention centre operated from 1940 to 1944. It was at the disposal of the Security Police, the gendarmerie, the district office and the Labour Office.[146] Based on the surviving record book, which comprised three volumes, it can be inferred that 5,628 individuals were incarcerated there (assuming that the detention centre existed until 22 July 1944 and that the records in all the notebooks were kept in the correct order).[147]

In the county jail in Busko-Zdrój, mainly Poles were imprisoned. Jews from Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów, Pińczów and Stopnica were also sent there. Jews from outside the Kreis Busko's territory, such as Staszów, Szczucin, Tarnów and Warsaw, were also held there. On the average, the prisoners stayed there for several days. From October 1941 to May 1942, Jews were incarcerated

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[144] T. Domański, A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2011), p. 307.

[145] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "System więziennictwa na terenie Buska-Zdroju w latach 1939–1945," *Rocznik Świętokrzyski. Seria A – Nauki Humanistyczne* 36 (2021), pp. 104–105.

[146] *Ead.*, "Straty osobowe mieszkańców Kreishauptmannschaft Busko," *Wieś Polska w Czasie II Wojny Światowej* 1 (2020), p. 47.

[147] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, 5351, Report on the conduct and results of the investigation into the Nazi crimes committed in Busko, Pińczów and the Busko County, no date, fol. 112.

in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój due to various reasons, including not possessing a Kennkarte, involvement in smuggling, and leaving their place of residence without permission.[148]

During the first weeks of the German occupation, pre-war Polish identity cards were the proof of identity. From November 1939, on the territory of the General Government, it was obligatory to permanently carry an official certificate, colloquially known as a *palcówka* (a certificate containing the person's fingerprints).[149] In 1941, a *Personalausweis* (*Ausweis*) – a certificate from an employer confirming a person's employment – became the document allowing its holder to avoid trouble with the police.

Another reason for the incarceration of Jews in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój was that they were caught smuggling. Smuggling resulted from the Jewish population being granted dramatically low food rations. Difficulties in obtaining rationed food necessitated seeking contacts with the so-called Aryan side and attempting to purchase goods in short supply in the ghetto. In the Kreis Busko area, Jews from Wiślica were the leading smugglers in 1940.[150] In the early days, the penalty for Jews caught in the act of smuggling was imprisonment[151]and, later, the death penalty.

Jews were also imprisoned in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój for arbitrarily leaving their place of residence. An executive order to the Compulsory Labour Regulation of 26 October 1939, issued on 11 December 1939 by Hans Frank, re-

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[148] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, A Hitlerite prison – the pre-trial detention centre in Busko-Zdrój, vol. 1, 23 October 1941 – 1 June 1942 (1546–2796), 53/4623, no page numbers.

[149] S. Piątkowski, "'Aryjskie papiery'. Z problematyki pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w legalizowaniu fałszywych tożsamości na obszarze Generalnego Gubernatorstwa," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), p. 307.

[150] *Encyklopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, p. 341.

[151] AIPN, GK, Investigative materials of the District Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Radom committed in the municipalities of: Nowy Korczyn, Pawłów, Radzanów, Grotniki, Chmielnik, Counties of Stopnica and Busko-Zdrój. Minutes of the interrogations of witnesses, lists of German crimes (covering the locality, date of crime, kind of crime and names of witnesses), questionnaires on executions and mass graves, and correspondence. The case file concerns, among others, the investigation against Herbert Böttcher, a former SS general and the SS and Police commander (SS und Polizeiführer) in the former Radom district, 179/113, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Ignacy Struzikiewicz, 3 April 1947, fol. 94.

stricted the free movement of Jews within the General Government.[152] This was paired with stringent residence registration obligations.[153] From 1 January 1940, Jews were not allowed to change their place of residence or stay without written permission from the competent authority of the German administration. A few people were imprisoned in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój for fraud or political reasons. It was not until 1942–1943 that the record books of the county jail in Busko-Zdrój listed Jewish nationality as the reason for the arrest.[154]

In the record book, information about prisoners is entered under seven sections: name, place of residence, day of imprisonment, reasons for arrest, day of release and subsequent fate. The last of these should be approached with caution. In most cases, information appears next to the names of the Jews, stating that they were released from detention. This was a deliberate action by the German occupying forces, who thus concealed most of the crimes. Information about the shooting of Jews, inmates of the county jail in Busko-Zdrój, did not appear in the record books until 1943.[155] A significant number of Jews were transferred to the prison in Pińczów. Due to the lack of railway lines, direct transports to the concentration camps did not depart from the territory of Kreis Busko. Therefore, Jews were imprisoned in prisons in towns with railway stations, such as in Pińczów. Establishing the precise count of Jews from the Kreis Busko area who were deported to concentration camps from the Pińczów prison between 1941 and 1942 would unquestionably hold significant value.

[152] *Represje za pomoc Żydom*, p. 18.

[153] S. Piątkowski, *Radom w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945)* (Lublin–Warsaw, 2018), p. 407.

[154] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, 5351, Report on the conduct and results of the investigation into the Nazi crimes committed in Busko, Pińczów and the Busko County, no date, fol. 116.

[155] *Ibid.*, fols 84–91.

Table 3. Jews Incarcerated in the County Jail in Busko-Zdrój between 1941 and 1942, Taking into Account the Reason for Arrest, Place of Origin and Allocation[156]

Date	Number of incarcerated Jews	Name of the locality they came from	Does not have a Kennkarte	No armband with the Star of David	Leaving the town limits	Smuggling	Fraud	Number of Jews transferred to the prison in Pińczów
November 1941	21	Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Kielce, Kraków, Pacanów, Tarnów, Warsaw	17	–	–	3	1	no data available
December 1941	23	Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów	–	–	6	–	–	6
January 1942	8	Busko-Zdrój, Łódź, Słabkowice, Wiślica	–	–	3	3	–	3
February 1942	22	Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Kielce, Nowy Korczyn, Pińczów, Warsaw	–	–	10	5	–	5
March 1942	17	Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pińczów, Stopnica	–	1	5	1	–	11
April 1942	14	Chmielnik, Pacanów, Pińczów, Radoszyce, Stopnica, Szydłów and Wiślica	–	–	8	–	–	10
May 1942	17	Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Pacanów, Nowy Korczyn, Stopnica, Szydłowiec	–	–	6	3	–	7

[156] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, 53/4623, Records of prisoners incarcerated in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój, 1941–1942, no page numbers.

The Pińczów prison was the most expansive correctional facility in the Kreis Busko area, typically housing nearly 300 inmates. It occupied an area of about 2 hectares. It was surrounded by a wall over 3.5 metres high with four watchtowers. The gendarmerie from Busko-Zdrój supervised it. At first, the head of the prison was a functionary of the Polish prison guards, Michał Wataci; his successors were Gustaw Hasis (1940–1944)[157] and Alfons Keller.

At least 42 Jews from the county jail in Busko-Zdrój were taken to the prison in Pińczów between November 1941 and May 1942. Jews from the prison on Zamkowa Street in Kielce were also brought there. Only transport lists for 1941 have survived in the State Archives in Kielce. One hundred ninety-one people were transported to Pińczów in February 1941. At least ten Jews were imprisoned there at that time: Abraham Faktor, Majer Frydman, Josek Goldfinger, Zenoch Kleinstein, Chil Lewkowicz, Majer Pinkus, Izrael Pinkusowicz, Icek Salzman, Leibus Taubenblatt and Szulim Tenenbaum.

The subsequent larger transport from Kielce to Pińczów took place on 5 May 1941, at a time when 78 prisoners were taken. Among them, there were at least 8 Jews.[158] Herszel Wymysłowski arrived at the Pińczów prison on a transport on 27 May 1941.[159] One of the most numerous transports of Jews to the Pińczów prison in 1941 was probably organised on 15 October 1941. A total of 35 people of Jewish nationality were brought there.[160]

On 4 November 1941, 67 prisoners were transported from Zamkowa Street in Kielce; 8 Jews were imprisoned in the Pińczów prison: Szapsia Blankleider, Chemia

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[157] K. Trzeskowska-Kubasik, "Działalność więzienia w Pińczowie w latach 1939–1944 (dystrykt Radom)," *Archiwum Kryminologii* 43/2 (2021), doi: 10.7420/AK2021.28, p. 434.

[158] These were: Jentla Kaminer, Szmul Kochen, Dora Rajzman, Chana Rajzla Rubinowicz, Łaja Rubinowicz, Estera Basia Szpilman, Gabriel Strosberg and Motel Wajnberg (APK, Prison in Kielce, 21/186/222, Transport list, Kielce, 5 May 1941, fols 23–25).

[159] APK, Prison in Kielce, 21/186/222, Transport list, Kielce, 27 May 1941, fol. 39.

[160] These were: Estera Ajdelkopf, Łaja Cukier, Chawa Frochtman, Łaja Glajt, Tauba Goldfarb, Alta Szajndla Goldman, Gisla Grundman, Chaim Hoffenberg, Abram Jakub Najman, Szmul Lerman, Jankiel Lederman, Brucha Liberman, Chana Lerman, Joel Manela, Hersz Martyn, Mendel Martyn, Cyrla Pinkusowicz, Hinda Przytycka, Hersz Rapaport, Chil Rozenblat, Jakub Rozenblat, Mordka Rozenblat, Fiszel Rozenberg, Szaja Rzeźnicka, Gela Sztarkman, Leibus Tarnowski, Hinda Tenenbaum, Herzig Turkieltaub, Leizor Tysz, Chemia Wasserstein, Estera Zajge *vel* Zając, Perla Zylberberg, Frajda Zylbersztajn, Kalman Zylbersztajn and Moszek Leib Zysmanowicz (APK, Prison in Kielce, 21/186/222, Transport list, Pińczów, 15 October 1941[?], fols 112–113).

Freilich, Izrael Laks, Beila Itla Latasz, Wolf Mortyn, Lajbus Majerowicz, Lajbuś Pinkusowicz and Jakub Chil Sztajnfeld.[161]

Both Poles and Jews were shot outside the prison in Pińczów, at the so-called *Zawięzienie* (Area behind the prison). The executors included a Security Police officer, Johann Hansel from Busko-Zdrój, who, according to Stefan Wróbel, an inmate of the jail in Pińczów, was said to have shot at least 200 Poles and 1,000 Jews and Romani:

> During those two years in prison, Hans came from Busko twice a week, brought some victims, led them to the prison wall and shot these victims in the back of the head with a short firearm. After the executions, he would call me from the stable where I was employed and say to me, Wróbel goes to bury. […] I underline that I personally, on Hans's orders, buried at least 200 Poles and over 1,000 Jews and Gypsies. These persons were shot by Hans personally.[162]

The exact number of Jews who perished at the Pińczów prison is difficult to determine. As part of the operation code-named 1005,[163] in the second half of 1944, the Germans toured the execution sites and fenced them off. To obliterate the traces, they sprinkled the bodies of the prisoners with concentrated chlorine concentrate.[164]

There were 121 Jews incarcerated in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój from October 1941 to May 1942. Given that a list of prisoners detained between June and August 1942 is missing, it must be assumed that the number of Jews held there was higher. Both Jews living within and outside the territory of Kreis Busko were sent to the county jail – 38 were imprisoned for leaving their place

[161] APK, Prison in Kielce, 21/186/222, Transport list, Kielce, 4 November 1941, fols 65–66.

[162] AIPN, GK, The case files of, among other things, the investigation against Herbert Böttcher, former SS general and SS and Police commander (SS und Polizeiführer) in the former Radom District, 179/114, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Stefan Wróbel, 17 March 1947, fol. 121.

[163] J. Hoffman, *Dass kann man nicht erzählen. „Aktion 1005,"* (Hamburg, 2013), pp. 390–391.

[164] AIPN Ki, OKŚZpNP – IPN Kielce, Reference files of the investigation concerning crimes committed by Hitlerites in Pińczów, 53/4907, German crimes committed on the territory of the town of Pińczów. Information sheet, no date, fol. 23.

of residence, 17 for not having a *Kennkarte*, 15 for smuggling, one for fraud and one for not having an armband. Forty-two Jews were transferred to the prison in Pińczów. The fate of the remaining 79 Jews remains unknown. In 1941, 62 Jews were transported from the Kielce prison to the Pińczów prison. These figures cannot be regarded as definitive. Given that only transport lists for 1941 have been preserved in the State Archives in Kielce, it must be assumed that the number of Jews who were transferred to the prison in Pińczów from Kielce was probably much higher.

Conclusion

Due to the vastness of the subject, this publication can only touch upon certain aspects of the terror of the German occupiers against the Jewish population in the area under discussion. On the territory of the Busko district, the Germans consistently applied various forms of persecution against the Jews from the first days of the war. According to the findings of the author of this article, at least 135 Jews were killed in the area in question in September 1939. Members of the Jewish community were forced to work and were excluded from economic life. They were then persecuted in ghettos in Kreis Busko. An interesting but unexplored phenomenon is the presence of Jews in local prisons and jails. The prison system was an essential part of the German terror machine. The lack of publications on the imprisonment of Jews in the county jail in Busko-Zdrój and the prison in Pińczów is surprising. The records of the Busko-Zdrój county jail allow us to determine not only the dynamics of the incarceration of Jews between 1941 and 1942 but also their personal data and, in some cases, their fate. The author has tried to estimate the number of prisoners held. Due to the scarcity of archival sources, her findings should not be considered binding.

Individual threads probably require further research. Some sources estimate the deaths among the Jewish population from the Kreis Busko area at about 26,000 people.[165] Lists of the names of Jews who died between 1939 and 1942 while living permanently or temporarily in the above areas are virtually non-existent. It is somewhat paradoxical that 78 years after the end of the war,

[165] Faliszewski, *Kartki z przeszłości ruchu ludowego*, p. 46.

we have not seen an exact calculation of the loss of life. The vast majority of victims remain anonymous. The author of this article has established that at least 532 Jews were killed between September 1939 and the summer of 1942. These are only those whose identities have been found. It can be assumed that the number of Jews who lived permanently or temporarily in Kreis Busko between 1939 and 1942 was much higher. The figures given should indeed not be regarded as definitive, as the author continues to research fatal victims. The following table is an incomplete list of the German persecution and repression victims.

Table 4. Jews who Perished in Chmielnik, Nowy Korczyn, Pacanów, Stopnica, and Szydłów between 1939 and 1942, according to the Jewish Civil Status Records[166]

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Fajga Albirt	1932	–	Łódź	2 July 1941	Chmielnik
Hinda Baumsztajn	7 February 1871	Chmielnik	Pacanów	19 November 1940	Pacanów
Zlata Birenbaum	–	–	Stopnica	25 November 1940	Stopnica
Ita Estera Bocian	1891	–	Płock/Chmielnik	28 September 1941	Chmielnik
Abram Bomchowicz	–	–	Stopnica	20 May 1940	Stopnica
Tabla Cebulara	1882	–	Nowy Korczyn	6 January 1940	Nowy Korczyn
Estera Chmielnicka	1936	–	Chmielnik	16 May 1941	Chmielnik
Abela Czapnik	1896	Nowy Korczyn	Nowy Korczyn	8 March 1940	–
Ela Eliasiewicz	1863	–	Chmielnik	28 March 1941	Chmielnik
Golda Falek	1889	–	Płock/Chmielnik	12 October 1941	Chmielnik
Estera Perla Faktor	1919	–	Nowy Korczyn	16 February 1942	–
Chawa Finkielsztajn	1890	–	Stopnica	23 November 1940	Stopnica
Moszek Finkielsztajn	1923	Nowy Korczyn	Nowy Korczyn	17 January 1940	Nowy Korczyn
Blima Flamholc	–	–	Głowno/Chmielnik	11 April 1941	Chmielnik

[166] Sources of data: Archiwum Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego w Chmielniku [Archives of the Registry Office in Chmielnik], Civil status records of the Mosaic faith; Archiwum Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego w Nowym Korczynie [Archives of the Registry Office in Nowy Korczyn], Civil status records of the Mosaic faith; Archiwum Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego w Pacanowie [Archives of the Registry Office in Pacanów], Civil status records of the Mosaic faith; Archiwum Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego w Stopnicy [Archives of the Registry Office in Stopnica], Civil status records of the Mosaic faith.

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Izrael Frydberg	1915	–	Nowy Korczyn	4 March 1942	Nowy Korczyn
Icek Gajzler	1880	–	Płock/Chmielnik	26 August 1941	Chmielnik
Jakub Glajt	–	–	Łódź/Chmielnik	28 May 1941	Chmielnik
Abram Glicensztajn	–	–	Łódź/Chmielnik	1 February 1941	Chmielnik
Gołda Goldhersz	2 March 1862	Pacanów	Pacanów	20 April 1941	Pacanów
Chaim Icek Grorberg	1872	–	–	19 February 1940	Stopnica
Herszel Grynewize	1895	Pacanów	Kraków/Pacanów	16 May 1941	Pacanów
Szmul Gryngras	1878	Pińczów	Pińczów	7 September 1939	Pińczów
Binem Groner	1910	–	Płock/Chmielnik	8 June 1941	Chmielnik
Icek Majer Hyrszlewicz	–	–	–	26 February 1940	Wiślica
Symcha Jakub Jakubowicz	1891	–	Płock/Chmielnik	2 October 1941	Chmielnik
Abram Józefowicz	1896	–	Łódź/Chmielnik	4 October 1941	Chmielnik
Wolf Kaufman	1911	Pacanów	Pacanów	23 February 1940	Pacanów
Chana Klajner	1872	–	Stopnica	16 May 1940	Stopnica
Chana Szajndla Krypel	–	–	Łowicz/Przededworze	6 September 1941	Przededworze
Chaim Kuten	1881	–	Płock/Chmielnik	22 April 1941	Chmielnik
Moszek Kuten	1918	–	Płock/Chmielnik	28 June 1941	Chmielnik
Aaron Landau	1880	Stary Korczyn	Kraków / Nowy Korczyn	14 June 1940	Nowy Korczyn
Szmul Lederman	1857	–	Pińczów/Chmielnik	9 August 1941	Chmielnik
Arja Lemberg	1894	–	Będzin/Chmielnik	6 October 1941	Chmielnik

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Herszel Lenczner	1896	–	Szczekociny/Chmielnik	21 February 1941	Chmielnik
Abram Litman	1922	–	Płock/Chmielnik	28 March 1941	Chmielnik
Szyja Lewkowicz	1902	–	Łódź/Chmielnik	26 June 1941	Chmielnik
Chana Szajndla Luft	1909	Pacanów	Pacanów	23 May 1941	Pacanów
Estera Luft	1901	Nowy Korczyn	Nowy Korczyn	28 November 1941	–
Sura Rywa Luft	25 August 1871	Pacanów	Pacanów	10 March 1941	Pacanów
Chaim Margules	1909	Chmielnik	Chmielnik	7 September 1939	Chmielnik
Frymeta Mendrowska	1872	–	Chmielnik	14 October 1941	Chmielnik
Rywka Miodownik	1883	Pacanów	–	23 May 1940	Pacanów
Josek Moszenberg	1867	–	Chmielnik	14 October 1941	Chmielnik
Chaim-Wolf Moszkowicz	1915	Chmielnik	Chmielnik	4 September 1939	Chmielnik
Dawid Judka Munysz	18 February 1863	Stopnica	Pacanów	11 November 1940	Pacanów
Eliasz Najberg	6 June 1863	Pacanów	Pacanów	12 August 1941	Pacanów
Ajdla Niewiadowicz	1871	–	Głowno/Chmielnik	2 October 1941	Chmielnik
Estera Nizenberg	1856	–	Chmielnik	26 April 1941	Chmielnik
Fajga Nudel	1898	–	Stopnica	29 April 1941	Stopnica
Ruchla Osełka	1919	Szydłów	–	17 March 1940	Szydłów
Jakub Orman	7 June 1893	Cracow	Cracow/Pacanów	30 May 1941	Pacanów
Herszka Paprowicz	1928	–	Szydłów	31 May 1940	Szydłów
Majer Rozensztajn	1899	–	Stopnica	9 June 1941	Stopnica

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Józef Pinkus Stopnicki	21 January 1936	Tarnów	Pacanów	6 November 1940	
Lejb Stopnicki	30 November 1853	Pacanów	Pacanów	2 December 1941	Pacanów
Sala Szerok	1905	–	Cracow/ Nowy Korczyn	14 June 1941	Nowy Korczyn
Hinda Sylman	–	–	–	12 January 1942	Chmielnik
Majer Szumacher	20 January 1922	Stopnica	Stopnica	20 January 1942	Stopnica
Chaja Szymanicka	1893	–	Płock/Chmielnik	15 April 1941	Chmielnik
Beila Szwarc	1916	–	Płock/Chmielnik	21 May 1941	Chmielnik
Gitla Szwarc	1874	–	Płock/Chmielnik	8 May 1941	Chmielnik
Chawa Szwer	1917	–	Stopnica	10 April 1941	Stopnica
Jakub Szwer	–	–	–	25 May 1941	Stopnica
Icek Świczarczyk	1930	Łódź	Nowy Korczyn	25 December 1941	–
Jakub Icek Taubenblat	5 December 1882	Stopnica	Pacanów	7 April 1940	Pacanów
Szmul Tangzuza	1901	–	Płock/Chmielnik	9 August 1941	Chmielnik
Fryma Tepel	1922	Solec-Zdrój	–	13 March 1941	Solec-Zdrój
Estera Topioł	1917	Stopnica	Stopnica	24 December 1940	Stopnica
Dawid Topper	2 May 1900	Bolesław	Bolesław/Żabiec	27 June 1941	–
Berek Trombecki	1878	–	Chmielnik	6 September 1939	Chmielnik
Henoch Tudałowicz	1870	–	Płock/Chmielnik	17 August 1941	Chmielnik
Szmul Elia Wajl	–	–	Chmielnik	7 September 1939	Chmielnik
Cwetla Wajngarten	1871	–	Piotrkowice	12 August 1941	Piotrkowice

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Mosze Warm	28 October 1894	Warsaw	Cracow/Pacanów	29 October 1941	Pacanów
Juda Waserman	1890	–	Płock/Chmielnik	28 May 1941	Chmielnik
Zofia Wietczniak	1877	–	Sędziejowice	17 June 1941	Chmielnik
Icek Wilhelm	16 August 1886	–	Radom/Pacanów	3 December 1941	Pacanów
Lejb Wolf Wirerberg	19 June 1924	Pacanów	–	27 November 1939	Pacanów
Blima Wiśnicka	–	–	Pińczów	20 August 1941	Chmielnik
Cywia Wiśnicka	1898	–	Chmielnik	20 July 1941	Chmielnik
Abram Wiśnicki	1895	–	Chmielnik	19 July 1941	Chmielnik
Chana Zysla Wites	–	–	Stopnica	29 December 1940	Stopnica
Nacha Wygodna	1889	–	Śladków Mały	1 April 1941	Śladków Mały
Chana Zając	1867	–	Chmielnik	5 March 1941	Chmielnik
Perec Zajf	1921	–	Chmielnik	29 November 1939	Chmielnik
Chana Zalcberg	1882	–	–	18 March 1941	Stopnica
Dawid Izrael Zalcman	1889	–	Chmielnik	28 May 1941	Chmielnik
Mendel Zandperl	1904	–	Nowy Korczyn	23 February 1942	Nowy Korczyn
Moszek Hersz Zygmunt	19 August 1884	–	Pacanów	1 April 1941	Pacanów
Chil Dawid Zylberberg	1909	Działoszyce	Proszowice	8 September 1939	Nowy Korczyn
Dawid Zylberberg	–	–	–	16 December 1941	Stopnica
Icek Zylberberg	1918	–		15 February 1941	Stopnica

Name and surname	Date of birth	Place of birth	Place of residence during the German occupation	Date of death	Place of death
Izrael Zylberberg	1876	–	Stopnica	29 April 1940	Stopnica
Nachman Zylberbogen	–	–	Pacanów	18 February 1940	–
Frajda Zylberg	19 July 1893	Pacanów	Pacanów	18 February 1940	–
Machla Zylbersztajn	1902	–	–	26 January 1942	Nowy Korczyn
Masza Zylbersztajn	17 August 1938	Pacanów	Pacanów	2 June 1940	Pacanów
Szlama Zylbersztajn	1901	–	Busko-Zdrój	19 February 1942	Nowy Korczyn
Chaja Gitla Zyngier	14 July 1890	Pacanów	Pacanów	21 November 1941	Pacanów
Czarna Zyngier	1873	–	Stopnica	30 June 1940	Stopnica
Moszek Zyngier	–	–	Stopnica	10 July 1940	Stopnica
Moszek Jankiel Zyngier	1918	–	Stopnica	3 September 1940	Chmielnik
Chaja Sura Zysman	–	–	Stopnica	18 September 1940	Stopnica
Szyja Zysmanowicz	1898	Pacanów	Pacanów	10 March 1941	–
Szmul Żaba	1872	–	Maleszowa	30 July 1941	Piotrkowice
Sura Rywka Żabner	1928	–	Stopnica	12 July 1940	Stopnica
Małka Żelazko	1867	–	Śladków Duży	15 May 1941	Śladków Duży
Mosze Żeleman	1873	–	Stopnica	21 May 1941	Stopnica
Judka Żeleman	1874	–	Stopnica	9 August 1941	Stopnica

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SUMMARY

The subject of this article is the German persecution and repression of the Jewish population in the Kreis Busko area between the autumn of 1939 and the summer of 1942. In 1941, 26,459 Jews lived in this area. The starting point of the publication is a discussion

of the crimes committed by the Wehrmacht against the Jews in September 1939 on the territory of the pre-war county of Stopnica. The author presents the various forms of German persecution and repression: forced labour and the elimination of Jews from economic life, as well as restrictions on freedoms. Living conditions in the ghettos in the Kreis Busko area are also discussed. A separate section is devoted to the imprisonment of Jews in the Busko-Zdrój county jail and the Pińczów prison. An attempt was also made to estimate the number of deaths among the Jewish population in the Kreis Busko area between 1939 and 1942.

KEYWORDS

Radom district • German repression • ghettoisation • the prison system • deaths/fatal victims

STUDIES
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THE GERMAN MUNICIPALITY-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION IN THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS SURVIVING RECORDS FOR THE STUDY OF POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS. THE EXAMPLE OF THE RADOM DISTRICT

Polish-Jewish relations in the General Government (GG), which was only a part of the occupied Polish territories, is an extensive subject. It encompasses the complexity of the attitudes of Poles towards Jews and Jews towards Poles, taking into account the reality imposed by the occupying German authorities that determined the fate of both nationalities. Since it was in the GG that the German state first massively and structurally persecuted the Jews and then committed genocide against them, researchers have drawn on a variety of sources to describe the factors that shaped ethnic and social relations between the Polish majority and the Jewish minority under the conditions created by the occupier.

The comprehensive body of literature on Polish-Jewish relations that has been published indicates that aspects of the occupation are dispersed across a wide array of archival materials. These materials are housed in Polish institutions and foreign entities in countries such as Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[1]

[1] For more, see A. Skibińska, in collaboration with M. Janczewska *et al.*, *Źródła do badań nad zagładą Żydów na okupowanych ziemiach polskich. Przewodnik archiwalno-bibliograficzny* (Warsaw, 2007). The other co-authors include Dariusz Libionka, Witold Mędykowski, Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, Jakub Petelewicz, and Monika Polit.

Many documents related to this subject have been published as source editions. It is impossible to list them all here. It suffices to point to the monumental work of the Ringelblum Archive,[2] published by the Jewish Historical Institute. Hundreds of memoirs by Holocaust survivors have also been published, revealing the Polish-Jewish context, including the experiences and perspective of children: *Dzieci żydowskie oskarżają* (Jewish Children Accuse),[3] *Dzieci Holokaustu* (Children of the Holocaust),[4] and *Czarny rok… czarne lata…*(Dark Year…Dark Years…).[5]

When writing about Polish-Jewish relations under German occupation, one can, quite obviously, also try to identify sources relating to the narrower problem of mutual relations, for example help given to Jews (including published sources)[6] or, at the opposite extreme, the betrayal and denunciation of Jews. In the latter case, the basis for the research reflections is the archival materials from criminal proceedings initiated under the PKWN Decree of 31 August 1944 on the punishment of fascist-Hitlerite criminals guilty of murdering and mistreating the civilian population and prisoners of war, as well as traitors to the Polish Nation, i.e. the so-called August decree-related files.[7] Sometimes, a more detailed examination

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[2] So far, 36 volumes of this publication have been published.

[3] *Dzieci żydowskie oskarżają*, ed. by K. Czarnota (Warsaw, 1993).

[4] *Dzieci Holokaustu mówią*, ed. by K. Meloch and H. Szostkiewicz (Warsaw, 2012).

[5] *Czarny rok… czarne lata…*, ed. and footn. by W. Śliwowska, forew. by W. Śliwowska and K. Meloch, afterw. by M. Turski (Warsaw, 1996).

[6] See A. Krochmal, "Problem pomocy Żydom w czasie II wojny światowej jako aktualny postulat badawczy," *Prace Historyczno-Archiwalne* 17 (2006), pp. 215–223; *ead.*, *Pomoc Żydom podczas II wojny* światowej *w* świetle źródeł *archiwalnych* (Przemyśl, 2018); *ead.*, "Pomoc Żydom w czasie II wojny światowej w świetle polskich i niemieckich źródeł archiwalnych," in *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-żydowskich w XX wieku*, ed. by E. Czop and E. Rączy (Rzeszów, 2009), pp. 38–55; *Pomoc Żydom podczas II wojny* światowej *w źródłach archiwalnych. Zbiór studiów*, ed. by A. Krochmal (Przemyśl, 2021); W. Mijal, "Realizacja programu INDEX w Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde," *Szczeciński Informator Archiwalny* 19 (2006), pp. 169–182; *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, select. and ed. by S. Piątkowski, vol. 1: *Dystrykt warszawski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Lublin–Warsaw, 2018), vol. 2: *Dystrykt krakowski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Lublin, 2020), vol. 3: *Dystrykt lubelski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Lublin–Warsaw, 2020), vol. 4: *Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Warsaw, 2020), vol. 5: *Dystrykt Galicja Generalnego Gubernatorstwa i Wołyń* (Lublin–Warsaw, 2021).

[7] A fairly extensive literature has already been published, emphasising the negative context of Poles' attitudes towards Jews during the Second World War, and using as a source the so-called August Decree-related files; see, i.a., *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vol. 1–2, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018); B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień. Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw, 2011); J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium z dziejów pewnego powiatu* (Warsaw, 2011); R. Gieroń, *Półmrok. Procesy karne w sprawie przestępstw okupacyjnych popełnionych przez chłopów wobec Żydów w województwie*

of the typology of sources, while ignoring their archival topography to focus on their record-forming structure,[8] can reveal unexpected similarities. The reason for this is that a great deal of space is taken up by Jewish and Polish testimonies (elicited sources) and post-war criminal files, the files mentioned above relating to the trials conducted under the August Decree. Numerous accusations of the lack of credibility and impartiality have been made against the latter archival corpus due to the historical circumstances of its creation. Irrespective of research disputes, it is based on the August Decree files that the story of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation, especially in the Polish provinces, is intensively shaped.[9]

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krakowskim (Cracow, 2020). There is an unquestionable lack of source studies on the so-called August Decree-related files. From this area see T. Domański, "Postępowania sądowe z dekretu z 31 sierpnia 1944 r. jako źródło do dziejów relacji polsko-żydowskich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem procesów tzw. sierpniówkowych na przykładzie powiatu kieleckiego," in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku. Badania – kontrowersje – perspektywy*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2021), pp. 127–151; T. Domański, "Z historii oddziału 'Wybranieckich,' czyli o wiarygodności materiałów śledczych i operacyjnych UB," *Arcana* 106–107 (2012), pp. 253–279 (Part 1); *Arcana* 109 (2013), pp. 120–144 (Part 2); *id.*, "'Sierpniówki' jako źródło do dziejów Armii Krajowej w Okręgu Radomsko-Kieleckim na przykładzie procesów przed Sądem Okręgowym, Sądem Apelacyjnym i Sądem Wojewódzkim w Kielcach. Wybrane problemy badawcze," in *Z dziejów Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, ed. by J. Gapys and T. Domański (Kielce, 2016), pp. 167–217.

[8] This standpoint is suggested by Krochmal, *Pomoc Żydom w czasie II wojny* światowej, pp. 40–42.

[9] The most comprehensive study devoted entirely to the August trials came from the pen of Andrew Kornbluth (*The August Trials. The Holocaust and Postwar Justice in Poland* [Cambridge–London, 2021]), to some extent following up on the previous ideas put forward by the author (*id.*, "'Jest wielu Kainów pośród nas.' Polski wymiar sprawiedliwości a Zagłada, 1944–1956," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 9 [2013], pp. 157–172). Kornbluth's work draws a picture of Polish-Jewish relations which, according to the scholar, emerges from the trials for "meeting the German authorities half-way/going along with the German authorities," in the shortest terms, this picture can be described as follows: most of the crimes depicted in his book took place without the knowledge or presence of the Germans or even German involvement at all. Often, the seizing and killing of Jews by "neighbours," Kornbluth argues, was the result of a joint effort of the local community without "direct German involvement" (*id.*, *The August Trials*, p. 47). Finally, according to the author, the evidence presented during the trial reveals that the involvement of Poles in the "ethnic cleansing" of their Jewish neighbours, especially in the countryside, was more enthusiastic, more sophisticated and more widespread than previously thought (*ibid.*, p. 169). Kornbluth's theses would deserve a detailed review. At this point, I will point out that one can, of course, agree with Kornbluth that some of the crimes committed against the Jews by some Poles took place without German knowledge. There was overzealous involvement and various forms of physical violence during the seizing of the Jews, but the thesis that there was no German involvement in the process is completely wrong and is contradicted by the elementary knowledge derived from reading the "August Decree files" (see 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*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski, introduction by K. Persak, [Warsaw, 2011], p. 349; Gieroń, *Półmrok*, pp. 119–122).

Surprisingly absent from previous research on Polish-Jewish relations in the GG between 1942 and 1945 is the archival legacy of the lowest level of the German civil administration of the occupied territories – the files of the municipalities. Under the order of 27 June 1940, Governor General Hans Frank established unions of municipalities (Gemaindeverbände) in the GG, covering counties within the former inter-war borders. The unions of municipalities took over the assets of the pre-war local government units but were not their legal successors, as they were local government units in name only. Mayors and village leaders[10] became henceforth functionaries of the occupation administration, which used local government structures only as its executive bodies.[11] In this manner, Germans wiped out the authentic pre-war Polish local government and created captive bodies to realise their aims. Mayors were appointed by the governor (head of the district) and village leaders by the German starost. In light of these findings, the presentation of the role of a mayor, village leader or sub-village leader as an intermediary between the German authorities and the local community should be considered only partially correct.[12] In the occupation system, these officials were an essential part of the German authority, albeit composed of Poles. Of course, it should be remembered that Germans and Volksdeutsche also held the functions of mayors or village leaders in the district. Therefore, voices speaking about a "German-Polish" administration are entirely wrong, and they flat-out distort the reality of the occupation[13] since there was no such administration.

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[10] In Polish: *sołtys*.

[11] For more see C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1, (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 215–216; W. Kozyra, "Okupacyjna administracja niemiecka na ziemiach Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1939–1945," *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska* 60/1 (2013), Sectio G, pp. 45–46; A. Wrzyszcz, "Administracja terytorialna w ustawodawstwie okupanta niemieckiego w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie (1939—1944). Part 1 (1.09.1939 – 31.07.1940)," *Z Dziejów Prawa* 12/20 (2019), pp. 617–636.

[12] Such a view is presented by Alina Skibińska ("Dostał 10 lat," p. 349) and Bartłomiej Ługowski. According to Ługowski, "The mayors became intermediaries between the German occupation authorities and the local population. Their main task became to communicate the occupant's orders and to implement them. To this end, it became necessary to hold conferences of mayors from the whole county at the starost's office, as well as conferences in the buildings of the municipal offices of the village leaders from the whole municipality, at which the mayor passed on the current orders of the starost and instructed them to announce them to the population in a customary manner." (B. Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów gmin wiejskich w dystrykcie lubelskim Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w latach 1939–1944," *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego* 21 [2018], p. 337).

[13] Engelking and Grabowski, "Wstęp," in *Dalej jest noc*, p. 19.

The main difficulty in researching the production of the municipal offices is that it is highly incomplete. During the war, the records were systematically destroyed by underground organisations that wanted to make the task of the German administration more difficult.[14] Documents were also destroyed at the time of the German withdrawal and the Soviet invasion. Probably due to the state of preservation of the source material, many works dealing with Polish-Jewish relations lacked references to the records of the municipal administration. Suffice it to say that municipal archives, with a few exceptions, are practically absent in the book *Dalej jest noc* (Night Without End).[15] Even Bartłomiej Ługowski, in his interesting study on the operation of the rural municipal offices in the Lublin district, did not devote a single sentence to the Jewish question.[16]

Against the background of the general neglect in this area, the research of Dagmara Swałtek (Swałtek-Niewińska) stands out positively. A few years ago, based on the preserved documentation of the municipality of Wawrzeńczyce (Kreis Miechów, Cracow district), she attempted to depict the fate of the local Jewish community during the Second World War. However, some of the author's formulations or conclusions should be considered debatable. Concluding her reflections, Swałtek wrote, among other things:

> Municipal officials did not make decisions about the life or death [of Jews – T.D.]. Nevertheless, without the detailed censuses of the Jewish population, the compilation of documents from the registers and all other information provided by the mayors, the deportation and murder of the Jewish population would have been much more difficult. The municipal officials, of course, could not have

[14] In the Kreis Busko, one of the ways of protecting files from destruction by underground troops was to keep the documentation in the offices of the union of municipalities' boards; see Archiwum Państwowe w Kielcach [State Archives in Kielce, hereinafter APK], Files of the Municipality of Busko, 1067, Letter of the Board of the Union of Municipalities (Gemeindeverband) Kreishauptmannschaft Busko to all mayors and municipalities in the county, Busko-Zdrój, 15 June 1944, p. 4.

[15] See bibliography in *Dalej jest noc*, pp. 647–670. A particularly characteristic example of this is the lack of files from the municipality of Czarnocin, located within the Kreis Miechów, whose file legacy from the German occupation amounts to more than 300 archival units. Also Jan Grabowski's book (*Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium z dziejów pewnego powiatu*, [Warsaw, 2011]) failed to use municipal records.

[16] Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów gmin wiejskich," pp. 333–345.

foreseen how the occupiers would use the materials provided, but they unwittingly became one of the tools of the Holocaust.[17]

The Germans applied similar mechanisms to the Judenrats to force them to perform various tasks. In this interpretation, each of these institutions was an unwitting tool of the German Holocaust policy. Regardless of the interpretative issues, however, Swałtek has thoroughly demonstrated the usefulness of municipal records for the detailed study of Polish-Jewish relations and, in particular, the coercion of officials at the lowest levels of the German administration to implement anti-Jewish policies.

In the case of the Radom district,[18] rural community records are deposited in four state archives: in Częstochowa, Kielce (with a branch in Sandomierz), Piotrków Trybunalski (with a branch in Tomaszów Mazowiecki) and Radom. Przemysław Snoch, Łukasz Guldon and his mother Romana, Krzysztof Urzędowski and Sebastian Piątkowski commented on their significance for regional studies of Polish-Jewish relations. However, the analysis was basically limited to listing specific record groups without a scholarly exploration of their content.[19] The available materials are discussed similarly in the guide edited by Alina Skibińska. The authors mentioned only in passing the presence of the Holocaust threads (implicitly also the question of Polish-Jewish relations) in the rural municipalities' records, concentrating on municipal and starosty records (for example in the State Archives in Częstochowa,

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[17] D. Swałtek, "*Żydzi i zagłada Żydów z Wawrzeńczyc w świetle akt gminnych,*" in *Zarys krajobrazu*, p. 190. The same tasks were performed by the Judenrats. In this interpretation, each of these institutions was an unwitting tool of the German Holocaust policy. On the activities of the Judenrats, see B. Engelking, "Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego," in *Prowincja noc. Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim*, ed. by B. Engelking, J. Leociak, and D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 119–221.

[18] In this article, I have not considered the general characteristics of the Radom district, as these issues have been discussed many times. From the abundant literature, see i.a. S. Piątkowski, *Okupacja i propaganda. Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w publicystyce polskojęzycznej prasy niemieckiej* (Lublin–Radom, 2013), pp. 19–39.

[19] P. Snoch, "Materiały do dziejów Żydów w zasobie Archiwum Państwowego w Częstochowie," in *Źródła archiwalne do dziejów Żydów w Polsce*, ed. by B. Woszczyński and V. Urbaniak, (Warsaw, 2001), pp. 109–115; K. Urzędowski, "*Źródła do historii Żydów w Polsce w Archiwum Państwowym w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim,*" *in ibid.*, pp. 255–257; R. Guldon, "*Źródła do historii Żydów w zasobie Archiwum Państwowego w Kielcach,*" *in ibid.*, pp. 181–191; S. Piątkowski, "*Źródła do dziejów ludności żydowskiej w XVII–XX wieku w zasobie Archiwum Państwowego w Radomiu,*" *in ibid.*, pp. 323–325; R. Guldon and Ł. Guldon, "Akta z okresu okupacji hitlerowskiej w archiwach państwowych województwa świętokrzyskiego," *Almanach Historyczny* 3 (2001), pp. 203–217.

in the State Archives in Kielce). The usefulness of municipal records was somewhat more clearly indicated in the case of the State Archives in Piotrków Trybunalski and Radom.[20] So far, however, there has been no detailed qualitative analysis of municipal records of the Radom district in terms of their usefulness for the study of Polish-Jewish relations. Filling the above research gap is the aim of this sketch.

To begin with, it's crucial to acknowledge that municipal records play a key role in understanding Polish-Jewish relations during the war. These records provide insight into the backdrop of the occupation and the functioning of the most basic tier of German administration, primarily made up of local people within a system established and overseen by the Germans. The individual units of the archives mainly contain correspondence (orders) sent by the German starosts (district heads) directly or through unions of municipalities to the boards of individual municipalities or mayors and village leaders for their immediate execution. The municipalities then reported to the German starost's office on the extent to which they had carried out the tasks imposed on them. The scope of activities involved was fairly uniform throughout the GG.[21] The circulation of correspondence proves the totality of the German occupation.[22] The German starosts imposed on mayors and village leaders an obligation to send every last piece of information necessary for the efficient management of the conquered area and for economic and human exploitation, such as the population size of the individual villages, maps and communication layout of the villages; the number of men able to work; the size and productivity of farms; the amount of livestock owned or the number of bicycles. The starosts even wanted information on scrap metal collection campaigns in progress or maintenance of the graves of German soldiers.[23] Numerous orders concerned reporting on forced labour, including constructing and upkeeping roads, deforesting areas, and providing unpaid horse-drawn transport services, among other duties.[24] All orders were

[20] Skibińska in collaboration with M. Janczewska *et al.*, *Źródła do badań nad zagładą*, pp. 45–46, 52–53, 66.

[21] Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów gmin wiejskich," pp. 333–345.

[22] This state of affairs is reflected in most detail in the reports of the conferences of the village leaders that have survived.

[23] Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów gmin wiejskich," pp. 338–339.

[24] Archiwum Państwowe w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim [State Archives in Piotrków Trybunalski, hereinafter APP], Records of the Municipality of Gorzkowice [hereinafter AGG], 531, Letter of the Mayor of the Municipality of Gorzkowice to the Starost Office's Department of Economy in Piotrków Trybunalski,

made public. At the same time, the German supervisors attached great importance to poster campaigns and the organisation and maintenance of notice boards.[25]

The surviving municipal correspondence shows very clearly that village leaders were forced by the German authorities to participate in the deportation of people for forced labour.[26] The German occupation system not only assumed that the responsibility for the preparation of the labourers' lists was transferred to the municipal committees but also made the village leader a kind of hostage to the execution of the imposed amount of labour. Here is an example from the municipality of Rzeczniów (Kreis Iłża):

> According to the distribution list sent by the relevant authorities, the quota of persons to be sent to the Reich for agricultural labour in that community is four persons. I therefore instruct you to bring, together with the Recruitment Committee and the Village Police [Blue Police] on 30 March 1943, one person as a partial quota to the local Municipal Board. As this is the final quota, bringing in one person on the date above is mandatory. Any evasion of this will be severely punished, and in the case of a greater offence, even severe imprisonment [is envisaged]. An alternate way to express this could be: The individual presented to the Board must fulfil all the prerequisites for departure and subsequent work.[27]

Gorzkowice, 21 November 1940, no page numbers. The village leaders were also obliged to send lists of names of the inhabitants of each village who had not turned up for forced labour. Such lists were sent to the municipalities (see APP, Records of the Municipality of Woźniki [hereinafter AGW], 833, Report of the Village Leader of Kozierogi, Kozierogi, 29 September 1944, no page numbers).

[25] APK, Records of the Municipality of Końskie [hereinafter AGK], 214, Minutes No. 2 from the meeting of village leaders, Przyborów, 30 January 1940, p. 10; APK, AGK, 313, Letter of the Końskie Kreishauptmann Albrecht to mayors of all municipalities in the county, Końskie, 6 August 1940, p. 330; *ibid.*, Letter of the Końskie Kreishauptmann Albrecht to all mayors and village leaders, Końskie, 24 October 1940, p. 91; *ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the municipality of Końskie to the board of the municipality of Końskie, Końskie, 11 November 1940, p. 90.

[26] On the deportation of forced labourers from the Western parts of the Radom district, see R. Kotewicz, "Grabież i eksploatacja ekonomiczna przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na terenie powiatu tomaszowskiego," *Biuletyn Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Łodzi Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* 5 (1997), pp. 102–119. The article underlines the role of the village leader forced by Germans to take part in this system of exploitation.

[27] Delegatura IPN w Radomiu – Wydział Archiwalny [Institute of National Remembrance Delegation in Radom – Archival Department], hereinafter AIPN Ra], Sąd Okręgowy Radom [District Court Radom, hereinafter SOR], 108/138, Letter of the mayor of the municipality of Rzeczniów to the village leader of the village of Rzeczniówek, Rzeczniów, 25 March 1943, fol. 38.

An example of another practice comes from the same village – making the rural population pay for the activities of German punitive expeditions sent against it.[28]

The principle of collective and individual responsibility was widely applied in the GG. The Germans mastered fear management to perfection. Pacifications, arrests and individual and mass executions clearly showed the consequences of not obeying the occupation laws. In addition, the linguistic layer of the orders issued played an essential role in the constant intimidation of the conquered population. For example, it is worth referring to the correspondence from the municipality of Boszczynek (correspondence from the German Starost's district in Miechów, Cracow district). In just one letter addressed by the municipality administration to the village leaders of this municipality, one can find as many as seven ultimate and arbitrary phrases: "I make you personally responsible," "village leaders who neglect their duty will be held disciplinarily accountable," "I will not tolerate this any longer,"[29] "you are to present immediately," "the village leaders are to make a meeting immediately and make the population aware of the consequences it will suffer," "you are to try by all means," "you are to report to me."[30]

The shifting of responsibility for the exploitation of people onto the shoulders of the local Polish population and the German administration, which was made up of members of that community, is therefore all too obvious. Quantifying the extent of human suffering concealed behind this dry administrative tone is impossible. The German actions led to profound social disintegration and tensions between the village leader and the other residents. It was the village leader, a policeman or, for example, a member of the quota committee with whom the Polish peasant

[28] The local village leader was made responsible for collecting the outstanding quota amounts. After the war, the village leader was prosecuted for collaboration with the occupation authorities. The documents he kept, showing that he had acted on orders from the occupying authorities, contributed significantly to his acquittal of the charge of collaboration with the Germans (AIPN Ra, SOR, 108/138, Letter of the mayor of the municipality of Rzeczniów to the village leader of the village of Rzeczniówek, Rzeczniów, 10 September 1943, fol. 40; *ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the municipality of Rzeczniów to the village leader of the village of Rzeczniówek, Rzeczniów, 23 September 1943, fol. 44; *ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the municipality of Rzeczniów to the village leader of the village of Rzeczniówek, Rzeczniów, 28 January 1943, fol. 43).

[29] Here, the board informed about two farmers locked in a camp until the milk quota is delivered (APK, Records of the municipality of Boszczynek, 482, Letter of the board of the municipality in Boszczynek to all village leaders of the groups of villages [Polish sing. *gromada*] in the municipality, Boszczynek, 28 November 1941, p. 3).

[30] *Ibid.*.

population had direct contact and whom they considered responsible for the situation. At the same time, the system of brutal terror led to abuses and crimes. Some village chiefs or other local officials eagerly took advantage of these circumstances to make profits and enrich themselves. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the post-war legal settlements, many village leaders sat on the benches of the accused.[31]

As for reducing municipalities and village leaders to the role of tools serving the occupant's interests, this also applied to the use of the local administration in the Jewish question. An analysis of the sources leads to the conclusion that rural municipalities throughout the GG carried out similar "Jewish" tasks as in the Cracow district. The extent of the duties delegated to the municipalities (despite the incomplete documentation preservation) is apparent from a parallel analysis of files from the entire Radom district. Thus, under the directives of the German local administration, a census of the Jewish population was conducted in the spring of 1940, labour cards were distributed, quotas were collected, and lists of Jewish workers (aged 16–25) for forced labour were drawn up.[32] In the early days of the occupation, German institutions employed Jewish labourers through the municipalities. The demand for a specific number of labourers was reported to the municipality, which, in turn, approached the Judenrat.[33] Also, where there were "small Jewish properties," they had to be leased to "the Volksdeutsche or Poles" with the help of the mayors.[34]

The municipalities, on German orders, played a crucial role in controlling the movement of the Jewish population. They prepared lists of names of Jews

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[31] Czesław Madajczyk, a classic historian of the German occupation in Poland, has already written about the attitude of village leaders, see C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 215–216.

[32] T. Domański, "Prześladowania Żydów na prowincji Kreishauptmannschaft Kielce w latach 1939–1941," *Res Historica* 54 (2022), pp. 481–532; APP, Records of the Municipality of Dmenin [hereinafter AG Dmenin], 680, List of Jews residing in the settlement of Teodorów, [no date, no place], no page numbers; APK, Records of the Municipality of Duraczów [hereinafter AG Duraczów], 214, Minutes No. 6 of the meeting of village leaders of the municipality of Duraczów in Pomyków, Pomyków, 9 March 1940, p. 21.

[33] Archiwum Państwowe w Tomaszowie Mazowieckim [State Archives in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, hereinafter APTM], Records of the Municipality of Będków [hereinafter AGB], 579, Letter of the board of the municipality in Będków to Mr [Icek] Lipfeld in Będków, Będków, 30 August 1940, p. 116; *ibid.*, Letter of the board of the municipality in Będków to Mr [Icek] Lipfeld, Chair of the Judenrat in Będków, Będków, 27 May 1940, p. 121.

[34] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Kreis Tomaschow's Department of Nutrition and Agriculture to the board of the municipality in Będków, Tomaschow, 24 April 1940, p. 133.

living in the municipalities and villages. They reported Jewish families who had arrived in or left the area voluntarily. Even the most minor information concerning individuals was sent to the German starost's offices.[35] It is worth noting that the visible principle of mutual control between the municipal authorities and the Judenrat in Kreis Tomaschow and Kreis Radomsko was established in an atmosphere of German administrative terror. The Tomaschow Kreishauptmann demanded information from the mayors as to whether Jews arriving in the municipal area, especially from the Reich, reported within 24 hours and whether the mayor maintained a record of individuals who reported. At the same time, he asked periodically in writing whether the Judenrat submitted the names of new arrivals.[36] The Piotrków Kreishauptmann "made all mayors personally accountable to him" for meeting the deadline for the Judenrats to complete the census of the Jewish population (6 February 1940).[37] In addition, municipal authorities headed by a mayor could issue certificates authorising Jews to leave their place of residence (a sectioned-off place), if only to go to work[38] or for medical treatment.[39] In turn, just before the deportation action, in the summer of 1942, the municipalities sent lists of Jewish houses with the amount of rent paid. The Judenrat confirmed these lists.[40] Sometimes, the mayors, as in the case of a certain Schubert in the municipality of Łazisko (with its seat in Ujazd, Kreis Tomashow), decided on the division of labour within the Judenrat, incidentally at the request

[35] APK, Records of the Municipality of Końskie, 214, Minutes No. 1 of the meeting of village leaders of the municipality of Duraczów, Duraczów, 30 January 1940, p. 5; APK, AGK, 313, Letter of the Końskie Kreishauptmann to the mayors, Końskie, 20 May 1940, p. 401; APTM, Records of the Municipality of Łazisko [hereinafter AGŁ], 223, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Łazisko to the starost's office in Tomaszów, Ujazd, 20 February 1942.

[36] APTM, AGB, 579, Letter of the Tomaszów Kreishauptmann to the mayors of the county, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, 11 April 1940, p. 149.

[37] APP, Records of the Municipality of Gidle, 32, Letter of the Radomsko Kreishauptmann to all mayors in the county, Radomsko, 30 January 1940, no page numbers.

[38] Many individual permits issued for the Jews of Będków by the mayor, Adolf Pusch, are preserved in the records of the above municipality (see APTM, AG Będków, 579, pp. 23 –30).

[39] One such example comes from the municipality of Łazisko. In December 1941, the mayor issued an appropriate certificate to Pinkus Scheinfärber permitting him to take his wife to Piotrków Trybunalski for treatment; however, in April 1942, he ordered that Genia Scheinfärber's request to go to the hospital in Piotrków be refused (APTM, AGŁ, 223, Letter of Genia Scheinfärber [Szajnferber] to the mayor in Ujazd, Ujazd, 21 April 1942, p. 16; *ibid.*, Certificate [Bescheinigung], Ujazd, 31 December 1941, p. 17).

[40] APTM, AGB, 579, Correspondence with the Ownerless and Jewish Properties Chief Administrator, pp. 50–55.

of the President of the Judenrat, Gerber. The surviving correspondence between the municipality and the Judenrat should be seen primarily in the context of the verification of the residence cards carried out by the Judenrat in Ujazd (together with the local Ordnungsdienst) by order of the German authorities just before the deportation action in 1942.[41] At the same time, the municipality of Łazisko received supplementary tasks from the starost's office of Tomaszów. Based on a verbal order, the municipality officials were to provide the starost's office with lists of all the Jewish residents of Ujazd, including the addresses where Jews lived. Indeed, such lists were prepared.[42] The local Judenrat also prepared a list of the Jews living in Ujazd.[43] In the same way, lists of names were drawn up in other municipalities in this Kreis.[44] Perhaps the German authorities in the run-up to Operation "Reinhardt" had the opportunity to verify the data from two different institutions.

The municipalities also dealt with housing matters, such as the quartering (resettlement) of Jews within their territory between individual houses. Administrative decisions were made in connection with the "housing needs of the authorities," which were distinctly underscored in the correspondence.[45] In the municipality of Łazisko, the board also allocated premises to the Judenrat and the Jewish Order Service.[46] Individual documents refer to municipal arrests of Jews whom Blue Police officers guarded. The legal basis for the detentions is unknown.[47]

Documents at the municipal level also contain traces of the process of ghettoisation within the municipalities[48] and evidence of the tragic provisioning of

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[41] APTM, AGŁ, 223, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Ujazd [Łazisko] to the board of the Judenrat in Ujazd, Ujazd, 19 June 1942, p. 23; *ibid.*, Letter of members of the Judenrat in Ujazd to the board of the Municipality of Łazisko, [4 July 1942], p. 31.

[42] *Ibid.*, [List of Jews. Groups I–IV], Ujazd, [no date], pp. 37–41.

[43] *Ibid.*, [List of names of Jews], Ujazd, 17 June 1942, p. 43 ff.

[44] APTM, AGB, 579, List, Będków, [no date], pp. 59–70.

[45] See for example APTM, AGŁ, 223, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Ujazd [Łazisko] to Mrs Piwowarska, widow of Mr Piwowarski, Ujazd, 11 February 1942, p. 7; *ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Ujazd [Łazisko] to Wojciech Pachulski, Ujazd, 11 February 1942, p. 8.

[46] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Judenrat and the Jewish Order Service to the board of the Municipality of Łazisko, Ujazd, 24 February 1942, p. 13.

[47] See *ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Łazisko to the Polish Police Station in Ujazd, Ujazd, 17 April 1942, p. 14.

[48] APP, Records of the Municipality of Pławno [hereinafter AGP], 121, Letter of the Radomsko Kreishauptmann to the mayor in Pławno, Radomsko, 31 January 1942, no page numbers.

the Jewish population in the autumn of 1939[49] and the employment of Jews in the corvée (slave labour force). Municipal documents also depict instances of indirect annihilation of Jews and the escalation of Polish-Jewish conflicts. For example, at the end of May 1942, the mayor of the municipality of Pławno demanded from the Labour Office in Radomsko that local Jews be used as corvée labour, for which he gave the following reasons:

> I would like to mention that the Polish population in Pławno is scarce [earlier in the letter he informed about the workload of Polish workers – T.D.], as a lot of young people left for agricultural work in Germany, several people work at regulating the Warta river in the Zettl company in Gidle. Jews, on the other hand, do not work anywhere; they stand and sit in front of their houses in Pławno all day long, and only a small number of Jews work at digging ditches in the Zettl Company in Gidle, but there are a lot of them in Pławno, about 500 people.

As a result, Jews were sent to "public works."[50] Thanks to the data sent by the municipalities forced to do so, the Germans took over Jewish properties, to which also the Polish population was moved.[51]

The correspondence preserved in the municipal records clearly shows that the German authorities treated the "post-Jewish" property as their own property and prosecuted all attempts by the local population to steal the property of the Third Reich.[52] Through the municipalities, a several-point "Warning" issued by the Tomaszów Kreishauptmann, Dr. Ghlen, dated 3 January 1942, related to the so-called

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[49] APTM, Records of the Municipality of Długie [hereinafter AG Długie], 323, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Długie to the starost of Kreis Tomaszów, Długie, 29 December 1939, no page numbers.

[50] APP, AGP, 121, Copy of the letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Pławno to the Labour Office in Radomsko, Pławno, 28 May 1942, no page numbers; *ibid.*, List of Jews sent to public works, Pławno, 6 June 1942, no page numbers; *ibid.*, List of workers designated to report for work on 5 June 1942, no page numbers.

[51] APTM, AGB, 579, Copy of the letter of the Radom District's Department of Economy to the municipal commissioner of Tomaszów, Będków, 9 January 1943, fol. 9; APK, AG Duraczów, 305, Letter of the board of Jewish and ownerless properties to the Municipality of Duraczów, Końskie, 21 April 1942, p. 1; APK, Records of the Municipality of Niewachlów, 47, Angaben über die ehemals jüdischen Gründstucken, [no date, no place], p. 5; APK, AGK, 313, Letter of the Końskie Kreishauptmann to the mayors, Końskie, 16 May 1940, p. 447; *ibid.*, List of the Jewish properties located on the territory of the Końskie Municipality, Końskie, 21 May 1940, p. 448.

[52] APK, AG Duraczów, 305, Letter of the board of Jewish and ownerless properties to the mayor of the Municipality of Duraczów, Końskie, 7 November 1942, p. 3.

fur action, was also distributed, which read: "Jews who are still in possession of fur coats, furs or leather after 7 January 1942 will be shot. I decree for the Tomaschow district that all purchases of fur coats, furs or leather of any kind made directly or indirectly from Jews after 2 January 1942 are made null and void." The starost further forbade the purchase of the said goods from Jews (it can be inferred that by the Christian population). He threatened: "Offences will be punished with an appropriate penalty in line with point 1. for aiding or complicity."[53] In the first point of the order, the starost threatened Jews that if they continued to possess furs after 3 January 1942, they would be shot. As far as Christians were concerned, the meaning of the order was clear: trade with the Jewish population was a crime.

Particular importance was attached to the performance of specific tasks by the municipalities, and care was taken to ensure they were duly carried out. As the German policy towards the Jews became more stringent, the tone of proclamations and orders also grew progressively stern. The Radomsko Kreishauptmann issued many orders. One example is the obligation placed on the shoulders of the village leaders to distribute the Order concerning the Restrictions on Residence in the GG for Jews of 15 October 1941.[54] The order addressed to the mayors of the municipality of Dmenin (Kreis Radomsko) read: "The village leader must warn all Jews that under no circumstances are they to leave their *gromada*. If caught, the Jew will be taken to the nearest German authority, which will hand him over to the court, for such he will face the death penalty!" The order indicated that "the execution of my order must be reported in writing to the Kreishauptmann, as the executive authority, by 6 December at the latest! I make Mr. Village Leader personally responsible for punctual and conscientious execution."[55] The village leaders were required to confirm the receipt of the order in writing.[56] The municipal authorities were to immediately put up posters "The Jew – your swindler" ("Der Jude – dein

[53] APTM, AGŁ, 196, Warning, Tomaszów, 3 January 1942, no page numbers.

[54] The records of the Municipality of Łazisko also contain the district governor's "own" order, dated 12 December 1941, restricting the right of residence of Jews in the district. The order was distributed by the Tomaszów Kreishauptmann, Dr. Ghlen (*ibid.*, Order concerning the restriction of the residence of Jews, Tomaszów, 12 January 1942, no page numbers).

[55] APP, AG Dmenin, 679, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Dmenin to a village leader, Dmenin, 5 December 1941, no page numbers.

[56] *Ibid.*

Betrüger") in all the municipalities that constituted the Kreis Radomsko. Indeed, such posters were put up already by the following day, on 6 February 1942, according to information from the municipality's mayor of Pławno, in all villages.[57] The local Kreishauptmann also made mayors and village heads responsible for producing accurate inventories of Jewish and "ownerless" houses in the autumn of 1941.[58] The order ended with an unequivocal statement: "I will impose hefty disciplinary penalties for negligent reporting."[59] And indeed, such reports were sent. When they were considered too general or incorrect, the village leader was obliged to supplement them.[60] The German orders went even further in the situation of taking a census of all representatives of this nationality living in the municipalities "or being employed by any farmer" just before the "eviction" of the Jews. For example, the mayor of the city of Dmenin, named Kirsch, warned village leaders against trying to help Jews: "I point out that if Mr. Village Leader tries to hide any Jew, he will be punished directly by the Kreishauptmann."[61]

In the municipal documents of the Radom district, there are also orders reminding of the death penalty for helping Jews in connection with their deportation to the death camps. In Kreis Busko, an order was issued by the German Starost in Busko, Dr. Schäfer, with the following content:

> Announcement. Subject: Sheltering Jewish escapees by Poles. Under Regulation No. 3 concerning the Restrictions on Residence in the General Government of 15 October 1941 […], the Board of the Municipality of Zagość hereby announces

[57] APP, AGP, 121, Report of the office of the Municipality of Pławno, [no date, no place], no page numbers.

[58] It is worth noting that the lists included Jews and Poles (APP, AGD, 679, Letter of the Radomsko Kreishauptmann to all mayors, Radomsko, 6 February 1940, no page numbers).

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] *Ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Dmenin to the village leader of the *gromada* of Dziepółć, Dmenin, 19 September 1941, no page numbers. Not all municipalities made equal efforts to draw up the inventory of assets. In the case of the Municipality of Duraczów, the chief trusteeship of the district they were threatened with handing over the case to the "district chief." The delay was about six weeks. APK, AGD, 679, Letter of the chief trusteeship office in Kreis Końskie to the mayor of the Municipality of Duraczów, Końskie, 2 February 1944, p. 4.

[61] *Ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Dmenin to the village leader of the *gromada* of Orzechówek, Dmenin, 19 August 1942, no page numbers. The list was to be extremely detailed and include name and first name, date of birth, "whose house he/she lives in, who he/she works for, is he/she married or single, comments" (*ibid.*).

> to all residents of the municipality that any Pole who takes in a Jew and shelters him shall be liable to punishment under this regulation. Also punishable by death will be the person who provides Jewish escapees or Jews who are not registered with the police with room and board or sells them food.[62]

A decree by the SS and police commander in the Radom district, Herbert Böttcher, in the autumn of 1942, was circulated through the starosts and then the municipalities (mayors, village leaders). In the peak moment of Operation "Reinhardt" in the Radom district, Böttcher "reminded" the residents that helping Jews, including trade, was liable to be punished by the death penalty.[63] In Kreis Tomaschow, the local starost made individual village leaders responsible for announcing the order in each village.[64] The content of Böttcher's order makes it clear that the Germans were aware of the mass escapes of Jews and their attempts to seek refuge on the so-called Aryan side. They, therefore, sought to prevent this by radical means.

Jewish issues were indirectly reflected in several orders and duties imposed on municipalities about maintaining "public safety" in the field.[65] German determination was by no means dictated by considerations towards the civilian population. Still, it stemmed from protecting their interests, in other words the desire to drain the economic potential of the occupied areas undisturbed. For this reason, in rural areas, the Germans resorted to tried and tested methods – terror and holding the conquered population hostage to their policies. Gradually, under the threat of numerous punishments, they forced the villagers and the local administration to participate in collective security maintenance by creating a system of watches, also known as guards and hostage-hood. Once again, the Germans resorted to the tried and tested "divide and rule" method. Apart from the Blue Police, night watches (guards)[66] and "voluntary"

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[62] APK, Records of the Municipality of Zagość [hereinafter AGZ], 19, Letter of the Kreishauptmann of Busko-Zdrój, Dr. Schäfer to all mayors of Kreis Busko, Busko, 26 September 1942, p. 57.

[63] J.A. Młynarczyk, S. Piątkowski, *Cena poświęcenia. Zbrodnie na Polakach za pomoc udzielaną Żydom w rejonie Ciepielowa* (Cracow, 2007), p. 70.

[64] APTM, AKŁ, 223, Starost of Kreis Tomaschow to all mayors, [no place], 25 September 1942, p. 82

[65] Some orders regarding proper fire equipment maintenance and fire alarms undoubtedly carried positive overtones (APP, AGW, 833, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Woźniki to the anti-aircraft defence commander, Woźniki, 14 August 1943, no page numbers).

[66] In addition to night guards, the Piotrków Kreishauptmann ordered the creation, during the 1943 harvest period, of "field auxiliaries," unknown anywhere else, in numbers – depending on the size of the village – from one to several. This order was posted in the county and communicated to village leaders

fire brigades were supposed to guarantee peace in the field. The Voluntary Fire Brigade (VFB) was recognised as a militarised unit of the German police. According to German orders, they had to be established in towns where VFBs had not previously been active. Therefore, the term "voluntary" should be written in inverted commas. Firefighters were also integrated into the SS judiciary system. According to an order handed down by the higher commander of the SS and police in the GG, the German fire brigades in the GG as "technical auxiliary police" under the SS Reichsführer's order of 8 March 1943 (in conjunction with the SS Reichsführer's order of 8 August 1942 concerning the application of the emergency judiciary of the order police and its auxiliary units) were subordinate to the SS judiciary. In turn, members of the Voluntary Fire Brigades were subject to this judiciary in the case of "general, military and criminal offences which they commit in service or a uniform." In a special order, a certain Reihnd wrote that the subordination "to the police emergency judiciary is the same as the subordination of soldiers to military courts."[67] The County Fire Instructor, in a letter addressed to the fire commanders in Kreis Tomaszów, directed that the above order be read out at a special meeting and that a case of "any misdemeanour and negligence on duty or during a fire will be considered a punishable act and may be brought before an extraordinary police court."[68]

As early as the beginning of 1941, in the Cracow District (a circular of 6 March), ten hostages (this was the term used) were appointed in each of the Kreis Miechów municipalities for two weeks. These people's names and addresses were sent to the Kreishauptmann in Miechów and the Landkomisar in Kazimierza Wielka.[69] An example of the content of the notice was as follows: "By the circular of 6 March

during a briefing. At the same time, the same Kreishauptmann who had recommended the creation of "field auxiliaries" underlined at a meeting with the village leaders that failure to turn in the quotas would be punishable by death (APP, Records of the Municipality of Gorzkowice, 634, Order of the Piotrków Kreishauptmann to all mayors, Piotrków, 22 July 1943, no page numbers).

[67] APTM, Records of the Municipality of Budziszewice, 279, Translation of the order of the Ordnungspolizei's chief, Berlin, 21 September 1943, no page numbers. For more on the judiciary of the SS in the GG, see A. Wrzyszcz, "Sądownictwo SS i policji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie (stan badań)," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 19 (2013), pp. 361–371.

[68] APTM, AG Budziszewicze, Letter of the County Fire Instructor in Tomaszów Mazowiecki to the fire commanders in the county, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, 3 November 1943, no page numbers.

[69] APK, AG Czarnocin, 1366, Letter of the board of the Municipality in Czarnocin to the Kreishauptmann in Miechów and the Landkomisar in Kazimierza Wielka, Czarnocin, 18 April 1942, fol. 25.

1941 […] the board of the municipality reports that the following residents of the municipality have been selected as hostages for the municipality here for the period from 20 April to 4 May 1942." The names are given below. The appointed men were to patrol the area and apprehend all suspicious persons, including Jews, and hand them over to the German authorities. The duties also included guarding selected buildings, such as churches and businesses.[70]

In the Radom District, orders for the formation of peasant guards were issued in the middle of 1942, and the regulations were made more specific in the following months. The essential order for Kreishauptmannschaft Kielce was given by its Kreishauptmann on 16 December 1942 (sent to the municipalities by the Board of the Union of Municipalities on 30 December 1942). The village leaders in Kreis Kielce were obliged to draw up "guard duty plans for every 14 days." It is particularly important that the names of the peasants (together with their addresses) designated as guards were to be forwarded via the village leaders to the German gendarmerie posts.[71] In addition, guards had to be instructed on how to raise the alarm most effectively and provide means of transport – bicycles or horse-drawn carts – also for 14 days.[72] This order had to be carried out by 5 January 1943. The letters dispatched by the board of the municipality of Suchedniów (Kreis Kielce) serve as compelling evidence that the order was executed entirely. The plan for night watches, drawn up by the village leaders, was sent to the German gendarmerie in Skarżysko-Kamienna. An appropriate meeting of the village leaders was also organised, during which they were instructed about the order issued by the

[70] The process of creating guards in the rural areas of the Cracow district is quite correctly discussed by Jan Grabowski. However, the author omitted the topic of sending the "guards'" personal data to the German authorities. See J. Grabowski, "Strażacy, wiejska straż nocna i granatowa policja a zagłada na obszarach wiejskich w dystrykcie krakowskim," in *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, ed. by A. Sitarek, M. Trębacz, and E. Wiatr (Łódź, 2012), pp. 252–253; J. Grabowski, "Społeczność wiejska, policja granatowa i ukrywający się Żydzi: powiat Dąbrowa Tarnowska 1942–1945," in *Zarys krajobrazu*, pp. 146–150; see also Gieroń, *Półmrok*, pp. 186–187.

[71] Also, in Kreis Tomaszów, the names of the civil guards were sent by the municipal authorities to the gendarmerie stations under Kreishauptmann's order. Extensive lists of guards from many localities have been preserved there, with a breakdown into individual shifts (see APTM, Records of the Municipality of Lubochnia [hereinafter AGL], 796, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Lubochnia to the gendarmerie post in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Lubochnia, 29 January 1943, no page numbers).

[72] APK, AGS, 47, Letter of the VdG (Board of the Union of Municipalities of the Kielce County) to the mayors of the Kreishauptmannschaft Kielce, Kielce, 30 December 1942, fol. 5.

Kreishauptmann.[73] It was incumbent on the village leader to "report to the starost's office" those evading this task.[74]

The queries conducted in the surviving records from the activities of the municipalities during the occupation make it possible to assume that in some areas of the GG, the peasants considered the compulsion to participate in the night patrolling of villages an unwanted necessity. As a result, the system proved to be inefficient. The Germans then resorted to methods which they believed would be effective in discouraging the countryside from any attempts at resistance. In January 1943, the Board of the Union of Municipalities in Kielce sent an order issued by the German Kriminalpolizei – Kripo, which read as follows:

> During the liquidation of robbery gangs, it has been found that several people from other villages are living and staying in the villages in the area of this county without registering their residence. Therefore, I instruct the Commanders to inform the local population through the mayors and village leaders that any person residing or arriving in a village should be registered immediately. At the same time, the local population should be instructed that if a person is discovered living or staying in a village without being registered, then seven inhabitants of that village will be arrested and sent to a concentration camp. Any person arriving in the village for a longer or shorter stay must be reported immediately to the police station or the mayor, who will report him to the police.[75]

According to a handwritten annotation on the document, the order was announced at the village leaders' conference and posted publicly.[76] Although we do not know the results of this order, the terrorising of the population and the use of collective responsibility must have influenced the mood of the inhabitants and, above

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[73] APK, AGS, 47, Letter of the board of the Municipality in Suchedniów to the Board of the Union of Municipalities in Kielce, Suchedniów, 14 January 1943, fol. 8.

[74] The order read: "A criminal report will immediately be made to the Starost's office about the evaders of the guard duty." (APK, AGZ, 19, Board of the Municipality in Zagość to Mr Village Leader of the village of Wola, Zagość, 7 January 1943, p. 45).

[75] APK, Records of the Municipality of Suchedniów [hereinafter AGS], 47, Copy of the letter of Kriminalpolizei Kielce to the commanders of the Polish Police posts in the Kielce county, Kielce, 5 January 1943, fol. 7.

[76] *Ibid.*.

all, created panic or at least suspicion towards all strangers in the village. Threats of immediate arrest and imprisonment for "neglecting one's duty as a watchman or cutting one's time short" were also sent to the village leaders in other Kreises, for example, Tomaschow.[77] Under no circumstances were the guards allowed to be paid any remuneration (even in kind).[78]

It is worth adding that the German control of the rural population did not only consist in making the village leader responsible for registering every stranger. There was also a provision throughout the district ordering that a list of household members (called a "Hauslista" – a name derived from the German language) be hung on the door and that a list of the inhabitants of each house be sent (and, as documents testify, it was done) to the German gendarmerie, the German starost's office and the municipality. The lists were regularly revised to reflect changes (deaths, new arrivals, departures), with the Polish community's printing expense borne.[79] This rule was introduced at the turn of 1942 and 1943. Its temporal coincidence with the ongoing deportations of Jews to death camps in the district, the attempts to prevent Jews from fleeing and finally, the development of an armed anti-German underground could not have been a coincidence. Thanks to this recommendation, the not very numerous gendarmerie knew where everyone lived. It also gained another "legal" tool for enforcing obedience. The commanders of the district gendarmerie platoons were also among those authorised to summon representatives of the local administration and give them orders. For instance,

[77] APTM, Records of the Municipality of Mikołajów, 448, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Mikołajów to the village leader of the village of Stefanów, Mikołajów, 8 March 1943, no page numbers. It is noteworthy that in the same municipality, a security order sent by a mayor called Keppler to all village leaders has been preserved. The mayor threatened all residents in areas where a local dairy existed that they would answer for it with their lives and property if the dairy were attacked (*ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Mikołajów to all village leaders in the municipality, Mikołajów, 23 September 1943, no page numbers).

[78] *Ibid.*, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Mikołajów to all village leaders in the municipality, Mikołajów, 4 May 1943, no page numbers.

[79] See also APP, AGG, 634, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Gorzkowice to the German gendarmerie in Niechcice, Gorzkowice, 22 March 1943, no page numbers; APP, Records of the Municipality of Przerąb, 85, [Information for the Municipality of Przerąb, Kreis Radomsko], 25 January 1943, no page numbers; State Archives in Kielce – Division in Sandomierz [hereinafter APKS], Records of the Municipality of Rytwiany [hereinafter AGR], 27, Minutes No. 7 of the village leaders' meeting of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 4 March 1943, p. 216; *ibid.*, Minutes No. 8 of the village leaders' meeting of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 18 March 1943, p. 217.

in the Zagość municipality, the platoon commander, via the county's Blue Police commander, called the mayor, the secretary, and the village leaders to a meeting. The "invitation" clearly stated that non-attendance could result in penalties.[80]

It is interesting to note that no German norms mention any specific tasks of the guards concerning Jews. It can, therefore, be assumed that in the Radom district, as in other areas of the GG, capturing Jews was treated as part of general activities. Most often, instructions for capturing Jews were given by the officers of the gendarmerie and civilian structures during the meetings (briefings) of the village leaders organised in the municipalities. Only a few German orders have survived, which instructed local authorities to arrest Jews.[81] In addition to those known from other areas of the GG, in the Radom district, during a meeting in the Rytwiany municipality on 24 June 1943, an order was promulgated "to deliver hiding Jews to the nearest Polish police station or German gendarmerie."[82] In any case, the village leader (or his deputy) became a central figure in the security system created by the Germans as a representative of the German authorities and the man responsible for physically delivering the captured person to the police unit.[83] Furthermore, the organised nature of this system is corroborated by the numerous testimonies of defendants and the operational pattern, which was confirmed during the August Decree trials.[84]

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[80] APK, AGZ, 19, Letter of the county Polish Police commander in Busko to the Polish Police post in Chrobrze, Busko, 17 July 1942, p. 82; *ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Zagość to village leaders, Zagość, 17 July 1942, p. 84.

[81] See Grabowski, "Społeczność wiejska," p. 154. However, there was an order introduced on 28 October and 10 November 1942 by Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, commander of the SS and Police East, ordering that the authorities be informed about Jews staying outside the "Jewish residential area." (B. Musiał and O. Musiał (collab.), *Kto dopomoże Żydowi…* [Poznań, 2019], pp. 127–130).

[82] APKS, AGR, 27, Minutes No. 19 of the village leaders' meeting of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 24 June 1943, p. 228.

[83] Night watchmen were required to stop any person after the "forbidden" hour and escort them to the village leader for a "thorough document and identity check." (APKS, AGR, 27, Minutes No. 9 of the village leaders' meeting of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 25 March 1943, p. 219).

[84] As an aside, it should be added that the Voluntary Fire Brigade was also involved in maintaining security. All VFBs were recognised as part of the non-German police forces in the GG. Volunteer firemen were not subject to deportation to forced labour in the Reich. The Germans also introduced a system of control over the fire brigades. They were subject to the emergency police courts, just as "soldiers were subject to military courts." (APTM, Records of the Municipality of Mikołajów, 448, Translation of the order of the Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei [BdO] of 21 September 1943, no page numbers).

The next stage in the entanglement of Polish society in the creation of a rural security system turned out to be the establishment of "village councils" or "*gromada* (village or village group) security councils" (Kreis Tomaschow), which took place in mid-1942.[85] The extent of the tasks that rested on these bodies is revealed in the surviving correspondence from the municipality of Zagość in Kreis Busko. Kreishauptmann Dr Wilhelm Schäfer issued the order to organise the councils on 26 June 1942. It can be assumed that it applied to the entire Kreis Busko area. Initially, the tone of Dr. Schäfer's order was relatively mild. The starost ordered the formation of a council in each village separately and the election of its members from among the wealthiest farmers. These people were to notify the nearest German gendarmerie station of the appearance of any non-resident (stranger) in the village. Only in the absence of the German gendarmerie was the Blue Police the competent authority to be approached. The village leader and the council were to organise guards of three to four men armed with sticks.[86] The subsequent correspondence leads us to believe that the establishment of councils was not uniformly seamless across all regions, and it could even be said that in some areas, it was carried out with reluctance.[87] Therefore, the starost's subsequent order on the matter was fundamentally different, clearly indicating possible repression. The council was to consist of six of the wealthiest farmers from the individual villages, who, with their own lives and property, guaranteed the proper operation of the night watches. These, in turn, were obliged to report all strangers and assaults immediately to the nearest police station (border police or German gendarmerie). The number of guards was maintained, but an additional restriction was introduced – the municipality was to be notified of the guards' names.[88] As a consequence of the new order, the board of the municipality sent out the following notices to the farmers:

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[85] The boards of the municipalities forwarded the lists of persons "elected" to security departments at the *gromada* level to the starost's office (APTM, Records of the Municipality of Czerniewice, 61, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Czerniewice to the starost's office in Tomaszów, Czerniewice, 3 July 1942, no page numbers).

[86] APK, AGZ, 19, Letter of the Kreishauptmann in Busko to all mayors and boards of municipalities in the county of Busko, Busko, 26 June 1942, p. 87.

[87] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Kreishauptmann in Busko to all mayors in the county [Busko], [Busko], 30 October 1942, p. 54.

[88] *Ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Zagość to the village leaders of the village, [Zagość], 18 November 1943, p. 43.

> Under the order of the County Starost of Busko, I appoint you as a village council member. Your duties include constant control of the night guard consisting daily of … [this in the text – T.D.] guards armed with walking sticks. You are responsible for the smooth functioning of the night watch with your life and property and for ensuring that all strangers appearing in the village are immediately reported to the police stations concerned. If bandits are present or an assault is discovered, the whole village should be immediately alerted, and the nearest police station should be notified at the same time by horse messenger. Mayor.[89]

Still, on the same day, a list of council members for each village was drawn up, with 66 people indicated by name and place of residence.[90] The German county starost appointed a night watch controller in each municipality.[91]

As mentioned above, the village leaders' meetings within the municipality were essential in transmitting German orders. The considerable gaps in the archives make it impossible to trace the dynamics of this phenomenon in detail. It was one of the recurring points of the meetings, and its frequency arose from the German policy currently being implemented. Anti-Jewish threads had already appeared in the content of the minutes dated January 1940. Each order was handed over in one copy to the village leader for distribution and announcement to the inhabitants. For example, in the municipality of Duraczów in Pomyków (Kreis Końskie), the village leaders' meeting of 30 January 1940 called on the village leaders to present a census of "Jews wishing to leave for Russia" and "the content of the order of the Starost of the Końskie County was made known […], regarding the holiday rest in trade, and on public holidays and Sundays it [trade] is particularly forbidden to Jews." Later, during the same meeting, another order of the starost on the ban on the purchase and slaughter of cattle by Jews was announced.[92] The order held

[89] *Ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Zagość to [a farmer], Zagość, 18 November 1942, p. 42.

[90] *Ibid.*, List of persons appointed to the village council, Zagość, 18 November 1942, pp. 49–50.

[91] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Kreishauptmann in Busko to the Municipality of Zagość, Busko, 18 December 1942, fol. 24; *ibid.*, Letter of the board of the Municipality of Zagość to the county starost's office in Busko, Zagość, 26 February 1943.

[92] APK, AGK, 214, Minutes No. 2 of the meeting of village leaders held on 30 January 1940 at the chancellery of the board of the Municipality in Pomyków, 30 January 1940, ff. 10–11.

Jews responsible for supply shortages.[93] In the municipality of Rytwiany (Kreis Opatów), on 20 August 1942, during a meeting of the village leaders, the issue of "the use of carts and bicycles by Jews" was discussed[94] (such a ban was in place). The lack of precision in this document suggests that this matter must have been brought up and reiterated previously. It was also revisited at a meeting held a week later (27 August 1942).[95] This suggests that the local population was relatively unconcerned about the ban.

Indeed, after the 1942 deportation of the Jews to the death camps ("Operation Reinhardt"), the presence of Jewish threads in the daily operation of the municipalities diminished considerably. At the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, there were still issues of inventorying the remaining properties, matters of rents for houses and flats left behind by the displaced Jews and the demolition of the "former Jewish houses." In all cases, it was correspondence between the county departments and Der Hauptverwalter des herennlosen und jüdischen Grundbesitzes (the chief administrator of ownerless and Jewish properties), as well as the Kreishauptmannschaft.[96]

Another example from the municipality of Zalesice (Kreis Radom) demonstrates the atmosphere of the occupation times in connection with Jewish issues. In mid-1943, Łucja Molenda, a resident of the municipality of Michałów, approached the local office seeking the endorsement of requisite documents needed for issuing an identification card (Kennkarte). The head of the municipality did not want to sign the document because the baptismal certificate was missing, and the photo-

[93] The order had the following content: "It has been ascertained that the Jews, contrary to their religious regulations, have begun to consume meat and fat from pigs and have consequently endangered the Polish population's meat and fat security. Jewish butchers go to the countryside and compete with Polish butchers by driving up prices in the purchase of animals for slaughter. In addition, they often go against the ban on ritual slaughter issued by the Governor General on 26 October 1939. In order to prevent these abuses and to improve the provision of food to the non-Jewish population of the county, I forbid Jews, with immediate effect, to buy all animals for slaughter and to slaughter them." (APK, AGK, Ban on the slaughter and purchase of cattle by Jews in the Końskie county, Końskie, 13 January 1940, p. 639).

[94] APKS, AGR, 27, Minutes No. 3 of the meeting of village leaders of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 20 March 1943, p. 188.

[95] *Ibid.*, Minutes No. 4 of the meeting of village leaders of the *gromada* of Rytwiany, Rytwiany, 27 March 1943, p. 191.

[96] APTM, AGŁ, 223, Correspondence between the chief board of abandoned and Jewish properties in Kreis Tomaschow and the municipality of Łazisko in Ujazd, pp. 83–95; APTM, AGB, 579, Correspondence between the chief board of abandoned and Jewish properties in Kreis Tomaschow and the Municipality of Będków, pp. 1–18.

graph showed a woman with a "Jewish appearance." He instructed the petitioner to seek a signature in the municipality of Brody.[97] It is difficult to deduce from the laconic record whether the case concerned an ethnic Polish woman or, indeed, a Jewish woman in hiding. With a high degree of probability, however, it can be assumed that it was a Jewish woman, as evidenced by the filing of the application outside the place of residence. The lasting impact of the occupation era and the crucial influence of German directives are apparent here.

The municipal administration sources are barely a fragment of the documentation depicting Polish-Jewish relations created during the Second World War. Nonetheless, these archives are insufficiently valued and infrequently delved into in modern historiography. Abounding in all sorts of German norms, they luminously expose the context of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation. This includes, most importantly, the degree to which Polish society was intertwined in the actions of the occupier and compelled to partake in German anti-Jewish strategies. In the structure created by the German authorities, the boards of the municipalities and the mayors using the village leaders (sub-village leaders) formed, on the one hand, a kind of transmission belt of all oppressive orders and, on the other hand, played an essential role in the enforcement of these orders. Of particular importance were the measures to maintain the village security system. During the occupation, the Germans established a system of moral lawlessness designed to incite hostile acts against the Jews.[98] Undoubtedly, the system's efficiency should also be analysed in connection with the filling of the posts of mayors by Germans and the Volksdeutsche.

To comprehend the unique characteristics of the occupation period, as I have attempted to illustrate in this outline, it is essential to examine the tasks comprehensively performed by the municipal structures. The reading of the files leads to the conclusion that Germans used a similar mechanism to force rural communities to participate in economic and human exploitation for the benefit of Germany. In future research on the analysed corpus of archival material, it should, therefore, be of fundamental importance to attempt to compare the zeal of municipal officials in enforcing German policies against Jews and Poles.

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[97] APTM, AGB, 42, Letter of the mayor of the Municipality of Zalesice to the board of the Municipality of Brody, Łączany, 9 June 1943, p. 26.

[98] As cited in Gieroń, *Półmrok*, p. 53.

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SUMMARY

This article discusses the legacy of the records produced by German administrative bodies at the municipality level in the General Government, considering their applicability in the study of Polish-Jewish relations, as illustrated by a single district in the GG. In the numerous correspondence addressed by the starosts' offices to the municipalities, one can find various examples of specific orders aimed at intimidating the conquered population and forcing it to participate in the implementation of German anti-Jewish policies. This is evidenced by the creation of peasant guards by the Germans or by making the village leader responsible for registering the traffic of the rural population. The examination of the remaining records confirms that the measures to be implemented by the Polish population against the Jews were part of a series of imposed standards. These standards, through effective fear management, aimed to transform the subjugated population into a submissive instrument serving to realise the objectives of the occupier.

KEYWORDS

German administration • occupation • village leaders • municipality • Polish-German relations

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HIPOLIT ALEKSANDROWICZ AND HIS AID ACTIVITIES FOR POLES AND JEWS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In the discussion of the extermination of the Polish Jews, the attitude of the Polish population to the unfolding tragedy is an issue that is increasingly attracting research attention. Recent studies on help and rescue has also identified instances of help in regions with smaller Jewish populations, such as the pre-war Pomeranian Voivodeship.[1] In addition to the recipients of the Righteous Among the Nations medal, whose stories are usually better documented because they were investigated by a committee set up for this purpose (documentation on individual cases is kept in the archives of the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem),[2] aid activities were also pursued by people whose stories are less well known. The

[1] After the enlargement of the voivodeship boundaries in 1938 to include counties with a more significant Jewish population, statistics for the whole of the Pomeranian voivodeship indicate 2.3–2.4% Jews in the total number of inhabitants (T. Ceran and M. Tomkiewicz, "Polacy ratujący Żydów na terenie przedwojennego województwa pomorskiego w okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką. Przegląd piśmiennictwa*, ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek [Warsaw–Kielce, 2022], p. 528).

[2] For more on the history and procedure involved in awarding this medal, see M. Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Ktav, 1993), pp. 4–8.

second group certainly includes Count[3] Hipolit Aleksandrowicz, born in 1884, owner of the estate of Łochocin near Lipno.[4] From 1938, Lipno and Łochocin were within the boundaries of the Pomeranian Voivodeship, and the percentage of the Jewish population in Lipno alone was 20% (2,300–2,500 people).[5] During the German occupation, these areas were incorporated into the Reich and became part of the newly created Reich District of Danzig-West Prussia (Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreußen), and Poles and Jews became victims of the policy of terror and persecution directed against them.[6] During the German occupation, Aleksandrowicz gave shelter to several Jewish families. He also helped Jews in the nearby ghetto of Włocławek and the local Polish population.[7]

In an article summarising the state of research on helping and rescuing Jews in the former Pomeranian Voivodeship by Tomasz Ceran and Monika Tomkiewicz, Hipolit Aleksandrowicz is mentioned as the only known representative of the landed gentry in the region who provided such help.[8] It is worth noting here that the German aristocrat Baron Evert Freytag von Loringhoven, who saved the lives of two Jewish women by employing them in his estate near Toruń, was awarded the Medal of Righteous Among the Nations.[9] However, the context of the two figures' aid activities is too different to compare here.

The history of help provided by Hipolit Aleksandrowicz was previously mentioned in only one academic study, that is the one authored by regional historian Piotr Galkowski.[10] Apart from that, Gabriel Michalik devoted a report to this figure,[11]

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[3] The March Constitution of 1921 formally abolished coats of arms, titles, family and estate privileges, but it could not erase the knowledge of the aristocratic origin of families and the use of titles (such as Count) in informal situations (S. Rudnicki, *Ziemiaństwo polskie w XX wieku*, [Warsaw, 1996], p. 30).

[4] P. Gałkowski, *Ziemianie i ich własność w ziemi dobrzyńskiej w latach 1918–1947* (Rypin, 1999), pp. 268–269.

[5] Figures for 1939, see T. Kawski, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza Wielkopolski, Mazowsza i Pomorza w latach 1918–1942* (Toruń, 2012), pp. 7, 128.

[6] G. Berendt, "Żydzi na obszarze Okręgu Rzeszy Gdańsk – Prusy Zachodnie (do stycznia 1940 roku)," in *Pomorze pod okupacją niemiecką. Jesień 1939*, ed. by P. Madajczyk (Warsaw, 2021), pp. 264–296.

[7] Gałkowski, *Ziemianie i ich własność*, p. 269.

[8] Ceran and Tomkiewicz, "Polacy ratujący Żydów," p. 547.

[9] "Freytag Evert," in The Righteous Among the Nations Database, Yad Vashem, https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=Evert%20Baron%20Freytag%20von%20Loringhoven,&searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4043007&ind=0 (accessed 29 May 2022).

[10] Gałkowski, *Ziemianie i ich własność*, pp. 268–269.

[11] G. Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 November 2005, https://classic.wyborcza.pl/archiwumGW/4525119/Lwy-pana-hrabiego (accessed 17 March 2022).

and journalist Tomasz Lenczewski mentioned him in his article about the situation of the landed gentry in the territories incorporated into the Reich.[12] The lack of more extensive studies on Aleksandrowicz results mainly from the almost total absence of historical sources. His case (his fate during the occupation, including the help he provided) is not an isolated one. Piotr Galkowski writes: "The question of the fate of the landed gentry from the Dobrzyń region in the years 1939–1945 is not present in the historical literature so far. The main reason for this was the lack of sources documenting this issue. To analyse this problem, it was necessary to contact the landowners or their descendants, who were widely scattered."[13] The lack of source material that would allow more extensive research is, therefore, a problem that concerns the landed gentry in general in the area of interest to us, and probably in other regions of the occupied country as well, in terms of helping Jews during World War Two. Compared to other social groups, the attitude of the landed gentry towards the Holocaust and the extent and forms of the help they provided are relatively little known.

In the case of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz, Gałkowski's remarks about the lack of sources are, unfortunately, entirely accurate. Since it was impossible to reach either the documents deposited in the archives or the direct witnesses of the events, it was necessary to reach out to other sources and elicit them by collecting oral history accounts. Indeed, crucial to investigating the protagonist's fate was reaching out to his son, Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, who agreed to be interviewed[14] and provided access to the few documents from the family archives. This was the only way to get hold of a letter from Hipolit's wife, Stanisława, to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski dated 14 April 1945.[15] The original has not been found anywhere else. Stanisława Aleksandrowicz wrote this letter

[12] T. Lenczewski, "Polscy ziemianie, jawna opcja niemiecka," *Rzeczpospolita*, 16–17 April 2016, *Plus-Minus* 16 (1207), https://www.rp.pl/plus-minus/art11087691-polscy-ziemianie-jawna-opcja-niemiecka (accessed 29 May 2022).

[13] Gałkowski, *Ziemianie i ich własność*, p. 268.

[14] Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections. K. Bock-Matuszyk, for example, has written about the special significance of oral history, including self-collected accounts, for regional history, "Historia mówiona a badania regionalne," in *Bliska historia. O badaniach historii lokalnej i regionalnej*, ed. by P. Wiszewski (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 227–235.

[15] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fols 1–2.

as she was trying to get her husband released from custody, not knowing that he had been murdered earlier. Only years later, it was established that this was a robbery type of crime. His burial place was never found, and the family (wife and three children: Hipolit, Mikołaj and Elżbieta), who had already been forced to leave Łochocin, began their wandering around the country.[16] In attempting to research the history of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz and the help he provided during the war, the historian is therefore faced with a lack of sources and the death of the person who provided the help and could testify to it most thoroughly. Equally important would be the testimony of those who were helped, but it has not been possible to establish their full personal details or to reconstruct their subsequent fate (more on this later). Therefore, the letter written by Stanisława Aleksandrowicz in 1945 (even though we have no other source from that period to corroborate the information it contains), the 2005 report by Grzegorz Michalik (who managed to talk to the last living witnesses of the events), and the account of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, born in 1942, who is now the oldest keeper of the family memory, gain in importance.

Nevertheless, it is possible to formulate several research questions based on the available source materials. Under what circumstances did Hipolit Aleksandrowicz, a representative of the landed gentry of the Dobrzyń area, carry out his help activities? What forms did it take, and how did it change over time? What do we know about the people whom Aleksandrowicz helped? What were the motivations behind his actions? What research proposals can be formulated, treating the fate of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz as a contribution to subsequent research?

Hipolit Aleksandrowicz as a Representative of Landed Gentry

The main character of this article was born in 1884 in Kalisz to Hipolit (VI) Aleksandrowicz and his wife Olga Narbutt. The Aleksandrowicz (or Alexandrovitz) family originated in Lithuania, and in the 19th century, its representatives settled in the Kingdom of Poland. Hipolit (VI) Aleksandrowicz was the first of the family to become associated with the Dobrzyń region. Three of his children

[16] Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections; Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

remained there, too: Hipolit (VII), Jerzy, and Tatiana. The Chełmica Duża estate was divided between them. The eldest of the sons, Hipolit, completed his studies in St Petersburg and Heidelberg and assumed possession of the Łochocin estate in 1922. The following years showed that he was an efficient estate administrator and social activist, belonging, among other things, to the District Society of Agricultural Organisations and Circles in Lipno.[17]

The assets he multiplied in the inter-war period were to prove more than necessary after the outbreak of war. Piotr Gałkowski rightly observes that the financial trump card and the possibility of giving bribes to the Germans were fundamental to the effectiveness of the Count's later actions.[18] However, Hipolit was first rescued from the tragic fate of other region landowners by a fortunate coincidence. At the time of their arrests in October 1939, he was several hundred kilometres from his residence. Later, the German authorities agreed that he should continue managing his estate under their strict control. This rare decision was probably influenced by the Orthodox religion and the German education of the landowner.[19]

The Łochocin estate, which belonged to Aleksandrowicz, was located in the Dobrzyń region, where the Pomeranian crime of 1939 was committed. Its victims were representatives of all social groups; it did not target, for example, only the intelligentsia, in contrast to German "actions" in other parts of occupied Poland.[20] Landowners were also among those who died. As a result of the October arrests, several dozen people were arrested in the Lipno district alone, 33 of whom (about 70%) are known by name.[21] The owner of Łochocin had been invited along with other landowners to an "agricultural talk" on 24 October 1939, during which this arrest was made. He was saved by the fact that he was in Warsaw at the time.[22] Those

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[17] P. Gałkowski, *Genealogia ziemiaństwa ziemi dobrzyńskiej XIX–XX wieku* (Rypin, 1997), pp. 18–19.

[18] Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

[19] Gałkowski, *Genealogia ziemiaństwa*, p. 19.

[20] T. Ceran, "Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939 – portret zbiorowy," in *Rozstrzelana niepodległość. Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939*, ed. by *id.* (Toruń, 2020), p. 23.

[21] P. Gałkowski, "Zbrodnie niemieckie na ziemiaństwie z powiatów Lipno i Rypin," in *Zbrodnie niemieckie na ziemi dobrzyńskiej (byłe powiaty Lipno i Rypin) w latach 1939–1945*, ed. by A. Szwalbowski and P. Gałkowski (Rypin, 2019), pp. 524–525. The author compiled (and published, see *ibid.*, p. 524) a list of "landowners of the Lipno district arrested on 24 October 1939," which includes 33 names. As he himself cautioned, this is an incomplete list.

[22] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department [Office] in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

who arrived at the indicated place were arrested by the Germans and deported first to Królewiec (then Königsberg) and then presumably to Działdów (then Soldau), where they were shot. Probably another part of the arrested landowners, as well as teachers from this district, were deported to camps in the Reich.[23] Representatives of various social groups living in the area were threatened because the Germans conducted the extermination of the population of Pomerania (broadly defined as the area of the pre-war Pomeranian Voivodeship) and used other forms of terror.[24]

In a letter dated 14 April 1945, Stanisława Aleksandrowicz wrote that the requests for help in the ongoing displacement action in the area were supposed to persuade her husband to stay in the estate. On behalf of the local community, Hipolit Aleksandrowicz was approached by Jadwiga Walter – the mother superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of Common Labour of the Immaculate Mary in Włocławek, Father Stefan Wilk – the parish priest of Chełmica Duża, and Piotr Krupa – the head of the school in Fabianki. According to this account, written down in a letter, they were the first to suggest that Aleksandrowicz "use the advantage of being of the Orthodox religion and try to stay as long as possible in the estate as an outpost to be able to give shelter to the displaced people, even if only temporarily."[25]

The landowner's original intention was to move to Warsaw. In October, he went to find accommodation for himself and his family.[26] According to Krzysztof Jasiewicz's research, this behaviour corresponded to the prevailing trends of the time: "In the years 1939–1944 Warsaw became the largest concentration of the landed gentry in its history," as both landed gentry from the Eastern Borderlands and those from the western parts of the country, expelled from their estates by the Germans, went there.[27] However, in the end, after his return from Warsaw on 2 November 1939, Aleksandrowicz did not decide to settle there with his family. In

[23] P. Gałkowski, "Zbrodnie niemieckie," pp. 524–529. The author convincingly challenges the findings of Maria Wardzyńska (M. Wardzyńska, *Był rok 1939. Operacja niemieckiej policji bezpieczeństwa w Polsce „Intelligenzaktion"* [Warsaw, 2009], pp. 102–103).

[24] Ceran, "Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939," p. 25.

[25] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] K. Jasiewicz, *Lista strat ziemiaństwa polskiego 1939–1956* (Warsaw, 1995), p. 31.

the subsequent weeks, he became involved in helping the local Polish population and, soon, the Jewish population.[28]

In his research on the General Government (GG), Jerzy Gapys argues that the involvement of the landed gentry in charitable activities under the challenging conditions of the German occupation was due to several factors. Traditionally, it was important for this social group to work for the benefit of its community, and its economic position also entailed certain obligations towards groups dependent on it. Of additional importance for individual landowners may have been religious motivations or those stemming from their views on social issues. All this translated into their charity – as Gapys calls it – or aid activities for the benefit of those in need, both Poles and Jews.[29] Notwithstanding the differences in the German occupation's progress and the landed gentry's situation in the lands incorporated into the Reich and in the General Government, his findings concerning the propensity of the landed gentry to adopt caring attitudes can also be considered relevant to our areas of interest.

Help for the Polish Population

When considering the motivations of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz, it is essential to note that also, in the case of his aid activities, the recipients were both Jews and Poles. The first months of the occupation hit the local population hard, so Aleksandrowicz began to use his position to protect them in line with the earlier appeals voiced by local notables. Initially, his efforts were focused on helping displaced people with "grain, cash, fuel, whatever he could." It is also worth noting that he went beyond sharing reserves and surplus goods – his wife underlined that he, for example, donated his entire stock of peat to the displaced persons. He was also involved in broader help efforts, for example, when "the Committee in Włocławek worked to feed the population"[30] – this probably refers to the Polish Committee for Aid to Poles, established at the beginning of the war[31] – Aleksandrowicz do-

[28] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[29] J. Gapys, "Prywatna akcja dobroczynna ziemiaństwa polskiego w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945," *Almanach Historyczny* 19 (2017), pp. 161–164.

[30] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[31] A. Baranowska, *Żydzi włocławscy i ich zagłada 1939–1945* (Toruń, 2005), p. 100.

nated grain and money to it. He did so through the Committee's chairman, Teofil Hajda, the last pre-war vice-president of the city and long-standing president of the Włocławek's Polish Red Cross. After the Red Army entered the city, he was appointed temporary president of the town, and it was probably for this reason that Stanisława Aleksandrowicz recalled this acquaintance in her letter and in her efforts to have her husband released.[32]

In 1940, the Count took steps to ensure the smooth operation of the estate by protecting the people who managed it. He prepared a document subsequently signed by forty Volksdeutsche, who confirmed that the farmer of the village of Łochocin, Stanisław Celmer, and the servants working at the estate had not persecuted the German population. They also asked the occupation authorities not to deport the farmers, spare them searches and other persecution. The certificate was drawn up in two copies – one was kept with the farmer, Stanisław Celmer, and the other with the German village leader Flemke. However, it is not known precisely when this was done,[33] whether it was still before,[34] during or perhaps already after the new wave of deportations of the region's landed gentry in the spring of 1940. The idea was to secure his position before the next wave. In one way or another, it turned out to be possible to protect Łochocin and its owner from the fate of other estates in the region.

This enabled Aleksandrowicz to continue his activity for the benefit of the local community. In the first months of the occupation, he ensured the safety of as many people as possible, for example, by employing them in fictitious positions on the estate. The number of people he helped can be counted in dozens. These were often whole families who often did not know each other. He gave them a place to live, food, and work certificates. Among the recipients of aid were teachers, clerks and other landowners, such as the family of Bolesław Grochulski,[35] the owner of the

[32] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1; M. Gruszczyńska, "Organizacja władz miejskich Włocławka w latach 1914–1939," in *Włocławek. Dzieje miasta*, ed. by J. Staszewski, vol. 2 (Włocławek, 2001), p. 134; R. Kozłowski, "Życie społeczne i polityczne w latach 1945–1959," in *Włocławek*, p. 463.

[33] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[34] Gałkowski, "Zbrodnie niemieckie," p. 529.

[35] Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections; G. Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

estate of Oleszno, one of the many landowners of the County of Lipno who were arrested at a meeting on 24 October 1939,[36] and also the family of Karnkowski, Wilski and Klimkiewicz. He also helped the landowners by successfully arranging the release of Tadeusz Świecki and Kazimierz Różycki, imprisoned in Lipno, and facilitating their departure for Warsaw.[37] The Count also sent parcels to prisoners of concentration and POW camps.

Thus, if Aleksandrowicz had been arrested and there had been a change in the administrators of his estates, the circle of sufferers would have been numerous. In 1940, at the latest, Aleksandrowicz extended his help activities to another category of people in need – the Jewish population.[38]

Helping the Jewish Population

Jews were one of the social groups that, in addition to the intelligentsia and the mentally ill, suffered most severely as a result of the Pomeranian crime of 1939.[39] Fleeing the threat of death or deportation, in those early months, many decided to head eastwards, to the General Government or further into the Soviet-occupied territories. The persecution of the Jewish population began as early as September, which was remembered precisely because of the Jewish holidays celebrated at that time. In nearby Lipno, they started on the eve of Yom Kippur on 22 September, when the Germans issued summons for forced labour and committed harassment against the local rabbi. Despite earlier declarations, prayers on the Day of Judgement were forbidden, and those praying were chased away and beaten. In the weeks that followed, the Germans committed subsequent acts of violence and robbery. In November, they burned down the local synagogue and murdered a wailing Jewish woman.[40] In December, the last remaining Jews in Lipno were deported to Włocławek or, even further, to towns in the GG.[41] In Włocławek itself, the most

[36] Jasiewicz, *Lista strat*, p. 329.

[37] Gałkowski, *Ziemianie i ich własność*, p. 269.

[38] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[39] Ceran, "Ofiary zbrodni pomorskiej 1939," p. 28.

[40] *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 8: *Tereny wcielone do Rzeszy: Okręg Rzeszy Gdańsk – Prusy Zachodnie, rejencja ciechanowska, Górny Śląsk*, ed. by M. Siek, (Warsaw, 2012), doc. 13, pp. 45–50; *ibid.*, doc. 14, pp. 50–51.

[41] Kawski, *Gminy żydowskie*, pp. 135–136.

populous Jewish community in the former Pomeranian Voivodeship (within its extended 1938 borders), arrests had been ongoing since September, and similarly, as in Lipno, tragic circumstances accompanied the Yom Kippur holiday, violence and murders were frequent, and hundreds of people were displaced in December.[42] In the summer of 1940, the remaining Jews (around 4,000 people) inhabited a few streets in the city, and in October–November of that year, they were confined to a ghetto located in the poorest district.[43]

The available studies on the extermination of the Jews of Włocławek do not mention attempts to help them by hiding them in Polish homes during the first years of the occupation.[44] It is known, however, that until the closure of the ghetto in November 1941, it was possible to cross its borders and maintain contact with Poles.[45] As in the case of other ghettos in the Wartheland (Warthegau), this fostered trade and service relations, which in the circumstances of the occupation acquired an aid dimension,[46] for example, when Poles in need of Jewish craftsmen entered the ghetto and paid for their work with food. When the ghetto was closed, and these contacts were made impossible, the situation of the Jewish population deteriorated drastically. Representatives of Jewish youths then made dramatic attempts to leave the ghetto illegally and get food from Polish acquaintances. Not all of them succeeded in returning – we know the names of at least several young Jews who were shot while trying to return to the ghetto.[47] One study also mentions the shooting of a Pole, Stanisław Kujawa, trying to throw food over the fence.[48] The case of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz allows us to add new threads to this story.

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[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 261–263.

[43] E. Zegenhagen and S. Fishman, "Włocławek," in *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2: *Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe*, part A, ed. by M. Dean (Bloomington, 2012), p. 119.

[44] Baranowska, *Żydzi włocławscy*; B. Berent, "Zagłada Żydów," in *Włocławek*, pp. 430–439; T. Jaszowski, "Okupacyjna martyrologia Żydów włocławskich," in *Z badań nad eksterminacją Żydów na Pomorzu i Kujawach*, ed. by T. Jaszowski (Bydgoszcz, 1983), pp. 22–30.

[45] Kawski, *Gminy żydowskie*, p. 265.

[46] K. Czechowska, "Getto otwarte – getto zamknięte? Kontakty z Polakami jako kategoria przy klasyfikacji wybranych gett w Kraju Warty," in *Żydowscy sąsiedzi*, ed. by K. Morta (Ostrów Wielkopolski, 2018), pp. 159–174.

[47] Berent, "Zagłada Żydów," pp. 440–441.

[48] Baranowska, *Żydzi włocławscy*, p. 100.

Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz recalls that his father remained friendly with Jews from the neighbouring villages and towns, above all from Włocławek, during the interwar period. He maintained both professional and private contacts with them. Moreover, through his brother's wife, he was related to an assimilated Jewish family. During the first months of the occupation, Jerzy Aleksandrowicz tried to conceal his wife's identity by dyeing her dark hair a light colour, but soon decided they would be safer if they changed their surroundings, and the couple left for Warsaw. After their departure, Hipolit placed at least some of the many people he had helped in the Okrągła estate belonging to his brother.[49] In the case of assisting the Polish population, the most crucial factor may have been the desire to fulfil one's duty of care. With regard to other landowners, the motivation may have been the concern for the survival of one's social group;[50] involvement in helping Jews probably stemmed from personal bonds. In the light of research into the motivations prompting such activities (admittedly concerning the Righteous among the Nations), "long-term acquaintance, social or other ties with Jews" were the most common.[51] Marcin Chorązki writes that "mutual contacts between landed gentry and Jews developed on two levels: professional and social," which may or may not have intermingled. However, there was certainly no shortage of Jews who belonged to the social spheres of the landed gentry,[52] and the case of the contacts maintained by Hipolit Aleksandrowicz confirms this. At the same time, however, it is not sure that he had previously had close relations with all the Jews he helped during the war. His good contacts with some representatives of the affected group may have influenced him to be more open to fulfilling the requests for help from others in need.

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[49] Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections.

[50] J. Gapys, "Ziemianie wobec zagłady Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim," in *Życie codzienne społeczności żydowskiej na ziemiach polskich do 1942 roku*, ed. by E. Majcher-Ociesa and B. Wojciechowska (Kielce, 2013), p. 311.

[51] *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holokaustu. Polska*, ed. by I. Gutman, S. Bender, and S. Krakowski (Cracow, 2009), p. XXXIX.

[52] M. Chorązki, *Ziemianie wobec wojny. Postawy właścicieli ziemskich województwa krakowskiego w latach 1939–1945* (Cracow, 2010), p. 177. Tomasz Kawski's research reveals the existence (until the outbreak of the Second World War) of a small group of landowners of the Mosaic faith (T. Kawski, "Właściciele ziemscy wyznania mojżeszowego na Kujawach i ziemi dobrzyńskiej," in *Pomorskie rody ziemiańskie w czasach nowożytnych*, ed. by W. Jastrzębski, [Toruń, 2004], pp. 161–178).

Stanisława Aleksandrowicz said, "Throughout 1940, we began to provide shelter for the Jewish families of Paljard, Dyszel, and Milner from Włocławek."[53] The Father Stefan Wilk mentioned above, who forged baptismal certificates to conceal their Jewish identity, played his part in helping at this first stage.[54] We know neither the number nor the exact personal details of those hiding in Łochocin. Stanisława Aleksandrowicz only mentions that they were kept in hiding for the whole of 1940 and then managed to make their way eastwards (without specifying a particular destination) – but it is unclear whether this applied to all three families or just one.[55] Her son Hipolit only remembered his mother's post-war contacts with one rescued family, who sent them parcels from Israel in the 1950s.[56]

It is likely that the surname of the first of the Jewish families: "Paljard," has been written with a mistake, as among the surrounding Jewish families, one can find the Peljarts, possibly (as a variant spelling of the surname) the Peljards, who lived in the nearby Lipno and Tłuchów. Members of this family perished, among others, in the ghettos of Warsaw and Radom.[57] The Milner family did indeed live in Włocławek – the girls Ruta and Sara Milner died in the Włocławek ghetto, while Fajga Milner was exterminated at Kulmhof. At least one member of this family survived, Israel Milner, who was a claimant in both actions he raised to have a presumed death declared.[58] Israel and Motek Dyszel, in turn, were among several Jews murdered in the town on 22 September, the tragic eve of Yom Kippur, when the Germans

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[53] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[54] Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego"; *Wartime Rescue of Jews by the Polish Catholic Clergy. The Testimony of Survivors and Rescuers*, ed. by M. Paul (Toronto, 2018), p. 35, http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/Wartime-Rescue-of-Jews-by-the-Polish-Catholic-Clergy-rev-2019.pdf (accessed 29 May 2022). Father Wilk was a prisoner of several concentration camps and died in KL Dachau in 1943 (J. Adamska and J. Sziling, *Polscy księża w niemieckich obozach koncentracyjnych. Transport 527 duchownych 13 grudnia 1940 r. z Sachsenhausen do Dachau* [Warsaw, 2007], p. 115).

[55] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[56] Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

[57] T. Kawski, "Ludność żydowska ziemi dobrzyńskiej w latach 1939–1945. Próba bilansu," in *Zbrodnie niemieckie*, p. 399.

[58] Delegatura IPN w Bydgoszczy – Wydział Archiwalny [Institute of National Remembrance Delegation in Bydgoszcz – Archival Department; hereinafter AIPN By], 109/60, Case file of the action for the declaration of death of Fajga Milner; AIPN By, 109/386, Case file of the action for the declaration of death of Rutka Milner and Sara (Sarenka) Milner.

proceeded to brutally arrest a group of praying Jews.[59] However, we do not know their family ties with people with the same surnames hiding in Łochocin in 1940.

According to the same letter from Stanisława Aleksandrowicz, her husband also helped Jews in the Włocławek ghetto. However, it is unclear whether the first and the second acts of help concerned at least partly the same group of people. Due to the incomplete description of the situation in the only document concerning it, we cannot rule this out. There were times when those on the "Aryan" side decided to enter the ghetto because of relatives remaining in the ghetto who would not be able to be guided out of there. It is, therefore, possible that in addition to those hiding in Łochocin who managed to be saved and lived in Israel after the war, other Jews whom the Count tried to help ultimately became victims of the Holocaust.

Mikolaj Aleksandrowicz's account shows that his mother, Stanisława, was also an active helper, delivering food parcels to Jewish acquaintances.[60] It seems likely to assume that the persons carrying out this task changed with the increasing restrictions on the functioning of the ghetto and the growing danger involved in providing help. It is also possible that Stanisława Aleksandrowicz's being relieved by a farm worker, Jan Makowski, was due to personal reasons, i.e., her pregnancy (her son Mikołaj was born in April 1942). Hipolit started going with the parcels and the farm worker when the situation became even more dangerous. By then, the ghetto was fenced off and guarded by German guards, and attempts to help involved the risk of death. On one attempt to pass food over the fence, Aleksandrowicz and his servant are caught and are saved from being shot only by a bribe given by the Count.[61] Despite this, he did not give up on further help. However, it is unknown how long he managed to provide it. The ghetto in Włocławek was liquidated in late April/early May 1942, and its inhabitants were taken to the Kulmhof extermination camp, where they were murdered.[62]

Hipolit Aleksandrowicz's last act of help to the Jewish population was of a family nature and concerned his sister-in-law. In 1944, she was wanted by the Gestapo,

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[59] Berent, "Zagłada Żydów," p. 433; Baranowska, *Żydzi włocławscy*, p. 26.

[60] Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections.

[61] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1; Conversation with Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz of 14 March 2022; a recording in the author's collections; Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

[62] Berent, "Zagłada Żydów," p. 444. See P. Montague, *Chełmno. Pierwszy nazistowski obóz zagłady*, transl. by T.S. Gałązka (Wołowiec, 2014), p. 296.

and the Count went to Warsaw to warn her. Once in the city, the Warsaw Uprising broke out, and he was sent to a camp in Pruszków. By this time, his health had deteriorated. Thanks to the help of his two brothers, Jerzy Aleksandrowicz's wife survived the war.[63]

Conclusion

Hipolit Aleksandrowicz eventually became a victim of the second totalitarianism. Officers from the secret political police under Communism (the Security Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski arrested him on 6 March 1945 when he was staying at the vicarage in Nieszawa after leaving Łochocin. Contrary to his wife's initial assumption, he was not taken into custody, but the officers had previously assaulted him, robbed him of his valuables and then murdered him. The exact place of his burial is unknown.[64] Due to the savage behaviour of the secret police, the story of Aleksandrowicz's death was shrouded in mystery.[65]

Both the Count's death and the circumstances surrounding it, which remained unclear for a long time, harmed our knowledge of the fate of this figure during the German occupation. Regarding the Polish population, we can assume that a significant proportion of those he helped survived and that these people remained in the region, so this aspect of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz's activities is more alive in local memory.[66] Of the Jewish families hiding in Łochocin, only one is known to have survived the Holocaust. Of those who may have been recipients or witnesses of food aid given to the ghetto inmates, the vast majority perished before the end of 1942. In the overall tragedy of the Jews who suffered on the territory of the Pomeranian Crime of 1939, including those locked up in the ghetto in Włocławek, the efforts to provide relief become increasingly challenging to identify. The story of Hipolit Aleksandrowicz, the only landowner in the County of Lipno who was not murdered and was able to stay in his estate, is an example of highly improbable but possible attempts to help the local community, not only other landowners, not only other Poles but also Jews.

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[63] Family archives of Mikołaj Aleksandrowicz, Letter of Stanisława Aleksandrowicz to the Security Department (Office) in Aleksandrów Kujawski, 14 April 1945, fol. 1.

[64] *Ibid.*; Gałkowski, "Genealogia ziemiaństwa," pp. 19–20; Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego;" Jasiewicz, *Lista strat*, p. 31.

[65] M. Golon, *Dzieje Nieszawy*, vol. 2: *1945–1990* (Nieszawa, 2005), p. 14.

[66] Michalik, "Lwy pana hrabiego."

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SUMMARY

This article attempts to shed some light on Hipolit Aleksandrowicz and his aid activities during World War Two. By coincidence, he did not become one of the many victims of the Pomeranian Crime of 1939, and having been allowed to remain in his estate in Łochocin near Lipno, he used it to help the local population. Those in need included both the Polish population (threatened with expulsion) and Jews from the surrounding villages. Despite the scarcity of sources, the new information about Aleksandrowicz enriches our picture of the occupation in Pomerania, the extermination of the local Jews and the possibilities the Polish population had to help them.

KEYWORDS

German occupation • Holocaust • helping Jews • Polish-Jewish relations • landed gentry • Pomerania

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THE TRIAL OF WILLI HAASE BEFORE THE CRACOW VOIVODESHIP COURT IN 1951

Introductory Remarks

"It is known to me that Haase specifically investigated the ghetto's confinement devices, but he did so not to the detriment but for the protection of its inhabitants. The ghetto was surrounded by a wall, not only to gather all the Jews together but also to protect them from external attack,"[1] testified Friedrich Wehde, former administrative head of the Office of the SS and Police commander in Cracow at the hearing on the extradition of a German criminal on 28 July 1950 in Burgwedel.[2] Less than a year later, Willi Haase stood trial before the Cracow Voivodeship Court. The former chief of staff of the SS and Police commander of the Cracow district, responsible, among other things, for supervising Operation Reinhardt in the area, was sentenced to death for his deeds. The witnesses

[1] Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, hereinafter AIPN Kr], 502/2207, Minutes of the interrogation of Friedrich Wehde, Burgwedel, 28 July 1950, fols 249–250.

[2] Wehde testified that he held the position of administrative head from March 1943 to January 1945 (*ibid.*, fol. 248).

Mieczysław Pemper and Leon Pipersberg, who testified during his trial, called him a "murderer in white gloves."[3]

After the Second World War ended, significant court proceedings against German criminals were conducted in Cracow. Most of them took place in the 1940s. Among others, Amon Göth, Josef Bühler and members of the Auschwitz staff were tried here. Unlike the trials mentioned above, the Haase case has not been analysed in detail and is interesting for at least two reasons.[4] Firstly, the defendant was deported to Poland relatively late, as it was only in 1950, that is, at a time when the Allied authorities – due to the intensification of the Cold War – had essentially stopped surrendering persons accused of war crimes to local law enforcement authorities.[5] Secondly, Willi Haase belonged to a group of high-ranking SS officers who were responsible for the extermination of the Jewish population and were tried for their crimes.

The purpose of this article is to show how much valuable information about the crimes committed against the Jewish population was documented in this criminal case. In the article, I will describe the crimes committed by Willie Haase and how they were dealt with by the justice system of "People's" Poland in the early 1950s. In addition, I will characterise the person of the perpetrator and his subsequent fate from the moment of his arrest, through his extradition to Poland, to his trial before the court, with particular reference to the defence strategy adopted by the defendant.

Willi or Wilhelm?

Before moving on to the central part of the article, it should be noted that in Polish literature on the subject, we encounter both the names Willi Haase and

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[3] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 210; *ibid.*, The testimony of Leon Pipersberg, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 222v.

[4] On Cracow trials before the Supreme National Tribunal, see, among others, J. Lubecka, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz przed polskim sądem. Krakowskie procesy przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym* (Cracow, 2021); M. Grądzka, "'Do winy się nie poczuwam' Proces załogi KL Płaszów (1948)," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 36 (2012), pp. 87–103; *ead.*, "'Wszystkim tym zarzutom przeczę zdecydowanie i stanowczo.' Proces Amona Leopolda Götha (1946)," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 35 (2012), pp. 85–100; *Proces ludobójcy Amona Leopolda Goetha przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym*, ed. by N. Blumental *et al.* (Warsaw–Łódź–Cracow, 1947).

[5] See Lubecka, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, p. 35; E. Kobierska-Motas, *Ekstradycja przestępców wojennych do Polski z czterech stref okupacyjnych Niemiec 1946–1950*, part 1 (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 71–74, 81–89.

Wilhelm Haase.[6] In 1951, during a June hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, the defendant testified: "I am called Willi, not Wilhelm – 'Willi' is the name inscribed in my birth certificates."[7] The deed of indictment against him adopted the form "Wilhelm."[8] It was subsequently repeated in court judgments (in the Voivodeship Court judgment of 29 June 1951[9] and the Supreme Court judgment of 6 March 1952[10]). Could it be possible that the defendant insinuated during the trial that he was mistaken for someone else by the court? As will be discussed further in this article, this is not impossible, but it seems he was telling the truth regarding his name.[11] In a letter to the Voivodeship Court of 27 June 1951, the chairman of the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes (Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich, OKBZH) in Cracow, Jan Sehn, reported that in the seniority lists of the SS from 1935, 1936 and 1938 in possession of the commission, the name "Wilhelm von Haase" could not be found. There were, however, entries concerning Willi Haase (whose date of birth matched that of the defendant).[12] This form of the name also appeared in the documentation of the British tribunal deciding the case of Haase's extradition to

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[6] Among others, we shall find the name Wilhelm in the following publications: D. Libionka, *Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie. Zarys problematyki* (Lublin, 2017), pp. 162, 205; D. Swałtek-Niewińska, "Powiat bocheński," in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vol. 2, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018), p. 589; Lubecka, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, p. 310. Some authors used both forms interchangeably: M. Mączyński, *Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty funkcjonowania administracji bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego dla zajętych obszarów polskich w latach 1939–1945, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Krakowa jako stolicy Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Cracow, 2012), p. 372; E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszów, 2014), pp. 37, 285. In the register of extradited war criminals compiled by Elisabeth Kobierska-Motas, we find the entry "Haase Willi," see *ead.*, *Ekstradycja przestępców wojennych do Polski z czterech stref okupacyjnych Niemiec 1946–1950*, part 2 (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 91–92.

[7] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 205v.

[8] *Ibid.*, Deed of indictment against Wilhelm von Haase, Cracow, 29 April 1951, fol. 80.

[9] *Ibid.*, Conclusion of the judgment of the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fol. 234.

[10] *Ibid.*, Sentence of the Supreme Court, [Warsaw], 6 March 1952, fol. 290.

[11] This form can also be found in the materials compiled by Hans Christian Harten, see *id.*, *Weltanschauliche Schulung der SS und der Polizei im Nationalsozialismus: Zusammenstellung personenbezogener Daten*, 2017, p. 166, https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2018/15155/pdf/Harten_2017_Weltanschauliche_Schulung_der_SS_und_der_Polizei.pdf (accessed 13 January 2022).

[12] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of Jan Sehn, Chairman of the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 226.

Poland[13] and in some Polish documents of judiciary and investigative bodies.[14] The defendant signed himself "Willi."[15] This name was given mainly by witnesses interrogated during the pre-trial proceedings. This form has also been adopted in this article for the above reasons.

Career and Arrival in Cracow

Some witnesses testifying in the case of SS-Sturmbannführer Willie Haase remembered him as a well-groomed, cultured and elegant man. According to Alexander Biberstein,[16] he was known as "von Haase."[17] Edward Elsner stated that Haase was "a man of tall stature, very handsome, blond, and was characterised by courteous and elegant treatment of prisoners, as far as direct contact or conversation was concerned. He never shouted at prisoners, I never saw him hit anyone, and he referred to everyone by 'Sie' (Mr)."[18] Józef Brandeis recalled that the defendant: "often repaired his glasses […] He would come to the ghetto, the barber would shave him, the manicurist would give him a 'manicure' simultaneously, and I would repair his glasses. He never paid; others at least gave a cigarette, but the defendant Haase did not."[19] However, not everyone remembered him that

[13] *Ibid.*, Extradition Tribunal – Case of Willy Hasse, [no place], 12 June 1950, fol. 18.

[14] *Ibid.*, Letter from the Delegate to the Extradition Tribunal Capt. B. Bigda to the Head of the Mission for War Crimes in Berlin, Maj. Kozłowski on the case of Willie Haase, Bad Salzuflen, 6 September 1950, fol. 77; *ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fol. 229.

[15] This form of the name appears under his letters to the prison superintendent (AIPN Kr, 425/189, Letter to the Superintendent of the Montelupich Prison, Cracow, 29 July 1951, fol. 43), the notice of review (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Notice of review by the convicted Haase Willi before the Supreme Court in Warsaw against the judgment of the Voivodeship Court in Cracow of 29 June 1951, Cracow, 3 July 1951, fol. 201) or the power of attorney granted to the barrister (*ibid.*, Power of attorney granted by Haase to Dr. Henryk Sowilski, barrister, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 151).

[16] Aleksander Biberstein was the brother of the first president of the Cracow Judenrat, Marek Biberstein. He founded and ran an infectious disease hospital in the Cracow ghetto; he was imprisoned in the Płaszów and Gross-Rosen Camps. He was the author of a book on the history of Cracow's Jews during the German occupation (*id.*, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* [Cracow, 2001]).

[17] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Aleksander Biberstein, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 221v.

[18] AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Edward Elsner, Cracow, 15 April 1947, fol. 112.

[19] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Józef Brandeis, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 222v.

way. Another witness stated that Ordnungsdienst policemen told him that Haase was like a "god."[20] According to Leon Jekel, during the deportation operation carried out in the Cracow ghetto at the end of October 1942, Haase was referred to as a "thug and cannibal."[21] Others claimed that he "found special pleasure in personally murdering children."[22] So who was he?

Willi Haase, a husband of Anna[23] and a father of four children, was born on 17 May 1906 in Berlin, in the district of Neukölln.[24] He was a member of the SS (identity card number 1077) and the NSDAP (identity card number 23458).[25] He declared an Evangelical denomination.[26] His father was Wilhelm Haase, and his mother was Maria, née Tokarska.[27] According to Willie's testimony, his father was employed in a hotel.[28] He said that he had worked as a labourer in his youth. We know that he completed his secondary education (Oberrealschule) in 1924.[29] He then continued his education in a technical direction. From 1924 to 1926, he served an apprenticeship at the Nobiskrug shipyard in Rendsburg[30], and from 1926 to 1927, he worked at the Siemens-Halske Electrical Engineering Works. By this time, he was already a member of the SA in Charlottenburg (a district of Berlin). According to information provided by Hans Christian Harten, he joined the NSDAP in 1925 and the SS in 1927.[31] From 1927 to 1930, he studied at one of Germany's most important engineering colleges, the Mittweid Technikum in Frankenberg, Saxony, from which he graduated in 1930 with a degree

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[20] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 223.

[21] *Ibid.*, The testimony of Leon Jekel, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fols 220v–221.

[22] AIPN Kr, 1/24, Statement by Izaak and Mojżesz Blum, Linz, 31 July 1946, fol. 35.

[23] He got married in 1935 (AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 70v).

[24] *Ibid.*, fols 70–70v; H.Ch. Harten, *Weltanschauliche Schulung der SS und der Polizei*, p. 166.

[25] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of Jan Sehn, Chairman of the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 226.

[26] AIPN, 2449/1, The dossier of the convict Willi Haase.

[27] The queries did not uncover any additional information about her (AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 70).

[28] *Ibid.*, k. 70v; AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 204.

[29] Harten, *Weltanschauliche Schulung*, p. 166.

[30] The Nobiskrug shipyard in Rendsburg was officially founded in 1905 by Otto Storck. https://www.nobiskrug.com/company/evolution-of-innovation/ (accessed 13 January 2022).

[31] Harten, *Weltanschauliche Schulung* , p. 166.

in engineering. He then returned to Berlin. In 1933, he joined the Prussian police.[32]

Haase rose rapidly up the SS hierarchy. On 20 April 1934, he received the rank of Untersturmführer; on 15 September 1935, he was promoted to Obersturmführer and on 13 September 1936 to Hauptsturmführer.[33] In 1940, he became Sturmbannführer.[34] We know from court records that Haase held a gold NSDAP badge of honour (*Inhaber des goldenen Ehrenabzeichens der NSDAP*), a SS skull ring (*Inhaber des Totenkopfringes der SS*), a SA sports badge (*Inhaber des SA-Sportabzeichens*) and was a member of the "Lebensborn" association (*Mitglied des Vereins "Lebensborn"*).[35]

During his interrogation in Poland, Haase testified that he had worked in managerial positions in Berlin until the 1940s and then in Düsseldorf and Hamburg.[36] He was most likely employed within the structures of the SS Main Office of Supplies and Social Security. He claimed he was transferred to Cracow due to a conflict with his superiors.[37] In the General Government's (GG) capital, Haase reported to the higher SS and Police commander in the GG, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger.[38]

In light of the available records, it isn't easy to establish the exact date of Haase's arrival in Cracow. According to the testimony of Kurt Krüger, who had been employed in the structures of the German occupation administration in the central

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of Jan Sehn, Chairman of the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Cracow to the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 226; Harten, *Weltanschauliche Schulung*, p. 166.

[34] Harten, *Weltanschauliche Schulung*, p. 166. By contrast, according to the defendant's testimony at the June 1951 hearing, he had been Sturmbannführer since 1 October 1937 – however, this does not seem likely (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 216).

[35] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of Jan Sehn, Chairman of the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Cracow to the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 226; *ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 205v.

[36] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 71v.

[37] According to his testimony, as part of his official duties, he refused to grant a pension to a couple whose daughter was allegedly married to one of Himmler's brothers. This was allegedly the reason for his transfer to Cracow. It seems that the credibility of this testimony should be approached with caution. (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fols 204–205).

[38] *Ibid.*

agricultural office in Cracow since September 1941 and held the position of deputy district office manager, Haase arrived in Cracow in 1942. He brought his wife and four small children with him.[39] According to Mieczysław Pemper, Haase was transferred to Cracow between July and October 1942.[40] The defendant said he arrived in Cracow "on 14–15 October 1942."[41] However, it seems that his testimony should be approached cautiously – it cannot be ruled out that it was intended to marginalise his role during Operation "Reinhardt." In all likelihood, Haase was on duty in Cracow as early as July or August 1942.[42]

In the capital of the GG, he lived behind the Jordana Park on the Franciszka Pękrzyca-Grudzińskiego Street, then renamed Gartenstrasse by the occupation authorities (possibly under number 3).[43] It is likely that in October 1942, Willi Haase became Chief of Staff to the SS and Police commander of the Cracow district, SS-Oberführer Julian Scherner, replacing Martin Fellenz, who, at the time, was to step down from this position.[44]

Ghetto in Cracow

In the deed of indictment of 29 April 1951 against "Wilhelm von Haase [sic!]," he was accused of playing "a significant role in the area of Cracow as the initiator and leader of all actions against the Jewish population on behalf of the SS police and as the "right hand" of the commander of this police force for the Cracow

[39] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Kurt Krüger, Gernsbach, 24 July 1950, fol. 257.

[40] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 210. A similar time was mentioned by Michał Weichert, who testified that Haase arrived in Cracow between "July and September." (AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 11 October 1949, fol. 28).

[41] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fols 205v–206.

[42] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Leon Weiss, Cracow, 17 April 1947, fol. 117.

[43] Today it is Ignacego Domeyki Street (http://www.kmk.krakow.pl/artykul_nazwy_ulic.html [accessed 21 January 2022]). AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Franciszek Banaś, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 220; *ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 222v.

[44] *Ibid.*, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 208; AIPN Kr, 1/24, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 25 October 1946, fols 51–51v. See *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945*, vol. 9: *Polen: Generalgouvernement August 1941–1945*, ed. by K.P. Friedrich (München, 2014), p. 348.

district […]."[45] It seems that he did indeed play a leading role in this area during Operation "Reinhardt."[46] However, he did not personally direct all actions. The systematic process of deportation of the Jewish population from the Cracow ghetto to the Bełżec death camp began in the district at the beginning of June 1942. Transports from the capital of the GG were then directed – according to Michał Weichert – by Martin Fellenz and Wilhelm Kunde.[47] Subsequently, deportation actions to the Bełżec death camp continued in other locations in the district. According to Tadeusz Pankiewicz, Haase was said to have been present in the Cracow ghetto already during the deportation in June 1942.[48] However, this information is not corroborated by the testimonies of other witnesses interrogated during these criminal proceedings.[49]

As we mentioned, Willi Haase was a subordinate of SS-Oberführer Julian Scherner, who coordinated Operation "Reinhardt" in the area. Until October 1942, the person responsible for the direct supervision of the operation in the field was Martin Fellenz mentioned above, and only after his departure did Willi Haase take his place.[50] According to the witness Mieczysław Pemper, "Haase was in charge of all Jewish affairs in the autumn of 1942 and 1943. In 1943, the community board was dissolved, and a board of commissioners was set up, headed by Dawid Gutter,[51] who was in constant contact with the defendant and from the defendant received all instructions concerning the Jews."[52]

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[45] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Deed of indictment against Wilhelm von Haase, Cracow, 29 April 1951, fol. 82.

[46] This was, for example, the view of Michał Weichert (AIPN Kr, 1/24, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 25 October 1946, fol. 51v).

[47] *Ibid.*, fols 52v–53; AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 11 October 1949, fol. 28.

[48] According to him: "Haase was present during every operation at the ghetto, starting from June 1942 until the liquidation of the ghetto." (AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Tadeusz Pankiewicz, Cracow, 24 April 1947, fol. 146).

[49] The charge of directing the deportation operation from the Cracow ghetto to the Bełżec death camp in June 1942 was not included in the deed of indictment (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Deed of indictment against Wilhelm von Haase, Cracow, 29 April 1951, fols 80–86).

[50] Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 37.

[51] Dawid Gutter took the place of Artur Rosenzweig (the second chairman of the Cracow Judenrat), who in June 1942 was deported to the death camp in Bełżec (M. Grądzka-Rejak, *Kobieta żydowska w okupowanym Krakowie [1939–1945]* [Cracow, 2016], p. 65; A. Jarkowska-Natkaniec, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* [Cracow, 2018], p. 72).

[52] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 195, fol. 208.

On 28 October 1942, another deportation action to the Bełżec extermination camp was conducted in Cracow, during which – according to the testimony of interrogated witnesses – Willi Haase was in command.[53] The witness, Leon Weiss, testified that as early as August of that year, he had learned that Haase had "referred to the police authorities in Berlin for permission to conduct selections among the Jewish population in the Cracow ghetto and to deport in particular the sick and unfit Jews […]."[54] Witnesses underlined that the action was highly ruthless. On 28 October, a selection was carried out among the working people, who were not allowed to leave the ghetto but were ordered to gather near the Arbeitsamt building.[55] Witness Leon Jekel testified: "In the morning, we were taken to Józefińska in front of the labour office and waited for him. Haase came around 9 o'clock, then he started conducting with his fingers and hands; for example, five go to the gate at 14 Węgierska Street […]"[56] Leon Pipersberg testified similarly: "Haase personally segregated people."[57] According to the testimony of the witness Mieczysław Pemper, "the police, under the direction of the defendant [Haase], were separating people – into those who would go to work and those who would remain […] In front of the defendant, all the SS men stood at attention. Hence, when they constantly walked up and down to the defendant, you could see that the defendant was in charge of the whole action."[58] According to Jekel: "Haase himself did not personally shoot or bully anyone; he only personally gave orders to shoot whole groups of people."[59]

We should add that during this operation in the Cracow ghetto, people were caught in the streets and dragged out of their homes. The SS also fired into the crowd. The sick, elderly and disabled were treated with cruelty. In the Jewish hospital, SS men killed most of the patients on the spot. The rest was taken away and murdered. The same happened to the youngest children in the Jewish orphanage.

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[53] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Leon Grobler, Cracow, 24 January 1951, fols 41–41v.

[54] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Leon Weiss, Cracow, 17 April 1947, fol. 117.

[55] AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Ignacy Preis, Cracow, 22 May 1947, fol. 203.

[56] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Leon Jekel, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fols 220v–221.

[57] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Leon Pipersberg, Cracow, 11 January 1951, fol. 14v.

[58] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 208.

[59] AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Leon Jekel, Cracow, 24 April 1947, fol. 145.

The older children, however, were included in the transport to Bełżec. The group of people selected to be sent to the extermination camp was first gathered in Zgody Square (now Bohaterów Getta Square) and then rushed to the Płaszów railway station. Witnesses testified that between 4,000 and 7,000 people were transported to the death camp that day.[60] Several hundred people were murdered on the spot.[61]

Less than five months later, on 13 and 14 March 1943, Willi Haase again commanded an operation in the Cracow ghetto, which was divided into two sectors.[62] On the morning of the first day, the Germans began the liquidation of the section for people who were working ("A"), while on the next day, the operation was conducted in the section for the non-working ("B"). About 8,000 people were escorted in groups on the first day to the Zwangsarbeitslager Plaszow (ZAL Plaszow). On the next day, nearly 700 people were murdered in the ghetto. About 2,000 people were taken to KL Auschwitz.[63] According to the witness Pemper, "Haase was in charge of the organisational aspects of the ghetto's liquidation."[64] Furthermore, he was to be responsible for issuing an order stating that "those who are caught after the operation in the bunkers are to be shot immediately."[65] On 14 March, after

[60] Aleksander Biberstein gave the figure of 4,000 to 5,000 (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Aleksander Biberstein, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 221v). According to Mieczysław Pemper, 7,000 people were then deported to the death camp in Bełżec (*ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 208). According to Leon Jekel, 5,000 to 6,000 people were deported (*ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Leon Jekel, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fols 220v–221). According to Elżbieta Rączy – author of a monograph on the Holocaust in the Cracow district – at least 4,000 people were sent to Bełżec (Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 283).

[61] According to Rączy, this figure could have ranged from 600 to 800 persons (*ibid.*).

[62] After the deportations carried out in June and October 1942, the German authorities reduced the area of the ghetto. On 6 December 1942, the remaining area was divided into two parts: "A" and "B." In part "A," the working inhabitants with their immediate families (wives and children) were placed. The remaining inhabitants were sent to part "B" (*ibid.*).

[63] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 11 October 1949, fol. 28v; AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Leib Salpeter, [no place, no date], fols 58–59. See also Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 284.

[64] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 209v.

[65] *Ibid.* Michał Weichert also confirmed this: "After Haase had already ordered a search of hiding places, he liquidated the Cracow ghetto and ordered that the Jews found should be shot on the spot or taken to Płaszów to be shot." (AIPN Kr, 1/24, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 25 October 1946, fols 51v–52; also AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Aron Geldwerth, Cracow, 10 September 1947, fols 240–240v).

Amon Göth had selected a group of at least a few dozen men to be sent to do the so-called cleanup work in the liquidated ghetto, Haase allegedly decided that there were too many of them and ordered half of them to be shot.[66]

The Ghetto in Bochnia

Haase was also in command during the final liquidation of the Bochnia ghetto. This operation took place in early September 1943.[67] At the time, there were between 4,000 and 5,000 people in the Jewish quarter.[68] It is estimated that about 1,000 (from the section for those who worked) were sent to the camp in Szebnie near Jasło. On the other hand, about 3,000 people were deported to Auschwitz (most from the part for non-workers). Between 200 and 250 men were left to do the so-called cleanup work. One of their tasks was to carry away the bodies of those murdered during the operation and to burn them at the stake. Elżbieta Rączy estimated that during the operation and subsequent days, between 200 and 300 people were murdered in Bochnia.[69]

The defendant was identified as the leader of the operation by, among others, Henryk Monhajt: "When a group was being led to the liquidation," the witness testified, "I was about three metres away from the defendant, and I heard him give an order to one of the policemen not to fire short bursts but to shoot one person at a time."[70] Furthermore: "On Haase's orders, we had to undress the corpses, and later they were burned at the stake."[71] Ela Frisch also confirmed his participation:

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[66] Witnesses usually reported that the group numbered about 150–200 men, only Samuel Stoeger reported that there were only 60 (AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Leib Salpeter, [no place, no date], fol. 59; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Roman Kraftlos, [no place, no date], fol. 78; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Samuel Stoeger, Cracow, 9 April 1947, fol. 94; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Leon Jekel, Cracow, 24 April 1947, fol. 145).

[67] According to Elżbieta Rączy, the final liquidation of the ghetto "was carried out on 1 September 1943," while according to Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska, the operation was carried out on 2–4 September 1943 (Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 286; Swałtek-Niewińska, *Powiat bocheński*, p. 555).

[68] According to Elżbieta Rączy, there were between 4,500 and 5,000 people in it at the time (Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 286).

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[70] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Henryk Monhajt, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 211.

[71] *Ibid.*, fol. 210v.

> Haase took part in this liquidation. I recognised the defendant; he was wearing glasses, and the defendant was standing on the pavement at the time and gave orders to his helpers. After the liquidation, there were supposed to be only 250 people left to clean up the place, but there were more left, so the defendant gave the order to shoot the rest. The executed people were rolled onto one pile, and later, the pile was set on fire; near the pile, the executioners had a drinking party. Three houses caught fire from the pile. As a result, those who were hiding from the liquidation began to jump out from the bunkers. Upon seeing this, the SS men started shooting at them. […] Whether the defendant gave the order to shoot at the people who hid in the houses, I do not know.[72]

The Camp in Szebnie

Probably on 3 November 1943, Haase arrived at the camp in Szebnie. The following day, all the Jewish prisoners were gathered in the camp's square under the pretext of a search for money and valuables. Guards surrounded the place. Machine guns were also placed nearby. The assembled people were told that the camp was being liquidated and that they would all be transported to the Pustków camp. In the afternoon, segregation took place. As a result, several hundred (500 to 700) people were sent back to the camp barracks. The others were kept on the square for many hours.[73] After the SS men entered, the prisoners were divided into groups of several hundred people each.[74] According to Stanislaw Zabierowski, most of them

[72] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Ela Frisch, Cracow, 26 VI 1951, fols 211v–212.

[73] According to Zabierowski, the SS troops entered after 10.30 p.m. (S. Zabierowski, *Szebnie. Dzieje obozów hitlerowskich* [Rzeszów, 1985], p. 164). On the other hand, according to Józef Finkelstein, the SS troops arrived around one o'clock in the morning (Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie [Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw], 301/3861, The testimony of Józef Finkelstein, [p. 13]; see also: AIPN Kr, 502/2205, The testimony of Regina Weiss, Cracow, [no date], fols 77–78; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Edwin Opoczyński, Cracow, 24 April 1947, fol. 144; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Edward Elsner, Cracow, 15 April 1947, fol. 112v; AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Leon Steinberg, Cracow, 19 April 1947, fol. 119; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Emil Wimmer, Cracow, 18 April 1947, fols 120–120v; AIPN Kr, 1/24, Extract from the minutes of the interrogation of Mark Anisfeld, [no place, no date], fol. 47; *ibid.*, Extract from the minutes of the interrogation of Abraham Wilhelm Landerer, [no place, no date], fols 49–50).

[74] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Regina Weiss, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 211v; *ibid.*, Conclusion of the judgment of the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fols 239–239v; Zabierowski, *Szebnie*, pp. 163–165.

died in the KL Auschwitz II Birkenau.[75] This operation was one of the stages in the camp's liquidation, which was finally closed in February 1944.[76]

During the June hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, the defendant's managerial involvement in this action was pointed out, among others, by Regina Weiss, who came from Nowy Sącz and worked in the camp's office for the reception of prisoners:[77]

> I worked in the office and wrote statistical reports to Cracow to the SS Polizeiführer, and later found out that Haase and Scherner were in charge of the camps […] On 4 November 1943, I was not allowed to enter the office […], where the defendant was in charge of the operation. I asked what I was supposed to write in the report after the operation, and Berndt[78] says I should write that 2,800 persons died, and 700 people remained […].[79]

End of the Chief of Staff's Career

Presumably for taking bribes[80] and other abuses, Haase and his immediate superior Scherner were dismissed in 1944.[81] This date was indicated among others by Kurt Krüger, according to whom Haase was removed from his post at the beginning of that year and "arrested and put in a Polish prison [in the prison on Montelupich Street – R.G.]."[82] Subsequently, "He was transferred to an SS unit" [probably Waffen-SS is meant – R.G.].[83] One of the reasons for their dismissal from their posts was, according to the witnesses interviewed, their participation in the

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[75] Zabierowski, *Szebnie*, pp. 163–165.

[76] Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 180.

[77] Regina Weiss came from Nowy Sącz and worked in the office for the reception of prisoners (Zabierowski, *Szebnie*, pp. 10, 93).

[78] Arthur Berndt was the third consecutive head of the office for the reception of prisoners (*ibid.*, pp. 91–92).

[79] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Regina Weiss, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fols 211–211v.

[80] AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Minutes of the interrogation of Adalbert Kalman-Balas, Cracow, 31 March 1947, fol. 82.

[81] AIPN Kr, 1/24, Minutes of the interrogation of Mieczysław Pemper, Cracow, 1 April 1947, fol. 57.

[82] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the interrogation of Kurt Krüger, Gernsbach, 24 July 1950, fol. 259.

[83] *Ibid.*

orgies taking place in the camp in Szebnie (the so-called scheidtówki) – during which female prisoners were sexually abused. Michal Weichert stated, "Koppe was so outraged that he refused to meet them when they reported to him, given the uproar caused by the scandal was quite significant. They both went east to fight the guerrillas."[84] This witness claimed that the decision to dismiss Scherner had already been taken in February 1944.[85] We know that in the following months, Haase served in the 20th and then the 14th Grenadier Division.[86] After the war, he was captured in the northern German town of Nindorf[87] and sentenced to two years in prison by a British court in 1948 for being a member of the SS and NSDAP.[88]

Extradition and Trial Preparations

Following the provisions of the Moscow Declaration, Haase was deported to Poland in 1950. However, the extradition proceedings themselves took several years. The Polish investigating authorities had already submitted a request for his extradition to the British authorities in 1947 (Haase was then in a camp in Wolfsberg near Graz).[89] The British refused to hear the extradition case until the required documentation was submitted.[90] As mentioned earlier, at that time, with the escalation of the Cold War, the British authorities began to evade the extradition procedure.[91] The same also applied to this case; as late as the second half of 1950,

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[84] AIPN Kr, 1/24, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 25 October 1946, fols 51v–52.

[85] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of Michał Weichert, Cracow, 11 October 1949, fol. 29v.

[86] Mączyński, *Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty*, p. 294.

[87] AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Polish Case against Willi Haase, [no place, no date], fol. 73.

[88] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 70, 77v; AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 203v.

[89] AIPN Kr, 502/2205, Extradition request submitted by the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Cracow to the Ministry of Justice in Warsaw, Cracow, 2 May 1947, fol. 197; *ibid.*, Letter of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow to the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Cracow, Cracow, 22 September 1947, fol. 242.

[90] *Ibid.*, Letter from the Prosecutor's Supervision to the Prosecutor of the District Court in Cracow, [no place], 6 August 1949, fol. 5; *ibid.*, Extradition request submitted by the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Cracow to the Ministry of Justice in Warsaw, Cracow, 2 May 1947, fol. 197.

[91] See Lubecka, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, p. 35.

the British still withheld Haase's extradition to Poland.[92] Eventually, however, he was extradited at the end of that year.[93]

He was first imprisoned in Zielona Góra, then in January 1951, he was transferred to the prison in Warsaw-Mokotów on Rakowiecka Street,[94] and then, in March of the same year, he was sent to a jail in Kraków, on Montelupich Street.[95] On 29 April 1951, a deed of indictment was drawn up against "Wilhelm von Haase" [*sic*!][96]. Shortly before the trial, there were problems with appointing defence counsel. Successively appointed lawyers asked to be relieved of this duty.[97] They probably did not want to defend a German criminal.

The proceedings themselves, conducted at the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, were brief. On 4 June 1951, the first hearing against the defendant "Wilhelm Haase" [*sic*!] began at 9.35 a.m. in room 119 of the Voivodeship Court building in Cracow. However, it was adjourned at the request of the defence.[98] What motivated the motion was the defence's lack of time to prepare for the trial. It is worth noting that Haase had received the deed of indictment translated into German[99] and had seen the appointed public defender only two days earlier. The next hearing was held at the end of the month, on 26 June. It was presided over by Józef Matysiak, a pre-war judge. The lay judges were A. Bajorek and F. Cyganik. The prosecutor who presented the deed of indictment was Roman Rękiewicz.[100] In the end, Haase

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[92] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of the Polish Military Mission for the Investigation of German War Crimes to the Jewish Committee in Hannover, Bad Salzuflen, 7 September 1950, fol. 79.

[93] Kobierska-Motas, *Ekstradycja przestępców*, part 2, p. 91.

[94] AIPN Kr, 425/189, Letter of the Head of the Prison in Zielona Góra to the Department of Prisons of the Ministry of Public Security in Warsaw, Zielona Góra, 5 February 1951, fol. 41.

[95] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Voivodeship Prosecutor in Zielona Góra to the Head of the Montelupich Prison in Cracow, Zielona Góra, 25 April 1951, fol. 5; *ibid.*, Letter of the Head of the Prison in Warsaw to the Head of the Prison in Cracow, Warsaw, 9 March 1951, fol. 47.

[96] It was signed by Senior Legal Secretary, Investigator Stefan Waszuta (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Deed of indictment against Wilhelm von Haase, Cracow, 29 April 1951, fols 80–86).

[97] Dr. Adolf Liebeskind asked to be released from this duty, motivating this on health grounds (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Letter of barrister Adolf Liebskind to the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 22 May 1951, fol. 93). Another barrister, Jan Kocznur, applied for his dismissal on the grounds that he was to act as defence counsel in another case on the same day (*ibid.*, Application by barrister Jan Kocznur for exemption from public defender's duty, Cracow, 26 May 1951, fol. 94).

[98] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 4 June 1951, fols 155–155v.

[99] *Ibid.*, Confirmation of the receipt of the deed of indictment, Cracow, 2 June 1951, fol. 150.

[100] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 203.

was defended by Henryk Sowilski, a Warsaw-based lawyer, who, on 9 June 1951, accepted a power of attorney to represent the defendant before the court.[101] A German interpreter was also present.

Line of Defence

After the deed of indictment was read out, Haase pleaded not guilty to all charges.[102] The defendant suggested that there was a possibility that another member of the security police with the same name as him had served in Cracow. This was allegedly evidenced by the fact that persons giving evidence in his case in Poland and the British zone referred to him once as "Haase" and at other times as "von Haase."[103] The defendant stated: "My name is Haase, but why they write von Haase, I don't know – I was also arrested as von Haase."[104] It should be added that the witnesses who testified at the trial did not report any doubts that the defendant was the one whose acts they were testifying about – some of them only pointed out that during the German occupation, he did not have a moustache and wore glasses.[105]

During the trial, Haase tried to demonstrate that he was not an active and zealous party member. Before the court, he stated that joining the NSDAP was a "moral duty of public servants."[106] He testified that he joined the party in 1935.[107] He departed from the truth. We know that he entered its ranks as early as the 1920s.

Haase tried to give the impression of a person who shows remorse; he said: "It is difficult for me to speak about the conduct of the Germans in Poland, for I find that the Germans have made great mistakes."[108] On the other hand, he tried to convince the court that he did not know about the extermination of the Jewish

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[101] *Ibid.*, Power of attorney granted by Haase to barrister Dr. Henryk Sowilski, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fol. 151.

[102] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 204.

[103] *Ibid.*, fol. 205v.

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Wilhelm Machauf, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 222.

[106] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 205v.

[107] *Ibid.*, fol. 204.

[108] *Ibid.*, fol. 205.

population: "I know that the Jewish population was gathered in ghettos, but that 70% of the population was shot [*sic*!] I don't know."[109] Reading these testimonies, it is hard to believe that senior SS officers were unaware of the scale and circumstances of the crime.[110]

The defendant denied that he had been a desk officer for Jewish affairs under the SS and Police commander for the Cracow district and had taken an active part in any operations to liquidate Jews. Like other German criminals tried (before him) in the 1940s in Cracow, he strove to show that, despite holding a high position, he had no authority to give orders.[111] He stated, for example, that he possessed no function during the operation carried out in the Cracow ghetto at the end of October 1942: "I was not in charge of the extermination operation, I was only in the company of my boss Scherner […] The head of the SS ordered me to go with him, and as the junior rank, I had to go with him. […] I had no authority in the ghetto liquidation; I was only the most senior officer in rank, and above me, there was Scherner."[112] Haase went on to deny that he had ordered the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto on 13 and 14 March 1943. He said he had not been authorised to give orders: "I could not give orders because I was not authorised."[113] He admitted, however, that he was in Bochnia at the time of the liquidation of the ghetto and heard the shots:

> I was in Bochnia – I do not remember the date, and I cannot say that this corresponds to the date of the deed of the indictment; I was then only once with Scherner during the relocation of the inhabitants of the ghetto in Bochnia, and I did not have any insight into the whole operation, I was not even present the entire day, because I was in the office of the commander. I saw people in the streets with packages; I came to Bochnia in my boss's company. I heard

[109] *Ibid.*, fol. 206.

[110] See Lubecka, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, p. 257.

[111] *Ead.*, "Konieczność wykonania rozkazu jako instrument obrony w procesach przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym," in *Pola wolności*, ed. by A. Bartuś (Oświęcim–Poznań, 2020), pp. 217–236; *ead.*, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, p. 260.

[112] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fols 205v–206.

[113] *Ibid.*, fol. 206.

> that shots were fired, but what they were about, I do not know. I was there for 2–3 hours […] why shots were fired – it seems to me that maybe someone was trying to escape.[114]

Speaking about the camp in Szebnie, he said he had been there only one night.[115]

Witnesses

Most of the witnesses who testified after the defendant were Holocaust survivors. It is likely that even before the first trial began, emotions among them must have been running high. They were to testify about their torturer – the person responsible for the deaths of their loved ones. According to Haase's testimony, on 4 June in the court building, one of the witnesses approached him and said: "This c… must be dealt with and executed."[116]

It is worth noting that, due to the passage of time since efforts to extradite Haase began, some of the witnesses with knowledge of the acts committed by him left Poland and were unable to testify in person during his trial. During the hearing in June, the court agreed, at the prosecutor's request, to read several testimonies of witnesses who had emigrated to Israel and had previously testified in the pre-trial proceedings. These were: Leon Przechadzki, Sandel Mejtlis, Szyja Wolf Abramczyk, Leon Steinberg, Emil Wimmer, Leon Grobler and Franciszek Monhajt.[117] Among the witnesses for the prosecution were also Poles, such as Tadeusz Pankiewicz, who ran a pharmacy in the Cracow ghetto with the permission of the Germans, and Franciszek Banaś, a functionary of the so-called Blue Police and a Home Army soldier.[118] The witnesses' testimonies were extensive and comprehensive.

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[114] *Ibid.*

[115] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 217. While still under interrogation, Haase testified as a suspect: "During the liquidation of the camp in Szebnia, I first went there alone, and the next day Scherner arrived. I gave the commander a secret order in a sealed envelope which, as far as I knew at the time, concerned only the liquidation." (AIPN Kr, 502/2206, Minutes of the interrogation of suspect Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 27 April 1951, fols 77–77v).

[116] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, The testimony of Willi Haase, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 221.

[117] *Ibid.*, fol. 224.

[118] In the 1980s, both were awarded the titles of Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. (See "Banaś Franciszek," in *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący*

Notably, the defendant took the opportunity to speak during the trial after the witnesses testified. He asked them questions and made statements. He was very active. It seems that the same cannot be said of his defence counsel. The acting lawyer, probably due to the very short time to prepare for the trial – several days, in fact – did not have many witnesses at his disposal. He attempted to call as witnesses two prisoners who, like the defendant, were incarcerated in the Montelupich prison – Müller and Maurer, who were to testify that the defendant had not given orders.[119] Probably in an attempt to gain additional time, the application was also made for the admission of evidence from the testimony of the "other chauffeur of the defendant who drove with him in Cracow."[120] The defence counsel added that his name is: "unknown, but will possibly be determined by the defendant's Hamburg counsel."[121] The court refused to hear these witnesses because they considered that the circumstances they were to testify had already been clarified during the trial.[122] The court only agreed to read (at the request of the defence) the testimony of several witnesses: Karl Hess, Wilhelm Kunde, Thilde Bosch-Chur, and copies of the transcripts of the testimonies witnesses gave during the extradition proceedings in Burgwedel and Rastatt.[123] In these testimonies, we find opinions that the defendant could not have been the perpetrator of the crimes he was accused of, as he was always correct and had no dealings with Jewish matters. As the court emphasised in the statement of reasons for the judgment, it is noteworthy that the defence witnesses were not eyewitnesses to Haase's deeds but only "made positive statements about him based on personal contacts."[124]

At the end of the trial, during a concise (even perfunctory) defence speech, Henryk Sowilski stated only that "Haase did not give orders; he was only an executor of

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Żydów podczas Holocaustu. Polska, ed. by I. Gutman, S. Bender, and S. Krakowski, vol. 1 [Cracow, 2009], p. 20; "Pankiewicz Tadeusz," in *Księga Sprawiedliwych*, vol. 2, p. 528).

[119] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 223v.

[120] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 26 June 1951, fol. 212v.

[121] *Ibid.*, fol. 213.

[122] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 224.

[123] *Ibid.*, fol. 223v.

[124] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Conclusion of the judgment of the Voivodeship Court of Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fol. 240v.

orders."[125] The lawyer also requested the extraordinary mitigation of punishment. The defendant stated that he had not asked to be transferred to Cracow but had been forcibly transferred there. He pleaded not guilty and asked for acquittal. The prosecutor, however, demanded the death penalty.[126]

Sentence

On 29 June 1951, Haase was sentenced. For directing the deportation of the Jewish population from the ghettos in Cracow and Bochnia to extermination camps, to the camp in Szebnie, and for other crimes (including those committed in ZAL Plaszow), the Voivodeship Court in Cracow sentenced Haase to death.[127]

In the absence of evidence of guilt, the court acquitted Haase of the charges of "personally firing into a crowd and killing the Brands,[128] extorting valuables from the Jewish population,"[129] as well as the charge of being a member of the SS and NSDAP criminal organisations because the defendant had already been punished for this offence with a two-year prison term by a British court.[130] In addition, under Article 7 of the so-called August Decree, the court ordered the loss of public and civil rights and the forfeiture of property.[131]

Although the acts described in the deed of indictment mainly concerned crimes committed against the Jewish population,[132] the court stated that: "By directing acts of extermination of the Jewish and Polish population […] the defendant Haase went along with the authorities of the German state, whose aim was the final biological extermination of the Jews and Poles."[133] Among the

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[125] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the main hearing before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Cracow, 27 June 1951, fol. 225.

[126] *Ibid.*

[127] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Conclusion of the judgment of the Voivodeship Court of Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fol. 234.

[128] The deed of indictment charged Haase with the murder of Abraham and Natalia Brand during the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto in March 1943, when he fired into a crowd of assembled people. (AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Deed of indictment against Wilhelm von Haase, Cracow, 29 April 1951, fol. 80v).

[129] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Conclusion of the judgment of the Voivodeship Court of Cracow, Cracow, 29 June 1951, fol. 237v.

[130] *Ibid.*, fol. 241v.

[131] *Ibid.*, fol. 238.

[132] According to the court's findings, in November 1943, during the visitation of the camp in Szebnie, Haase ordered the execution of Stanisław Brzeziński (*ibid.*, fol. 239v).

[133] *Ibid.*, fol. 241.

aggravating circumstances, the court pointed out "the immense material and moral damage inflicted on the Jewish and Polish populations, the immeasurable amount of harm and suffering inflicted on these populations, and all of this for the sole purpose of realising the insane imperialist-fascist aspirations of the rulers of the Third Reich, possessed of a racial hatred of everything that is not fascist-German."[134] In the conclusion of the judgment, the court also stated that it found no grounds to apply Article 5 of the August Decree (extraordinary mitigation of punishment) to the convict: "For the defendant, Haase cannot plead that he acted under orders since he joined the SS criminal organisation voluntarily."[135] This was a characteristic line of jurisprudence also adopted by the judges of the Supreme National Tribunal.[136]

Both the defence counsel and the prosecutor filed a review with the Supreme Court. This led to part of the judgment being overturned and amended. On the one hand, the Supreme Court stated that the final decisions of foreign courts did not bind the Polish courts and, therefore, imposed an eight-year prison sentence on Haase for his participation in a criminal organisation.[137] On the other hand, it acquitted the defendant of the charge that he had abused and tormented the camp prisoners and "by exploiting the critical position of the female prisoners, had led them to submit to acts of lewdness."[138] According to the Supreme Court, the mere fact that the defendant participated in carousals organised by the camp authorities in Szebnie was not sufficient proof that he committed the acts he was charged with at the time.[139] Haase filed a petition for pardon.[140] Both the Voivodeship Court of Cracow and the Supreme Court gave a negative opinion on this petition.[141] The President of the Republic of Poland, Bolesław Bierut, did not exercise his right of

[134] *Ibid.*

[135] *Ibid.*

[136] Lubecka, "Konieczność wykonania rozkazu," p. 234.

[137] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, Sentence of the Supreme Court, [Warsaw], 6 March 1952, fol. 290.

[138] *Ibid.*, fol. 295.

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] AIPN Kr, 502/2207, A request for clemency to the President of the Republic of Poland, Bolesław Bierut, [date of receipt by the Supreme Court: 24 March 1952], fols 302–304.

[141] *Ibid.*, Opinion of the Voivodeship Court in Cracow on granting clemency to Wilhelm Haase, Cracow, 26 March 1952, fols 297–297v; *ibid.*, Opinion of the Supreme Court on granting clemency to Wilhelm Haase, [Warsaw], 2 April 1952, fol. 307.

pardon.[142] The sentence was carried out by hanging on 23 May 1952 in the prison on Montelupich Street in Cracow.[143]

The criminal prosecution results of those involved in implementing Operation "Reinhardt" have been described in the relevant literature on the subject as unsatisfactory to the highest degree.[144] Willi Haase belonged to a small group of perpetrators, given the scale of the crime, who were responsible for the extermination of the Jewish population and were tried for their actions. His defence was not atypical. Although he was a high-ranking SS officer, he argued that he had acted under orders and that he did not have full knowledge of the Holocaust. He also tried to show that he was not a zealous party functionary.[145] Neither the Voivodeship Court in Cracow nor the Supreme Court recognised his arguments. He was sentenced to death.

Compared to other trials of German criminals in Poland, this trial took place relatively late. Its proceedings were not publicised in the early 1950s, neither in the local nor in the central press of the time. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the criminal proceedings conducted, apart from bringing Haase's actions to account, made it possible to document a specific fragment of the criminal activities of those who carried out Operation "Reinhardt" on the territory of the Cracow district.

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[142] *Ibid.*, Letter of the Director of the Clemency Office to the Voivodeship Court in Cracow, Warsaw, 10 May 1952, fol. 329.

[143] AIPN Kr, 425/189, Report on the execution of the sentence of the Voivodeship Court in Cracow of 29 June 1951, No. K.170/51, partially overturned and amended by the sentence of the Supreme Court in Warsaw of 6 March 1952, No. II.K.886/51, by which Wilhelm Haase was validly sentenced to death, Cracow, 23 May 1952, fol. 135; R. Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945* (Warsaw–Cracow, 2009), pp. 52–53.

[144] See, for instance, H.Ch. Jasch, "Karanie zbrodni akcji 'Reinhardt' przez sądy RFN," in *Akcja „Reinhardt." Historia i upamiętnienie*, ed. by S. Lehnstaed and R. Traba (Warsaw, 2019), p. 251.

[145] See J. Lubecka, "Joseph Bühler – urzędnik uwikłany czy świadomy uczestnik zbrodni? Rozważania w świetle procesu Josepha Bühlera (17 czerwca – 10 lipca 1948 r.)," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 36/1 (2020), p. 350; *ead.*, *Niemiecki zbrodniarz*, pp. 254–262.

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SUMMARY

In June 1951, Willi Haase, the former chief of staff of the SS and Police commander of the Cracow district, who was responsible for supervising Operation "Reinhardt" in this area, was tried before the Voivodeship Court in Cracow. The article characterises the person of the criminal and then his fate from the moment of his arrest, through his extradition to Poland, until his trial, with particular emphasis on the defence strategy adopted by the defendant. Both Haase's crimes and the way they were handled by the justice system of "People's" Poland in the early 1950s are described. The article shows how much valuable information about the crimes committed against the Jewish population was documented during these proceedings.

KEYWORDS

Willi (Wilhelm) Haase • trials of German war criminals in Poland • Voivodeship Court in Cracow • Operation "Reinhardt" • Holocaust

STUDIES
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THE PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE PERPETRATORS OF CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST JEWS IN PONARY AND OTHER EXECUTION SITES IN THE VILNIUS REGION

Introduction

The question of criminal liability for crimes committed during World War Two has been discussed at international fora since the early 1940s. Key documents in this regard were issued in 1942 in the form of the Declaration of St James's Palace (also known as the London Declaration) of 13 January 1942 on the German terror system and the Declaration of 7 October 1942 announcing the establishment of the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC).[1] Finally, by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices was established. The members of this commission carried out the first inspections of the crime scenes, prepared medical reports and drew up the first

[1] Declaration of St James's Palace of 13 January 1942 and Moscow Declaration on Atrocities of 1 November 1943. See T. Cyprian, J. Sawicki, *Nieznana Norymberga. Dwanaście procesów norymberskich* (Warsaw, 1965), pp. 321–326.

lists of the criminals responsible for the murders committed on the territory of the USSR. Subsequently, courts and tribunals were set up to try the criminals on the basis of special regulations introduced by the Soviet Ministry of Security. These measures were further strengthened by the Moscow Declaration of 1 November 1943.[2]

The Case of the Ponary Crime in the Trial at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg

State commissions were set up in areas occupied by the Red Army to record crimes and identify perpetrators to be brought to justice in the future. At the same time, the so-called Big Four agreed that perpetrators of war crimes would be tried by the courts of the countries on whose territory they had committed the crime. The Agreement of 8 August 1945, signed by representatives of the 23 signatories to the London Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis, established the International Military Tribunal and adopted its Constitution, which set out the rules of procedure for crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. During the thirteen Nuremberg trials between 1945 and 1949, 405 public hearings were held, during which 2,630 documents were submitted by the prosecution and 2,700 by the defence. Two hundred forty witnesses were heard, and more than 200,000 testimonies were taken. The trial of the prominent war criminals before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, which took place between 20 November 1945 and 1 October 1946, also included crimes committed in the territory of the Reichskommissariat Ostland, i.e. in the territory of the former Polish Voivodeship of Vilnius (Polish: Wilno). Crimes committed between 1941 and 1944 in Ponary near Vilnius were included in the section on the General Plan East. They were given the status of the most serious category, i.e. war crimes and crimes against humanity, and were included in sub-section III of the deed of indictment's chapter on crimes committed in the USSR and other Soviet republics. The deed of indictment before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg states that "in the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, the murder of Soviet citizens took on mass forms; thus, at least 100,000 people were

[2] Cyprian, Sawicki, *Nieznana Norymberga*, pp. 321–326.

murdered in Ponary […]."[3] The Soviet prosecutors considered the "Report of the Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices on the Crimes of Hitlerite Invaders in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic" as the key document in their investigation. It contained the results of medical and forensic examinations carried out in Ponary since August 1944 and numerous minutes of witnesses' interrogations. Extremely important for the preparation of the deed of indictment were the German documents secured earlier, in particular the "Barbarossa" plan, orders introducing the death penalty in the occupied eastern territories of severe offences committed by persons acting against the Reich and the legislation of the occupied eastern territories; special penal provisions concerning Jews and Poles; reports by Einsatzgruppen A and the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, OKW) on the treatment of Jews, civilians and Soviet prisoners of war in the occupied eastern territories. Equally valuable was the archive of the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Alfred Rosenberg, which survived almost intact and was confiscated by the Russians. It was mainly on the basis of these documents that the chief Soviet prosecutor, General Roman Rudenko, prepared his closing speech. He emphasised the cruelty of the Ponary massacre and the role played by the respective German formations, starting with Einsatzgruppe A and ending with the Vilnius Sonderkommando.[4] The proceedings of the Nuremberg Tribunal concerning the Eastern Territories ended on 31 August 1946, and the judgment was passed a month later, but this did

[3] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, hereinafter GK], 150/1011, Operational Group A Report, fols 1 and 7; *ibid.*, 373 Nor, Report of the Wehrmacht Command on the Situation in the Occupied Areas, fols 1, 2; *ibid.*, 409 Nor, The "Barbarossa" Plan, fol. 1, 4; G.N. Aleksandrow, *Norymberga wczoraj i dziś* (Warsaw, 1974), pp. 8–9; J.J. Heydecker, J. Leeb, *Proces w Polymerize* (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 263–273.

[4] In German: Sonderkommando der Sipo und SD, in Lithuanian: Ypatingas Burys, in the Polish community the name "Strzelcy ponarscy" (The Ponary Riflemen) was used (*szaulisi*). The formation was directly subordinated to the Security Police and the SD. The unit was commanded by a member of the Gestapo or criminal police, until 1943 by SD personnel officer Martin Weiss, and later by Fiedler. It consisted of four or five members of the SD and SS, several members of the Fifth Column and agents, and a trained police commando of 45 to 150 men made up of Lithuanian volunteers. Initially, the members of the special unit were responsible for maintaining order on the streets and securing industrial plants. However, their main task was to execute people considered enemies of the Third Reich at Ponary, 12 kilometers from Vilnius. For more, see M. Tomkiewicz, *Zbrodnia ponarska 1941–1944* (Warsaw, 2022), pp. 54–62.

not close the way to the trial of other Nazi criminals on the basis of the Moscow Declaration and the Constitution of the International Military Tribunal.[5]

The Case of the Massacre of Ponary before the German Courts

Also, in post-war Germany, guided by Law No. 4 of 30 October 1945, the Allied Control Council for Germany established new German courts, which were obliged to try criminals accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The basic category of these crimes included extermination, individual crimes, imprisonment and torture committed against civilians for racial, religious or political reasons. On the other hand, the Control Council Law No. 10 of 20 December 1945 covered "the punishment of persons guilty of war crimes, crimes against peace and against humanity."

It should be noted that in the early years after the war, German prosecutors initiated follow-up investigations on the basis of reports of crimes committed in their respective territories. It was on the basis of a denunciation on 24 May 1949 that the former commander of the Vilnius Sonderkommando, Martin Weiss, who had been in hiding since the end of the war, working as a janitor under the false name Friedrich Kadgien, was arrested in Ochsenfurt, Bavaria. Finding him had been a priority for the Central Jewish Committee in Munich since the end of the war. Very soon, preparations began for the trial against Weiss.[6]

Weiss was essentially the first person tried for crimes committed in the Ostland in proceedings before a German court against members of the Einsatzgruppen and Einsatzkommandos and members of the Sicherheitspolizei und Sicherheitsdienst. The trial began on 25 January 1950 before the Jury of the Landgericht in Würzburg. In addition to Weiss, August Herring, the commander of the EK 3A in Vilnius, was also on the bench of the accused at the time. They were charged with taking part in the mass crimes committed in Ponary. On the basis of the final judgment of 3 February 1950, the commander of the Vilnius Ponary Riflemen, Weiss, was sentenced

[5] AIPN, GK, 150/961, Soobshcheniye Chrezvychaynoy Gosudarstvennoy Komissii po ustanovleniyu i rassledovaniyu zlodyeyaniy nemyetsko-fashistkikh zakhvatchikov v Litovskoy Sovyetskoy Sotsyalisticheskiey Ryespublikye, fols 1–4; G.M. Gilbert, *Dziennik norymberski* (Warsaw, 2012), p. 312.

[6] AIPN, GK, 164/1088, vol. 1, The Martin Weiss case file, Letter of the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Frankfurt am Main to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw, 19 July 1949, fol. 16.

to life imprisonment for actively and knowingly aiding and abetting in the killing of some 30,000 people escorted from Łukiszki to Ponary and for personally killing seven people. August Herring was sentenced to life imprisonment for aiding and abetting in the killing of at least 4,000 people in Ponary and for personally murdering one person. In the trial of both defendants, in its final decision, the court relied on the testimony of 40 witnesses.[7] Twenty years later, a life sentence was upheld for Weiss under an order issued by the Bavarian Ministry of Justice on 25 January 1971. Still, he was awarded clemency and released in 1977 after serving 27 years. As far as Herring[8] was concerned, the same Bavarian ministry had already changed his life sentence to 15 years' imprisonment on 18 March 1959, and on the basis of a decision of 20 December 1959, the sentence was upheld. The role of the Polish side in this case should also be highlighted. Namely, in December 1949, the Polish Military Mission for War Crimes in Berlin submitted a request to the American authorities for Martin Weiss's extradition. However, the American authorities refused to extradite Weiss to Poland because the commander of the Vilnius Sonderkommando had been validly sentenced to life imprisonment by a German court. Nevertheless, the case against Weiss and Herring was initiated by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland and was later conducted by the Warsaw County Court. On 19 February 1972, the court suspended these proceedings due to the impossibility of apprehending Martin Weiss and August Herring, who were in the territory of Germany. The Polish side handed over the evidence gathered during the investigation in March 1971 to the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR in Moscow, which was also handling the Ponary massacre case.[9]

The possibility of applying the statute of limitations to Nazi crimes was first raised in the early 1950s. The issue of prosecuting war criminals gained momentum

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[7] Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg [hereinafter BA L], Ks 15/49, Criminal trial against Martin Weiss and August Herring, fol. 122; A. Rückerl, *Nazistowscy przestępcy przed sądem* (Heidelberg, 1982).

[8] August Hering died on 17 November 1992 at the age of 82 ("Einfach am Baum totschlagen," *Berliner Zeitung*, 5 February 1950, p. 2).

[9] AIPN, II Ds. 96/68/W.54/72, The Martin Weiss case file – Gestapo in Vilnius, Order of the District Court in Warsaw suspending the criminal proceedings in the case of M. Weiss and A. Herring, 19 February 1972, fol. 29; *ibid.*, GK, 164/1088, vol. 1, The Martin Weiss case file, Phone dispatch of the Polish Military Mission for War Crimes in Berlin to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw, 9 February 1950, Letter of the Head of the Polish Military Mission for War Crimes in Berlin, Major W. Kozłowski, to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw, 20 March 1950, p. 92.

in 1956 after Chancellor Konrad Adenauer visited Moscow, where agreements were made for the return of German prisoners of war from the USSR to Germany. From then on, they acted in a dual role – as witnesses in trials and as full-time employees of the judiciary at various levels. Moreover, from then on, investigations were no longer initiated upon receipt of a report that a suspect had committed a criminal act but were already undertaken on the basis of any circumstantial evidence of a criminal act. Thus, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt am Main in 1959 initiated a case against members of Einsatzkommando 3 and the Sicherheitspolizei, operating in the General Commissariat of Lithuania. The focus of these proceedings was the persecution and crimes committed against Polish citizens of Jewish nationality in Ponary. At the preliminary stage of the proceedings, evidence was collected, and a deed of indictment was prepared against SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Ditz and six co-defendants (ex SS-Untersturmführer Erich W., ex SS-Obersturmführer Peter E., ex SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich E., ex SS-Untersturmführer Herbert A., ex SS-Scharführer Paul L. and ex SS-Sturmführer Max G.) Heinrich Ditz was accused of having "ordered the shooting of 2,000 Jewish men, women and children in Ponary at the end of 1942 […] and of having personally shot several Jews who began to scream or lost consciousness."[10] Ultimately, no investigation was initiated against the principal defendant. The investigation was discontinued due to insufficient evidence of guilt.[11]

Despite the lack of legally binding convictions, the 1959 investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt am Main became a model for subsequent trials. The identification and later interrogation of all major Ostland officers was the starting point for the prosecutions of German justice for crimes committed on the territory of the Reichskommissariat Ostland. For the German prosecution, one of the leading figures to be interrogated was the Reich Commissioner, Gauleiter Heinrich Lohse – one of the first officers of the Commissariat to be arrested by the British troops in 1945. After a trial in 1948, he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. He was released early on health grounds in 1951 after serving only

[10] The article quotes the original transcript from the trial records of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt am Main.

[11] *Die geheime Notizen des K. Sakowicz, Dokumenten zur Judenvernichtung in Ponary*, ed. R. Margolis, J.G. Tobias (Nürnberg, 2003), p. 4.

three years. Lohse was summoned as a witness to the Itzehoe Regional Court on 7 July 1960. The case in which he was to testify concerned the involvement of the civil administration of the Commissariat in the solution of the Jewish question in the eastern territories. In his testimony, Lohse emphatically stated that these were tasks assigned to the police, the SS and special units, not the civil administration. He emphasised that due to his lack of adequate knowledge of the operation of the Łukiszki prison in 1941–1944 and the mass atrocities committed in Ponary, he could not respond to them. There are several inaccuracies in his argument. His alleged ignorance of the Ponary massacre is astonishing since he was aware of the report by Gewecke, the Gebietskommissar (Territorial Commissioner) of Szawle, about the executions of Jews in the area under his command. The prosecutor in charge of the case pointed out that, in accordance with Hitler's decree of 17 July 1941 on the police protection of the territory of the USSR, the Reichskommissar cooperated with the Higher SS and Police Commander and was therefore aware of the guidelines sent to these bodies. This subordination, according to Lohse, had no bearing on the links between administrative matters and the liquidation of the Jews. The prosecutor in charge of the case, however, presented him with a document signed by him, "Provisional Guidelines for the Treatment of Jews in the Reich District Ostland." Lohse's explanation for this evidence was that he acquainted himself with the documents of this kind only perfunctorily and, after signing them, passed them on according to jurisdiction to Wilhelm Burmeister, who headed Hauptabteilung I and was responsible for administrative matters. Also, in this case, his testimony was inconsistent, as the prosecutor had the documentation in the case of A. Rosenberg, presented before the Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, which contained the information that the document had gone to all official units of the Ostland, including the Reich Commissioner for the Eastern Countries.[12]

The large number of proceedings initiated necessitated the establishment of a special institution for the comprehensive prosecution of National Socialist crimes. Thus, on 6 November 1958, an agreement between the Ministers of Justice of the Länder created a joint institution of all the Federal Länder's justice administrations called

[12] BA L, B 162/29571, Minutes of the interrogation of the accused Heinrich Lohse, 7 July 1960, fols 304–305; H. Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).

the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltung zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen). The Central Office initiated more than a dozen investigations into crimes committed in the occupied eastern territories between 1941 and 1944. Over time, however, it became apparent that the investigations into Nazi crimes committed in the occupied eastern territories were primarily based on the Central Office's own sources of information and research conducted exclusively in German archives. Only occasionally was legal assistance requested from competent foreign authorities (mainly Poland and Lithuania) with evidence of the crimes. At the beginning of 1960, information about the planned statute of limitations for Nazi crimes began to appear again in the German press. This mainly concerned trials in which sentences of up to 10 years' imprisonment were passed for crimes involving deprivation of liberty, property, and bodily harm. However, the statute of limitations for murder and bodily injury resulting in death was 15 years after the end of the war. From 9 May 1960, it was no longer possible to prosecute crimes classified as murder.[13]

Using the new guidelines of 14 May 1962, the Jury of the Landgericht in Berlin began the trial against the commander of Einsatzkommando 9. The commander of Einsatzkommando 9, SS-Obersturmbannführer Albert Filbert, and the co-defendants in the trial, i.e. the former head of the Einsatzkommando's personnel section, SS-Sturmbannführer Wilhelm Greiffenberg, Gerhard Schneider, Chief Criminal Commissioner Bodo Struck, the administrative employee Konrad Fiebig and the member of the police section Heinrich Tunnat, were indicted. The main defendant, Filbert, who had been hiding under a changed name since the end of the hostilities, was arrested on 25 February 1959 and imprisoned in the Moabit detention centre in Berlin. He was mainly charged with issuing orders whereby,

[13] BA L, B 162/86, Die Verfolgung nationalsozialistischer Straftaten durch Staatsanwaltschaften und Gerichte im Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland seit 1945, fol. 19; H. Sołga, *Niemcy o Niemcach. Bilans ścigania zbrodniarzy hitlerowskich w Republice Federalnej Niemiec* (Warsaw, 1988), pp. 19–20; J. Barcz, *System prawny RFN wobec norm prawa międzynarodowego – doktryna i praktyka konstytucyjna* (Warsaw, 1986); *Przedawnienie i ściganie zbrodni przeciwko pokojowi, zbrodni wojennych i zbrodni przeciwko ludzkości w systemie prawa RFN. Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Warszawa 28 IV 1980*, ed. by J. Barycz and P. Maćkowiak, 'Studia z dziedziny stosunków prawnych z zagranicą' Series (Warsaw, 1981); M. Becker, *Sądownictwo niemieckie i jego rola w polityce okupacyjnej na ziemiach polskich wcielonych do Rzeszy 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 305–306; H. Rottleuther, "Karrieren und Kontinuitäten deutscher Justizjuristen vor und nach 1945. Mit allen Grund-und Karrieredaten auf beilegender CD-ROM," *Schriftenreihe Justizforschung und Rechtssoziologie* 9 (2010), p. 58.

from 4 July 1941 onwards, "Jewish victims were dragged out of their flats and then hurried in columns to Ponary." Ultimately, the court ruled that Filbert was responsible for the murder of at least 4,000 Jews in the Vilnius area between 4 and 20 July 1941, 40 Jewish people in Wilejka and about 100 Jews in Mołodeczno at the end of July 194. The total number of those murdered between July and October 1941 in operations under Filbert's command was 6,800 people. The defendant, Struck, on the other hand, was accused of helping to lead the liquidation of the Vitebsk ghetto, where nearly 800 people were killed. Schneider was responsible for the shootings in Mołodeczno, where about 100 people were killed; Greiffenberg was accused of murdering 100 Jewish people in Wilejka, while Tunnat was charged with depriving 80 people of their lives in Mołodeczno. The court sentenced the main defendant to life imprisonment. In the end, Filbert spent only thirteen years in prison and was subsequently released due to prison overcrowding. The other co-defendants received lighter sentences (Schneider and Struck ten years, Tunnat and Greiffenberg three years, and Fiebig was acquitted).[14]

The Case of the Ponary Massacre in the Polish Legal System

In Poland, as early as 1942, attempts were made to create a legal basis for the future accountability of perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity. This was sanctioned by the Declaration of St James's Palace, signed on 13 January 1942 by the representatives of nine occupied states, which announced the judicial punishment of those responsible for the crimes committed.[15] A significant breakthrough was the establishment of the War Crimes Bureau in London in 1943. The first formal legislation on the subject was the Decree of the President of the Polish Republic in Exile "On Criminal Liability for War Crimes," promulgated on 30 March 1943,[16] which sanctioned punishments for acts committed to the detri-

[14] Alfred Filbert died on 30 July 1990 at the age of 85 (BA L, Ks 1.62 [23.61], Judgment against Albert Filbert, 22 June 1962, fol. 5).

[15] *Ściganie i karanie sprawców zbrodni wojennych i zbrodni przeciwko ludzkości (wybór dokumentów)*, ed. C. Pilichowski (Warsaw, 1978), *passim*.

[16] *Dziennik Ustaw RP Londyn* (The Journal of Laws, Republic of Poland, London) (1943), Part 1, No. 3, item 6. This was the world's first piece of legislation on war crimes. The basic provision of this decree read: "Whoever, contrary to the norms of international law, commits an act to the detriment of the Polish State, a Polish legal person or a Polish citizen, shall be liable to imprisonment."

ment of the Polish state and Polish citizens. Poland also soon began to cooperate with the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC), creating the first list of war criminals.[17]

No less important was the establishment of the Polish-Soviet Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in August 1944 by a resolution of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. On 31 August 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) issued a decree concerning "The Punishment of Fascist-Hitlerite Criminals Guilty of Murder and Ill-treatment of the Civilian Population and Prisoners of War, and the Punishment of Traitors of the Polish Nation." Under Article 1, crimes committed against Polish citizens are still prosecuted. On 12 September 1944, another decree of the PKWN, "On Special Criminal Courts for Punishing Fascist-Hitlerite Criminals", was passed based on the Decree of 31 August 1944. In January 1946, the Supreme National Tribunal was established with the primary objective of trying the biggest Nazi criminals on the Polish territory. The public prosecutor's offices and the courts also prosecute war crime perpetrators. Thus, under, among others, on the provisions of Article 1, point 1 of the August Decree:

(1) In December 1949, the Court of Appeals in Warsaw sentenced Eugeniusz Faulhaber to death for the murder of approximately 4,000 Polish citizens of Polish and Jewish nationality in Ponary on 5 May 1943 and the shooting of 62 people in Kaunas on 4 July 1944;

(2) The Voivodeship Court in Olsztyn, by its judgment of May 1954, sentenced Bronisław Dąbrowski for the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto in Miory in 1941 to the death penalty (followed by a review of the judgment by the Supreme Court in Warsaw of 29 June 1954 and a change of the sentence to 5 years' imprisonment and deprivation of public rights for two years);

(3) In March 1950, the Court of Appeals in Poznań sentenced Bolesław Kniaziewicz to the death penalty for the murders of civilians in Parafianów, County of Dzisna, in the summer of 1942, for the liquidation of the ghetto in Dokszyce, and for the hunts for guerrillas (the President of the Republic of Poland exercised

[17] D. Plesch, *Human Rights After Hitler: The lost History of Prosecuting Axis War Crimes* (Washington, 2017), pp. 123–125.

his right of pardon and, on 6 June 1951, the sentence was changed to 15 years' imprisonment).[18]

Although the legal infrastructure to prosecute war criminals already existed in the country, there was still no institution to document the crimes committed. On 29 March 1945, the Presidium of the PKWN established the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, which functioned as the Main Commission in Warsaw with field offices constituting District Commissions. The most crucial task imposed on this institution was to complete documentation enabling the prosecution of Nazi criminals for the crimes they committed during World War Two. The petitions for the extradition of war criminals drawn up in the first years of its activities and the lists of perpetrators completed for the purposes of the United Nations War Crimes Commission are still the basis for the prosecution of Nazi crimes in individual countries, including Poland, where the entity in charge is the investigative division of the Institute of National Remembrance. In 1949, the institution was renamed the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland. The year 1965 saw its dynamic development and intensification of activities related to the search for perpetrators of war crimes. In the 1960s, as a result of the debate in the media about the statute of limitations for war crimes, the activities of the Main Commission intensified. It was established that only homicides fulfilling the characteristics of the crimes listed in Article 1(1) of the August Decree could be investigated, while the trial of other criminal acts was subject to the statute of limitations. As a result, investigations were suspended due to the lack of access to foreign archival sources and the inability to interrogate witnesses and apprehend perpetrators living outside Poland.

From that time until the political transformation of Poland, no further criminal legislation was enacted providing for responsibility for crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. This state of affairs was changed by the provisions of Article 105 § 1 of the Penal Code and Article 43 of the Polish Con-

[18] Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Gdańsku [Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, hereinafter OKGd], S 87.2006. Zn, Investigation into crimes committed in 1941–1944 against the Jewish population in the Vilnius region, Vol. 1–42. For more, see M. Tomkiewicz, *Zbrodnia w Ponarach 1941–1944* (Warsaw, 2008), pp. 283–285.

stitution, enacted at the turn of 1997 and 1998, which stipulate that war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity are not subject to the statute of limitations. On 4 April 1991, when the institution was renamed, the scope of competence of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation – the Institute of National Remembrance – was extended to include Stalinist crimes. The commission conducted investigations only until the perpetrator was identified and handed them over to the prosecutor's office. The provisions still in force today were regulated by the Act of 1998 on the Establishment of the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, on the basis of which the prosecutors of the Main and Branch Commissions for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, in accordance with the Penal Code in force, renew the suspended and initiate new proceedings concerning Nazi crimes, communist crimes and acts fulfilling the characteristics of crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Considering its territorial jurisdiction, the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Gdańsk had several investigations pending concerning crimes against Polish citizens of Polish and Jewish nationality committed between 1941 and 1944 in the north-eastern Borderlands of the Second Republic of Poland.[19]

One of the first post-war cases conducted by Polish courts against a perpetrator who committed criminal acts in the area of the former Polish Voivodeship of Vilnius was the trial against Arkadius Sakalauskas, a former member of the Vilnius Sonderkommando, tried in September 1949 by the District Court in Warsaw. He was alleged to have been a member of the Vilnius Sonderkommando from 1941 to 1943 and to have taken part in the murder of Jewish people in Ponary, as well as to have arrested around 800 Jews and led them to the Łukiszki prison. On 23 November 1949, after a two-month trial, the court sentenced Sakalauskas to the death penalty, permanent loss of public and civil rights and forfeiture of all his

[19] J. Sawicki, B. Walawski, *Zbiór przepisów specjalnych przeciwko zbrodniarzom hitlerowskim i zdrajcom narodu z komentarzem* (Cracow, 1945), pp. 5–20; E. Kobierska-Motas, *Ekstradycja przestępców wojennych do Polski z czterech stref okupacyjnych Niemiec 1946–1950*, part 1 (Warsaw, 1991), p. 49; A. Machnikowska, *Wymiar sprawiedliwości w Polsce w latach 1944–1950* (Gdańsk, 2008), pp. 20–21; S. Kaniewski, "Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej. Kierunki i perspektywy działań," *Studia Juridica* 35 (1998), *passim*.

property. The convict appealed to the Supreme Court in August 1950, but his appeal was rejected. The convict then sent a letter to the President of Poland, requesting the right of clemency and commutation of the death sentence to imprisonment. President Bierut did not exercise this right, and Sakalauskas was executed on 16 November 1950.[20]

In April 1970, a criminal action against Vilnius Sonderkommando members Władysław Butkun (Vladas Butkūnas) and Juozas Miakisz (Juozas Mekišius) was initiated by the Prosecutor's Office of the Lithuanian SSR. The prosecution accused Butkun and Miakisz of being members of the Vilnius Sonderkommando from July 1941 and of taking part in the shooting and escorting of convicts from Łukiszki to the massacre site in Ponary. Both left for Poland after the war, so the General Prosecutor's Office of the People's Republic of Poland was commissioned to establish their whereabouts. The case continued on the Polish territory at the Voivodeship Prosecutor's Office in Warsaw. The case of another defendant, Jan Borkowski (Jonas Barkauskaus), a member of the Vilnius Sonderkommando, was added to the ongoing trial. The trial took place before the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, and the defendants were Józef Miakisz, born in 1911, Władysław Butkun, born in 1916, and Jan Borkowski, born in 1916. The main hearing was held in the Criminal Division IV of the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw between 23 and 25 October 1973. The judgment was passed on 30 November 1973, and on its basis, the court sentenced all defendants to the death penalty with permanent deprivation of public rights, together with a sentence of confiscation of property in its entirety. However, on 7 September 1974, the Council of State, exercising its right of clemency, commuted the sentence to 25 years' imprisonment.[21]

On 26 August 1976, the Deputy Public Prosecutor of the Olsztyn Voivodeship Public Prosecutor's Office presented charges against another member of the Vilnius Sonderkommando, Wiktor Gilwiński (Wiktoras Galwanauskas), accusing him of taking part in mass killings between 1941 and 1944 in Vilnius and other localities. During the trial, Gilwiński pleaded guilty to the charges brought against him of tak-

[20] M. Tomkiewicz, *Więzienie na Łukiszkach w Wilnie 1939–1953* (Warsaw, 2018), p. 221.

[21] Sąd Wojewódzki w Warszawie [Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, hereinafter SWwW], IV K 130/73, Criminal Case against Józef Miakisz, Władysław Butkun, Jan Borkowski, Order Extending the Time Limit for Pre-Trial Proceedings in the Criminal Case No. 295, fols 475, 1317–1320.

ing part in the mass executions in Ponary and escorting the victims from Łukiszki to the execution site. On 3 June 1977, the Olsztyn District Court sentenced him to 25 years imprisonment, deprivation of public rights for ten years and confiscation of all his property for these acts. However, on 2 December 1977, the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court, following a review of the judgment, changed the sentence of 25 years' imprisonment to the death penalty, and on 13 March 1978, the Council of State, exercising its right of clemency, changed the death penalty back to 25 years' imprisonment. This sentence was upheld.[22]

About a dozen cases concerning Nazi crimes committed in the territory of the former Voivodeship of Vilnius were conducted by judges and prosecutors of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Łódź and later in Gdańsk. To date, about 30 trials have been legally concluded concerning acts committed in the Vilnius region between 1939 and 1956 against the population of Polish and Jewish nationality. Among the most important are the cases conducted by the Gdańsk Commission: the investigation marked with the reference symbol S 1.2000. Zn crimes committed between 1941 and 1944 against the population of Polish nationality in Ponary near Vilnius; the investigation marked with the reference symbol S 18.2000. Zn crimes committed against prisoners of the camp in Prawieniszki near Kaunas between 1941 and 1944; the investigation marked with the reference symbol S 96.2001. Zn the shooting of approximately 400 inhabitants of Święciany in 1942 in connection with a retaliatory action; the investigation marked with the reference symbol S 87.2006. Zn crimes committed between 1941 and 1944 against the population of Jewish nationality in the Vilnius region. The Gdańsk Commission's investigations aimed not only to complete the settlement of war crimes cases but also to clarify all the circumstances of the events and to draw up a complete list of witnesses and perpetrators.

The Case of the Ponary Massacre Before the Soviet Justice System

While the hostilities were still in progress, the USSR also began preparations to bring to account the perpetrators of crimes committed during World War

[22] OKGd, S 87.2006.Zn, vol. 13, Judgment of the Voivodeship Court in Olsztyn, II K 59/76, pp. 2473–2486.

Two. On 2 November 1942, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR established the Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices. Representatives of the Commission registered the crimes, carried out forensic-medical examinations at execution sites and created the first list of German criminals responsible for organising and committing the murders on the territory of the USSR. In July 1944, a report was drawn up in Vilnius "in connection with the crime of genocide committed by the Germans against Soviet citizens during the occupation of the Vilnius region between 24 June 1941 and 9 July 1944." Representatives of the Soviet military unit and local residents of Ponary, Nowosiołki and Chotbeje inspected the execution site in Ponary. The commission interrogated several hundred witnesses and drew up a historical-geographical sketch of the wartime events.[23]

Shortly after that, the USSR's Ministry of Security established courts and tribunals designed to try the criminals. Members of the Vilnius Sonderkommando were tried by the following Soviet bodies: the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the Military Tribunal of the NKVD of the Lithuanian SSR, the Military Tribunal of the Ministry of the Interior's Troops of the LSSR, the Tribunal of the Soviet Army and the Naval Fleet, and extrajudicial bodies – the Special Commission under the USSR's Ministry of Security. War crimes were qualified in accordance with point 1 of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 19 April 1943 "On the Punishment of German-Hitlerite Criminals Guilty of Murder and Ill-treatment of the Civilian Population and Red Army Prisoners of War, and the Punishment of Spies, Traitors to the Nation and their Accomplices" and Article 58 "1a" and "1b" of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic's Criminal Code. The "Smersh" counter-intelligence units of the Third Belarussian Front, officers of the LSSR's Ministry of Public Security and the investigative

[23] Central Archives of the Ministry of Defence of Russia in Moscow, documents without reference symbols sent to the Branch Commission in Gdańsk via the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Gdańsk, 13 November 2002: Report and Addendum to the Report drawn up in connection with the genocide in Ponary, a village of the Vilnius region, introduced at a rally of the inhabitants of Ponary, Nowosiołki and Chotbej on the basis of their testimonies on the above matter, 14 July 1944; LVVA, P-132 T 30 April 48, Communique of the Extraordinary State Commission on the extermination of the population in the town of Ponary, 2 January 1946, fols 82–99.

departments of the NKGB and KGB of the LSSR were responsible for arresting the selected perpetrators. In most cases, final decisions in secret trials were made within 24 hours of the arrested person's arraignment, and sentences were final and not subject to appeal. Those sentenced to death under the decree were executed by firing squad or hanged from the gallows in a public execution, and their bodies were displayed in public for a specified period of time.[24]

One of the first people captured by the "Smersh" organs of the Third Belarussian Front was a Lithuanian, a member of the Vilnius Sonderkommando Bronisław Żelwis. He was accused of complicity in the crimes committed at Ponary and of serving in the German Security Police from September 1943 and later in the Vilnius Special Division. He served in the unit until July 1944, after which he was arrested. The "Smersh" counterintelligence department of the First Air Army presented Żelwis with charges under Article 58-I "a" of the RSFSR's Criminal Code, to which he pleaded guilty. The case was referred first to the 2nd "Smersh" Division of the Third Byelorussian Front and then to the court of the War Tribunal of the Third Byelorussian Front, with a simultaneous change of the legal qualification from Article 58-1 "a" of the RSFSR's CC to the charge under point 1 of the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR's Supreme Soviet of 19 April 1943. The judgment was passed on 27 September 1944 at a closed session in Kaunas. Żelwis was sentenced to capital punishment by shooting and to confiscation of personal property.[25]

Also, an officer of the Lithuanian Security Police (Sauguma), Lithuanian Antanas Granickas, was tried under point 1 of the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 19 April 1943. In July 1941, he volunteered for service in the Vilnius Sonderkommando. He took an active part in the executions at Ponary, Nemenczyn and Nowe Święciany on several occasions, and in autumn 1944, he carried out mass killings at Fort IX in Kaunas. He then joined an SS unit

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[24] М.В. Кожевников, *История советского суда 1917–1956 гг.* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 340–341; Н.С. Алексеев, *Злодеяния и возмездие. Преступления против человечества* (Moscow, 1986), *passim*; E. Rojowska, "Wpływ dekretów radzieckich Rady Najwyższej ZSRR na polskie prawo karne dotyczące karania zbrodniarzy wojennych," *Studia Prawnoustrojowe* 15 (2012), pp. 183–192.

[25] Lietuvos Ypatingasis Archyvas in Vilnius [Lithuanian Special Archives, hereinafter LYA], K-1 Ap 58 B 43319/3, Questionnaire of the detainee Bronisław Żelwis, 15 August 1944; Minutes of the interrogation of Bronisław Żelwis, 29 July 1944, 31 July 1944, 2 August 1944, 8 August 1944, 14 August 1944; Deed of indictment, 20 September 1944; Judgment of the War Tribunal of the Third Byelorussian Front, 27 September 1944, fols 8–82.

that took part in fighting on the Hel Peninsula, from where he was evacuated by sea to the Bornholm Island area, where he was captured by the "Smersh" counter-intelligence organs of the 132nd Rifle Corps of the Second Byelorussian Front. In the same trial, the intelligence officer Władysław Kowalewski was tried,[26] who worked as an investigator for the NKVD authorities between 20 November 1940 and 22 July 1941. After the outbreak of the German-Russian war, he was evacuated by the People's Commissariat to Kalinin for sabotage training. On 5 March 1942, given his experience as an agent, German intelligence offered him the opportunity to work as a secret agent. Kowalewski immediately agreed and signed a declaration of loyalty to the security organs. He was then given the codename "508", later changed to "Maks". His first task was to denounce and report on the mood of the workers at the carpentry factory in Kaunas, where he was employed. During his agent's operations, which lasted from March 1942 to July 1944, 10 people were arrested on the basis of his reports, three of whom were executed by shooting. He was one of the exemplary agents, so from January 1943, in accordance with Sauguma's orders, he was already engaged only in special tasks in Lithuania, consisting of exposing guerillas, paratroopers, Soviet activists and former party members.[27] On 3 October, at a closed session, the Military Tribunal of the 43rd Army sentenced Antanas Granickas and Władysław Kowalewski to death by shooting and to confiscation of property. The sentence was final and not subject to appeal, and the execution took place on 21 February 1946.[28]

In turn, in September 1951, the Lithuanian security police charged Ypatingas Burys member Jonas Germanavičius, who had served throughout Ypatingas Burys'

[26] Władysław Kowalewski (born in 1919 in Vilnius) – a Lithuanian, former member of the Komsomol. Until 1941, he worked as an investigator of the LSSR's NKVD. From July 1944, he was on guard duty at Fort IX in Kaunas, and then went with evacuated prisoners to Sztutowo. In February 1945, he was sent to the front with an SS unit. After the German capitulation, he took refuge on the island of Bornholm, where he was arrested by counter-intelligence agents. Captured on 21 June 1945 and tried by the Military Tribunal of the 43rd Army at a closed session under the chairmanship of Lt. Col. Sheremetev for a crime under Article 58-1 "b" of the RSFSR's CC. On the basis of the Judgment of 3 October 1945, he was sentenced to execution by firing squad and to confiscation of all property (LYA, F.K-1 Ap 58 B 44678/3, fols 161–166).

[27] LYA, F.K-1 Ap 58 B 44678/3, Minutes of the court hearing of the Military Tribunal of the 43rd Army in the case of Władysław Kowalewski and Antanas Granickas, fols 8–82.

[28] LYA, F K-1 Ap 58 B 44678/3, Decision to bring charges, 7 July 1945; Request for prosecution, 28 September 1945; Detention decision, 27 June 1945; Minutes of the court hearing, no date; Judgment in Case No. 138 against Władysław Kowalewski and Antanas Granickas, 3 October 1945; Death penalty execution report, 21 February 1946, fols 98–186.

operation, with responsibility for crimes under Articles 58-1 "a" and 58-11 of the RSFSR's Criminal Code. His duties between 1941 and 1944 included escorting prisoners from the Łukiszki Prison for interrogation to the headquarters of the German Security Police and participating in the firing squad at Ponary. His case was tried in October 1951 at a closed court session of the Military Tribunal of the Baltic Military District in Vilnius. The judgment was passed on 27 October, and on its basis, Germanavičius was sentenced to execution by firing squad and to confiscation of all property. A cassation appeal filed by the accused was not accepted and the sentence was executed on 14 April 1952 in Vilnius.[29]

It was not only the crime at Ponary that fell within the jurisdiction of the Soviet legislation but also the crimes committed during the liquidation of the Jewish ghettos and in the camps. In the case of the functionaries and guards of the labour camp in Prawieniszki near Kaunas, where mainly Poles and Jews were imprisoned, the first court hearing began in November 1944. It was held before the War Tribunal of the Kaunas City Garrison. The first to be sentenced by the Tribunal, on 27 November 1944, was Jurgis Naujokajtis – a non-commissioned officer in the SS, "a guard of the concentration camp for political prisoners who were Soviet citizens in the village of Prowieniszki" – sentenced to the maximum penalty of shooting and confiscation of property. The verdict stated that he had participated in the murder of an unknown prisoner in December 1942, in the shooting of two hostages in January 1943 because one of the prisoners had escaped from his workplace, in the murder of 12 political prisoners in the woods near the camp in July 1943, and in the execution of a Roma family of five. The sentence was final and not subject to appeal. Nonetheless, at a subsequent court hearing of the War Tribunal of the Third Byelorussian Front on 10 April 1945, at the request of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Naujokajtis's maximum sentence was commuted to 25 years in a hard labour camp.

[29] LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 36137/3, Request for prosecution in Case No. 18919, 19 September 1951; Minutes of the preliminary hearing at the Military Tribunal of the Baltic Military District, 17 October 1951; Judgment of the Military Tribunal of the Baltic Military District, 17 October 1951; Minutes of the court hearing in Case No. 0316 against the defendant Germanavičius, 27 October 1951; Judgment No. 00274, 27 October 1951; Cassation appeal, 27 October 1951; Judgment of the Supreme Court of the USSR No. I-004053-p/51, 19 December 1951; Certificate of execution of the death penalty, 14 April 1952, fols 389–431.

In the post-war period, on the territory of the LSSR, Soviet tribunals and courts, in principle, tried most of the members of the crew of the camp in Prawieniszki. In pursuance of the judgment of the Kaunas Garrison War Tribunal on 29 November 1944, the cruellest supervisors of the guard unit from Prawieniszki were sentenced: Pavel Timofeyev, Georgi Manzurov, Vadim But, Fyodor Yemelyanov and Kirill Fomkin. Timofeyev, Manzurov, But and Yemelyanov were sentenced under Article 2 of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 19 April 1943 to 15 years of hard labour, deprivation of public rights for five years and confiscation of personal property for "systematic, self-initiated beatings with clubs and fists of Soviet citizens imprisoned by the Germans in the camp in the town of Prawieniszki." Kirill Fomkin was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in a correctional camp. The following guards were sentenced by the judgments of the Military Tribunal of the LSSR's NKVD Troops between January and March 1946: Osip Udaltsov (sentence of 23 January 1946, 10 years in a forced labour camp) and Georgy Kruglakov (sentence of 14 March 1946, 15 years in a forced labour camp). The Military Tribunal of the 6th Guards Army passed one of the last sentences on 20 February 1946. The accused member of the Latvian SS Legion, Alexei Agafonov, "a deputy platoon commander of the guard company in the concentration camp in the town of Prawieniszki," was sentenced to be placed in a correctional labour camp for ten years. The last of the sentences passed by the Line Court of the Lithuanian State Railways in March 1952 concerned the "supervisor at the concentration camp in Prawieniszki," Dominas Balnis, who was sentenced to exile to a hard labour camp for 25 years.[30]

The Case of the Ponary Massacre before the Lithuanian Justice System

The Lithuanian justice system also conducted several trials concerning crimes committed in the Ostland area. In particular, the prosecution of the Lithuanian Sauguma employees was loudly echoed. These were mainly lower-level employees

[30] LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 45665/3, Criminal case of Jurgis Naujokajtis, fols 1–111; LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 22587/3, Criminal case of Dominas Balnis, fols 1–147; LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 39304/3, Criminal case of Pavel Timofeyev, Georgi Manzurov, Vadim But, Fyodor Yemelyanov and Kirill Fomkin, fols 1–220; LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 30158/3, Criminal case of Osip Udaltsov, fols 1–25; K-1 Ap 58 B 3742/3, Criminal case of Georgy Kruglakov, fols 1–107; LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 46865/3, Criminal case of A. Agafonov, fols 1–119.

in various departments of the German and Lithuanian police and administration. In the trials in question, Bronislavas Gečiauskas was sentenced to death for his involvement in arresting Jews in 1941–1942 and, delivering them to the ghetto in Podbrzezie, and then taking the Jews to Rieše for execution. Several defendants were sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in a correctional camp: Petras Asminavičius, for arresting Jews in 1941 and delivering them to the ghetto in Nowe Święciany, and Petras Skrebutėnas, chief of the Święciany county police, for participation in arresting and deporting Jews to the ghetto in Nowe Święciany in 1941.[31] Also tried under the LSSR's law were other police officers who took part in the retaliatory action known as the "Święciany massacre," which was carried out in May 1942. As many as 450 people were shot as a result. The defendants tried in this case were Jonas Kurpis, Edwardas Verikas, Bronus Chechura, Jonas Ankienas and Kazis Garła, who were sentenced by the Military Tribunal of the LSSR's NKVD in Vilnius on 7 April 1945 under Article 58-1 "b" 58-11 of the RSFSR's Criminal Code to 10 to 20 years of penal servitude. Kazis Garła was acquitted and released from jail. The judgment was final and not subject to appeal.[32] In addition, Jonas Maciulevicius, who was accused, among other things, of personal involvement in the Święciany massacre, was sentenced to death by the Court of Appeals in Olsztyn on 2 May 1950. The sentence against Maciulevicius was executed on 12 December 1950 in Olsztyn prison.

However, the search continued for persons holding important positions, from chiefs to heads of the various departments of the repressive apparatus between 1941 and 1944. On this basis, in the 1960s, the perpetrators of the Ponary murders were subjected to criminal proceedings, namely the former SS-Oberscharführer of the 2nd platoon of the 1st company of the 9th police battalion in Vilnius, Horst Schweinberger, adjutant to the commissar Hingst and the organiser of the Vilnius ghetto, Franz Murer Juganowicz (he was sentenced to 25 years in prison and handed over to the Austrian authorities in 1949) and Martin Weiss.[33]

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[31] LYA, F.K. 1 Ap 58 B 13907/3, fols 114–117, 140–141.

[32] LYA, K-1 Ap 58 B 10712/3, Judgment of the Military Tribunal of the LSSR's NKVD, 7 April 1945, in the case of J. Kurpis, E. Werikas, E. Gienajtis, B. Czechur, J. Anienas, K. Garła, fols 103–104, 319.

[33] AIPN, II Ds. 96/68/W.54/72, vol. 1, The Martin Weiss case file – Gestapo in Vilnius, Correspondence between the Ministry of the Interior and the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, 9 July 1969, fols 59–60.

Many, however, fled to South America, Australia and the USA in the 1950s, such as the head of the Vilnius district of the Lithuanian Security Police, Aleksander Lileikis, who worked for the CIA in East Germany since 1952 before emigrating to the USA, and his deputy, Kazys Gimžauskas.[34] The anonymous complaint alleged that Lileikis, as head of the Lithuanian police during the Nazi occupation, was personally responsible for the arrest, detention and execution of Jews and those who helped Jews, suspected Communists and other civilians. The trials of Lileikis and Gimžauskas began in the United States and then continued in Lithuania after their extradition. On 2 May 1995, the Deputy Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania, A. Pestininkas, opened an investigation into the Alexander Lileikis case under Article 18, Part 6 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania and Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania. The health of the then 90-year-old Lileikis began to deteriorate rapidly, and it was likely that he would not live to see the trial. As in the case of Lileikis, the criminal proceedings against Gimžauskas were to be conducted by the Lithuanian Prosecutor's Office. On 19 November 1997, the chief prosecutor of the Special Investigations Department of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius, K. Kowarskas, issued a decision to open a criminal case against Gimžauskas. However, both cases were repeatedly suspended due to the defendants' ill health. Eventually, the investigation against Gimžauskas was brought to a conclusion under pressure from the international public. He was found guilty of involvement in the crimes in Lithuania, but the court dropped the sentence due to the defendant's poor health. The trial of Lileikis, who died a few months later, was halted for the same reason. In general, the results of these investigations were never disclosed to the public.[35]

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[34] LYA, F K-1 Ap 46 B 1103, The Juozas Arlauskas Case, fol. 1.

[35] OKGd, S 1.2000.Zn, vol. 46, Memorandum of the judicial decision of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts concerning the instituted civil action marked with the reference 94-11902-RGS against A. Lileikis, 15 September 1995, fols 9207–9216; *ibid.*, Vol. 46, Memo of the meeting at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Washington concerning the A. Lileikis case, 6 October 1994, fols 8654–8660; *ibid.*, vol. 44, Memorandum of an agreement between the US Department of Justice and the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania on cooperation in the prosecution of war criminals, no date, fols 8661–8662; E. Lichtblau, *Sąsiedzi naziści. Jak Ameryka stała się bezpiecznym schronieniem dla ludzi Hitlera*, Warsaw 2015, pp. 345–371; OKGd, S 87.2006.Zn, Vol. 43, Letter from the Regional Court of the Reutlingen District, 2 December 1949, fol. 8630; S 1.2000.Zn, Vol. 48, Statement by Kazys Gimžauskas, 21 March 1995, fols 9538–9540.

The Case of the Ponary Massacre before the Austrian Judiciary

There were also several criminal trials in Austria in which the direct perpetrators of the Ponary massacre and members of Einsatzkommando 3 of Einsatzgruppe A were in the dock. Among the more than a dozen trials initiated by the Austrian justice system, the following deserve special mention: the investigation by the Regional Court in Graz against Franz Murer, Rudolf Thomas Neugebauer, Dr. Humbert Achamer-Pifrader, Dr. Walter Musil, Heinz Lackner, Franz Radif, Erich Appel, Leopold Litschauer and Franz Schwarz,[36] and by the Regional Court in Vienna against Franz Murer.[37] Among the most important of these was the trial of the adjutant of the Vilnius district commissar Hingst and the desk officer of the commissariat for Jewish affairs, Franz Murer, who was recognised and arrested in Styria, Austria, after the war in 1947. In December 1948, he was deported to the Soviet Union and tried in Vilnius, where he was found guilty of murdering Soviet citizens and sentenced to 25 years of hard labour. In 1955, he was extradited to Austria. Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal succeeded in having him retried in 1963. The trial for murder under Article 134 et seq. of the Austrian Criminal Code took place at the Landesgericht Graz. The trial lasted a week and ended with Murer's acquittal, although he had initially been charged with complicity in the murder of 60–80,000 Jews in Vilnius between 1941 and 1944, as well as murder in sev-

[36] LG Graz 13 Vr 1257/61, LG Graz Vg 13 Vr 3485/55, LG Graz Vg 11 Vr 6880/47 Staatsanwaltschaft Graz StA Graz 10 St 8254/62, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsache Graz gegen Franz Murer wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von Jüdinnen und Juden des Wilnaer Ghettos in den Jahren 1941 bis 1943 in sejner Funktion als leitender Mitarbeiter des Gebietskommissariats Wilna; LG Graz 15 Vr 976/64, LG Graz 15 Vr 559/63, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsachen Graz gegen Rudolf Thomas Neugebauer wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von Jüdinnen und Juden in Litauen von Juni 1941 bis Juli 1944 als Angehöriger des Einsatzkommandos 3 der Einsatzgruppe A, *passim*; LG Graz 12 Vr 562/63, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsache Graz gegen Dr. Humbert Achamer-Pifrader wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von Jüdinnen und Juden in Litauen von Juni 1941 bis Juli 1944 als Angehöriger des Einsatzkommandos 3 der Einsatzgruppe A, *passim*; LG Graz 15 Vr 3157/63, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsache Graz gegen Heinz Lackner wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von von Jüdinnen und Juden in Litauen von Juni 1941 bis Juli 1944 als Angehöriger des Einsatzkommandos 3 der Einsatzgruppe A, *passim*; LG Graz 17 Vr 557/63, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsache Graz gegen Franz Radif, Erich Appel und Leopold Litschauer wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von von Jüdinnen und Juden in Litauen von Juni 1941 bis Juli 1944 als Angehöriger des Einsatzkommandos 3 der Einsatzgruppe A, *passim*; LG Graz 10 St 6091/65, Franz Schwarz, *passim* (documentation made available by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington).

[37] LG Wien, 4 Vr 1911/62 Beschuldigter: Franz Murer, Antrags- und Verfügungsbogen, *passim* (documentation made available by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington).

eral individual cases (for example the murder of six Jewish women in September 1942; the murder of Jekel Lewin and Hilz during the "yellow certificate action" in the Vilnius ghetto; the murder of Abraham Kuriszki in September 1942 in the courtyard of the Łukiszki prison during the preparation of transport of 60 Jews to Ponary). Murer pleaded not guilty and blamed members of the SS and Sicherheitspolizei for the Vilnius extermination action and suggested that witnesses had misidentified him.[38]

Conclusion

The presented analysis of criminal responsibility for the crimes committed in the Vilnius region leaves a feeling of inadequacy in holding the perpetrators accountable, from the Nuremberg trials to the domestic trials. A large number of perpetrators escaped criminal responsibility because they participated in the war effort between 1943 and 1945, during which they were either killed or declared missing. The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity is still in force in all the countries concerned, which guarantees the continuation of investigative work in this area until the death of the last perpetrator. Several European institutions still carry out investigative and research work on World War Two crimes. In Germany, it is the aforementioned Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen Ludwigsburg; in Poland it is the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, in Lithuania it is the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, and in Austria it is the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. Until recently, there was a non-state civic project in Russia, the Memorial Association, which was banned by the Russian authorities in December 2021 in what the world media described as "memory erasure."[39]

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[38] LG Graz 13 Vr 1257/61, LG Graz Vg 13 Vr 3485/55, LG Graz Vg 11 Vr 6880/47, Staatsanwaltschaft Graz StA Graz 10 St 8254/62, Verfahren vor dem Landesgericht für Strafsache Graz gegen Franz Murer wegen Beteiligung an Einzel- und Massentötungen von Jüdinnen und Juden des Wilnaer Ghettos in den Jahren 1941 bis 1943 in seiner Funktion als leitender Mitarbeiter des Gebietskommissariats Wilna (documentation made available by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington), Vol. 1–13.

[39] https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art19240931-memorial-zdelegalizowany-w-rosji-trwa-kasowanie-pamieci.

Biographies of Selected Perpetrators

Martin Weiss (born 21 February 1903 in Karlsruhe) – by training, he was a master tinsmith. In his youth, he belonged to the non-political youth movement "Wandervogel." From 1923 to 1927, he lived with his brother in Argentina and Paraguay; on his return to Germany, he settled in Karlsruhe. He married in 1930 and had three children. In 1937, he became a member of the NSDAP, and on 6 September 1939, he was drafted into the Wehrmacht as a member of an SS unit. After his recruit training in Dachau, he was assigned to a workshop company and participated in the French campaign. In August 1940, he was discharged from military service and resumed work in his sheet metal company in Karlsruhe. In March 1941, he was drafted into the SS and sent to the Düben training camp in Marsch, where operational groups were formed. After completing his training and taking the oath, he was assigned to the Einsatzgruppe A, specifically EK 3 in Kaunas. He then went to a special unit in Vilnius, which he was head of until 1943. His highest military rank in the SS units was SS-Hauptscharführer. He was arrested on 24 May 1949 in Ochsenfurt and was held in one of the prisons in the American zone. The Jury of the Landgericht in Würzburg passed a final judgment against him on 3 February 1950. He was charged with knowingly and actively playing an assisting role in the execution of around 30,000 people in Ponary near Vilnius between October 1941 and July 1943 and with having committed seven murders himself. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and deprivation of honourable civil rights for life. The War Crimes Mission in Poland requested his extradition on 13 December 1949.

Source: BA L, Ks 15/49, *passim*, Judgment in the case of Martin Weiss and August Herring, 3 February 1950.

August Herring (born 15 October 1910 in Hibarden) – belonged to the Einsatzkommando 3 in Kaunas; at the beginning of September 1941, he was transferred to the Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD Litauen, Aussendienstelle Wilna. He was proven to have played an instrumental role in the murder of at least 4,000 people, mainly of Jewish origin, in Ponary between September 1941 and the

end of May 1942. Also, he murdered a woman named Kenska in Vilnius at the end of 1941. He died on 17 November 1992 at the age of 82.

Source: BA L, Ks 15/49, *passim*, Judgment in the case of Martin Weiss and August Herring, 3 February 1950; E. Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 246.

Heinrich Lohse (born 2 September 1896 in Mühlenbarbek near Itzehoe, died 25 February 1964 in Mühlenbarbek) – from 1923 in the NSDAP, from 1924 Member of Parliament in Altona for the National Socialist Bloc, from 1925 Gauleiter in Schleswig-Holstein, from 1932 Member of the Reichstag, from 1933 Oberpräsident of Schleswig-Holstein, in 1934 Gruppenführer SA, between 1941 and 1944 Reichskommissar for the Baltic States in Riga, Head of the Civil Administration of the Baltic States, from 1942 also of Belarus. In 1945, he was captured by British troops. He was tried in 1948 and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. In 1951, after only three years in prison, he was released early on health grounds. In 1960, Lohse was retried at the Regional Court in Itzehoe.

Source: H. Weiß, *Biographisches Lexikon zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), pp. 304–305; BA L, B 162/29571, Minutes of the interrogation of the defendant Heinrich Lohse, 7 July 1960, pp. 12–17.

Heinrich Ditz – from February 1942 to March 1944, he was employed with the rank of SS-Obersturmführer at the Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD Litauen, Aussendienstelle Wilna, and headed Division V there. In the middle of 1942, he participated in the shooting of a Jewish interpreter in Ponary, and in the autumn of 1942 – in the execution in Ponary of at least 20 Jewish men, women and children. During the so-called national ghetto operation, he guarded the unloading of railway wagons at the Ponary railway station.

Source: *Die geheime Notizen des K. Sakowicz, Dokumenten zur Judenvernichtung in Ponary*, ed. by R. Margolis and J.G. Tobias (Nürnberg, 2003), p. 4.

Albert Filbert (born 8 May 1905 in Darmstadt) was educated at a banking school and then at the Faculty of Law in Worms. In 1932, he joined the NSDAP and the SS. In 1934, he obtained his doctorate in legal sciences at the University

of Giessen. In 1936, with the rank of SS-Untersturmführer, he was employed in Department III of the SS Main Office, which was responsible for the RSHA's foreign intelligence service. In 1939, he became deputy chief of Office VI of the RSHA. From June 1941, he was commander of Einsatzkommando 9 in the USSR. In the autumn of 1943, he returned to work for the RSHA in Department V, where he led the group for combating economic crime until 1945. Arrested on 25 February 1959 and imprisoned in Moabit prison in Berlin. Prisoner no. 2806.61.

Source: AIPN, 3P (K) Ks1.62 (23.61), ff. 1–4, Criminal case of the Landgericht in Berlin against Alfred K.W. Filbert, Gerhard O.P. Schneider, Bodo Struck, Wilhelm Greiffenberger, Konrad Fiebig, Heinrich Tunnat, Judgment against Albert Filbert, 22 June 1962; Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (BStU Berlin), MfS-HA IX/11 PA 2985, pp. 4, 34.

Władysław Butkun *vel* **Vladas, Vincento Butkūnas** (born 5 March 1916 in Nowinki, Święciany) – both his parents were Polish; in March 1938, he was drafted into the 32nd Infantry Regiment of the Polish Army in Modlin. He took part in the war against Germany, was wounded and ended up in a prisoner-of-war camp in East Prussia. As a reservist, he reported for duty at the military barracks in Vilnius. There, he changed his name to Vladas Butkūnas. He served in the Lithuanian unit of the 2nd Railway Protection Regiment. Butkūnas joined the Vilnius unit because he feared being drafted into the army and serving at the front. He served in the unit until July 1944. He then retreated with the Germans to Kaunas and Tylża and took part in escorting a transport of Jews to the vicinity of Toruń. After the war, he went into hiding for many years. During his trial before the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, he declared that he was of Polish nationality.

Source: SWwW, IV K 130/73, fol. 43, Criminal case against Józef Miakisz, Władysław Butkun, Jan Borkowski, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Władysław Butkun, 10 August 1972; A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių sauguno policijos ir SD Vilniaus ypatingasis būrys* (Vilnius, 2019), p. 58.

Józef Miakisz *vel* **Juozas Kristupo Mekišius** (born 13 May 1911 in Mielegiany near Vilnius) – between 1933 and 1934, he served in the 13th Infantry Regiment in Pułtusk near Warsaw, and 1939, for several months, in the 85th Infantry Regiment in Lvov. In 1939, he went to Vilnius and worked as a postman until 1941. In July 1941, he joined a special unit in Vilnius as a volunteer and changed his name

to Juozas Mekišius; in the same month, he received his first order to convoy car transports of Jews from Vilnius to Ponary. Before the Red Army entered Vilnius, he made his way to Kaunas and Tylża and then took part in escorting a transport of Jews to the vicinity of Toruń. After the war, he went into hiding for many years. During his trial before the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, he declared that he was of Polish nationality.

Source: SWwW, IV K 130/73, Criminal case against Józef Miakisz, Władysław Butkun, Jan Borkowski, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Józef Miakisz, 8 June 1972, ff. 35–38; A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių sauguno policijos ir SD Vilniaus ypatingasis būrys* (Vilnius, 2019), p. 58.

Jan Borkowski *vel* **Jonas Igno Barkauskas** (born 15 October 1916 in Niderkuny) – from 1934, he served in the 20th Battalion of the Border Guard Corps in Nowe Święciany, in 1937 he began service in the 29th regiment of the "Strzelcy kaniowscy" (Kaniów riflemen), and in 1939-1941 he was a contract employee of the 235th regiment of the Red Army. In August 1941, he joined the Sonderkommando in Vilnius. Before the Red Army entered Vilnius, he made his way to Kaunas and Tylża and then took part in escorting a transport of Jews to the vicinity of Toruń. After the war, he went into hiding for many years. During his trial before the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, he declared that he was of Polish nationality.

Source: SWwW, IV K 130/73, ff. 78–97, Criminal case against Józef Miakisz, Władysław Butkun, Jan Borkowski, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Jan Borkowski, 24 January 1973; A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių sauguno policijos ir SD Vilniaus ypatingasis būrys* (Vilnius, 2019), p. 57.

Wiktor (Witold) Gilwiński *vel* **Viktoras Macėjus Galvanauskas** (born 26 August 1912 in Vilnius) – served in the 33rd Infantry Regiment in Łomża from 1933 to 1936. He joined the special unit because of difficulties finding a job in Vilnius. On 3 June 1977, he was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment by the District Court in Olsztyn for his participation in the mass murders in Ponary.

Source: OKGd, S 87/06/Zn, Vol. 12, Investigation of crimes committed against persons of Jewish nationality between 1941 and 1944 in the former voivodeship of Vilnius, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Witold Gilwiński, 26 August 1976, ff. 2343–2345; Sąd Wojewódzki w Olsztynie [Voivodeship Court in Olsztyn], Sentence of the Voivodeship Court in Olsztyn in a case against Witold Gilwiński, II K 59/76; A. Bubnys, *Vokiečių sauguno policijos ir SD Vilniaus ypatingasis būrys* (Vilnius, 2019), p. 61.

Aleksandras Lileikis (born 10 July 1907 in the present-day Paprūdžiai near Szawle in the Kaunas district, died on 27 September 2000 in Vilnius) – was a professional Sauguma officer since 1929. Before the war, he served as deputy chief in the Mariampol district. He was transferred to Vilnius as deputy chief after the city was ceded to Lithuania by the Soviet authorities in 1939. In June 1940, when the Soviets took control of Lithuania, he fled to Germany and asked for German citizenship. Still, his application was not processed until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war in June 1941. In August 1941, he was appointed head of the Vilnius district, fled to Germany in 1944, and emigrated to the USA after the war, where he unsuccessfully applied several times to the Displaced Persons Commission for a displaced person status and then a refugee status. On 2 May 1995, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Lithuania initiated a criminal action against him under Article 18 Part 6 of the RL's Criminal Code and Article 1 of the RL's Act "On Responsibility for Genocide of the Lithuanian People." On 3 July 2000, the criminal case was suspended due to Lileikis' ill health, preventing him from attending the trial. He died of a heart attack at the age of 93 in the Vilnius University clinic.

Source: Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas, F. 337, Ap. 17, fol. 2741, List of employees of the Lithuanian police, January 1937; BDC Berlin Document Center, Request to grant German citizenship to Aleksander Lileikis; LYA, F.K. 1, Ap. 46, B. 1189, The A. Lileikis case, fol. 72; "Nie odpowie za Holocaust," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28 September 2000.

Franz Juganowicz Murer, known as the "Vilnius Butcher" (born 24 January 1912 in Sankt Georgen ob Murau in Austria, died on 5 January 1994) – at the beginning of his career, he was an Austrian non-commissioned officer with the rank of SS-Oberscharführer. Before his transfer to Vilnius, he served as deputy commander of the Hitlerjugend in Nuremberg between 1941 and 1943. From July 1943 onwards, he was adjutant to Vilnius District Commissar Hingst and desk officer of the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs (replacing SS-Oberscharführer Bruno Kittel in this position). In addition to the organisation of the ghetto, his duties included the handing over of the ghetto population to the punitive authorities for execution by firing squad. After the war, Murer moved to Styria in Austria. In 1947, he was recognised and arrested. In December 1948, he was deported to

the Soviet Union. Tried in Vilnius, he was found guilty of the murder of Soviet citizens and sentenced to 25 years of hard labour before being handed over to the Austrian authorities in 1955. Simon Wiesenthal managed to bring him back to trial in 1963. The trial in Graz, Austria, lasted a week and ended with Murer's acquittal.

Source: OKGd, S2/00/Zn, Vol. 4, Letter from the Ministry of the Interior informing on the conduct of preparatory proceedings by the State Security Committee of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR in cases of crimes committed by the Hitlerites between 1941 and 1944 on the territory of the LSSR, 9 July 1969, fols 714–716; *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, ed. by I. Ehrenburg, V. Grossman, and D. Patterson (New Brunswick NJ, 2003), p. 249.

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SUMMARY

The Ponary massacre, the majority of whose victims were Polish citizens of Jewish nationality, was the subject of criminal proceedings in several legal systems: Polish, German, Lithuanian, Soviet and Austrian. Its aspects were also dealt with at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in the so-called "Trial of the Major War Criminals." The defendants were accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in violation of the Hague Convention of 1907, the Geneva Convention of 1929 and the general principles of criminal law derived from the laws of all civilised nations. On 20 December 1945, the Allied Control Council issued the Law On the Punishment of Persons Guilty of War Crimes, Crimes against Peace and Crimes against Humanity. On its basis, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union were able to set up courts to try war criminals in their respective occupation zones. The first trials of the perpetrators of the Ponary crime before Polish courts took place in 1949 after the extradition of the perpetrators and the recognition that their acts had been committed on Polish territory. These were the proceedings of the Court of Appeals in Warsaw against Eugen Faulhaber and the Court of Appeals in Warsaw against Arkadiusz Sakalauskas. Subsequent trials – before the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw in 1974 against Jan Borkowski, Władysław Butkun and Józef Miakisz, and before the Voivodeship Court in Olsztyn in 1976 against Wiktor (Witold) Gilwiński – concerned the crimes that had been committed on the territory of the LSSR. Law no. 13 of the Allied Control Council of 1 January 1950 lifted the restrictions imposed on German courts. From then on, they could also adjudicate crimes committed against persons other than German citizens. The German Democratic Republic, on the basis of a constitutional provision, introduced the rule that the principles of international law apply to domestic law. Its Criminal Code of 1968 included a provision on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and crimes against

human rights, which also included criminal sanctions for the perpetration of individual acts. The Federal Republic of Germany, contrary to international law, did not acknowledge the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Hitler era as being of a unique or extraordinary nature. These crimes were treated as ordinary crimes. In the face of protests coming from all over the world, the German authorities extended the deadline for the prosecution of Hitlerite crimes from the end of 1969 to the end of 1979. Poland, on the other hand, was one of the first countries to issue a special criminal law, namely the Decree of 31 August 1944, "On the Punishment of Fascist-Hitlerite Criminals." Under this law, the punishment of perpetrators of Hitlerite crimes is still in force today. The question of the USSR's responsibility for both aggression and crimes committed during World War Two is entirely different. Due to the artificially introduced principle that "the victors are not judged," this issue was not discussed in the great powers' post-war agreements. The Soviet Union, as the main victorious state in World War Two, was treated exceptionally in the international arena. The Lithuanians, on the other hand, paid a considerable price – they lost their territorial and political integrity to the USSR and were sovietised in their entirety. Lithuania continues to have a big problem with coming to terms with its past. Condemnation and punishment of the still-living perpetrators of crimes committed against Jews and representatives of other nationalities during World War Two encounters resistance from the public. The issue of applicability of the statute of limitations to the crime of genocide has become a political problem, as can be seen from the criminal trials against commanders of the Lithuanian Security Police, which had been ongoing for many years. In Austria, too, several criminal trials were held in which direct perpetrators of the Ponary massacre and members of Einsatzkommando 3 of Einsatzgruppe A sat in the dock.

KEYWORDS

Vilnius • Ponary • extermination • Northern-Eastern Borderlands • Second Republic • Polish legal system • German legal system • Soviet legal system • International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg • Lithuanian legislation

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"YES, I PLEAD GUILTY." THE MURDER OF JANKIEL LIEBERMAN IN THE VILLAGE OF ROGÓW ON 1 FEBRUARY 1943: A CASE STUDY[1]

Aleksander Kuraj was a farmer in the village of Rogów, near Miechów. During the war, against German orders, he knowingly and selflessly hid a Jew – Jankiel Lieberman – in his barn. On 1 February 1943, he killed him with his own hands. After the war, members of Lieberman's family, who had survived the Holocaust, reported that Kuraj had committed this crime. They demanded that the perpetrator be prosecuted and punished. Later – already in court – they asked for his sentence to be commuted. How is this possible?

Terror and Collective Responsibility

In every state, the legal system in force and the extent and manner in which state bodies and formations enforce the law directly impact the living conditions

[1] The original version of the text in Polish was also published in a volume on the martyrdom of the Polish countryside: M. Korkuć, "'Tak, przyznaję się do winy.' Zabójstwo we wsi Rogów 1 lutego 1943 r. Studium przypadku," in *Martyrologia wsi polskich w pamięci historycznej*, ed. by T. Sikora, E. Kołomańska, K. Jedynak, J. Staszewska, and H. Seńczyszyn (Kielce, 2021). The author would like to thank Tomasz Domański and Roman Gieroń for their help in gaining access to some of the archival material related to the subject described, as well as Ewa Kołomańska from the Mausoleum of the Martyrdom of Polish Villages in Michniów for her kindness and valuable comments.

and behaviour of the population. In the theory of law, the effects caused by applying law to different areas of life are referred to as the functions of law.[2] In the context of the operation of the German formation of the General Government (GG), Wacław Uruszczak mentioned the functions of the law of the GG that were unknown in pre-war Poland. These were:

- the public terror function,
- the segregation function
- the elimination function,
- the extermination function.

The public terror function (or, in this case, the "mega repressive function") was manifested above all in the numerous laws enacted by the Germans, which stipulated highly severe punishments, including the death penalty, for any behaviour that the occupiers interpreted as directed against the German administration or persons of German nationality.

The segregation function was based on the laws and regulations introduced into the legal system of the General Government as a result of the National Socialist theory of race. It led to the deliberately programmed disintegration of Polish society under the occupation and the break-up of its multinational and multiracial community. On the other hand, the elimination function of the GG law consisted of the "exclusion of certain categories of persons from social, economic or cultural life." It affected the whole of Polish society but was particularly blatant in the case of the Jewish community, which was "excluded from normal life and made into a completely separate community at the mercy of the occupier."

The extermination function of the law, on the other hand, is to be found wherever "the purpose of the law is to deprive people of life by killing them or, indirectly, by creating inhuman living conditions conducive to mass deaths." Professor Uruszczak pointed out that the death penalty, which the GG authorities administered right, left and centre, "was not only a punitive measure but also an instrument of extermination."[3]

An essential component of how the law of the *General Government, shaped in this way, affected social relations was the Germans' application of the principle of*

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[2] W. Uruszczak, "Perwersyjne funkcje niemieckiego 'prawa' w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie," *Z Dziejów Prawa* 12 (2019), pp. 681, 687.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 689, 693–694, 699.

collective responsibility. The second component of this phenomenon was the inhabitants' awareness that such a practice was taking place. It was paired with fear: the feeling that anyone could become a victim of such activities of the German occupation structures.

The principle of collective responsibility applied by the German Reich became one of the main instruments of forcing the conquered population to obey German orders. The mass and deliberately publicised terror was intended not only as a punishment but also as a preventive warning against the activities that the Germans criminalised. In addition, the Germans sought both immediate effects (instilling fear of illegal activities) and more far-reaching effects (forcing the population to take preventive action against illegal practices – for fear of collective responsibility). In other words, they aimed to make rural and urban dwellers, under the threat of collective responsibility, fight illegal activities and the people involved in them themselves. In this way, fear was to produce an additional paralysing effect: the awareness that the Germans, once they had detected illegal activities, would murder all bystanders in the vicinity without any special investigation of actual guilt. It was not uncommon for the behaviour of individuals to hold other residents responsible as well: family members, residents of neighbouring farms and other people from the same village or even random passers-by. This was the way to create a real psychosis of fear.

Therefore, during the bloody pacification of the villages, the Germans often ostentatiously demonstrated that they had complete freedom of action. They often herded together all the residents to force them to watch the makeshift investigations, tortures and killings and to realise that at any moment, they too could share the fate of the victims. In other cases, they carried out the massacre in the village itself, leaving the victims at the scene of the crime. They showed that they could and would act at their discretion, killing not only men but also women and children, regardless of "how guilty they were."

In practice, during the occupation period, the Germans decided for themselves, according to their criteria (assumptions, impressions, fleeting emotions), who, in their opinion, knew about illegal activities and did not inform the authorities about the "crime." This was also punishable by death. In occupied Poland, the Germans also freely killed those who, in their opinion, "might have

known" about illegal activities but failed to report them to the authorities.[4] After all, the Governor General's Decree of 31 October 1939 on the "suppression of acts of violence" in the GG already established the obligation to report to the authorities – in the event of acquiring knowledge thereof – any intention to commit vaguely defined "acts of violence," defined simply as "disobedience to the decrees or orders of the German authorities." Failure to report, even in the case of knowledge of any instances of incitement to such acts, was punishable by death.[5]

The Germans quickly found that to destroy, for example, the guerrillas, it was necessary to ruthlessly punish not only those who participated in the guerrilla warfare but, above all, those who provided any support to it, even if only incidental. This is why the instruction "Kampfanweisung für die Bandenbekämpfung im Osten" of 11 November 1941 also regarded undisclosed knowledge of the guerrillas' whereabouts (even if temporary) as such a form of support: "Whoever supports the gangs by concealing their known whereabouts or otherwise – is liable to the death penalty. Collective punishment shall be generally ordered against villages in which the gangs have found any support."[6]

Already at that time, the Germans saw the need to use methods of general terror to create such a psychosis of fear that the villagers, threatened with collective responsibility, would themselves, **out of concern for their safety**, support the eradication or destruction of those who, in defiance of the Reich's proclaimed orders, engaged in any illegal activity. In a slightly earlier order, dated 28 July 1941, Himmler had already written: "Burn the villages to the ground – villages and settlements should be a network of support points whose **inhabitants kill every**

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[4] A prominent example from regions close to the area under discussion was the murder of Piotr Podgórski from the village of Wierbka near Pilica, who was murdered by the Germans on 12 January 1943, together with people found hiding in the village. The Germans killed him only because, based on their own *ad hoc* opinions, they considered that, as a member of the so-called village night watch, he might have known that Jews were being hidden in one of the farms (K. Samsonowska, "Dramat we wsi Wierbka i jego dalszy ciąg na zamku w Pilicy," in *"Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?"… Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej*, ed. by A. Namysło [Warsaw, 2009], p. 126).

[5] See Uruszczak, "Perwersyjne funkcje," p. 688.

[6] As cited in J. Fajkowski and J. Religa, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1981), pp. 10–11.

guerrilla and marauder of their own accord. Otherwise, such villages should cease to exist [emphasis mine – M.K.]."[7]

It was only a technical matter to extend such a philosophy to all other persons prosecuted by the Reich whose presence outside the places designated by the Germans was illegal, i.e., persecuted Jews and escaped prisoners of war (including Soviet prisoners of war). Indeed, only a few months later, the death penalty was introduced for aiding Jews in hiding. The "Third Regulation on the Restriction of Residency in the General Government", issued by Hans Frank on 15 October 1941, provided for "the death penalty for all Jews who leave their designated district without authorisation." In addition, it introduced the provision that "persons who knowingly provide such Jews with a hiding place shall be liable to the same punishment," and that "instigators and helpers shall be liable to the same punishment as the perpetrator," and "an attempted act shall be punished as an accomplished act."[8] In this way, the spiral of terror continued to widen and widen. Residents were also directly informed of the collective responsibility that could affect the perpetrators of crimes and their neighbours. For example, this was explicitly announced to the assembled residents in the village of Wolica, neighbouring the village of Rogów, which we will write about in detail below. One resident recalled:

> At one of the meetings, which an official of the occupation authorities conducted, it was made known to the inhabitants of our village that it was forbidden to shelter Jews and that in the event of a discovery of people sheltering Jews, such people would be punished with death, and their farms, as well as those of the neighbouring villages, **would be burnt down** [emphasis mine – M.K.].[9]

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[7] As cited in *ibid*.

[8] *Verordnungsblatt für das General Gouvernement* (The Journal of Regulations for the General Government) 99 (1941), p. 593.

[9] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, hereinafter GK], 392/1364, Files concerning the murder of Anna Furca and Rozalia Kurpiel in Czorsztyn, Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14.

The awareness that the Germans were also punishing people who knew about cases of helping those in illegal hiding and did not inform the authorities enhanced the threat psychosis. Information about crimes committed or collective pacifications of individual villages spread throughout the area. And they affected the inhabitants – in line with the terrorist intentions of the Germans.

The Village of Rogów

The events in Rogów and several surrounding villages near Miechów at the end of January/beginning of February 1943 show the consequences of such a chain of events. The village of Rogów is located more than 8 kilometers west of Książ Wielki. Today, it is the northern part of the Voivodeship of Lesser Poland, while before 1939, it was the southern part of the Voivodeship of Kielce. After September 1939, the village, like the entire western part of the country, found itself under German occupation.[10] During the war, within the framework of the German occupation administration, Rogów was located in the southern part of the General Government (Kreishauptmannshaft Miechów, Cracow District). The events in Rogów analysed below have already been the subject of a reasonably detailed, albeit not entirely accurate, journalistic account.[11] In scholarly publications, they were mentioned only in passing. That also includes polemics with other publications, which we will return later.[12]

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to discuss the whole sequence of events in detail, using scholarly tools, and to treat this case not only as an opportunity to recon-

[10] The eastern half of Poland, up to the line of the rivers Pisa–Narew–Vistula–San, was occupied by the Soviet Union, which attacked Poland in collaboration with Germany in September 1939.

[11] The events of Rogów were discussed in detail by Piotr Gontarczyk, in a journalistic form (P. Gontarczyk, "Śmierć Jankiela Libermana, czyli o pewnej antycznej tragedii na polskiej prowincji w czasie II wojny światowej," *Sieci* 46 [2018], pp. 100–103). Gontarczyk erroneously placed the events described in Rogów in 1944 instead of 1943, a mistake which probably arises from erroneous information found in some of the testimonies and documents included in the case file.

[12] Dariusz Libionka wrote about these events in broad terms, also erroneously placing the events in 1944 instead of 1943 (D. Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski, vol. 1–2 (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 162–163). Tomasz Domański, who also describes the essential details of the events, polemicised quite extensively with this passage from Libionka's article. Like Libionka, Domański erroneously placed the events in 1944 (T. Domański, *Korekta obrazu? Refleksje źródłoznawcze wokół książki „Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski," red. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski*, 1–2, *Warszawa 2018* [Warsaw, 2019], pp. 38–39). Again, the confusion was probably due to erroneous information entered in some of the testimonies and documents attached to the case file.

struct individual events but also as an essential contribution to the reconstruction of the specific nature of the German rule in the GG and the atmosphere of crime, terror and police impunity that reigned within it. This also involves reconstructing the consequences of these phenomena, including the psychological and social ones.

The village leader of Rogów under the Germans was Józef Gądek. It should be noted that the Germans in the GG abolished the local government (although they sometimes used this name). The inhabitants elected no bodies. The village leaders were appointed and dismissed at the governor's discretion from among the persons indicated by the German Kreishauptmann.[13] Village leaders were appointed and dismissed by the Kreishauptmann himself, but he could use the mayor's suggestions for candidates.[14] In addition, to tighten the control of the occupying authorities over the observance of their orders, the personal responsibility of the village leaders was introduced for how the German orders were enforced in the village or for the non-compliance with the orders of the Kreishauptmann in the area under their control.[15]

Under the new conditions, the village leader essentially became an officer of the German occupation administration, functioning at the lowest level, where he was responsible for implementing the orders he received.[16] He had to declare that he would "faithfully and conscientiously discharge his duties in obedience to the German administration."[17] At the same time, the villagers understood that disobeying the village leader's orders to enforce the Germans' orders would be interpreted not so much as the opposition towards him but as the direct opposition towards his German superiors. Every adult resident was aware that such disobedience could result in repression – at the discretion of the Germans. Depending on the seri-

[13] Referring to the Kreishauptmann in Polish as a county starost – although this was somehow mechanically translated into Polish during the war – is as common as it is vague. Sometimes, it can even distract from the understanding of the specificity and scope of a starost's authority, which was incomparably greater for a wartime Kreishauptmann than for a pre-war starost. Czesław Madajczyk was right when he translated the name of this function, to distinguish it from that of the pre-war starosts, more literally as "the head of the district" (C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vol. 1 [Warsaw, 1970], p. 215). The specific nature of this office can also be emphasised by retaining the original German name: Kreishauptmann.

[14] B. Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów gmin wiejskich w dystrykcie lubelskim Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w latach 1939–1944," *Studia z Dziejów Państwa i Prawa Polskiego* 2 (2018), p. 336.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[16] Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy*, vol. 1, p. 216.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 216, 221–222; Ługowski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędów," pp. 335, 342.

ousness of the offence or the extent of the disobedience, it could mean immediate arrest, exile to a concentration camp or even death.

Józef Gądek's position in the new social hierarchy imposed by the Germans was also strengthened by the fact that he had been registered on the German nationality list – he had become a Volksdeutscher, i.e. he "belonged to the German nation." This formally gave him a privileged status vis-à-vis the Poles. "The village leader Gądek was feared in the village during the occupation because he was a Volksdeutscher," Kuraj later said.[18] This status also gave him protection from the Germans. "I would like to point out that the village leader Gądek was a Volksdeutcher […] and he was feared by everyone in the village because, because of him, many people were taken from the village by the Germans for failing to hand over their quotas."[19] In the village, the village leader had a reputation of a strict enforcer of the German orders. It was said that he was "very rigorous for the Germans' sake [in this manner in the original – MK]"[20].

Kuraj claimed, among other things, that he knew "from Skrzyniarz Józef from Rogów that the village leader Gądek denounced him [i.e., Skrzyniarz] to the Germans so that they would kill him [i.e. Skrzyniarz]." The threatened Skrzyniarz "escaped and hid until the war's end." This was already in 1944.[21]

An additional way of building a sense of collective responsibility among the inhabitants for the actions of others was the German demand that hostages be appointed from among the villagers. This was intended to make the villagers aware that they could not just pretend to obey German orders. They had to carry them out and observe the prohibitions because specific individuals could pay for sabotaging German orders with their lives. Mateusz Szpytma wrote the following about the nature of such actions:

> In order to terrorise the population more fully and to enforce compliance with the German occupation's legislation [the Germans] additionally used a peculiar

[18] Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [National Archives in Cracow, hereinafter ANKr], Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie [Court of Appeals in Cracow, hereinafter SAKr], 1222, Aleksander Kuraj case files, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 47.

[19] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Jan Kucharz, 20 June 1947, fol. 51.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 48.

> form of personalised collective responsibility. Namely, they appointed groups of hostages responsible with their lives for the conscientious execution of the authorities' orders. The hostages were appointed either by the village leader or by Blue policemen from among the villagers. The village leader had to designate potential victims – he had no right to refuse or evade such orders. During the occupation, the designated hostages also became a group used for specific tasks. Non-cooperation on their part could result in exile to a labour camp, and in the event of more severe offences, they were the first to be shot dead. It was thus a sophisticated method of using fear for the safety of themselves and their families as a form of psychological pressure. In this way, all residents were pre-emptively warned about which of them would pay first for potential insubordination. Subsequently, the responsibility may have fallen on the rest of the villagers anyway.[22]

Such people were also designated in Rogów. And it was the village leader Gądek who was obliged to designate hostages that would be, in the first instance, responsible with their heads for disrespecting the German occupation orders. It is possible that these circumstances further entitled statements such as: "the inhabitants of Rogów were afraid of the village leader Gądek. Gądek was the master of life and death in the village."[23]

Kuraj and Lieberman

We know little about Jankiel (Jankel) Lieberman (Liberman, Liebermann).[24] His past was not reconstructed during the investigation. We also do not find much information about his earlier life in the available records. It is known that before

[22] M. Szpytma, "Zbrodnie na ludności żydowskiej w Markowej w 1942 roku w kontekście postępowań karnych z lat 1949–1954," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 40 (2014), p. 4.

[23] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining sentence and the forfeiture of property, 16 September 1950, fol. 387.

[24] Jankiel Lieberman's name was phonetically rendered as Liberman in the transcribed minutes of the witnesses' and defendants' testimonies. In official court documentation, corrected notations appear in two versions: Lieberman and Liebermann. This text adopts the spelling Lieberman as the most likely, without definitively prejudging what was the actual spelling. The phonetic spelling was used by Libionka, Gontarczyk, and Domański (Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," p. 168; Domański, *Korekta obrazu*, p. 38; Gontarczyk, "Śmierć Jankiela Libermana").

the war, he ran a shop in Rogów. However, he belonged to the poorer part of the Jewish community. He was married to Chaja (née Romankiewicz).[25]

Aleksander Kuraj was a simple man, a poor farmer. He was born in 1901. He completed two forms of primary school. In 1919, he served in the Polish-Bolshevik war as a soldier of the 8th Legions Infantry Regiment. He never had a criminal record. He cultivated a farm of several hectares. In 1937, he started to build a house and a barn, but he looked for extra work on other farms due to the lack of funds. He had nine children. In early 1943, his eldest son was 17–18 years old. Kuraj was still relatively young at the time, only 41 years old. During the German occupation, he had to support his family from his small farm. Not surprisingly, he also did forestry work as a lumberjack. As it was found in the records, he "led a modest life."[26] In the context of moral judgements, it was later written in the court documents that Kuraj, up to the time of the 1943 events, "had gone through life impeccably."[27]

The fates of Kuraj and Lieberman were linked at the turn of 1942 and 1943. On 5 September 1942, the Germans began the liquidation of the Wolbrom ghetto. The liquidation of the Miechów ghetto followed in November 1942. In the closing months of that year, after the German murders of Jews in and around Miechów, Jankiel Lieberman hid in the woods. We do not know where he stayed, with whom or how he spent the night. "However, a hard winter came, and the conditions for survival became tough."[28] At the end of 1942 or the beginning of 1943, Lieberman farm, equipped only with a sheepskin coat and a feather quilt, arrived at the Kuraj's. We can guess that, in the winter conditions, survival had become much more difficult or outright impossible in the places where he had lived so far. Lieberman sought help. He had no choice, even though he was well aware that the Germans threatened the death penalty for any form of help to the Jewish population. He

[25] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 2, Statement by Jakób Romankiewicz and Aron Romankiewicz (brothers-in-law of Jankiel Lieberman) concerning the case of the accused Aleksander Kuraj, 10 October 1949, fol. 343.

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 45; *ibid.*, Vol. 2, Letter from the Citizens' Militia station in Kozłów, 9 June 1950, fol. 400.

[27] *Ibid.*, Sentence of the Court of Appeals in Cracow, 15 November 1949, fol. 373.

[28] *Ibid.*, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining sentence and the forfeiture of property, fol. 386a.

came here precisely because he had known Aleksander Kuraj before the war and trusted him. And he was not mistaken.

Aleksander Kuraj was motivated "only by compassion for the helpless and poor Jew, persecuted by the occupiers."[29] He was also aware that he was acting illegally against the laws imposed by the Germans, against the orders of the authorities who, by segregating society according to their racial criteria, were already denying the Jews the right to live. They also denied the right to live to all those who helped them. The Germans posted posters all over the General Government announcing the death penalty for any form of help. Kuraj knew he was taking a massive risk on himself and his family. The inhabitants were also informed of such prohibitions at village meetings. As already mentioned, in the neighbouring village of Wolica, it was announced that "sheltering Jews" was forbidden and that if such cases were discovered, the perpetrators would be punished by death. At the same time, their farms and those of their neighbours would be burnt down.[30]

The issue ceased to be theoretical after Jankiel Lieberman, hiding from the Germans, knocked on his door in the winter of 1942/1943. When a particular man needed help stood before Kuraj, the farmer had to choose. And he made a decision that, as it later turned out, changed his life.

What was his motive? He knew that his primary duty as the head of the family was to ensure its survival, but he wanted to combine this with a reflex of humanity towards the persecuted, shelter-seeking Lieberman.[31] There was certainly no question of any gratuity. "I would like to point out that I took Lieberman in at his request, free of charge,"[32] "I didn't derive any benefit from it because he was a poor man,"[33] he testified several years later. This is how the situation was described in interventions that were undertaken for Kuraj's sake: "[…] even though Kuraj was himself in difficult material conditions and burdened with a large family of his wife and nine children, he rushed to help Lieberman completely selflessly, motivated

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14.

[31] The dilemma of whether it is possible to put the lives of one's family at risk in order to help others under the kind of conditions that were created by the German occupation is an extremely difficult one – the one that sometimes requires asking questions without getting good answers.

[32] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 48.

[33] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 20 June 1947, fol. 16a.

only by compassion."[34] What was Kuraj hoping for? He certainly hoped that the matter could be kept secret. Perhaps he was only thinking of making it easier for Jankiel to get through the most frosty time? We don't know precisely what they agreed on.

A hiding place was prepared in the barn under the threshing floor, where Lieberman, equipped with a sheepskin coat, a pillow and a feather quilt, could lie down and survive in this position. The entrance hole was covered with hay. Kuraj knew he would be heavily burdened with the cost of feeding the hiding person. Lieberman, in turn, understood that Kuraj was struggling to feed his family of eleven. He knew that he would have to share food, which was barely enough to feed his children at the end of winter. And even so, he knew that what he gave Lieberman was insufficient. "I gave him some food, but not enough because I didn't have any myself."[35] Therefore, Lieberman had to get extra food somewhere to survive. Everything indicates that he had places in this or some surrounding village where he was not given shelter but was given food. Under German regulations in occupied Poland, it was also illegal to feed a Jew, even incidentally. The mere feeding of a hiding Jew was punishable by death. Kuraj knew that Lieberman sometimes left his hiding place: "Lieberman would sometimes leave at night, but where he went, he did not tell me,"[36] "Lieberman would sometimes leave; he was with me for over a month."[37] A later statement of reasons for the court's judgment also described how Lieberman "only left his hiding place in the barn at night to go under its cover to the villagers to ask for support. The villagers, who knew Li[e]berman well – as he came from the same village – never refused to help him."[38]

But everything has its price. The fact that Lieberman was on the move meant that the number of people who knew about him was growing. The secret, the disclosure of which would have meant the death of all those who helped Lieberman to survive, was no longer a secret. The news must also have reached the village leader, Gądek. We do not know how the village leader felt about everything the Germans

[34] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining sentence and the forfeiture of property, fol. 386a.

[35] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 48.

[36] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 16.

[37] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 49.

[38] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Judgment of the Court of Appeals of 15 September 1949, fol. 369a.

were doing to the Jews – from persecution to mass murder. Even if he wanted to get on in life by obtaining the status of a Volksdeutscher, we have no documents that can shed more light on his views. We know that, as the village leader, he was obliged to participate and did participate in enforcing German orders. Did he care about putting the Jew Lieberman into the hands of the Germans? Did he – like the Germans – deny him the right to live? Both questions posed in this way must be answered negatively. This is not to defend the village leader by force. His acceptance of the status of a Volksdeutscher and the actions described above were facts that put him in a negative light. But this does not mean that we can *a priori* ascribe to him additional intentions and views about which no trace can be found in the documents.[39] He could (and in the light of the official duties at the time should) have reported the matter to the police station. However, under such circumstances, this could have led to repeating the situation in Wierzbica. The blood of the entire Kuraj family would have burdened the village leader's conscience. Or perhaps there would have been more people held responsible? Who knows? Maybe, as the village leader, knowing all the residents personally, he wanted to avoid the burden of such responsibility. After all, he knew about Lieberman's illegal hiding by one of the farmers, but it was unknown who else from the village might have been involved in helping him, if only with food. Or perhaps he was primarily afraid that the Germans would also hold him responsible because – despite his status as a Volksdeutscher – he was not disciplined enough and could not ensure that the German occupation's regulations were observed in his area.

In the context of the Lieberman case, it gives food for thought to how the village leader reacted to rumours (or already specific information) that a person of Jewish nationality might be hiding illegally at Kuraj's house. As has already been pointed out, according to his duties, he should have informed the German services immediately. He did not, even though he was, after all, "rigorous."

He knew that this threatened the death of Kuraj and his entire family. A part of the file shows that he sent Jan Kucharz, Wincenty Kucharz and Jan Gądek to Kuraj "with the instruction that they should warn Kuraj that if he was sheltering a Jew in his house, he should chase him away because in case the Germans found out,

[39] For example, no thread appears in the case file to attribute anti-Semitic views to the village leader.

he [Kuraj] and his whole family would be killed."[40] Jan and Wincenty Kucharz and Jan Gądek went to Kuraj. They communicated to him everything that the village leader had instructed them to say. Kuraj, for his part, was to assure them "that he was not sheltering any Jew."[41]

It should be noted that the village leader's envoys, on his behalf, only demanded that Kuraj should stop helping Lieberman and should make him go away. They were not soliciting for Lieberman to be captured or harmed. They wanted Kuraj to "cause the Jew hiding with him to escape."[42] At that time, in mid-January 1943, it may not have occurred to them that a victim of persecution caught by the Germans could be a real threat if he began to impart information about who he was staying with. The village leader's messengers accepted Kuraj's assurances and reported them to the village leader.

It did not take a keen mind to see that the situation was becoming increasingly dangerous for both Kuraj and Lieberman. However, nothing happened in the following days. For the next two weeks, Lieberman continued to hide in Kuraj's barn. He survived there until the end of January 1943. The situation changed when news of what had happened in the village of Wierzbica, a few kilometres away, and several other villages spread throughout the area. There, officers of the occupying forces carried out operations designed to spread panic and terror. And indeed, they did spread panic and terror.

The Massacre in Wierzbica

In the villages of Wierzbica and Wolica, which were only a few kilometres from Rogów, local farmers hid members of the Wandersman Jewish family. One of the Jews in hiding, Paweł Wandersman, was arrested in January 1943. During interrogation, he was promised his life if he would indicate all the houses where he had been helped and all the places he knew where members of his family or other Jews had been hidden. On 9 January 1943, a punitive expedition composed of offic-

[40] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 1, Judgment of the District Court in Cracow of 18 December 1947, fol. 212.

[41] However, Kuraj himself at one point denied that they had previously been at his place (*ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 48).

[42] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Request by the convicted Józef Miś and Jan Kucharz for exercising the right of pardon, 4 January 1950, fol. 380a.

ers from various German police formations (including Blue policemen) brought Wandersman to Wolica and Wierzbica.[43] These events were briefly described by Tadeusz Seweryn, in 1943, the head of the underground Social Resistance of the District Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Poland in Cracow: "in Wierzbica, the municipality of Kozłów (Miechów County), on 29 January 1943, the Nazis shot three families, fifteen people in total […]. For what reason did the Nazis carry out such a massacre? Because three Jews were hiding with these families."[44] Wandersman named one by one the families who had illegally helped the Jews. The officers shot Jan Gądek, his wife Władysława and his mother-in-law Balbina Bielawska on the spot for helping Jews. The entire group of officers then drove to Wierzbica.

> Paweł Wandersman took the gendarme Nowak to the Książek family, and after bringing them in, the gendarme Nowak found 2 Jews at the Książek family's place who had come from Żarnowiec. It was a married couple. […] Upon entering,

[43] In Nogieć's study, included in the book by Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna (J. Nogieć, "Strzały w Wierzbicy," in W. Bartoszewski and Z. Lewinówna, *„Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej". Polacy o pomocy Żydom 1939–1945* [Warsaw, 2007], p. 616) we shall find information that the person who pointed to the specific farmsteads was a Jew by the name of Naftul, the Wandersmans' son-in-law. Nogieć based his testimony on the testimony of Bronisław Kucharski, one of the then-severely injured residents of Wierzbica. Bronisław Kucharski made the same assertion in his testimony in the 1970s (AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Bronisław Kucharski, Wrocław, 7 October 1977, fols 1–5). It should be noted, however, that he was only 11 years old during the occupation and might not have had a complete understanding of the personalities of the adult Jewish inhabitants of the village. He could have mistakenly assigned the wrong names to the participants in the events, especially as he could not remember the name of the Naftul in question. On the other hand, another witness, Piotr Karcz, who was older than Kucharski, aged 26 at the time, did not doubt that the German "guide" was Paweł Wandersman. (AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14). Martyna Grądzka-Rejak also writes about the fact that the "guide" of the Germans was Paweł Wandersman and not Naftul (M. Grądzka-Rejak, "Ratować nawet za cenę życia," *Dziennik Polski*, 4 April 2016, https://dziennikpolski24.pl/ratowac-nawet-za-cene-zycia/ar/9823204 [accessed 31 October 2020]). Grądzka-Rejak only mentions some doubts in her published study. However, the bibliography indicates that she did not use Karcz's testimony (see *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny* światowej, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło [Warsaw, 2019], pp. 202–204). The role of the guide is assigned to Naftul in Libionka's (Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," p. 168) and Domański's studies (Domański, *Korekta obrazu*, p. 38.). The same applies to Gontarczyk (Gontarczyk, "Śmierć Jankiela Libermana"). See R. Gieroń, *Półmrok. Procesy karne w sprawie przestępstw okupacyjnych popełnionych przez chłopów wobec Żydów w województwie krakowskim* (Cracow, 2020), p. 206.

[44] "Relacja Tadeusza Seweryna," in Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *„Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej"*, p. 613.

> the gendarme Nowak shot this Jewish couple and four people who were in the house at the time and who were members of the Książek family.[45]

The murdered Książek family was a married couple, Piotr (often misnamed Franciszek)[46] and Julia, and their sons, Jan and Zygmunt.[47] The officers were then directed to the home of the Nowaks from Wierzbica, where they murdered a disabled man named Nowak and his several-year-old daughter for helping Jews.

> From Nowak's house, the expedition went to Kucharski's house. To all these inhabitants, gendarme Nowak was led by Paweł Wandersman. Upon arriving at the Kucharskis' place, gendarme Nowak shot eight people who were present there at the time. Out of these eight people, two people survived, namely the father of the family – Izydor Kucharski, who was shot in the back of the head, but the wound, as it turned out later, was not fatal. His son Bronisław Kucharski also survived.[48]

As a result of the shooting, both of them were mutilated for life: Izydor Kucharski lost an eye, and Bronisław Kucharski completely lost his sight. Murdered were Izydor's wife, Anna Kucharska and their four children: Mieczysław (15 years old), Bolesław (9 years old), and twins Józef and Stefan (5 years old). Their grandmother, Julianna Ostrowska (86), was also shot dead. Wandersman also led officers to other houses, such as where his family sold some of their belongings. Wandersman himself was, after the executions at the homes of the Gądek, Książek, Nowak and Kucharski families, shot dead by German officers together with Stanisław Tochowicz, whom he met on the way, near the village of Żabiniec.[49]

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[45] AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14.

[46] This has been explained by Piotr Książek's grandson, Wojciech. W. Książek, see *id.*, "Mord mej rodziny i sąsiadów – Żydów w Wierzbicy. Starajmy się robić swoje," https://wojciechksiazek.wordpress.com/mord-mej-rodziny-i-sasiadow-zydow- w-wierzbicy-starajmy-sie-robic-swoje/ (accessed 15 October 2020).

[47] *Represje za pomoc Żydom*, pp. 202–204.

[48] AIPN, GK, 392/1364, Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14.

[49] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Bronisław Kucharski, Wrocław, 7 October 1977, fols 1–5; Minutes of the interrogation of Piotr Karcz, 7 April 1978, fols 10–14; *Represje za pomoc Żydom*,

News of these events quickly spread throughout the area. As the Germans intended, their acts of cruelty caused panic in the surrounding villages. The heightened sense of danger must have affected at least those people who were in some way involved in helping Jews or at least possessed knowledge of their hiding and illegal help being given to them. In the post-war files of the Kuraj case, direct reference was made to these events:

> A few days before the incident, the German police had discovered Jews in several villages in the vicinity. They had, therefore, murdered not only the families of those with whom Jews had been found but also those [about] whom the found Jews had declared that they had been helping them. So, in the village of Wierzbica, directly bordering on Rogów, thirteen people fell victim.[50]

Kuraj himself also recalled that, a few days earlier, "Gestapo had shot dead 17 or 18 people in the village of Wierzbica, 4 kilometers away, apart from the Jews they were hiding."[51] Later on, in the case file, one could find statements underlining that Kuraj "was aware of the mortal danger that threatened him and his entire family for sheltering a person of Jewish nationality. Despite this, he did not expel Lieberman from his farm but continued to hide him and help him with total devotion, putting his own life and that of his large family in danger."[52]

Over the next two days, news of what had happened in Wierzbica and Wolica spread through the area. The inhabitants of Rogów were overwhelmed by the mass murders that had taken place nearby. At the very least, those who knew that help was being given to Jews in this village must have feared that new acts of terror would be committed in their village.

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pp. 202–204. See M. Korkuć, "Niemieckie zbrodnie w Wierzbicy i Wolicy. Ekshumacja i pierwszy pogrzeb rodziny zamordowanej za pomoc Żydom w 1943 roku," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 3 (2022), pp. 435–438; *id.*, "German Crimes Committed in Wierzbica and Wolica. Exhumation and the First Funeral of a Family Murdered for Helping Jews in 1943," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 3 (2022), pp. 637–640.

[50] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 1, Judgment of the District Court in Cracow of 18 December 1947, fol. 212.

[51] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 29 August 1947, fol. 109.

[52] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining Aleksander Kuraj's sentence and the forfeiture of his property, fol. 386a.

The Psychosis of Fear

In such a situation, the village leader, Gądek, did not wait for the worst fears to come true. "After this incident [i.e. after the massacres in Wierzbica – M.K.], one day [i.e. Monday, 1 February 1943], the village leader Gądek started to roam around the village and gather the men, saying that they would go for a search, but where and for what – that he did not say."[53]

The village leader gathered a dozen people in this way. "It was only when he led us to Kuraj's home that he told us we were going to look for Jews," Jan Kucharz testified years later in the investigation.[54] He explained, evidently answering a straightforward question, that the village leader had gathered them "while not talking about killing."[55] Kucharz himself, a thirty-three-year-old resident of Rogów in 1943, had additional reasons for concern: he was on the list of hostages in the village. He had three young children at the time. At the same time, he had already been used to carry out German orders.[56] One of the hostages was Józef Miś, whom the village leader also came to take for the search. Years later, he gave the following testimony: "I said I wouldn't go, and he told me: "Then do you want to be responsible for a Jew in case he is at Kuraj's?" If the Germans came and found out that I didn't want to go to Kuraj, they would shoot me. I was afraid, and that's why I went."[57]

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[53] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Jan Kucharz, 20 June 1947, fols 50a–51.

[54] *Ibid.*.

[55] *Ibid.*.

[56] *Ibid.*, fols 50–50a. Kucharz was an ambiguous figure, to say the least. He was used by the village leader and his German superiors to implement the occupation authorities' orders to designate people for forced labour in Germany. The testimonies show that Kucharz fulfilled these tasks with evident commitment. We do not know today if and how this was influenced by the fact that he was a hostage. Many people were of an unequivocally negative opinion of him. "Kucharz gathered people from the village and drove them to the municipality of Kozłów, and from there the Germans took [them] to Germany for forced labour. He […] sent poor people, while he did not send rich people," – testified Maria Uchto (Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow], Wojewódzki Urząd Spraw Wewnętrznych w Krakowie [Voivodeship Office of the Interior in Cracow], 010/3998, Registered case for observation concerning Jan Kucharz, Vol. 1, The Testimony of Maria Uchto, 13 March 1950, fol. 35; The Testimony of Teofila Sieradzka, 22 February 1950, fol. 24; The Testimony of Władysław Sieradzki, 28 February 1950, fol. 28; The Testimony of Jan Kania, 25 February 1950, fol. 30; The Testimony of Zofia Tokarz, 22 February 1950, fol. 26; The Testimony of Julia Burska, 22 February 1950, fol. 24; The Testimony of Józef Skrzy-niarz, 22 February 1950, fol. 22; The Testimony of Stanisław Kowal, 23 February 1948, fol. 18).

[57] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Miś, 28 June 1947, fol. 55a.

On 1 February 1943, after dark, the people gathered by the village leader went to Kuraj's farm. He was also horrified by the events in and around Wierzbica. When he heard voices approaching, he was afraid that they were Germans. His first instinct was to flee into the fields with his son. His wife Helena sent another son to warn Lieberman as well. But he did not manage to do so.[58] Only after a while did Kuraj hear Polish in the darkness, and he realised these were not Germans. After cautiously approaching the house, he recognised the voices of people from the village. "The village leader came up to me and asked me where was the Jew hiding," he said. Kuraj again lied that "there was none."[59]

In this situation, the village leader ordered the gathered people to search the house. Nothing was found there. Then they went to the attic. They searched the pigsty. They did not see anyone. So they went to search the barn. Kuraj hoped they wouldn't find the hiding place: "I told them not to search because there was nothing to search for, but they did," he testified.[60] Miś and Kucharz, who took part in this "search," later stated that "they knew beforehand that no Jew could be hidden in the house of the accused Kuraj since the accused Kuraj had been warned, so he made the Jew who had been hiding with him run away, all the more so as he knew what repressions were the Germans using for this purpose, as in the village of Wierzbica." They also explained, "that they knew that in winter [due to the temperatures at that time – M.K.] no one would hide a Jew in a barn, nor would he survive if he was hidden in a barn in winter."[61]

It is possible that this was indeed the case. It is possible that this was merely a defence strategy adopted years later. However, it is difficult to reject this argument unequivocally. Both claimed that "the search was a sham; it was a mystification to mislead the Germans into thinking that something was being done." He recalled that "they did not want to go to search, and they resisted the village leader, which made him eventually threaten them that he would hand them over to the police." They pointed out that "it was not only them who pretended to

[58] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Judgment of the District Court in Cracow of 13 July 1949, fol. 297a.

[59] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 20 June 1947, fol. 16a.

[60] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 45.

[61] *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, Request by the convicted Józef Miś and Jan Kucharz for exercising the right of pardon, 4 January 1950, fol. 380a.

do the search, but [also] everyone else whom the village leader had assigned to do it."[62] It was entirely by chance that Lieberman's hiding place was found. Miś "went to the barn of the accused Kuraj, together with others, on the orders of the village leader, and for the sake of appearances turned over sheaves, pretending to search, and then by chance his foot fell into a hole, which turned out to be Lieberman's hiding place, from which he came out upon having been called by the accused Kuraj and the village leader."[63] Later it was even speculated that "the fact of the discovery of the pit where Liebermann was staying **was a pure coincidence**, which might not have happened if someone present had not shouted, perhaps in spite of himself, that the leg of the accused had fallen into a hole, which attracted the attention of the village leader" [emphasis mine – M.K.].[64] Jan Kucharz understood that, as a hostage, he would be the first to be held responsible for Kuraj's illegal actions. He got carried away and "slapped Kuraj in the face twice, while crying out: you said you didn't have a Jew, and there is one!"[65] Kuraj confirmed that: "for lying, I was hit."[66] Kucharz himself, during the post-war trial, admitted that he had at the most pushed him away, while asking: "what have you done."[67] Later, the District Court, in passing sentences, despite everything, noted that Kucharz's assumption that the accused Kuraj got rid of the Jews was all the more correct as it was a period of particular intensification towards the extermination of Jews by the German authorities in the county of Miechów. As a result, the German police murdered not only the families of those with whom Jews were found but also the persons who – as the Jews who were caught declared – had been helping them.[68]

This is also how the situation of Kucharz and Miś was later explained: "The fact of finding a Jew was undesirable to them [they understood this,] realising what awaited them and others for this, having in mind the incidents in the nearby vil-

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[62] *Ibid.*, fol. 380.

[63] *Ibid.*. Miś "found the hole in the floor where Lieberman sat" (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 45).

[64] *Ibid.*, Request by the convicted Józef Miś and Jan Kucharz for exercising the right of pardon, 4 January 1950, fol. 380.

[65] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 47.

[66] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 20 June 1947, fol. 16a.

[67] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Minutes of the main hearing, 15 September 1947, fol. 348.

[68] *Ibid.*, Sentence of the District Court in Cracow of 13 July 1949, fol. 297a.

lages and that so many people were shot dead for this, for example in the village of Wierzbica."[69]

The Crime

The finding of Lieberman had become a fact. In the whole loop of events, it was clear that none of the participants in this event could explain to the German authorities that they did not know about the illegal hiding of the man on Kuraj's farm. They had all acquired knowledge of illegal help being given to a Jew. In the eyes of the German authorities, the release of Lieberman could incriminate everyone. For it was now formally incumbent on everyone to inform the German authorities. They brought Lieberman home. There, a meeting was held.

Most of the participants of the meeting were frightened and embarrassed. The documents show that no one imposed himself with proposing solutions: "in Kuraj's home [the village leader] asked all of us what we should do with it, to this nobody wanted to decide anything, they said to the village leader 'do whatever you want'".[70] So they all tried to avoid the decision (and therefore the responsibility for it – also in their conscience) and to put the duty on the village leader. This was because, in principle, they were all subject to criminal liability for potentially concealing knowledge of the fact. The other solution was to hand Lieberman over to the Germans, which meant death for him anyway. In theory, the village leader and the other inhabitants would have been protected from liability as those who obediently obeyed German orders. However, after the events of three days before in the neighbouring villages, in such circumstances, it had to be taken into account that Kuraj and his family were in danger of being murdered. The same happened to the Kucharski, Książek and Nowak families in Wierzbica and Wolica. In such a situation, the village leader ordered the peasants to stay home with Kuraj and Lieberman. He, with the most endangered inhabitants, the hostages Józef Miś and Józef Kucharz, went out into the yard. There, they conferred. After a while, they summoned Kuraj. They decided that the only way out was to kill Lieberman by themselves. After the disastrous experiences in the area, they decided that this

[69] *Ibid.*, Request by the convicted Józef Miś and Jan Kucharz for exercising the right of pardon, 4 January 1950, fols 380a–381.

[70] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Jan Kucharz, 20 June 1947, fol. 53.

was the only thing that would protect the village from repeating the events in Wierzbica.[71]

Today, it is easy to ask the question: how can we be sure that Jankiel Lieberman, had he been captured, would have acted the same way as Wandersman in Wierzbica and Wolica? Of course, there was no certainty. They did not know whether he would. But they also did not know if he would not since it had happened once. They were afraid of a repetition of the murders of a few days ago. This is how the German system of terror, combined with the ostentatious use of collective responsibility, was supposed to work and did work. The inhabitants' questions were: What will the Germans do when the news reaches them that Lieberman has been released by them all in defiance of the occupation orders? Will the Germans look this time only for the "perpetrators" of the given help, or will they punish a more significant number of residents?

It is worth noting a rather characteristic thing here: there was no one in this group who, taking advantage of the impunity guaranteed by the German state, would have been ready to commit murder. No one wanted to be a murderer – including the village leader, a Volksdeutcher. No one wanted to take responsibility for the shedding of innocent blood. So those in front of the house also tried to pretend, like peasants sometimes do, that they were on the sidelines: if Kuraj was sheltering Lieberman illegally (and lying, denying the facts), then let him sort it out all by himself, and let him take it on his conscience. After all, it was him and his family who were in the greatest danger – they were the ones who would have paid with their lives if the village leader, following German orders, had taken Lieberman to the police.

Kuraj must have realised that on one side of the scale was the murder of Lieberman himself, and on the other, the death of Lieberman together with Kuraj and his entire family. Jozef Miś testified that "when the village leader was left alone with Kuraj in his house, he allegedly told him that if he did not kill him, the Germans would do to him what they had done in Wierzbica."[72]

Those standing in front of the house were straightforward: it was Kuraj who was to kill "for sheltering him." In turn, Kuraj himself later testified: "I resisted,

[71] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 20 June 1947, fol. 16a.
[72] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Józef Miś, 28 June 1947, fol. 58.

and then the village leader threatened me that he would take a cart and take me to the German gendarmerie, saying that 'they would kill me and my whole family.'"[73]

Other testimonies also confirm that the village leader, understanding his responsibility to enforce the Germans' orders, made things clear: "he ordered us all to take Lieberman to his house, announcing that he would take him [together] with Kuraj to the Germans."[74] Kuraj explained that he could not kill a man; he explained "that he, after all, could not even kill a sick calf. Explanations and requests came to no avail."[75]

No one was going to take responsibility for these "criminal" – in the light of the Germans' orders – actions of Kuraj in favour of Lieberman. At the same time, no one believed that the affair could be kept secret. Desperate, Kuraj tried to propose that Lieberman be released. "The village leader said that when the Gestapo catches the Jew, he would turn them all in, and they would [all] be shot,"[76] the scenario of a few days ago from Wierzbica will repeat itself. The first to pay for it with their lives would be Kuraj's family of eleven. However, no one could guarantee that the Germans would stop there. Therefore, if Kuraj did not deal with the matter himself, the village leader, not wanting to expose himself to the charge of failing to comply with the German orders, would take Lieberman to the Gestapo station anyway. And then, too, the Germans might murder Kuraj's entire family.

This dramatic logic of state repression was designed to make Kuraj realise that nothing could save Lieberman's life anyway. The point was that to save his family from death at the hands of the Germans, Kuraj himself would have to become the murderer of the man he had illegally and devotedly helped for several weeks.

The village leader pointed to the tool – a giant railway spanner. Lieberman was led out of the house. Years later, Kuraj testified: "I felt compelled at the time, so when the village leader pointed to the railway spanner to me – as a tool – I took it and hit Lieberman from behind on the head […] once."[77] He claimed that "the

[73] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 46.

[74] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Jan Kucharz, 20 June 1947, fol. 53.

[75] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining Aleksander Kuraj's sentence and the forfeiture of his property, fol. 387.

[76] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 29 August 1947, fol. 108a.

[77] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 46.

man fell and died on the spot."[78] All of this was happening in the backyard. Kuraj, when the village leader

> Ordered to harness horses to take Kuraj and Liberman to the Gestapo […], was stunned with fear. Witnesses Antoni Rozworski, Jan Zasada and Stanisław Kania stated that Kuraj was dazed with fear, that he was almost unconscious, that he was shaking and did not know what was happening to him. When Gądek pressed an iron spanner into his hand, Kuraj struck Lieberman with it. The blow was fatal. [79]

This is how the moment of the murder itself was later described. This was confirmed by the opinion of an expert who examined the corpse in 1947: "the deceased died as a result of a blunt force trauma inflicted with a considerable force, due to the damage to the central nervous system. The death was instantaneous."[80]

Years later, Kuraj's defence lawyer tried to describe his mental state at that moment. He tried to describe what is intangible and impossible to describe. The defence counsel wrote:

> The Court of Appeals found that Kuraj committed the act he was accused of only because of a tragic coincidence. Dazed by a violent course of events [that unfolded before him], no longer in control of his mind, already plunged in his opinion into the abyss of death, counting his life in minutes, clearly seeing the death of his innocent family […], finding in his reasoning no other way out, and there was no such way – he kills.[81]

It is characteristic that the few members of Lieberman's family who survived the Holocaust also approached Kuraj's fate with empathy:

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[78] *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 20 June 1947, fol. 16a.

[79] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining Aleksander Kuraj's sentence and the forfeiture of his property, fol. 387.

[80] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Report on the examination of the body of Jankiel Lieberman, 21 June 1947, fol. 38a.

[81] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining Aleksander Kuraj's sentence and the forfeiture of his property, fol. 386a.

> Also, two simple Jews, Jakub and Aron Romankiewicz [who, before they knew the exact circumstances of the case, demanded an investigation into it – M.K.] understand the tragedy of the case. In their letter to the court, they declare that Aleksander Kuraj, whom they have known since his youth as an honest and good man, had no other way out of the situation. As the closest of the family of Jank[ie]l Lieberman, who was their brother-in-law, the Romankiewiczes declared that they held no grudge against Kuraj and believed he deserved to be exempted from criminal responsibility.[82]

Kuraj later testified: "Immediately after killing Lieberman, I went to dig a hole" behind the barn. How he survived all this – will remain his secret.

Gądek considered any such case of illegally hiding people wanted by the Germans in the village to be a problem: "The next day, the village leader was at Antoni Nowak's house looking for Jews, but he did not find them [Jews]."[83]

Under such circumstances, the problem of punishment for helping Lieberman essentially disappeared because the hiding Jew was already dead. The terror took its toll without involving the uniformed services of the GG. As Kuraj's defence counsel said years later:

> In the opinion of the Court [of Appeals], the tragedy of the case lies in the fact that this terrible act was committed by a man whose life up to that moment had been impeccable, a man who, after all, had never raised a hand against anyone in his life, who could not even kill a sick calf, that he committed this act against a person to whom he had shown the highest degree of compassion and kindness.[84]

Two Different States

An analysis of the cause-and-effect logic of the events that took place in this area between 29 January and 1 February 1943 reveals the horrific murders committed by the German services in several villages and then the dramatic consequences of

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[82] *Ibid.*

[83] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of Aleksander Kuraj, 28 June 1947, fol. 48.

[84] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Barrister Jan Kocznur's request for pardoning the remaining Aleksander Kuraj's sentence and the forfeiture of his property, fol. 386a.

the crimes committed in other places. And although in Rogów – unlike Wierzbica – there were no uniformed German officers physically present on the day of the crime, it is difficult to see Lieberman's murder as an event detached from the realities of the occupation, the German law and the terror generated and sanctioned by the might of the German Reich. Here we have a murder that was a tragedy of two people, both the victim and the killer. There is the poor, persecuted Jew and the poor Polish farmer who helps him illegally. But there are also the German authorities in the Kreishauptmannschaft and the criminal "law" in force. Finally, there is panic in the village that the events of Wierzbica will happen again.

It was clear that officers acting on behalf of the state could also come to Rogów at any time to administer punishment for "acts of violence against the reconstruction of the General Government" or – for offences against the orders of the "Regulation on the Restriction of Residency in the General Government." In this way, due to acts of state terror, the imposed legal system, which was binding then, revealed its effectiveness. There is no doubt that, in this case, how the state organs and armed formations enforced the GG laws directly impacted the behaviour of the village leader, the people he mobilised, and Aleksander Kuraj himself. In this way, the crime in Rogów embodied the function of the law presented at the beginning of this article – in this case, the murderous regulations in force in the General Government.

It is difficult not to see that the crime in Rogów was an attempt to prevent a German punitive expedition that threatened the village for illegally sheltering one of the stigmatised. The possibility of such a scenario was determined by the fact that the village belonged to an area over which the German Reich exercised undivided power, and the population was deprived of any protection against the crimes of that state. The information published in one of Józef Guzik's books, which attributes this murder to someone else, is not true. Its author gave the personalities of Jankiel Lieberman and correctly indicated the village of Rogów. However, neither the date of the murder (May 1943) nor the circumstances are accurate in his study. Guzik writes that Lieberman was "shot by the gendarmerie." It is difficult to get over such untrue data.[85] However, the above events are not fairly shown,

[85] See J. Guzik, *Racławickie wezwania. Monografia okupacyjna ziemi miechowskiej 1939–1945* (Wawrzeńczyce, 1987), p. 178.

even in the more elaborate accounts. In one, the crime committed against Jankiel Lieberman is presented simply as a "murder without police involvement."[86] In the abbreviated narrative, there was no space to show the essence of the events or their context, i.e. the earlier murders in Wierzbica and the neighbouring villages. This is even though the author mentions the massacre in Wierzbica and its surroundings in another part of the book but does not link these facts in the slightest with the story of Kuraj.[87] Under these circumstances, the events were reduced to an incident in which the village leader Gądek and a group of peasants "surrounded the buildings and thoroughly searched the barn." The author mentions that Gądek "blackmailed and threatened Kuraj that he would go to the police."[88] And the mere fact of blackmail was supposed to have led to the murder of Lieberman by Kuraj. But are we uncovering the facts by reducing the whole event to a story that took place only and exclusively in Rogów, only and exclusively between peasants and Poles (leaving out the fact that Gądek was a Volksdeutscher), without the involvement of any factors of the higher order, without the context of the German murders in the area? Such an account certainly does not bring us any closer to understanding the actual dimension of the tragedy of Aleksander Kuraj and Jankiel Lieberman. After all, it was not a question of residents disapproving of their neighbour's hiding a fugitive. It is challenging to consider the story as presented in its entirety if it was told without the context of the acts of terror in the neighbouring villages. Likewise, the picture of events will be incomplete without taking into account the German Reich, its legal system and the widespread terror as a fundamental causal factor or the creator of this reality, in which Aleksander Kuraj, an honest man ready to make sacrifices, became a murderer.

It would not be an overstatement to say that such events would not have been possible in pre-war Poland but became possible under the rule of the German Reich. Drawing attention to the role of the German state terror is essential to show

[86] Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," p. 162.

[87] It is possible that this is due to a misplacement of events in time. While Libionka places the murder in Wierzbica on 29 January 1943, his account of Lieberman's murder erroneously states that it took place more than a year later, on 1 February 1944. In doing so, as mentioned above, he makes the same mistake that other authors have made. Admittedly, this significantly changes the context and the direct coincidence of events (see Libionka, "Powiat miechowski," pp. 162, 168).

[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 168.

the actual panorama of human attitudes during the German occupation. After all, the simplest definition of terror states that it is "violence and cruelty, or threats of their use, directed against people to intimidate them."[89] Therefore – if the story told above is to be an actual case study, showing elements of a broader phenomenon – it is worth paying a little more attention to the fundamental differences between the situation of the inhabitants of Rogów under the German Reich and their situation a few years earlier – in independent Poland. Let us focus on some, albeit key, elements of this story.

In 1943, under the "racial" hierarchy imposed by the Germans, Germans and Volksdeutsche stand higher on the social ladder than Poles, not to mention Jews. In Poland before the war, all inhabitants were equal before the law – regardless of religion or nationality.

In 1943, the village leader orders the village men to turn up at his command to perform unspecified tasks. In doing so, he threatens the resisters with penalties that may be administered by the state (German) police authorities. Some are held hostage, forced to risk their necks for the actions of others. Before the war, there was freedom of assembly in Poland, and the village leader had no right to force people to participate by threats.[90] He could invite them, at the most. There were no hostages or collective responsibility. There were even fewer state sanctions for disregarding the village leader's invitation. The police did not deal with such matters, and the village leader had no such powers. If, in this or any other village before the war, the village leader had wanted to coerce someone into obeying his orders – he would have exposed himself to ridicule or, upon crossing the boundaries of punishable threats or personal inviolability, to criminal liability.

In 1943, in the General Government, the village leader sends the people gathered at his command to someone else's farm. He orders a search. This search

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[89] *Słownik języka polskiego*, https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/terror.html (accessed 31 October 2020).

[90] Moreover, the village leader could be held criminally liable under Article 250 of the 1932 Polish Penal Code: "Whoever threatens another person with the perpetration of a crime or a misdemeanour to his or her detriment or to the detriment of his or her relatives, if the announcement is likely to be fulfilled and the threat is likely to arouse fear in the threatened person, shall be liable to imprisonment of up to two years or to the penalty of arrest of up to two years." (*Polski Kodeks Karny z 11 VII 1932 r. wraz z prawem o wykroczeniach, przepisami wprowadzającemu i utrzymanymi w mocy przepisami kodeksu karnego austryjackiego, niemieckiego, rosyjskiego i skorowidzem. Komentarzem zaopatrzyli Kazimierz Sobolewski i dr Alfred Laniewski wiceprokuratorowie Sądu Apelacyjnego we Lwowie* [Lvov, 1932], p. 132).

is carried out in all the farmer's rooms. In Poland before the war, the village leader had no right to carry out any searches. He could, at the most, visit another farmer as a guest. Even the police should have had a search warrant. If other villagers tried to force their way into someone else's farm without an invitation, it would be an unlawful raid and, if force were used, an assault. If reported by the victim, the State Police were obliged to prosecute the perpetrators of such a raid.[91]

In 1943, the Jew Lieberman goes into hiding because he understands that he is committing a crime punishable by death by staying in Rogów without permission from the state authorities. In Poland before the war, the Jew Lieberman was a free citizen, staying wherever he wanted. No one threatened him with death for moving anywhere. If someone had tried to restrict his freedom or freedom of movement, he could have called the State Police for help.

In 1943, the Jew Lieberman, by entering the house of the farmer Kuraj, exposed him to the death penalty from the state authorities – following the orders that were in force. The farmer, by taking in a Jewish acquaintance under his roof, became – according to the German regulations – a criminal who exposed himself and his family to responsibility in the form of the death penalty. In prewar Poland, the state had nothing to do with who visited whom or where. No one was threatened with death or any punishment for receiving visitors. The state had nothing to do with who received whom under their roof. And those supporting people in need enjoyed social respect – and also found appreciation of the state institutions.

In 1943, Lieberman is hiding, sleeping in the woods, on Kuraj's farm. He lives in a hole hollowed out in the threshing floor under a layer of straw. And everyone understands that there is no other way out. In Poland, before the war, an innocent man sleeping in the forest or a hole under the threshing floor of a barn would have been considered mentally disabled at best because he did not have to hide from anyone.

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[91] Article 252.1 of the 1932 Polish Penal Code stated: "Any person who breaks into another person's house, flat, premises, room, enterprise, fenced property connected with a dwelling or fenced property serving as a place of residence, or any person who, contrary to the demand of an authorised person, fails to leave such a place, is liable to a penalty of arrest of up to 2 years or a fine." (*ibid.*, p. 133).

In 1943, the people of Rogów feared a repetition of the experience of the neighbouring villages, where German policemen murdered ordinary people with their families. This was an unthinkable situation in pre-war Poland. If someone had murdered individuals or an entire family, he would have been prosecuted by the state authorities. The police ensured the safety of citizens. Article 225.1 of the 1932 Penal Code stated simply and clearly, making no distinction based on religion or nationality: "Any person who kills a man is liable to a penalty of imprisonment of no less than five years, life imprisonment or the death penalty."[92]

In 1943, the village leader and other villagers witnessed a crime against a Jewish villager. Everyone knew that the state structures would not deal with such a case because the murdered person was a Jew in hiding. Nobody believes that the perpetrator of the crime should hide from the state authorities. Under the authority of the German Reich, this was indeed the case. Moreover, everyone knew that the state structures would intervene if the victims remained alive. And there was a fear of collective responsibility. In pre-war Poland, Lieberman had the same right to life and legal protection as everyone else. All citizens were aware that any murder was a crime that would be prosecuted by law and the state services. And in such circumstances, the crime would be investigated. In free Poland, a citizen who murdered another person was prosecuted for this crime by the state authorities. He was a criminal who murdered a fellow citizen (whose nationality did not matter).

This list of circumstances could be continued, showing the vast gap between the realities of the two states (the German Reich and the Polish Republic) before and after 1939. It is difficult to imagine the sequence of events that made Aleksander Kuraj kill a man had he and the entire village, region and state not been under the rule of the German Reich, its criminal laws and services.

The Judgment of Kuraj

Kuraj's story had its finale after the war. This event was by no means a collective secret of Rogów. People talked about it. It also acquired much false information – like any rumour news. As long as the Germans were in control of the area,

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

there was no question of punishing the perpetrator. After the German occupation, the time came to square some accounts.

Poland did not regain its independence in 1945. The Soviet Union, as one of the main Allied powers, imposed a new enslavement on the Poles in place of the German occupation – a Communist version of totalitarianism. It did not allow the legal authorities of the Republic of Poland to return to the country from London. USSR forcibly annexed the whole of eastern Poland, which the United States and Great Britain accepted at Yalta. Stalin imposed on the people a puppet communist government entirely dependent on Moscow. The crimes committed during the war and those still committed after the war by the USSR and the Communists were not even allowed to be spoken of.

However, crimes committed on German orders or in compliance with German orders became the subject of court proceedings. Today, when we look through the trial files, the difference between the trials of the Germans and their collaborators and the trials of the soldiers of the independence underground fighting after the war is striking. In the former – although also far from perfect – we are confronted with incomparably greater evidentiary and procedural diligence. In the latter, the judiciary was, as a rule, only an extension of the communist security apparatus.

Only a tiny part of Jankiel and Chai Lieberman's family survived the Holocaust. Jankiel's brother-in-law, Chai's brother Jakób Romankiewicz, stayed, among others. On 20 May 1947, he filed a report with the district headquarters of the Milicja Obywatelska (Citizens' Militia) about the crime against Jankiel Lieberman. He based it on the news he had heard, which only magnified the horror of the events. According to what he heard, Aleksander Kuraj murdered Lieberman by brutally cutting off his head with an axe. Romankiewicz was aware that Kuraj had been coerced into doing so (although he was partly inaccurate in naming the incident's participants, and mixed up persons and functions).[93] However, the assassination of Lieberman was a fact.

On 13 January 1949, the District Court in Cracow found Aleksander Kuraj guilty of the charge, stating that his act fulfilled an "order from a superior German

[93] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 1, Report of receipt of an oral report of a crime, 20 May 1947, fol. 39.

authority."[94] Finally, on 15 November 1949, the Court of Appeals, despite saying "that the accused Kuraj had indeed acted under the threat of annihilation of himself and his family consisting of his wife and nine children," sentenced him to seven years of imprisonment, loss of public rights and forfeiture of all property.[95] The village leader, Gądek, was not subject to investigation – he had already died.

The Supreme Court, in dismissing the cassation of the sentence, in its ruling of 1 July 1949, also referred to the participants' awareness of the events that the crime was consistent with the imposed law of the German Reich. This was an aggravating circumstance: "the accused, in killing Lieberman, **foresaw and accepted** that he would act in compliance with the demands of the German police authorities" [emphasis mine – M.K.].[96]

The villagers stood up for Kuraj. However – and this is particularly important – eventually, the two Romankiewicz brothers – i.e. Lieberman's brothers-in-law who survived the Holocaust – also took his side. The same ones who had reported the crime in 1947. When they became aware of all the circumstances of the case, as early as the autumn of 1949, they wrote to the Court as follows:

> Based on the information gathered, we came to the conclusion that Aleksander Kuraj, whom we had known since his youth and whom we knew to be an honest and good man, had selflessly hidden our brother-in-law from the German occupiers at the risk of his own life and that of his family, and that only under the influence of threats and orders from the village leader Gądek, having no other way out of the situation, terrified and almost unconscious out of fear for the lives of his large family and his own life, had he been forced to commit the deed he was accused of.[97]

For those who lived in the area immediately after the war, it was clear that the bloody events in Wolica and Wierzbica were linked to those in the neighbouring

[94] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, Judgment of the District Court in Cracow of 13 January 1949, fol. 295a.
[95] *Ibid.*, Judgment of the Court of Appeals in Cracow, 15 November 1949, fols 368a, 372a.
[96] *Ibid.*, Judgment of the Supreme Court from the cassation hearing of 1 July 1949, fol. 320.
[97] *Ibid.*, Statement by Jakób Romankiewicz and Aron Romankiewicz (brothers-in-law of Jankiel Lieberman) on the case of the accused Aleksander Kuraj, 10 October 1949, fols 343–343a.

Rogów. The historian Tomasz Domański, writing about the crime in Wierzbica, stated that:

> This experience [i.e. the massacre of the inhabitants of the villages of Wierzbica and Wolica, where the guide of the torturers was a captured Jew who led them to the people who had helped him illegally] showed that any previously sheltered person, under the influence of the struggle for their survival, can become an instrument of crime used against the former benefactors.[98]

On the other hand, the story of the tragedy of the two people from Rogów – Jankiel Lieberman, the victim of the crime, and Aleksander Kuraj, who became his murderer – unfortunately shows the brutal victory of the German totalitarian state over the reflexes resulting from the noblest understanding of humanity and love of one's neighbour. A triumph of the state which, through the fear and helplessness of the civilian population faced with the state machinery of violence, deepened by the awareness of the experience of entire families of those who had just been murdered, was able to coerce ordinary peasants in a neighbouring village into the kind of behaviour that the Germans needed. The sort of behaviour they wanted to programme the conquered population into using universal terror.

The totalitarian German Reich was able to make a civilian, a noble benefactor, murder a defenceless man in the name of the safety of his family (and other families). One whom he had previously risked his life to help. Simply because the German Reich had introduced and brutally enforced a law based on racial segregation, public terror and the extermination of entire social and national groups. These, Domański wrote, were indeed "infernal loops" created by "a combination of German terror, the enforcement of criminal laws and fear that gripped whole communities rendered helpless in the face of the violence of the German occupation."[99]

Let the words of the already quoted letter from the Holocaust survivors, Jankiel Lieberman's brothers-in-law, the Romankiewicz brothers, to the court, be the

[98] Domański, *Korekta obrazu*, p. 38.
[99] *Ibid.*

concluding message of this story: "As the closest relatives of Jankiel Lieberman's family, we declare that we hold no grudge against Aleksander Kuraj and believe he deserves to be exempted from criminal responsibility."[100]

However, the court did not grant the request made by the victim's family. Aleksander Kuraj was imprisoned. It was only after he had served most of his sentence, i.e., five years, that he was released early on parole under an extraordinary commutation of his sentence.

[100] ANKr, SAKr, 1222, Vol. 2, Statement by Jakób Romankiewicz and Aron Romankiewicz (brothers-in-law of Jankiel Lieberman) on the case of the accused Aleksander Kuraj, 10 October 1949, fols 343–343a.

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SUMMARY

The story of the murder of Jankiel Lieberman, a Jewish resident of the village of Rogów near Miechów, who was hiding from the Germans. The crime was committed on 1 February 1943 by Aleksander Kuraj, a peasant from Rogów, who risked his life by selflessly helping Lieberman. This happened under the conditions of the psychosis of fear that gripped the inhabitants after the massacre in the neighbouring villages of Wierzbica and Wolica. There, a captured Jew led German officers to all the families who had illegally helped the Jewish population persecuted by the Germans. Once identified, the families were murdered one by one. The text shows the specificity of the German state terror in the General Government and the far-reaching effects of Germany's criminal policy towards the Jewish and Polish populations. After the war, Aleksander Kuraj was tried for the murder of Lieberman.

Holocaust survivors of Lieberman's family reported the crime. After becoming familiar with the circumstances of the case, they wrote a letter to the court requesting his exemption from criminal responsibility.

KEYWORDS

Germany • German Reich • crimes • German occupation • General Government • Holocaust • Poles • Jews • repression for helping Jews • Polish-Jewish relations under the German occupation • German law • crimes • Rogów • Wierzbica • Wolica • Poland during World War II • crimes in the Polish countryside

PJS STUDIES
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ANTI-JEWISH COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE IN RZESZÓW AND CRACOW IN 1945: A COMPARISON IN THE CONTEXT OF CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS

In the early 1990s, a witness, an officer of the Railway Security Guard, detailed to patrol the streets of the Kazimierz district during the anti-Jewish tumult that took place in Cracow on 11 August 1945, testified:

> A few months later, from a colleague of mine, a railway security guard on patrol duty, I learned that he had spent three months in jail in connection to his participation in a patrol in Miodowa Street. When I asked him for the reason for his arrest, he told me he had fancied climbing roofs, without giving any details about who had arrested him and where he was jailed. What he did tell me was he was not allowed to talk about it.[1]

[1] Archiwum Oddziałowej Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Krakowie [Archives of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation in Cracow, hereinafter AOKŚZpNP Kr], S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 1, Transcript of the testimony of witness Zbigniew Paliwoda, Cracow, 24 April 1992, fol. 12. Research failed to reveal the identity of the person mentioned by the witness.

This event was the first major and widely discussed collective act of anti-Jewish violence after the Second World War.[2] Importantly, two months earlier, on 11 and 12 June, anti-Jewish riots took place in Rzeszów too. The origins and course of these incidents and the reactions they provoked have already been discussed in many publications. An attempt to reconstruct the Rzeszów tumult was made by Krzysztof Kaczmarski.[3] In turn, the first comprehensive publication on the Cracow pogrom was that by Anna Cichopek, released by the Jewish Historical Institute in 2000.[4] She traced how political, economic, social, religious and psychological factors led to an outburst of violence. Next, she reconstructed the events of 11 August 1945 and described the reactions by the state and administrative authorities, opposition, society, Catholic Church and Jewish communities. It is worth noting that before her, already in 1988, this subject was discussed by Julian Kwiek in a chapter of his book *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy w województwie krakowskim w latach 1945–1949/50* (Jews, Lemkos, Slovaks in the Voivodeship of Cracow in 1945–1949/50).[5] More recent relevant publications include Łukasz Krzyżanowski's article published in issue 15 of *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* (Holocaust. Studies and Materials) that shed light on the investigation into the death of Róża Berger – the only victim of the anti-Jewish pogrom in Cracow.[6]

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[2] See A. Grabski, "Wstęp," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 4: *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)*, ed. by A. Grabski (Warsaw, 2019), p. 18.

[3] K. Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było. Rzeszów, 11–12 czerwca 1945 r. Fakty, hipotezy, dokumenty* (Rzeszów, 2008); *id*., "Antyżydowskie zajścia 1945," in *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, ed. by Z. Budzyński (Rzeszów, 2011), pp. 18–20.

[4] A. Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie 11 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Warsaw, 2000). In 2003, another article by her appeared on this subject, *ead*., "The Cracow Pogrom of August 1945. A Narrative Reconstruction," in *Contested Memories. Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. by J.D. Zimmerman (New Brunswick, 2003), pp. 221–238.

[5] J. Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy w województwie krakowskim w latach 1945–1949/50* (Cracow, 1998), pp. 31–47. In 2002, this author also published documents on the Cracow pogrom: *id*., "Wydarzenia antyżydowskie 11 sierpnia 1945 r. w Krakowie. Dokumenty," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1 (2001), pp. 77–89. In 2019, he published another article on the pogrom: *id*., "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie 11 sierpnia 1945 r.," in *Pogromy Żydów*, vol. 4, pp. 161–181.

[6] Ł. Krzyżanowski, "'To było między pierwszą a drugą.' Zabójstwo Róży Berger podczas pogromu w Krakowie 11 sierpnia 1945 r.," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały*, 15 (2019), pp. 409–445. The author studied in depth the files of the criminal case against Jan Rodak (Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow], 110/393, Files in the criminal case against Jan Rodak; father's name Piotr, born on 26 June 1911 charged with illegal possession of firearms, participation in an anti-Semitic tumult and assaulting and fatally shooting a person of Jewish origin, under acts as defined in the Polish Army Criminal Code [kkWP],

Recently, the first attempts were made to compare the Cracow tumult of 11 August with other similar occurrences. In 2019, Anna Cichopek-Gajraj published an article in which she attempted to compare the Cracow pogrom with one in Topoľčany, Slovakia.[7] The next year saw the publication of another study by her in which she compared anti-Jewish violence in Cracow in 1918 and 1945.[8] There are also publications available – as Bożena Szaynok wrote – in which the anti-Jewish tumults in Rzeszów and Cracow are discussed together, enabling to highlight the elements they had in common (the myth of ritual murder and involvement of uniformed officers).[9] Among these publications, special attention is deserved by the 2021 monograph by Julian Kwiek on hostility towards Jews after the war in Poland.[10]

The purpose of this article is a comparison of the Rzeszów and Cracow pogroms and actions by law enforcement agencies and the administration of justice taken in connection with them in both the 1940s and after the watershed of 1989 when the pogroms attracted the attention of the District Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*Okregowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*, OKBZpNP) and later the Branch Commission for the

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Art. 102[2] & [4], in connection with the Criminal Code, Art. 240, and the Decree on State Protection of 30 October 1944, Art. 4[1][a]).

[7] A. Cichopek-Gajraj, "Pogromy w Krakowie (Polska) i Topolczanach (Słowacja) w 1945 r. – analiza porównawcza," in *Pogromy Żydów*, vol. 4, pp. 183–214.

[8] *Ead.*, "Przemoc antyżydowska w Krakowie w 1918 i 1945 r. Analiza porównawcza," in *Pytać mądrze. Studia z dziejów społecznych i kulturowych. Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana profesorowi Andrzejowi Chwalbie*, ed. by A. Czocher and B. Klich-Kluczewska (Cracow, 2020), pp. 373–389.

[9] See B. Szaynok, "Polska historiografia po 1989 r. na temat pogromów," in *Pogromy Żydów*, vol. 4, p. 522. I list following this author: J.T. Gross, *Strach. Antysemityzm w Polsce tuż po wojnie. Historia moralnej zapaści* (Cracow 2008); J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Legendy o krwi. Antropologia przesądu* (Warsaw, 2008); M. Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys* (Warsaw, 2012). A comparative analysis of mob cries along the route followed by the Jewish residents of 12 Tannenbaum Street in Rzeszów escorted by the militia on 12 June 1945 and the mob gathered at 27 Miodowa Street in Cracow on 11 August 1945 (as well as ones at 7 Planty Street in Kielce on 4 July 1946) was made by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (*ead.*, "Cries of the Mob in the Pogroms in Rzeszów (June 1945), Cracow (August 1945) and Kielce (July 1946) as a Source to the History of Mentality," *East European Politics & Societies* 25/3 (2011), pp. 553–574; *ead.*, *Okrzyki pogromowe. Szkice z antropologii historycznej Polski lat 1939–1946* [Wołowiec, 2012], pp. 143–156).

[10] J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Warsaw, 2021). In the attached calendar, covering the murders of Jewish individuals and other anti-Semitic acts in 1944–1947, there is no information on the events in Rzeszów on 11 and 12 June 1945 (although they are studied in the first part of the monograph).

Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*, OKŚZpNP).

It is worth mentioning that historians' opinions varied on the use of the term "pogrom" with respect to the events in question.[11] This must have been a result of the serious problem posed by the fuzziness of the term.[12] Nevertheless, it seems that both occurrences in question can be called pogroms. In the opinion of Lech Nijakowski, the purpose of a pogrom is not the death of its victims, although it very often causes fatalities (according to this researcher, there can be a pogrom without fatalities). According to his definition, the purpose of a pogrom is usually "a collective punishment of the community of victims for actual or presumed actions. During a pogrom, the property of victims is looted or destroyed, symbols of group identity are defiled or destroyed, victims are raped, beaten and mutilated, but only rarely are they intentionally murdered."[13] As we shall see below, most of these elements can be found in both cases of collective anti-Jewish violence under consideration.

Jews in Rzeszów and Cracow in 1945

To begin with, it is worth answering the question of how many Jews there were in the two cities when anti-Jewish violence broke out in June and August 1945. In Cracow, prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, there were about 60,000 residents of Jewish origin, making up about twenty-five percent of the population

[11] Bożena Szaynok wrote on this issue in her "Polska historiografia," p. 515. She quoted the work on the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów: *Pogrom, którego nie było*. In 1998, in his *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy* Julian Kwiek, relying on what was known then, also questioned the use of this term with respect to the Cracow tumult. He wrote then that "an 'attempted pogrom' is a more suitable term" (Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy*, p. 46). However, over twenty years later, he described the events in Cracow as a pogrom (*id*., "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," pp. 161–181). Interestingly, in a report by Intelligence Brigades, the Rzeszów events were also referred to as a pogrom: "Upon learning of this occurrence, people attacked Jews, holding a pogrom" (Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Rzeszowie [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów, hereinafter AIPN Rz], 122/312, Attachment to a report of the Rzeszów District of Intelligence Brigades concerning incidents with Jews, [1945], p. 217; this document was published by Kaczmarski, see *id*., *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 142).

[12] Grabski, *Wstęp*, p. 10; D. Grinberg, "Wokół idei pogromów. Definicje, główne szkoły interpretacji, źródła nieporozumień," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 3: *Historiografia, polityka, recepcja społeczna (do 1939 roku)*, ed. by K. Kijek, A. Markowski, and K. Zieliński (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 15–24.

[13] See L.M. Nijakowski, *Rozkosz zemsty. Socjologia historyczna mobilizacji ludobójczej* (Warsaw, 2013), p. 68.

of the city.[14] In Rzeszów, in turn, Jewish people, numbering about 14,000, represented about thirty percent of the city's residents.[15] Most of the Jewish populations of both cities perished during the Second World War.[16]

Historians estimate that of the pre-war Jewish population of Cracow, about 2,000 people survived,[17] while of that of Rzeszów – 700–800.[18] It is not known how many returned to Cracow and Rzeszów after the war was over, as the number of Jews in the two cities varied a lot due to migrations of varied intensity. Available data suggests that at the outbreak of the anti-Jewish tumult, there were probably from one hundred to several hundred Jews in Rzeszów and several thousand in Cracow.[19]

Before comparing the 1945 events, it is worth remembering that already over a quarter of a century earlier, anti-Jewish tumults took place in these cities; notably, collective anti-Jewish violence broke out in Cracow towards the end of the First World War in April 1918.[20] A year later – in May 1919 – Rzeszów witnessed an anti-Jewish tumult in which many shops were looted and numerous people were beaten. This was underlain by a strained social and economic situation and, above all food, shortages for which Jews were held responsible, according to part of the public, because they dominated in commerce and some crafts.[21] Not to be ignored,

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[14] In the early 1930s, the Jewish community in Cracow numbered almost 57,000. Immediately before the outbreak of the war, the city attracted Jewish refugees and migrants, making the Jewish community grow (M. Grądzka-Rejak, "Ocaleni z Zagłady – zarys demograficzny," *Studia nad Totalitaryzmami i Wiekiem XX* 3 [2019], pp. 165–166).

[15] W. Wierzbieniec, "Żydzi Rzeszowscy," in *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, p. 1023.

[16] E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszów, 2014), pp. 284–285, 296–299.

[17] E. Gawron, "Powojenna emigracja Żydów z Polski. Przykład Krakowa," in *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, ed. by F. Tych and M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Warsaw–Lublin, 2011), p. 414; See also Grądzka-Rejak, "Ocaleni z Zagłady," p. 171.

[18] Wierzbieniec, "Żydzi Rzeszowscy," p. 1024.

[19] Julian Kwiek, relying on the data from the Ministry of Public Administration, claimed that over 6,000 Jews lived in the Cracow Voivodeship in June 1945, while in the early 1946 their number grew to over 10,000 (Kwiek, Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy, p. 15). Krzysztof Kaczmarski claimed that 413 Jews lived in Rzeszów County in the middle of March. In May their number dropped to 317 (Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 17). See also M.E. Ożóg, "Żydzi po wyzwoleniu," in *Dzieje Rzeszowa*, vol. 3, ed. by F. Kiryk (Rzeszów, 2001), p. 914.

[20] Another pogrom in Cracow took place a year later, in June 1919.

[21] The tumult in Rzeszów took place on 3 May 1919. In two days, 200 Jews were injured, and almost 200 flats and 50 shops were looted. The Rzeszów prison took in 136 people charged with participation in the tumult (W. Wierzbieniec, "Antyżydowskie zajścia 1919," in *Encyklopedia Rzeszowa*, pp. 17–18). In Cracow, during the April tumult, the police arrested 60 people, against whom the Public Prosecutor's Office instituted criminal prosecutions. In the course of these events, intervening soldiers shot dead

the anomie, caused by over four years of war, was a contributing factor no doubt. The anti-Jewish tumults under discussion also took place after the end of a military conflict, but – as shall be shown below – had a slightly different underlying cause.

Comparison of the Course of Events

The direct spark for the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów was the finding of the body of a murdered girl. Suspicion of murdering her fell on Jews who lived on the second floor of the house where the body had been found.[22] The events of 11 August 1945 in Cracow, in turn, were preceded by rumours spread that Jews, during their religious practices, murdered Polish children and used their blood in rituals. Rumours about the finding of the bodies of murdered children were supposedly circulated in the so-called *tandeta* or a marketplace at Szeroka Street. At the same time, anti-Jewish incidents were recorded around the city.[23]

In June 1945, the Citizens' Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO) in Rzeszów was notified that eight-year-old Bronisława Mendoń[24] had gone missing after she left home for a private lesson on June 7th.[25] On 11 June, MO officers went to the house at 12 Tannenbauma Street (today Okrzei Street) because one of its residents, Kazimierz Woźniak, found in the cellar a bag with books and school notebooks belonging to the missing girl. Several officers arrived at the scene. About 9.00 p.m., while inspecting the cellar in which the belongings of the missing girl had been found, her body was discovered under wood shavings. It was

a fourteen-year-old Catholic, Elżbieta Lempartówna, and Petache Meller, a Jew from Stryj, died probably of a heart attack (J.M. Małecki, "Zamieszki w Krakowie w kwietniu 1918 r. Pogrom czy rozruchy głodowe?," in *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 1, ed. by A.K. Paluch [Cracow, 1992], pp. 253–255).

[22] For more on the anti-Jewish tumult of 11 and 12 June in Rzeszów see Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, pp. 19–36.

[23] For the tracing of the origins and course of events of 11 August 1945 in Cracow see Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," pp. 165–171; Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, pp. 67–93.

[24] In publications, her age is given as nine years (see Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 12; Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, p. 588; Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," p. 162), but according to her death certificate Bronisława Mendoń was born on 26 December 1936 so in June 1945 she was eight years of age (Archiwum Oddziałowej Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Rzeszowie [Archives of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation in Rzeszów, hereinafter AOKŚZpNP Rz], S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Complete Copy of Death Certificate, Rzeszów, 10 July 1998, fol. 9).

[25] *Ibid*., Vol. 2, Letter to the Ministry of Justice, Rzeszów, 1 September 1945, fol. 235; AIPN Rz, 062/5, Letter of the Public Prosecutor of the District Court in Rzeszów to the Ministry of Justice in Warsaw, Rzeszów, 1 September 1945, fol. 19.

unclothed and mutilated (her face was skinned, and her muscles were cut from her hands and legs).[26]

On that very night, MO officers searched two flats on the second floor of the house where the body of Bronisława Mendoń had been found and arrested over a dozen Jews who lived there.[27] Around midnight, the arrested men were escorted under guard to the MO County Headquarters at 13 3 Maja Street. Several hours later MO officers began their search and making arrests in other houses close to the one in Tannenbauma Street and neighbouring Sobieskiego Street. Jews found near the railway station were also arrested.[28] In an operation lasting several hours, probably about 130 people were arrested.[29] At the same time, a rumour spread around Rzeszów about Polish children being murdered by Jews, and this is probably why, from the early morning of 12 June, people started to gather close to the house where the body of the girl had been found: "It was a market day. Many residents flocked in and started mob justice, taking matters into their hands" – reads the Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów of 15 June 1945,[30] included in the investigation files (discontinued in 2003) into the use of, and connivance at, violence and unlawful threats against a group of persons of Jewish nationality during the events in Rzeszów in June 1945.

The attackers were both civilians and uniformed officers. Having gathered at the house at 12 Tannenbauma Street, they threw stones at the Jews and beat them. All this was happening in the presence of MO officers who escorted the arrested persons and did not react to the aggressive behaviour of the mob towards them. In fact, the officers used physical violence against them as well.[31] The Jews were

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[26] AIPN Rz, 062/5, Report of Cpl Jan Łukasz, Rzeszów, 12 June 1945, fol. 4; AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 2, Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the use of, and connivance at, violence and unlawful threats against a group of persons of Jewish nationality during the events in Rzeszów in June 1945, Rzeszów, 1 April 2003, fol. 290v.

[27] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Testimony of Jonas Landesmann, Cracow, 5 October 1945, fol. 133.

[28] *Ibid*., Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 32; *ibid*., Testimony of Jonas Landesmann, Cracow, 5 October 1945, fol. 133.

[29] *Ibid*., Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 33.

[30] *Ibid*., fol. 29.

[31] *Ibid*., fols 29–31; *ibid.*, Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow, 16 June 1945, fols 36–37; *ibid*., Transcript of testimony of witness Leib Kapłan, Cracow, 13 June 1945, fol. 190.

verbally abused and threatened with death. One of the witnesses of these events, Leib Kapłan, testified: "When the Jews were escorted down the streets, the mob threw stones and cried 'kill the Jews'."[32] According to the Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission, the course of events was influenced by anti-Jewish sentiments among MO officers.[33]

The anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów took place mainly in the city centre or around Tannenbauma Street and along the route taken by the Jews and MO officers escorting them to the MO County Headquarters at 13 3 Maja Street. The Cracow tumult, in turn, engulfed chiefly several streets in the Kazimierz district, including Wolnica Square and Krakowska Street and it appears that its scale was larger. On the day of the pogrom in the morning, 11 August 1945 in the Kupa Synagogue in Kazimierz, a service was being held when several dozen hooligans interrupted it by throwing stones at the synagogue. Such incidents had already occurred earlier, and on that day, several congregation members ran out, caught one of the hooligans and beat him.[34] The grounds given for the investigation conducted by the District Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*, OKŚZpNP) in Cracow (discontinued in 2009) read: "A probable witness of this incident could be a young boy present at the scene by the name of Antoni Nijaki. He was supposedly incited by an unknown man, who allegedly was an MO officer, to run around and cry that Jews wanted to abduct and kill him."[35] This sparked the mob into action, attacking the Kupa Synagogue in search of

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[32] *Ibid*., Transcript of testimony of witness Leib Kapłan, Cracow, 13 June 1945, fol. 190.

[33] "We wish to stress that the above events resulted from the atmosphere that had been ten months in the making. For ten months since the entry of the Red Army into the Voivodeship of Rzeszów, we had been hearing the voices of MO officers who very often shouted to Jews: 'Germans have not finished you off; we will finish you off.'" (*ibid*., Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow 16 June 1945, fol. 39).

[34] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], 915/770, Transcript of interview of witness Jehuda Landau, Cracow, 15 August 1945, fols 87–88.

[35] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision of Public Prosecutor to Discontinue Investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 882; see AIPN, 915/770, Transcript of interview of witness Antoni Nijaki, Cracow, 14 August 1945, fol. 71. Interestingly, three days earlier, the boy gave a different testimony (*ibid*., Transcript of oral notification of an offence made by Antoni Nijaki, Cracow, 11 August 1945, fol. 69). For the comparison of these testimonies and their credibility, see A. Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, pp. 71–73; Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," pp. 166–177.

the bodies of allegedly murdered or held children. In the attack, the interior of the synagogue was damaged and vandalised. Its annexe, home of the caretaker Mandel Hehcht and his sister Lola Welgrün, was attacked too, as was a shelter for Jews located nearby,[36] and in the afternoon the Kupa Synagogue was set on fire.[37] The mob, apart from civilians, consisted of MO officers, soldiers[38] and probably Railway Security Guards,[39] who entered nearby houses and flats under the pretext of searching for the bodies of murdered children and accusations that Jews had been shooting from windows and roofs.[40]

Some of these acts were done under the influence of alcohol. For instance, defendant Sec. Lt Józef Konieczny was convicted pursuant to the Polish Army Criminal Code (kkWP), Art. 170,[41] and sentenced to two years in prison for attempting on 11 August, "while being strongly excited with alcohol," to catch a five-year-old Jewish girl running across a street.[42] One of the witnesses in this case testified that "a child was chased first by a civilian followed by the defendant and that he heard two male voices of which one shouted the words 'kill her, this a Jewish child,' but he was not absolutely certain if these words were shouted by the defendant."[43] On 19 February 1946, another defendant, Helena Jordan, received a two-year prison sentence (suspended for 3 years) for committing an

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[36] AIPN, 829/1255, Indictment, Cracow, 5 September 1945, fol. 126.

[37] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fols 882–883.

[38] AIPN, 824/267, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 22 December 1945, fol. 14.

[39] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Transcript of interview of witness Zbigniew Paliwoda, Cracow, 24 April 1992, fols 1–13; *ibid.*, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fols 882–883; AIPN 915/770, Testimony of defendant Franciszek Baudys, Cracow, 22 October 1945, fols 225–226.

[40] AIPN, 915/770, Transcript of interview of witness Emil Rosenzweig, Cracow, 15 August 1945, fols 102–103; *ibid.*, Transcript of interview of witness Dawid Raber, Cracow, 11 August 1945, fols 98–99; see also Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," p. 168.

[41] Under the the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 170, "Any soldier who commits a deed disgraceful to the military honour or dignity of the Polish Army, even if the deed was not done in the line of duty, shall be subject to imprisonment of up to five years and/or arrest or sent to a penal company," *Dziennik Ustaw* (The Journal of Laws) 6 (1944), item 27.

[42] AIPN, 824/270, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 14 January 1946, fol. 15.

[43] The court, on account of the defendant's "impeccable record" suspended his sentence. Other considerations included his "participation in the war with the Germans, in the ranks of the 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Division" and material support he provided to a Jewish woman, Maria Perlberger, during their stay in the Soviet Union (AIPN, 824/270, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 14 January 1946, fol. 16).

offence contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 170,[44] by publicly disseminating false information that "Jews murdered Polish children in the synagogue, that they drink child blood" on the day of the anti-Jewish tumult in Cracow.[45] While committing this offence, the defendant was – as the court found in the opinion to the judgement – "excited with alcohol, having drunk a few glasses of vodka on the occasion of her birthday."[46] In Rzeszów, too, some violence against the Jewish population could have been committed in a state of inebriation.

Both tumults continued for more than ten hours. In the afternoon of 12 June in Rzeszów, the detained Jews started to be released without being interviewed,[47] supposedly on intervention from the NKVD.[48] Already on the very same day and on successive ones, most of the released Jews left Rzeszów.[49] Meanwhile, the crowds that had gathered in Tannenbaum Street were dispersed in the evening.[50] In Cracow, too, only in the evening, did officers of the MO Voivodeship Headquarters (KWMO) and Voivodeship Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP) as well as Internal Security Corps soldiers manage to restore order. Among people detained that day, besides civilians, there were also officers of uniformed services.[51] Moreover, the available records do not show any person being arrested in Rzeszów in connection with the anti-Jewish tumult in June 1945.

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[44] Under the Criminal Code, Art. 179, "Any person who publicly disseminates false information that may cause public unrest shall be subject to two years of arrest and a fine (*Dziennik Ustaw* 60 [1932], item 571).

[45] AIPN, 824/395, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 19 February 1946, fol. 19.

[46] *Ibid.*, fol. 20.

[47] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Transcript of testimony of witness Leib Kapłan, Cracow, 13 June 1945, fol. 190.

[48] *Ibid.*, "Testimony of Jonas Landesmann," Cracow, 5 October 1945, fol. 133; *ibid.*, A fragment of a report by Rzeszów District Intelligence Brigades, fol. 6. In Krzysztof Kaczmarski's opinion, these were officers and soldiers of the 104th Border Regiment, 64th Division of NKVD Internal Forces (Kaczmarski, "Antyżydowskie zajścia 1945," s. 19).

[49] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 33; *ibid.*, Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow, 16 June 1945, fol. 38; *ibid.*, Transcript of testimony of witness Leib Kapłan, Cracow, 13 June 1945, fol. 190.

[50] *Ibid.*, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 33.

[51] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fols 882–883.

During both tumults, there were cases of theft. In Rzeszów, "twenty-two Jewish flats were ransacked and fifty-seven Jewish families were robbed of their possessions."[52] Losses were estimated at about half a million zlotys.[53] Józef Landau's candy factory was looted as well.[54] In Cracow, in turn, looting and beating took place in several Jewish flats.[55] A case in point is one where two MO officers, Józef Stawarski and Ludwik Sala, charged with forced entry "to the flat of one Meiteles, […] where, threatening to shoot and beat him, made him buy vodka and offer them supper." On 3 December 1945, the Cracow District Military Court sentenced (under the Criminal Code, Art. 286[1])[56] Stawarski to one year and Sala to one year and six months imprisonment.[57] The Court found them guilty of acting *ultra vires* to the detriment of public interest. The Court made the following findings of fact: about 9.00 p.m., the defendants, having drunk a large amount of alcohol and carrying service firearms, came to the Meiteles flat at 27 Józefa Street. There, Stawarski "punched Szymon Józef Meiteles in the face twice."[58] Next, the defendants demanded to be given vodka. The Meiteleses offered them vodka and a snack. The defendants stayed in the flat until midnight and left. The court noted that testimonies given by the members of the Meiteles family at the trial were toned down when compared to those given during the inquiry when the witnesses said they had been terrorised and held at gunpoint. Whereas at the trial they testified that "they willingly treated the defendants to supper, considering the longest possible

[52] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow, 16 June 1945, fol. 37.

[53] *Ibid*., Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fols 33–34; *ibid*., Transcript of testimony of witness Leib Kapłan, Cracow, 13 June 1945, fol. 190.

[54] *Ibid*., Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow, 16 June 1945, fol. 37.

[55] See Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów*, p. 377.

[56] Under the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 286(1), "Any official who acting *ultra vires* or in dereliction of duty to the detriment of public or private interest shall be subject to imprisonment of up to five years" (*Dziennik Ustaw* 60 [1932], item 571).

[57] Anna Cichopek's publication says that Ludwik Sala served his 18-month prison term (Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, p. 91). Actually, on 4 September 1946, the Cracow District Military Court, at an *in camera* session, granted the convict a petition for parole (AIPN 824/271, Transcript of *in camera* session of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 4 September 1946, fol. 26). Sala left the Koronów prison on 1 October 1946, that is, after serving eleven months and eighteen days in prison (*ibid*., Notification of criminal prisoner release, Koronów, 2 October 1946, fol. 32).

[58] AIPN, 829/1255, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 3 December 1945, fol. 146.

presence of the defendants as a protection of sorts."[59] The court failed to find the reason for the discrepancies in the witness testimonies.[60]

We know of Jews being beaten in the streets and their flats during both tumults.[61] We cannot, however, find the precise number of victims. The records of the Rzeszów tumult identify by name and surname only a few people[62] who suffered grievous bodily harm and mention "a countless number of beaten Jews without visible external injuries."[63] Researchers believe that from over a dozen to several dozen people could have been harmed (in various ways) during the Cracow pogrom.[64] Krzysztof Kaczmarski maintained, relying on the records of Intelligence Brigades, that Jews were beaten in Rzeszów by, besides MO officers and civilians, "in part" Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeńtwa*, UB) officers and soldiers of the Polish "People's" Army.[65]

The records mention a case of beating and robbing a person the mob took for a Jewess during the Cracow pogrom. It is not known if any similar cases occurred

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[59] *Ibid.*

[60] The trial was presided over by Cpt Dr. Karol Peczenik, while Lt Mieczysław Kwapisz and Ensign Jan Baszek sat as lay judges (*ibid.*, fol. 145).

[61] AIPN, 915/770, Testimony of Sara Stern recorded at the Jewish Committee in Cracow, 13 August 1945, fol. 81; *ibid.*, Transcript of interview of witness Lola Welgrün, Cracow, 15 August 1945, fol. 83; *ibid.*, Transcript of interview of witness Mandel Hecht, Cracow, 15 August 1945, fol. 83; *ibid.*, Transcript of interview of witness Max Apfelbaum, Cracow, 11 August 1945, fols 90–91; *ibid.*, Transcript of interview of witness Emil Rosenzweig, Cracow, 12 August 1945, fols 100–101; AIPN, 915/862, Testimony of Marian Pieprzyk, Cracow, 29 December 1945, fol. 40. According to the Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów, the first to be beaten were Jews living on the second floor of the house at 12 Tannenbauma Street (AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 29).

[62] These were, among others, Leon Nadel, Klemens Brandwein, Herman Kesler, Klemens Kosa and Juda Moses (AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June *1945*, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 30; *ibid.*, Report of the Voivodeship Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow on the events in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Cracow 16 June 1945, fol. 37).

[63] *Ibid.*, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 30.

[64] Julian Kwiek in his 2019 article wrote that "in the course of the tumult over a dozen people were harmed (*id.*, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," p. 171), in a successive publication, he estimated the number of beaten people at several dozen (*id.*, *Nie chcemy Żydów*, p. 377). Anna Cichopek-Garaj, in turn, in an article, maintained that the accurate number of victims was not known. She believed that there were many (A. Cichopek-Gajraj, *Pogromy w Krakowie (Polska) i Topolczanach (Słowacja)*, p. 186).

[65] K. Kaczmarski, *Antyżydowskie zajścia 1945*, p. 18; see AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Intelligence Report from the Rzeszów Voivodeship, fol. 6.

in Rzeszów. For instance, in the judgment of 21 December 1945, Cpl Jan Podstawski was found guilty of taking a wallet with money from Stanisława Saletnik on 11 August 1945. Under the Criminal Code, Art. 257(1),[66] he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and degradation from the rank of corporal to private. On that day, Saletnik was taken for a Jewess and badly beaten by unknown assailants. At the trial, she denied that the defendant had beaten her or said to her: "A damn Jewess, if a Jewess, beat her."[67]

During the anti-Jewish tumult, the people who came to the victims' defence risked being harassed.[68] For instance, the Report of the Board of the Jewish Community on the tumult in Rzeszów reads: "On many occasions Christians were beaten for giving help."[69] The Report also mentions two instances of beating Christians who came to Jews' defence.[70]

In Rzeszów, there were no fatal casualties, whereas in the Cracow pogrom, there was one. In the house at 4 Wolnica Square, a Holocaust survivor, Róża Berger, lost her life. The circumstances of her death – as a Cracow OKŚZpNP public prosecutor claimed – showed that it "was not a result of an intended and direct action, but rather an accidental shot. The perpetrator, intending to break down the door of her flat, fired at the lock or handle while Róża Berger was standing behind it. It is impossible to tell if he was aware of her presence behind it."[71] In the opinion of Łukasz Krzyżanowski, who has studied the criminal proceedings conducted in

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[66] Under the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 257(1), "Any person who takes another person's movable property to appropriate it shall be subject to imprisonment of up to five years" (*Dziennik Ustaw* 60 [1932], item 571).

[67] AIPN, 824/268, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, 21 December 1945, fols 18–19. Two months later, another defendant, Antoni Niedolistek, was found guilty of "a violent assault on a person, while taking part in the anti-Jewish tumult and shouting with the mob, by striking a Polish woman of unknown name whom the mob took for a Jewess." He was sentenced to one year's imprisonment under the Criminal Code, Art. 163 (AIPN, 824/393, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 18 February 1946, fol. 18). This judgment was appealed against to the Supreme Military Court which set it aside and committed the case for trial to a common court. In the studied supervisory files, a final judgment in the case was not found (*ibid*., Decision of the Supreme Military Court, Warsaw, 22 March 1946, fol. 32).

[68] AIPN, 824/270, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 14 January 1946, fol. 16.

[69] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Report of the Board of the Jewish Community in Rzeszów on the course of the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 12 June 1945, Rzeszów, 15 June 1945, fol. 32.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision of Public Prosecutor to Discontinue Investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 884.

this case, there is considerable evidence that Róża was fatally shot by an officer of the 2nd MO Station, located less than one hundred meters from the crime scene.[72]

Criminal Prosecutions in the 1940s

As mentioned earlier, archival records do not show any criminal prosecutions in the 1940s of people involved in the anti-Jewish tumult in Rzeszów on 11 and 12 June 1945. Surprising as it may seem, law enforcement agencies did not react to it. Perhaps one of the reasons could have been the involvement of uniformed service officers. It appears, however, that the main reason was – as pointed out by the author of *Pogrom, którego nie było. Rzeszów, 11–12 czerwca 1945 r.* (The Pogrom that wasn't. Rzeszów, 11–12 June 1945) – the desire to hush up the whole affair by the Communist authorities. Krzysztof Kaczmarski wrote that "Any anti-Jewish pogrom did not suit the Communists in power in Poland at that time."[73] He added that any pogrom could embarrass the Communist Provisional Government.[74]

However, an investigation was conducted into what triggered the tumult: the brutal murder of Bronisława Mendoń.[75] The investigation was conducted by an examining magistrate of the Rzeszów District Court for almost four months and concerned a crime contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 225(1) (homicide). The suspect was Jonas Landesmann,[76] who was arrested on 14 June at 2.00 p.m. He was one of the residents of the house at 12 Tannenbauma Street who had already been detained earlier, on the night of 11/12 June, by the MO officers who searched flats on the second floor of the house. Unfortunately, the main files of the case (file ref. III Ds. 1738/45) have not survived. In the 1960s, they were lost under unclear circumstances.[77] All that we have is the prosecutor's summary files. As Kaczmarski rightly observed, the investigation into this crime was initially conducted sluggishly.[78] According to him, the "holiday

[72] Krzyżanowski, "To było między pierwszą a drugą," p. 427.

[73] Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 54.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] For more on the investigation, see *ibid.*, pp. 41–51.

[76] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Memo, Rzeszów, 21 May 1968, fol. 75.

[77] *Ibid.*, Criminal case against Jonas Landesmann accused of the killing of Bronisława Mendoń, Rzeszów, 8 June 1968, fol. 78. According to Kaczmarski, these files were secretly removed from a file depository, without leaving a so-called "placeholder," between May 1960 and May–June 1968. A placeholder would show who, when and for what purpose had done that (Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 60).

[78] Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, p. 47.

epidemic" that affected the examining magistrates of the Rzeszów court then, who were to work on the case, could have been caused by the fear of investigating it. Kaczmarski did not rule out an intervention by the WUBP or the NKVD.[79]

Ultimately, the killer has not been identified. In September, Landesmann left prison.[80] A month later, Assistant Public Prosecutor Bronisław Gnatowski filed a motion to discontinue the investigation. Almost two months later, on 11 December, an examining magistrate of the District Court ruled to discontinue it.[81] Gnatowski maintained that the homicide could have been perpetrated by one of the second-floor tenants of the house at 12 Tannenbauma Street. However, he also admitted that the crime could have been committed by a person who did not live there. He added, however, that this was rather unlikely, "nevertheless, it has to be considered as well."[82] The prosecutor assumed that Bronisława Mendoń had been murdered in the house in which her body was found.[83]

Only half a century later, on 7 January 1999, did a prosecutor of the Regional Public Prosecutor's Office delegated to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu,* GKBZpNP) in Rzeszów launch an investigation into "assaults on persons of Jewish nationality that took place in Rzeszów in 1945, taking the form of individual or collective attacks on persons of Jewish nationality or their groups constituting the physical components of offences against life and health, freedom and property provoked by the killing of Bronisława Mendoń.[84] More on this investigation shall be said in the final part of this article.

In the case of the Cracow tumult of 11 August, the first arrests of anti-Jewish rioters were made already on the very same day. Sources say that at least two

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[80] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Criminal case against Jonas Landesmann accused of the killing of Bronisława Mendoń, Rzeszów, 8 June 1968, fol. 78.

[81] AIPN Rz, 062/5, Decision of examining magistrate of the Rzeszów District Court, Rzeszów, 11 December 1945, fol. 30.

[82] *Ibid.*, Letter to examining magistrate in Rzeszów, [Rzeszów], 12 October 1945, fol. 29.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] That is offences contrary to the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 237(1) (bodily injury), Art. 251 (terrorising a person into a specific conduct), Art. 251(1) (theft). AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Decision to institute investigation, 7 January 1999, fol. 46. The investigation, file no. S.25/02/Zk, was first described by Krzysztof Kaczmarski (see K. Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było*, pp. 60–62).

or three score people could have been arrested on that day.[85] Two days later, on 13 August, the Minister of Public Security, Stanisław Radkiewicz, ordered that anti-Semitic tumults be "fought." The order directed that – in the event of an anti-Jewish tumult – a formal investigation be instituted and a special report on such a development be filed. In turn, with respect to persons suspected of taking part in anti-Jewish riots or tumults, "an inquiry should be immediately launched, and they should be committed for trial to military courts as soon as possible."[86]

Arrests of anti-Jewish rioters from 11 August were also made on successive days. For instance, a stallholder on the so-called *tandeta* or a marketplace, Honorata Pieprzyk,[87] was arrested together with her husband only on 13 August,[88] or two days after the pogrom. Interestingly, the only witness for the prosecution at her trial was a WUBP investigation officer, Eliasz Grünfeld, who prior to taking up employment with the security service (it was three days after the 11 August tumult) traded on the *tandeta* close to Pieprzyk.[89]

Furthermore, WUBP officers employed inadmissible investigation methods in the course of preliminary proceedings and extorted testimonies from detainees. This was the case of suspect Tadeusz Janicki who was charged with publicly inciting to racial feuds and spreading false information that could cause public unrest by shouting "beat and shoot Jews because they have killed seven Polish children;

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[85] See Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," p. 171.

[86] Order no. 46 "On fighting anti-Semitic tumults" (quoted after Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, p. 101).

[87] The judgement in Pieprzyk's case, was entered by the military court on 31 December 1945. The defendant was found guilty of shouting at the *tandeta* on 11 August 1945 that those who were safekeeping Jewish belongings and gave help to a Jew "will bitterly pay for this." Thus, she incited to ethnic feuds (Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102). Despite the fact that the offence carried a sentence from 3 years imprisonment to the death penalty, the defendant was sentenced only to one year's imprisonment. The court extraordinarily mitigated the sentence, being guided by the opinion of Dr. Stanisław Paszkowski of the Jagiellonian University Neurological-Psychiatric Department, who was appointed as an expert witness and asked to examine the mental state of Honorata Pieprzyk. The examination showed that the defendant was in a "constitutional neuropsychopathic state," having suffered from acute puerperal psychosis (AIPN, 915/862, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 31 December 1945, fols 42–43).

[88] *Ibid*., Testimony of Marian Pieprzyk, Cracow, 29 December 1945, fol. 40.

[89] Łukasz Krzyżanowski found that Grünfeld started to work in the security service on 14 August 1945 (Krzyżanowski, "To było między pierwszą a drugą," p. 415). In other cases too, it was revealed that security service officers were witnesses for the prosecution (AIPN, 915/770, Transcript of interview of witness Edmund Łukawiecki, Cracow, 11 August 1945. fol. 89; *ibid*., Testimony of Edmund Łukawiecki, Cracow, 22 October 1945, fol. 241).

while the militia instead of shooting them, protect them."[90] On 16 November 1945, Maj. Tadeusz Juśkiewicz, a public prosecutor for the Military District, dropped the charges, "Since the suspect's admission to having committed the acts he is charged with has been extorted by beating and since no witnesses have been interviewed in the course of the investigation."[91]

Very soon several score people were charged with taking part in an anti-Jewish tumult or spreading anti-Semitic slogans. After presenting evidence against them, the cases and detainees were left at the disposal of a public prosecutor for the Cracow Military District. It appears that initially, the investigators intended to have a large trial with many defendants. The indictment of 5 September 1945, drafted by Irena Mycińska,[92] a Cracow WUBP investigation officer, included as many as twenty-five defendants[93] (take note that these were not all detainees suspected of participating in the anti-Jewish tumult).[94] From among the ones named, Franciszek Baudys[95] stands out; he was charged with – besides taking part in assaults and robberies – being one of the instigators of the anti-Jewish tumult as a member of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, NSZ).[96] Working as the

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[90] AIPN, 824/273, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 16 November 1945. fol. 3.

[91] During an interview on 24 August 1945, Tadeusz Janicki admitted to having told "a lieutenant where Jews were hiding, in which shop, and having said that Jews murdered seven Polish children. I deny having shouted, and I did not incite to beat Jews. I have admitted to all this because during the interrogation, they beat me with a piece of rubber wrapped in pitch, and I had to sign what they wrote (AIPN, 824/273, Transcript of interview of suspect Tadeusz Janicki, Cracow, 24 August 1945, fol. 23).

[92] Irena Mycińska-Grabowska, born on 17 June 1914, daughter of Jan, on 20 February 1945 started to work at the WUBP in Cracow, then on 15 August 1946 she was expelled from the security service ("Mycińska-Grabowska Irena," in *Ludzie bezpieki województwa krakowskiego. Obsada stanowisk kierowniczych Urzędu Bezpieczeństwa i Służby Bezpieczeństwa w województwie krakowskim w latach 1945–1990. Informator personalny*, ed. by W. Frazik, F. Musiał, M. Szpytma, and M. Wenklar [Cracow, 2009], p. 434).

[93] AIPN, 829/1255, Indictment, Cracow, 5 September 1945, fols 125–137.

[94] Available records show that preliminary proceedings were also conducted against Tadeusz Janicki, Bolesław Dzierża, Julia Błażek, Antoni Niedolistek, Rudolf Świętoniowski, Helena Jordan, Stefan Zychowicz, Edward Zaraska, Bolesław Golczyk, Marian Kudra and Jan Rodak.

[95] In the relevant literature, he is sometimes wrongly referred to as "Bandys." Actually, the defendant's name was Baudys.

[96] The indictment charged him with "(a) being one of the instigators of the anti-Jewish tumult as a member of a secret, illegal, fascist and anti-state organisation known as the NSZ whose objective is to abolish the democratic system of government of the Polish State. For this purpose, he contacted, as follows from the defendant's and witness Mazurkiewicz's testimonies, an NSZ delegate from Warsaw, a certain Ługowski, on 9 August 1945 in Cracow; (b) actively participating in an attack on an annexe to the synagogue during the Cracow tumult into which he led MO officers whom he had incited for the purpose of robbing and beating Polish citizens of Jewish nationality. He badly beat Lola Welgrün

caretaker of a Jewish shelter at 26 Miodowa Street, allegedly acted "in the name of" the NSZ:

> It is only for this purpose that he contacted a certain Ługowski, an NSZ member, already on 9 August 1945. Ługowski brought Baudys special instructions from Warsaw, from the organisation, directing to organise anti-Jewish tumults. Baudys, following the instructions, leading MO officers, forced their way into the quarters of the synagogue caretaker, dragged outside Lola Welgrün, the caretaker's sister, and twisting her arms, beat her cruelly.[97]

The charge that Baudys was a member of a "secret, illegal, fascist and anti-state organisation known as the NSZ" and an instigator of the "anti-Jewish tumult" was based on the testimony of the defendant himself and witness Bronisław Mazurkiewicz (according to the indictment this witness was held in the jail of the voivodeship security service in Inwalidów Square).[98] Unfortunately, in the available files, neither the transcript of the interview of this witness nor Baudys' testimony could be found. Meanwhile, in the other available transcripts of defendant Baudys' interviews, no reference to the NSZ has been found.

The grounds of the indictment read that the anti-Jewish tumult of 11 August "resulted from suitable propaganda by our home reactionaries, especially those from under the banner of the NSZ."[99] Emphasis was also put on the effects of German anti-Jewish propaganda and comments were made that persons responsible for provoking the tumult "did not mean to fight Jews. They only served as

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and publicly incited ethnic and racial feuds using the following words: "You old whores, Hitler has not finished you off, so we will finish you off, you are on Polish soil and you murder Polish children"; (c) attacking a Jewish flat at 26 Miodowa Street being in possession of a short firearm without a licence; (d) barging into the flat of citizen Ptasznik at 26 Miodowa Street threatening him with a revolver and an axe, and robbing Ptasznik of a pair of knee-high boots. These acts constitute in: (a) an offence contrary to the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego [hereinafter PKWN]) Decree of 30 October 1944, Art. 1; (b) an offence contrary to the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102(1) & (4); (c) an offence contrary to the PKWN Decree of 30 October 1944, Art. 4(1); (d) an offence contrary to the PKWN Decree of 30 October 1944, Art. 9 (AIPN, 829/1255, Indictment, Cracow, 5 September 1945, fol. 129).

[97] *Ibid.*, Indictment, Cracow, 5 September 1945, fol. 128.

[98] *Ibid.*, fols 129–136.

[99] *Ibid.*, fol. 126.

a springboard for large-scale anti-state riots."[100] The investigators also found that the "tumult greatly intensified" because MO and army officers actively participated in it; instead of dispersing the mob, they joined in beating and robbing Jews.[101] At the time the indictment was drafted, the suspects were incarcerated in St Michael's Prison at 3 Senacka Street.[102]

It is worth noting that the grounds of the indictment repeated the main propaganda claims included, for instance, in a resolution adopted immediately after the anti-Jewish tumult by the Voivodeship National Council in Cracow. It stressed that the events of 11 August were organised in advance and had a political character and pointed a finger of blame at the so-called bankrupt reactionaries from under the banner of the National-Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*, ONR) and NSZ who:

> Taking advantage of some petty-bourgeoisie's resentments at people of Jewish origin, organised a tumult, having first prepared the grounds for it by spreading rumours of alleged crimes committed by Jews in the city of Cracow. At the same time as the tumult, action was taken against democratic parties, combining an attack on democracy with the Jewish question.[103]

Ultimately, a large trial has never taken place. Early on, the decision was made to separate the cases of persons named in the document of 5 September 1945. For instance, in the indictment of 6 September 1945 charges were brought only against Franciszek Baudys and four other persons. Surprisingly, the document was dated 6 September, while the decision to join the cases against the defendants named in it was made only on 9 September 1945 or three days later.[104] From the second in-

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] *Ibid.*, fol. 128.

[102] *Ibid.*, fol. 135.

[103] Text of the August 14 resolution on the anti-Semitic tumult adopted at the session of the Voivodeship National Council, quoted after Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy*, p. 40. For its full text see Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, pp. 155–156. See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, „Pogrom w Kielcach – Podziemie w roli oskarżonego," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, ed. by Ł. Kamiński and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2006), pp. 27–33.

[104] There were three civilians – Franciszek Kucharski, Jan Wywrocki, and Kazimierz Rafa, and one MO officer – Bolesław Skrzypek (AIPN, 915/770, Decision to join investigation cases, Cracow, 9 September 1945, fol. 8).

dictment, the aspect of defendant Franciszek Baudys' ties to the NSZ was removed, and no mention was made in it of the activities of MO officers and soldiers who supposedly exacerbated the anti-Jewish tumult. This time, a mention was only made of "misinformed MO officers."[105] On 1 October, Maj Tadeusz Juśkiewicz, a public prosecutor for the Cracow Military District, approved the indictment and sent it to the Military Court for the Cracow Military District.[106] The trial of these defendants took place very soon, on 22, 26 and 29 October 1945.[107] All the defendants, except one, pleaded not guilty. Only Franciszek Baudys pleaded guilty to selected counts. In their testimonies at the trial all defendants spoke about inadmissible investigation methods being used with respect to them by interrogating officers. They testified that they had been beaten and coerced into giving false testimonies.[108] Additionally, some defendants called witnesses who were to testify to their positive attitude to the Jewish population during the Second World War. On 29 October 1945, the Military Court entered a judgment.[109] For taking part in the public riot that jointly committed offences against persons or property (Criminal Code, Art. 163), three persons were convicted: Franciszek Baudys, Franciszek Kucharski and Jan Wywrocki. Baudys was sentenced to 7.5 years' imprisonment.[110] This was the highest sentence of all given to defendants convicted in connection with the Cracow pogrom. Kucharski was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment, and Wywrocki was to serve 2 years in prison. In their case, the court took into consideration a mitigating circumstance, namely, the positive attitude of the defendants to the Jewish population, the absence of any criminal record and insensibility caused by alcoholic intoxication.[111] The court found that the offences they committed were

[105] *Ibid*., Indictment, Cracow, 6 September 1945, fols 138–148.

[106] *Ibid*., Decision to approve indictment, Cracow, 1 October 1945, fol. 181.

[107] *Ibid*., Transcript of trial, Cracow, 22 October 1945, fol. 221; *ibid*., Transcript of trial, Cracow, 26 October 1945, fol. 255; *ibid*., Transcript of trial, Cracow, 29 October 1945, fol. 263.

[108] *Ibid*., Transcript of trial, Cracow, 22 October 1945, fols 230–237.

[109] *Ibid*., Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court in Cracow, Cracow, 29 October 1945, fol. 271.

[110] While sentencing, the court applied the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 53(2), to the convicted person, and that is why the sentence was higher than the maximum statutory sentence provided for an offence contrary to Art. 163 (see fn. 65). The provision said that "the court may sentence a convicted person to a prison term a half longer than the maximum statutory prison term provided for a given offence, however, not exceeding the statutory limit of a given type of punishment […], e) if the offence was committed in the presence of a public riot" (*Dziennik Ustaw* 6 [1944], item 27).

[111] Wywrocki supposedly hid "selflessly, as can be deduced from the testimony of witness Zabiegaj, a Jewess for two months in his home during the German occupation," while Kucharski allegedly helped

perpetrated individually and were unorganised and held that they did not have the physical components of the offences described in the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102. It is worth mentioning that the provision covered incitement to ethnic, racial and religious violence and provided for very severe sanctions. If the offences described in it were committed during riots, a defendant faced a sentence from 3 years' imprisonment to the death penalty (Art. 102[4]).[112] Kazimierz Rafa and an MO officer, Bolesław Skrzypek, were acquitted.[113] Three months after the judgment was delivered, on 31 January 1946, the governor of the prison at 3 Senacka Street in Cracow notified the Military District Court that on 28 January, convicts Kucharski and Baudys had escaped "from the convoy while on their way to the prison in Wronki."[114] What happened to them next is not known. Jan Wywrocki, in turn, was granted an amnesty in 1947.[115]

It seems that trials could have been separated in an effort to conceal the participation of members of unformed services in the pogrom. Among the persons named in the indictment of 5 September, there were in total seven MO officers and five soldiers (including two military police corporals). They were mostly charged with actively participating in the anti-Jewish tumult, battery, wrongful arrests, inciting to ethnic and racial feuds and theft. Most were convicted in separate trials in coming months. The highest sentence was given to Czesław Hynek convicted under the Criminal Code, Art. 286,[116] (for abusing authority and acting *ultra vires*) to 6 years' imprisonment.[117] Hynek was found guilty of "bringing Stanisława

witness Adolf Kleinman (AIPN, 915/770, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court in Cracow, Cracow, 29 October 1945, fols 275–276).

[112] *Dziennik Ustaw* 6 (1944), item 27.

[113] AIPN, 915/770, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court *in Cracow*, Cracow, 29 October 1945, fol. 278.

[114] The monograph by Anna Cichopek wrongly informs that they escaped from prison (Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, p. 90). AIPN, 915/770, Notification of the escape of criminal prisoner Franciszek Kucharski, Cracow, 31 January 1946, fol. 289; *ibid*., Notification of the escape of criminal prisoner Franciszek Ba[u]dys, 31 January 1946, fol. 290.

[115] *Ibid*., Decision to remit punishment, Cracow, 14 March 1947, fol. 327.

[116] Under "Art. 286(1) Any official who, acting *ultra vires* or in dereliction of duty, acts to the detriment of public or private interest shall be subject to 5 years' imprisonment. § 2. If the perpetrator acts for financial or personal gain, for himself or another person, he shall be subject to up to 10 years' imprisonment" (*Dziennik Ustaw* 60 [1932], item 571).

[117] AIPN 915/846, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 7 December 1945, fols 81–82.

Saletnik who had been beaten by the mob and bleeding, to an MO headquarters and hitting her twice with a rifle butt and saying 'you rotten Jewess, you whore, you have murdered two children' on the day of the tumult whereby he abused authority and acted to the detriment of public and private interest."[118] (Stanisława Saletnik was not a Jewess, but was taken for one). This convict, too, escaped from a convoy to the Wronki prison on 28 January 1946.[119] For several months he was hiding at his brother Stefan Hynek's place, who was an officer of the County Public Security Office (PUBP) in Drawsko.[120] On 12 April 1947, he was captured and then served his sentence in the Nowy Wiśnicz prison.[121] Upon amnesty, his sentence was reduced by half to 3 years.[122]

Among the defendants named in the indictment of 5 September, there were also women. They were mainly charged with offences contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 170, or spreading false information that might cause public unrest and offences contrary to the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102(1) & (4), or inciting ethnic or racial feuds. For instance, Honorata Pieprzyk, during the anti-Jewish tumult, from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. supposedly shouted in public that "Polish citizens of Jewish nationality have murdered two Polish children."[123] Likewise, Ludwika Sienkiewicz and Kazimiera Stalmach allegedly publicly spread information that "Jews have murdered sixty Christian children in the synagogue,"[124] Stefania Kramarska reportedly said that "Jews have murdered eighteen children, that their bones and hair have been seen,"[125] and Zofia Danek reportedly shouted loudly in the crowd: "we have not been raising our children for Jews to murder them now."[126] Ultimately, in respect of most women, charges were dropped because, as respective decisions read, their acts "did not bring about any serious consequences."[127]

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[118] *Ibid.*, fol. 82.

[119] AIPN, 915/846, Notification of the escape of a criminal prisoner, Cracow, 31 January 1946. fol. 91.

[120] *Ibid.*, Request for pardon, Drawsko, 10 April 1947, fol. 97.

[121] *Ibid.*, Report, Nowy Wiśnicz, 29 August 1947, fol. 111.

[122] *Ibid.*, Decision of the Public Prosecutor for the Cracow Military District, Cracow, 25 March 1947, fol. 93.

[123] AIPN, 829/1255, Indictment, Cracow, 5 September 1945, fol. 133.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid.*, fol. 135.

[126] *Ibid.*, fol. 133.

[127] AIPN, 829/1256, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 6 November 145, fol. 31; *ibid.*, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 14 November 1945, fol. 55; *ibid.*, Decision to discontinue

This opinion may raise doubts when the surviving records of the Cracow tumult are considered. It appears that the real reason for dropping the charges was insufficient evidence of the women's guilt (this aspect, however, was not mentioned in the respective decisions).

Altogether, in the span of several months, the Cracow District Military Court sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the Cracow pogrom over a dozen people.[128] Most were convicted under the Criminal Code, Art. 163 (participation in a public riot that committed an offence) and sentenced to imprisonment from one to seven years.[129] It appears that in some of these cases the Military Court lacked jurisdiction and should have transferred them for trial to common courts. For instance, Antoni Niedolistek filed an appeal from the judgment of the Cracow District Military Court of 18 February 1946, sentencing him to a term of imprisonment of 1 year under the Criminal Code, Art. 163.[130] Already next month, on 22 March, the Supreme Military Court set aside the judgment of the lower court and transferred Niedolistek's case to a common court for trial. In the decision, it held that:

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investigation, Cracow, 14 November 1945, fol. 101; *ibid*., Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 13 November 1945, fol. 116.

[128] Anna Cichopek counted that between October 1945 and February 1946, 14 people were convicted (Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, p. 90). Julian Kwiek, in turn, maintained that altogether 15 people were convicted. He pointed out that Cichopek had left out MO Cpl Jan Podstawski, sentenced to three years of imprisonment and degradation (Kwiek, "Pogrom antyżydowski w Krakowie," p. 172). It must be noted that these authors include Stanisław Jedynowicz in the number of the convicted. He was convicted of an act committed a day after the Cracow pogrom. On 19 December 1945, the Cracow District Military Court sentenced Jedynowicz to serve in a penal unit for 6 months for a deed disgraceful to the military honour and dignity of the Polish Army. "On 12 August 1945 in Cracow, he shouted while intoxicated in the street – in connection to an argument with other soldiers – the words: 'They want communism, I'll show them communism, they defend Jews, while it is Jews that do all this' whereby he committed an offence contrary to the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 170." (AIPN, 824/269, Judgment of the Cracow District Military Court, Cracow, 19 December 1945, fol. 15).

[129] Under the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 170 (deed disgraceful to military honour and dignity of the Polish Army), two people were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment from six months to two years. Under the Criminal Code, Art. 286 (abuse of authority and acting *ultra vires*) three people were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment from one year to six years. Under the Criminal Code, Art. 170 (spreading false information that may cause public unrest), one person was convicted and sentenced to two years of imprisonment. Under the Criminal Code, Art. 257 (theft of movable property), one person was convicted and sentenced to three years of imprisonment.

[130] AIPN, 824/393, Appeal to the Supreme Military Court in Warsaw, [Cracow], [filing date: 25 February 1946], fols 24–27.

> The jurisdiction of the Military Court over this case was originally justified by the fact that the indictment charged the defendant with an offence defined in the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102 […]. Upon, however, the finding by the Military Court, based on hearing the results and all circumstances revealed in the course of the trial, that the defendant's act covered the physical components of an offence contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 163, and not an offence contrary to the Polish Army Criminal Code, Art. 102 or possibly another that would make the Military Court competent to deal with the defendant's case, it should have recognised on its own motion its lack of jurisdiction and transferred the case to a competent common court.[131]

Thus, it was the District Court that had jurisdiction over Niedolistek's case. It appears that with respect to other civilian defendants, an error as to jurisdiction was also the case. This subject, however, calls for further study.

After 1989 – the Commission Investigations

Accusations of triggering "anti-Jewish tumults," in both Rzeszów and Cracow were made very soon. In both cases, the regime press strongly suggested that the tumults had been instigated by underground anti-Communist organisations. In the special edition of the *Dziennik Rzeszowski* of 12 June 1945, local residents could read the following words: "We all must be very watchful so that anti-Semitic provocations, initiated in all consciousness by the reaction to disrupt our life and discredit us in the eyes of foreign countries, are exposed in time by society that should respond to them as a society and democratic justice require."[132] In respect of the Cracow pogrom, press editorials condemned "anti-Jewish" tumults and pointed the finger of blame at their organisers who were referred to as "criminal reactionary elements."[133] In neither case did the press give a detailed report of events, while the participation of uniformed services in violent attacks on Jews was covered up. On the other hand, independence organisations claimed that the

[131] *Ibid*., Decision of the Supreme Military Court, Warsaw, 22 March 1946, fol. 32.

[132] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Certified copy of the special edition of *Dziennik Rzeszowski* of 12 June 1945, fol. 26.

[133] Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*, pp. 109–110.

tumult of 11 August could have been triggered by the UB and NKVD that wanted to obtain an argument to be used in their propaganda.[134] Moreover, with respect to the Rzeszów tumult, security services supposedly acted to cover up the entire matter.[135]

The hypothesis that the anti-Jewish tumults in Rzeszów and Cracow were provoked by the security services was the reason why the OKBZpNP launched investigations in the 1990s. On 24 June 1991, public prosecutor Włodzimierz Konarski, delegated to the OKBZpNP in Cracow, launched an investigation into the matter "of abusing authority by the officials and other persons from the top administrative and law-enforcement circles of Cracow by allowing incidents, triggering an uncontrolled hostile reaction of residents towards Jews, which led to a pogrom and the killing of Jews on 11 August 1945."[136] The reason for launching the investigation was press stories and the relation of witness Idzi Ćwięk. It followed from it that the anti-Jewish tumult in Cracow had allegedly been provoked by the then authorities, with the leading role being played by the WUBP in Cracow. Two years later, the investigation was joined with another concerning the criminal actions by the officials of the former WUBP in Cracow (S 2/91/UB).[137]

An investigation into the Rzeszów tumult was launched in 1998 on the basis of a memo by Waldemar Tomczyk, research documentation assistant at the OKBZpNP in Rzeszów. While reviewing the file of "Exhibits in the case of Klaus Jozef," he came across information on the killing of Bronisława Mendoń in a report of Intelligence Brigades on the tumult of 11 and 12 June.[138] According to it, the killing was supposedly "the result of a provocation organised by the Security Service from Rzeszów."[139] On 7 January 1999, a public prosecutor of the Rzeszów City Office, delegated to the Rzeszów Commission, launched an investigation.[140] Its subject matter was "assaults on persons of Jewish nationality that took place in

[134] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision of public prosecutor to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 886.

[135] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Intelligence report from Rzeszów Voivodeship, fols 5–6.

[136] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 1, Decision to launch investigation, Cracow, 24 June 1991, fol. 4.

[137] *Ibid*., Decision to join cases, Cracow, 30 December 1993, fol. 3.

[138] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Vol. 1, Intelligence report from the Rzeszów Voivodeship, fols 5–6.

[139] *Ibid*., Memo, Rzeszów, 12 March 1998, fol. 1.

[140] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Decision to launch investigation, Rzeszów, 7 January 1999, fol. 46.

Rzeszów in 1945, taking the form of individual or collective attacks on persons of Jewish nationality or their groups and constituting physical components of offences against life and health, freedom and property, the reason of which was the killing of Bronisława Mendoń."[141]

Due to the coming into force of the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, the investigations were suspended.[142] The Rzeszów investigation was resumed by the OKŚZpNP IPN in Rzeszów in April 2002 and focused on the serious persecution of a group of persons of Jewish nationality and toleration thereof by pubic security officers; it consisted in the use of violence and unlawful threats towards the persecuted because of their membership of a specific ethnic group during the anti-Semitic tumult in Rzeszów, June 1945, sparked by the killing of Bronisława Mendoń.[143] In 2007, Artur Wrona – a public prosecutor at the OKŚZpNP in Cracow – pursuant to the Code of Criminal Procedure, Art. 34(8), decided to make evidence of the dereliction of duty by the Cracow WUBP officials and administrative and law-enforcement authorities the subject-matter of separate proceedings. The dereliction of duty, it is argued, brought about the so-called Cracow pogrom of persons of Jewish nationality on 11 August 1945.[144] In this case, proceedings were conducted in the matter of "dereliction of duty and acting *ultra vires* by Cracow administrative officials by triggering an uncontrolled hostile reaction of residents towards persons of Jewish nationality, or tolerating same. This led to killings, beatings and destroying as well as robbing of property in Cracow on 11 August 1945 (so-called Cracow pogrom)."[145]

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[141] *Ibid.*

[142] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Decision to suspend investigation, 28 January 1999, fol. 171.

[143] An act contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 119(1), in connection with Art. 3 of the Act of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation (*ibid*., Decision to resume a suspended investigation, 4 April 2002, fol. 172).

[144] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 1, Decision to exclude materials for separate proceedings, Cracow, 1 October 2007, fol. 1.

[145] Offences contrary to the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 225(1), the 1943 Criminal Code, Art. 240, and the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 257(1) and Art. 263(1) in connection with the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 291(1) and Art. 26 and in connection with the Act of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Art. 2(1) (*Dziennik Ustaw*, 155 [1988], item 1016, as amended); AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 881.

Ultimately, both investigations were discontinued, and nobody was charged. The Rzeszów one was already dropped first in 2003,[146] without identifying any persons who had first-hand information related to the case in question or interviewing MO officers working at that time.[147] Relying on the accumulated evidence, the finding was made that in June 1945, an anti-Jewish tumult occurred during which "persons of Jewish nationality were beaten and abused by Rzeszów residents."[148] All this happened in the presence of the MO officers who escorted the detainees but tolerated aggressive behaviour towards them and themselves used physical violence against them. It was also found that the behaviour of public officials constituted serious persecution because of the membership of victims of a specific group. This, in turn, was held to have been a "crime against humanity" described in the Act of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation.[149] The investigation, however, did not identify those directly responsible for it, hence the investigation was discontinued due to the failure to identify its perpetrators.[150] The provocation aspect was not discussed in the decision to discontinue the investigation.

The Cracow investigation was discontinued six years later[151] due to a lack of evidence that would make the commission of a prohibited act sufficiently probable.[152] The public prosecutor found that:

> There is no evidence whatsoever for accepting that an uncontrolled and hostile reaction towards persons of Jewish nationality during which a person was killed, other persons were beaten and property was damaged and robbed in Cracow on 11 August 1945 was planned, instigated, triggered or tolerated by WUBP or

[146] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Decision to discontinue investigation, Rzeszów, 1 April 2003, fol. 290.

[147] Because – as the public prosecutor wrote – they had died or were not included in the PESEL data base.

[148] AOKŚZpNP Rz, S 25/2002/Zn, Decision to discontinue investigation, Rzeszów, 1 April 2003, fol. 291.

[149] Under the Act of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Art. 3, such persecution – because of membership of a specific ethnic, political, social, racial or religious group – if perpetrated, instigated or tolerated by public officials, constitutes a crime against humanity (*ibid.*, fol. 291v).

[150] *Ibid.*

[151] AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 880.

[152] *Ibid.*, fol. 887.

> MO officers and the administrative officials of the city of Cracow, and others for the purpose of sparking persecutions because of the membership of victims of a specific ethnic, racial or religious group.[153]

Thus, the provocation hypothesis was rejected.[154]

Conclusion

What were the causes of hostility towards Jews in the post-war period? The research carried out hitherto points to the consequences of the war (social demoralisation and loss of respect for human life), desire to loot and rob, anti-Semitism, belief in rumours about ritual killings, the experience of the Holocaust and the siding of some Jews with the Communist authorities.[155] In 1945, the greatest outbursts of anti-Jewish violence occurred in Rzeszów and Cracow.

To recapitulate, the June 1945 tumult was sparked by the finding of the dead body of an eight-year-old girl who had been murdered a few days earlier. This tragic occurrence led to the outburst of violence directed at Jews whom residents suspected of the murder, whereas the Cracow pogrom was instigated by rumours of a ritual murder. During both events, Jews were beaten, abused and robbed. The precise number of victims cannot be known. During the Rzeszów tumult there were not any fatal casualties in contrast to Cracow, where Róża Berger was shot dead. With respect to the Rzeszów tumult, no evidence has been found that anyone was ever brought to account for actions perpetrated then. The reason could have been the desire by the Communist authorities, as Krzysztof Kaczmarski quoted earlier wrote, to hush up the whole matter. After the 1989 watershed, it was not possible either – obviously due to the considerable lapse of time – to bring to justice the participants in the 1945 events. This was different with respect to the

[153] Thus, there was no evidence whatsoever for the commission of an offence contrary to the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 225(1), Art. 240, Art. 257(1) and Art. 263(1) in connection with the 1932 Criminal Code, Art. 291(1), and Art. 26 and in connection with the Act of 18 December 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, Art. 2(1) (*Dziennik Ustaw* 155 [1988], item 1016, as amended); AOKŚZpNP Kr, S 111/2007/Zk, Vol. 5, Decision to discontinue investigation, Cracow, 17 April 2009, fol. 887.

[154] *Ibid*., fol. 885.

[155] See Szaynok, "Polska historiografia," p. 524; Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, pp. 585–643.

Cracow pogrom. Within several months, over a dozen people were convicted of their participation in the anti-Jewish tumult. The available files of criminal proceedings conducted then enabled us to learn in greater detail about the robberies and anti-Jewish violence. In this context, it must be remembered that the investigations were manipulated by law-enforcement agencies of those times. Hence, it might be worthwhile to study them further, especially as, in this article, certain questions have only been sketched out.

The studies carried out so far elicit further questions about offences committed against Jews in the post-war period. Above all, what was the nature of the prosecution and trials of the perpetrators of such offences in the latter half of the 1940s? What was the effectiveness of prosecutions conducted then, how many prosecutions were discontinued, and in how many cases were indictments filed? Who were the people charged? Were these cases used as a means to other ends? To what degree were prosecutions entangled in current politics? What was the nature of judicial decisions in the cases of people charged with the offences in question? Were such cases used for propaganda purposes?

The research conducted hitherto shows that acts of violence against the Jewish population took place in Cracow and Rzeszów Voivodeships both before and after the 1945 tumults.[156] It would be worthwhile to study the reactions of Communist law enforcement agencies to particular acts of violence, killings and anti-Jewish tumults in various regions in the post-war period. Any comparisons that could be then made would be a valuable contribution to what we know of various manifestations of aversion towards Jews in Poland after the end of the Second World War.

[156] See E. Rączy, "Zabójstwa dokonane na Żydach w województwie rzeszowskim w latach 1944–1947 w świetle akt organów bezpieczeństwa," in *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-żydowskich w XX wieku*, ed. by E. Czop and E. Rączy (Rzeszów, 2009), pp. 128–142; J. Kwiek "Zabójstwa ludności żydowskiej w Krakowskiem w latach 1945–1947. Fakty i mity," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 4 (2013), pp. 679–695.

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SUMMARY

This article attempts to compare the course of two acts of collective anti-Jewish violence that occurred in post-war Poland, first in Rzeszów on 11–12 June 1945 and two months later on 11 August in Cracow, and criminal proceedings launched in relation thereto. Actions by law enforcement agencies and the administration of justice, taken in the 1940s and after 1989, are discussed. In the latter period, the Rzeszów and Cracow tumults were investigated by the District Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation and later by the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation.

KEYWORDS

anti-Jewish violence • anti-Semitism • Jews in Poland after 1944

PJS STUDIES
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REVIEW OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE STUDIES OF THE KIELCE POGROM: 1946–1992

Introduction

Polish-Jewish relations have enjoyed unfading interest since the early 2000s. Such large works as *Dalej jest noc* (Night without End)[1] or *Pod klątwą* (Cursed)[2] make us yet again ask the question of what we actually know about the relations between the Poles and Jews during and after the war. Strong criticism, in turn, levelled at these works by some conservative historians, provokes questions about the objectivity and intentions of researchers.[3] The

[1] *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018).

[2] J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1–2 (Warsaw, 2018).

[3] The first work in particular aroused lively discussions. For reviews of *Dalej jest noc* see J. Chrobaczyński, "Osaczeni, samotni, bezbronni Refleksje po lekturze książki 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski,'" *Res Gestae* 6 (2018), pp. 266–301; R. Gieroń, "Próby przetrwania zagłady w powiecie bocheńskim. Refleksje po lekturze artykułu Dagmary Swałtek-Niewińskiej," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 47 (2018), pp. 95–108; D. Golik, "Nowatorska noc. Kilka uwag na marginesie artykułu Karoliny Panz," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 47 (2018), pp. 109–134; P. Gontarczyk, "Między nauką a mistyfikacją, czyli o naturze piśmiennictwa prof. Jana Grabowskiego na podstawie casusu wsi Wrotnów i Międzyleś powiatu węgrowskiego," *Glaukopis* 36 (2018), pp. 313–323; T. Rogulski, "Recenzja: 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski," *Glaukopis* 36 (2018), pp. 335–356; J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Błąd pomiaru. O artykule Barbary Engelking: *Powiat bielski*," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2018), pp. 166–194; M. Zaremba, "Efekt Lucyfera w polskim powiecie (na marginesie 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski,' ed. by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, Warsaw, 2018, vol. 1–2, 1640 ss.," *Przegląd Historyczny* 110/1 (2018), pp. 123–130; K. Koprowska, "Nocne i dzienne historie. Doświadczenie Zagłady na

dilemma remains whether the very way of looking at past controversial events should not become a research topic. This is because of the increasingly frequent mutual accusations from "Judeocentric" and conservative scholars of not being sufficiently critical.[4]

The Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946 is an excellent example of an event that, on the one hand, continues to be an object of research and, on the other, has been

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polskiej prowincji (O książce 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski),'" *Wielogłos* 36 (2019), pp. 161–174; S. Kassow, "'Like Trees Marked for Cutting': The Jewish Struggle for Survival in Nazi-Occupied Provincial Poland," *Yad Vashem Studies* 48 (2020), pp. 223–244; A. Kopciowski, "Book Reviews. Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, eds 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski' [Night Without an End. The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland] (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2018)," *Polish Review* 65/2 (2020), pp. 83–85; S. Lehnstaedt, "Review of: Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (eds), 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski' [Night Without an End. Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], 2 vols., Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów (Warsaw, 2018), 871 + 835 pp.," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 121 (2020), pp. 309–314; in particular T. Domański, "Korekta obrazu? Refleksje źródłoznawcze wokół książki 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski,'" *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 209–314; a reply of the authors of the book to the review by Tomasz Domański is accessible on the webpage of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research: http://www.holocaustresearch.pl/index.php?show=555&lang=pl (accessed 5 October 2020). Continuation of the polemic, see T. Domański, *Korekty ciąg dalszy. Odpowiedź redaktorom i współautorom książki "Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski," red. B. Engelking, J. Grabowski, Warszawa 2018 na ich polemikę z moją recenzją "Korekta obrazu? Refleksje źródłoznawcze wokół książki Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski," t. 1–2, red. Barbara Engelking, Jan Grabowski, Warszawa 2018," Warszawa 2019* (Warsaw, 2020). The announcement of the English language edition of the book, to be published by Indiana University Press, runs the following information: "When these findings were first published in a Polish edition in 2018, a storm of protest and lawsuits erupted from Holocaust deniers and from people who claimed the research was falsified and smeared the national character of the Polish people." It is published on the official webpage of Indiana University Press: https://iupress.org/9780253062864/night-without-end/ (accessed 25 May 2022). An interesting discussion on the book *Pod kątwą* was held by its author with Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Między tezą, hipotezą a fikcją literacką – opowieść o pogromie Żydów w Kielcach – recenzja książki Joanny Tokarskiej-Bakir, 'Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego,' Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, Warszawa 2018, t. 1, t. 2: 'Dokumenty,'" *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 315–384; J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Miazga. Odpowiedź Ryszardowi Śmietance-Kruszelnickiemu," *Studia Litteraria et Historica* 10 (2021), pp. 1–31.

[4] The term 'Judeo-centric' was coined by Natalia Aleksiun to refer to historical writing drawing mainly on Jewish accounts (N. Aleksiun, "Survivor Testimonies and Historical Objectivity: Polish Historiography since Neighbors," *Holocaust Studies* 20/1–2 [2014], p. 160). A German historian, Stephan Lehnstaedt, ironically calls historians representing a type of conservative narrative a "heroic camp." He charges the "Judeo-centric" side, in turn, with "politically intentional" writing in many respects and adopting demythologisation as its goal by stressing the Polish complicity in the Holocaust and leaving the impression of a "Holocaust without Germans" (Lehnstaedt, Review of: Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, pp. 309–314). An excellent work on the difficulties in commemorating the Holocaust in post-communist countries has been recently written by Jelena Subotić, see J. Subotić, *Yellow Star, Red Star. Holocaust Remembrance after Communism* (London, 2019).

mythologised and seriously distorted. Although seventy-seven years have lapsed since the pogrom, the dispute about its spontaneous or organised character continues and will not cease to arouse controversies soon.[5]

In Poland, any discussion of the massacre was greatly limited in communist times, with the first publications on it coming out only in the early 1980s.[6] Therefore, it can be said that knowledge of the pogrom accumulated in the West until 1989 without considering the Polish point of view. In 1992, Krystyna Kersten[7] observed that a view circulated "that after all these publications on the subject that have appeared outside Poland, nothing new can be said; everything is known."[8]

This article's very purpose is to review English-language academic texts on the Kielce pogrom published between 1946 and 1992. The end date is set by the publication of Bożena Szaynok's book and her English-language article on the Kielce pogrom in *Yad Vashem Studies*.[9] As the reader can see, both works were milestones in studying the pogrom and Polish-Jewish relations in post-war Poland.

The present author attempts to go beyond a standard review of historiography. Besides presenting the publications, an attempt will be made to study how historians understood the pogrom, from where they drew information on it, what made them view these tragic events in the way they did and whether the views created then could influence the current debate about the pogrom. For this reason and because the publications are only a few, they are discussed in separate sections, while a comprehensive discussion of processes and phenomena is attempted in the conclusions.

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[5] On the investigation into the Kielce pogrom, see Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the Kielce pogrom, Cracow, 21 October 2004, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, ed. by Ł. Kamiński and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2006), pp. 441–483. In the second volume of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, its authors inclined towards the opinion that the event resulted from a provocation (*Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2, ed. by Ł. Bukowski, A. Jankowski and J. Żaryn (Warsaw 2008)).

[6] One of the first articles on the pogrom was the 1981 text by Krystyna Kersten published in the *Tygodnik Solidarność*: K. Kersten, "Kielce – 4 lipca 1946 roku," *Tygodnik Solidarność* 36, 4 December 1981.

[7] Bożena Szaynok (b. 1965) – a Polish historian specialising in recent history, the history of Jews in Poland after 1945 and Polish-Israeli relations. The author of the first major and still one of the vital works on the Kielce pogrom: B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.* (Warsaw, 1992).

[8] Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach*, p. 7.

[9] B. Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews in Kielce, July 4, 1946," *Yad Vashem Studies* 22 (1992), pp. 199–235.

Bernard Dov Weinryb, "Poland"

Probably the first academic work that gave details about the Kielce pogrom was the chapter written by Bernard Weinryb[10] in the 1953 book *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*.[11] It presents Polish-Jewish relations across history, including the post-war period and the Kielce massacre. Hence, the pogrom, but also anti-Semitism in general, were only elements of Polish-Jewish relations for Weinryb.[12]

Before moving to the pogrom, the author informed the reader that before that "most heinous" murder, Poles had killed 1,150 Jews. Trying to explain the reasons for a surge of anti-Jewish violence in Poland, Weinryb devoted much space to the role of the "nationalist and reactionary" Catholic Church. In this context, he quoted the statement by the Primate of Poland, August Hlond, to American reporters on 11 July 1946 and the views of the then Bishop of Lublin, Stefan Wyszyński, and contrasted them with the attitude of the Bishop of Częstochowa, Teodor Kubina.[13] The historian included the anti-communist underground in the broader group of Polish nationalists, and the number of Jews killed by the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, NSZ) was given. Moreover, he claimed that underground members infiltrated the structures of the communist authorities while partisans in areas around Kielce and Białystok reportedly were a "shadow cabinet." He also said that the communist side's indecisiveness in the struggle against anti-Semitism

[10] Bernard Dov Weinryb (1900–1982) – a Polish-American historian of Jewish origin. He spent his youth in Breslau, where he also obtained his doctorate. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he emigrated to Palestine, while after it ended he moved to the United States. From 1948 to 1964, he taught at the Yeshiva University in New York City but also worked at many other universities, including Columbia University. He authored numerous publications and a few hundred articles and was a member of many American learned societies.

[11] B.D. Weinryb, "Poland," in *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*, ed. by P. Meyer, B.D. Weinryb, E. Duschinsky, and N. Sylvain (Syracuse, 1953), pp. 207–327. The book was re-published in 2016, owing to the efforts of the Forgotten Books publishers.

[12] Weinryb devoted a separate section to anti-Semitism. It covers only 7 out of 107 pages of the whole chapter (Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 207–314; section "Antisemitism," in *ibid.*, pp. 247–254).

[13] Hlond believed that the pogrom was sparked by political and not racial factors, and blamed Jews in the communist authorities for creating tensions. In the opinion of Wyszyński, in turn, the source of unrest was Jews holding positions in the communist authorities. He was also reported as having said that "the Germans wanted to exterminate the Jewish people because Jews spread Communism" and that the question of ritual murders had not been finally settled. Whereas Kubina issued an appeal together with the communist authorities denouncing anti-Semites without approval from higher Church dignitaries.

resulted from its weakness caused by insufficient support from an "anti-Semitic" society.[14]

Only after describing the background in considerable detail did Weinryb move to present the pogrom itself. He thus associated it with a surge of anti-Jewish violence, for which he blamed the NSZ. The historian gave the following account of the pogrom: a boy was taught a story about being kidnapped by Jews, the militia that was to verify the story confiscated the Jews' arms and then a mob together with the militiamen entered the building and massacred the Jews. In total, forty-one Jews were reported to have been killed.[15]

The account, albeit short, gave several important details. Weinryb argued that the Kielce pogrom was not an isolated incident but a part of a "broader plan." He mentioned attacks on trains and attempted pogroms in Częstochowa, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski and Radom, as well as attacks in Silesia and Pomerania. He was convinced that "it would seem that [the pogrom] was well organised," and about Henryk Błaszczyk, he said that the boy was "trained" to tell his story and suggested that this was the work of the NSZ. What is more, Weinryb knew such details as the disarming of the Jews and the murdering of Regina Fisz and her child. However, the Polish Army and Soviets were completely missing from his account, while arms were requisitioned by the militia.[16]

Weinryb claimed that after the pogrom, the communist authorities reportedly attempted to attack the hideouts of the anti-communist underground and took some stricter measures, but anti-Semitism thrived nevertheless. In the historian's opinion, combatting it more effectively was possible only when the communist rule consolidated after the January 1947 election and stricter coercive measures were introduced.[17]

It is worthwhile to take a closer look at the sources that Weinryb used in his discussion of Polish anti-Semitism, including the Kielce pogrom. He drew on the reports from the *New York Herald Tribune* and the bulletin of the Jewish Telegraphic

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[14] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 247–253.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 252–253.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

Agency and cited Samuel Leib Shneiderman's boo *Between Fear and Hope*[18] and a chapter from the *American Jewish Yearbook* devoted to Poland authored by Leon Shapiro.[19] These sources, above all, but not exclusively, presented a Jewish viewpoint on the events taking place in Poland. This, in turn, could not have left Weinryb's view of the Kielce pogrom unaffected. Surprisingly, he did not cite – in the context of the situation in post-war Poland – the relations of Arthur Bliss-Lane,[20] ambassador of the United States to Poland, or Stanisław Mikołajczyk,[21] although he did refer to their books elsewhere.[22]

To the pogrom account itself, Weinryb did not add any source footnotes. The quoting of the number of forty-one murdered Jews and the information about Henryk Błaszczyk being taught a story of kidnapping, however, suggest that he drew extensively from the chapter by Shapiro.[23] However, the other details he gave make us ask if the historian perhaps had access to the witnesses of those events or documents produced by communist law-enforcement agencies after the pogrom.

Importantly, Weinryb blamed NSZ members for the pogrom. He believed that not only had they created the conditions conducive to it but also had organised it and "trained" Henryk to speak about kidnapping. Moreover, it was the NSZ, according to him, that was responsible for anti-Jewish violence, including the attacks on trains, in other parts of Poland at the same time.[24] The picture of post-war years that Weinryb sketched divided Poles into two categories: one comprising those who supported the communists and their equality slogans and others who opposed them and were responsible for a wave of anti-Jewish violence.

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[18] S.L. Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope* (New York, 1947). Weinryb dates this book to 1949, which is either a mistake or a reference to another edition he used.

[19] L. Shapiro, "Poland," *American Jewish Year Book* 49 (1947–1948/5708), ed. by H. Schneiderman and M. Fine (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 380–392.

[20] A. Bliss-Lane, *I saw Poland Betrayed* (New York, 1948).

[21] S. Mikołajczyk, *The Rape of Poland. Pattern of Soviet Aggression* (New York, 1948).

[22] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 231, 361.

[23] Shapiro, "Poland," p. 384.

[24] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 252–253. This, in turn, shows that the opinion about the National Armed Forces' complicity in the pogrom he took from Shneiderman (Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*, pp. 85–94).

Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*

Seventeen years after Weinryb's work, in 1970, Yehuda Bauer[25] published *Flight and Rescue*,[26] his renowned book used to this day, describing the migration of Jews from East-Central Europe in 1944–1948. The story of the pogrom was told in the chapter "Great Exodus," which is titled analogously to the Book of Exodus in the Bible.[27] The pogrom triggered a mass migration of Jews from Poland, with Palestine being their primary destination. There the State of Israel was founded in 1948.[28] If this were true, it would show that the author adopted only one perspective in advance.

Before discussing the pogrom itself, Bauer outlined the background against which the events played out by describing the situation of Jews in post-war Poland. In his opinion, anti-Jewish violence was widespread, often leading to minor pogroms and attacks on Jews on trains. The Kielce massacre was thus "exceptional" since it eclipsed other acts of violence with its scale and occurrence in "broad daylight."[29]

Discussing the general causes of the pogrom, the author named, above all, the anti-Semitism of the anti-communist underground and the ambiguous and passive stance taken by the Catholic Church. The historian mentioned the failed requests to condemn anti-Semitism by David Kahane (Head Rabbi of the Polish People's Army) and Józef Tenenbaum (President of the American World Jewish Federation in Poland), who addressed Church dignitaries before the pogrom. He also extensively quoted the statement by August Hlond of 11 July and commented

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[25] Yehuda Bauer (b. 1926) – an Israeli researcher associated with Hebrew University in Jerusalem, studying the history of Jews and the Holocaust. The author of many publications in these fields and one of the most famous and renowned researchers of the Holocaust. One of the founders of the prestigious academic journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*.

[26] Y. Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah. The Organized Escape of the Jewish Survivors of Eastern Europe, 1944–1948* (New York, 1970).

[27] The Book of Exodus (Greek Εξοδος), tells of the oppression of Jews under Egyptian rule and their later migration to the Promised Land, i.e. Palestine, which enabled the Jews to found their own state of Israel.

[28] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 206–211. Despite its status as one of the most important books on this subject, Bauer's work has not been widely commented on. The reason may be its complexity. Its reviewer, Marver Hillel Bernstein, observed that "it is a book that is not easy to read nor assimilate," see M.H. Bernstein, "'Flight and Rescue: Brichah.' By Yehuda Bauer. New York: Random House, 1970. x + 369 pp. maps," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 61/3 (1972), pp. 254–255.

[29] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 208.

on it by finding that "the Primate gave no indication of his condemnation of the pogrom as directed specifically against Jews. It seemed to be the Primate's view that Jews were either communists or supporters of Communism and that the fault of the pogrom rested with them."[30] In Bauer's opinion, even if the Church was not directly involved in pogroms or did not "sponsor" pogroms – to which question he does not give a definite answer – it did nothing to prevent them and stayed on the course of "the traditional pre-war form of anti-Semitism." Bauer did not accuse outright the opposition of organising the pogrom or a provocation but maintained that it had created, together with the Church, the atmosphere of connivance in acts of anti-Jewish violence.

The account of the pogrom itself began with the appearance of nine-year-old Henryk Błaszczyk at a militia station and his story of having been kidnapped by Jews. Bauer found it incredible that the militia commander could believe in that story. He added sarcastically: "Was it not well known that Jews murdered Christian children for ritual purposes?"[31] Militiamen and the boy went to 7 Planty Street, where a mob had begun to gather as a result of the story spread by the boy. A priest appeared at the "scene" but "did nothing to calm the public." The mob and militiamen attacked the building, murdered the Jews and looted their possessions. In the mob, several soldiers disarmed the Jews and promised them – the historian informs – that they would protect them against the mob. When the soldiers had left the building, the Jews were reportedly grabbed by the mob and murdered in the square. In Bauer's opinion, the same mob, after forcing their way into the building, murdered the chairman of the Jewish Committee in Kielce, Seweryn Kahane. Ultimately, reinforcements arrived at the scene, but the soldiers, instead of stopping the massacre, dragged the Jews onto the square for the mob of many thousands to massacre them. Only the arrival of another military unit brought the situation under control. In total, in the pogrom and attacks in other parts of the city, according to Bauer, forty-one Jews and four Poles perished. He opined that "More blood would certainly have been shed if the Polish government had not reacted so swiftly."[32]

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 209–211.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208.

Yehuda Bauer's account of the Kielce pogrom was based on David Kahane's article in *HaTzofe*, published on 6 July 1956, a relation of an anonymous witness of the massacre,[33] the testimonies of a person Bauer gave the pseudonym "Alexander" and of Yitzhak Zuckerman, as well as stories by William H. Lawrence published in *The New York Times* on 5–16 July 1946.[34] Except for the "witness," of whom nothing is known, Bauer's sources were second-hand accounts. David Kahane, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and William Lawrence did not witness the pogrom; the first two maintained close relations with the communist authorities in connection with their positions, while Lawrence relied chiefly on official information from Gen. Wiktor Grosz.[35]

For Bauer, the pogrom was only a single incident in the story of Polish anti-Semitism. This is seen in his critical comments, giving unimportant details (such as Henryk Błaszczyk's father was a cobbler by profession[36]) and disinterest in the causes and perpetrators of the pogrom or an alleged provocation. The details of the massacre were probably unimportant for him because he did not devote any space to them in his work.[37] In his eyes, the pogrom was the most tragic event in post-war Europe, while its causes had little significance for the Jews at that time or ones of his time.

In Bauer's account of the pogrom, there are three significant distortions: that the mob murdered Seweryn Kahane,[38] that at the beginning of the commotion, a priest

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[33] Bauer does not reveal the identity of the person or what information he or she provided.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

[35] Yitzhak Zuckerman was a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Polish Jews; he also co-organised the semi-legal migration of Jews from Poland. For more on the subject, see M. Semczyszyn, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski 1944–1947 – kontekst międzynarodowy," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 50/1 (2018), pp. 95–121; and memoirs of Zuckerman: I. Cukierman, *Nadmiar pamięci (siedem owych lat). Wspomnienia 1939–1946* (Warsaw, 2000). Bauer wrote that when the pogrom broke out, Yitzhak Zuckerman was talking with Prime Minister Edward Osóbka-Morawski about providing assistance to the Zionists in their struggle against the British over Palestine (Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 208–209). David Kahane was the Head Rabbi of the Polish People's Army and president of the Jewish Religious Congregation in Poland.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[37] It should be noted that Bauer does not inquire at all where Henryk was between 1 and 3 July. The version that the boy supposedly spontaneously made up the story that later incited a mob to perpetrate a massacre appears to him absolutely credible and thus calls for neither a comment nor verification.

[38] Seweryn Kahane – the chairman of the Voivodeship Jewish Committee in Kielce. He was shot dead when calling for help during the pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946 (*ibid.*, p. 208). The murder was committed by Polish Army officers. This information must have been taken from Shneiderman's work; however, he did not give it in the footnote to the pogrom description (Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*, p. 91).

appeared at the scene but did nothing to stop the later pogrom,[39] and that the army took part only in the later part of the massacre and only by pushing the Jews into the mob. Although Bauer did inform about the participation of the army in the massacre, his message on this issue was distorted. He did not go into the causes of the soldiers' conduct as he probably believed that Polish anti-Semitism was a sufficient explanation of what happened.[40] If his information came from Zuckerman or Kahane, one could expect that the Jews who had survived the pogrom would share their knowledge with them on the actual role of soldiers in the massacre.[41]

The question, therefore, is who provided Bauer, and why, with detailed but distorted information on the engagement of the army in the pogrom or why he presented the role of soldiers in this way and the reaction of the communist authorities. The further question that should be asked is where he sourced the information about the four murdered Poles and what their identities were.[42]

Lucjan Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life in Post-War Poland"

Another publication mentioning the pogrom was a 1973 article by Lucjan Dobroszycki[43] about restoring Jewish life in post-war Poland.[44] Similarly to the previous authors, Dobroszycki believed that the massacre in Kielce was merely one of many. What is more, it was to be a typical pogrom: it started with a rumour

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[39] Bauer informs the reader that Seweryn Kahane called Bishop of Kielce Czesław Kaczmarek only to learn that the bishop was away. The historian comments that people had doubts about this absence (Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 207).

[40] The conduct of soldiers towards the Jews, according to Bauer, in all likelihood resulted from their anti-Semitism as Poles. This can be seen in his comment that only a swift reaction of the communist authorities limited the scale of the massacre. The reaction was the sending of soldiers to its scene (*ibid.*, p. 208).

[41] See, for instance, the relation of Jechiel Alpert in P. Cytron, *Sefer Kielce. Toldot Kehilat Kielce. Miyom Hivsuduh V'ad Churbanah* (Tel Aviv, 1957), pp. 253–255.

[42] William Lawrence reported that he had seen the bodies of thirty-six Jews and four Poles killed in the pogrom ("Poles Declare Two Hoaxes Caused High Toll in Pogrom," *New York Times*, 6 July 1946). So, Bauer did not give the number of killed Jews reported by Lawrence or even the total number of victims if Poles were to be included. The information that Kahane was killed by the mob was given by Shneiderman, but Bauer did not quote him. Neither is the number of Jewish victims of the pogrom suggested by both researchers correct. In all likelihood, Bauer had greater source knowledge than he chose to reveal and, faced with contradictory pieces of information, made a compilation.

[43] Lucjan Dobroszycki (1925–1995) – a Polish-American scholar of recent history and Polish-Jewish relations. Survivor of the Łódź Ghetto and Auschwitz concentration camp, who migrated to the United States in 1970.

[44] L. Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life in Post-War Poland," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 2 (3) (1973), pp. 58–72.

about Jews kidnapping a child for ritual purposes, it took place in the middle of a city, a mob was involved, and Jewish property was destroyed in its course.[45]

The account of the pogrom covered three paragraphs of the five pages devoted to the study of anti-Jewish violence.[46] It ran as follows: on 1 July, eight-year-old Henryk Błaszczyk went missing but returned two days later. The boy said that he had been kidnapped by Jews who intended to kill him. In reality, however – Dobroszycki claimed – Henryk stayed with some friends of his father in a village [Pielaki] 25 kilometres away from Kielce where he was supposedly "taught" what to say. The historian added that already before the boy's return, rumours were circulating about Jews kidnapping Christian children and calling people to gather in front of the building at 7 Planty Street. The pogrom itself was to be perpetrated by a mob by shooting Jews at 7 Planty St. or killing them with axes and dull implements. Jews reportedly were also killed in their Kielce homes and dragged out to the streets. Altogether, forty-one people perished.[47]

In an attempt to name the perpetrators of the pogrom, Dobroszycki informed the reader about mutual accusations made by communists, the anti-communist underground and the Catholic Church. He claimed that underground forces openly murdered Jews, and there were even cases of cooperation between the representatives of the new authorities and "terrorists." An example of such collaboration, in Dobroszycki's opinion, was the Kielce pogrom in which militiamen participated, as the scholar informed the reader.[48] He emphasised, however, that due to a lack of evidence, it was difficult to tell to what extent they acted on their own and to what they followed orders. For the same reason, the attitude of the then-ruling politicians and Soviet officers to violence against Jews in the country could not be established, as Dobroszycki maintained and observed that the Jewish sources he used provided contradicting information on this issue.[49]

Dobroszycki did not place the blame for the pogrom on any one specific group and did not say if it had been organised but claimed that, undeniably, it was the local

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[45] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 66–70. The reason certainly was the author's attitude to the subject – for Dobroszycki, the Kielce pogrom was an event typical of the period and field he studied.

[47] *Ibid.,* p. 67.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 68. Dobroszycki's account suggests that militiamen formed part of the mob, which goes to explain gunshot wounds.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

authorities that bore a great responsibility for anti-Jewish sentiment and violence.[50] His account of the pogrom suggested that he also blamed pro-independence forces because, by perpetrating anti-Semitic acts, they created an atmosphere conducive to crimes against Jews. Anti-Semites could be found, he maintained, in both anti-communist underground forces and structures of power, while the massacre was perpetrated by a mob. Consequently, the blame for the pogrom was borne by the Poles as such because of their anti-Semitism. That the author shared this view is also shown by his account of Henryk's story[51] and the description of murders outside Planty that he gave.[52]

Although the publications Dobroszycki used are not known, his article was a significant contribution to the study of the pogrom and Polish-Jewish relations – it is still quoted today. His was the first attempt to show that the situation in post-war Poland was complex, while the Jewish question was but an element of this puzzle. The approach he adopted was somewhat surprising: although he viewed the pogrom from the perspective of Polish history, he believed it to be, by nature, an event typical of its kind and of its place and time. Moreover, he distinguished between the potential perpetrators of the pogrom and the people responsible for building an atmosphere conducive to massacres and the murderers themselves.

Michał Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom. Some Unanswered Questions"

A similar perspective, albeit not identical to Dobroszycki's, was adopted by Michał Chęciński[53] in a 1975 article devoted entirely to the Kielce pogrom.[54] It was

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 67–70.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[53] Michał Mosze Chęciński (1924–2011) – an officer in the Polish People's Army of Jewish origin, serving in the counterintelligence service. Having been discharged from the army, he emigrated to Israel in 1969 and to the United States in 1976 where he published academic works on the communist system of government in Poland. His background and military career let him view the Poles-Jews-communists relationships quite differently and put him in an excellent position to study the operations of the uniformed services during the pogrom and afterwards. However, his experience could have narrowed down his discussion to the question of a provocation by secret services and a search for evidence to prove it. This is seen in the structure of the article where the account of the pogrom covers just over one of its fifteen pages (*ibid.*, pp 58–59).

[54] M. Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom. Some Unanswered Questions," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 5/1 (1975), pp. 57–72.

not an exceptional event, its author believed like other scholars, but was instead the quintessence of post-war anti-Jewish violence. It erupted in all places where Jewish communities had lived in the past, and local populations were afraid of losing Jewish property taken over during the war. What made Poland exceptional, in Chęciński's opinion, was the high number of murdered Jews and recurrent accusations of using blood for ritual purposes to justify violence.[55]

Chęciński mentioned circumstances he deemed important preceding the pogrom: throwing a grenade into the building of the Kielce Jewish Committee in October 1945 and the conversation of Seweryn Kahane and Jechiel Alpert[56] with the Kielce Bishop, Czesław Kaczmarek, in the autumn of 1945.[57] Chęciński presented the very events of 4 July 1946 in this way: Henryk Blaszczyk went missing but returned several days later. On his way to a militia station, he was telling passers-by about having been kidnapped and other children held by Jews. In front of the building housing the Jewish Committee, a crowd of onlookers gathered while the militiamen showed that there were no children or a cellar in the building because it stood too close to the river.[58] At a particular moment, the mob started breaking windows while the militia began to escort the Jews out of the building.[59] Two military officers with some men arrived at the scene, who then disarmed the Jews. One of them killed Seweryn Kahane, while others started throwing Committee residents through the windows and shooting Jews together with the militiamen. In the evening, more soldiers arrived who, admittedly, stopped the massacre but took part in looting the Committee. The historian estimated the number of casualties at 36 to 42 Jews, and finally, counting the victims of murders in other parts of the city – at 60–70.[60]

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[56] The vice-president of the Voivodeship Jewish Committee in Kielce. Having survived the pogrom with his wife Hanka (Chana) Alpert, he spoke on the pogrom on many occasions and was one of the main sources of information on the massacre for Szmuel Lejb Shneiderman.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 58. The latter, allegedly, not only did not come to the defence of Jews in the conversation, but even considered the tensions to be caused by their sharing in Polish political life, i.e. engagement in the work of communists. The historian claims that this view was reiterated after the pogrom by August Hlond.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[59] Chęciński does not suggest why the militia, who had inspected the premises and exposed Henryk Błaszczyk's lie, suddenly started to show aggressive behaviour like the mob.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

To present the Kielce pogrom and discuss it further, the historian used sources extensively: Dobroszycki's article, memoirs of Shneiderman and Stanisław Mikołajczyk, reports in the Polish press on the pogrom or the relation by Jechiel Alpert and the Kielce *Księga pamięci* [Memory Book of Kielce].[61] Much of his discussion drew on interviews with the witnesses of the events and persons holding government positions in 1945–1946,[62] particularly Eta Lewkowicz-Ajzenman.[63] For an unknown reason, however, the historian did not use the publications of Weinryb, the *American Jewish Yearbook,* reports of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency or memoirs of Arthur Bliss-Lane and Joseph Tenenbaum, all available in America.[64]

Characteristically, Chęciński, in his article, devoted more space to selected details than to the account of the pogrom itself. He was predominantly interested in Henryk Błaszczyk's kidnapping, the nature of uniformed services' participation in the pogrom and the apparent powerlessness of the communist authorities in the face of the massacre.[65]

Discussing the first mystery, Chęciński pinpointed inaccuracies in Henryk Błaszczyk's disappearance story and his trip to Pielaki.[66] He asked what role Tadeusz Bartoszyński[67] played: did he threaten and instruct the boy, and did he meet a group of unknown persons at night, as Shneiderman claimed?[68] Did he only host the boy, or – as Shneiderman maintains – was he also responsible for his trans-

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[61] Bibliography to the article, see *ibid*., p. 72. Chęciński quotes the following publications: Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life;" Cytron, *Sefer Kielce*; Mikołajczyk, *The Rape of Poland*; Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*

[62] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 61, 72.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63, 65–68.

[64] Tenenbaum's work, for unknown reasons, was not used in earlier publications either, in spite of the fact that it gave a panorama of the situation in post-war Poland and included information on the anti-communist underground, Catholic Church and pogrom. See J. Tenenbaum, *In Search of Lost People* (New York, 1948), pp. 204–243.

[65] Although almost fifty years have elapsed since Chęciński's article's publication, researchers have not answered these questions.

[66] Pielaki is a small village in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Mniów Municipality, about 25 kilometres from Kielce, where Henryk Błaszczyk lived. According to one account of the boy's disappearance, it was in Pielaki that he reportedly stayed between 1 and 3 July 1946. Chęciński quotes extensively Shneiderman's account.

[67] It should read: Bartosiński. Chęciński uses the name Bielaki. The former mistake is repeated after Shneiderman (Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*, pp. 94, 96). The latter is a translation of a quotation from a newspaper.

[68] Chęciński compares a passage from the *Gazeta Ludowa* of 10 July 1946 and the relation of Shneiderman from page 94.

port to the country? Further, how and when did Henryk return to Kielce?[69] He thus showed that the fundamental question concerning the pogrom, specifically where Henryk Błaszczyk was, had not been fully and unambiguously resolved or revealed to the public.

As far as the participation of uniformed services in the pogrom is concerned, Chęciński informed the reader that the communist authorities tried to hush up the fact of disarming the Jews and the participation of the militia and military in the pogrom. They were especially keen to keep under cover that some of the Jews died of gun wounds. Chęciński also pointed out that there was no information on who killed the Poles in the pogrom, how they died, and why this aspect was not publicised.[70]

Chęciński was equally sceptical about the claim that the communist authorities were powerless in the face of the pogrom and mob. To prove this claim wrong, he confronted the accounts he found with extensive reports in the Polish press of the efforts of the army and militia to stop the massacre. Furthermore, he mentioned the arrest of persons responsible for the uniformed services and their subsequent release.[71] He showed thus that the claim about the powerlessness of the uniformed services and their desperate efforts to stop the anti-Semitic mob was false. What is more, the officers of the services subordinate to the authorities actively participated in murdering the Jews and subsequently covering up their role in the massacre. Chęciński added that although one hundred persons were arrested, twelve were tried, and nine were convicted and sentenced to the death penalty; the court announced that the actual organisers of the pogrom would be found, which has ultimately never happened.[72]

Furthermore, Chęciński took a closer look at selected "actors" of the pogrom. He informed the reader about the past and views of the chief of the Voivodeship

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[69] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 61–62.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 64–66.

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 66–68.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 59. On 18 April 1947, the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported that a day earlier, the Warsaw Radio announced that Jan Ruczaj had been found. He was the leader of a band which reportedly organised the pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946. It was he, according to the report, who kidnapped Henryk Błaszczyk and made him spread the rumour about a ritual murder. Despite having organised the pogrom he was not punished because of the amnesty granted to "anti-Semitic underground groups" (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 18 April 1947).

Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP), Władysław Sobczyński, and his later promotion.[73] It was he that Chęciński saw as the probable author of the pogrom. Besides him, the historian characterised two other persons whom he believed to have been involved in the organisation of the massacre: a Soviet officer named "Dyomin"[74] and Walenty Błaszczyk, the father of Henryk who went temporarily missing. Walenty, Chęciński believed, worked for the Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, UB) under codename Przelot, his task being the infiltration of the Kielce NSZ. It was he, according to Chęciński, who organised the kidnapping of his son to disgrace the NSZ and, as a result, bring about the pogrom.[75] Notably, the characteristics of both men were taken from a single source.[76]

Although the best-known claims made by Chęciński – about the involvement of "Dyomin" and "Przelot" in the pogrom – were not borne out by archival resources,[77] one aspect of his study has kept its relevance undiminished to this day. He made the reader distinguish between different forms of responsibility for the pogrom: for creating an atmosphere conducive to violence against Jews,[78]

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[73] Chęciński, "The Kielce pogrom," pp. 68–69.

[74] Correctly: Dyomin, Mikhail Alexandrovich (*ibid.*, pp. 62–63).

[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64. See the Transcript of interview of Henryk Błaszczyk, Kielce, 25 August 1995, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 286–291.

[76] "Dyomin" was supposedly mentioned by Eta Lewkowicz-Ajzenman, Head of the Secretariat at the Kielce WUBP, in conversation with Chęciński. The source of information on "Przelot" was Adam Kornecki (1917–1986; true name: Dawid Kornhendler). He held the position of the Kielce WUBP chief but was dismissed in October 1945. Subsequently, his position was taken by Władysław Sobczyński. In 1969 Kornecki left for the Federal Republic of Germany, where he died in 1986.

[77] The theme of "Dyomin" was examined during the second investigation into the Kielce pogrom. No evidence corroborating the statements by Eta Lewkowicz-Ajzenman was found then (Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the Kielce pogrom, Cracow, 21 October 2004, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, p. 471). After the death of Chęciński, a present-day researcher of the Kielce pogrom, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, had an opportunity to study his collection of sources, which she cited in part in her book (Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, pp. 685–717). Having studied the materials Chęciński had collected, she found the claim about "Dyomin's" involvement in the pogrom not credible. Moreover, she wrote that "a search in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance and Central Military Archives does not confirm that such a person ever existed" (*ibid.*, pp. 419–420, 750–751). Her claim, however, is not entirely accurate (see Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Między tezą," p. 328). After it was possible to access the collections of communist archives after 1989, no information has been found that would prove Walenty Błaszczyk's work for the UB under the codename "Przelot."

[78] In his opinion, the responsibility for this lay with the anti-Semitic part of the underground pro-independence forces and the Catholic Church (Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 57–58).

for what happened during the tragic events of 4 July 1946[79] and for the potential organisation of the pogrom.[80] The pogrom account given in the article and the many-sided viewing of responsibility for it suggest that Chęciński believed the Kielce pogrom to have been a provocation, with its most likely organisers being UB officials, in particular Władysław Sobczyński. He either worked together with the Soviet authorities or acted at their behest.[81] Researchers do not currently share the opinion that the UB was responsible for the pogrom, but it prevails among the general public nonetheless.[82]

Furthermore, Chęciński advised caution in drawing conclusions invoking the *cui prodest* reasoning. Pondering who benefited from the Kielce pogrom, he replied that almost everybody. The Soviets and Polish communists received a pretext to

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[79] That is the passivity or complicity of the uniformed services in the massacre (*ibid*., pp. 64–66).

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 66–69.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 68–69. It cannot be ruled out that it was for this reason that Chęciński formulated this and other opinions of his as suggestions and not outright. Another reason could be also his fear of criticism, as Soviet studies were only in a nascent stage and could not help people understand how the communist system worked then and after the war. Consequently, Chęciński could have been seen as a sympathiser of "fascists," who tried to shift the guilt for the pogrom to the Jews (and the UB) and Soviets, thus aligning himself with the slogans proclaimed by the "anti-Semitic" pro-independence underground forces.

[82] The author of the latest work on the Kielce pogrom, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, makes a bold claim that "evidence for a UB/NKVD conspiracy is non-existent, quite on the contrary, there is considerable proof that UB agents, such as Andrzej Markiewicz, Sylwester Klimczak or Zygmunt Majewski saved Jews, no UB agent beat or killed them, and the WUBP chief, Władysław Sobczyński, was first to recognise the accusation of Jews of kidnapping Henio Błaszczyk for what it was – a political provocation." (J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Odpowiedź na recenzje Bożeny Szaynok i Marcina Zaremby," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 14 (2018), p. 668; also Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, p. 15). Cf. also: "Summing up, when evidence is evaluated from the point of view of the legitimacy of the investigation hypothesis, it must be found that the body of evidence collected in the course of investigation does not support the claim that the events in Kielce on 4 July 1946 were an effect of a provocation by national or voivodeship echelons of security services" (Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the Kielce pogrom, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 473–478). So unequivocal a stance is unjustified in the opinion of Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki who points to many shortcomings in Joanna Tokarska-Bakir's book (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Między tezą," pp. 327–328, 332–335, 382). Nevertheless, the view that the pogrom was a UB provocation widely prevails among the general public and is sometimes proclaimed in the form of the slogan: "UB pogrom, not Kielce pogrom." On 5 July 2015, under this slogan, conservatives marched in the streets of Kielce ("Pogrom ubecki, a nie kielecki. Manifestacja w Kielcach," *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 July 2015, https://www.rp.pl/historia/art11626471-pogrom-ubecki-a-nie-kielecki-manifestacja-w-kielcach (accessed 10 February 2022); see also: "69. rocznica pogromu kie-leckiego. Manifestacja pod hasłem 'Pogrom ubecki, a nie kielecki' i natychmiastowa odpowiedź," *Echo Dnia*, 5 July 2015, https://echodnia.eu/swietokrzyskie/69-rocznica-pogromu-kieleckiego-manifestacja-pod-haslem-pogrom-ubecki-a-nie-kielecki-i-natychmiastowa-odpowiedz-wideo-zdjecia/ar/8143962 (accessed 10 February 2022).

take stricter measures against the independence underground as part of combating anti-Semitism. As an effect of the pogrom, the mass emigration of Jews from Poland exerted pressure on the British authorities in the context of founding a Jewish state in Palestine.[83] A benefit was also reaped by the Poles having anti-Semitic views and the Catholic Church because in the wake of the Kielce pogrom, Poland's Jewish population declined.[84]

Chęciński's comments on the reception of the Kielce pogrom in the West are worth noting. He believed that the version presented by the communist authorities, blaming the opposition and émigré circles for the pogrom, became prevalent there. Likewise, with respect to the Catholic Church in Poland, Chęciński observed that, due to its support for anti-communist factions, it was criticised in the West for, and even suspected of, provoking the pogrom.[85] In turn, while discussing the weakness of the uniformed services, Chęciński gave the example of Shneiderman's version as one that – although published in the West – actually spread communist propaganda.[86] By doing that, Chęciński probably wanted to show that the opinions about the innocence and weakness of the uniformed services, proclaimed by the new regime, although false, caught on in the West.

Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*

In 1979, the Kielce pogrom was revisited by Yehuda Bauer in *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*.[87] Although he did not give much space to the massacre and did not describe its course, he expressed very strong opinions about it none-

[83] For the same reason, Zionists could have benefited by gaining an argument in their lobbying for a Jewish state in Palestine. This reasoning led to the conception that they had organised the Kielce pogrom. Today, researchers reject this conception because there are no grounds for considering it credible (Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the Kielce pogrom, Cracow, 21 October 2004, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, p. 469).

[84] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 59, 70–71.

[85] Chęciński does not deny that some of the underground forces showed anti-Semitic behaviour, spread slogans of this kind and took part in the massacres of Jews, but maintains that the underground did not organise the pogrom (*ibid.*, pp. 59–61).

[86] *Ibid.* pp. 66–70.

[87] Y. Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto–Buffalo, 1979). This book has been re-published by the University of Toronto Press: Y. Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto, 2016). A part of the book, including fragments on the pogrom, was repeated verbatim in an article published ten years later: Y. Bauer, "Zionism, the Holocaust, and the Road to Israel," in *The End of the Holocaust*, ed. M.R. Marrus (New York, 1989), pp. 539–579.

theless. As the book gained popularity, its author's convictions could have affected how English-speaking researchers viewed the pogrom.

One of such convictions held that the massacre in Kielce was one of many acts of violence that had taken on an "epidemic scale," with the most frequent pretext for anti-Semitic riots being accusations of ritual murders. This myth, as Bauer stressed, "survived Hitler" and was what old and new anti-Semitism had in common.[88] Only a year after the defeat of the Third Reich, it brought about the tragic pogrom in Kielce, a city, as Bauer emphasised, being the seat of a bishop.[89]

Although the book did not give any account of what happened in Kielce, it cited the number of forty-two Jews killed in the pogrom. Curiously enough, as several years earlier in *Flight and Rescue*, the same author gave the number of forty-one Jewish and four Polish casualties of the massacre in "[…] which the local government militia, members of the clergy, and even a socialist factory director and his workers took part."[90] Despite the boldness of this claim, he did not say where he took this information from.

Furthermore, Bauer expressed another important opinion, namely that the massacre in Kielce could have been one of the primary reasons why the United States joined in the question of Palestine, which contributed to the foundation of the State of Israel. He explained that the discovery of concentration camps shocked American soldiers and improved their opinion of Jews as well as advanced the Jewish cause, in particular among commissioned officers. Faced with the influx of Jewish migrants to the American occupation zone after the Kielce pogrom, the Americans had a choice between using force to stop them or letting them into the United States. Alternatively, they could search for a third way out to join in the discussion on Palestine.[91]

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[88] Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 43.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[90] *Ibid.*; cf. Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 208.

[91] Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 68. Bauer observed that the opposite effect was also possible and could intensify anti-Semitism among the rank and file. His observation seems right. As many as 22% of American soldiers stationed in Germany, when polled in September 1945, agreed that the Germans had "good reasons" for not liking Jews, while 19% believed that the Germans had a "good" or "some" justification for starting the war. According to other polls from the same time, 8% of American soldiers personally did not like the Jews. In comparison, about 10% were convinced that the Jews benefited from the war, and 7–8% indicated them as the most disliked group in America. Above 15% of respondents were also convinced that the Jews formed too large a part of financiers, that they made money on non-Jews,

Hence, Bauer considered the pogrom an event in world history that impacted the international situation.

Michał Chęciński, *Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism*

In 1982, seven years after publishing his article, Chęciński published *Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism*, a book in which he devoted a short chapter to the Kielce pogrom.[92] First, although the article and the book chapter have the same events as their subject, their bibliographies differ somewhat. The publications by Weinryb and Arthur Bliss-Lane are added to the one in the book, but the article by Dobroszycki is removed from it.[93] It cannot be ruled out that it was the first of the named publications that made Chęciński criticise more sharply the opposition and soften his stance on the engagement of the communist authorities in the pogrom.

The part devoted to the events of 4 July 1946 starts with the observation that the pogrom has never been unravelled, while it is a significant event from the perspective of the history of the Jews and the Soviet domination of post-war Poland.[94] The further part of the introduction, preceding the account of the pogrom, is taken from the article,[95] as is the account itself.[96] There are, however, some differences.

While earlier, the quoted author left a hiatus between the search conducted by the militia at 7 Planty Street and the start of the attack on the building, in the book, he maintained that the mob attacked the building "despite" discovering that the rumour about murdered children was a lie. Furthermore, a piece of information was added in the book about former Jewish soldiers firing into the air to scare off the mob. Only then did the militia shoot the first pogrom victim and disarm the

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and dodged the draft; some believed that they had fought in the interest of a particular group – capitalists, Jews or politicians (S.A. Stouffer, A.A. Lumsdaine, M.H. Lumsdaine, R.M. Williams Jr, M.B. Smith, I.L. Janis, S.A. Star, and L.S. Cottrell Jr, *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*, vol. 2 (Princeton, 1949), pp. 571, 585, 617, 619, 638–639.

[92] M. Chęciński, *Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1982), pp. 17–18, 21–34. It was published after Krystyna Kersten wrote her article on the Kielce pogrom (Kersten, "Kielce – 4 lipca 1946 roku").

[93] Chęciński, *Poland*, pp. 32–34.

[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22; cf. *id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 57–58.

[96] *Id.*, *Poland*, pp. 22–23; cf. *id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 58–59.

Jews.[97] In the article account, the Jews were disarmed because they had firearms, which they used to scare off the mob from entering the building. There is no information, however, that they were fired.[98] While in the article account, the attack was initiated by the mob and militia, the book account underscored the role of ordinary people and the Jews as well.

These are not the only differences between the book and the article. One concerns the story of the later conduct of the military and militia: in the article, the new reinforcements that arrived at the scene at about 11:30 am joined in the beating and shooting of the Jews. Meanwhile, in the book, Chęciński distinguished between a group of soldiers who undertook bold and resolute actions and the other soldiers and militiamen. The lynching carried out by the former group motivated the others to join in the massacre and even to fire "at" the windows. Since this information is given in the context of what was happening inside the building, he could have believed that the soldiers and militiamen shot at the Jews who had been cast out or escorted from the building or at the mob from inside it.[99] Importantly, neither pogrom account by Chęciński carries a source footnote. It must be presumed,

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[97] *Id.*, *Poland*, p. 23.

[98] *Id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 58.

[99] "[…] and even fired at the windows." The interpretation that they fired "from" and not "at" the windows appears legitimate, taking into account that the author spoke of the officers inside the building (*id.*, *Poland*, p. 23; *id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 59). Elsewhere, a mention is made of soldiers firing at the windows under the influence of the mob (Chęciński, *Poland*, p. 29; *id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 67). It is possible, however, that the author intended to stress that the military and militiamen as a body joined in the massacre and shooting only as a result of the actions of one determined and specific group. "The investigation could not unequivocally establish who had fired the first shots. According to the report of the instructors of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party (*Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej*, KC PPR), the first shots were fired in self-defence by the Jews inside the building. The same information was given by Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek, who also said that the shots triggered the mob's aggression, while the militiamen and soldiers took then the side of the mob instead of trying to disperse it. […] During the pogrom, two other Poles standing in front of the building died of gunshot wounds. […] A post-mortem examination of their bodies, specifically the direction of the gunshot wounds, revealed that they had been shot at from above, from some height. This suggests that the bullets were fired from the building, from at least its first floor. It does not seem possible that such shots were fired at the mob by Polish Army soldiers or militiamen from inside the building" (Report of the Decision to discontinue investigation into the Kielce pogrom, Cracow, 21 October 2004, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 455–456). "A few soldiers, at the same time, on the second floor, took off their uniforms and hats and started firing from the building at the people who were standing in front of the Committee" (Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, vol. 2: *Dokumenty*, p. 133). Therefore, the question of who shot at the mob and who started shooting first in the first place – the Jews in self-defence, soldiers, or soldiers pretending to be Jews – remains unanswered.

therefore, that the accounts give his version of the events developed based on collected source materials, publications and interviews. In particular, the details given in the account support this presumption.

Another difference concerns the assigning of blame for the pogrom. In the article, Chęciński related mutual accusations of the underground and communists of organising the massacre and criticism levelled at the Catholic Church, which was even suspected of its organisation. The version spread by the propaganda of the new regime was to dominate in the Soviet Union and the West also at the time when Chęciński was writing his article.[100] Meanwhile, in the book, he maintained that the communist authorities accused the underground of organising the pogrom and made the Catholic Church morally responsible for it. This point of view was commonly accepted then, while in Chęciński's times, it was only often repeated. The opposition, in turn, only denied such accusations and demanded a thorough investigation.[101]

In the context of Henryk Błaszczyk going missing, Chęciński limited the number of questions and the length of the narrative in favour of presentation simplicity.[102] The question of "Dyomin" underwent significant changes. In the article, "he was probably an intelligence and not counter-intelligence officer,"[103] whereas, in the book, he was characterised as follows: "[…] Dyomin was assigned to Kielce, an unlikely place for a highly-educated Soviet intelligence officer, a few months before the pogrom, and he left two weeks after the pogrom. As a rule, Soviet intelligence officers were sent abroad if delicate political provocations were needed."[104] In the first case, Chęciński's source of information was Eta Lewkowicz-Ajzenman; in the second case, he did not name his source, but in all likelihood, it was her as well. Hence, we can presume that what he earlier considered only potentially true became true for him, and he decided to present his conjectures as facts.[105]

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[100] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 59.

[101] *Id.*, *Poland*, p. 24.

[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

[103] *Id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 62.

[104] *Id.*, *Poland*, p. 25.

[105] Interestingly, his article did not enjoy much interest among Western scholars in contrast to his book, which was easier to read and not burdened as much with a critical apparatus.

What else changed was the description of the alleged collaboration of Walenty Błaszczyk with the UB under the codename "Przelot." In the article, Chęciński quoted his conversation with Adam Kornecki on this subject but did not comment on it.[106] In the book, only a short fragment of the conversation is quoted, with the rest presented as orderly facts, suggesting that Chęciński's article may have met with incomprehension from readers unfamiliar with the Polish post-war reality. Therefore, he adjusted his narrative style to his readers. Both texts show that Walenty reportedly approached the authorities with the information that the NSZ intended to organise a provocation with his son's participation. In contrast, the authorities decided to provoke a pogrom to implicate the underground. He was supposedly motivated by fear that he would lose his flat that had previously belonged to Jews.[107]

Chęciński also changed his approach to the question of *cui prodest* reasoning. In the article, he pointed the finger of blame above all at the communist authorities, who could shift the blame for the pogrom onto the opposition, but he also saw that the opposition benefited from it by getting rid of an unwanted minority.[108] Meanwhile, in the book, it was the anti-Semitism of a "considerable" portion of the opposition that made it an easy scapegoat, owing to which the communists scored a propaganda win. Moreover, the book elaborated on the aspect of exerting pressure on Western countries through the mass migration of Jews. In this context, Chęciński presented the communists' point of view, who claimed that the pogrom showed it was necessary to use stricter measures in Poland and that under those circumstances, the communists had become the defenders of Jews. The historian did not say if this claim was true or merely a propaganda bluff, although, in the article, he clearly criticised the claim about the weakness of the communist authorities.[109] The book also mentioned the statement by August Hlond, charging him with using anti-Semitism for political ends.[110]

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[106] *Id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 63.

[107] The information survived among pogrom witnesses that Walenty Błaszczyk intended to get rid of Jews. The witnesses reportedly heard from the militia his alleged comment in which he admitted to having planned the events (M. Hillel, *Le massacre des Survivants en Pologne 1945–1947* [Paris, 1985], p. 341).

[108] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 69–70.

[109] *Id.*, *Poland*, pp. 31; *id.*, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 66–70.

[110] *Id.*, *Poland*, p. 22.

The magnitude of differences between the article and the book shows that their introduction was purposeful. The article attempted to objectively present the multifaceted reality of post-war Poland and place the pogrom, a complex occurrence in itself, against this backdrop. Although its author let his views be known, he was inclined to resort to quotations rather than provide ready answers. By contrast, the book fragment on the pogrom carried a ready-made message. Its language was improved, and the narrative was now orderly and straightforward, but some important details were missing. As a result, the previous depth of reasoning was gone, as was the multi-layered presentation of the question of responsibility for the pogrom. Instead, the reader was given a declaration: regardless of whether the massacre was planned and who planned it, it was used for propaganda purposes by the communists. Their task was made easier because they could use the anti-Semitism of the underground as their weapon. If public officials took part in the massacre, it was because of the great dislike for the Jews by the Poles. If it was planned – here, Chęciński implicates the UB – it was because the authorities knew that a provocation would draw a response from the Poles, and they could be thus entangled in a crime, which could subsequently be taken advantage of.

The discussion of the Kielce pogrom represented only a tiny part of Chęciński's book about the situation in communist Poland. Therefore, the reader, thus far in reading the book, did not know the facts to be presented. At that point in his narrative, Chęciński used the pogrom to illustrate the complexity of relations between the communist authorities, ordinary Poles, the opposition and the Jews. Against this backdrop, he continued his story of post-war Poland.

In this context, a potential provocation was of secondary importance to Chęciński. He could expect the reader to have sufficient knowledge of the way Eastern Bloc countries functioned and present the pogrom as an example of manipulation or a political game. This interpretation, however, would make it necessary to look for an external spark that would set off a pogrom, that is, to search for evidence of communist involvement in the massacre organisation.[111] This explains

[111] A similar opinion was expressed by Klaus-Peter Fredrich (K.P. Fredrich, "Das Pogrom von Kielce am 4. Juli 1946. Anmerkungen zu einigen polnischen Neuerscheinungen," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 45/3 [1996], pp. 420–421).

why the claims made in the article differ from the findings arrived at in the book. Although they are not contradictory, they place the accent elsewhere regarding responsibility for the pogrom.

Reception of Poland: *Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism*

Chęciński's book has met with the lively interest of scholars from around the world and is one of the most frequently quoted publications abroad on the pogrom, history of Jews and Poland's communist system of government.[112] However, many authors have drawn attention to its imperfections. Its author was criticised for too great a reliance on the interviews he conducted and presenting "[…] the point of view of an understandably disillusioned Polish Jew who now makes his home in Israel." Chęciński was also criticised for downplaying the dislike for Jews prevailing among ordinary Poles and treating anti-Semitism as a Russian "import."[113] Other shortcomings that were pointed out included failure to provide a broader background against which the events unfolded, a tendency to explain everything with the operation of Soviet secret services[114] and an inability to quote sources on many occasions.[115] Wacław Soroka,[116] above all, appreciated the exposure of the communist authorities' involvement in engendering anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence but believed that Chęciński "diluted" their responsibility by overstating the role of the mob and excessively accusing the Catholic Church. He also drew attention to the fact that the view about anti-communist forces be-

[112] Reviews in English, see J.C. Campbell, "'Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism' by Michael Checinski. New York: Larz-Cohl, 1982, 270 pp.," *Foreign Affairs* 61/2 (1982), pp. 475–476; A.J. Prażmowska, "Michael Chęciński, 'Poland, Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism,' Kanz-Cohl Publishing Inc., New York, 1982, viii + 289 pp.," *Soviet Studies* 35/3 (1983), pp. 425–426; S. Kirschbaum, "Michael Checinski, 'Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism,'" *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 25/4 (1983), pp. 606–607; W.W. Soroka, "A Book That Shocks and Frightens (On the Pattern of Poland's Subjugation)," *Polish Review* 28/4 (1983), pp. 105–112; E. Mendelsohn, "'Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism' by Michael Checinski. New York, Karz-Cohl Publishing, 1982. 289 pp.," *Political Science Quarterly* 99/1 (1984), pp. 158–159.

[113] Mendelsohn, "Poland," pp. 158–159.

[114] Prażmowska, "Michael Chęciński, 'Poland,'" pp. 425–426.

[115] Kirschbaum, "Michael Checinski. 'Poland,'" pp. 606–607.

[116] Wacław W. Soroka (1917–1999) – a Polish-American historian and a Second World War veteran, associated with the popular movement. In 1947, he left Poland and, since 1963, pursued a career at the University of Wisconsin. For more on Wacław Soroka, see A. Indraszczyk, "Wacław Soroka – ludowiec na emigracji: szkic biograficzny," *Niepodległość i Pamięć* 25/4 (2018), pp. 167–203.

ing dominated by anti-Semites was a false stereotype perpetuated at American universities.[117]

Until the 1990s, Chęciński's publications had been the chief source of information on the Kielce pogrom and thus impacted the incipient discussion on Polish-Jewish relations. An interesting example of their role is offered by a short mention and a comment about the pogrom made by Gershon David Hundert[118] in his review of the book *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland*.[119] Discussing anti-Semitism in Poland and mentioning the pogroms in Rzeszów, Cracow and Kielce, Hundert wrote that "Almost everyone who has studied these events agrees that the Soviet-instructed Secret police had a hand in their provocation, perhaps with a view to turning Western opinion against Poland."[120] As a scholar respected in the world, Hundert must have been at least convinced that he was right and must have had good reasons to claim that researchers familiar with the subject of pogroms had no reservations about Soviet involvement. Formulating this thought *expressis verbis* suggests, however, that different ideas prevailed among the researchers who were not so well-versed in the subject.[121]

Although Chęciński offered many profound insights into the pogrom, he is chiefly remembered as the author of the theory that the pogrom had been organised by the UB, personally by Władysław Sobczyński, as well as the source of information on "Przelot" and "Dyomin." Once old communist archives could be accessed, these claims were proven false, and the theory about the special significance of these elusive figures, as well as about the alleged provocation by the UB at the behest of Soviet secret services, was discredited.

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[117] Soroka, "A Book That Shocks," pp. 106, 109–111.

[118] Gershon David Hundert (b. 1946) – a Canadian scholar of Jewish origin whose ancestors came from Poland. He studied the history of Polish Jews in late-modern times. For instance, the author and editor of many works on Jewish history is the editor-in-chief of the two-volume *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven–London, 2008). Between 2014 and 2018, he served as the president of the American Academy for Jewish Studies.

[119] G.D. Hundert, "Review: M. Niezabitowska, T. Tomaszewski, 'Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland,' New York: Friendly Press, [1985], 272 pp.," *Polish Review* 32/4 (1987), pp. 459–462.

[120] *Ibid.*, p. 459.

[121] One cannot ignore the Cold War climate that was favourable to accusing East-Central European countries of anti-Semitism. In this case, however, the role of ordinary Poles would have been underscored, whereas Hundert accused outright Soviet secret services.

Aleksander Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem"

Another English-language publication on the Kielce pogrom, Aleksander Smolar's[122] 1987 article in the prestigious *Daedalus*, is devoted to the history of Polish-Jewish relations.[123] The post-war period is described on ten pages, none of which is devoted to the account of the event itself.[124] What exactly happened in the Kielce pogrom interested its author far less than that it had happened at all. This is seen in his approach to the provocation theory, about which he remained quite sceptical. He believed that no evidence would be found that one of the sides of the political dispute – or both – was responsible for the pogrom and that inquiring who organised the massacre was pointless. A much more important question was how a pogrom might have occurred in a country where six million Jews had either perished or been murdered.[125]

Trying to understand the causes of the pogrom, Smolar concentrated on the role of the Catholic Church in the entire event. Thus, he presented briefly the position of bishops: they were indifferent, did not condemn anti-Jewish acts and shifted the blame for violence onto Jewish communists. He further stressed that such views were held by such important personages as August Hlond, Czesław Kaczmarek and Stefan Wyszyński and contrasted them with the attitude of the Częstochowa Bishop, Teodor Kubina.[126] Smolar, therefore, advised the reader against generalising comments by bishops as the position of the entire clergy despite the negative and critical view of the Church.

In his discussion, Smolar took advantage mainly of comments by Polish intellectuals and the press. He also quoted publications strictly on the pogrom, such as studies by Chęciński and Shneiderman, the article by Krystyna Kersten and Marc Hillel's Le massacre des Survivants: En Pologne 1945–1947, published in 1985.[127]

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[122] Aleksander Smolar (b. 1940) – a Polish feature writer and political activist of Jewish origin. Having been engaged in the March 1968 protests, he was arrested and expelled from Warsaw University. In 1971, he emigrated and served abroad as a spokesman for the Workers' Defence Committee. After the change of the political system, he returned home. From 1991 to 2020, he served as Chairman of the Board of the Stefan Batory Foundation. His father, Grzegorz Smolar, was a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Polish Jews from 1946 to 1950.

[123] A. Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," *Daedalus* 116/2 (1987), pp. 31–73.

[124] *Ibid.*, pp. 45–55.

[125] *Ibid.*, pp. 45–49.

[126] *Ibid.*, pp. 53–54.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 72. Smolar was sceptical about Hillel's book (Hillel, *Le massacre des Survivants*). In his opinion, it distorted many details, but he believed its general claims to be true.

Smolar's analysis of the pogrom was far from objective – a predetermined thesis being visible. Its central theme was the claim that the pogrom was perpetrated by "very ordinary men and women" and not "communists, secret police operatives or hated dignitaries."[128] He failed to stress the role of militiamen and soldiers who took part in the lynching and shooting of the Jews. Having used the studies by Chęciński and Shneiderman,[129] he could not have been unaware that uniformed servicemen took part in the massacre. This distortion is even more significant as the article was published in the prestigious *Daedalus*. This certainly must have contributed to the popularity and weight of Smolar's claims.

Arieh Josef Kochavi, "The Catholic Church and Antisemitism in Poland Following World War II as Reflected in British Diplomatic Documents"

In 1989, Arieh Kochavi[130] published an article on the anti-Semitism of the Catholic Church in Poland as reflected in British diplomatic documents. It, too, carried a short but significant account of the pogrom,[131] mentioning forty-seven Jews killed because of the accusation of kidnapping of a "Christian" boy. Kochavi did not go into the details of the pogrom but mentioned mutual accusations of organising the pogrom by the communists and the opposition and the fact that the Catholic Church was blamed for it. He wrote that "Polish hierarchs, unsurprisingly, rejected any guilt."[132]

Like many authors before him, Kochavi quoted the statement by August Hlond of 11 July 1946 and criticised it. This statement, as well as others made on other occasions, lacked, in the historian's opinion, any condemnation of the perpetrators and the belief in the myth of ritual murders. Kochavi also reminded readers of the

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[128] Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 49.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[130] Arieh Josef Kochavi – an Israeli modern history scholar at the University of Haifa. The author of the famous work *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (London, 2001), a part of which deals with the situation in post-war Poland, and of *Prelude to Nuremberg: Allied War Crimes Policy and the Question of Punishment* (London, 1998).

[131] A.J. Kochavi, "The Catholic Church and Antisemitism in Poland Following World War II as Reflected in British Diplomatic Documents," *Gal-Ed* 11 (1989), pp. 116–128.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

throwing of a grenade into the Committee building a year earlier and the reaction of the local clergy to this incident.[133]

Kochavi did not take a stance on the question of who had brought about the pogrom. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that for him, the theory about a provocation on the part of the anti-communist underground was as legitimate as others. Kochavi referred the reader to studies by Yehuda Bauer[134] Chęciński and Weinryb (all discussed in this article) and Israel Gutman[135] (written in Hebrew), as well as memoirs by David Kahane.[136]

Abraham Brumberg, "Poland, the Polish Intelligentsia and Antisemitism"

A few comments on the pogrom were made also by Abraham Brumberg in his 1990 article.[137] He did not go into the details of the pogrom either but used it in his discussion of anti-Semitism among the Polish intelligentsia. Having quoted a comment by Andrzej Szczypiorski,[138] who considered the pogrom a provocation "no doubt," Brumberg deemed it absurd. He maintained that no evidence had been found of the communists "instigating the massacre or Stalin planning it to justify a Soviet intervention". He observed that even if the communist authorities produced the rumour that led to the pogrom, the pogrom was perpetrated by Poles.[139]

Elsewhere in his article, Brumberg criticised the 1981 article on the pogrom by Krystyna Kersten[140] for excessive concentration on alleged pogrom organisers and insufficiently focusing on "why thousands of people could believe a rumour

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[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

[134] Y. Bauer, *HaBerihah* (Tel Aviv, 1970). This is a Hebrew version of his book *Flight and Rescue.*

[135] I. Gutman, *HaYehudim beFolin aharei Milhemet ha'Olam haSheniyah* [The Jews in Poland after the Second World War] (Jerusalem, 1985).

[136] D. Kahane, *Aharei HaMabul* [*After Deluge*] (Jerusalem, 1981).

[137] Abraham Brumberg (1926–2008) – an American writer of Polish-Jewish descent. During the Second World War, he emigrated to the United States. His interests included the Jews of East-Central Europe and communist countries. Numerous American newspapers published his work, but this article did not gain much recognition (A. Brumberg, "Poland, the Polish Intelligentsia and Antisemitism," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 20/2–3 [1990], vol. 20, pp. 5–25).

[138] Andrzej Szczypiorski (1928–2000) – a Polish writer and politician associated with the popular movement. A Warsaw Rising veteran, anti-communist dissident, and member of the Polish-Israeli Friendship Society.

[139] Brumberg, "Poland," p. 16.

[140] Kersten, "Kielce – 4 lipca 1946."

about a ritual murder and start a day of indescribable massacre." Moreover, he pointed out that she had left out the role of the Church and its failure to condemn anti-Semitism.[141]

Marion Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Attitudes in Post-Holocaust Poland*

References to the Kielce pogrom can be found in a 1992 book by Marion (Marian) Mushkat[142] discussing philo- and anti-Semitism in post-war Poland.[143] Mushkat did not go into pogrom details but attempted to outline the complex background of the events. He mentioned, for instance, the collaboration of the Świętokrzyska Brigade with the Nazis or murders perpetrated by the NSZ. On the other hand, Mushkat wrote in detail about the communist actors of the pogrom, connections of Sobczyński to the NKVD and the rampant infiltration of the anti-communist underground by agents provocateurs who were prepared to murder Jews and public officials to gain credence in the eyes of the NSZ and thus penetrate the organisation deeper still.[144] Mushkat thus pointed out that the driving force of history, in this case, was not the opposition between good philo-Semites and bad anti-Semites but rather that its actors represented a broad spectrum of attitudes. Furthermore, given this background, the reader could realise that the Jews were an instrument taken advantage of by both sides of the political conflict in their propaganda war.

Despite leaving out the account of the pogrom itself, Mushkat wrote about the events following the pogrom: arrests of civilians, but also of Sobczyński, Kuźnicki (Kuzminski in the article) and Gwiazdowicz, a later promotion of the first of them,

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[141] Brumberg, "Poland," p. 24.

[142] Marion Mushkat (1909–1995) – a Polish lawyer of Jewish origin, specialising in international law and relations. From 1945 on, he was a member of the Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR), later the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR). After the Second World War, he worked at Warsaw University, but in 1957 emigrated to Israel and took up a position at Tel Aviv University. He authored many academic publications in many languages, most related to law.

[143] M. Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Attitudes in Post-Holocaust Poland* (Queenston–Lampeter, 1992). Ezra Mendelsohn was critical of the book, especially its language problems, overuse of names and personal data, to which Western readers were not used, and of an inadequate critical apparatus (E. Mendelsohn, "Reviewed Works: 'Philo-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Attitudes in Post-Holocaust Poland' by Marian Mushkat; 'A Surplus of Memory. Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising' by Yitzhak Zuckerman, transl. Barbara Harshav," *Slavonic and East European Review* 72/3 [1994], p. 563).

[144] Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 140–142.

sentencing to death of "some murderers" and the strike of Łódź workers in reaction to their execution.[145] Mushkat stressed that the pogrom attracted the attention of not only Jews but also the world public opinion, at the same time diverting its attention away from the rigged referendum. Finally, it gave the communists a pretext to step up violence against the opposition.[146]

In an attempt to answer the question of who was responsible for the pogrom, Mushkat cited the views of public officials, opposition activists and members of the intelligentsia on the subject to show the reader how ambiguous this event was and how variously it was interpreted.[147] In his opinion, the pogrom did not have an organiser, but "It was the result of the miscalculation of the Polish communists and the work of criminals, policemen, NSZ personnel and veteran anti-Semites." In this way, he distinguished between provocateurs whose existence he disputed, groups that had created an atmosphere conducive to a pogrom and yet others who actively brought it about. In the second group, he included only the militia and UB, while the Catholic Church was blamed for too passive an attitude towards anti-Semitism.[148] Any provocations by either the NSZ or Soviets were rejected as having little credibility despite his very bad opinion of "NSZ criminals and bandits."[149]

For Mushkat, the Kielce pogrom was not an exceptional event but an instance of post-war anti-Jewish violence "[…] as if in continuation of their plan for a 'final solution of the Jewish question.'"[150] In his opinion, the source of dislike for the Jews was the nationalism of both anti-communist forces and a part of Polish communists themselves.[151] He did not segregate people into good communists and bad Fascists because the very root of evil was ethnocentrism he believed, accepted by some Poles regardless of their political views.

Although Mushkat extensively commented on the pogrom without giving any account of it, he barely cited any publications. Instead, he did quote detailed ones concerning the matters he had selected. The work of Shneiderman must have

[145] *Ibid.*, pp. 141–143.
[146] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 137–138, 141–142.
[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 137–138, 142–143.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[150] *Ibid.*, p. 142
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

been known to him, at least partially, but he did not quote it when commenting on the pogrom. By contrast, he referred the reader to a master's thesis written on the pogrom by Bożena Szaynok and that its central part was to be delivered at the conference *Pogrom in Kielce* in Tel Aviv in December 1991. It reputedly contained the thesis that the local population was to blame for the Kielce pogrom. However, it should be noted that Mushkat did not quote Bożena Szaynok's publications from 1992.[152]

Bożena Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews in Kielce, July 4, 1946"

The last English-language publication before 1992 on the Kielce pogrom was Bożena Szaynok's article, a version of her master's thesis.[153] Except for Michał Chęciński's article, it was the only publication exclusively on the massacre at that time.

Szaynok gave a detailed account of the pogrom, beginning with Henryk Błaszczyk going missing on 1 July 1946 and his parents reacting to the disappearance. Using witness testimonies, she gave various versions of where the boy stayed between 1 and 3 July, herself opting for Pielaki. In this context, she found the alleged conversation of Shneiderman with Henryk not to be credible because, in her opinion, the boy was taught the story of being kidnapped and Jewish rituals only after his return.[154]

Next, the account goes on to mention the formation of a mob, Seweryn Kahane's intervention with the militia, a search for murdered children, the arrival of troops at 7 Planty Street, entry of militiamen and troops into the Committee building, seizure of firearms and the start of the massacre.[155] Further, accounts of the start of the shooting inside the Committee building are extensively discussed, as are ones on the mob joining in the massacre. The use of firearms in self-defence by the Jews, they being cast out by the militiamen and soldiers into the mob,[156] discussions and

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[153] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 199–235. The article is based on her published master's thesis, see Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów.*

[154] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 199–202. It is worth noting that the latest book on the Kielce pogrom by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir does not discuss the question of Henryk's absence but presents its author's version as absolutely sure (Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, pp. 80–97).

[155] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 204–211.

[156] *Ibid.*, pp. 211–216.

communications between various officials and commanding officers about what to do in the face of the pogrom, and confusion caused by their indecisiveness[157] as well as murders elsewhere in Kielce[158] are all discussed in detail. Finally, the article gives the number of dead as forty-two and the list of victims of the pogrom.[159]

Bożena Szaynok's article was the first to provide a detailed account of the pogrom and a landmark in the study of the subject. It was also the first to quote communist sources and so extensively discuss the participation of uniformed services in the pogrom. However, these merits that made Szaynok's article so exceptional made it difficult for non-Polish speaking readers. Long quotes and a detailed narrative featuring numerous names and positions produced information noise that readers used to a different tradition of academic writing found hard to struggle through. To make matters worse, a broader backdrop of the pogrom, introduction and summary were missing from the article to the disadvantage of non-Polish readers unfamiliar with the local context, which they would greatly benefit from by being able to follow the narrative with far less effort.[160]

The reasons for this form of the article may include the desire to render the story of the pogrom as objectively as possible and present the knowledge transpiring from communist archives made accessible after 1989 as accurately as possible. It has to be remembered that this article was the first such serious and detailed study of the Kielce pogrom both in Poland[161] and abroad.[162] A clear favouring of one of the interpretations would have met with criticism, while the form of the

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[157] *Ibid.*, pp. 216–219, 222–223.

[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 220–221, 230–234.

[159] *Ibid.*, pp. 234–235.

[160] Meanwhile, the account of events preceding the massacre itself takes up almost one-third of the text (*ibid.*, pp. 199–211). The readability of a work is crucial, as illustrated by the comparison of the popularity of Szaynok's article and Jan Tomasz Gross's *Fear*, which, despite its lesser particularity, dominated how the pogrom was represented in the public mind in later years (J.T. Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz* [New York, 2006], pp. 81–166). It must be stressed, however, that some non-Polish authors with knowledge of the Polish language, instead of this article, quoted Szaynok's book *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach*. A similar conflict between objectivity and text readability was probably faced by Michał Chęciński, whose study was mentioned in this article.

[161] Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów*. The same year saw the publication of annotated source documents on the pogrom, edited by Stanisław Meducki and Zenon Wrona, *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946. Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 1 (Kielce 1992).

[162] This is to mean the content of published works and not the knowledge itself of their authors on the pogrom.

article prevented the author from adding a lengthy commentary or a discussion of the credibility of particular source types.[163] The last-mentioned question was so important that "for the Western world, Communism was an experience that never happened."[164]

Surprising as this may seem, despite the excellent empirical work done in the article, it is not free from inaccuracies. *Exempli gratia*, in the beginning, it gives the number of pogrom casualties as forty-two Jews – without mentioning any Poles[165] – while at the end – as forty-four of which forty-two were killed in the pogrom itself, including two Poles, and two that died in hospital.[166] The first number may, in fact, have been given by the editors of the *Yad Vashem Studies*.

Szaynok relied, above all, on Polish documents produced by communist secret services. The information they provided was compared with and supplemented by the non-polish relations: Shneiderman,[167] Cytron,[168] Shtokfish[169] and Bliss-Lane.[170] She did not refer, however, to the publications mentioned above or the press other than Polish except for one occasion, where a fragment of the pogrom account from Chęciński's book is quoted but without his commentary.[171] As a result, the article lacks a clear author's stance on the pogrom theories discussed in non-Polish publications for almost half a century. Neither does it assess the output of Western researchers in the light of discoveries made by its author.

What else made Bożena Szaynok's article exceptional was an entirely different view of the pogrom. She studied it as a unique event and confined her interpretation to related matters. Meanwhile, non-Polish researchers working at that time treated the pogrom as an element of a greater whole while its course was often

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[163] It must be remembered that the article was written in 1992 when the study of records left by various communist authorities was only beginning. Therefore, the absence of a broader criticism of sources should be treated as the characteristic of the times and not a deficiency of the author's research technique.

[164] É. Kovács, "Limits of Universalization: The European Memory Sites of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 20/4 (2018), p. 498.

[165] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," p. 199.

[166] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

[167] *Ibid.*, pp. 201, 222.

[168] *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 211–212, 214, 216–217, 227, 234–235.

[169] *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 212–213, 215, 235.

[170] *Ibid*, p. 214.

[171] *Ibid.*, p. 216. Curiously enough, Szaynok spotlighted the figure of Władysław Sobczyński in the pogrom as did Chęciński and yet did not comment on his publications and opinions (*ibid.*, pp. 207–209, 217–220, 224–227).

left out. For this reason, presumably, Szaynok focused on the immediate causes of the massacre and not a general setting which could have induced people to perpetrate a crime. Therefore, the article lacks any references to the role played by the Catholic Church and the anti-communist underground in contrast to works by foreign authors where such references are frequent.

Bożena Szaynok's article and her study published in Poland marked the end of the first period of pogrom studies in which the massacre was thought of chiefly as an instance of anti-Jewish violence, and the press stories and testimonies of surviving Jews were the only available sources. Szaynok's article was the first and the only serious publication on the pogrom by an author working in Poland. It resounded in international academic literature and showed that any further study of the massacre – and not only – was impossible without using communist archives. Moreover, Szaynok showed that the study of the Kielce pogrom called for an enormous amount of empirical work and that its interpretation merely as a sign of anti-Semitism was inadequate.

Image of the Pogrom

Although from the pogrom in 1946 to 1992 almost half a century had lapsed, the massacre noticeably did not attract any special interest of English-speaking researchers.[172] Moreover, only two publications dealt specifically with the pogrom,[173] while others only mentioned it, albeit in some cases quite extensively. The reason in this case probably being the fact that for the people of those turbulent and belligerent times, a pogrom in a provincial Central-European city could not represent a particularly spectacular event.[174] It was commonly believed therefore

[172] Mushkat noticed this by observing that the pogrom "until now has been mentioned only in passing" (Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 137). He may have thus referred to the studies by Bożena Szaynok (*ibid*., p. 137).

[173] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom;" Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews."

[174] Now, an opposite tendency is noticeable. In the seventy years since the Holocaust, it has become one of many mass murders described – next to the Holodomor in Ukraine, the Armenian Genocide or the Ruanda Genocide – in publications on world history. For that matter, the period in question witnessed other more severe incidents in which the criterion of division into victims and murderers was ethnicity. Among such incidents were the Sétif and Guelma massacre on 8 May 1945, the Deir Yassin massacre on 9 April 1948, the Kafr Qasim massacre on 29 October 1956 and the Paris massacre on 17 October 1961. Therefore, the Kielce pogrom could be viewed by the general public as one of many acts of mass violence after the Second World War. Lately, however, the Kielce pogrom has attracted increasing interest from regionalist historians and is discussed in the context of the Poles' self-perception.

to have been yet another instance and summation of Polish anti-Semitism: "the most gruesome,"[175] but still a "typical" pogrom.[176] What could be seen as special about it, though, was its scale and the fact that it was openly perpetrated in broad daylight.[177] More interest than the pogrom itself was aroused by the question how it was possible that a year after the war had ended – during which several million Jews perished – in the country that became a vortex of death and desolation and, at the same time, one of the principal victims of an appalling military conflagration, a several-hour-long massacre could happen in broad daylight with the participation of ordinary residents in a city where the bishop was based.[178]

Initially, the reason why the pogrom attracted little interest could have been general indifference to all matters Jewish until the 1960s when Adolf Eichman was captured and tried in Jerusalem.[179] With time, the knowledge of those events diminished. After Weinryb's work, seventeen years had to pass until 1970 before the pogrom reappeared – in a book by Yehuda Bauer only loosely connected to the history of Poland. In the first quarter of a century, only a single short publication on the pogrom came out, while since the 1970s, interest in the subject has noticeably increased.

One of the reasons for the change in the dynamics could have been a Cold War propaganda contest between the so-called free world and the Eastern Bloc. A need then arose for the negative presentation of the East and defence of the "democratic" West, for instance, by an instrumental treatment of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations.[180] The pogrom ideally suited the purpose of perpetuating the myth of "traditional Polish anti-Semitism" and helped show that a dislike for the Jews afflicted primitive communist countries and not "civilised ones."

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[175] Weinryb, "Poland," p. 252.

[176] Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," p. 67.

[177] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 208; Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 57.

[178] To the socio-historical backdrop of the pogrom, special attention is given by Yehuda Bauer (Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 206, 208; *id.*, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 65). This question resounds strongly in Smolar's article (Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," pp. 45–46, 48–49).

[179] Kovács, "Limits of Universalization," p. 494; S. Stach, "'It Was the Poles' or How Emanuel Ringelblum Was Instrumentalized by Expellees in West Germany. On the History of the Book Ghetto Warschau: Tagebucher aus dem Chaos," *Czech Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (2018), pp. 42–43, 61.

[180] H. Maischein, "The Historicity of the Witness: The Polish Relationship to Jews and Germans in the Polish Memory Discourse of the Holocaust," in *Jews and Germans in Eastern Europe. Shared and Comparative Histories*, ed. by T. Grill (Berlin–Boston, 2018), pp. 221–223; S. Stach, "'It Was the Poles."

The treatment of the Kielce massacre as predominantly an instance of the Polish dislike for the Jews perfectly filled the bill.[181] Last but not least, the inclination of Western historians to identify with victims and ignore the causes and context of events contributed to the bias.[182]

This explanation, however, seems inadequate. Most historians who studied the pogrom were of Jewish descent (Weinryb, Dobroszycki, Chęciński and Smolar were Polish Jews, Brumberg spent his childhood in Poland while Bauer and Kochavi came from Israel), five emigrated from Poland (Weinryb, Dobroszycki, Chęciński, Smolar and Mushkat), of whom three left Poland in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Dobroszycki, Chęciński, Smolar) and three maintained relations with the communist authorities in Poland in the past (Dobroszycki,[183] Chęciński[184] and Mushkat[185]). Although the climate was favourable to writing emphasising anti-Semitism in Poland, there were no British or American, German or French authors who would publish on this subject in prestigious American or British journals. Nor were there any ethnic Poles who would take a closer look at the pogrom after leaving the country. Hence, the question can be asked why an event that was considered a manifestation of anti-Semitism was studied by those whose people had suffered a greater tragedy than the Shoah and did not arouse any interest of historians who were not personally involved in Polish-Jewish relations.

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[181] For more on the stereotypical presentation of Poles as primitive anti-Semitic churls, see D. Goska, *Biegański. Stereotyp Polaka bydlaka w stosunkach polsko-żydowskich i amerykańskiej kulturze popularnej* (Cracow, 2015). This stereotype probably persists to an extent to this day. J. Tokarska-Bakir called the July 1946 events in Kielce a "low-tech massacre". She did not explain why the inclusion in the "low-tech" category should matter for its victims and how it helped to understand the pogrom better. What she did, however, was to characterise the tools – simple household objects – used to kill people. Her description failed to mention, however, that some victims were stabbed to death with bayonets or shot with firearms that can hardly be called primitive technology. Such a description paints the picture of Kielce residents as primitive churls and defines them as the major group of perpetrators responsible for the massacre (J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, pp. 60–61). Tomasz Domański observed that the authors of *Dalej jest noc* referred to village residents during the German occupation as *wieśniak/wieśniacy* – terms that have pejorative connotations in Polish (T. Domański, *Korekta obrazu?*, p. 303).

[182] T. Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York 2010), p. 399.

[183] A. Czyżewski, "Lucjan Dobroszycki (1925–1995) – zapomniany historyk (nie tylko) Zagłady," *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 1 (2022), vol. 67, pp. 12 ff.

[184] Michał Chęciński was a commissioned officer in the Polish People's Army, associated with counterintelligence.

[185] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], 2386/15141, Information on the conduct of selected (former) higher state officials who emigrated to Israel, Warsaw, 21 September 1959, pp. 32–33.

A partial answer is the language barrier,[186] but a more convincing one is the very experience of the Holocaust. Although the Kielce pogrom was one of the many momentous events in the history of the world at that time, for many Jews, it was the end of their community in Poland and the last large pogrom of Jews in European history.[187] It was also a signal that despite the egalitarian slogans proclaimed by the communists, the Poland they ruled was not a friendly place for Jews, with the ultimate proof being the Kielce pogrom followed by the March of 1968.[188] Thus, the pogrom became an integral part of Jewish history, especially of the Jewish minority in Poland, as well as the final paroxysm of the Holocaust – and thus its part; it also represented a major stage on the road to the foundation of Israel. It was this last-named aspect that made the pogrom interesting to researchers of Jewish origin but not so to Western ones. Not insignificant was the fact that some saw the massacre victims as not only people or Jews but also Holocaust survivors.[189]

If this is true, it would mean that for the first half a century, the Kielce pogrom was viewed from a pre-set perspective, while what motivated the researchers was emotions and questions of identity. This would also explain why no researcher, even Michał Chęciński, was interested in reconstructing the course of the

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[186] Researchers who spoke only congress languages would not have been able to avail themselves fully of sources in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish or to talk to witnesses. For this reason, they would have sourced their knowledge on the pogrom, mainly from Shneiderman's book and English-language newspapers that contained communist propaganda. However, specialists in Polish or Jewish history could be expected to know, at least to a degree, the languages they needed for their research. There have been no publications of sources concerning the Kielce pogrom translated into English. The first such publication will probably be the translation of the second volume of *Pod klątwą* by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir.

[187] Albeit not the last instance of anti-Jewish riots. In late July and early August 1947, the so-called Sergeants affair broke out in Palestine and the United Kingdom. The Jewish militant organisation Irgun kidnapped two British soldiers and threatened to kill them if the British authorities would execute three members of the organisation captured earlier. Carrying out their threat, Irgun militants killed the soldiers, triggering anti-Jewish riots by British people and soldiers in Tel Aviv and the United Kingdom.

[188] In the wake of the March 1968 incidents, Aleksander Smolar, for one, was expelled from a university.

[189] The aspects of the Holocaust, its survivors and the pogrom are linked by: Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 247–253; Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 206; *id.*, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 43; Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," pp. 66–67. Chęciński, in his article, does not refer to the Holocaust in the context of the pogrom, although a mention to this effect does appear in his book, in the introduction to the Kielce events (Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 57; *id.*, *Poland*, p. 21; Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, p. 264). The question thus should be asked if the treatment of pogrom victims as Holocaust survivors contributes anything to the discussion of the pogrom or if it is merely a rhetorical device.

pogrom,[190] and greater interest was aroused by the fact that the pogrom occurred in the first place.

Although the simplified view of the pogrom found in the literature on the subject fitted well the stereotype of the anti-Semitic Pole, the source of ascribing dislike for the Jews to the Poles *en masse* lay elsewhere. It followed from the adopted perspective and perhaps from researchers' own experience or the authors they availed themselves of. The same factor, therefore, made researchers of Jewish origin alone study the pogrom but also view it in a specific way. The origin of the pogrom researchers and authors of testimonies related to it made them more credible to the Western elites than the Poles, who were entangled in a political struggle and accused of anti-Semitism. They were lent more credence still by the simple fact that it was the Jews who mostly perished in the pogrom in contrast to Poles, its perpetrators.[191] Then again, however, it must be remembered that the

[190] A lack of sources can hardly explain the reluctance to reconstruct the course of the pogrom. Michał Chęciński talked to well-informed people about the pogrom but simplified the account of events. The course of the pogrom was, in fact, reconstructed using interviews with its witnesses by Marc Hillel (M. Hillel, *Le massacre des Survivants*, pp. 256–281). Dispersed information could also be found in American newspapers and recorded testimonies of the Kielce Jews (Cytron, *Sefer Kielce*, pp. 253–258; D. Shtokfish, *Al betenu she-harav-Fun der khorever heym* [*About our house which was devastated*] [Tel Aviv, 1981], pp. 64–66). Foreign archives held resources usable in the study of the pogrom, as shown by Kochavi's article, containing copies of documents related to the Kielce pogrom. Unfortunately, they were not used in the account of the pogrom given there. The documents he found have not been used by the other researchers (Kochavi, "The Catholic Church"). Antony Polonsky, likewise, included copies of pogrom-related documents in his article but did not give any account of the massacre; they, too, have not resurfaced in later publications (A. Polonsky, "Jews in Eastern Europe after World War II: Documents from the British Foreign Office," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 10/1 [1980], pp. 52–70). In the collection of American diplomacy documents, several sources refer to the Kielce pogrom (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, vol. 6: *Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union*, ed. by R. Churchill and W. Slany [Washington, 1969], pp. 478–480, 483–484). Adolf Berman's report is worth mentioning among Israeli archive holdings as it concerns the Kielce pogrom; it can be found in the Ghetto Fighters' House. It was quoted in part in the 2004 book by Arnon Rubin (A. Rubin, *Facts and Fictions about the Rescue of the Polish Jewry during the Holocaust*, vol. 6: *The Kielce Pogrom. Spontaneity, Provocation or Part of a Country-Wide Scheme?* [Tel Aviv, 2004], pp. 310–313). Rubin's copy was included by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir in her most recent book on the pogrom (Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą*, vol. 2: *Dokumenty*, pp. 113–116). The last-mentioned author, despite the significance of the report, left out its fragments, distorted its contents and did not reach the original, which had one more page (Ghetto Fighters House Archives, 11248/3, The July 4, 1946 pogrom in Kielce: reports, correspondence, responses, and excerpts from the press, fols 1–6). All these records show that during the Cold War, information that could help reconstruct the pogrom was still available.

[191] A similar view was taken of the credibility of Jewish relations concerning the pogrom itself. Communists were believed to deserve little credence, while the opposition and the Church were accused of anti-Semitism. Hence, the most credible information source from the point of view of Western observers

pogrom, and Polish anti-Semitism in its context, was in most cases only one of several subjects discussed by the historians. They could have used widespread stereotypes themselves, as would suggest a limited number of source references in pogrom accounts written by some researchers, and due to the failure to go into details and only cursory study of the pogrom, perpetuate the stereotypes.

The above interpretation of publications on the pogrom raises a major doubt. Suppose the massacre in Kielce was pictured as an episode of Jewish history. Why was it written only in the 1970s and later, and not right after it occurred when memories were the freshest and public interest the greatest? Perhaps, an answer to this question can be found in the studies by Audrey Kichelewski, who observed that among the Jews who emigrated from Poland to France, two attitudes could be noticed. Those who left in 1946 did not feel attached to Poland, while for those who left in 1956, and especially in 1968, Poland was part of their identity and history, inspiring love or hatred for itself.[192] Therefore, such a phenomenon and emotions stirred up by the past could be responsible for the motivation of some scholars studying the subjects in which the theme of the pogrom was present. Moreover, a delay in the study of the pogrom could have also been caused by the fact that migrating pogrom witnesses had to re-establish themselves in new environments and cope with the trauma caused by it and the Holocaust alike.

Sources

One of the characteristics of early publications on the pogrom was the limited use of source material. The most-quoted one was the book by Shneiderman,[193]

was the Jews, apparently politically neutral victims of the massacre. It is very likely for this reason that the American ambassador to Poland, Arthur Bliss-Lane, in a telegram to the Secretary of State, wrote in the context of the pogrom about his "best Jewish sources" ("The Ambassador in Poland [Lane] to the Secretary of State, Warsaw, July 15, 1946," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, vol. 6, p. 479).

[192] A. Kichelewski, "In or Out? Identities and Images of Poland among Polish Jews in the Postwar Years," in *New Directions in the History of the Jews in the Polish Lands*, ed. by A. Polonsky, H. Węgrzynek, and A. Żbikowski (Boston, 2018), pp. 475–476.

[193] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 319–320; Dobroszycki did mention it, but not in the context of the pogrom (Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," p. 70; Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 72; *id.*, *Poland*, p. 33; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 72). Bauer must have used it or gained knowledge of it from someone who knew it, which is attested by the information about the killing of Seweryn Kahane by the mob and not soldiers (Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 208). Kochavi quotes the works of the authors mentioned above who relied on the information included in Shneiderman's book (Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, p. 116; Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 201, 222).

whereas the other sources and relations were quoted far less frequently. Some researchers made use of interviews with eyewitnesses. This was undoubtedly done by Yehuda Bauer and Michał Chęciński[194] and probably by Weinryb,[195] although the last-named author did not inform about this in his publication. Although only Weinryb's chapter was written before the 1957 publication of *Sefer Kielce* and Shtokfish's book came out in 1981, the memoirs of Jews concerning Kielce met with limited interest from historians.[196] Only Szaynok and Chęciński included extensive bibliographies of the pogrom in their respective works, whereas the others did not go beyond earlier narratives. At best, they supplemented them with materials that were easily accessible to them. For example, the authors who had left Poland used Polish newspapers,[197] while Israeli researchers – the relation of Dawid Kahane.[198] Except for Szaynok, they did not undertake an archival search for possible pogrom-related materials either.

The limited choice of literature and sources did not result from a language barrier.[199] This testifies to the conviction prevalent at that time that there was nothing else to be discovered about the pogrom[200] and would also explain the limited interest in the event shown by scholars. The main lines of interpretation were set as it seems not by researchers but by the first reports of the pogrom

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[194] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 61, 72.

[195] The information he gives goes beyond the scope of the publications he quotes. See the section on his book.

[196] Szaynok extensively quotes *Al betenu she-harav-Fun der khorever heym* by Shtokfish (Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 204, 212–213, 215, 235), and even more extensively – *Sefer Kielce* by Cytron (*ibid.,* pp. 204, 211–212, 214, 216–217, 227, 234–235). *Sefer Kielce* was used by Chęciński, too (Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 72). Smolar does not quote the above publications but notices instead the French-language publication by Marc Hillel (Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 72).

[197] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 72; *id.*, *Poland*, p. 33; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," pp. 71–73.

[198] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, s. 344; Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, pp. 116–117. Kahane was also quoted by Weinryb (*id.*, "Poland," p. 249).

[199] Most of the researchers were of Jewish descent, many came from Poland, and all discussed articles were written in English.

[200] This view prevailed also in Poland, in the opinion of Krystyna Kersten. In the introduction to Bożena Szaynok's 1992 book *Pogrom Żydów*, Kersten claims that "the reluctance to undertake the study of the history of the Kielce pogrom stemmed from the view that after the publications on this subject that had come out outside Poland, there was nothing new to be said, everything was known. A mistaken view for even a cursory review of relevant sources showed clearly that we knew nothing about the mechanism of the massacre and that the issues underlying the tragedy and its situational context called for a more thorough study" (Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów*, p. 7).

in the press,[201] relations of Jews fleeing Poland[202] and the book by Samuel Leib Shneiderman.[203] It was from there that three recurrent *topoi* emerged to be encountered later in research:[204] the anti-communist underground was strong and anti-Semitic,[205] the Catholic Church was influential, anti-Semitic and re-

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[201] The American press abundantly drew information on the massacre from official communist propaganda supplied by Wiktor Grosz. See J. Tyszkiewicz, "The Pogrom in Kielce as Reported by Opinion-Making US Newspapers in 1946," *Polish Jewish Studies* 3 (2022), pp. 262–276.

[202] The experience of the Holocaust, post-war violence and the necessity to leave the country must have no doubt left an impact on how the Jews perceived the Poles and, consequently, the pogrom (K. Kersten, "Pogrom of Jews in Kielce on July 4, 1946," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 76 [1997], p. 197). Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that some members of the Jewish community purposefully exaggerated the threat of violence and pogroms, shaping thus the opinion of Poland in the world. David Kahane mentioned earlier reputedly said while abroad that "the Polish government has the best intentions, but it is not able to control the situation because seventy, eighty per cent of the Polish nation is overcome with anti-Semitic venom." He also accused General Anders and his followers of the perpetration of murders of Jews. The communist authorities pressurised him in relation to slogans he proclaimed abroad, probably using the evidence of embezzlement of Jewish Religious Congress funds he was entrusted with against him. They also charged him with purposeful exaggeration of the threat of pogroms and the scale of anti-Jewish violence. Finally, he was characterised as "being officially favourably disposed to People's Poland, while in fact, he was its masked enemy" (AIPN, 0192/28, Memo, Warsaw, 19 January 1947, pp. 29–30; *ibid*., Agent Report, [no place], early 1947, pp. 35–36; *ibid*., Note, 13 August 1947, p. 39; *ibid*., Profile of Kahane, Dawid, [no place, no date], c. 1948, p. 169). Kahane himself was a Zionist and, in conversations with the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States, criticised the communists and opposed the assimilation of Jews (M. Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944–50* [London–New York, 2009], p. 70 and endnote 58 on page 164; see Ghetto Fighters House Archives 15184rm, Testimony of Rabbi David Kahane, fols 1–11).

[203] Shneiderman's *Between Fear and Hope* contains many distortions of the picture of post-war Poland. He was a well-known American journalist of Polish-Jewish descent, witness of the Spanish Civil War and promoter of Yiddish, writing about Poland. Sympathising with socialist views, he was probably intentionally used by the communist authorities to spread the propaganda image of Poland under communist rule. With respect to the years 1945–1946, his dossier reads: "In 45–46 […] the above-named [S.L. Shneiderman] contacted Polish People's Republic's diplomatic personnel in the USA and as Com. Oskar Lange says, 'he rendered us very great services with his work and contacts'. Com. Litauer writes about the above-named: 'He is sincerely devoted to the new democratic Poland; he worked with us in America'. What the merits and collaboration consisted in, we do not know" (AIPN, 01136/17, Report, Warsaw, 14 December 1955, p. 14). Faced with the discredit of the communist authorities and their failure to fulfil egalitarian promises made to the Jews, he became a critic of Poland's political system, as could be seen, for instance, in his book *The Warsaw Heresy* (New York, 1959). The book was re-published by Sagwan Press in 2015.

[204] This article does not discuss the legitimacy of charges made in the press and Shneiderman's book or in publications of other authors. Szaynok's article does not contain any of the leading topics named earlier, but its author does not make her narrative overly general with respect to the pogrom and does not relate to foreign historical writings on the pogrom, focusing solely on a detailed account of what happened.

[205] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 248–249, 252–253; Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 113–115, 209; Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," pp. 68–69; Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 60, 71; Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 65; Chęciński, *Poland*, p. 31; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," pp. 50, 70; Mush-

mained passive with respect to anti-Semitism,[206] and the communist authorities were well-disposed to the Jews, but were too weak to defend them.[207] Fi-

kat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 138, 140–142, 244. See also: R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1945–1948* (Kielce, 2002). For the organisation of anti-communist forces and accusations of organising the pogrom levelled against them see *id.*, "Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 25–74. The opinion of the omnipotence of partisan units in the vicinity of Kielce, researchers believe, can be traced to communist propaganda and probably was an element in an intelligence game. A July 1947 report of the American intelligence, "Survey of the Illegal Opposition in Poland," is worth quoting in this context. It says that in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, "The population is as much controlled by the Partisans as by the government. There, even those elements which otherwise would be inimical are kept in line by fear of the Partisans." It continues by saying that the Kielce area was one of the regions with the highest concentration of partisan units. Supposedly, "Szary" was still active there with his 7,000–8,000 men (Archives of the Central Intelligence Agency, General CIA Records, CIA-RDP82-00457R000500200011-6, Survey of the Illegal Opposition in Poland, [no place], 1 August 1947, pp. 3–4, 6). Actually, Antoni Heda, nom de guerre "Szary," ceased his operations after the attack on the prison in Kielce on 5 August 1945. It is estimated that due to the amnesty announced on 22 February 1947, 1,100–1,800 partisans – in total in Poland – stayed in the woods by the spring. From January 1946 to April 1947, the number of partisans stayed below 450 in the Kielce Voivodeship. Only a tiny percentage belonged to the National Armed Forces, and a majority of the partisans were concentrated not in the Kielce area but in the vicinity of Radom (*Atlas Polskiego Podziemia Niepodległościowego, 1944–1956*, ed. by R. Wnuk, S. Poleszak, A. Jaczyńska, and M. Śladecka [Warszawa–Lublin, 2007], pp. XXXII, 523–524).

[206] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 249–250; Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 209–211; Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 58, 60, 71; Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence*, pp. 43, 65; Chęciński, *Poland*, pp. 21–22, 33–34; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," pp. 52–55; Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, pp. 116–119; Brumberg, "Poland," p. 15. The last-named author faulted Krystyna Kersten for not discussing this subject in her 1981 article (*ibid.*, p. 24; Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 142–143). Jan Żaryn argued against the thesis about the anti-Semitic and passive Church (J. Żaryn, "Hierarchia Kościoła katolickiego wobec relacji polsko-żydowskich w latach 1945–1947," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 75–110). Worthy of note is the fact that the conviction about the Church's ability to influence Polish post-war society was adopted *a priori*, while the statements of particular hierarchs illustrated its alleged anti-Semitism and passiveness.

[207] Weinryb, "Poland," p. 253; Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 113–114, 219–220; Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," pp. 60–61, 63, 70. Dobroszycki also observed that communists could be anti-Semites and contribute to violence at a local level (*ibid.*, p. 68). Michał Chęciński argued against the thesis about the weakness of the communist authorities in Kielce in 1946, which also suggests that he must have heard such an opinion after leaving Poland (Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 66–70; Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence*, pp. 64–65). In his book, Chęciński informed about the increasing impression that the authorities were weak but did not comment on whether the impression was right (Chęciński, *Poland*, p. 31; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 60; Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, p. 116). An elaborate opinion on the communist authorities in the context of the pogrom was given by Mushkat. On the one hand, he pointed out the anti-Semitism of some communists (Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 143, 264); on the other hand, he showed what assistance Jews received after the war (*ibid.*, p. 186). He also observed that the communist authorities were not weak and had the support of the Soviet Army (*ibid.*, p. 266). For the instrumental treatment of the Jewish question by the communist authorities, see M. Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland*. The strength and efficiency of the communist authorities and their enforcement tools are attested by the effective rigging of the referendum results on 30 June 1946 and the preceding crackdown on the opposition.

nally, the statement by August Hlond of 11 July 1946 was regularly referred to as well.[208]

Details

Early publications on the pogrom showed little interest in its details. Even though contradicting and unreliable information could be found in the press and other sources, researchers did not compare or verify it with other sources. The distinction between the mob, militia and army was often obliterated, and it did not matter who murdered the Jews – the perpetrators were Poles motivated by their anti-Semitism.[209] What is more, all these publications skirted the issue of Soviet troops and did not ask any questions about their absence/presence during the massacre that lasted several hours.[210] Only Chęciński's works brought into discussion the theme of Soviet secret services and showed what a mysterious event the pogrom was. In contrast, Szaynok showed that treating particular groups as a uniform mass was quite wrong.[211]

Similarly, the issue of Henryk Błaszczyk's absence between 1 and 3 July did not interest researchers much. A terse and simplified account of Henryk's disappearance is strange as much as they could access at least one attractive and

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[208] Weinryb, "Poland," p. 250; Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, pp. 210–211; Chęciński, *Poland*, p. 22; Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 53; Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, pp. 116–117.

[209] This point of view was excellently expressed by Abraham Brumberg. In his opinion, a potential provocation on the part of communist authorities did not alter the fact that "Who, if not thousands of Poles descended upon the survivors of Auschwitz and Treblinka with axe and knife on the strength of a rumour that Jews had committed 'ritual murder'?" (Brumberg, "Poland," p. 16. Likewise, Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 49).

[210] The issue of Soviet troops was not raised in press reports on the pogrom or Shneiderman's book. Jechiel Alpert reportedly informed the reporter about the participation of Polish soldiers in the pogrom, but he mentioned it only perfunctorily. The question of whether Alpert brought to Shneiderman's attention the total passiveness of soldiers faced with the pogrom a few days after the rigged referendum remains open (see Testimony of witness Jechiel Alpert before the Court of Peace, Tel Aviv, 16 July 1996, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, p. 361). For the account of the pogrom in Shneiderman's book, see *id.*, *Between Fear and Hope*, pp. 85–107.

[211] Joanna Tokarska-Bakir has expanded the phenomenological approach to the pogrom actors. She has recommended that pogrom participants should not be tagged anymore as members of particular social or occupational groups. Instead, she suggested that specific persons should be scrutinised from the angle of their past and practices. For more on the methodology used in *Pod klątwą*, see J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Sous anathéme," in *Les Polonais et la Shoah: une nouvelle* école *historique*, ed. by A. Kichelewski, J. Lyon-Caen, J.-Ch. Szurek, and A. Wieviorka (Paris 2019), pp. 191–204.

elaborate, albeit not necessarily true, line of interpretation. Shneiderman in *Between Fear and Hope,* one of the most important early sources on the pogrom, quoted his conversation with Henryk Błaszczyk that supposedly took place on 5 July 1946. In it, the boy reportedly said that when he stayed in Pielaki, the house of the Bartosińskis was visited "after sunset, by several people and they talked for a long time." What is more, it was also Tadeusz Bartosiński who reportedly took the boy to the village and told him to tell the story about Jews under threat of beating.[212] Wiktor Grosz, too, told foreign journalists about an "anti-Semitic Pole" teaching Błaszczyk a story about being kidnapped by Jews.[213] It was this version that made its way to the American press, for instance, to *The New York Times*.[214]

Meanwhile, the historians gave the following accounts of Henryk Błaszczyk's disappearance. Weinryb wrote that Błaszczyk had been fed the story of kidnapping and suggested that the underground was responsible for it.[215] Bauer, in turn, mentioned only Henryk telling his story at the militia station.[216] According to Dobroszycki, the boy had gone missing and upon his return spoke about being held by Jews, whereas he supposedly stayed with some friends of his father's 25 kilometres from Kielce and he invented the story of kidnapping and murdering children out of fear, and as an excuse.[217] Chęciński devoted to Henryk three pages in his article on which he wrote about Antoni Pasowski and Pielaki, but concentrated on the latter version. Ultimately, he considered the boy's disappearance a part of the conspiracy of "Dyomin" and Henryk's father ("Przelot") who allegedly brought about the pogrom in the name of the NSZ.[218] In the book, Pasowski was not mentioned, while its author even more strongly argued that the intrigue he described

[212] Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*, p. 94.

[213] Shapiro, "Poland," p. 384.

[214] *The New York Times*, among others, wrote that the peasant (with whom the boy stayed in the countryside) had given Henryk Błaszczyk the story about being kidnapped by Jews ("Poles Declares Two Hoaxes Caused High Toll in Pogrom," *The New York Times*, 6 July 1946).

[215] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 252–253.

[216] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 206. In his second publication, he reduced the entire theme to the accusation of ritual use of blood (*id.*, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 65).

[217] Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," p. 67.

[218] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," pp. 61–64.

was true.[219] Smolar and Mushkat left out this part of the pogrom,[220] while Kochavi and Brumberg reduced it to a rumour about a ritual murder.[221] Szaynok wrote several pages about the kidnapping and Henryk's visit at the militia station. She opted for the Pielaki version in which the story about Jews was suggested to the boy by adults upon his return. If so, why on July 5th, in the presence of UB officers, did Henryk Błaszczyk tell this version of events to two American journalists? Szaynok offered no comment. The discussion and presentation of other versions of young Błaszczyk's absence were relegated to a footnote.[222]

Inspired by the communist authorities and reported by *The New York Times* and Shneiderman, the story would suggest that the people who visited Bartoszyński were partisans and so the pogrom was planned by the NSZ. Information to this effect was available to the communist authorities already on 5 July and they decided to inform the world about this already on the next day after the pogrom. Shneiderman himself believed that the NSZ organised the pogrom[223] and that Walenty Błaszczyk was a NSZ member.[224] The belief in this version was also shared by some researchers, especially in Jewish circles.[225] Others, in turn, were not interested in Henryk's disappearance; instead, a more important question to them was why in the middle of the twentieth century people could believe that children were murdered to procure their blood.[226]

Faced with contradicting information on presumed intrigue plotters, researchers outside Poland could thus opt for a communist provocation or a conspiracy by the underground. Alternatively, they could choose not to side with either opinion and reduce the cause of Henryk's disappearance to the belief of the Poles in the medieval legend about a ritual murder, thereby reinforcing the stereotype of ubiquitous and eternal anti-Semitism of the Poles. It is also worth noting that in

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[219] *Id.*, *Poland*, pp. 24–27.

[220] Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 47; Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, pp. 137–143.

[221] Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, p. 116; Brumberg, "Poland," p. 24.

[222] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," pp. 199–204. A discussion on Shneiderman's thesis and the version about Pasowski is included in fn. 7, p. 201.

[223] Shneiderman, *Between Fear and Hope*, pp. 85–86.

[224] J. Bookstein, "Variations on a legend. Dictionary of the Kielce pogrom. Ethnography, legend, and narrative" (University of Oregon 1993), p. 162. [unpublished BA thesis]

[225] Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów*, p. 20.

[226] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 206; Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, p. 116; Brumberg, "Poland," p. 24.

Poland the anti-communist underground stopped being accused of organising the pogrom within a few weeks of it and ultimately no connection was established between the massacre and the underground at the show trial.[227]

That the researchers were not interested in pogrom details can be seen in the number of casualties they gave. Weinryb gave the number of forty-two murdered Jews,[228] Bauer – forty-one Jews and four Poles in the book[229] and forty-two Jews in the article,[230] Dobroszycki – forty-one persons,[231] Chęciński – thirty-six to forty-two in the article and ultimately sixty to seventy Jews,[232] and forty-two in the book and ultimately sixty to seventy Jews,[233] Smolar – several dozen Jews,[234] Kochavi – forty-seven Jews,[235] Brumberg – one hundred killed or injured Jews,[236] Mushkat – forty survivors,[237] Szaynok, in a footnote – forty-two Jews,[238] at the end of the article – forty-two persons, including forty Jews and two Poles.[239] It can be seen that the numbers given most often are forty-one and forty-two Jews; they come from the time close to the pogrom.[240] Curiously enough, only two researchers mentioned killed Poles. This shows that pogrom details were of little interest to the researchers as even inaccuracies in the number of casualties did not arouse anybody's interest.

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[227] For more on accusations against the underground in the matter of the Kielce pogrom, see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Pogrom w Kielcach*

[228] Weinryb, "Poland," pp. 252–253.

[229] Bauer, *Flight and Rescue*, p. 208.

[230] *Id.*, *The Jewish Emergence*, p. 65.

[231] Dobroszycki, "Restoring Jewish Life," p. 67.

[232] Chęciński, "The Kielce Pogrom," p. 59.

[233] *Id.*, *Poland*, p. 23.

[234] Smolar, "Jews as a Polish Problem," p. 47.

[235] Kochavi, *The Catholic Church*, p. 116.

[236] Brumberg, "Poland," fn. 4, p. 24.

[237] Mushkat, *Philo-Semitic*, p. 142.

[238] Unnumbered note in Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," p. 199. It is possible that the note was added by the editors of the *Yad Vashem Studies*.

[239] Szaynok, "The Pogrom of Jews," p. 234.

[240] The number of 41 murdered Jews probably comes in a distorted way from the court judgment in the Kielce pogrom case. It named 39 Jews and 2 murdered Poles (AIPN, 0397/591/1, Judgment in the Name of the Republic of Poland, Kielce, 11 July 1946, p. 22). This number is also found in a chapter by Shapiro (*id.*, *Poland*, p. 384). The number of forty-two Jews for the first time most likely appeared in Shneiderman's book (*id.*, *Between Fear and Hope*, p. 86). He was informed about the number of casualties by Jechiel Alpert on 5 July 1946 who had got it from a UB officer, probably Albert Grynbaum (Testimony of witness Jechiel Alpert before the Court of Peace, Tel Aviv, 16 July 1996, in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, p. 361).

Conclusion

To recapitulate, in spite of the Cold War climate and an increased interest in Jewish Studies in the second half of the twentieth century, the pogrom was not popular with researchers, as seen in the fact that only three longer publications had dealt with it and a few by way of comment between 1946 and 1992. Most of their authors were of Jewish descent, which, on the one hand, influenced the way they viewed the pogrom, but on the other hand, introduced pogrom-related questions to the international academic debate, even though communist archives were inaccessible at that time.[241]

Except for Bożena Szaynok's article, the English-language publications saw the events in Kielce as an "ordinary" massacre or a "typical" pogrom of Jews (perpetrated by Poles).[242] Even Michał Chęciński, opting for the provocation theory, wrote in his book that an intrigue plotted by the communists would be feasible and usable for propaganda purposes for the very reason of Polish society's anti-Semitism and acceptance of murdering Jews.[243]

The treating of the Kielce pogrom as a typical occurrence was reflected primarily in the absence of any discussion of massacre details, provision of only general information and reliance on a limited number of sources. Importantly, more sources were available at that time than those referred to by the authors writing about the pogrom. Since it supposedly was a typical occurrence, they rejected the potential external factors that could have led to it and were rather inclined to

[241] Already in 1993, Jonah Bookstein pointed out that the pogrom was significant for the Poles and Jews not only as a massacre but also as a symbol, mythologised event and element of building a collective identity. For the Jews, it was the last pogrom, the final spasm of the Holocaust and the last stage preceding the foundation of the State of Israel. Bookstein was an American Jew who chose to write a thesis on this subject being attracted by the pogrom's symbolic meaning (*id.*, "Variations on a legend," pp. 2–7, 17, 22, 73).

[242] Bożena Szaynok did not take a stance on this issue in her article. Writing in the 1990s, Klaus-Peter Friedrich ascribed something entirely different to Polish historiography. He maintained that the pogrom was believed to have been an exceptional occurrence in Poland, and only Marc Hillel's *Le massacre des Survivants*, although not an academic work, supposedly showed that after the war, a disproportionately high number of Jews were murdered in Poland, which cannot be explained by a provocation (Friedrich, "Das Pogrom von Kielce," p. 415). Carla Tonini took a similar stance. In her opinion, only the emergence of a new generation of historians in the second half of the 1990s, not engaged in the struggle against Communism, helped change the perception of the pogrom and Polish-Jewish relations in Poland (C. Tonini, "The Jews in Poland after the Second World War. Most Recent Contributions of Polish History," *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 1 [2010], pp. 62–63).

[243] Chęciński, *Poland*, pp. 31–32.

search for the causes of the massacre in the internal conditions of post-war Poland.[244] Anti-Semitism was supposed to explain the pogrom fully, and that same was the best proof that the stereotype of a Pole as an anti-Semitic churl was true.[245] Furthermore, the adoption of the "Judeo-centric" perspective could be seen in painting the picture of Poland as a country in which the war afflicted only Jews, ignoring the criminal factor and Stalinist terror, leaving out the Polish victims of the pogrom or embroiling the Kielce events in the Holocaust.

For most early pogrom researchers, the question of potential intrigue was instead of secondary importance and would not change the overall perception of the pogrom. Regardless of whether it was organised and, if so, by whom, the massacre was perpetrated, according to the researchers, by Poles – militiamen, soldiers and "ordinary people." This point of view was shared even by Michał Chęciński, who argued that the pogrom was a communist intrigue. Having made this point, he did not, however, re-interpret the event itself and continued to treat it as a typical

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[244] Friedrich ascribed opposite reasoning to the first Polish researchers of the pogrom – if they rejected anti-Semitism as an explanation of violence against Jews, it was necessary to look for external causes of the massacre, for instance, a provocation (Friedrich, "Das Pogrom von Kielce," p. 420).

[245] Danuta Goska believes that the stereotype of a Pole as an anti-Semite has been very much alive. She believes that "Since Polish ethnicity is, alone, enough to signify anti-Semitism, when Poles do commit anti-Semitic acts […] no analysis beyond identifying the ethnic identity of the perpetrators is necessary. In fact, any further analysis is all but forbidden and condemned as "polemics" and an attempt to "justify" atrocity." (D.V. Goska, *Bieganski*: *The Brute Polak Stereotype in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture* [Boston, 2010], p. 33 ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/warw/detail.action?docID=3110437 [accessed 9 November 2023]) Brian Porter-Szűcs pointed out the stereotype of backwardness of East-Central Europe prevailing in the West; it is used to explain anti-Semitism (B. Porter-Szűcs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland*, [Oxford, 2011], p. 273). The picture of Poles as churls and anti-Semites was also painted by the Zionist activist Maksymilian Tauchner after the pogrom: "In societies on a higher cultural level, anti-Semitism was seen here and there in a dislike for the Jews. However, with the fading away of the objective reasons for antipathy, the antipathy itself eroded. In societies on a low cultural level, anti-Semitism was seen in hatred which, in its primitive nature, did not require even a rational justification. It was blind as a savage and uncontrollable instinct. And it will certainly find it. Of course, civilised "enlightened" anti-Semites are meant here who believe it necessary to justify their anti-Semitism. For most do not care about any justification" (M. Tauchner, "Po zbrodni nad zbrodniami," *Opinia. Pismo syjonistyczno-demokratyczne*, 15/2, 25 July 1946). Adolf Berman, in a similar vein, spoke about backwardness at the funeral of victims: "We have been horrified by the power of ignorance, Middle Ages, barbarity!" ("Nad grobem męczenników. Przemówienie tow. posła dr. A. Bermana na pogrzebie 41 ofiar pogromu w Kielcach," *Przełom. Organ Żydowskiej Partii Robotniczej Poalej-Syjon Lewicy* 1, June 1946). For more on the pogrom in Kielce in Polish-language Jewish press, see P. Wieczorek, "Oblicza zbrodni. Pogrom kielecki w świetle polskojęzycznej prasy żydowskiej," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 4: *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)*, ed. A. Grabski (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 433–452.

anti-Semitic atrocity.[246] Instead, the researchers put much effort into determining the factors that made people kill and answering the question of who had created conditions conducive to the massacre. The answers were mostly stereotypical: the Poles were anti-Semites before, during and after the Second World War, the Church through its indifference gave moral consent to kill Jews, the anti-communist underground taught people how to do it and the communists, although they supported minorities, were too weak to oppose anti-Semitism.

Meanwhile, it has to be remembered that after the war Poland was undergoing internal strife. Audrey Kichelewski observed that due to the "civil war" and political chaos more people died during hostilities between communist and anti-communist forces, while the number of killed Jews, which she estimated at 650–750, was relatively low albeit significant from the point of view of the minority itself.[247] By contrast, the regression to primitive human relations caused by the war and government terror are practically absent from the quoted publications, while Poland is shown there to be a country where victims were mostly Polish Jews.

An entirely different view of the pogrom was suggested by Bożena Szaynok in 1992. Her article supplied knowledge drawn from communist archives, which had been previously inaccessible, and made it possible to see the massacre through the eyes of the people who were treated as potential perpetrators. Limiting her article to the reconstruction of the pogrom allowed her to show that it escaped standard lines of interpretation at that time. Anti-Semitism did not explain everything that happened in Kielce on 4 July 1946, particular groups of Poles behaved differently for different reasons and some participants could be identified by giving their full name. Thus she proved that treating all the people who murdered as a single whole was wrong. Although the perspective Szaynok adopted prevented placing the pogrom in a broader context and drawing more general conclusions, her empirical

[246] The general perception and account of the massacre are consistent with the other accounts and geared to show the anti-Semitic Poles, Church and underground. However, this author questioned the third pogrom stereotype, namely the weakness of the communist authorities, and even accused them of organising the pogrom. Since his claims concerning "Dyomin" and "Przelot" could not be corroborated after 1989, the impact of his reflections on later researchers was limited.

[247] A. Kichelewski, "To Stay or to Go? Reconfigurations of Jewish Life in Post-War Poland, 1944–1947," in *Seeking Peace in the Wake of War. Europe, 1943–1947*, ed. by S.L. Hoffman, S. Kot, P. Romijn, and O. Wieviorka (Amsterdam, 2015), p. 192.

study offered a new perspective on the Kielce pogrom and re-opened a debate in the English-language literature on a potential provocation and its significance.

Understanding the nature of the early publications on the pogrom is important as much as they represented all that was known about the massacre for almost half a century without any possibility to confront this knowledge with some other view. The idea of the pogrom that their authors had created, relying at least to an extent on sources containing communist propaganda, in turn, shaped public opinion and stereotypes about the pogrom in the "free world," including its elites and – even more importantly – future researchers.[248] In the Eastern Bloc, meanwhile, the pogrom was a taboo subject. A free debate about it was possible only after 1989,[249] but it was conducted chiefly among Polish historians who tried either to prove or disprove a "communist provocation" and distanced themselves from the issue of anti-Semitism.[250] This is not to say that knowledge was not transferred.

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[248] Examples of a stereotypical perception of the pogrom and Polish-Jewish relations include articles by David Cotter and Rivka Schiller (D. Cotter, "The Persistent Holocaust and the Kielce Pogrom of July 1946," in *Ethical Implications of Large Scale Combat Operations. A Selection of Papers Presented at the 2019 Fort Leavenworth Ethics Symposium*, ed. by E. Ditsch (Fort Leavenworth KS, 2019), pp. 29–35; R. Schiller, "The History of Anti-Semitism in Kielce during the Holocaust Era," *Kielce-Radom Special Interest Group Journal* 6/3 (2002), pp. 25–37). In 1999, an elaborate article was published by David Cymet, maintaining that the chief factor leading to the Holocaust was the anti-Semitism prevailing in Poland (D. Cymet, "Polish state antisemitism as a major factor leading to the Holocaust," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1/2 [1999], pp. 169–212). Another publication in a similar vein was published by Leo Cooper a year later (L. Cooper, *In the Shadow of the Polish Eagle. The Poles, the Holocaust and Beyond* [London, 2000]). These publications, presenting radical opinions, have not entered the mainstream academic debate. Still, they nonetheless show that among scholars, especially those of Jewish descent, the stereotype of the Poles as anti-Semites is alive and reinforced. Importantly, Cymet's article presenting a very bold thesis was accepted by the editors of one of the most prestigious academic journals devoted to Jewish matters. Bold claims about the pogrom can also be found in the *Epilogue*, devoted to the massacre, and in the book *In the Enemy Land* by the renowned and respected historian Sarah Bender. Giving the account of the pogrom, she uses in places terminology most likely taken from the 1940s communist propaganda. She writes about "traditional Polish anti-Semitism" or "extreme right-wing and Fascist nationalistic elements […] such as the NSZ and WiN" who "received extensive assistance from Polish masses". Relating to the discussion of the massacre, she factually quotes the relevant arguments of the article by Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki *Podziemie w roli oskarżonego.* In the end, however, she adds an ironic commentary: "The article leaves the unmistakable impression that the writer embraces the classic narrative, which held the Soviets responsible for what had happened." (S. Bender, *In Enemy Land: The Jews of Kielce and the Region, 1939–1946* [Boston, 2018], p. 295. ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/warw/detail.action?docID=5733000 (accessed 15 November 2023).

[249] For the early Polish historiography of the pogrom with a commentary, see Friedrich, "Das Pogrom von Kielce," pp. 411–421.

[250] Tonini, "The Jews in Poland," pp. 58–74.

Information and ideas were exchanged between the West and Polish scholars, as can be seen from Bożena Szaynok's use of foreign-language sources and Krystyna Kersten's introduction to Szaynok's book published in Polish.[251]

Treating the Kielce massacre as typical and caused solely by anti-Semitism for almost fifty years, as well as most English-language scholars' reluctance to study its details, had consequences for the later reception of the theories of Polish researchers by foreign ones. Historians outside Poland acquired knowledge about the pogrom from that early literature. In contrast, however, to the first authors of Jewish origin writing on the pogrom and Polish-Jewish relations, later researchers faced a language barrier and an unknown country. Their predicament was observable already in the 1990s when Krystyna Kersten expressed the opinion that "in some Jewish circles, especially outside Poland, the very claim that a lot seems to argue in favour of the thesis about an element of provocation by communist secret services in the pogrom mechanism arouses fierce opposition and is treated as an attempt to shift the guilt for the massacre onto the communists, whereas it grew on the poisoned soil of Polish anti-Semitism."[252] Meanwhile, an international debate about the pogrom was only about to begin.

[251] In her Introduction, Krystyna Kersten included quite a few phrases that prominently featured in earlier English-language publications and are quoted in this article, such as "pogrom in Kielce is […] the greatest, most tragic in terms of effects and the most notorious atrocity among many single and collective acts of violence suffered by Jews in Poland who survived the Holocaust," "it is astonishing for example how seriously the militia treated the information given by young Błaszczyk about being held by Jews and about children murdered in a house in Planty Street," "importantly, a year after the war, in Poland – in the place where the Holocaust took place – a pogrom of Jews was possible," "the thesis about a provocation on the part of the authorities […] cannot serve as a shield protecting the criminal behaviour of ordinary people, on an ordinary day, in an ordinary voivodeship city." (Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów*, pp. 7–8, 22–23).

[252] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

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SUMMARY

The study of the Kielce pogrom accounts enjoys unfailing interest, but little attention has been given until now as to how the pogrom was remembered and interpreted outside Poland. This article intends to introduce the reader to the literature about the pogrom published in English until 1992 and analyse the sources used therein. Moreover, the article discusses why English-language historical writing took an interest in the subject and how a specific view of the pogrom developed in it.

KEYWORDS

Kielce pogrom • anti-Semitism in Poland • Polish-Jewish relations • historical writing on Polish-Jewish relations

REVIEWS/ DISCUSSION

REVIEWS
DISCUSSION
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JAN GRABOWSKI'S JUDENJAGD: A CASE IN POINT FOR THE STUDY OF HOLOCAUST DISTORTION

Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu (Judenjagd: The Hunt for the Jews, 1942–1945: A Study of the Story of One County) was supposed to be an attempt at reconstructing the dramatic fate of Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska and its environs during World War II. Has this intention been properly carried out? To answer this question, it is worthwhile examining the sources used by the author, what use he made of them and how he constructed his narrative, because such methodological matters are a decisive factor in assessing the credibility of any research project.

The discussion should start with archival research. Various Polish archives hold numerous documents relating to German policies towards Jews in the area in question from the start of the German occupation in 1939, as well as the later deportations and extermination of local Jewish communities as part of *Aktion Reinhardt* (Operation Reinhardt) and the hunts for Jews carried out by the occupier until the entry of the Soviet Army. Possibly the largest collection of files, the legacy of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich*, GKBZH), is kept at the Institute of National Remembrance

(*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN). It contains a wealth of fundamental information on the fate of the Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska and its environs. These are records of the investigations into, and criminal prosecutions of, specific crimes committed by specific German criminals. There are hundreds of witness testimonies, normative documents and, for instance, official German wartime correspondence. The Cracow IPN Archives hold many volumes of relevant files organised under several score call numbers. They include the investigation and trial records of cases brought against German criminals. Held separately, the files of the Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (*Główna Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu*) Branch in Cracow (today, they form their own archives of the IPN Prosecution Service), document additional investigations into crimes against Poles and Jews perpetrated by the Germans, including those that took place in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County (call numbers S.31.15.Zn and S.21.13. Zn). These consist of hundreds of pages of sometimes very detailed accounts by eyewitnesses of German crimes against Jews perpetrated by the Dąbrowa Tarnowska gendarmerie commander Rudolf Langraf and his subordinates.[1] In the Warsaw IPN Head Office, among many files of other cases, there are Chief Commission investigation files concerning scores of crimes committed by the Szczucin *Sonderdienst* chief Józef Preschl.[2] It should be noted that there are also files of an investigation against him deposited in the Cracow IPN Archives.[3]

These are invaluable documents relating to the persecution and killing of Jews perpetrated by the Germans in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, which provide a wealth of information on the places, methods and circumstances of murdering

[1] The author mentioned only that proceedings were conducted against Langraf in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1970s. He is unaware that Langraf was captured in Silesia in 1945, was investigated and was to be tried for numerous crimes (some of which he did not even deny). An indictment was even prepared. However, in February 1945, after contracting typhus in prison, he was hospitalised. He escaped from the hospital to Germany (this information can be found in the files). The author also ignored the investigation files concerning the "special" merits of Artur Zimmerman, one of his subordinates, in killing Jews and Poles (Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, hereinafter GK], 164/4552).

[2] AIPN, GK, 164/65.

[3] Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, hereinafter AIPN Kr], 010/6740. He is one of the major "absentees" in the book in question.

Jews by the Germans before, during and after the deportations. We can find there dozens of names, dates and circumstances of death of specific victims whose memory deserves to be restored when one is writing about the Jews of Dąbrowa Tarnowska. None of these people are remembered in *Judenjagd*.

Likewise, outside Jan Grabowski's research field of interest, are many of the Jews who survived in this area with the help of Poles. The names of the latter are left out as are even the names of those who paid the highest price for helping Jews. One of those was Franciszek Juzba, who shot dead with his wife on 3 December 1942 by the gendarme Engelbert Guzdek. One of the witnesses to this killing testified: "It was enough if Guzdek [learned] about a single instance of giving help [by providing food to Jews hiding in the forest – P.G.] to a citizen of Jewish nationality or putting him up for a short time, for him to shoot such a person, and there was no excuse [Guzdek would accept]."[4]

In *Judenjagd,* the materials collected by the GKBZH were rejected as having little credibility. The author writes:

> A comparison of testimonies given between 1945 and 1950 with the testimonies from 1960–1975 reveals a considerable change in tone and a major "adjustment" of narratives. The latter testimonies were collected in Poland (on behalf of the German Prosecutor's office) by the GKBZH, in the presence of Polish prosecutors. We can take for granted that the last thing that Polish prosecutors would share with German prosecutors conducting investigations of Germans suspected of murdering Jews would be testimonies that, in any way, incriminated Polish citizens or hinted at their complicity in those crimes.[5]

These words are followed by the story of a Jewish fugitive about whom a witness testified in the 1970s that he was treated well by Poles, whereas the testimonies from the 1940s suggest that the fugitive was allegedly caught by peasants and handed over to gendarmes.[6] We do not know where the later witness's knowledge

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[4] AIPN Kr, 307/28, vol. 2, Transcript of the interrogation of Stanisław Dykas, 16 April 1973, fol. 21v.

[5] J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd: Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu* (Warsaw, 2011), p. 19.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

came from, nor is there any evidence that his testimony was "adjusted" under the influence of the "presence" of a GKBZH prosecutor. The claim that this single case illustrates a widespread distortion of collected testimonies is not substantiated in any way whatsoever. Moreover, there are other significant aspects of this matter. In the course of various investigations, the GKBZH collected hundreds of testimonies of crimes against Jews, attesting to mass shootings and deportations carried out by Germans after all. Many such testimonies were collected by various bodies in 1945–1950: the GKBZH, public prosecutors' offices, Citizens Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO) and Security Office (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, UB). Even though the comments in *Judenjagd* do not apply to these materials, they were nonetheless left out of the book. It is a pity, for had the author used them, his knowledge of the wartime fate of Jews would have been incomparably greater in all respects, for that matter, one example being the persecution of Jews even before the commencement of *Aktion Reinhardt* (Operation Reinhardt). The first mass murder of Jews in the area under discussion was probably perpetrated in Szczucin on 12 September 1939, when twenty or twenty-five Jewish men assigned to "cleaning up" were killed after the massacre by the *Wehrmacht* of Polish prisoners of war held in the local school.[7] No account of this massacre, however, or many other similar ones perpetrated by the Germans in this area during the war can be found in *Judenjagd*. This comes as no surprise if one considers the fact (which is proven below) that the author was less interested in the fate of the Jews and crimes perpetrated against them by the Germans than in searching out evidence of the reprehensible deeds of Poles.

Symbolic of the author's approach is the omission of many volumes of IPN Archives files – call number GK 164/619 – from the preliminary archival search undertaken for *Judenjagd*. Collected in 1945–1947, they hold evidence of crimes committed against Jews by the commanders of the local German security services and the complicity in such crimes of the German civil authorities. The chief representatives of the latter were the Tarnów County Head (*Kreishauptmann*) Alfred Kipke (vol. 1–2) and his deputy and principal "specialist" for Jewish matters, Karl Pernutz (vol. 3). Relying on lies they told at trials, resembling a farce, before

[7] AIPN Kr, S8/2018/Zn/Kr.

German law enforcement bodies, these criminals – are presented in *Judenjagd* as typical "caring administrators," who generally did not have anything to do with crimes against Jews. One of them, the Gorlice Landkomissar, was, according to *Judenjagd*, still shocked twenty years after the war by what had been done to the Jews: "We heard that horrible things were happening in Tarnów. They smashed children's heads against the walls and killed them in such a way. Until this very day [the interrogation took place on 9 July 1965], I recall that the most terrible conditions reigned in Tarnów."[8] Even German occupation officials risked death. Ernst August Wedekind, a Tarnów municipal employee, supposedly testified after the war that he had narrowly escaped being shot when he went for a walk with his wife.[9] Another German described the Tarnów County Head, Alfred Kipke, and his deputy, Karl Pernutz, as solicitous of sanitary conditions, because when deportations started and Jews were being killed in the streets, "he ensured that the corpses be disposed of and thus prevented an epidemic."[10] Besides these bizarre accounts and quotations, the book informs us about Poles "butchering" a Jewish woman while others ran amok and cried, "Catch the Jews."[11] Incidents like this no doubt could have occurred, but the proportions of the scale and course of German deportations and murders of Jews have been turned upside down in this case. Moreover, what we are faced with here is the omission of hundreds of testimonies attesting to German crimes whose perpetrators are given the status of credible and praiseworthy witnesses of history. Grabowski judged:

> The above-mentioned Dr. Karl Pernutz (from March 1942 vice-chief of the civil administration and the chief of the Department of Internal Affairs in Tarnów) recalled that on the day of the *Aktion* some SS officers showed up in his offices in the *Kreishauptmannschaft* building, and informed the staff about the upcoming operation. His superior, Dr. Kipke, issued an order prohibiting all German civilian personnel from entering the ghetto, and strongly advised against venturing into the city. It was a wise decision […].

[8] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, pp. 49–50.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

Meanwhile, County Head Alfred Kipke and his deputy, Dr. Karl Pernutz, who is presented as a "notary and lawyer" in *Judenjagd*, were the chief local architects of the German policy directed against Jews and Poles in the area under their control. The matter has been researched and described in the relevant publications.[12] It is Pernutz's name that is signed under the German order posted in the city's streets to deport Jews from Tarnów. "§1. On 16 September 1942, the deportation of Jews shall take place. §2. Any Pole who hinders the deportation in any way shall be subject to the most severe punishment. §3. Any Pole who, during or after the deportation, receives a Jew or gives him shelter shall be shot."[13] Presenting mendacious testimonies given in court by Pernutz as factual accounts and calling them "recollections" are a typical example of the bizarre whitewashing of Nazi criminals found in Jan Grabowski's works and those of the "academic school" he represents.

The only trial dossier referred to in *Judenjagd* is that of one of the major German criminals in this area, gendarme Wilhelm Rommelman, who was convicted in Poland in 1948. It would be in vain, however, to look for accounts of the murders of Jews in the references to this dossier. They concern mainly testimonies in which he denies committing any crimes and claims that he did not perform any important function and generally did not do anything against the Jews.[14] The kind of treatment given to this criminal is not an exception but rather a *modus operandi*, so to speak, of the book under review, in which German criminals are systematically whitewashed.

By analogy to the treatment of principal archival sources, *Judenjagd* has practically excluded works of local historians, i.e., Józef Kozaczka's *Pomoc Żydom w powiecie Dąbrowa Tarnowska* (Assistance for Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County)[15] and Jerzy Rzeszuta's *Żydzi dąbrowscy* (Dąbrowa Jews),[16] who collected

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[12] See B. Musial, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement: Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden, 1999–2011). This book concerns another administrative area of the GG, but it also provides information on the Cracow District.

[13] The document is published in B. Musiał, O. Musiał (collab.), *„Kto dopomoże Żydowi…* (Poznań, 2019), pp. 294–295 (document source: AIPN, GK, 141/51). This document alone exposes the lies of this Nazi official, who claims that he learned of the deportation of the Jews from SS officers, since the poster with the announcement was commissioned by the county office at a local printing house (whose signature can be found on the poster) at least several days before the deportation.

[14] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, pp. 102–103.

[15] Article was published in *Polacy, Żydzi, 1939–1945*, ed. by S. Wroński and M. Zwolakowa (Warsaw, 1971), pp. 341–346.

[16] Published in Dąbrowa Tarnowska in 1993.

accounts of residents of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County and Jewish survivors. These publications were discredited on account of their connection to the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign on the strength of a single case of a peasant, mentioned in one of the publications, who is said to have hidden Jews, while in reality, he reportedly killed three of them with an axe.[17] Indeed, publications from that era should be read with a great deal of caution, but this does not predetermine the substantive value of the text and the entire book.[18] On this matter, *Judenjagd* states: "Kozaczka's list of 'self-sacrificing rescuers' included also a certain Michał K. who – according to the amateur historian from Dąbrowa – was supposed to have hidden ten Jews. Michał K. did indeed give shelter to three Jews, but butchered them with an axe in late autumn of 1944 when they had run out of money to pay for his hospitality."[19] No personal data of the alleged murderer are given, nor the source on which the author relied. It is hard to tell whether the reason was to avoid potential civil liability for libel or perhaps to prevent a systematic verification of the matter.

Hence, it is worth explaining that the alleged murderer's name was Michał Kozik, who, until 1944, sheltered the Glückmann family consisting of three persons.[20] A testimony before the Jewish Historical Commission in Cracow regarding the alleged killing of the Glückmanns by Kozik was given by Izaak Stieglitz, who identified as witnesses – as he was in a camp at the time – other Jews who had been hiding in that same area.[21] They, however, either did not corroborate Stieglitz's words or – as in Rachel Gruszów's case – gave testimonies of little credibility. Kozik was not even put on trial. The Public Prosecutor's Office discontinued the inves-

[17] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 55.

[18] One of the editors of the book was Stanisław Wroński (1916–2003), who is not a historian but a high-ranking official of the Communist Party-state apparatus associated with the faction of Mieczysław Moczar of the Polish United Workers" Party. Nevertheless, Kozaczka"s own services in saving Jews during the war are well-known and indisputable (the author of *Judenjagd* mentions this in a footnote); moreover, after the war, Kozaczka collected information on the fate of Jews in the area under discussion and stayed in contact with Holocaust survivors.

[19] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 55.

[20] Ryfka Glückmann and her two sons, Izrael and Berek. This last name is mentioned when the author describes the case a second time on p. 70. However, the reader may not realize that it refers to the same event – in this case this Jewish testimony does not facilitate verification.

[21] AIPN Kr, 502/3939, Certified copy of a testimony transcript; the testimony was given by Izaak Stieglitz before the Voivodeship Historical Commission in Cracow on 12 September 1947.

tigation, being convinced that there was insufficient evidence that Michał Kozik had killed the Jews he sheltered, namely, Ryfka, Izrael and Berek Glückmann.[22] Their fate remains unknown.

Whatever the nature of this matter, it should not serve as a pretext to reject the entire body of work of local historians, who also relied on the oral histories of Jewish survivors, collected over the course of decades information from witnesses and found many undeniably true facts about the rescue of Jews by local Poles. The evidence they gave was corroborated by many available sources (largely left out of *Judenjagd*). It can be legitimately argued that it was not due to their lack of credibility that the author chose not to refer to these publications, but rather that decision was based on finding a pretext to exclude them. Exactly the same procedure, by the way, was employed to discredit the GKBZH records kept at the IPN. The rejection of fundamental document resources and relevant literature carries with it obvious consequences. The failure to consider many fundamental files and documents relating to some matters has already been described in a manner that justifies classifying *Judenjagd* as a work that raises doubts about its research methodology and credibility.[23]

It is not the case, however, that the author of *Judenjagd* did not make any use of the above-mentioned archives. Quite the contrary, he did peruse the State Archives in Tarnów, the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance and the National Archives in Cracow. The problem is that in the first of these archives, he

[22] This, however, does not definitely settle the question of Michał Kozik"s guilt but merely tells us that there was no credible evidence that could be used against him at trial. Upon studying the case files, it appears, however, that Kozik was probably not guilty. The accusations against him were made by two peasants from the same settlement who fed falsehoods to the Jews who later testified. They, in turn, notified, in good faith, law enforcement agencies. On the one hand, this should be considered a typical village feud and, on the other, an instance of incredible or downright false accusations based on hearsay and rumours that frequently came before the Jewish Historical Commission and later made their way to prosecutors" and court files.

[23] B. Musiał, "'Umiejętne działanie' czy zbrodnicza perfidia?," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 43/2 (2011), pp. 164–165; K. Samsonowska, "Dąbrowa Tarnowska – nieco inaczej," *Więź* 7 (2011), pp. 75–84. To mention one fact only, it should be noted that Samsonowska cited the records of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (*Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce*, CKŻP), which gave the number of Jews rescued in that area as being at least twice as high as that given in the book under review; it should be kept in mind that the figures she gave are incomplete. The same is true of persons awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal by Yad Vashem, whose number is approximately twice as high as that given by the author. No less important here, for assessing the credibility of the book under review, are Prof. Musiał"s comments.

was interested mostly in files where one could find information about the anti-Semitic attitudes of Poles prior to World War II,[24] while in the other two archives, he focused on post-war court files of cases tried under the August Decree (issued on 31 August 1944 by the Polish Committee of National Liberation [*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*, PKWN]), where he could find information on true or alleged criminal acts committed by Poles against Jews. These files, which deal with individual cases of denunciation or murder, were used in *Judenjagd* on an incomparably greater scale than the (largely left out) archival files of the very same courts or from the same archives that concern massacres of Jews and numerous instances when individual Jews were killed by Germans. This, in a way, seems to illustrate what the intentions of the author were and what Grabowski's study is about. It was clear from the outset that its purpose was not to reconstruct accurately the fate of the Jews, but to search for criminal acts carried out by Poles.

Not a lesser problem than the peculiar approach to archival searches is posed by the use that was made of those files. Attempts, in this context, to verify particular threads frequently bring astonishing results.

The historical narrative of *Judenjagd* begins with the chapter titled "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na terenie powiatu dąbrowskiego w przededniu II wojny *światowej*" (Polish-Jewish Relations in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County Prior to the Outbreak of the Second World War).[25] There, we can read:

> In order to study the situation in the late 1930s (when anti-Semitic sentiments grew across Polish society), we will rely on two credible sources. The first is detailed reports prepared by the Public Security Department of the Cracow Voivodeship Office […] The second valuable source testifying to the evolution of anti-Jewish sentiments is court investigation files connected to the reports from Tarnów and vicinity. The documents from both collections clearly show that in the Tarnów area, just as in the entire Małopolska region, anti-Jewish incidents took on a massive scale during the course of the 1930s. An economic boycott, strongly advocated by the National Democratic Party since the beginning of

[24] The use of these files in the above-mentioned book will be discussed shortly.
[25] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 21.

> that decade (with considerable support from the Catholic Church), became an everyday occurrence in the cities and towns of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County.[26]

General information on the Cracow region was selected from the records of the Voivodeship Office without providing any examples from Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Many accounts of anti-Jewish tumults come from public prosecutors' files mentioned earlier, but frequently it is unclear what area they concern. In other cases, names of localities are provided, such as Ryglice, Szczurowa, Brzesko, and other towns and settlements, that lie outside the county. A local historian who was one of the first to react to this kind of writing regarding "the history of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County," in a text bearing a meaningful subtitle, "Poradnik – jak stworzyć coś z niczego?" (A manual – how to create something out of nothing?), argued in a somewhat emotional manner:

> He sometimes searches desperately for signs of anti-Semitism in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County in the interwar period and asks the question: "**Was the population of Tarnów County**…?" [*sic!*][27] already before the war "infected with anti-Semitism?" […] Not finding satisfactory examples within the county, he writes about the spreading of anti-Semitic fliers at a farmer's market in **Ryglice**, about anti-Semitic campaigning in **Brzesko,** about policemen in **Szczurowa,** in reply to a complaint by a Jew of an assault, yelling, "What do you want here, you lousy Jew?" Moreover, the author too often makes use of the following sentence: "**In the absence of accounts concerning Dąbrowa**, I shall refer to the description of …" You can perhaps turn a blind eye when he refers to descriptions from Tarnów (although even this, as it seems, is unjustified because different social ties bound Poles and Jews in small towns than in large cities), but it is absolutely unacceptable to refer to examples from the former Russian partition, which is known to every Polish historian studying Polish-Jewish relations in the interwar period [original emphasis].[28]

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[27] Indeed, on p. 24 of his monograph, Jan Grabowski confused Dąbrowa Tarnowska County with Tarnów.

[28] K. Struziak, "'Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu.' Poradnik – jak stworzyć coś z niczego?," http://ksszczucin.prv.pl/grab.htm (accessed 28 December 2022). The localities marked in bold by the author lie outside Dąbrowa Tarnowska County.

Three serious cases of anti-Jewish violence referred to in *Judenjagd* are worth discussing in some detail. They all supposedly happened in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. The first is the "case of Stanisław Klekot from Otfinów, accused of instigating hate against Jews, smashing their windows, and setting their houses on fire."[29] Actually, Stanisław Klekot was charged with "publicly [in his shop] abetting offences in Demblin in early October 1932, specifically beating Jews, and breaking their widows, and with approving such offences,"[30] which is an offence contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 154(1).[31] So it transpires that Stanisław Klekot, contrary to what *Judenjagd* says about him, did not break any windows, and, in particular, there is no mention in the case files of any "setting [Jewish] houses on fire."

Secondly, the book mentions that anti-Jewish incidents took so violent a course that "sometimes – to disperse aggressive rioters – the police had to use firearms,"[32] and that the dossier of one of such cases allegedly bore the heading: "Proceedings against Stanisław Węgrzyn in the matter of a fatal shooting by a policeman during anti-Jewish riots."[33] Upon verification, it appears that Stanisław Węgrzyn, in whose case an investigation was held and discontinued, was a policeman who, during a manhunt for bandits living in the village of Jadowniki on 2 July 1933, fatally shot Władysław Adamski, a wanted man. In this case, there were no riots or any Jews.[34] The made-up dossier heading in *Judenjagd*, just as the information about aggressive anti-Jewish tumults during which the police "sometimes" had to use firearms, not so much concern history *per se,* but rather appear more to justify raising the question here of scholarly mystification, something I have previously contended with respect to Jan Grabowski's work.[35]

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[29] The author wrote: "This [allegedly large scale of anti-Jewish violence – P.G.] is illustrated by the titles of successive investigations by the Tarnów Public Prosecutor"s Office" (Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 25), and he then listed these alleged titles.

[30] Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie Oddział w Tarnowie [National Archives in Cracow Branch in Tarnów, hereinafter ANKr OT], Tarnów Public Prosecutor"s Office, 54, Indictment of 22 November 1932.

[31] "Any person who publicly incites others to commit an offence or approves of it shall be subject to 5 years" imprisonment and/or arrest" (*Dziennik Ustaw* [The Jurnal of Laws] 60 [1932], item 571, p. 1165).

[32] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 27.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] ANKr OT, Tarnów Public Prosecutor"s Office, 65, Letter from County Police Headquarters in Brzesko to the Prosecutor of the District Court in Tarnów, 3 July 1933.

[35] P. Gontarczyk, "Między nauką a mistyfikacją, czyli o naturze piśmiennictwa prof. Jana Grabowskiego na podstawie casusu wsi Wrotnów i Międzyleś powiatu węgrowskiego," *Glaukopis* 36 (2018), pp. 313–323.

The third case concerns Stefania K., who in 1937 was supposedly accused of breaking windows and attempting to set fire to the synagogue in Wietrzychowice. Indeed, in 1937, the Tarnów Public Prosecutor's Office held an inquiry into an offence contrary to the Criminal Code, Art. 215(1),[36] against Stefania K., who, on 13 September 1937, set fire to three Jewish farms (not a synagogue), owned respectively by Rufin Walaszek, Beniamin Kejner and Izaak Braw. Afterwards, she reported to a police station and explained what she had done as an "irresistible internal compulsion." During her examination by expert psychiatrists, she admitted to breaking windows in Jewish houses and in the Wietrzychowice synagogue. The psychiatrists subsequently found her to be insane. Contrary to what is alleged in *Judenjagd,* she was never charged because the case was dropped. Having been found to be a danger to the public, she was put away in an insane asylum.[37] Thus, Stefania K. did not attempt to set a synagogue on fire, as *Judenjagd* states; in any event, there was no synagogue in Wietrzychowice. "Historical facts" constructed in this manner serve as a basis for describing Dąbrowa Tarnowska in the 1930s, in the book under review, as follows: "Over time acts of enmity against the Jews escalated in ferocity, synagogues were set ablaze."[38] What attracts one's attention here is a characteristic trick: the use of the plural ("synagogues were set ablaze"), although the only such case described in the book is a (false claim of) setting on fire a (non-existent) synagogue in Wietrzychowice.

A special role in the *Judenjagd* narrative, however, is played by "building something out of nothing," which was mentioned already earlier, that is, the writing of the history of Dąbrowa Tarnowka based on information (not always true) collected from elsewhere. While in the case of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second Republic, data from adjacent counties were used, with respect to the operations of the blue police, fire brigades, *Baudienst* and the conduct of Poles towards Jews during the occupation, examples were taken not only from other counties but also from the entire territory of occupied Poland, including the lands incorporated into the Third Reich. One thing at a time, however.

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[36] "Any person who brings about the danger of a fire, flooding, collapse of a building or a catastrophe in land, water and air transport shall be subject to imprisonment" (*Dziennik Ustaw* 60 [1932], item 571, p. 1168).

[37] ANKr OT, Tarnów Public Prosecutor"s Office, PT 218, Decision of Tarnów District Court of 27 November 1937 to place Stefania K. in the institution for the mentally ill in Kobierzyn.

[38] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 27.

Grabowski's study does not provide any evidence of the participation of firemen in the deportations of Jews from Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. The only such case comes from Mazowsze (Mazovia). The author relied on that case, even though he knew full well that the very same newspaper he quoted had corrected this erroneous piece of information in one of its successive issues.[39]

No less interesting in terms of records used and described facts, the chapter entitled "Baudienst" numbers about seven pages and includes twenty footnotes. It is worth discussing briefly the sources relied on and quoting selected fragments so as to give a taste of its tenor and content.

The chapter begins with these words: "Apart from the police, gendarmerie and fire brigades, the *Baudienst* (construction service) also participated in the liquidation of the ghettos and deportations of the Dąbrowa and Tarnów Jews to the extermination camps."[40] Initially (on p. 121), the reader may find it unclear why a monograph of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County mentions adjacent Tarnów County, but all is made clear towards the end of this chapter (on p. 127).

Page 121 is dedicated to structural issues and besides the sentence quoted above there is nothing on Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. Neither is there anything on page 122. On page 123, there is information that the Tarnów *Baudienst* outpost had three sections: "Tarnów, Lisia Góra and Szczuczyn." The same "Szczuczyn" can be seen in a footnote and the geographical index; hence, this is not a typographical error. Besides, the same "Szczuczyn" is found in the English-language version of the book under review.[41] To those who are less versed in the geography of Poland, I can offer the explanation that the closest locality by the name of Szczuczyn lies in Podlasie, over 400 km away from Dąbrowa Tarnowska and that it did not lie within the General Government (GG) during the war, so there was no *Baudienst* there. The town of Szczucin, however, does lie near Dąbrowa Tarnowska.

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[39] See *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, 41/145, 22 October 1942; *Biuletyn Informacyjny* 48/152, 10 December 1942. The information given in *Judenjagd* was taken from a text by Dariusz Libionka, "Polska konspiracja wobec eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim," in *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim*, ed. by B. Engelking, J. Leociak, and D. Libionka (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 443–504.

[40] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 121.

[41] J. Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington–Indianapolis, 2013), http://www.scribd.com/doc/163928125/Hunt-for-the-Jews-Betrayal-and-Murder-in-German-Occupied-Poland (accessed 20 February 2024).

Let us go back, however, to the chapter on the local *Baudienst*. On page 124, the name Dąbrowa Tarnowska is mentioned twice – in the sentence: "Let's go back, however, to Tarnów and Dąbrowa on the days when the ghettos were liquidated" and "after all, the entire Dąbrowa and Tarnów both resonated with gunfire" – but there is no information about the *Baudienst*. Furthermore, on the same page, the author refers to a testimony given by a German engineer who was reportedly stationed in Tarnów during the war; after the war, he testified before a German court that "Junaks" (i.e., *Baudienst* workforce members) were assigned to secure Jewish possessions. It follows rather from this testimony that they did not take part directly in actions against Jews. The author of *Judenjagd* cites this information but considers it untrue.

On the following page, the robbery of possessions left by Jews in Żabno (Dąbrowa Tarnowska County) is described, but there is no mention of Junaks. Only in the middle of page 125, does the description of this formation, which was harnessed to help in the deportation of Jews from Działoszyce and Książ Wielki, start. These towns, however, are not located in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. Both towns were then in Miechów County, presently part of Cracow and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeships, and not in the Tarnów area. On page 126, the name of the county is not mentioned, but what is said concerns true and alleged *Baudienst* operations in Tarnów. On page 127, mention is made of the number of "working days" Junaks were expected to complete, performing all kinds of auxiliary tasks in German operations of deporting Jews, and of Cardinal Adam Sapieha's protest against the demoralization of Junaks by plying them with vodka and employing them in extermination operations. This this information, however, concerns either Małopolska or the Cracow District. No evidence is provided for the use of the *Baudienst* in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. With this, the chapter ends.

This chapter is somewhat of a curiosity: it presents accounts, facts and quotations from various regions of Poland (Podkarpacie, Małopolska, Świętokrzyskie and Mazowsze) and even mentions a *Baudienst* unit in "Szczuczyn". Curiously enough, in a publication which is supposed to be a monograph on Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, in a chapter that refers to the participation of the *Baudienst* in "the liquidation of the ghettos and deportations of Jews to extermination camps," there is not a single document or fact from the area in question.

The chapter on the activities of the blue police makes use of numerous files of August Decree cases. Most are stored at the National Archives in Cracow and a few at the IPN Archives. Of the former, almost half concern Dąbrowa Tarnowska, while the other half record events in other counties, mainly Miechów, but also Mielec, Dębica, Tarnów, and Limanowa. Of the three IPN file call numbers which were used, one – referred to in a way that makes it untraceable[42] – concerns Wieliczka (another county), while the other two concern Mińsk Mazowiecki, a town in Mazowsze, a few hundred kilometres away from Dąbrowa Tarnowska.[43] These files are used in a characteristic manner, often without a precise geographic description, but with the names of small towns and villages, whose exact locations are rather unknown to the average reader, mentioned in a way that prevents the reader from realizing that the history of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, as presented in *Judenjagd,* has little in common with its actual history. Another curious trick used in the book consists in describing various cases of pathological behaviour of Poles (denunciations and murders) from across the country and suggesting, or even writing outright, that the same thing happened in Dąbrowa Tarnowska.

However, the use of records from other regions of Poland in what purports to be the monograph of a single county is only one aspect of the problem. It is not only a question of their quantity, but also one of quality. After analysing the key chapters of the book, it turns out that **all** of the most dramatic – and unfavourable to Poles – descriptions of Jewish tragedies concern **other counties or even other regions of Poland.** The quotation used as a motto for this chapter, referring to blue policemen who reportedly shot Jews after consuming alcohol, comes from the file of a case that took place in Dębica County. The way the author of *Judenjagd* describes the case and his choice of quotation suggest that the Jews were shot dead

[42] The author wrote in a footnote: "AIPN, SO Kr, 552, case against Zygmunt P." (Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 118). At the IPN Archives there is no file collection named "District Court in Cracow". Such a collection is stored in the National Archives in Cracow. The number "'552'" is neither the number of a file collection nor is it a file call number; and, if it refers to the National Archives in Cracow, it does not assist in finding any specific documents. Actually, this must be file AIPN Kr, 502/1309, Zygmunt and Monika Pawlik. Whether providing an incorrect call number in the book was intended or was simply an error cannot be determined.

[43] AIPN, Sąd Wojewódzki dla Województwa Warszawskiego [Voivodeship Court for Warsaw Voivodeship, hereinafter SWWW] GK, 318/322 (Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 110) and AIPN, SWWW GK, 318/574 (*ibid.*, p. 117).

by a blue policeman. According to the case file, however, the crime could have been committed by German gendarmes.[44]

Another part of that chapter reads: "There survives a shocking account left by a witness of the tortures to which peasants subjected their Jewish neighbours whom they had caught earlier. After locking up the Jews in a dark chamber, farmers in Gniewczyna set out to beat the men and rape the women."[45] A long account of these dramatic events follows, regarding which a single brief footnote adds the following information: "Here, I give an example from outside the county, from around Łańcut."[46] In other words, not from Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, again. A little further on, one can read about "a certain ritual of drinking vodka in order to pluck up courage before shooting a victim," which was supposed to have been "observed by functionaries of the Polish Police in the Tarnów area."[47] The story continues: "This ritual was also known **elsewhere** [emphasis mine – P.G.]," after which the author describes two such cases: one from Pilzno (Dębica County), and the other from around Mińsk Mazowiecki, in Mazowsze. The ritual was supposedly known "elsewhere," but there is no example of its observance in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County.[48] The chapter on the blue police ends with a lengthy description of a massacre of Jews that reportedly took place in the settlement of Rechta.[49] It should not be surprising if I write that the blue police were not involved in that massacre and that Rechta is located in another part of occupied Poland, namely the Lublin region.

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[44] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 116. Pilzno was located in Dębica County. The author of the book under review added in a footnote: "*Ibid.* [National Archives in Cracow, call number:] 1011, IV, k. 102/50" without indicating the document the quotation came from, which goes against the fundamental rules of academic writing. This is not a single instance, but rather a *modus operandi* of sorts that discourages one from verifying information given in the book, sometimes requiring the reviewer to read hundreds or even thousands of pages of files. It remains an open question whether writing footnotes in this manner resulted from disrespect for the rules of academic writing or was intentional. A helpful tip on the matter seems to be a noticeably significant relationship, namely the more difficult it is to verify information given in such cases, the more often the information given in the book based on such quotations has nothing in common with its actual content. The words quoted in *Judenjagd* come from the testimony of Stanisław Podraza of 17 January 1949 (fol. 25v). It follows from the file in question that the policeman who consumed the alcohol was not alone, but in the company of a German gendarme who shot the victims dead (*ibid.*, Judgment of the Court of Appeal in Cracow of 15 December 1949, fols 140–142v).

[45] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 110.

[46] *Ibid.*, fn. 16.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 118–119.

A similar situation is found in another critical chapter, "The Destruction of Dąbrowa Tarnowska." The most dramatic and symbolic scenes are the following (both from outside Dąbrowa Tarnowska): in the first, during the deportation of the Jews, peasants reportedly chased the fugitives crying, "Catch the Jews!" (this happened in Dulcza Wielka, Mielec County[50]); while in the other, a blue policeman allegedly caught and turned over to the Germans a "Christian convert," mother of two, by the name of Witkowa (in reality, this happened in Tarnów).[51] The description is followed by the following summary: "And in this way – after the final *Aktion* – four centuries of Jewish history in Dąbrowa Tarnowska came to an end."[52]

Serious doubts – equally problematic as the archival reconnaissance and the manner of building a historical narrative – are raised by the way in which sources are used in *Judenjagd*. After checking various quotations set out in the book, one often finds that the sources say something different than what the writer writes, quotations are trimmed so that their tenor is different than in the original testimonies, and the sources in no way provide the information mentioned in the book. Such distortions are downright systemic and also impact many of the testimonies of Holocaust victims. A fragment of the book that deals with the story of the activities of blue policemen from Otwinów in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County reads:

> The arrested Jews were in most cases interrogated in a village jail or in the cottage of the farmer who had denounced them. The purpose was to extract, as quickly as possible, information about "Jewish gold," about which legends circulated in the villages. […] The interrogation of captured Jewish fugitives sometimes ena-

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 47. The text "Święto zmarłych w Rechcie," by Dariusz Libionka and Paweł Reszka, published in *Karta* 46 (2005), pp. 122–135.

[51] The case is complicated and multifaceted. In the criminal case files quoted by the author, the policeman Stefan Suchar is named as defendant; the author did not give his name, perhaps for fear of civil liability. The reason could be the fact that Suchar was ultimately acquitted of the charge of contributing to the death of Witkowa because, as corroborated by witnesses, he reportedly let her go when he learned who she was and pretended to chase after her for the sake of the witnesses observing the scene (ANKr, SA Kr, 1041, IV K, 241/50, Judgment of the Court of Appeal in Cracow, 5 October 1950, fols 133–135v). Without a detailed analysis of the case, it is hard to tell if this is a correct interpretation of the evidence; however, since the case happened in another county, the matter falls outside the scope of this review.

[52] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 49.

> bled one to find buried valuables, but – much more often – to draw up a list of peasants whom the Jews entrusted with the safekeeping of their duvets, cutlery, clothing, cows and horses.[53]

The author provided the following source for this information in a footnote: "APKr, SAKr, 1025, IV K 164/50, The testimony of Beniek Grün of 2.01.1950: 'In July 1942, my cow was taken away from me that was in safekeeping with Stefan Dobrowolski in Radwan, Mędrzechów Municipality,' Grün said."[54]

After verifying the quoted testimony, it turned out that its content was as follows:

> In July 1942, a cow was taken away from me that was in safekeeping with Stefan Dobrowolski in Radwan, Mędrzechów County. It was taken by Stanisław Młynarczyk and Andrzej Nowicki, blue policemen from the Radgoszcz station, who sold it at an auction. It was bought by the policeman Andrzej Nowicki. Next, in 1943, in winter, my two sisters were hiding at a certain Franciszek Sołtys', […] where Młynarczyk with another policeman unknown to me conducted a search in order to capture them, but owing to their good hiding place they did not find them, but the said owner, Franciszek Sołtys, was beaten unconscious; despite the beating, he did not reveal the hiding place.[55]

Hence, Grün related an interrogation carried out by policemen of a Polish peasant who knew where the witness was hiding and did not betray him. The quoted testimony does not say anything about policemen interrogating Jews to extract information about their possessions. What the book says about this event, allegedly in reliance on Grün's testimony, is not true.

A typical example of the direction and manner in which testimonies of Holocaust victims are distorted in *Judenjagd* is the account of Chaja Rosenblatt. The first case worthy of note here is her stay on the farm of a Pole: "Fleeing from another liquidation, in January 1943, she again found herself near Radomyśl, this time at

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[53] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] APKr [State Archives in Cracow], SA Kr, 1025, IV K 164/50, Testimony of Beniek Grün, 2 January 1950 (p. 2 of testimony).

Józef Szozik's place, an amply-paid farmer. After two weeks of threats and thefts, and being threatened with murder, Chaja Rosenblat and her husband had to flee for their lives to the woods."[56]

The account unequivocally suggests the farmer's reprehensible behaviour, since who else – the account mentions only Szozik and Rosenblatt with her family – could have robbed the protagonist or wanted to murder her. But Rosenblatt's testimony says something else:

> Before dawn we knocked on a villager's door and he opened it. After he was handed a large sum of money, he let us in. From the conversation it transpired that he was sheltering other Jews, whom he presented to us right away. When I saw them I got scared because these were men from a very low class, dangerous informers, like Zelman Storch, a cabdriver and others of this sort (they were shot later on). When we saw them, our hearts started beating at an abnormal pace, but we had to compose ourselves. Bad luck, this time we fell into a hornets' nest. We lived together, under one roof, for two long weeks. They worked together with the villager in robbing us of the rest of our clothes. They only left us what we had on […] We made up our minds to leave the place especially as this gang soon realized that we kept our money on us, sewn into the clothes we wore all the time. They were thus ready to kill us and appropriate our clothes. It turned out that the villager was also a bandit. One afternoon, upon coming back from the town of Radomyśl, where he had spent some time in a dive in the company of a policeman, who worked for the Germans, he called us out from the hiding place. The villager told us that he had learned in the town that the police knew he was sheltering Jews and that we had to leave his house (this happened at Józef Szozik's place).[57]

In *Judenjagd,* the story has been cleansed of the information that the chief robbers, and later the people who threatened the life of the family of fugitives, were Jewish informers and criminals. They were removed from the book version of the story, and the only threat to the Jews that was left was a Polish peasant, Józef Szozik.

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[56] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 137.

[57] Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie [Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, hereinafter AŻIH], 302/218, Testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, typescript, pp. 45–46.

A different manner was adopted in the case of the events at the Szczurek family. Here, the narrative – sprinkled with quotations from the source – runs as follows:

> Chaja Rosenblatt was one of those "people who had certain possessions and money," and hid with her family at Tomasz Szczurek's, a farmer from Dulcza Wielka whom she knew. Already earlier the Garns and Rosenblatts had entrusted most of their possessions to Szczurek: "textiles from our shop that we had managed to hide, all our furniture, linen and all our clothes." In addition, they gave him a considerable sum of money. Despite all these preparations, the Szczureks kicked the Jews out of their house only after one day. As the farmer's wife explained upon returning from a church service (the liquidation of the Jewish part of Radomyśl took place on Sunday), the priest had warned the faithful of impending house searches "for Jews." "We tried to explain to our protectors, 'dear friends,' that we could not leave their house in broad daylight for fear of being noticed. It is out of the question to let you stay a while longer at our place, they replied. I started pleading to stir their emotions […] finally I dared to say that their God, Jesus Christ, would never forgive them their cruelty." Despite the pleading and crying of Chaja Rosenblatt's old parents, the hosts refused to budge and the "paid help" was over already before dusk[58]

A longer passage from this account presents the story in a different light:

> **The farmer's wife hosted us well, took care of us the best she could, while her husband watched the house so that, heaven forbid, nobody would notice our presence. Unfortunately, their kindness lasted for a day only – Saturday, a day before the deportation** [of Jews from Radomyśl Wielki]. **The next day, on Sunday,**[59] **we sent her** [the farmer's wife] **to Radomyśl to get some information about the situation. So she went before dawn and came back in the afternoon. We were on pins and needles, waiting for her to return. We could hardly bear it since the sound of gunfire was reaching us all the time. [We waited?] be-**

[58] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 137.
[59] These events took place on 19 July 1942.

> **ing unable to find any explanation for this. Upon the farmer's wife return, we learned about the sad fate of our people. One could easily imagine what we felt. Suddenly, the village woman started explaining to us in a trembling voice that she was scared to shelter us any longer at her house because in the church during the sermon the priest warned them of an imminent search of all the houses in the villages. At this point, she told us that the deportation was general, that no Jew had the right to stay in Radomyśl [...] We must immediately leave her home.** We tried to explain to our protectors, 'dear friends' that we could not leave their home in broad daylight for fear of being noticed. It is out of the question to let you stay a while longer at our place, they replied. I started pleading to stir their emotions [...] finally I dared to tell her that **the same fate that befell the Jews on that day may fall on them during that occupation. I told her, too, that** their God, Jesus Christ, would never forgive them their cruelty. **Suddenly they wised up, pretending that they did not at all intend that we were to leave during the day. I gracefully apologised for misunderstanding them. So they let us stay at their home until the evening.**[60]

The original testimony was cleansed of any information about the direct connection between the conversation at the Szczureks' home and the tragedy of the local Jews witnessed by Szczurek's wife, who was sent to Radomyśl that Sunday morning. She saw an apocalypse there: "The Germans have no mercy for anybody, they drive people away in huge numbers while fugitives are hunted down." The scale of the brutality must have been enormous since the Jews hiding in her house heard gunfire for a long time. After leaving this information out, Grabowski presented the priest's warning from the pulpit as the only reason for the Szczureks' refusal to continue extending help to the Jews. The book's version of this story is bereft of any emotions on the part of the hosts, above all, the dramatic turn in the Szczureks' attitude – brought about by the tragic events in Radomyśl on 19 July 1942 – from one of kindness, care and willingness to help to one of overwhelming fear for their own lives. In *Judenjagd,* the Szczureks are portrayed as emotionless and inexorable. What they did is described as "kicking the Jews out the door" in

[60] AŻIH, 302/318, Testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, manuscript, pp. 33–35.

broad daylight, although the account shows this not to be true: they were allowed to stay at home until the evening.

Instead of a commentary, suffice it to say that, as is often the case, *Judenjagd* lacks a footnote with the page number where the quotation in question can be found. This makes it harder to locate the distorted fragment of the account. The manuscript consists of eighty-two pages, while the typescript has seventy pages. Bibliographic details are missing in many other instances not mentioned in this review. The question keeps arising: is it neglect of the rules of academic writing or a systematic effort to make it harder to verify the information?

Curiously enough, the above comments apply to distortions in the Polish edition of *Judenjagd* of 2011. It at least has information about the warnings of the threat of German searches for Jews delivered by the priest during mass. Authentic documents[61] and oral testimonies have survived, bearing out the fact that in many localities, such announcements informing of the prohibition against providing any help to Jews on pain of death were made in churches by priests on the orders of the German authorities. In particular, they forbade the sheltering of Jews and warned that villages would be searched. They were not, thus, an expression of the clergyman's attitude or the position of the Catholic Church. The Germans used announcements such as these to ensure that the information would reach as many residents as possible. In various Jewish accounts, based usually on second- or further-hand information, these announcements are variously interpreted and described, which is conducive to their further manipulation. Rosenblatt gives one such description: "in the church during the sermon the priest warned them of an imminent search of all the houses in the villages."[62] The 2013 English-language edition of *Judenjagd* states that the local priest told his congregation from the pulpit

[61] A typical example comes from the Lublin region: "Pursuant to the order of the German authorities on the state of emergency, please read what comes below before every church service: […] According to the order of Kreishauptmann of 23 October 1942, no. […] all those and their neighbours will be punished by death who keep jews [sic], provide them with food or help them escape, in particular any person who leaves a wagon at the disposal of Jews" (Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie [State Archives in Lublin], 561, Records of the Municipality of Zakrzówek, Letter of the mayor of Zakrzówek to parish priests in Zakrzówek and Boża Wola, 4 December 1942, fol. 341). The matter does not require further documentation as it is known from various other territories of occupied Poland and mentioned in many Jewish testimonies.

[62] AŻIH, 302/318, Testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, manuscript, pp. 33–34. Presumably, the warning was probably given before mass or after it (together with other parish announcements and not during the sermon).

not to keep Jews. That information can be found neither in the source used nor in the Polish-language edition of the book.[63] This is one of many examples of "progressive interpretation" employed by that school of research. It appears to not so much interpret history as systematically tarnish the image of the Catholic Church and peasants. Not only has it been distorted from the start, but it also fits in with the stereotypical prejudices that are quite frequent in the English-speaking world.

In the last interesting case of the use of Resenblatt's testimony, the reason why dogs did not bark seems important. *Judenjagd* contains a description of an alleged Polish-German hunt for Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, making use of information from Szczebrzeszyn in the Lublin region.[64] The description is followed by Rosenblatt's testimony, which, after all, concerns the events in Radomyśl Wielki (Mielec County), and the assertion:

> Jewish descriptions of this initial phase of the search for fugitives testify to incredible, outright bestial brutality, which evolved into an orgy of murder. For the local population, it was, so to speak, a lesson in obedience: the Germans were the masters of life and death, while Jewish life had lost any value altogether. **Continuing for days and weeks on, hunts for Jews had become so ordinary an occurrence that in areas neighbouring on Jewish communities being liquidated "even dogs have grown accustomed to gunshots and stopped barking"** – a young Jewish woman from Radomyśl Wielki wrote.[65]

The above text leaves no doubt: hunts for Jews lasting for "weeks", carried out by Germans and Poles immediately after the deportations (see the highlighted text), made even animals grow indifferent to what Poles and Germans together were doing to the Jews and so they stopped barking. However, the content of the testimony referred to is different. It is worth quoting, therefore, a longer passage from the testimony and learn in this way what the failure of dogs to bark was about.

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[63] "Where she heard the local priest warning his flock of impending house searches and telling the faithful not to keep Jews" (Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*).

[64] The case shall be discussed soon.

[65] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 59 – the fragment crucial for further discussion is highlighted.

The cruel Sunday

> The cruel Sunday has come, but unfortunately not as we had expected.[66] At dawn, a large band of SS and Gestapo men arrived. There were about 500 of them. The town was completely sealed off. Streets and alleys were watched as well as surrounding fields. Hence, there was no way to escape from the town … […] Following orders, the elderly and small children gathered in the market. The sick awaited their fate on their beds. The Judenrat was also invited to assist. Suddenly, an order was given for the elderly, men, women and the sick to form separate groups. Whole families were thus separated. […] The elderly and the sick were put like cattle on wagons drawn by horses; the wagons had been prepared in advance for this purpose. They were taken straight to the Jewish cemetery where SS-men had already been waiting to shoot them and throw their bodies into recently-dug trenches. The doomed were ordered to strip naked and stand in rows in front of the trenches. In front of every person, there was an SS-man who at a command shot every individual person straight in the face. Everything was perfectly organised and worked smoothly. As soon as a shot was fired and a person fell into a trench, he or she was buried under earth. Nobody cared if the person was actually killed. Do not imagine that cries, moans or crying could be heard, only gunshots could be heard. The people doomed to die were fear-stricken and silent. In the entire area, fear was so oppressive that even dogs had grown accustomed to gunshots and stopped barking.[67]

This account describes the dramatic events in Radomyśl Wielki of 19 July 1942, when the deportation of the local Jews culminated. It does not, however, refer to later "hunts" that allegedly continued there afterwards. The reaction of the dogs did not result from their having grown accustomed to the killing of Jews that supposedly continued "for weeks," but rather from the horror caused by the circumstances of the murders and deportations.

While on the subject of Poles growing accustomed and callous to the murder of Jews (apart from, naturally, their complicity), Grabowski attempts to prove in

[66] The events took place on 19 July 1942.

[67] AŻIH, 302/218, Testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, typescript, pp. 21–22.

a long argument in *Judenjagd* that Jews lost their human characteristics in the eyes of Poles. As proof, he points to the widespread use of the expression "shooting Jews" instead of the word "murdering," supposedly reserved for Poles. Using graphic examples, Bogdan Musiał, one of the critics of the book under review, called this argument a fabrication.[68]

Summing up, in the first case of the use of Rosenblatt's account, the alterations in *Judenjagd* were aimed at cleansing the story of a group of Jewish criminals who robbed and were prepared to kill the author of the account and her family. The Jewish account was "trimmed" and presented in such a way so that it would appear that Poles were the only threat. In another passage, the Szczurek family, who wanted to help the Jews but got frightened by the German atrocities and possible consequences for themselves, was falsely turned into emotionless participants in the tragedy of the Jews who appropriated their property and kicked them out of the house in broad daylight, leaving them at the mercy of the Germans. In the third instance, the description of the widespread horror that engulfed Jews and Poles (and even local dogs) faced with the scale and brutality of German atrocities was used to depict another part of this tragedy (later hunts for Jews, although, in reality, the account describes the deportation itself) and another aspect of it: Rosenblatt speaks to the reaction of Jews to the brutality of the German deportation, whereas Grabowski turned it into the indifference of Poles to the hunt for Jews (presented, in the book, as a German-Polish hunt).

The removal from the story of a group of Jewish criminals who threaten Rosenblatt is by no means the only instance in the book of a practice of this kind. The author systematically omitted or removed any information that could have been considered unfavourable to Jews. In this context, it is worth reviewing how the activities of the Jewish Police Service (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst, JOD) in Dąbrowa Tarnowska are portrayed in *Judenjagd*. First, the author says that it allegedly follows from one Jewish testimony, given by Berta Milet, that a Jewish bunker was exposed by a Pole, Józef Kucharski.[69] It is not known where Berta Milet (who was absent from the scene) got this information from and if it was true. Kucharski is

[68] See Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 59; Musiał, "Umiejętne działanie," pp. 164–165.

[69] Bundesarchiv-Außenstelle Ludwigsburg, B162/2169, Testimony of Berta Milet, 31 October 1946.

mentioned in passing, while the entire testimony is about the head of the local Arbeitsamt, Eilmes, and the persecution of Jews for which he was responsible (including participation in the deportation). It was he who was supposed to have organised the dragging out of Jews from the bunker, which is the matter under discussion. However, Eilmes was left out of the story and it only features Józef Kucharski. This trick enabled the author to draw the following conclusion: "In Dąbrowa, the local inhabitants were actively involved in pulling out Jews from the bunkers in the ghetto."[70] Even if Józef Kuchraski did indeed give away the Jewish hiding place mentioned in the testimony, this is not enough to write that "local inhabitants were actively involved in pulling out Jews from the bunkers," because there are no testimonies bearing out such a collective phenomenon. Yet, the author of *Judenjagd* wrote extensively about how the dragging of Jews out of bunkers by Poles in Dąbrowa Tarnowska supposedly looked: "Although no other descriptions of dragging Jews out of bunkers [in Dąbrowa Tarnowska] have survived, this could not have differed in any significant way from what Zygmunt Klukowski, a doctor from Szczebrzeszyn near Zamość, wrote in his diary."[71]

Grabowski did actually say that there were no other sources concerning the dragging out of Jews from bunkers and hideouts in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, and used a description of events from Biłgoraj County 200 km away. He also included a long quotation from the source mentioned earlier, but did so selectively, thus considerably distorting Klukowski's account of the events in Szczebrzeszyn. The crucial portions that were removed are restored and highlighted below.

> All day, until dusk, incredible things were going on. Armed gendarmes, SS-men and blue policemen scurried around the town, tracking down and searching for Jews. […] [**They were rounded up in the market square and assembled in front of the town hall**], they were dragged out of all kinds of hiding places, gates and doors were battered down, shutters were knocked down, and hand grenades were thrown into cellars and flats […] [**Handguns and rifles were fired as well as machine guns placed in various places. People were beaten**

[70] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 58.
[71] *Ibid.*

and kicked and generally maltreated with utmost cruelty. At 3 p.m., about nine hundred Jews – men, women and children – were escorted out of town. They were prodded with batons, rifle butts and continuous shooting. Only Judenrat and Jewish police members rode on wagons. After they were taken away, the *Aktion* did not stop. Those who stayed in hiding continued to be captured. It was announced throughout the town that sheltering Jews or keeping their possessions carried the death penalty; for exposing Jewish hiding places special awards were promised. Captured Jews were shot on the spot now without any mercy. Polish residents were forced to bury the dead. How many are there of them, it is hard to tell] […] I cannot describe what was going on [**a special literary talent is necessary to give a true and proper picture of German barbarity**] […] Tracking down Jews is going on. The strangers – gendarmes and SS-men – left yesterday. Today, "our" [i.e. local] gendarmes and blue policemen are active; they were told to kill on the spot every apprehended Jew. They carry out this order very eagerly […]. Throughout the day, Jews were tracked down in all kinds of hiding places. They were either shot on the spot or taken to the cemetery and killed there. […] **In the town jail, thirty something Jews were gathered. I saw them being escorted from the jail and driven down Zamojska Street, across the market square to the cemetery. They were driven by two gendarmes, Pryczing and Siring, and a blue policeman. Those who had been led out of town yesterday were kept outdoors all night next to the "Alwa" factory. About 9 a.m., Jews from Zwierzyniec were brought. Only today at noon were they loaded onto railway cars. […] Jewish flats are sealed in part but** robbery is rampant anyway. Generally, Polish residents did not behave properly. Some took part in tracking down and searching for Jews. They indicated where Jews were hiding, boys even chased small Jewish children whom [**Polish**][72] policemen killed in front of everybody.[73]

The picture drawn by Klukowski is dramatic and brings discredit to some Poles. However, the cut-out version of his diary quoted in *Judenjagd* differs drastically

[72] An insertion by Jan Grabowski.

[73] A comparison was made of Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, pp. 58–59; Z. Klukowski, *Zamojszczyzna*, vol. 1: *1918–1943* (Warsaw, 2007), pp. 302–304.

from the original, which describes the deportation of Jews from Szczebrzeszyn and Zwierzyniec carried out by large German forces in so barbaric a manner that Klukowski was at a loss for words to render what was going on adequately. The *Judenjagd* version of his diary removed critical information that described the German deportation, left out the names of specific German criminals in charge of the deportation, as well as the sentence that Poles risked death for any help given to Jews and that Polish residents were forced to bury the dead. What also disappeared from the original diary – although it was rather unimportant for the course of the German operation – was the privileged position of the Judenrat and Jewish police. The German operation of the deportation and extermination of Jews depicted in Klukowski's diary was turned into a joint "Polish-German" operation of hunting down Jews and dragging them out of their hiding places by Poles already after the deportation – 200 km away from Dąbrowa Tarnowska, at that.

Such "cuts" and methods of using sources do not come as a surprise: Jan Grabowski and other authors from his circle have been employing them in their publications on a large scale.[74] However, this is not the point here. Far more important is the fact that *Judenjagd* left out the description of tracking down and dragging out Jews from their hiding places by the Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst (JOD). Such a description can be found in the sources and refers to Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Instead, events from Szczebrzeszyn, 200 kilometres away, taken from Zygmunt Klukowski's diary, were added. What is more, only certain portions were selected so that readers would not realise that it depicted a German deportation. Instead, they might get the impression that these were chiefly the activities of Poles already after the deportation. Instead of engaging in such manipulations, which have nothing in common with a scholarly reconstruction, better use could be made of, for instance, the testimony of Avigdor Weit, which was described and quoted in *Judenjagd* as follows:

> One of the survivors remembered this period in the following words: "the worst *Aktions* started in the spring of 1942, shortly after Pesach; rich people were taken according to a list, the family of Dr. Schindler was shot then. He

[74] This matter shall be discussed further below.

himself survived because he jumped from a balcony and survived.[75] Around 35 people were then shot on the spot. The Germans also led the secretary of the Judenrat, Bereł Zys, into a field and shot him together with his fiancée. On Shavuot 1942, an *Aktion* on even a greater scale took place, about 1,000 people were rounded up at that time and loaded onto railway cars and taken, I believe, to Bełżec."[76]

Weit said more than this, and his testimony runs as follows – the restored words are highlighted:

> **The JOD commander was Kalman Fenicher; he grew rich by collecting contributions, robbed the rich, but the poor he left alone. Admittedly, through his fault many Jews fell into the hands of Germans, he would discover hiding places and drag people out of them.** The worst *Aktions* started in the spring of 1942, shortly after Pesach, rich people were taken according to a list, the family of Dr. Schindler was shot then. He himself survived because he jumped from a balcony and survived. Around 35 people were then shot on the spot. Germans also led the secretary of the Judenrat, Bereł Zys, into a field and shot him together with his fiancée. On Shavuot 1942, an *Aktion* on even a greater scale took place, about 1,000 people were rounded up at that time and loaded onto railway cars and taken, I believe, to Bełżec […] **The liquidation of Jews in Dąbrowa [Tarnowska] took place between Rosh-Hashanah and Yom Kippur; those who remained were taken to Tarnów by horse-drawn wagons. Only Jewish policemen were left to help the Germans clear houses. They were promised that afterwards they would be taken to the Tarnów Ghetto and that Kalman would remain their commander there in the place of Binstock, who had held this post until then. The Jewish policemen believed these promises and eagerly dragged people out of bunkers to save their families, but afterwards the**

[75] Those shot were Aszer (a merchant) and Rozalia Schindler and Dr. Jehuda Schindler"s younger brother (Yad Vashem Archive [hereinafter AYV], O.3/2363).

[76] AYV, O.3/2020, Testimony of Avigdor Weit, typescript, p. 5. According to incorrect information in the footnotes of *Judenjagd*, the author quotes the "Account of Abram and Avigdor Weit," call number O.3/2020. Actually, these are two separate testimonies given by two different persons.

> **Germans surrounded that house where they all lived too, led out separately every family, had them strip naked, shot and buried them.**[77]

The description of JOD operations can be supplemented and corrected thanks to the account of Liba Ehrenberg quoted by the local historian Krzysztof Struziak in his critical review of *Judenjagd*:

> The fact that I am alive today and walk the earth I owe solely to Poles who did not refuse me help wherever I was during the occupation. The worst dogs were the Jewish policemen who discovered my husband and daughter in a hiding place. They handed them over to the Germans who shot them. The greatest scoundrel of them all was their commander, Hersz Majer, for his eagerness towards the Germans, Jews called him Majer the executioner.[78]

In *Judenjagd* we will not find anything meaningful about the activities of the JOD; JOD members are portrayed solely as victims:

> Thus, the Dąbrowa Ghetto ceased to exist – the only ones left in it, Jewish policemen, were concentrated in one house together with their families, in total about 30 people. They were the last ones to be shot by the German gendarmerie under the command of Landgraf in the Jewish cemetery on 20 December 1942. Among the OD-men (*Ordnungsdienstmänner*) who were killed was also Kalman Fenichel, the ghetto police chief, who, until the very end, had been promised his life and a transfer to Tarnów.

Jan Grabowski added in a footnote: "Besides Fenichel, the Wolf brothers, Leib Gruszow, Hersz Majer Pflaum and Uszer Ofen perished at that time."[79] He did not give the source of this information, but the last three names come no doubt from Alter Milet's testimony which is found in the annex to the book. It

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[77] AYV, O.3/2020, Testimony of Avigdor Weit, typescript, pp. 5–6.

[78] Struziak, "Judenjagd." Almost all Jewish witnesses claim, however, that the chief of the JOD, who was was in charge of many criminal actions of the local unit, was Kalman Ponicher, mentioned earlier.

[79] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 43.

is from that account that the information about the last three policemen was taken and their names transposed to the book without even a comma: "Hersz Majer Pflaum and Uszer Ofen."[80] The name of Kalman Fenichel also appears in other accounts.

The book version of the account and the quoted source differ by one crucial word, the omission of which resembles the omissions from source materials described earlier. Actually, Milet was not so much listing the names of the policemen who were shot as describing what he thought of the JOD men: "They were all stripped naked and shot one at a time together with their children in the cemetery. Only about 30 souls were left. OD-men with their wives and children. They, too, were finished off on 20 December 1942. The **most wicked of them** were Kalman Fenichel, Hersz Majer Flaum, Uscher Ofen."[81]

The above testimonies of JOD activities in Dąbrowa Tarnowska can be supplemented by the account of Molly Applebaum (although this account could not have been included in *Judenjagd* as it was published only in 2017):

> The Jewish police were under orders from the Germans to make sure that no Jewish family remained living in the forbidden part of town. When they did find someone and delivered them to the SS, they received an award of extra rations for their own families. Occasionally, we heard that they turned in members of their own families. … I still have a picture in my mind's eye of a couple of those Jewish policemen. People were envious of their position, believing that they had a better chance of staying alive. They strutted around in their special uniforms, armed with rubber batons that they were urged to use, whether necessary or not. They were ordinary men from our midst, but the situation lifted them up and I recall people saying that any of them could be bribed with valuables so as not to reveal if they found someone in the wrong part of town. One of the grownups said, "Even at this horrible time, a diamond still has some value even if nothing else does."[82]

[80] *Ibid*., p. 222.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] M. Applebaum, *Buried Words: The Diary of Molly Applebaum* (Toronto, 2017), p. 62.

After omitting or rejecting Polish publications and Jewish testimonies known to its author, one can find in *Judenjagd* a denial of the fact that JOD men hunted for their compatriots after the final deportation in September 1942: "This statement [that Jewish policemen tracked down their fellow Jews] is untrue inasmuch as Dąbrowa Jewish policemen did not leave the ghetto and were murdered in the local Jewish cemetery already in December 1942, while the real hunt for fugitives was only beginning then."[83] The Germans, however, were hunting down Jews in the ghetto, using JOD men for that purpose, also after the final deportation in September 1942 until they themselves were shot in December 1942, which was clearly described by Avigdor Weit, for one. Replacing relevant sources with a (suitably doctored) fragment of Zygmunt Klukowski's diary (relating other events from another locality) does not sound convincing.

The methodology employed by the author of *Judenjagd,* however, is well suited to the overall tenor of the book. Information gathered from across occupied Poland, an area hundreds of times larger than the size of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, is used to construct what purports to be a monograph of that county. Furthermore, the book features chapters on "Polish accomplices" (as for example, about the *Baudienst*) without any document or fact showing that that formation took part in direct operations against Jews in that area. This factual void and utter research absurdity could have been replaced with a sound chapter on the activities of the JOD.[84]

Incidentally, the practice of removing from the true picture of the history of the JOD and attributing its "achievements" to Poles is a typical manipulation found in the publications of the author of *Judenjagd* and others he has edited. The least subtle example of such a distortion is the case of the Bochnia Ghetto, where local JOD men dragged several hundred compatriots (two renowned rabbis among them) out of bunkers, robbed them and handed them over to the Germans. In the book, *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without End: The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland], edited by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, the author of the article on Bochnia,

[83] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 55.

[84] In *Judenjagd*, the Tarnów JOD was treated in a similar way. That matter will be described in this author"s forthcoming publication.

Dagmara Swałtek-Niewińska, attributed those JOD crimes to "German" and (Polish) blue policemen, contrary to unambiguous source material.[85]

Crucially, even after the publication of the relevant and unequivocal information and document scans, the author, Swałtek-Niewińska, and editor Jan Grabowski, publicly upheld what was written in *Dalej jest noc*.[86] Jan Grabowski did the same thing regarding Cracow in another book, in which he replaced JOD men who searched for Jewish bunkers and hiding places and turned over to the Germans the Jews taking cover in them with "Polish and German policemen."[87]

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[85] D. Swałtek-Niewińska, "Powiat bocheński," in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 563–564.

[86] Attention was first drawn to this matter by Tomasz Domański in a critical review of the book in question, *Korekta obrazu? Refleksje źródłoznawcze wokół książki 'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski"* ''(Warsaw, 2019), p. 59 (https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/biblioteka-cyfrowa/publikacje/43750, Korekta-obrazu-Refleksje-zrodloznawcze-wokol-ksiazki-Dalej-jest-noc-Losy-Zydow-w.html). In a rebuttal, the author upheld her false claims (http://www.holocaustresearch.pl/nowy/photo/Dagmara_Swaltek-Niewinska_odpowiedz_KOREKTA_OBRAZU.pdf, p. 6). After this bizarre rebuttal, I publicised the matter in the media by publishing documents (P. Gontarczyk, "Naukowa mistyfikacja," *Sieci* 10 [2019], pp. 22–26; *idem*, "Niezależni od prawdy," *Sieci* 11 [2019], pp 39–42). When the matter of substituting "Polish and German police" for "Jewish police" was raised by Prof. Daniel Blatman in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* (D. Blatman, "The Holocaust"s Evasive History in Both Poland and Israel," 3 May 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/the-holocaust-s-evasive-history-in-both-poland-and-israel-1.7196251), the author of *Judenjagd* wrote: "The person who accused one of our authors of substituting 'Polish police' for 'Jewish police' is Dr. Piotr Gontarczyk, an employee of the IPN, who has no credentials as a historian of the Holocaust. In fact, Gontarczyk, who remains deservedly unknown abroad, is well-known in Poland as a champion of hard right-wing causes. In this case, Gontarczyk"s allegations have been exposed piece by piece for what they are: lies, misquotes and a display of outrageous ignorance. The rebuttal, written by Dagmara Swałtek-Niewiska, was published on our website as well as in the main opposition daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. For Blatman to lend currency to Gontarczyk"s lies is beyond shameful." (J. Grabowski, "Poland"s Militant Nationalists Are Targeting Holocaust Scholars, With Help From an Israeli Historian" (https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium-the-israeli-historian-helping-poland-s-nationalists-target-scholars-of-the-holocaust-1.72557980). This reaction proves that any polemic is pointless in this case. The present author is working now on a larger publication that will also have an extensive treatment of the events in Bochnia.

[87] "[…] hundreds of Jews were still hiding in the Cracow Ghetto after the final deportation. Day after day, shelters and bunkers fell into the hands of German and Polish policemen who searched the former Jewish quarter" (J. Grabowski, *Na posterunku: Udział polskiej policji granatowej i kryminalnej w zagładzie Żydów* [Wołowiec, 2020], p. 144). The author was aware how the situation really looked. Earlier, the flagship publication of this circle *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2 (2006) – Grabowski was on its editorial board at the time – ran an article by a Yad Vashem employee, Witold Mędykowski, titled "Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy" (Against their own: Patterns of Jewish Collaboration in Cracow and Its Environs), which described this phenomenon and quoted one of the most important sources on the history of the Cracow Ghetto: "The Germans, notified by their informers or by chance, tracked down hideouts in the ghetto. Then, entire expeditions set out composed of Germans and JOD men under the command of [Cracow JOD chief, Symcha] Spira, assisted by workmen armed with axes, pickaxes and crowbars. Elaborately-made hiding places in attics, cellars and large

Coming back, however, to the question of the research methodology of *Judenjagd,* it has to be said that the book not only relates sources carelessly, but is even guilty of changing the content of quotations. This is equally true of the accounts of Holocaust victims and other documents such as, for instance, reports from underground newspapers. This practice was utilized, for instance, in a Jewish account published in the appendix of the book under review, specifically the testimony of Michał Pinkas from the village of Dąbrówka, near Radomyśl Wielki (Mielec County). Quoted in the appendix, the document ends thus: "In the evening, I went to Dąbrowa, I walked the whole night, I had nothing to eat."[88]

As the source of Pinkas' account, the book gives the AŻIH (Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute). Its call number is cited without informing whether it refers to a manuscript or a typescript. This is important because manuscripts, which were often difficult to read, were then typed in the AŻIH, so each version of the document has a different call number. When the document in *Judenjagd* and the original AŻIH file are compared, one can see right away that something is not in order. The book version ends in 1942, whereas the respective AŻIH microfilm contains the sentence: "when the war was over, the boy was taken care of by his aunt."[89] Since this piece of information is missing from the book, the matter needed to be clarified. It turned out that the microfilmed file was in disorder and the manuscript was incomplete: the last page was missing, while the last-but-one ended as it does in *Judenjagd.* The typescript has one more page and ends with the author's signature and date ("Pinkas Michał 7 IX 1945"). The final sentence of the account reads: "I have an aunt who was baptised already 17 years [ago], she lived in Wola Wadowska, when she learned where I was, she took me from there [from the peasant's farm – P.G.]."[90] The following passage was left out of the book:

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bakeries were exposed where people, who had enough food and water, could have survived for months had it not been for bad luck or betrayal. The Jews who were found were taken to the JOD jail, whence they walked to Płaszów, usually to meet their deaths" (W. Mędykowski, "Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2 [2006], p. 214). The quotation in Mędykowski"s text comes from the memoir of Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *Apteka w getcie krakowskim* (Cracow, 2003), which is well-known to Grabowski.

[88] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 194.

[89] AŻIH, 301/767, Testimony of Michał Pinkas, microfilm description of 26 September 1996.

[90] *Ibid.*, typescript, p. 3.

> In the morning I reached Radogoszcz. There, I passed myself off as a lost person [Pole – P.G.], I said I did not know where I came from, I got lost when the war broke out and I did not have anyone. A woman took me in as a servant. I stayed with her three days. Later, a farmer from Gruszów Wielki took me, he was looking for a cowherd and learned that there was a certain lost boy. I spent two years with him. I was doing very well there. Usually, I minded two cows and two horses. I could eat as much as I wanted and well. He liked me very much, I would not leave the place, I did not know if I had anybody. The farmer bought me lemonade and ice cream, I went to town every day. When the front was approaching, people from my village came and my farmer learned that I was a Jew. But he told me to stay on, "Since you have been here all this time, stay on." He only asked if I had anybody [alive from my family]. I have an aunt who was baptised already 17 years, she lived in Wola Wadowska, and when she learned where I was, she took me from there.[91]

Judenjagd included that part of Pinkas' account which described the death of his family, to which the blue police contributed, and illustrated the risks posed by peasants and policemen from whom he fled for his life. However, the book left out the final part of his account, where he writes about his two years' sojourn in Gruszów Wielki (Dąbrowa Tarnowska County), sheltered by a Polish peasant. The farmer did not throw him out (if only out of fear) upon learning that he was a Jew. A human error, one might think; perhaps it happened that, unfortunately, the author of *Judenjagd* did not notice that one page of the manuscript was missing and simply published what he had found. Can one argue, though, that this explanation is correct?

This question is answered by analyzing the differences between the manuscript and typescript of the account and the version published in the book. The manuscript starts thus: "Pinkas Michał. 1931. Dąbrówka (Mielec County[92]). **I lived with my family in Dąbrówka.** There were [my] parents, **2** brothers and **2** sisters."[93]

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[91] *Ibid.*

[92] The word "Mielec" is struck out, "Nisko" is superscribed and "Rzeszów Voivodeship" is added underneath.

[93] AŻIH, 301/767, Testimony of Michał Pinkas, manuscript, p. 1.

Whereas, in the typescript, the account begins thus: "Pinkas Michał, born in 1931. Dąbrówka, Mielec County. **I lived in Dąbrówka with my family.** There were [my] parents, **two** brothers and **two** sisters."[94] The *Judenjagd* version of the beginning of the account is as follows: "Michał Pinkas (born in 1931). **I lived in Dąbrówka with my family.** There were [my] parents, **two** brothers, and **two** sisters [all emphasis is mine – P.G.].[95]

Admittedly, in the book, perhaps due to an error, the name and surname of the author of the account were transposed, and information on the county where Michał Pinkas's birthplace was located was left out without noting this. However, the word order of the first sentence and the writing out of numerals unequivocally indicate that the typescript of the account was used.[96] The crucial question that arises for the purpose of this discussion is: if the author of *Judenjagd* used the (complete) typewritten version of Pinkas's account, why did the version published in the book break off where the manuscript on microfilm ends? It seems that there could be only one answer: part of Pinkas's account was deliberately omitted in the book because it contained information about the help extended to its author by a Pole. If someone were to notice the manipulation, Jan Grabowski could always explain that he used the original version, i.e., the manuscript, which breaks off earlier. But this would ignore the differences between the two versions that show, rather, that he used the typescript. Any comments on such "scholarly methods" of doctoring published sources therefore appear moot.

Another example of such practices in *Judenjagd* – besides the ones mentioned earlier – is the way Jan Grabowski uses a quotation taken from an underground bulletin published in 1942, in which it was supposedly argued that saving Jews being murdered by the Germans was an anti-national act. The author of *Judenjagd* writes and quotes:

> In certain circles, helping Jews was even considered an activity hostile to the vital interests of the Polish nation. This view was expressed in an underground

[94] *Ibid*.

[95] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 193.

[96] There are many more differences between the versions of Michał Pinkas's account (manuscript and typescript) and all of them unambiguously prove that the author of *Judenjagd* used the typescript.

> newspaper published by the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne;* NSZ)*:* "We have to condemn those who want to hide Jews among themselves and proclaim them traitors to the Polish cause. Because every true Pole knows that in a reborn Poland, there is no room either for a German or for a Jew."[97]

The source of these radical contentions supposedly was – as the author informs in a footnote – *Propaganda Centralna* (no. 14 [27] of 15 July 1942), published by the National Armed Forces.[98] Upon verification, the text in this bulletin was found not to refer to the question of whether Jews should be given aid or not. Moreover, the words used in *Propaganda Centralna* were not written by its editors, but were an account from another publication – allegedly an open letter of a private person published in *Miecz i Pług*, the official bulletin of an organisation bearing the same name. In spite of its many genuine achievements and credits, that organisation was infiltrated in 1942, and perhaps already taken over by agents of the German security forces (after its real leaders had been arrested).[99] Hence, the opinions expressed in the letter can hardly be considered representative of the Polish underground. The National Armed Forces did not have anything to do with the bulletin because they were formed after the letter quoted in *Judenjagd* was published. This fact can be verified even in *Encyklopedia powszechna PWN*.[100] What appears crucial, however, is the fact that the quotation in the book from *Propaganda Centralna* is incomplete and the omissions were not marked. The restored portions are highlighted below:

> In the latest issue of *M[iecz] and P[*ług*],* in the article "Monopoly on Patriotism," the author, among other things, claims with certainty that one of the respected military organizations has Jews among its leaders or members. As a member of one of the military organisations, in my own name and that of hundreds of other comrades in arms, I demand that the author of the article clearly specify and name those organisations and name those Jews for the good of many organised

[97] Grabowski, *Judenjagd*, p. 64.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] The matter is well-known and discussed in the relevant literature, see https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Miecz-i-Plug;3940621.html (accessed 1 September 2019).

[100] https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Narodowe-Sily-Zbrojne;3945849.html (accessed 1 September 2019).

> soldiers of the underground army. If the claim is true, **those who want to hide Jews among themselves ought to be denounced and proclaimed traitors to the Polish cause.** Members of such an organisation will decline any further collaboration with Jews **because every true Pole knows that in a reborn Poland there is no room either for a German or for a Jew.**[101]

The original text refers to a private letter published in a marginal bulletin of ill repute. It raises the question of whether Jews should be accepted or not into the Polish underground struggle for independence. After doctoring the original source text in the manner described above, a quotation from it was placed in *Judenjagd* that was supposed to show the attitude of an important (nationalist) Polish underground organisation, the National Armed Forces, toward the Jewish community and the Holocaust. Such practices of "correcting" sources, or rather of finding meaning in them that is not there, are ones the author has been employing for years.[102]

In 1995, Ośrodek KARTA published the diary of Calek Perechodnik. This testimony of a former Jewish policeman is not only known chiefly for its tragic content and poignancy but also because the first edition that came out in Poland contained a censored and cut version of the diary.[103] The matter ended in a scandal because this "correcting of a source" was exposed and described by David Engel, who compared such practices to the infamous efforts of Thomas Bowdler.[104] Only

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[101] *Propaganda Centralna* 14, 15 July 1942.

[102] P. Gontarczyk, "Naukowe fałszerstwo pod szyldem 'Polin,'" *Sieci*, 25 November 2019. This was not the first article in which I charged the author with source falsification. Earlier, I published various scholarly texts and feature articles on this subject. In one of them (also in *Sieci*), next to a fragment of an article by Grabowski from *Night Without End* with a quotation from the testimony of a witness who supposedly testified that Polish firemen "set fire to" the ghetto in Węgrów, I placed the original testimony in which the witness says that firemen "put out a fire" in the ghetto (P. Gontarczyk, "Na niemieckim posterunku: Uwagi na marginesie nowej książki Jana Grabowskiego," *Sieci*, 1 June 2020). There is a difference, isn't there? No reply from the author was forthcoming. He even "corrects" maps by transposing the Treblinka extermination camp from one county to another in one of his texts, about which I wrote as well (P. Gontarczyk, "Gdzie leży obóz zagłady w Treblince?," *Sieci*, 2 November 2020).

[103] C. Perechodnik, *Czy ja jestem mordercą?*, ed. by P. Szapiro (Warsaw, 1995).

[104] D. Engel, "On the Bowdlerization of a Holocaust Testimony: The Wartime Journal of Calek Perechodnik," *Polin* 12 (1999), pp. 316–329. Thomas Bowdler (1754–1825) – a physician and editor of the works of William Shakespeare. He published these works after replacing certain words, phrases and expressions with others and removing specific themes (for example about a prostitute). Similar methods were used by Bowdler to correct the historical work of Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall*

later was a complete edition of the testimony published without intervention by a censor trying to "correct" history.[105] As far as Polish history is concerned, the academic world is well aware that such practices of doctoring historical sources, as are found in many publications by Jan Grabowski, were, until recently, mainly the domain of the notorious Department of Party History at the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Stalinist times. In this context, how should one treat the methodology of distorting sources (including changing their content when quoting and editing them) carried out in *Judenjagd* in a manner that is incomparably more diverse and widespread?

To sum up, it must be stated that the book under review is, above all, not an account of the fate of Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. It is mostly a collage of drastic examples of the behaviour by Poles "crammed" from literally the entire country into this alleged monograph. There are even chapters in *Judenjagd* without a single fact or document pertaining to the area being discussed. Moreover, the wartime fate of the Jews is clearly given a subsidiary treatment. The key goal appears to be finding in sources – because, in this case, one cannot speak of a genuine scholarly archival search – and quoting primarily examples of despicable and shameful behaviour of Poles, which become the most important "discovered" aspect of the Holocaust, even at the cost of pushing German criminals into the background. In the process, the facts presented in *Judenjagd* were systematically "purged" of information regarding the improper behaviour of some Jews, Jewish criminals, and the important problem of sometimes even criminal activities of the Jewish police. Using this approach, the responsibility for these deeds is shifted onto the Germans and, even more eagerly, onto the Poles. It is important to underscore that the treatment of all fundamental aspects of a scholarly publication such as archival research, the selection and analysis of sources, and especially the widespread use of completely unacceptable methods of constructing a narrative and treating historical sources, excludes *Judenjagd* from any serious form of scholarly discourse.

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of the Roman Empire, because of some critical remarks it contained on the role Christianity supposedly played in the process.

[105] C. Perechodnik, *Spowiedź – dzieje rodziny żydowskiej podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2004).

REVIEWS
DISCUSSION
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*UMARŁY CMENTARZ. WSTĘP DO STUDIÓW NAD WYJAŚNIENIEM PRZYCZYN I PRZEBIEGU MORDERSTWA NA ŻYDACH W KIELCACH DNIA 4 LIPCA 1946 ROKU** BY KRZYSZTOF KĄKOLEWSKI

The years 2006–2008 saw the publication of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego* (On the Kielce Pogrom) in two volumes by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN).[1] At that time, they were rather widely considered a summation of the state of research into the pogrom of Jews in Kielce on 4 July 1946. Over a decade later, successive publications came out that made a significant contribution to the state of research and had a major impact on the debate about the pogrom. Among them were the two-volume study *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (Under a Curse: a Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom), (Warsaw, 2018) by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir and the fourth volume of *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku* (Pogroms of Jews in the Polish Lands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), (Warsaw, 2019), entitled *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)* (The Holocaust and the Post-War Years [1939–1946]), edited

* The Lifeless Cemetery: Introduction to the Study of the Causes and Course of the Massacre of Jews in Kielce on 4 July 1946'.

[1] *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, ed. by Ł. Kamiński and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2006); *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2, ed. by L. Bukowski, A. Jankowski, and J. Żaryn (Warsaw, 2008).

by August Grabski. The latter publication included many articles on the Kielce pogrom or selected issues related to it, which analysed various interpretations of the atrocity[2] and gave new research proposals, relying on theories taken from related fields of study.[3] Two articles by Bożena Szaynok deserve a special mention and can be considered a successive summation of the research into the pogrom of Jews in Kielce.[4] Summing up her discussion, she wrote: "We have […] to remember that the Kielce tragedy cannot be explained by a single scenario."[5] Possible further research directions and re-interpretations of some events which occurred during the pogrom were also given in several articles by the author of the present review.[6]

The review of major publications of interest to us here may end with the 2021 book by Julian Kwiek.[7] It is a compendium, so to speak, of knowledge (including relevant literature) on anti-Jewish violence in Poland in 1944–1947.

After the war, Polish-Jewish relations were very complicated and, as such, cannot be characterised by a single selected conception. Many aspects of these relations arouse strong emotions and fierce polemics while overshadowing legitimate arguments and findings, following from research. Tracing the course of events in Kielce on 4 July 1946 and determining the responsibility of particular persons for them

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[2] Ł. Krzyżanowski and M. Zaremba, "Bić ich za nasze dzieci!" Panika moralna i przemoc zbiorowa wobec Żydów w Polsce w latach 1945–1946," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 4: *Holokaust i powojnie (1939–1946)*, ed. by A. Grabski (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 489–510.

[3] J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Pogrom jako akt kontroli społecznej. Springfield 1908 – Polska 1945–1946," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, pp. 467–487.

[4] B. Szaynok, "Nowe ustalenia badawcze dotyczące pogromu w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.," in *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich*, pp. 215–235; *ead.*, "Polska historiografia po 1989 r. na temat pogromów i powojennej przemocy wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947," in *ibid.*, pp. 511–526.

[5] Szaynok, "Nowe ustalenia badawcze," p. 235. See also *ead.*, *Polska historiografia*, p. 519, fn. 39: "It is worth making it clear in this context that the thesis about a provocation by the authorities does not rule out the adoption of anti-Semitism as another factor sparking the Kielce tragedy."

[6] R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r. Możliwości badawcze," *Arcana* 132 (2016), pp. 105–124. It pointed out new research findings which made certain IPN investigation findings obsolete. They were known from the 2004 decision to discontinue investigation, published in volume two of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego.* See also R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Między tezą, hipotezą a fikcją literacką – opowieść o pogromie Żydów w Kielcach. Recenzja książki Joanny Tokarskiej-Bakir, 'Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego,' Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, (Warszawa 2018), vol. 1, vol. 2: Dokumenty," *Polish-Jewish Studies* 1 (2020), pp. 315–384; *id.*, "Stawiając pytania, zbliżamy się do prawdy. Wokół bezradności badawczej nad pogromem Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.," in *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w XX wieku. Badania – kontrowersje – perspektywy*, ed. by T. Domański and E. Majcher-Ociesa (Kielce–Warsaw, 2021), pp. 303–340.

[7] J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Warsaw, 2021).

(including clearly identifying all perpetrators) are very difficult because of the credibility problem with sources and the mutually exclusive information they provide (some sources come from political trials). The followers of various interpretation theories often do not agree on the facts and definitions of situations themselves. Another significant difficulty is the need to cope continually with the myths and stereotypes that have grown up about the pogrom of Jews in Kielce. Furthermore, a situation is hardly acceptable when a researcher restricts his or her field of vision to one indisputable theory. It is thus worth reiterating the research truism that in an interpretation process, it is only natural that competing, alternative, main and subsidiary hypotheses clash.

In the public sphere, now and then, voices are heard, referring to the theses (hypotheses) put forward in Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book *Umarły cmentarz. Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku*, Warsaw 2008 (first edition 1996). Those who study the Kielce pogrom of Jews are well familiar with Kąkolewski's work and the beliefs and opinions it offers have been shared by many. This is one of the reasons why this book was judged by other researchers studying Polish-Jewish relations after 1945. Several of these judgements are worth quoting.

Ryszard Gryz (2000), on the state of research into the attitude of the Catholic Church to the events in Kielce, found "the major shortcoming [of Krzysztof Kąkolewski's work] to be the absence of references. Hence, interesting or even sensational claims lack any source support. Besides, there are many mistakes and inaccuracies in it."[8]

Bożena Szaynok, in her article "Spory o pogrom kielecki" (The Polemic Over the Kielce Pogrom), included in the first volume of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*,[9] was very critical of Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book,[10] by saying that it belonged to the group of "several publications whose authors unambiguously opted for

[8] R. Gryz, "Stanowisko Kościoła katolickiego wobec pogromu Żydów w Kielcach. Stan badań," *Nasza Przeszłość*, 93 (2000), p. 426. Gryz maintains that also Fr. Jan Śledzianowski in *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim* (Kielce, 1998) pointed out the shortcomings of Kąkolewski"s work.

[9] B. Szaynok, "Spory o pogrom kielecki," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 111–129.

[10] K. Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz. Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku* (Warsaw, 1996). The second edition of this book came out in 2008.

the thesis about provocation, ignoring or marginalising the problem of anti-Semitism." She further said that "the authors who deny or play down the role of anti-Semitism in the Kielce pogrom frequently refer to current events" and that "a point of departure for denying anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes in post-war Poland is accusations of anti-Semitism currently levelled against the Poles."[11] In Szaynok's opinion, Krzysztof Kąkolewski held that the key "to understand the pogrom is a provocation by Soviet and Polish secret services" and "tried to prove this thesis by quoting information from anonymous sources," which leaves the reader "completely unable to verify it." Moreover, she faulted Kąkolewski for "frequently reconstructing particular events on the strength of a single relation" at the same time ignoring the sources "according to which a provocation alone does not suffice to explain anti-Jewish sentiments and actions in Kielce." According to Kąkolewski, moreover, anti-Semitism is replaced with "Communist anti-Semitism". Summing up her critical review, the researcher of Polish-Jewish relations stressed:

> The authors who believe that the Kielce pogrom was prepared and carried out by Polish and Soviet secret services do not tackle the problem of the responsibility of some Kielce residents for these murders. In other words, they argue no Pole living in Kielce participated in the massacre – during the pogrom they formed a passive mass, separated from the crime scene by a militia and army cordon. The same authors do not believe there was any problem of anti-Semitism in Poland after the war, including Kielce at the time of the pogrom. What does exist, however, is the problem of using false accusations of anti-Semitism against the Poles for some advantage by various circles around the world. Viewing the pogrom only as a provocation is a simplification as much as describing it solely in terms of anti-Semitism.[12]

In a successive article, already mentioned above, concerning new research findings in the study of the pogrom, she wrote:

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[11] Szaynok, "Spory o pogrom kielecki," p. 121.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 123–125.

> It so happens that an interpretation of a provocation follows from the analysis of "extra-Kielce" events, for instance, in the book *Umarły cmentarz* [The Lifeless Cemetery] by Krzysztof Kąkolewski. He writes that "the pogrom date was set for the day when the Katyń trial started in Nuremberg." An attempt to tie "Katyń" to "Kielce", serving Soviet purposes, is a good example of building an interpretation ignoring sources, but answering the question *cui prodest*.[13]

In the first volume of *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, in the selection of documents from the investigation into the Kielce pogrom conducted from the mid-1990s on (edited by Jacek Żurek), there is the *Transcript of the interview of witness Krzysztof Kąkolewski* (Warsaw, 27 November 1995).[14] Its fragment reads:

> I believe that the pogrom was not as much a provocation as a militia-military operation staged as one. I presume that Władysław Sobczyński was its director, who was head of the Voivodeship Security Office in Kielce at that time. He gave an order to capture civilians in the streets of Kielce of whom some were tried by a military court and sentenced to death in several cases in spite of the fact that none of these persons was guilty of the death of any victims in Planty Street. To be precise, I do not wish to accuse Sobczyński because I do not have any evidence. All my public statements so far on the causes of the pogrom have been based on pieces of circumstantial evidence that complement one another. To the question of the public prosecutor, if the witness had any documents bearing out his opinion that the Kielce pogrom had been a militia-military operation staged as a provocation, the witness replied that he did not – despite the efforts he made in both Poland and Russia.[15]

Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book is based on records from the Central Archives of Modern Records (the author lists several dozen archival units from two groups), Central Archives of the Ministry of Home Affairs (seven archival units), Central Military Archives (three archival units), Polish Underground Movement Study

[13] *Ead.*, "Nowe ustalenia badawcze," p. 229.
[14] *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 322–324.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

Trust (*Studium Polski Podziemnej*) (one file), Jewish Historical Institute (transcripts of Central Committee of Jews) and the private archives of Jan Wrzeszcz. He also used academic studies and press articles. Due to limitations in access to documents, which were still a major obstacle in the 1990s, the archival search may raise serious doubts as to its direction. What poses a greater problem, however, is the use of the relations of "anonymous informers" by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*. In many cases their accounts are vitally important.

Krzysztof Kąkolewski's book is not a scholarly study strictly speaking; its narrative resembles rather an elaborate historical reportage (it consists of sixty-one sketches) that has been enhanced by some elements of a scholarly apparatus.

Not rejecting beforehand any of the hypotheses (or rather research proposals) advanced by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*, one can hardly not agree with charges levelled by Bożena Szaynok or Ryszard Gryz, concerning the sources the book is based on and the absence of an appropriate scholarly apparatus (absence of references to the most important issues). To illustrate how serious the problem is, it is worthwhile to present some of the many such instances (quotations come from the second edition of *Umarły cmentarz* in 2008):

> – The massacre was purposefully complicated already by its planners and perpetrators and later by those who especially obscured its course, by special propaganda units assigned to spread disinformation on the subject – that is why we are facing particularly complicated coincidences. Some are carefully planned accidents, while others follow naturally from the provoked course of events.[16]

> – Meanwhile, the members […] of the Communist Party wearing military and police uniforms, and plainclothes ones, were the murderers, and the Polish Workers' Party incited the massacre and organised a group of its members who were ordered to kill innocent Jews.[17]

[16] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 8.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

– Fire consumed the valuable historical part of the archives and records of wartime trials and others that took place shortly after the war. Approximately, until fifty-something, fourth.[18]

– If we add that one of the witnesses, who are mentioned above, active in the pogrom propaganda sphere, was a member of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, NSZ) during the war and left Poland with the NSZ Świętokrzyska Brigade under the care of the German armed forces and later returned to Poland, and not only was not imprisoned and convicted of membership in a hostile organisation and collaboration with the Germans, but instead moved around freely and even, in his own words, took part in the pogrom as its passive witness.[19] […] In my opinion, he was being prepared to suit the "NSZ version". This is so because, as my research shows, the security forces supervised and directed by the Russians – advisers stationed in Kielce and a special pogrom instructor, Mikhail Alexandr Dyomin[20], who had arrived from Moscow – did not plan in advance who to blame for the pogrom.[21]

– Colonel, later General Grzegorz Korczyński, who supervised the course of the pogrom on behalf of the Warsaw authorities […].[22]

– One of the informers, let us call him Informer 8, who insisted that his identity be kept absolutely secret because he did not have any protection like other true or presumed witnesses and feared not only – as he said – "the revenge of Jews", but also that a resumed investigation might count him among potential criminals because of my interlocutors he was the only one who admitted being close to the

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[19] Here, it is worth mentioning that the unidentified figure of "Cpt Janek" appears in sources (see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 47–49).

[20] In the matter of Dyomin see, for instance, R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Między tezą, hipotezą a fikcją literacką," p. 328.

[21] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 29.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 67. For Grzegorz Korczyński in the context of the Kielce pogrom see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Pogrom w Kielcach – podziemie w roli oskarżonego," pp. 43–45, 69; R. Kuśnierz, "Pogrom kielecki na łamach prasy w Polsce," in *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 2008), p. 158.

"Jewish House" […] Informer 8 painted the picture that brought some order to an apparently absurd and incoherent scenario created by Communist and post-Communist historians. […] At certain intervals, four, or rather, six men drag a wounded Jew and hand him over to an ORMO squad [*Ochotnicza Rezerwa Milicji Obywatels-kiej* – Citizens' Militia Volunteer Reserves] of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) that came from a factory. These six men never say a word, do not provoke or incite to kill the Jews, but merely carry out their criminal work mechanically, as it were. They are like a conveyor between the building interior and a kind of yard or square where they operate. These people, these four or six men, alternately disappear and re-emerge with new victims. They shuttle back and forth irregularly, sometimes between their successive appearances more time passes. However, each time these are the same men who behave in an exactly the same way. Informer 8 remembered the culminating moment, so to speak, of the pogrom. In the door leading to the staircase, a soldier appeared and shouted: "Lieutenant Wacek is dead!" According to other data, immediately before the pogrom, information was spread in the army and the Internal Security Corps (*Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego*, KBW), in parallel to that spread by militiamen and plainclothes operatives, about children being killed for matzo in the Jewish House. Interestingly, this information sounds identical as the soldier's cry: "Jews killed Lieutenant Wacek." Was this cry a provocation?[23] It may never be possible to find out because in the fight with the Jews, at least two or perhaps even four officers were killed of those who had stormed the building. Who were these individuals? […] I have identified one of these criminals by name. […] Trying to establish the composition of the group of civilians operating in Planty Street, besides "people camping out in the woods", of whom Informer 4 spoke, and what one of the then Kielce dignitaries confirmed in a conversation before his death, we have found the trace of criminal convicts brought from the Radom prison […].[24]

– It may be presumed that secret plainclothes combat groups, mobilised for the referendum that preceded the pogrom by only a few days, could have participated

[23] R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Stawiając pytania," pp. 320–321.
[24] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 75–77.

in the pogrom. In a report, one can read that every Polish Army regiment had such groups – thus, the 4th Infantry Regiment and the units of the 2nd Division, stationed in Kielce, had to have them. Their uniformed colleagues operated openly in the pogrom so it is hardly imaginable that secret squads were not used; perhaps even the whole plan rested on them.[25]

– As many as three names of people connected to the new regime could be identified, who mixed with the crowd. They wore British battledress, as did 2nd Corps soldiers. We can provide these names on request because these people cannot be charged with any crime. Where did they stand or mix with onlookers? Mostly along Sienkiewicza Street. They played a double role: with their uniforms, they asserted the participation of "Anders forces" and observed onlookers. It is from the onlookers that a group of persons was formed of whom, in turn, future defendants were to be chosen. For apart from the occupation-background criterion, people to be later accused of murdering innocent men of Jewish blood were chosen from the onlookers, carefully leaving alone all those who were too close to the scene. […] The "Andersites" included the son of a high-ranking Kielce UB dignitary, a teenager – although there was no such term at that time – most likely sent there by his father, the second Andersite was a prison guard from the UB prison in Kielce. […] The third Andersite we have identified was a lieutenant from the Kielce Security Office who probably operated in tandem with a woman unknown in Kielce, who mixed with the crowd of onlookers along Sienkiewicza Street and kept asking them, for instance, how they voted in the referendum.[26]

– The late Stanisława H[anusz], who on the orders of Freedom and Independence (*Wolność i Niezawisłość*, WiN)[27] was among those who investigated the causes, course and consequences of the pogrom, told me in September 1946 and reaffirmed it later on several occasions in the 1970s and 1980s that with

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

[27] For organisational structures and operations of post-AK (Home Army) WiN in the Kielce Voivodeship, see R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1945–1948* (Cracow, 2002), pp. 123–310.

a group of investigators she made the following findings: (1) workers, members of the Polish Workers' Party and ORMO, from the SHL Factory[28] left the factory, instigated by the mendacious rumour they heard at an official mass meeting from a former NSZ member and at that time a UB informer. He had been ordered by the Voivodeship Public Security Office to tell the workers about the shedding of the blood of Christian children in a house on Planty Street. (2) The house was invaded by armed officers of various services. The Jews were armed and defended themselves; in the struggle several Jews were killed as well as two UB officers. (3) One of the public prosecutors who had been assigned to assist at the autopsy of the murdered Jews committed suicide at the sight of their massacred bodies. However, it is possible that during the autopsy or when drafting its report an argument broke out as to the mortal wounds suffered by the Jews. Almost all were shot dead or stabbed with bayonets, which the prosecutor found. Ultimately, the adopted version held that the massacre had been perpetrated by ordinary Kielce residents, while the prosecutor lost his life. He may have been killed or he may have killed himself in protest against falsifying the report.[29]

– Those who organised the pogrom were keen to have some more time – the time of the pogrom or a day or two more – for deciding whom to accuse of instigating the pogrom. Perhaps they wanted to consult with Moscow, with the person who decided that it was necessary to stage a pogrom […]. […] It may be hypothesised that the event staged by secret services carried so much weight and ranked so high that the decision in this matter Stalin reserved for himself.[30]

– Characteristic behaviour was shown by an informer, let's call him Informer 4. He gave a sensational testimony, but later took back the crucial part of it.[31]

[28] Suchedniów Steel Mill "Ludwików" in Kielce.
[29] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 88.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 91
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

– According to my Informer 4, the same liquidation group in plainclothes murdered Jews and later waited in tents in the woods for the next group of people to shoot.[32]

– Informer 8. […]. His father, an outstanding, in the Communist sense, activist of the Polish Communist Party (KPP), Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) and perhaps of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)(WKPb) played a role in the Kielce pogrom, which has not been revealed to this day. If he had told his son everything he knew, we would know everything. I contacted Informer 8 twice through a third party […]. Like his sister, who was employed by the UB, he was an intelligence and counterintelligence officer for many years. […] He tells me what his father told him in one of very few conversations about the functions he had: "In this matter, neither my father, nor any Pole in the authorities had anything to say. A Soviet adviser came and took charge of everything. His father, as Informer 8 says, told him that the pogrom was organised and carried out by army officers (NKVD) of clearly Jewish descent, whom he did not know earlier – they were total strangers to him – in Kielce they were unknown, too. Furthermore, they did not stay in Kielce, but camped out next to an army barracks in the woods (most likely in Bukówka), after 'accomplishing their mission' they left Kielce."[33]

– Some sources and testimonies say that it was Grynbaum[34] who, having entered the part of the building occupied by non-Communist Jews, put up a defence there that the first shots – according to this version – were fired by the Jewish side, on Grynbaum's orders. Allegedly, it was then that one of the officers who stormed the building was killed. This supposedly angered the army-militia forces so much that they murdered so many people. In the light of these claims,

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[34] Lt Albert Grynbaum (Grinbaum) is meant, deputy head of the County Security Office in Kielce. For more on the role of this officer see *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71, 238, 309, 355, 386, 449, and vol. 2, pp. 110, 112, 117, 122, 455, 464, 467; *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce. Kadra kierownicza*, vol. 1: *1944–1956*, ed. by K. Szwagrzyk (Warsaw, 2005), p. 211. His rank is sometimes given as warrant officer.

Grynbaum would be one of the agents provocateurs, but he did not operate jointly with them, but was given, so to speak, a separate and very important task, having no contact or connection with groups attacking the Jewish House. According to this version, as others commanded army units and security forces, Grynbaum, an experienced Communist and a UB officer, went to the "Jewish" side whose actions (firing shots) were necessary for the pogrom to proceed as they made the forces besieging the Jewish House attack it.[35]

– Sobczyński, Kuźnicki and Gwiazdowicz[36] were all acquitted and released […]. However, Wiktor Kuźnicki was careless enough to say that what happened in Kielce was an "absolute provocation". What exactly and to whom he said this is unclear. UB officers raided his home and took him in an unknown direction. In vain did the wife of the former high-rank militiaman look for him in prisons. It was after this second imprisonment that he came back, being a physical and mental wreck. Suffice it to say that he was jailed together with AK and WiN soldiers and treated the same. It was then, possibly anticipating that he would not live long, that he started telling his cellmates the same that brought about his second arrest, namely that the Kielce events were an "absolute provocation". Not all would listen to him because, in spite of the fact that he appeared frank, open and determined, my informer, let's call him BSB, preferred not to ask him any questions.[37]

– For the attacking KBW soldiers the Jewish House was yet another building they were ordered to pacify. The unit going to Planty Street down Sienkiewicza Street from the east – mind you – in perfect order and accurately, as in exercises, manoeuvres or during war games, raked the Jewish House with machine-gun

[35] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 151.

[36] For the case of Maj Władysław Sobczyński (Head of the Voivodeship Public Security Office in Kielce), Lt Col. Wiktor Kuźnicki (Voivodeship Chief of Citizens' Militia in Kielce) and Maj Kazimierz Gwiazdowicz (Voivodeship Deputy Chief of Citizens' Militia in Kielce), see *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 r. Dokumenty i materiały. Akta procesów uczestników wydarzeń oraz funkcjonariuszy Milicji Obywatelskiej i Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, vol. 1, ed. by S. Meducki and Z. Wrona (Kielce, 1992), pp. 356–392; B. Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 91–92.

[37] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 155–156.

fire in unison – marching in step – in a manner thoroughly practised in previous pacifications.[38]

– A separate question concerns Soviet pacification forces stationed in the centre and outskirts of the city. According to pogrom observers, standing across the Silnica River, the group of four or six plainclothes men who dragged out wounded civilians and handed them over to the "mob" – a true or presumed SHL squad – going back and forth, acted as a conveyor and did not say a word. They acted as if they had been dumb. Hence, my informers, who wished that their names be kept secret, began to suspect that they were foreigners – Russians.[39]

– The cruel murderers of Jews, numerous groups of local officers and others who came down from Warsaw and across Poland to Kielce, were divided roughly into three sections: (1) executive – murderers, (2) operative groups active among onlookers and passersby whose task was to pick out people who could be conveniently charged and tried, and (3) separate investigative-prosecution-judicial groups. All were militarised, with the first two resorting to torture, acting towards one goal but in various configurations, under various commanders but subordinated to one man – Alexandr Mikhailovich Dyomin […]. The fourth section – assigned different tasks – was the one that first went into action or the patrol, mentioned earlier, numbering up to fourteen men, whose task was to call and gather a crowd of onlookers (who were later called the mob) and give scope for activity to Section 2, who selected people to be arrested and tried from amongst the onlookers.[40]

– Three different sections of officers and PPR activists, possibly ignorant of one another, performed the task the effects of which were to bring the USSR unimaginable advantages. This was more than a mere provocation. This was such a shaping of events so that they would appear to have been provoked and

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 170. For information on the NKVD unit stationed in Kielce at that time, see Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Stawiając pytania," p. 319.

[40] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, pp. 186–187.

> that the right number of people who "let themselves be provoked" would be found and captured.[41]

It appears that the above long quotations from Krzysztof Kąkolewski's publication show clearly why it is necessary to distance oneself from unambiguous claims by the author of *Umarły cmentarz*. His research technique problems are more pronounced when Krzysztof Kąkolewski analyses other issues in his book, referring to the specific pages of selected publications.[42] Furthermore, a few of his other findings call for comment because they are either imprecise or erroneous (sometimes they are a result of ignorance of the relevant literature) or undocumented. For instance, the case of a fire at the archives of the Kielce Voivodeship Office of Home Affairs is very mysterious and intriguing indeed, but it is not true, as Krzysztof Kąkolewski maintained, that the fire consumed the files of "war trials and ones that took place right after it".[43] To learn about the extent of the damage, it is enough to read the publication by the archivists of the Kielce IPN Delegation.[44] Furthermore, the fact that Krzysztof Kąkolewski considered Stefan Skwarek's book *Na wysuniętych posterunkach* (On Advanced Positions: Struggle for People's Power in the Kielce Region)[45] "an exceedingly accurate and competent history of the security organs in the Kielce Voivodeship" is a major misunderstanding.[46] The negative judgement of this publication follows not only from the interpretations of events, judgements and generalisations (in line with the then policies of the Communist authorities) it contains, but also from source falsification and the rejection of generally accepted research practice.[47] Moreover,

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–14, 26, 34–35, 69, 71, 80–81, 94, 119, 122, 140–142, 149, 155, 158–159, 206. At other issues, the author does not give the numbers of pages he refers to: pp. 38, 41, 44, 57–58, 70, 78, 136–137, 197, 209, 215.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[44] *Inwentarz zespołu archiwalnego Wojskowego Sądu Rejonowego w Kielcach [1918] 1946–1954 [2013]*, introd. by M. Jedynak and R. Piwko, ed. by I. Czyżyk, M. Jedynak, R. Piwko, Ł. Kasza, K. Polit, and M. Zawisza (Kielce–Cracow, 2014).

[45] K. Skwarek, *Na wysuniętych posterunkach. W walce o władzę ludową na Kielecczyźnie (1944–1954)* (Warsaw, 1977).

[46] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 17.

[47] Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, pp. 13, 207. See also "Nieznany dokument do dziejów 'Pogromu kieleckiego'", ed. by R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u* 4 (1993), pp. 126–129.

the problem with this publication involves also the credibility of investigation and trial records[48] – a matter raised already by many historians,[49] including ones studying the recent history of the Kielce region.[50]

The superficial knowledge of the state of research made Kąkolewski write, when introducing Antoni Heda "Szary", the commander of a group of post-AK units which broke into the Kielce prison in the night of 4–5 August 1945, that he was "a legendary ZWZ [Union of Armed Struggle, *Związek Walki Zbrojnej*], AK and WiN commander in the Kielce region."[51] In truth, Antoni Heda, soon after the prison break-up, left the Kielce voivodeship and had no ties to regional WiN structures[52] and thus could not be a "commander of […] WiN".[53] There is no credible evidence either that as a result of the Kielce prison break-up "700 political prisoners, mostly AK-men and WiN-men" were freed.[54] Nor can it be said that Zygmunt Szewczyk was the "head of intelligence and counter-intelligence sections in the WiN Association".[55] Referring to Stefan Skwarek's book, Kąkolewski wrote that the group of Sec. Lt. Antoni Sobol "Dołęga" was defeated on 10 August 1946.[56] In reality, it continued to operate for a few more months and came out of hiding only in November 1946.[57] It is not true either that no investigations were conducted into the deaths of Jews in the Kielce voivodeship after 1945.[58]

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[48] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 25.

[49] See *Wokół teczek bezpieki. Zagadnienia metodologiczno-źródłoznawcze*, ed. by F. Musiał (Cracow, 2015).

[50] R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Protokół przesłuchania jako źródło historyczne," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2003), pp. 199–207; *id.*, "Działalność prowokacyjna urzędów bezpieczeństwa w woj. kieleckim i ich manipulacje przebiegiem i wynikami śledztw w świetle materiałów Wojskowego Sądu Rejonowego w Kielcach," in *"Zwyczajny" resort. Studia o aparacie bezpieczeństwa 1944–1956*, ed. by K. Krajewski and T. Łabuszewski (Warsaw, 2005), pp. 461–481.

[51] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, s. 46.

[52] Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, pp. 123–310.

[53] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 46. Similar phrases can be found on pp. 122–123, 187.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 46. See M. Sołtysiak and R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Rozbicie więzienia w Kielcach w nocy z 4 na 5 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Kielce, 2009), pp. 10–16.

[55] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 47. See *W sieci. Powojenne polskie siatki wywiadowcze (AK, NIE, DSZ, WIN, PSZ) w latach 1944–1955*, ed. by M. Bechta (Warsaw, 2016).

[56] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 153.

[57] Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie*, p. 267.

[58] Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz*, p. 60. See R. Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 r. – wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego)," in *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich. Polityka – gospodarka – kultura – społeczeństwo*, ed. by J. Wijaczka and G. Miernik (Cracow, 2005) pp. 249–277.

Despite so many critical remarks concerning above all research methodology and source interpretation skills, the book by Krzysztof Kąkolewski is worth studying and making an attempt to verify certain claims based on statements by anonymous informers. Any discussion of the theses (hypotheses) formulated by Kąkolewski will only make sense when the sources (reports by "informers", transcripts of conversations) are made available on the basis of which these hypotheses were formulated. It appears that making available the sources obtained from "anonymous informers" would supplement knowledge on the operation of security organs in 1946 (and not only).[59] An anthropological approach, in turn, could not only bring interesting results concerning relations inside the Kielce Security Office but also ensure a broader scope for the critical assessment of documents produced by its staff. Describing the network of mutual informal ties and scrutinising the actual decision-making process – in the context of the astonishing helplessness of people nominally in power in the structures of the Kielce security forces on 4 July 1946 – could explain a lot in the matter of overt and covert direction mechanisms during the pogrom of Jews in Kielce.[60]

Furthermore, introducing new source materials to the academic discourse would help show research directions that could contribute to the verification, specification or supplementation of our knowledge of the events that took place in Kielce on 4 July 1946.

[59] At times, the impression is created that these "anonymous informers" have some unique knowledge and – using a combination of truths, half-truths and fiction – intentionally mislead the author of *Umarły cmentarz*.

[60] The need to avail oneself of the output of Soviet studies seems obvious. See M. Zakrzewski, "Ontologia bezpieki – organa bezpieczeństwa w perspektywie leninowskiej teorii politycznej. Zarys zagadnienia," in *W stronę antropologii "bezpieki." Nieklasyczna refleksja nad aparatem bezpieczeństwa w Polsce Ludowej*, ed. by J. Syrnyk, A. Klarman, M. Mazur, and E. Kłosek (Wrocław, 2014), pp. 51–59.

REVIEWS
DISCUSSION
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THE HOLOCAUST WITHOUT THE GERMANS: *CENA. W POSZUKIWANIU ŻYDOWSKICH DZIECI PO WOJNIE* BY ANNA BIKONT

Anna Bikont's book *Cena. W poszukiwaniu żydowskich dzieci po wojnie* (The Price. In Search of Jewish Children After the War)[1] is by far the most interesting work in the hitherto output of the *Gazeta Wyborcza* journalist. This time, the reader is introduced to the stories of children saved from the Holocaust, where the axis of her work's narrative is the story of Lejb Majzels, from the Central Committee of Polish Jews, who, from May 1947 to August 1948, searched throughout Poland for Jewish children in the care of Polish families. Following or in the course of his visits, the children were picked up, ransomed or even kidnapped, after which they were transferred to Jewish orphanages or to Jewish families.[2] Majzels' records listed fifty-two children whom he intended to find. In the end, he failed to find traces of nine, six only mentioned and failed to reach one girl. Thus, Anna Bikont followed the trail of the thirty-six others for many years,

[1] *Cena. W poszukiwaniu żydowskich dzieci po wojnie* (Warsaw: Czarne, 2022), 463 pp.

[2] See P. Kornacki, "Losy uratowanych dzieci żydowskich. Cztery bardzo smutne historie," https://przystanekhistoria.pl/pa2/teksty/92353, Losy-uratowanych-dzieci-zydowskich-Cztery-bardzo-smutne-historie.html.

reaching twelve and, in eighteen cases, managed to contact their families. In the final publication, she outlined the stories of thirty children[3] after having carried out hundreds of searches, where in order to meet her Holocaust survivors, she travelled thousands of kilometres, having done a mountain of work.

Anna Bikont's book is a form of reportage and not a research or strictly historical work. For this reason, scholars should approach it with some caution. Although in this convention the author is entitled to express her convictions, the question arises as to whether this is a work that brings us closer to, or further from, learning about the whole spectrum of issues related to Polish-Jewish relations under the German Occupation and the help that the rescued children eventually experienced from Poles. It is on these themes that this review will focus.

Although the publication in question deals with the fate of Jewish children during and after the German occupation, the reader is left with the impression that this only constitutes the narrative background. The key issue of Bikont's work is the various evils that befell Jews at the hands of Poles before, after and above all, during the Second World War. The Germans are almost absent from the war accounts presented, and the course of events becomes actually a showdown between Poles and Jews. The German occupier, if there is one, is located at a considerable distance, completely on the sidelines.[4] In one of the chapters, Anna Bikont supports this positioning of the Germans with, among other things, the findings of Dariusz Libionka, who counted how many Jews died in the area in the third phase of the Holocaust, when ghettos ceased to exist, and Jews had to try to survive in hiding: "Of the 584 Jewish refugees he inventoried, 550 died denounced or murdered by Poles."[5] In this context, Anna Bikont writes: "The vast majority of those who hid in Działoszyce and neighbouring villages did not live to see liberation. They died denounced, caught in manhunts, led by locals to gendarmerie stations and killed by members of underground organisations."[6] There are more references to Libionka:

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[3] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 393.

[4] The thesis of German absence during the German Occupation is one of the prime paradigms of the so-called The New Polish School of Holocaust Research (*Nowa Polska Szkoła Badania Holokaustu*).

[5] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 115.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

> As a rule, many people from the local population – firemen, members of the night watch and ordinary onlookers, including women and children […] – took part in catching the Jews and bringing them to the stations. The most important roles were played by village heads and Blue Police, who were usually the last link in the chain – they took them over and usually "liquidated" them themselves. The participation of Germans was negligible.[7]

These few sentences prompt a deeper historical reflection. Firstly, the author makes a fundamental mistake in that under the German administrative system organised in the occupied Polish lands, Pińczów County no longer existed.[8] Under the German Occupation at this time, this area was governed by the Germans as the Miechów *Kreishauptmannschaft*[9] (Miechów Administration), headed by a *Kreishauptmann* (Administration Governor) – and it is these two local government terms that Bikont uses interchangeably. It is puzzling therefore that, citing the findings of Dariusz Libionka, Bikont confuses these two administrative structures, especially since this historian by no means did so. In this way, by omitting this distinction and its role in shaping Polish-Jewish relations during the occupation, did the author wish to accentuate Polish perpetration of the Holocaust from the very beginning of her work?

The historian's attention is also drawn to the general assessment of the role of Poles in relation to the third phase of the Holocaust, i.e. between 1942 and 1945. During this period, the German occupation authorities, motivated by Nazi ideology, showed almost uncommon determination to murder the Jews located outside the so-called places of segregation (for example residual ghettos, labour camps). Meanwhile, in the book under review – by means of an appropriately chosen quotation – the denunciation of Jews, their "capture," and murder is presented exclusively as one at the hands of Poles. The author did not even bother to write that the post she mentions in the quotation above is a German gendarmerie post, i.e. part of the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei), one of whose most

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[7] *Ibid.*

[8] The pre-war name and local government structure [translator's note].

[9] The German Occupation administrative system in Polish territories created local territorial structures known as *Kreishauptmannschaft* – some being similar in size to counties, others larger, as in this case [translator's note].

important tasks was the murder of Jews. When considering this issue, it must, of course, be emphasised that indeed civilians (mainly from the countryside) and the aforementioned formations made up of ethnic Poles, i.e. the Polnische Polizei (the so-called Blue Police), the fire brigade or the so-called functionaries – village heads – took part in the raids on Jews in hiding. However, it was the German occupation authorities, both civilian and police, who created and supervised the system aimed at capturing Jews, in which the above-mentioned Poles participated.

Further, we do not learn from the book about the omnipresent political terror in the General Government, directed against Poles. One can assume that for the author of *Cena* these are insignificant marginalia, not worth even hinting at. In addition, Anna Bikont is silent about the briefings organised by the German gendarmerie in the field, to which village heads were summoned in order to explain to them that they were to detain every suspicious person, including Jews. Neither is there information about the order of 28 October 1942, introduced by Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, under threat of severe punishment, on the obligation to report to the authorities Jews in hiding or other methods of implicating and coercing the Polish population in the implementation of German anti-Jewish policy.[10] Thus, the sentence in the book about the negligible participation of the Germans in these activities sounds curious – when juxtaposed with historical facts. Bikont's thesis is not surprising, since researchers ideologically close to her[11] have also written about the occupation system organised by the Germans, marginalising it at the same time. It seems, therefore that the author presents the most possibly radical interpretation and – most importantly – one not corresponding to the true reality of the German Occupation between 1942 and 1945. It is noticeable, therefore, that the above-mentioned issues of German wartime presence and its contextual impact on Polish-Jewish relations, not to mention the physical presence of the Germans themselves as occupants, have not so much been marginalised by Anna Bikont, as almost been completely eliminated.[12]

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[10] *Cf*. B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi* (Warsaw, 2019).

[11] The flag-bearing publication here is: *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018).

[12] A similar narration occurs in such publications as for example, *Dalej jest noc*; J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Bracia miesiące. Studia z antropologii historycznej Polski* (Warsaw, 2018).

On more than one occasion, the author also refers directly to the deportation operation of 1942, *Aktion Reinhardt* (Operation Reinhardt) – the German genocide of the Jews. Of significance is the following quotation – referring to the Kielce-Cracow border region – where again we are confronted with the case of the "disappearing" Germans and the emphasis on the main role of the Poles in the Holocaust: "The deportations were managed by Germans. It didn't take many of them, because they had the Junkers, the firemen, the Blue Police and the locals to help. Then – from late autumn 1942 until the end of the war – they appeared only occasionally."[13]

This quotation requires further comment. Firstly, "locals" did not take part in the "deportations," i.e. deportations to the extermination camps, unless the author is referring here to the Polish peasants who had to provide carts on German orders and sometimes transport the Jews to the places indicated by them. Before each *Aktion*, posters were displayed in the various ghettos stating that it was absolutely forbidden – under penalty of death – to enter the Jewish quarter. This order, out of fear for their own lives, was obeyed. Secondly, the youngsters, i.e. male youths from the Baudienst labour camps, as well as the volunteer firemen[14] and Blue Police, did not participate in the deportation operations of their own free will, but were forced to do so by the relevant German orders. The particular attitude of individual officers is, of course, a different matter.

Another overlooked participant in the Holocaust by Bikont, apart from the Germans, are the functionaries of the Jewish Order Service (*Ordnungsdienst*) and members of the Judenrat (Councils of Elders), forced by the Germans to participate in the Holocaust. Each of the aforementioned formations and structures – both Polish and Jewish – performed roles prescribed by the German police forces. However, reading the book under review, one has the impression that the author selectively presents only those formations involved in the Holocaust that are associated with the Polish population and perfectly fit the – it seems – predetermined thesis of this publication.

Also worthy of comment is the author's thesis on the occasional appearance of Germans in villages between 1942 and 1945. The scholarly literature in this area points to a completely different phenomenon. This was the peak of the German

[13] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 112.

[14] The Fire Brigade or the combat youth from Baudienst were militarised units carrying out the orders of the Germans.

presence in the provinces, or rather of the mass crimes committed against the rural population. At that time, the German police regrouped its forces, strengthened its units in the field, setting up temporary gendarmerie stations. Subsequently, the Germans sent mobile, ruthless battalions and police regiments into the field. These were the same units that were engaged in murdering Jews.[15]

In a narrative devoid of context, contradicting the results of historical research, which we observe in *Cena*, the line between attitudes forced by the Germans and those genuinely motivated by individual or sometimes even group conditions, such as anti-Semitism, becomes blurred. Bikont mixes these seemingly quite important orders, and according to her, all Poles become complicit in the Holocaust.

What is also surprising is the means of discussing the aid given to the Jews by the Poles. At the same time, while occasionally introducing themes of aid, the author constantly bombards the reader with occasional sentences or lengthy passages about anti-Semitic Poles without any need, completely suppressing and blanketing the heroism of the former with the wickedness of the latter. In doing so, Anna Bikont makes extensive recourse to emotional language saturated with mostly negative connotations: "After the war in small towns, the rules of the game were set by murderers, not by the Righteous."[16] The writer here uses formulations and descriptions that echo negative, drastic metaphors, such as "the noose was tightening." Furthermore, Bikont gives suppositions as if facts: "There were more and more people who were ready to give up the Jews […]. Was this caused by fear, greed or anti-Semitism fuelled by German propaganda? Or perhaps the pleasure derived from killing?"[17] This last almost shocking accusation, presented admittedly in the form of a question, comes, according to Anna Bikont, from Marek Edelman. If this is indeed what he said, this passage should be given an appropriate explanatory footnote.

It would seem, therefore, that the author, in referring to the alleged participation of Poles in the Holocaust, is also trying to defame the image of the Righteous, although the source basis of her reflections is questionable: "The boundaries were

[15] On the scale of German crimes in the countryside in this area and the German presence see T. Domański and A. Jankowski, *Represje niemieckie na wsi kieleckiej 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2011); J. Fajkowski and J. Religa, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1981).

[16] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 115.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

fluid, someone who seemed sympathetic only a moment ago suddenly began to threaten. Sensing when this change would occur, when yesterday's rescuer would turn out to be today's murderer, was a matter of life and death."[18] Undoubtedly, such situations where rescuers committed crimes against Jews did occur, which was either a direct result of the enormous tensions created by the conditions of the German Occupation, or out of greed, or indeed anti-Semitism per se. These should be condemned unreservedly, but Bikont does not research how many such cases have been established and does not attempt to estimate the scale of the phenomenon of murdering and reporting Jews. Was this the Occupation norm, one may ask, or a certain margin of Polish-Jewish relations?

A key theme explored extensively in *Cena*, from which the title of the entire book is taken, concerns the post-war ransoming of Jewish children who were taken care of by Polish families. Bikont refers to financial issues, writing that Poles who hid Jews often did so "in order to rob them." Once again, the stratagem of depreciating those who rescued Jews is employed: "Many Jews gave up all their possessions in exchange for shelter with Polish friends, who took everything and after a few days threw them out like a squeezed lemon."[19] In her interpretation, the Polish population tried to deceive the Jews in every situation, taking advantage of their superior position as Poles in the reality of the Occupation. In doing so, Bikont authoritatively accused many Poles of lying, who spoke after the war of giving selfless aid: "I, on the other hand, from observing documents and testimonies, can say that when someone who hid Jews starts by declaring that he did not receive any remuneration from the Jews, they most probably did receive it, and a lot."[20] As to the nature of documents on this subject that Bikont had analysed and the percentage of such cases as the above, alas we will not learn from her publication.

The themes of payment, bargaining and the price of rescue as well as aid appear in almost every chapter.[21] The shocking stories highlighted by Bikont distort the overall picture of the aid situation. Moreover, the book lacks a reflection on how

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[21] Barbara Engelking wrote in a similar vein on her Polish-Jewish relations: *"Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień." Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw, 2011).

much people risked by taking in Jewish children and we do not learn what the motivations of the rescuers were. The theme of payment, which is emphasised in the foreground, reduces the rescue of children to a financial issue only, obviously in a negative context.

The reader may have the impression that in the whole process of helping, we are dealing only with the desire for profit, the burning thirst for Jewish gold and that Jewish children are only a good deal that will pay off after the war. In the pages of the book in question, Poles are generally depraved individuals, greedy, demanding horrendous amounts of money from Jews for the safekeeping of children, people to whom it did not occur that children should be given away for free after the war. An editorial by Magdalena Budzinska[22] appeared as a comment on similar situations: "I am thinking out loud […], shouldn't it be commented on somehow directly that it didn't occur to people that someone else's child could, or even should, simply be given back to the family and not exchanged for a square in Zawichost?" Was indeed such an attitude widespread, and did such an experience also accompany the nearly thirty Jewish children rescued by the nuns at the orphanage in Turkowice in the Lublin region? [23]

From reading *Cena* we learn that some rescuers dared to baptise their children, to bring them up in a Christian manner and thus generally arouse in them, as Bikont suggests, an atavistic hatred of Jews. These last two themes are inseparable. Children rescued from Christian families, as depicted by the author, hated Jews and bringing them back to the bosom of Judaism required a lot of effort and, once the family's charges were taken away, caused Jewish educators a lot of trouble. In a world so "directed" by the author, the foster Christian parents essentially stripped the children of their identities, and it was only by uprooting them from these environments that the latter had a chance to return to the normal world.

The fact that it is precisely the theme of financial aid that is important and perhaps the main in Bikont's new work for its overall expression, is evident from the title given to it – *Cena*. It is a pity that readers only get the chance to see one

[22] Magdalena Budzińska – editor of literature and documentaries, tied to the publishing house Wydawnictwo Czarne.

[23] See R. Łukiewicz and P. Skrok, *"Dom ocalenia" w Turkowicach – opieka sióstr służebniczek nad dziećmi trzech narodowości na tle historii regionu* (Lublin, 2022).

kind of price – the one paid by the Jews. The Polish price is irrelevant here and does not exist at all, even though there was a death penalty for saving Jews.

It is apt now to examine in more detail the two stories described by Bikont – that of Rachela Drążek and Zisla Jadowska. This scholar became familiar with the fate of the former, Rachela Drążek, before the publication of the book under review. Her life became even more interesting when, during a search in the Yad Vashem Archive, a diary written by her was found.[24] Her experiences are described by Anna Bikont in the fourteenth chapter of *Cena*: Rachela Drążek was born on 15 October 1929 in Ostrołęka, an only child. Her father was successfully involved in running a business before the war. In the 1930s, the family moved to Łomża, and when her mother died, her father remarried. Before the war itself, Rachela's brother Idzio was born. When Łomża came under Soviet occupation in 1939, Rachela absorbed communist propaganda at school, and after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, her father served in the Red Army and died at the front in circumstances unknown to the family. Rachela, together with her stepmother and brother, was forced to live in the Lomza ghetto in August 1941. When the liquidation of the ghettos in the Białystok District began on 2 November 1942, Rachela's family and friends decided to flee. This is when the girl's epic journey began. She quickly lost her stepmother and brother, and in the course of her wanderings, she met various people. Those that were kind, however, were far more numerous, and it was thanks to them that she survived. They gave her shelter, food and life-saving warnings, which she went on to outline this time in her diary.

After leaving the ghetto in Łomża, she hid with her stepmother, brother and several other fugitives in Czerwony Bór. A forester found them there, warning the group of Jews and recommended they escape, as he knew that a manhunt organised by the Germans was heading for this area. One of the local peasants, who had been forced to participate, found Rachela. She recalls this moment as follows:

> I was sitting crouched under a bush, and my frightened gaze was fixed on my enemy. And he, clearly amused, asked what I was doing here. He sort of threatened me and told me to hop it. Good, dear friends! So much depends on the person!

[24] Yad Vashem Archives [hereinafter YVA], O.33, 10488, Pamiętnik Racheli Drążek.

> They could have caught us all and handed us over to the Germans, they would have done their duty, and yet… For every Jew, 3 kg of sugar was provided, a luxury for the time, and there were those who took advantage of this privilege. However, this passed us by at that moment and for my part, I gained more confidence in Poles.[25]

In her case, her trust paid off, and Rachela Drążek survived the war.

During her escape, Rachela experienced a religious mystical inspiration and became a Christian. After the end of the war, she was baptised and joined the Order of the Benedictine Nuns in Łomża. It was there that Majzels found her in July 1947 and tried, with the help of various organisations and relatives, to make her leave the convent. Her story was chronicled by the sisters.[26] The efforts to persuade Rachel to leave the convent lasted about two years but were unsuccessful. She remained a nun, and her sense of mission was genuine and deep-seated.

Sister Paula – that was her religious name – struggled with many dilemmas, but she persevered in the order until her passing. Towards the end of her life, she went to the Holy Land with the intention of converting Jews to Christianity and spent her last years in the monastery on the Mount of Olives where Anna Bikont met her. There, Rachela Drążek spoke about her wartime adventures, her escape from the ghetto during the *Aktion* and the time of hiding, as well as her choice of life, living to tell her tale thanks to the help of many good people. She did not nominate anyone to be honoured with the Righteous Among the Nations medal, because she believed that she owed the saving of her life only to Christ.

The transcript of Anna Bikont's conversation with Sister Paula would be one of the most interesting in her book if it were not for the writer's obsessive desire to highlight the injustices inflicted on Jews by Poles. Instead of focusing on a reliable account of Rachel's wartime fate, who survived the Holocaust precisely thanks to Poles, the author did not present her experiences, but told an "ersatz account" that did not directly concern her interlocutrix.[27] One might have the impression therefore that Anna Bikont wanted to use a negative account about Poles, who were

[25] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 105.

[26] A. Piesiewiczówna, *Kronika Panien Benedyktynek* (Łomża, 1995).

[27] This story, however, concerned friends of Rachela with whom she was in hiding for a period of time.

not connected to Rachela's fate, so as to cover up the fact that along the Jewish girl's journey there were kind people who contributed to saving her.

Furthermore, Anna Bikont, described a murder that took place near the village of Podosie,[28] where a group of about 25 Jews were hiding. Twelve were murdered on the night of 1 to 2 June 1944, most probably by an AK unit under the command of Bolesław Kurpiewski "Orlik." However, analysis of the available documentation raises numerous doubts about the scenario of events outlined by Anna Bikont.[29] Even if it was as the author of *Cena* claims, at that time Rachela Drążek was in a completely different place. Naturally, in the chapter under discussion here, again the Germans are the great absentees. In a word, the whole story disregards the real story of Rachela, who was helped to survive in fact by the Poles.

The fate of Zisla Jadowska, is described in chapter sixteen – a Jewish girl born in 1942 in a forest hiding place near Węgrów, who was rescued by the poor and childless Ruszkowski couple.[30] Bikont introduced the reader to various versions of how the child managed to survive. First, she quoted the story of the survivor herself. According to Zisla, her mother left her on Piwna Street, where she lay for three days and three nights, and was looked after by a German gendarme who gave her milk. He is said to have become annoyed and reproached the Poles, saying: "After the Jews you rob, you take everything, and you cannot take a child? Take this child

[28] Podosie is located in the Miastkowo Commune, on the border of today's Mazowieckie and Podlaskie Voivodeships. Anna Bikont also devoted a separate article to the crime that was committed there: "'Marzeniem pana Poteraja, jak i moim, jest, aby te niechlubne wydarzenia zostały opisane.' O zbrodni oddziału AK na Żydach ukrywających się na bagnach koło wsi Podosie w Łomżyńskiem," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 18 (2022), pp. 170–199.

[29] See among others, Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN], Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce [Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, hereinafter GK], 318/594, Files in the Criminal Case of Edward Ficowski and others; Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Białymstoku [Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok], 484/233, File on the murder of twelve Polish citizens of Jewish nationality committed in May 1944 by the Home Army unit of Bolesław Kurpiewski nom de guerre "Orlik" near the village of Podosie, Łomża Voivodship. Other sources are also mentioned in the aforementioned article. Doubts mainly concern the motives for the crimes. If the aim was indeed to exterminate the Jews, why did the partisans allow most of them to escape? Why was the crime committed by an AK unit from a neighbouring district? Anna Bikont gives other reasons for the crime: the arbitrariness of the squad leadership, the desire to rob, the intention to liquidate a robbery group or Soviet agents, and so on., but ultimately rejects them.

[30] YVA, M.31/5581 – 3 August 1995. Yad Vashem recognised Marianna Ruszkowska (1901–1970) and her husband Antoni Ruszkowski (1902–1962) as Righteous Among the Nations.

and save her."[31] However, according to this version, the Poles were afraid, because it was for helping the Jews that the Polish woman was killed. It is significant that it was only at the end of the chapter that the journalist herself stated that this variant was improbable. Interestingly, Anna Bikont considered as the most plausible interpretation the claim that Zisla was given into care (for money, of course) in the countryside and that the guardians abandoned her on the street in Węgrów.[32] This is also a presumption, except that it shows another variant of the "Polish evil."

According to Zisla's account, she survived the war with the Ruszkowski family who adopted her and after the war did not give her back to her uncle Szmul Szenberg. After the war, she lived in Węgrów and because her origins were known, she was subjected to harassment, which led her to suicidal thoughts. Her foster parents, however, loved and supported her. In 1964 she went to Israel to visit her uncle, who tried to discourage her from returning to the Poles. He explained to her that they had collaborated with the Germans and wanted to kill him. Zisla, however, remained in Poland under the name Zofia Żochowska.

The chapter describing Zisla's fate could not be one without digressions. Referring to the post-war harassment that the protagonist faced in Węgrów because of her origin, Anna Bikont explained to readers that the Poles' complicity in the Holocaust exacerbated post-war anti-Semitism, resulting in more than a thousand murders of Jews committed at the time. The journalist referred to the findings of Julian Kwiek, who additionally counted that 19% of the victims were women and children. A major shortcoming of Kwiek's research is that it lumps everything together. Unfortunately, the author did not bother to count how many Jews were killed when robbed and how many out of anti-Semitism.[33]

There is another unjustified and shocking digression in the chapter under discussion. In the author's interpretation of *Cena*, the death penalty for rescuing Jews is also presented as a myth. "Death awaited the hiding Jews almost without exception. As far as hiding Poles were concerned, it was rather an exception, although it did

[31] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 172. The question is why, in this particular version, the main female protagonist kept to her story.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[33] J. Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944–1947* (Warsaw, 2021).

happen,"[34] writes Anna Bikont. The author tries to convince the reader that as a rule the consequences for rescuing Jews were at most, burning down a farm, being beaten, arrested, fined, imprisoned or sent to a concentration camp. Bikont even goes so far as to claim that the Poles' belief that entire families were punished by death was the result of rumours spread by the Germans. "During the Occupation, rumours spread by the Germans and compounded by fear spoke of dozens of people killed in the area, of families being shot, of villages going up in smoke. To this day, stories of Jews being caught hiding end in the death penalty for an entire Polish family."[35] It follows that it was as a result of rumours disseminated by the Germans that a "legend" was created about Poles being punished by death for any help given to Jews. Meanwhile, death for helping Jews was suffered, according to older research, by no less than 700 Poles.[36] In doing so, Bikont makes a completely erroneous reference to the findings of historians from the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in their work *Represje za pomoc Żydom* (Repressions for Helping Jews), which mentions more than 340 people murdered. The editors of the aforementioned work, Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Aleksandra Namysło, have clearly stated that the publication contains partial results of research and that the research project is still continuing. It is, therefore, difficult to speak of definitive data at this stage.[37]

A counterpoint to Zisla's story is also the description of the liquidation of the Węgrów Ghetto. Here, the journalist drew, among others, on the work of Jan Grabowski[38] and the memoirs of Szraga Fajwel Bielawski.[39] So the story of the *Aktion* is recounted, one carried out by Germans, Ukrainians and Polish Blue Police, who together surrounded the ghetto. Members of the volunteer fire brigade threw children out of the windows, and the gendarmes – surprisingly, the Germans – slaughtered them. The author quotes Fajwel Bielawski, who is said to have heard the screams of Jews mingle with the shouting of Germans and the laughter

[34] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 172.

[35] *Ibid*.

[36] W. Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warsaw, 1987).

[37] See Bikont, *Cena*, p. 172; *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2019), p. 75.

[38] J. Grabowski, "Powiat węgrowski," in *Dalej jest noc*, vol. 1, pp. 383–544.

[39] F. Bielawski, *Ostatni Żyd z Węgrowa. Wspomnienia ocalałego z Zagłady w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2015).

of the Poles. He describes how Poles voluntarily removed the corpses of Jews from the town, hoping for loot in the form of leftover clothes. In the next paragraph, in turn, there is a description of the execution. Unfortunately, the reader does not learn who carried it out. Instead, there is a quote: "I watch from home […] as they killed."[40] The question arises as to who did the killing. The next paragraph again presents a description of the looting of the corpse.

Unfortunately, the picture presented by Jan Grabowski of the liquidation of the ghetto and the one emerging from Bielawski's diary (according to among others, the research of regional historian Radosław Jóźwiak) consist of many distortions and confabulations.[41] The ghetto in Węgrów was liquidated by the Germans and auxiliary troops composed of Ukrainians. The Blue Police, members of the Judenrat and Jewish Ghetto Police, also took part in rounding up the Jews to the market square. Each of these formations carried out the order of Germans commanding the *Aktion*. In the case of the Jewish Ghetto Police and Judenrat members, they paid a terrible price for saving – if only for now – their own lives. Leaving aside these details, however, there is no doubt that the reader of *Cena* received a biased picture of the events in the town, one far from the truth.

Undoubtedly Anna Bikont's reportage books are interesting and colourful, certainly demonstrating a great talent and commitment. However, what draws one's attention in *Cena* is the complete lack of reference to the realities of the Occupation created by the Germans, who are almost absent, making it impossible to understand the nature of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War. Her work *Cena* thus becomes a phenomenon that is set, as it were, in a historical vacuum. It is an investigative oxymoron, in which the rescuers are presented as little better than murderers. For the Polish reader, reading this work is a bitter experience, as even the Righteous turn out to be those who sold their sacrifice for money. If this is what Anna Bikont wanted to convey to us, then she has succeeded.

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[40] Bikont, *Cena*, p. 176.

[41] R. Jóźwiak, "*Garść refleksji na temat wspomnień Szragi Fajwla Bielawskiego*, 'Ostatni Żyd z Węgrowa' jako źródła do badań historii Zagłady i stosunków polsko-żydowskich w powiecie węgrowskim," *Polish Jewish Studies* 2 (2021), pp. 336–378. This was published after *Cena*, so Anna Bikont could not have had access to it. She could, however, without any problem have found the review by Tomasz Roguski, "'Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski,' red. Barbara Engelking i Jan Grabowski," *Glaukopis* 36 (2019), pp. 335–356. Here, the author refers to the research by Jóźwiak and other scholars.

REVIEWS
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SZTETL LUBICZ,[*] WINDOW INTO A LOST WORLD BY KAROLINA FAMULSKA-CIESIELSKA

Looking at the history of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish relations from a regional perspective, it transpires that it is very difficult to make a generalisation and statement that is true for the entire country. This relates to both the subject of research (in the renowned study by Ezra Mendelsohn, there continue to be references to the division into historical partitions even in that part of the narration related to interbellum Poland[1]) as well as the state of research, for particular regions, towns or shtetls were not subject to the same degree of interest on the part of researchers. In a similar vein, when we speak of the historical memory or awareness presented by local communities, differences between various centres and regions come to the fore. Therefore, in the case of regions such as Pomerania, Kujawy and Dobrzyń, where the number of Jews in the context of the Second Polish Republic was low, the state of research devoted to this group of people is much

[*] K. Famulska-Ciesielska, *Sztetl Lubicz* (Toruń: Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Marii Znamierowskiej-Prüfferowej, 2019), 111 pp.

[1] E. Mendelsohn, *Żydzi Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w okresie międzywojennym*, trans. A. Tomaszewska (Warsaw, 1983), pp. 31–122.

lower, and the memory of this community, more faded. Thus, it is all the more a pleasant surprise when such publications and activities contribute to a change in this state of affairs. It would appear that, in fact, this is so in the case of Karolina Famulska-Ciesielska in her work *Sztetl Lubicz* (Shtetl Lubicz), published in 2019 by the Ethnographic Museum in Toruń.

The author is a scholar of literature and a specialist in the writings of Polish Jews in Israel, having finished a doctorate on this very subject at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.[2] Her latest publication, popularising the field of Jewish studies, is not the result of changing her research interests but, in fact, a personal return to her hometown of Lubicz, a shtetl, where, as a result of the Holocaust, it lost its Jewish identity. Just as Wojciech Wilczyk, in *Niewinne oko nie istnieje* (*There's No Such Thing As An Innocent Eye*), in his travels across Poland pointed out the particular type of "desertion" characteristic of some towns,[3] so too Famulska-Ciesielska was for a long time under the impression that in her mind "there is something about Lubicz – there is a kind of blank," but was unable to define it.[4] In both of the above it transpired that this was a gap left by the Jewish community that in days gone by constituted an important part of the local social landscape. Similarly, as Wilczyk, in his hundreds of photographs of (former) synagogues, showed the state of (non-) memory of Jewish residents in small towns, so too Famulska-Ciesielska decided to familiarise readers with the Jewish shtetl of yesteryear, presenting the last Jews living there.

Though in formal terms, the study was not divided into sections, it is possible to discern a short historical outline on both Upper and Lower Lubicz and the Jewish community that had settled there from the eighteenth century, as, in fact, one serving the role of an introduction. Although there were two towns, the Jewish communities there used one cemetery and belonged to one religious association. In the Second Polish Republic, the border dividing the small towns between the Russian and Prussian states ceased to exist, though it is only since 1938 that they

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[2] K. Famulska-Ciesielska, *Polacy, Żydzi, Izraelczycy – tożsamość w literaturze polskiej w Izraelu* (Toruń, 2008).

[3] "Fotografowanie niedozwolonych obiektów. Z Wojciechem Wilczykiem rozmawia Elżbieta Janicka," in W. Wilczyk, *Niewinne oko nie istnieje* (Łódź, 2009), pp. 34–35.

[4] K. Famulska-Ciesielska, "Ta pamięć jest pełna bólu," 19 November 2019, https://ototorun.pl/artykul/karolina-famulska-ciesielska/863718 (accessed 26 August 2021).

belonged to the one province, Pomerania, which was characterised by the lowest percentage of Jewish people in Poland. In this context, first and foremost, the historian Tomasz Kawski wrote a study on the Kujawy-Dobrzyń Jews, and quite justifiably, Famulska-Ciesielska relies on his findings in her work.

The main part of her study is the outline of Lubicz residents before the war and their tragic fate during the Holocaust. Famulska-Ciesielska presents the names of Jews in Lubicz in alphabetical order and goes on to outline often entire generations of families connected to this town. On account of the paucity of source material it was difficult in many cases to develop the narration further and go beyond presenting the basic facts themselves. The assiduous "excavation" of information on the part of the author is cause for great respect, as she does not forego even the slightest iota of information that she was able to reach.

The source base itself of this work is worth noting. The author made use of archival materials collected by the Yad Vashem Institute that are available on the Internet, mainly the *daf ed* (Page of Testimony), where interested parties or relations bear witness to the circumstances of victims' death in the Holocaust. In this respect, the *List of Persecuted Persons*, as it turned out, proved less useful. It should be noted that all of this information can be found in the one search base, The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.[5] Moreover, the lion's share (if not all) of *daf ed* forms used in Famulska-Ciesielska's book were written in Hebrew and it is all the more one should appreciate the importance of this work for the Polish reader, especially for those interested in the history of their hometown. Although the author notes that these testimonies are submitted from the mid-1950s, it should be emphasised that the Institute in Jerusalem is still collecting this documentation. Yad Vashem estimates that over a million names of Holocaust victims are still unknown and have yet to be added to their database.

Apart from the above, the author made use of similar historical materials deposited in the Institute of National Remembrance Archives such as court files from cases confirming a person's death. For a historian this is an interesting observation on the differences between the information contained in these two types of documents that is worth further examination. In this context therefore, the publication

[5] Available at: https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en (accessed 26 August 2022).

under review may serve as an inspiration not only for others trying to popularise knowledge about other *shtetl*, but also for professional historians.

Unfortunately the book presents a lack of further detail or excerpts from the unique sources found by Famulska-Ciesielska such as discussions and interviews that she had conducted as well as the documents she was given. In this respect, the author informs the reader about the manuscript of memoirs by Aleksander Makower that she received from his sons and in fact thanks to this, the section devoted to the Makower family is exceptionally comprehensive, although it is not known to what degree this makes use of the source base. It is perhaps a good idea to publish these memoirs – for their absence is all the more disappointing in that the author decided to include entire such accounts devoted to Lubicz that found their way into the Ringelblum Archive volume VIII, *Tereny wcielone do Rzeszy: Okręg Rzeszy Gdańsk – Prusy Zachodnie, rejencja ciechanowska, Górny Śląsk* (Territory Incorporated into the Third Reich: Gdańsk–Western Prussia Reich Region, Ciechanów District, Upper Silesia).[6] Here it should also be noted that this monumental series has been recently finished and that the comprehensive documentation collected by Oneg Szabat is published in 36 volumes in total. Further, it is a pity that Famulska-Ciesielska did not emphasise that these particular accounts were originally written in Polish (many others were translated from Yiddish for the purposes of publication).

An additional strong point of this publication – especially considering its informative, popularising nature – is the comprehensive graphic material included. The author took the trouble of reprinting fragments of the historical map of Lubicz, as well as the unique photographs made available by family members from Lubicz that she shared with the reader. Based mainly on discussions with Polish neighbours, Famulska-Ciesielska made the attempt to recreate the historical layout of households in the nearby surroundings and to remind the specific places where Jews once lived. In the result, the author managed to create an image that affects the reader's imagination – and as a strongly incomplete and fragmentary, it is also moving on an emotional level.

[6] Edited by M. Siek (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012). Moreover, it is now available online: https://cbj.jhi.pl/documents/730162/0/ (accessed 26 August 2022).

The reader of the publication under review will find themselves taken on a personal journey, one that Famulska-Ciesielska also made, bringing to life the history of people living in the above mentioned shtetl of Lubicz. In line with the intention of the author the reader is not confronted on this occasion with an anonymous mass whose fate is defined in common as a collective, but with an attempt, difficult at times, to portray the lives of individuals as well as to establish and preserve the names of those that have faded into the annals of a deeper, lost history. Though this work was not meant to be – and in fact is not – a scholarly monograph, it should be nonetheless valuable for scholars interested in the history of this specific region, considering for example the usefulness of sources used in this publication. Moreover, Famulska-Ciesielska's work also constitutes a worthy form of commemoration of the events of more than eighty years ago when the Jews of Lubicz at the beginning of the German occupation were forcibly deported from their hometown – at first to nearby Lipno and Włocławek, only to find themselves in the Warsaw Ghetto shortly after. Ultimately, the community of Lubicz's Jews became dispersed, and their tragic fate saw their end across various towns of occupied Poland. *The Sztetl Lubicz* is therefore an opportunity to open a window into a world then lost.

REVIEWS
DISCUSSION
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PAINTER, GRAPHIC ARTIST AND WOOD ENGRAVER (UN)FORGOTTEN. *JAKOB STEINHARDT (1887–1968). ŻYCIE I DZIAŁALNOŚĆ*[1] BY DOMINIK FLISIAK

Every year in Polish historiography appear studies devoted to the Jewish people living in Poland across the ages. There are also monographs that are generally dedicated to research on particular questions and biographies of noted individuals as well as the history of specific institutions or organisations, not to mention publications that popularise various themes and processes. The range of research with respect to the Jewish population in Poland is broad. Therefore, studies are devoted to aspects of daily life, politics, society, economics, religion, the arts and literature. Researchers increasingly reach out to fields of study hitherto unexplored, taking the opportunity of increasingly easy access to archives and libraries as well as the fact that many such studies and sources have been published online. Indubitably, one such research question that has been waiting for comprehensive study is the biography of Jakob Steinhardt, painter, graphic artist and wood engraver. To date, only brief studies in Polish[2] and other languages have appea-

[1] *Jakob Steinhardt (1887–1968). Życie i działalność* (Jakob Steinhardt [1887–1968]. Life And Work) (Chrzan: Wydawnictwo Stara Szuflada, 2022), 139 pp.

[2] See A. Kostołowski, *Jakob Steinhardt (1887–1968). Malarz i grafik z Żerkowa* (Żerków, 2017); T. Knasiecka-Sztyma, "Przyczynek do problematyki mecenatu kulturalnego poznańskich Żydów. Życie i twórczość Jakoba Steinhardta (1887–1968)," *Kronika Miasta Poznania* 3 (2006), pp. 250–260; K. Szerle, *Jakob Steinhardt. Wielki artysta z Żerkowa* (Żerków, 2017); I. Wawroska, "Jakob Steinhardt – Żyd

red.[3] In this respect, it is good that this subject has again provoked interest, one result being the publication under review enriched by the reproduction of the artist's select works, allowing readers to become familiar with at least some of his oeuvre.

The author of the publication under review is Dominik Flisiak, a historian and alumnus of the Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce. He is best known for the complex question of revisionist Zionists and their history. He has a large number of research publications to his name, among others *Działalność syjonistów rewizjonistów w Polsce w latach 1944/1945–1950* (Activity of Revisionist Zionists in Poland 1944–1950), as well as *Wybrane materiały ideologiczne i propagandowe Syjonistyczno-Socjalistycznej Partii Robotniczej Poalej Syjon-Hitachdut* (Select Ideological and Propaganda Materials of the Jewish Zionist-Socialist Labor Party Poalej Syjon-Hitachdut). However, this particular study under review is on a somewhat different subject than his previous studies.

The book in question comprises five chapters with an introduction and appendixes, including reproductions of Jakob Steinhardt's artworks. The latter clearly suggests inspirations from traditional Jewish religious life and customs of the shtetl. These reproductions also contain references to Jewish holidays, particular motifs from the Old Testament as well as current events such as pogroms. The work by Dominik Flisiak also includes a list of abbreviations, a bibliography, an index of persons mentioned and geographical, administrative and ethnic names. Of particular note are the supplementary materials in the appendixes, where the author cites large fragments of articles on Steinhardt.

From the introduction, the reader will not learn much about the particular aims that Dominik Flisiak has set himself or, indeed, to what extent he succeeded in finding sources and studies allowing for a comprehensive unveiling of his protagonist's life work: "This publication is devoted to the memory of Jakob (Jacob) Steinhardt, a Jewish artist born in 1887 at Żerków."[4]

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z Żerkowa i jego metryka," in *Ochrona dziedzictwa kulturowego, intertemporalność, archiwum pamięci*, ed. by S. Kowalska (Poznań–Kalisz, 2018), pp. 28–60.

[3] *Jakob's Dream: Steinhardt in Prints, Drawings and Paintings*, ed. by R. Sorek, transl. by S. Schneiderman (Jerusalem, 2010); *Jakob Steinhardt. Der Prophet. Ausstellungs- und Bestandskatalog* (Berlin, 1995).

[4] Flisiak, *Jakob Steinhardt*, p. 7.

It is, therefore, difficult based on the introduction, to say to what extent the subject and biographical themes were thoroughly researched or whether perhaps the author was unable to find a particular aspect of his legacy or relevant documents that could have made his life work more complete as well as information on the creative work of Steinhardt and its reception. It should be noted, however, that the study was written in a logical format, organised and reader-friendly – well-written so that the reader can readily engage in the subsequent unveiling of the artist's biography.

Chapter one, "Społeczność żydowska na ziemiach polskich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Wielkopolski. Zarys tematyki" (The Jews in Poland, in particular with respect to Wielkopolska. An outline), outlines the historical background of the presence of Jews in Poland across the ages. This is by no means unusual, for many scholars, in this particular way, set the scope of their work's main subject. The chapter has only a dozen or so pages and contains many bibliographical references and explanations relating to various historical moments. In the opinion of this author, without in any way weakening the study, it would have been possible to omit the well-known episodes on the beginnings of Jewish presence in Poland in the Middle Ages and instead, in greater detail, show their history in Wielkopolska itself. It could thus be said that this chapter only in part refers to the specific nature of Jewish settlement in this region. In this respect, Flisiak did not bring to the fore aspects of their life in the community, such as the issues of assimilation or attitude to religion, or indeed the nature of how they functioned in Wielkopolska in the context of other Polish regions where Jewish communities lived. It will be argued that shedding light, as it were, on the region where the protagonist of the study was born and grew up can, as a consequence, lead to a more complete understanding of both his biography and his later creative work. Moreover, one should note the literature that the author resorted to in this part of his study. Among these are specialist studies, for example, those edited by Jerzy Topolski and Krzysztof Modelski, those of Ezra Mendelsohn, Ignacy Schiper, Ari Tartakower or Heinrich Graetz (though some now are of value more as a source *per se*, than a factographic work). There are also studies clearly showing sensibilities of that particular epoch, such as those by Marek Arczyński and Wiesław Balcerak relating to "Żegota", or the comprehensive academic course

books relating to the history of Poland by Stanisław Szczur, Mariusz Markiewicz and Andrzej Chwalba.

In fact, Flisiak does not refer to many important issues for this general subject. For example, only three sentences are devoted to the Second World War. Therefore for the reader to understand the period well in which Steinhardt lived as an artist, more space should have been given to an analysis of the respective transformations at the turn of the twentieth century taking place among Jewish communities, the events of the 1905 revolution as well as the First World War, the interbellum, the Second World War, and the early post-war years thereafter. The remaining information is only a chronological introduction to the life of this artist – that is the period 1887–1968. The right decision it could be said, to shed light on the context of the so-called Little Homeland, Wielkopolska, was only in part completed in this study.

Further, in the Introduction, there was not even basic information given on the location of Żerków, where Steinhardt was born, which after all not every reader is necessarily familiar with. The second chapter, "Dzieje Żerków i jego żydowskiej społeczności. Zarys tematyki" (History of Żerków and its Jewish community) contains a succinct outline of the history of this town as well as the situation of the Jewish community living there. One learns the geopolitical meaning of Żerków and the most important events relating to it. Notwithstanding, in this aspect also, there remains a sense of incompleteness. In a somewhat telegraphic shorthand, the author presents information from the first mention of the presence of Jews in this town in the Middle Ages to the events of the beginning of the twentieth century. Here, therefore, the study takes on a signalling, as it were character, chronologically organising the background to the biography of Steinhardt. Perhaps this is a result of the available literature, but there was no explanation given. Flisiak does not present the social context or the community that Steinhardt grew up in – though after all it surely influenced his later creative output. Further, in many places of the study under review it should be noted, one reads Steinhardt many a time resorted to scenes observed on the streets of his home town and brought them to life in his works throughout the various periods of his creative output.

In this chapter as well as in other parts of his work, Dominik Flisiak uses the expression "Jews" and that of "followers of Judaism" alternatively. These, however, are not equivalents.

The former relates to nationality, origin – whereas the latter to religious affiliation, which doesn't have to be the same. Not every person of Jewish nationality therefore is a follower of Judaism. On this account therefore, a certain chaos it could be said permeates into this work in respect to information and the account of facts. Moreover, it is relevant in this place to make a general note that this study provides little on the self-identification and sense of identity of the artist in question. Further, again it is not clear whether this is on account of the paucity of sources or indeed, the author's conscious decision not to pursue these issues.

The statistics presented in this chapter showing the growth of the Jewish population in Żerków can be said to be interesting. The reader, nonetheless, would benefit from information regarding the general population of this town. The statistics are given selectively, for example, in 1908 one learns that at that time there were 121 Jews for 1631 residents of Żerków – that is Jews constituted almost 7.5% of the town's population. Of particular note is the rather dramatic rate of departure of Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century. Here the author emphasises that in that period "the Jewish community in Żerków fell by 80–90%."[5] This does not explain, however, what the causes were. Further, the reader learns that in this particular regard the town was no exception, similar phenomena could be found in Opalenica, Grodzisko or Książ – though there is no explanation for the causes of this mechanism. This would no doubt be a point of interest in the context of Steinhardt's biography and the fact that he only left Żerków after the First World War in 1920. A broader outline of the town's Jewish community at a time when Steinhardt lived there would, therefore, allow for a better understanding of both relevant family matters and his artistic oeuvre.

The main part of the artist's biography is presented by the last three chapters of the study, which are divided into two stages of his creative life. This is decidedly the most interesting part of the publication under review. In chapter three, "Jakob

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Steinhardt. Życie i działalność w latach 1887–1920" (Jakob Steinhardt, Life and Work in 1887–1920), his private life and work just after the Great War is outlined, when in the end he left Żerków for Germany. Here, Flisiak gives information on the artist's family as well as the change of surname from Schmul to Steinhardt. Further in the chapter it is possible to learn a great deal about his material situation, particular members of his family, death of his father and his mother's attempts to provide her children a decent life, as well as – importantly – the stages of Jacob's education, among others in Berlin and Paris. The author also mentions the factors responsible for shaping the later artistic skills of Steinhardt and his establishing ties during this period with other artists.

In this context, Flisiak notes the motifs occurring in the artist's earlier work: "Being a witness to anti-Semitic moods in Europe, Jakob in 1913 created several etchings by the same title, *Pogrom*, where he presented Jews as victims of anti-Semitic incidents. In the same year, he made a wood engraving, *Zniszczenie* (Destruction), where he presented a small town consumed by fire."[6] It should be noted that the author apart from references to anti-Jewish events that took place throughout Central and Eastern Europe, notes in the work of the artist inspirations from other conflicts such as those in the Balkans. In this chapter, there is relatively little space devoted to information on biographical experiences from the First World War and the wave of pogroms against Jews taking place during this time and just after its end. Perhaps again this is a matter of sources and their accessibility. The departure of Jakob Steinhardt to Berlin closes this chapter and one learns that the artist's immediate family also left the Second Polish Republic, settling, among others, in Germany and Palestine.

In chapter four, "Jakob Steinhardt. Życie i działalność w latach 1920–1968" (Jakob Steinhardt. Life and work in 1920–1968), Flisiak outlines the work of the artist in Berlin and his family life, notably his marriage to Minni Gumpert. It is there in Germany that his only daughter was born. The author then goes on to enumerate the remaining works by the artist and his exhibitions. The coming of the Nazis to power, attacks on Jews, political opponents including communists, and fear about his and his family's future all meant that already in 1933, Steinhardt, together with

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

his wife and daughter, emigrated to Palestine – the most immediate factors that were responsible for this that are worth noting are the searching of his home and threatening phone calls. Flisiak then goes on to say, "In his new homeland, Jakob concentrated on painting and wood engraving, at the same time resigning from other graphic techniques."[7] Here, a question mark can be raised as to the relatively short fragment devoted to the murder during the Holocaust of Steinhardt's family members in Europe. Nor does Flisiak account for how events between 1939 and 1945 influenced the life and work of the artist, only that Steinhardt experienced difficulties in his newfound homeland and professional work. Further, the author also points out Steinhardt's employment in the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem and Steinhardt receiving an award in recognition of his creative work.

In this part, similar to the previous, there are references to the subject of his work. Many a time during this period Steinhardt reached for biblical motifs, among others the figure of Jobe as well as scenes of traditional life among religious Jews that were well-known to him. After the tragic experiences of Jews during the Holocaust these took on an additional meaning – they reveal a world that was consumed by total destruction. Here, Flisiak focused on a chronological account of the artist's life and work up to Steinhardt's passing in 1968 in Nahariji, where he was laid to rest.

Chapter five, "Upamiętnienie Jakob Steinhardt. Zakończenie" (Commemorating Jakob Steinhardt. Conclusion) closes the study by Flisiak, where various initiatives undertaken to commemorate the artist are outlined. It is in this context that the author places his study: "After his [Steinhardt] death in 1968, in several countries such as Israel, Germany and Poland measures were taken to honour the memory of this artistic figure. I have the hope that this book also can contribute to a broader understanding of Steinhardt's life work."[8]

Dominik Flisiak's study of Steinhardt is an uneven work. On the one hand, there are important and detailed fragments of particular interest regarding the biography of this painter – graphic artist and wood engraver – mixed in with thematic outlines regarding the fate of Jewish communities in Poland and explanations of particular lexis that is in general known (Pesach and masonry). On the other,

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

the text itself and footnotes, though as a matter of rule well written, are not free from stylistic and linguistic errors. Moreover, the depth of analysis and degree of discussion in particular issues leaves much to be desired – as noted above – not to mention a frequent reluctance to attempt a more comprehensive examination of Steinhardt's oeuvre. In addition, there is a lack of a clear explanation as to what sources the author used and which ones he was unable to. All of the above factors mean that the reader may well have the impression that the work by Flisiak under review is in fact a good contribution to the biography of Jakob Steinhardt, though still not one that reveals a complete picture of his life and artistic work. This in no way changes the fact that this is a study constructed in an interesting way and one that can be seen to have many positive aspects, finding readers for whom it shall be a motivation for further research. The intriguing artistic work of Jakob Steinhardt, apparently forgotten, has received another study that has gained a wider collective of readers. There is no doubt, therefore, that this artist and his works deserve further exploration.

CHRONICLES

CHRONICLES
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SYMPOSIA PROCEEDINGS *STAN BADAŃ NAD POMOCĄ ŻYDOM NA ZIEMIACH POLSKICH POD OKUPACJĄ NIEMIECKĄ – PRZEGLĄD PIŚMIENNICTWA*, ED. BY TOMASZ DOMAŃSKI AND ALICJA GONTAREK

After several years of work, researchers in 2022 at the Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Naradowej*, IPN) published the study: *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa*.[1] This publication arose in the context of the main IPN research project "Dzieje Żydów w Polsce i stosunki polsko-żydowskie w latach 1917–1990" (History of Jews in Poland and Polish-Jewish relations between 1917 and 1990), edited by Tomasz Domański and Alicja Gontarek, and is divided into three parts. In the first, the German occupation and its political system in Polish territories is analysed as well as its lawmaking in respect to Poles and Jews in the General Government,[2] and territories incorporated into the Third

[1] *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką – przegląd piśmiennictwa* (State of Research on Assistance Offered in Polish Territories to Jewish People During the German Occupation – A Review of the Literature), ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek (Kielce–Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2022), 998 pp.

[2] General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Territories (German: Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo dla Okupowanych Ziem Polskich, abbreviated to GG hereinafter).

Reich. The second part discusses the extent of assistance given to Jews by the Polish diplomatic service and the third, main part, examines studies on such assistance in particular voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic. These cover both an analysis of the particular nature of a given region, Polish Jewish relations in the inter-bellum as well as a presentation of the literature up to now and its research devoted to assistance given to Jews. Moreover, the studies examine this assistance and its consequences during the German occupation relating to individual and organised support on the part of the Polish Catholic Church and that of "Żegota."[3] In this context, according to the researchers' aims, this was to be a point of departure for further, particular studies on these very research questions. In 2022 therefore, for the purposes of familiarising the public at large with the latter, the respective IPN research divisions organised their local book launch, where historians contributing to this publication took part.

The first book launch saw respective contributions from Tomasz Domański, Alicja Gontarek, and Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, initiating numerous discussions promoting the above-mentioned study on 7 September at the IPN Centre for Education, History Stopover (*Centrum Edukacyjne IPN Przystanek Historia*), ul. Marszałkowska 21/25, Warsaw, with Rafał Dudkiewicz from Polish Radio 24 as moderator. In his speech, Mateusz Szpytma underscored that the Institute, which has been functioning already for over twenty years, was established with the aim of researching communist crimes, security service documentation and the broadly understood apparatus of repression and its functions. This activity, however, coincided at the time with a controversial debate (of international dimensions) related to the crimes committed in Jedwabne, against which IPN could not refrain from taking a stand. The Deputy President of the IPN viewed this as a motivating opportunity towards a more comprehensive undertaking of the Second World War research by this Institute than envisaged by its founders, in particular relating to such questions as Polish-Jewish relations. As a consequence, over the past two decades, research on the so-called Jewish question, among others, has taken pride of place in the scholarship conducted by researchers at IPN.

[3] Rada Pomocy Żydom (Council for the Aid to Jews) "Żegota."

In relation to the main aspect of the discussion, Tomasz Domański, when asked about the justification of conducting research in respect to Polish-Jewish relations as far as the notion of Polish assistance was concerned, replied:

> One might be under the impression that the literature and its research relating to studies on the assistance given to Jews is so large, so comprehensive that in fact the final conclusions that should accompany our publications should be definitive and yes, many claim so much has already been done that there is nothing to research and there's nothing else to be written. The conclusions, however, are totally the opposite. Contrary to current opinion, first and foremost that of the media as well as those that are well-known to academic circles, there is in fact material to research. There are many research fields that are lying fallow, ones that in a sense are as it were blanks and it is these that constitute the major conclusion of our study.

Next, Tomasz Domański outlined the respective contents of the publication and the underlying idea behind it – showing the relevant literature and its research in relation to the assistance given to Jewish people in occupied Poland at that time in particular voivodeships. He went on to state that the comprehensive nature of the literature devoted to this subject notwithstanding, it is highly fragmentary, secondary and multi-lingual. So far two studies on this research question have been published in relation to the regions of Rzeszów and Upper Silesia, while others in respect to specific voivodeships or counties are still waiting their turn. Therefore, the research being undertaken is so important, he stated and also noted that apart from the Archive of The Righteous Among the Nations, there is, in principle, no other such work that has recorded the vast numbers of the Polish Righteous. Moreover, to date no research has been undertaken that allows one to state what percentage amongst them were men and what percentage were women, which age group was most engaged in giving assistance and which the least and why. In discussing the literature and its research, he pointed out that the present breadth of literature on the subject of assistance given to Jews differs in relation to particular voivodeships. For example, the Eastern Borderlands and Wielkopolska were, for this reason, not the subject of study.

In the case of central Poland, the situation is different – starting from the 1960s through to the 1970s and 1980s when the research was conducted by, among others, Władysław Bartoszewski, Zofia Lewinówna, Stanisław Wroński, Maria Zwolakowa, Tatiana Bernstein, Adam Rutkowski or Szymon Datner, though by no means was this research question conclusively covered. In this respect, the study *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom* has this clearly documented, organising the publications available. Alas, nearly 80 years after the war's end, it is still not possible to give the numbers of those rescued Jews as well as those who, as a result of giving this assistance, were murdered.

It is to this very point that Mateusz Szpytma shared his reflections, adding that to this very day it is not possible to conclusively answer the question of how many Jews, thanks to this assistance, managed to survive the war:

> Such fundamental questions, and there are no answers. […] We took the decision that this should be simply the subject of research. How might one ask? To research thoroughly – that is, region by region. If not in terms of counties, then at least in terms of voivodeships. […] When we undertook this initiative, there appeared at that time replies such as why research this particular problem since so many studies have already been published on the subject – since the literature is so comprehensive, so huge? It is at that time that I decided we should establish the state of the literature at the beginning. That we should establish whether a given researcher observes that in their area, everything has been comprehensively studied, then a brief outline of one or two pages that informs: *in the area of this region, everything already is known on the subject of rescuing Jews and this can be found in the literature I am attaching* and the given researcher signs this, taking personal responsibility. As it turned out, no one completed such an outline. On the contrary; many, as well as those who had doubts, came to contribute to this publication […], commenting among others that this very subject is poorly researched and there is still much to be explored.

Mateusz Szpytma also pointed out the most important research directions in respect to Polish-Jewish relations: "This publication represents our first stage. The second will be a collection of monographs on assistance given to Jews during the

German occupation that outline the above in particular voivodeships and finally, research devoted to the above-mentioned nature of relations and the Holocaust," stated the Deputy President of IPN. He then appealed to all researchers, those focused on Polish regions and aficionados of history to prepare such monographs devoted to their towns, villages and communes. Taking his own example, he encouraged others by recounting his own journey:

> When I decided to research my own village, at that time, in the relevant literature, one could find information that six Jews managed to survive. After further comprehensive examination, it transpired that, in fact, twenty-one Jews were rescued. Naturally, in this context, negative attitudes on the part of the local population can also be found, and this is also worth noting. It is for this reason that history is an enormously interesting venture and why it is worth entering into the so-called microcosms of history that IPN is not able to engage in. This, ladies and gentlemen, is an invitation extended to you.

Continuing the discussion, Alicja Gontarek informed that research relating to the work of Polish embassies and consulates that were engaged in providing assistance to Jews has been undertaken by scholars abroad and that the materials are highly comprehensive:

> There has been much that has been written on the work of the Polish diplomatic service, but there remains a principle question, namely our research relates to the assistance given, whereas many studies are concerned with their work *per se*. These are, it can be seen, two separate research questions. The work of the diplomatic service during the Holocaust is a wider matter, whereas such assistance decidedly a more narrow research question. Having conducted a review of the literature at hand, I realised that in respect to the issue of providing assistance, there exist only three studies, and all three relate to the Embassy of Poland in Bern. Naturally, research questions relating to assistance provided to Jews also occur in other publications and one should make use of this knowledge. The subject itself of assistance, the subject of our research, is not broadly represented and is only just, as it were, learning to walk.

Further on, Alicja Gontarek outlined the functioning of the Embassy of Poland in Bern, describing it as a "great centre of rescue and information with respect to the Holocaust." She also went on to outline the phenomenon of other centres in their work, among others in Cuba, Spain and Greece, though in her view, "we are far from completing an overall picture in this regard, and this is needed. The tasks of diplomacy are among others, to provide protection and help to its citizens, though such work as for example producing false documents belongs to deeds of an extraordinary nature," said the researcher.

In this context Mateusz Szpytma noted that both fulfilling one's tasks in the service of one's country as well as all types of sabotage deserve recognition – for the Second World War was in its essence an unprecedented experience – and it is about this very determination that one should speak loudly.

At the end of the discussion, Tomasz Domański once again took to the floor in respect to his chapter of the publication, *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom*, dealing with the Kielce Voivodeship. The speaker noted that studies on his research area began to appear in the late 1960s, though they were not written by regional researchers but from the perspective of Warsaw (Warsaw-centric), which in a fundamental way influenced the calibre of these discussions. Further, there still remains somewhat of a hiatus in relation to reviews of literature, studies on the Righteous from the region and literature reviews. Moreover, not all the research relating to archives has been exhausted, he emphasised. Tomasz Domański went on to note that the subject of providing assistance to Jews has been undertaken in a great deal many publications of various nature, which, alas, does not change the fact that a monograph on this subject pertaining to the Kielce Voivodeship is still awaiting its researcher. In closing, he turned to the problems that all the authors of their respective chapters had encountered:

> It is often that we speak of neglecting research on the subject of providing assistance to Jews and that there are so many things that remain a *tabula rasa*. I do hope nonetheless that the remaining panelists agree that this is a difficult subject. It is one demanding a huge amount of effort researching the archives that at times may appear to be of little effect compared to the time actually spent there itself. It is one that demands from the researcher a highly experienced hand at

> moving in and about many various collections and resources. We therefore have to "conduct excavations" for example, in the collections of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland [*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*], records from the Yad Vashem collections or the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute [*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma*]. […] We also have to deal with the enormous audiovisual collection in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, documents of the Polish Underground State [*Polskie Państwo Podziemne*], documentation from German courts, personal recollections, diaries and memorial books. All this demands an incredibly huge amount of work in order to prepare for such a publication.

The Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance Mateusz Szpytma subsequently went on to recapitulate the discussion, stating that everyone, regardless of their views, who does research on the Holocaust will need to read the publication *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom* – this being one of the most important IPN publications, he concluded.

The abovementioned book launch was the first meeting of discussions that opened the cycle of local promotions for this collective body of research (in particular divisions and delegations) that took their course in a similar vein. Thus each of these meetings discussed the aims of the publication, the relevant literature and challenges that researchers face in preparing publications relating to the main research question of assistance provided to Jews in the territories of Poland during the German Occupation.

The second book launch took place on 26 September 2022 and was organised by the Gdańsk Branch of the IPN and the Museum of the Second World War (*Muzeum II Wojny Światowej*) for the discussion cycle "Encounters with History". Taking part were Grzegorz Berendt, Director of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk; Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance; Tomasz Domański, IPN Kielce; Alicja Gontarek, IPN Office for Historical Research (*Biuro Badań Historycznych*) in Lublin and Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin with Jan Hlebowicz from the Office for Historical Research (*Biuro Badań Historycznych*), IPN Gdańsk as moderator. During the

discussion, it was emphasised that research on the assistance given to Jews in what is present-day Poland requires assiduous and precise work, and thus, conclusions cannot be simply drawn without taking into account the relevant historical context of particular areas under research. The so-called picture that presented itself of occupied Poland was therefore not uniform, and as a consequence, the "conditions, opportunities and circumstances of providing assistance" varied in nature.

The third book launch was organised by IPN in Cracow on 5 October 2022. Taking part were Maciej Korkuć, Director of the Office for Commemorating Polish Struggle and Martyrdom (*Biuro Upamiętniania Walk i Męczeństwa*), and Roman Gieroń, the IPN Office for Historical Research (*Biuro Badań Historycznych*) in Cracow, author of the chapter on the state of research on assistance provided to Jews in the Cracow Voivodeship. During the discussion, he commented on the large difference between the above and the numbers given in the literature and maintained that this is a consequence of the so-called research gap on this subject and the lack of verification with respect to sources. Further, he reminded the audience that after the Second World War it was not possible to conduct historical research freely.

In turn, Maciej Korkuć pointed out that the title of the publication itself is perhaps not that pleasant to the ear, but this does not change the fact that in condensed fashion it discusses the German Occupation in Poland and indubitably constitutes a valuable source of historical knowledge – not simply a review of the available literature.

Moreover, in relation to the previous speaker Roman Gieroń, he noted that when the free world discussed the Second World War, Polish historians were locked as it were behind the Iron Curtain. In his view therefore, it may be argued that the level of awareness and overall picture of the Holocaust among some researchers in the West can be said to be selective. Therefore in examining the issue of assistance provided to Jews one should know that in essence this was conspiratorial in nature. Further, it is necessary to know how to put to one side cases of factual such assistance of an altruistic nature from that of situations where profit was made at the expense of a Jewish person's safety – though it was often the case that Jews paid for such assistance, otherwise the family hiding them would not have been able to afford the necessary food. Korkuć went on to finish the discussion with this final

thought: "Let a family today, in the context of a free Poland, take as guests another family of five and look after them for two years. It is obvious that in so far as they are able, they would participate in expenses. One should, therefore, carefully differentiate such situations from ones where money is extorted."

The next book launch took place on 6 October 2022 in Rzeszów with Wojciech Hanus and Michał Kalisz from IPN Rzeszów. The latter wrote the chapter devoted to assistance given to Jewish people by Poles in the eastern part of the Lvov Voivodeship, while the former from The Office for Historical Research (*Biuro Badań Historycznych*) is continuing the research on this area. The question of the administrative division of the Lwów Voivodeship was discussed, whereby according to the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact the eastern part of the voivodeship belonged to the Soviet zone. There was general agreement that assistance given to Jews in the main took place in larger towns where there was a majority of Polish people. In addition, in these very places there were large concentrations of Jewish communities organised by the Germans into ghettos. In the countryside, however, Jews constituted a very small percentage of the population and therefore acts of assistance were far and few between. In this context, the ethnic composition of this region was an important issue that analysts drew attention to. Therefore, in an inimical community where nationalist propaganda prevailed (this in particular related to villages with a developed network of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Організація українських націоналістів), the chances of survival proved to be significantly less than in towns, irrespective of German terror. Further, another part of the discussion was devoted to the course of Operation Reinhardt (*Aktion Reinhardt*).

The fifth book launch took place in Bydgoszcz on 11 October 2022. Taking part were Tomasz Kawski, prof. Monika Tomkiewicz from Kazimierz Wielki University (IPN Warsaw), Tomasz Ceran (IPN Bydgoszcz) and Kinga Czechowska (IPN Bydgoszcz). The discussion was centred on the assistance provided to Jews in Pomerania and Kujawy during the Second World War, being focused on the local context. Contributors pointed out that in the pre-war voivodeship of Pomerania the percentage of Jewish people was rather small. From the end of the First World War it gradually decreased in respect to their emigration to Germany. When the Germans invaded in 1939, some Jews were deported, while others were murdered

there. At the time, Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler issued a decree that all Jews must be removed from Pomerania by the end of 1940. Therefore in the view of scholars the prospects for research on assistance given to Jews is limited in the case of this region. Nonetheless, in the opinion of prof. Kawski, the publication *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom* is the first such attempt at a comprehensive approach to this research question, whereby every case should be thoroughly documented.

The next book launch took place on 7 November 2022 in Łódź, Voivodeship Public Library with Tomasz Domański, IPN Kielce, Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, IPN Warsaw and Aleksandra Namysło, IPN Katowice. The co-editor of the publication outlined the aims and explained why the above question remains one of the main ones for IPN. He went on to note that the estimation of the scale of such assistance provided is the cause of the greatest controversy and therefore the main task that scholars engaged in this project took upon themselves is an attempt at establishing – with the greatest possible precision – the specific numbers of people concerned.

The sixth book launch was organised in Kielce on 17 November 2022. Taking part were Tomasz Domański, Alicja Gontarek, Jan Kochanowski (University in Kielce), prof. Jerzy Gapys, who chaired the discussion, and Edyta Majcher-Ociesa. Tomasz Domański brought to listeners' attention that many myths and controversies have grown around the subject of assistance provided to the Jewish people and that after all, this is a research question like any other that should be approached without prejudice or emotion as well as preserving scholarly objectivity and professionalism. He went on to emphasise that for the Kielce Voivodeship to date there have not been any statistical studies in respect to the numbers of rescued Jews. Moreover, during the discussion it was pointed out that in many cases it is already too late to conduct research in the field

The seventh book launch was organised by Wrocław Branch of IPN on 28 November 2022. Taking part were Wojciech Hanus and Michał Kalisz (IPN Rzeszów), Tomasz Gonet (IPN Katowice) and Michał Siekierka (IPN Wrocław). All of the speakers were working on the so-called Eastern Borderlands voivodeships that once created the pre-war territory of Eastern Małopolska, Poland: Lvov, Stanisławów and Tarnopol voivodeships. All during discussion were agreed that the point of difference in respect to these voivodeships from other such studied areas was the ethnic composition of the region's population. Thus in the countryside the Ukrainians

dominated, which had an effect on the environment for the provision of possible assistance, especially in the period where it came to a pacification of Polish towns. In many cases therefore, Ukrainians represented an additional danger for Jews hiding on the so-called Aryan side. Here, speakers underscored that the literature devoted to the Eastern Borderlands voivodeships is very meagre, while studies on the rescued Jews have not been conducted so far. In this context the main source of information remains the accounts of witnesses, testimonies and diaries. As an illustration, Tomasz Gonet recounted how his search of the archives in Ukraine fared, one that he just managed to conduct a day before the Russian invasion. Every one of the speakers gave an interesting example by way of outlining their field of research, where a dozen or more people were given shelter. The meeting finished with a series of questions from the audience that were in the main focused on the challenges that scholars faced in preparing monographs on the research question of assistance given to Jews.

Book launch number eight took place in Bialystok on 29 November 2022 in Książnica Podlaska with two authors from the publication: Marta Kupczewska, *Polacy ratujący Żydów na terenie przedwojennego województwa wileńskiego* (Poles Rescuing Jews in pre-war Vilno Voivodeship) and Anna Pyżewska, *Pomoc ludności żydowskiej w latach okupacji niemieckiej na terenie województwa Białystockiego – stan badań* (Assistance Given to Jewish People During the German Occupation in Białystock Voivodeship – State of Research), IPN Bialystok. The meeting saw a detailed discussion of issues that are tied to the literature of the above subject, on which Anna Pyżewska has been conducting research for the past several years. The scholar went on to state that such research represents very much a long-distance grind requiring Benedictine precision and moreover, one should note the number of those rescued is significantly greater than those awarded a medal as the Righteous Among the Nations. In outlining the main features of the Vilno Voivodeship in this regard, the scholar pointed out the complicated ethnic structure with numerous minorities including Lithuanians and Belarusians. Here, it should be noted that the policy of the Third Reich during the German Occupation aimed at exploiting these differences for the benefit of its own aims.

The last book launch discussion of *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom* took place on 5 December 2022 in Lublin. The presentation coincided with the eightieth an-

niversary of the establishment of "Żegota". Taking part were Tomasz Domański and Alicja Gontarek from IPN, as well as Janusz Kłapeć, who outlined the state of research and research aims associated with the rescue of Jews in the Lublin District. The former, co-editors of the publication, gave an outline of the study's contents. Further, Paweł Skrok presented information on the shelter given by the Servant Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Najświętszej Maryi Panny Niepokalanie Poczętej*) to orphans in Turkowice. Finally, Małgorzata Orłowska, TVP Lublin gave an introduction to the pre-Premier of the film *Gniazdo sierot* (Nest for Orphans), on the shelter for children orphaned during the war in Turkowice, which was then screened to close this book launch.

All the discussions on the publication *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom* demonstrated that this particular subject is one of considerable interest that often evokes many emotions. This was an opportunity for the authors of the publication's respective chapters to share the research of their studies and, in turn, for those taking part, a means of becoming familiar with the latest studies devoted to the assistance provided to Jewish people on the territories of Poland during the German Occupation.

CHRONICLES
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"LEST WE FORGET THE VICTIMS". REPORT ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE BRANCH IN CRACOW IN CONNECTION WITH THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE *AKTION REINHARDT*

In 2022, some eighty years have passed since the start of *Aktion Reinhardt* (Operation Reinhardt). Officials of the Third Reich used this cryptonym for an operation whose aim was the mass murder of Jews in the territory of the General Government (GG) and Białystock District. The *Aktion* was conducted by the Germans in 1942–1943 in the context of The Final Solution (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*).

In the extermination camps established by the German authorities in the GG, about one and a half million people were murdered at the time; in the main, Polish citizens. Victims were also murdered during executions that accompanied the deportation of Jews – this included women, children, the elderly and the infirm. This criminal operation began on the night of 16 March 1942 with the deportation of Jewish people from the Lublin Ghetto to the Bełżec extermination camp.[1] Therefore, on the eve of the eightieth anniversary of this *Aktion*, on 15 March

[1] It was only in June 1942 that it was given the name from one of the main implementers of the Holocaust Reinhard Heydrich, who at the beginning of that month died as a result of injuries sustained as a result of the assassination attempt in Prague.

2022, the Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN), together with the State Museum at Majdanek (*Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanek*) organised the ceremony commemorating its victims. On this day at the Museum and Memorial in Bełżec (*Muzeum i Miejscu Pamięci w Bełżcu*) the following took part in the ceremony: the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Karol Nawrocki, and the Director of the State Museum at Majdanek, Tomasz Kranz, as well as guests, among whom there were delegates of the national and local government, army, veteran organisations, government and NGO institutions, the Church and other faiths as well as those from the local community.

During the ceremony, letters from President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki were read out. The organisers and invited guests also spoke, among whom the President of the Institute of National Remembrance reminded: "Today these victims call out lest we forget, forget their life and tragic death. They also call out to us to take responsibility and react against the evil of this world." Further, testimonies were read out from Holocaust survivors Rudolf Reder, Pola Hirszman, Irena Schnitzer and the account of a primary school teacher, Eustachy Ukraiński, in Bełżec. In conclusion, the head rabbi in Poland, Michael Schudrich, with Fr. Stanisław Szałański of the Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady Queen of Poland in Bełżec together with the rev. prot. Dariusz Wasiluk of the Russian Orthodox parish of St Michael in Tomaszów Lubelski said a prayer for the souls of the victims. Subsequently, those taking part in the ceremony gave their respects to those murdered by placing flowers and lights in the recess of the ohel (tombstone monument).[2]

The record of these proceedings aims to summarise the work of the Cracow IPN undertaken in 2022 with respect to *Aktion Reinhardt*.[3] Taking into account the present divisions of territory, the main area of the research for the above is the present day Małopolska Voivodeship. During the Occupation, this region in the main was in the eastern part – created by the German authorities – of the Cracow

[2] The concept of this anniversary was formulated by Roman Gieroń (IPN Branch in Cracow). The recording of this can be accessed on-line: https://krakow.ipn.gov.pl/pl4/80-rocznica-akcji-reinhardt/163252,Uroczystosc-upamietniajaca-ofiary-niemieckiej-Akcji-Reinhardt-Belzec-woj-lubelsk.html, (accessed 25 November 2022).

[3] The abovementioned report of proceedings does not include the work of IPN Delegation in Kielce.

District of the GG. Here, deportations of Jews to the Bełżec extermination camp began in June 1942 from Cracow. Thus residents of the Cracow Ghetto prior to deportation were crowded onto Zgody Square (at present Bohaterów Getta Square) and then formed into columns and groups by the Germans under the escort of soldiers and led to the railway station in Płaszów. From there, the Jews were deported to Bełżec. It is estimated that during the June *Aktion,* between 5,000 and 7,000 people were sent to their deaths. Shortly after its conclusion on 20 June, the Cracow Ghetto was reduced in area.[4] For the eightieth anniversary of these events, it was possible to visit two exhibitions at Bohaterów Getta Square until 30 June 2022 that were organised by the IPN: *Zagłada Żydów europejskich* (The Genocide of European Jews)[5] and *Polacy ratujący Żydów podczas II wojny* światowej (Poles Rescuing Jews During the Second World War).[6]

Over the next few weeks and months, IPN delegates in Cracow took part in commemoratives events such as Remembrance Marches, conferences and ceremonies for the victims of the Holocaust that were deported from cities, towns and villages in the Cracow District and territories incorporated into the Third Reich. The Cracow IPN co-organised events and commemorative parades in memory of victims in Tarnów and Zbylitowska Góra (12 and 17 June), Olkusz (8–14 June), Wadowice (2 July), Maków Podhalański (17 August), Myślenice (22 August), Nowy Sącz (23–28 August), Bochnia (24 August), Skawina (2 September), Słomniki (2 September), Miechów (4 September), Wolbrom (5 September), Brzesko (10–11 September), Tuchów (13 September), Dąbrowa Tarnowska (16 September), Żabno (20 September), Pińczów (26 October) and Zakliczyn (26 January 2023).[7] On the invitation of the organisers (government offices, associations and foundations) Cracow IPN also took part in ceremonies at Bobów (12 August), Stary Sącz (17 August), Limanów (18 August), Gorlice (19 August), Biała Niżna (21 August),

[4] The next *Aktion* in the Cracow Ghetto took place on 28 October 1942. Several months later, on 13 and 14 March, the Jewish suburb in Cracow was liquidated.

[5] The exhibition can be downloaded from the following link: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/edukacja-1/wystawy/85863,Wystawa-Zaglada-Zydow-europejskich-do-pobrania-PLEN.html (accessed 28 March 2022).

[6] The exhibition can be downloaded from the following link: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/edukacja-1/wystawy/87180,Wystawa-Polacy-ratujacy-Zydow-w-czasie-II-wojny-swiatowej-do-pobrania.html (accessed 28 March 2022).

[7] At first, this ceremony was planned for October or November 2022.

Mszana Dolna (22 August), Wieliczka and Niepołomice (26 August), and in Rabka (28 August). The details of these particular commemorative events taking place were placed on the webpage of the Cracow IPN in the tab "80th anniversary of *Aktion Reinhardt*," and on Facebook.

During the abovementioned anniversaries, there was also an exhibition, "Aktion Reinhardt 1942–1943,"[8] organised by IPN in Tarnów, Nowy Sącz, Bochnia, Wolbrom, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, and Żabno. Another exhibition, "Poles Rescuing Jews during the Second World War," was presented in Tarnów and Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The final exhibition, "The Genocide of European Jews" (*Zagłada Żydów europejskich*) could be visited in Tarnów, Olkusz, Nowy Sącz, and Żabno.

One should also note the work of The Office for Commemorating Polish Struggle and Martyrdom (*Biuro Upamiętniania Walk i Męczeństwa*) in Cracow, which in collaboration with the mayor of Pińczów, funded the plaque commemorating Polish Jews murdered by Germans mounted at the entrance to the Old Synagogue (*Stara Synagoga*) in Pińczów (the unveiling ceremony took place on 26 October) and, together with the Zakliczyn town authorities and descendants of the Riegelhaupt-Kempiński family, a monument and plaque commemorating murdered Jews from Zakliczyn and other towns was officially mounted in Zakliczyn (ceremonial unveiling on 26 January 2023).[9] Moreover, the Cracow Office mentioned above in conjunction with the mayor of Maków Podhalański funded a plaque commemorating Jews murdered by the Germans that was mounted on the station building in Maków Podhalański (18 August), whence the Germans deported Jewish residents to their death.

On account of the surveys conducted in Poland over a decade ago that showed only 0.9% of respondents mentioned the extermination camp of Bełżec as a place of Jewish genocide,[10] the Cracow IPN, because of its place on the Polish map as it were, saw one of its main tasks as education on the role of this extermination camp as a place of human massacre for the majority of Małopolska Jews. In June

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[8] The exhibition was undertaken by the Lublin Branch of the IPN National Education Office and the Lublin Branch of the IPN National Education Delegation in Radom and can be downloaded from the following link: https://edukacja.ipn.gov.pl/edu/wystawy/wystawy-elementarne/161287,Aktion-quotReinhardtquot-19421943.html (accessed 9 January 2023).

[9] This commemorative site was already established in 2022.

[10] *Akcja „Reinhardt". Historia i upamiętnianie*, ed. by P. Lehnstaedt and R. Traba (Warsaw, 2019), p. 7.

2022, on the anniversary of the systematic deportations from the Cracow District to the Bełżec extermination camp, the educational film *Aktion Reinhardt in the Cracow District*[11] was shown for the first time on the Cracow IPN portal, which it produced under the direction of Jarosław Migoń.

The film showed the evolution of German anti-Jewish policy as well as the course that *Aktion Reinhardt* took mainly from the perspective of two key cities of this region; Cracow (from where deportations began to Bełżec) and Tarnów (at that time the greatest concentration of Jewish people in that area). It is estimated that approximately 140,000 people were deported to the extermination camp of Bełżec from the Cracow District. The film aimed, as Martyna Grądzka-Rejak mentioned in the review of the script – to refer to the local perspective, thanks to which the production could be used also by educators in Małopolska examining the issue of the Holocaust. The screening of the film for school students took place at the Museum of Independence Myślenice (*Muzeum Niepodległości w Myślenicach*) on 22 August at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska Comprehensive High School (*Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej*) in Skawina on 5 September, at the Culture Centre (*Dom Kultury*) in Wolbrom on 5 September and at the Culture Centre in Tuchów on 13 September.

The next element of education work on the part of the Cracow IPN was the preparation of war historical supplements that after publication in the local press were placed on the IPN portal. The first, *Zbrodnicza akcja* (Criminal *Aktion*), appearing on 18 March 2022, was a free supplement to *Dziennik Polski* (Polish Daily).[12] The following articles were featured: Filip Musiał's *Niemiecka zbrodnia na polskich Żydach* (German Crimes against Polish Jews), Rafał Opulski's *Wieczny Żyd*, *Antysemicka propaganda III Rzeszy* (The Eternal Jew. Antisemitic Propaganda of the Third Reich), Anny Czocher's *Zaczęły się systematyczne prześladowania Żydów* (There Began Systematic Persecution of Jews), Martyna Grądzka-Rejak's *'Strzępek*

[11] The film can be accessed on the portal of the IPN Branch in Cracow: https://krakow.ipn.gov.pl/pl4/80-rocznica-akcji-reinhardt/166724,Aktion-Reinhardt-w-dystrykcie-krakowskim-Film-edukacyjny-krakowskiego-IPN.html (accessed 25 November 2022). The script for the film was written by Roman Gieroń and Michał Masłowski, Head of the IPN National Education Office in Cracow, in collaboration with film director Jarosław Migoń.

[12] The supplement can be accessed online: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/publikacje/periodyki-ipn/dodatki-historyczne-do/161558, Zbrodnicza-Akcja-Dodatek-prasowy-PDF.html (accessed 16 January 2023).

nadziei i dno rozpaczy'. Aktion Reinhardt w dystrykcie krakowskim (A Glimmer of Hope and the Depths of Despair. *Aktion Reinhardt* in the Cracow District), Roman Gieron's *Zatem wyśle pan zakładników natychmiast, by przeszukali cały teren* (You Shall Therefore Send Hostages At Once, So They Comb the Whole Area), and Joanna Lubecka's *Nieukarani sprawcy* (The Perpetrators Not Punished). These articles were related to the life of Jewish communities in the GG between 1939 and 1942, anti-Jewish propaganda, the course that *Aktion Reinhardt* took, the capture of those escaping the Holocaust as well as post-war trials of officials responsible for the crimes committed.

The remaining three supplements – that can be called regional – were tied to the commemoration of victims of deportation in particular cities, towns, and villages in present-day Małopolska Voivodeship. On 10 June 2022 came out the supplement *Zagłada Żydów w Tarnowie* (Genocide of Jews in Tarnów), also containing the article by Martyna Grądzka-Rejak "Byliśmy jak sparaliżowani" (We Were as if Paralysed) and that of Maciej Korkuć "Zdruzgotane iluzje" (Crushed Illusions), as well as the interview by Roman Gieroń with Leszek Hońdo, Head of the Department of Jewish Culture (*Zakład Kultury Żydów*) at the Institute of Jewish Studies (*Instytut Judaistyki*), Jagiellonian University, "Zdawali sobie sprawę, że Żydzi zostaną wkrótce zamordowani" (They Realised that Jews Will Soon Be Murdered).[13] On 19 August 2022 another supplement was published: *Zagłada Żydów w Nowym Sączu* (The Genocide of Jews in Nowy Sącz), also containing articles by the following: Łukasz Połomski, "Żydzi sądeccy w międzywojniu" (Nowy Sącz Jews in Interbellum Poland), Artur Franczak, "Getto w Nowym Sączu" (The Ghetto in Nowy Sącz), Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, "Szukają błędnym wzrokiem tych, których już na wieki utracili" (Hopelessly Looking For Those They Have Lost for Centuries), and the interview by Roman Gieroń with Urszula Antosz-Rekucka, community curator of historical objects, founder and director of The Sztetl Foundation (*Fundacja Sztetl*), Mszana Dolna: "Przedwojenne życie, zagłada i upamiętnienie historii mszańskich Żydów" (Prewar Life, Genocide and

[13] The supplement can be accessed on-line: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/publikacje/periodyki-ipn/dodatki-historyczne-do/166331,Zaglada-Zydow-w-Tarnowie-Dodatek-prasowy-do-pobrania-PDF.html (accessed 16 January 2023).

Commemorating the History of Mszana Jews).[14] On 26 August 2022 the final supplement was published: *Zagłada Żydów na Podhalu* (The Genocide of Podhale Jews) that also contained articles by Marcin Chorązki "Wojenne realia na Podhalu" (Everyday Life in Wartime Podhale), Martyna Grądzka-Rejak "Zagłada nowotarskich Żydów" (The Genocide of Nowy Targ Jews), and Roman Gieroń, "Zastali na drzwiach kartkę, że mają zgłosić się w Nowym Targu" (They Found a Note on Their Door to Report to Nowy Targ).[15] These supplements and their planning were initiated by Roman Gieroń.[16]

The above articles, popularising modern history also appeared in a digital version on the IPN portal, tab devoted to the 80th anniversary of *Aktion Reinhardt*: Michał Zajda, "Bełżec. Zapomniane miejsce kaźni polskich Żydów" (Bełżec, a Forgotten Place of Massacres of Polish Jews); Joanna Lubecka, "Adolf Eichmann. Człowiek w kapciach w kratkę" (Adolf Eichmann. A Person in Checkered Slippers), and Roman Gieroń, "'Morderca w białych rękawiczkach'. Willi Haase" (Willi Haase – 'Murderer in White Gloves').

Historians from the Cracow Branch of IPN also conducted workshops and gave lectures and papers devoted to the German operation against Jews; they also worked with the media by giving journalists historical commentaries. On 23 March 2022 at the IPN Centre for Education, Next Stop History (*Centrum Edukacyjne Przystanek Historia IPN*) in Cracow in the context of the cycle Wednesday at the Archives (*Archiwalna środa*) a lecture was given by Michał Zajda from the IPN Archives in Cracow: "Aktion 'Reinhardt'. Ideologiczne podstawy, przebieg i pamięć o ofiarach niemieckiego ludobójstwa" (*Aktion Reinhardt*. The Ideological Foundations, Course of Action and Memory Devoted to Victims of Genocide at the Hands of Germans). The speaker outlined German operations concerning the preparation for the murder of European Jews, the realisation of *Aktion Reinhardt* and preserving

[14] The supplement can be accessed on-line: https://krakow.ipn.gov.pl/pl4/edukacja/przystanek-historia/169157,Zaglada-Zydow-w-Nowym-Saczu-Dodatek-prasowy-do-pobrania-PDF.html (accessed 16 January 2023).

[15] The supplement can be accessed on-line: https://krakow.ipn.gov.pl/pl4/edukacja/przystanek-historia/169313, Zaglada-Zydow-na-Podhalu-Dodatek-prasowy-do-pobrania-PDF.html (accessed 16 January 2023).

[16] The author would like to express his deep gratitude to Martyna Grądzka-Rejak for her help in making these publications possible.

the memory of the Holocaust. Also, in this place several days earlier, on 9 March, at the Next Stop History in Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw during the conference "Aktion »Reinhardt i Zagłada« polskich Żydów – w kręgu mechanizmów i sprawców" ("*Aktion* 'Reinhardt and Genocide' of Polish Jews – Mechanisms and Perpetrators") Roman Gieroń delivered a paper devoted to Wilhelm Haase, responsible from October 1942 for the direct supervision of this *Aktion* in the Cracow District.[17] On the basis of the archival research conducted, he went on to outline Haase's work and the post-war trial before the Voivodeship Court in 1951. Moreover, Roman Gieroń went on to demonstrate the considerable amount of valuable information concerning the crimes committed during *Aktion Reinhardt* that was documented in the above-mentioned court case.

On 25 May 2022, together with the Małopolska Centre for Teacher Education (*Małopolskie Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli*), staff from the respective IPN Cracow Offices of State Education and Historical Research organised a seminar on the 80th anniversary of *Aktion Reinhardt* in Małopolska. In this context, online workshops were directed towards teachers. The following lectures were conducted during the conference: Rafał Opulski, "Nowy człowiek w nowym społeczeństwie. Geneza i istota totalitaryzmów" (The New Person in the New Society); Roman Gieroń, "*Aktion Reinhardt* w dystrykcie krakowskim" (*Aktion Reinhardt* in the Cracow District) and Michał Masłowski "Zagłada Żydów w powiecie olkuskim" (The Genocide of Jews in Olkusz County). In conclusion, educational materials in relation to the Holocaust were presented.

In the months that followed, papers were given concerning *Aktion Reinhardt* by Roman Gieroń at the Museum of Independence Myślenice (*Muzeum Niepodległości w Myślenicach*) on 22 August), Maria Curie-Skłodowska Comprehensive High School (*Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej*) in Skawina on 5 September, City and County Public Library (*Miejska i Powiatowa Biblioteka Publiczna*) in Brzesko on 10 September,[18] City Museum (*Muzeum Miejskie*) on

[17] Julian Scherner was responsible for the coordination of this *Aktion* in the Cracow District, while Martin Fellenz was responsible directly for supervision in the area and after his departure, Wilhelm Haase.

[18] The paper was given during the conference devoted to the 80th anniversary of Jews from Brzesko, which was organised by the Municipal Cultural Centre at Brzesko, the Association "Memory and Dialogue. Common History", and the Brzesko Townhall.

13 September and the Culture Centre (*Dom Kultury*) in Tuchów on 13 September as well as at the Zakliczyn Townhall on 26 January 2023.

In the same year of the IPN publication devoted to "*Aktion Reinhardt* – 80. rocznica niemieckiej zbrodni 1942–1943" (*Aktion Reinhardt* – 80th Anniversary of German Crimes, 1942–1943) and under this mast heading, Ryszard Kotarba from the IPN Cracow archives published *Żydzi Krakowa w dobie zagłady (ZAL/KL Plaszów)* (Cracow Jews at the Time of Genocide – ZAL/KL Plaszów). This study is very comprehensive, numbering over 800 pages and made up of fifteen chapters where the author undertook to demonstrate a part of the history of Cracow Jews during the German Occupation – in particular with respect to the period concerning the functioning of the labour camp and thereafter, the concentration camp in Płaszów.

To conclude, the Cracow Branch of IPN, in respect to the preservation of the memory of countless victims at the hands of German crimes perpetrated, organised some three score varied activities and initiatives as well as supporting relevant organisations for the purpose of commemorating these victims and disseminating knowledge on the German *Aktion Reinhardt*, where up to the end of 1942 the majority of Cracow Jews and those from surrounding towns and villages were murdered in the extermination camp of Bełżec.

CHRONICLES
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PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CONFERENCE "*WARSZAWO MA …*[1] – 79TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING," WARSAW, 14 APRIL 2022

On 14 April 2022 at the Museum of Independence (*Muzeum Niepodległości*) in Warsaw the conference "'Warszawo ma…' 79. rocznica Powstania w Getcie Warszawskim" ("*My Warsaw* – 79th Anniversary, Warsaw Ghetto Uprising") took place. As if naturally, the conference aims and subject matter were tied at this time to the anniversary of the Jewish rising. Before the start of the proceedings, a fragment of the film *Zakazane piosenki* (Forbidden Songs) was screened. Deputy Director of Programming Beata Michalec greeted guests in the name of Director Tadeusz Skoczek, Museum of Independence in Warsaw. Subsequently, Aleksander Ferens, Mayor of Śródmieście, Warsaw, outlined the work of institutions engaged in the research and propagation of knowledge on the history of Polish Jews such as the Jewish Historical Institute (Żydowski Instytut Historyczny), POLIN Museum of the History of Jews (*Muzeum Historii Żydów*

[1] *Warszawo ma,* a song written by Ludwik Starski (based on the melody of the song "*Miasteczka Bełz*") from the 1946 film Zakazane piosenki (Forbidden Songs), directed by Leonard Buczkowski [translator's note], https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakazane_piosenki (accessed 21 November 2023).

Polskich POLIN) as well as the future Museum of the Warsaw Ghetto (*Muzeum Getta Warszawskiego*).

After the speeches relating to the abovementioned anniversary, Maciej Jakubowski from the Department of History and Research (*Dział Historii i Badań Naukowych*), Museum of Independence in Warsaw, presented a historical outline of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He went on to remind listeners that the April Rising, led in the main by the young, was both the greatest Jewish armed action during the Second World War and the first urban uprising in occupied Europe. The presentation by Krystyna Budnicka, a child survivor and member of the Children of the Holocaust Association (*Dzieci Holokaustu*), closed the introductory section of the proceedings. She went on in vivid terms to recount her childhood in Muranów, Warsaw and the tragedy of the Holocaust, as a result of which almost her entire immediate family met their death or were murdered. In no uncertain terms, Budnicka emphasised that she owes her survival to other people and circumstances, and because of this, today, she feels obliged to pass on her knowledge about these events.

The plenary session began with a paper by Beata Michalec, "O poszukiwaniach żydowskich dzieci i borykaniu się z brakiem tożsamości" (On the Search for Jewish children and Struggling With a Lack of Identity). Michalec referred to Oliver Sacks' notion on the fundamental role of memory in the formation of the unique "self." Michalec then juxtaposed Sacks' concept with the fate of Jewish children who only discovered their roots and true life history after the war. The restoration of their Jewish identity sometimes occurred independently of them, especially when envoys from Palestine and Zionist activists[2] sought Jewish orphans residing in foster Polish families to reclaim them for the nascent Jewish state and its people. Sometimes, however, Holocaust survivors began to inquire into their own history themselves years later and formed associations for people with a similar life story. One of the first was the kibbutz Ghetto Fighters' House Archives (*Lohamei Haghetaot*) (named after the Ghetto Fighters) in Israel, which in 1994 established the Department and Archive of Children without Identity. In Poland, the first

[2] First and foremost the mission by Lejb Majzels, 1947–1948, should be noted. His notes were recently analysed by Anna Bikont, see *ead.*, *Cena. W poszukiwaniu żydowskich dzieci po wojnie* (Wołowiec, 2022).

such organisation was the Children of the Holocaust Association (*Stowarzyszenie* '*Dzieci Holocaustu*'), established in 1991.

The next paper, "Chłopi and Żydzi w panoramie dziejów" (Peasants and Jews in the Panorama of History), was delivered by Janusz Gmitruk, Director of the Museum of the History of the Polish People's Movement (*Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego*, MHPRL). In his speech, Gmitruk emphasised that the history of relations between Poles (peasants) and Jews is one, first and foremost, a history of cooperation, not conflict. Both groups, to the same extent, benefited from the peace and rights prevailing in Poland and were equally affected by the misfortunes befalling the country. According to Gmitruk, the Jews, valued for their resourcefulness, entrepreneurship and hunger for knowledge, had a positive impact on the economic and intellectual development of the country as a whole. Significantly for the researcher, the emerging political aspirations of the Jews found understanding among the representatives of the peasant movement, who fought against their political discrimination. The good relations linking Polish peasants and this ethnic community, according to Gmitruk, were reflected in the face of trial when, during the Second World War, more than 100,000 Jews were rescued from extermination in hamlets and villages.[3] Moreover, Gmitruk pointed out that just as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the first urban uprising, the Zamość Uprising was the first peasant uprising in German-occupied Europe.

The next speaker was another representative of the MHPRL, Jerzy Mazurek, who presented "The Extermination of Jews in the Opatów District (Radom District, GG)." Mazurek began his speech with an outline of the situation of the Opatów County population between 1939 and 1942, which did not differ from the situation of Jews in other parts of the Radom District. The ghettos created by the German occupation authorities in the area, including those in Opatów, Ostrowiec, Ożarów,

[3] Gmitruk refers to the older historiographic research, where the number of Jews rescued by Poles is estimated at up to even 120,000. The latest research, however, significantly reduces this number, to name for example the study by Albert Stankowski and Piotr Weiser, who estimated the number of Jews rescued to be around 15–20,000 (T. Domański and A. Gontarek, "Wstęp," in *Stan badań nad pomocą Żydom na ziemiach polskich pod okupacją niemiecką. Przegląd piśmiennictwa*, ed. by T. Domański and A. Gontarek (Kielce–Warsaw, 2022); M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło, "Prawodawstwo niemieckie wobec Polaków i Żydów na terenie Generalnego Gubernatorstwa oraz ziem wcielonych do III Rzeszy. Analiza porównawcza," in *ibid.*; see W. Stankowski and P. Weiser, "Demograficzne skutki Holokaustu," in *Następstwa zagłady Żydów: Polska 1944–2010*, ed. by F. Tych and M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin, 2012).

and Sandomierz, were open or semi-open, i.e. there were no external restrictions in the form of walls or fences, known from Warsaw, Łódź or the larger ghettos of the Radom District, such as Kielce. Mazurek discussed the policy of resettlement and expropriation of Jewish property, before focusing on the presentation of *Aktion Reinhardt* in Opatów County. This criminal operation began with the so-called deportation of Jews from Ostrowiec, carried out on 11–12 October 1941. Some 11,000 people fell victim to this murderous operation and were transported to the extermination camp at Treblinka, of whom as many as 2,000 were killed on the spot, and following the example of other deportation operations, some Jews were left there. Such deportations in other ghettos were carried out in a similar manner. Mazurek also referred to statistical studies, indicating the extent of murder and deportation in the German Occupation. Before the war, the total number of Jews in the Opatów County was estimated at around 43,000, whereas just over a thousand survived the Second World War. At the end of his paper, the scholar touched upon the situation of the Jews in the first post-war years, especially the exodus of the few remaining from the area. According to his findings, the reason why the few survivors decided to emigrate was due to attacks on Jews returning. As a result of the exodus, only a few individuals remained in the region.

The next presentation was given by Janusz Owsiany, a Varsavianist and member of the Warsaw FWK Distillery Association (*Stowarzyszenie Monopol Warszawski*),[4] who recalled the role played by the director of the Warsaw Zoo, Jan Żabiński, in saving Jews during the German occupation, which is already well-known in academic and journalist circles. Owsiany reminded that Żabiński was at one point asked by Ziegler, head of the German labour office, the so-called Arbeitsamt, to help him rescue one of the ghetto prisoners, Szymon Tenenbaum, who was an entomologist highly regarded in the world (also by the Germans themselves). Tenenbaum did not ultimately decide to leave the ghetto, as he had found a new species of endemic insect in the ghetto. Still, the bearer pass obtained from Ziegler made it possible to take about 300 people out of the ghetto to the so-called Aryan side. All these people hid on the zoo grounds, where they received help from Żabiński

[4] Named in English after the building where the distillery *Fabryka Wódek "Koneser"* produced vodka. Now a centre for the advancement of Warsaw culture, history and heritage [translator's note].

that enabled them to survive the war. This is the story that came to form the basis of the film *The Zookeeper's Wife* in 2017.

Ryszard Ślązak, a retired employee of the MHPRL, raised the little-known issue of post-war reparations for the Jewish minority. The speaker argued that, as early as February 1947, the British authorities, followed shortly by the French, required the government in Poland to take up the subject of compensation for Jews, which was to cover all titles, including rights to real estate and lost claims. According to Ślązak, the often quoted sum of $40 million, paid by Poland, includes only a compensation settlement – the value of all property transferred should also be added to this amount. One example is the plot of land under the US embassy in Switzerland, transferred by Poland as compensation. The nominal amount of the paid claims oscillates around $6 billion. In conclusion, Ślązak stated that the issue of reparations has not, however, been fully settled to date.

Representing the MHPRL, Mirosława Bednarzak-Libera delivered a paper on "Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej wobec ludności żydowskiej w autonomicznej Galicji" (The People's School Society 'PSS' and the Jewish population in Autonomous Galicia). The Society was founded in 1891 to commemorate the Constitution of 3 May, and its first director was the poet Adam Asnyk. One of the organisation's aims was the education and assimilation of local Jews. To realise the chosen directions, PSS colleges and reading rooms were established in Brody, Lwów and Żółków. In these establishments, books were made available for free, theatrical and musical performances were organised, lectures were given, celebrations were held together, and people gathered for various social gatherings. The society was also concerned with educating young people, including Jews, who were taught tolerance, camaraderie, obedience to elders, and an orderly, peaceful way of life. The society's activities did not meet with resistance from local Jews, as they saw it as an opportunity to improve their living conditions and break their isolation. In her conclusions, Bednarzak-Libera argued that PSS activities failed to lay the foundations for a common social platform between Poles and Jews, the latter remaining isolated and shunned by Christian families.

The following two papers brought the conference participants to consider Jewish resistance to the Germans in occupied Poland. Paweł Kornacki from the Historical Research Office (*Biuro Badań Historycznych*) of the Institute of National Remem-

brance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN) Branch in Białystok discussed how the Białystok Ghetto Uprising in older historiography was presented. The scholar emphasised that in previous years, Israeli researcher Sara Bender had pointed out that the images of the Bialystok uprising presented in the historiography of the 1940s and 1950s had little in common with the truth. A myth was created that spoke of fierce urban battles that lasted almost a month. Meanwhile, as Kornacki pointed out, the Germans, after the experience of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Treblinka II uprising, expected resistance and, before the liquidation operation itself, assembled a larger police force and staffed the key buildings.

In addition, the weak conspiracy in the ghetto was unable to win over the local Jews, who believed that they would only survive the war by working for the Germans. The uprising, the speaker argued, took place in an area occupied by little more than 30 buildings. The insurgents, after a brief and unsuccessful firefight, were told to retreat and try to hide among the gathered crowd. Resistance eventually collapsed when a German tank drove into the battle area. The whole event can thus be described as a well-planned, brutal police operation with elements of resistance by a group of Jews. On the other hand, Kornacki did not consider it appropriate to change the already accepted terminology in light of the latest findings, as the participants in the fighting called the resistance an uprising. For this reason alone, they should not be deprived of the right to call it thus.

In the next presentation, Dawid Chomej and Janusz Piwowar from the IPN Archives in Warsaw presented hitherto unknown Gestapo files in Ciechanów and Płock concerning two micro-histories from the history of the Warsaw Ghetto: Rosa Hutnik and Lotte Eckstein. They were born in Germany to Polish Jewish families, and both were suddenly forced to emigrate to their parents' country during the so-called *Polenaktion* in 1938. They settled in Warsaw, where they were imprisoned behind the ghetto walls after the outbreak of war, and the difficult living conditions made them decide to flee to Płońsk, where Rosa Hutnik had family. On 20 June 1941, the women left the ghetto by tram by bribing the conductor. Their escape was helped by people they met, who enabled them to cross the border between the General Government and the Third Reich. A critical moment occurred during a crossing of bridges over the Vistula and Narew rivers near Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, during which the escapees managed to pass off "old documents"

to German officials. When the women asked German soldiers for directions, they were rumbled for a trivial reason. One of the railwaymen listening to the conversation, surprised by the fact that the women pretending to be Polish spoke fluent German, decided to inform the Gestapo in Modlin. After their arrest, Rosa and Lotte were accused of leaving the ghetto without permission, bribing a tram driver, removing their armband with the Star of David and illegally crossing the border. The intention was to send them to the Ravensbrück camp, but only Rosa Hutnik ended up there. Lotte Eckstein was murdered in the camp in Działdów on 17 July 1941, less than a month after her arrest. Rosa herself did not survive the concentration camp – "Golgota kobiet" (Golgotha of Women) – she died in KL Ravensbrück on 12 March 1942.

This paper was followed by a break in the proceedings with the opening of the exhibition *Ruch ludowy, bataliony chłopskie i wieś polska w obronie ludności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej* (The People's Movement, Peasant Battalions and the Polish Countryside in Defence of the Jewish Population During the Second World War). After the break, a recording of Dorota Loboda's speech, "'Twoje odwrócenie głowy pomaga tym, którzy dopuszczają się zła' – warszawska nagroda edukacyjna im. Marka Edelmana i jej wpływ na kształtowanie się postaw dzieci i młodzieży" ('Looking the Other Way Helps Those Who Commit Evil' – the Warsaw Mark Edelman Award for Education and Its Impact on the Shaping of Children and Youth). The organiser and founder of this prize is the City of Warsaw in cooperation with POLIN. The project, aimed at Warsaw schools, seeks to remind people of the city's Jewish history – not only its tragic turn of events but also its cultural history. By recalling the figure of Marek Edelman, this initiative is intended to help shape a young generation that is open to others and opposed to any discrimination and violation of rights.

Next, Anna Skoczek from the Bogdan Jański Academy in Cracow presented a paper on the event "Pin a Daffodil" and began by describing the fate of Marek Edelman, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, who after the war used to place a bouquet of daffodils in Muranów on each anniversary of the uprising in tribute to his fallen colleagues. This tradition was referred to in 2013 by POLIN with its campaign "Pin a Daffodil – Lest We Forget." Paper daffodils distributed by volunteers reminded people of the heroes of the uprising. Schools from all over

Poland were able to join this initiative and demonstrate their own ingenuity in the form of promoting the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The school represented by the speaker organised a karaoke competition, a concert and a film screening among others.

Subsequently, Przemysław Prekiel, The Museum of History in Przasnysz (*Muzeum Historyczny w Przasnyszu*), introduced the personal wartime history of Professor Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, closely associated with helping Jews during the Second World War. He was born on 22 January 1923 into a Warsaw intelligentsia family with Piłsudski traditions and a member of "Żegota,"[5] who, during the war, was involved in helping Jewish youth. Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz believed that people helping Jews could be divided by their motivations into four categories: (1) those doing it for religious reasons, (2) ideologues, anti-fascists – mainly socialists, (3) professional groups – Polish doctors helped Jewish doctors, lawyers helped Jewish lawyers, etc., and (4) good-hearted people, to which the professor counted his parents.

He was drawn into Żegota by his future long-time friend Władysław Bartoszewski after the latter's release from the concentration camp. The first people Dunin-Wąsowicz helped were Maurycy Gelbert and the Tejhorn family, using the surname Motyka. The professor provided these people with care, housing and a livelihood. He used to say that it was easier to overcome the fear of death than people's indifference, which usually paralysed them and made it impossible for them to help. Captured by the Germans on 13 April 1944, he went through the Szucha Gestapo Interrogation Jail, the Pawiak Prison and the Stutthof Concentration Camp, from which he managed to escape only when the camp was evacuated in February 1945. For his actions, Professor Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz was awarded, among others, the Righteous Among the Nations medal and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising medal. An excellent historian and author of more than a dozen books – he passed on 9 May 2013.

In his presentation, Rafał Kowalski, The Museum of Mazowian Jews (*Muzeum Żydów Mazowieckich*) in Płock, took his cue from Martin Pollack's idea that to understand an enormous history, one must look at the individual experiences of

[5] Rada Pomocy Żydom (Council for the Aid to Jews), hereinafter referred to as "Żegota".

people. In this context, Kowalski presented many reminiscences of Płock Jews, witnesses to the last moments of their more than eight-hundred-year annals in the region, interrupted by the Germans in the course of just 17 months. Among the accounts presented in the paper was that of Maurycy Zielonka, from a family of Płock shopkeepers, who had his shop taken over overnight by an SS man, not allowing him to take anything from it and leaving only a receipt on the basis of which he was to receive compensation from the German state after the war.

Another, Jurek Rawicki's father, a manager at the Sarna agricultural machinery factory, was forced to leave for Warsaw when his deputy, a German named Gross, spread rumours that he was acting to the detriment of the factory. The speaker also presented the account of four-year-old Jakub Guterman: "a sudden noise in the middle of the night, a harsh light, banging on the door, his mother in a long shirt flying to the door and opening it, his half-naked and bleeding father lying in bed for the next few weeks." Many such Jews from Plock ended up in the Warsaw ghetto. Kowalski presented the gruesome memories of one of them, Lolek Gutman. There were about 60 people in the bunker where he was hiding, including a young couple with a small child. The child kept crying and people started saying that the Germans would discover the bunker because of this and everyone would die. The young parents realised they had no choice. They put the baby on the table and strangled it.

Next, Miroslaw Matosek, Academy of Commerce and Foreign Languages (*Zespół Szkół Stenotypii and Języków Obcych*), presented the paper "Życie codzienne i zagłada aniołów i ludzi" (Everyday Life and the Extermination of Angels and Humans). The title referred to Friedrich Weinreb's book *Spotkanie z aniołami i ludźmi. Misterium czynu* (Encountering Angels and Humans. A Mystery Play of Deeds), in which he describes his fantastical 1935 visit to Sobolewo, almost 60% inhabited by Jews and not an arena for nationality conflicts during the Second Polish Republic. During the German Occupation, a ghetto was established in Sobolewo based on the order of 20 November 1941, issued by the Starost of Garwolin, Dr. Carl Ludwig Freudenthal, where almost 4,000 Jews passed through. In his paper, Matosek focused on the individual memories of people who managed to survive the extermination of Jews in the ghetto. One of the most striking accounts spoke of a young poor Jewish woman who asked a gendarme for a bullet

for herself and her little ones. The gendarmes led her to Łaskarzew, only to be shot there with other Jews sometime later.

Then Krzysztof Bąkała from the Museum of Independence in Warsaw introduced the figure of Zofia Kossak-Szczucka. Despite preaching anti-Semitism, she became one of the most active people who helped Jews during the Holocaust. The speaker recalled her immense commitment to rescuing Jews, including her activities in the Konrad Żegota Provisional Committee for Aid to Jews (*Tymczasowy Komitet Pomocy Żydom im. Konrada Żegoty*),[6] which she co-founded, and recalled the writer's numerous appeals in the Front for the Rebirth of Poland (*Front Odrodzenia Polski*) publication to give up their indifference to the suffering and murder of Jews, and finally to call for action for those in need. The paper was concluded with a telling quote from Jan Dobraczyński: "No one else has done so much and heard so few words of appreciation."

Another speaker, Daria Zarodkiewicz, student at the Vistula University of Finance and Business (*Akademia Finansów and Biznesu Vistula*), presented the history of the Maków Mazowiecki Ghetto in her paper. Jews settled in the town in the sixteenth century and by the end of the nineteenth century it had already become one of the largest Jewish communities in Mazowsze. The first persecutions of Jews began when the Germans entered Maków. At first, these were limited to robbing shops, beatings, forcing Jews to do public works or cutting their beards – humiliating especially for pious Jews. The situation escalated in early 1940 with the order to isolate the Jews and have them wear an insignia. Further, Jewish people from the districts of Maków and Pułtusk were transported to the Maków ghetto, which was established at this time. The very poor living conditions (known from other ghettos, such as scarcity of food and especially water, overcrowding and disease) worsened dramatically after subsequent transports from Chorzele, Przasnysz, Sierpc and Mława. It is estimated that a total of over 12,000 people passed through this small ghetto. The liquidation of the ghetto, where all Jews from the surrounding

[6] On 27 September 1942, the Polish Underground State set up the Konrad Żegota Provisional Committee to Aid Jews, later (4 December 1942) renamed as the "Żegota" Council for Aid to Jews at the Government Delegation for Poland, https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/171145,80-rocznica-powstania-Tymczasowego-Komitetu-Pomocy-Zydom-im-Konrada-Zegoty.html, trans. Richard J. Reisner (accessed 24 October 2023).

labour camps had been transported, took place in November 1942. Those unable to work, including women and children under 16, were transported to the Treblinka extermination camp, while the rest were taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination/concentration camp. Zarodkiewicz noted that young Jews from the Maków Mazowiecki ghetto were among the members of the Sonderkommando uprising of 7 October 1944, during which Crematoria 2 and 4 were burned.

Maciej Jakubowski, an employee of the Museum of Independence, touched on another of the Mazovian ghettos in his lecture – this time in Strzegowo. The history of Jews in this locality was not a very long one, beginning only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite this, the number of Jewish inhabitants grew rapidly and already by 1921 there were 591 Jews in Strzegowo alone (31% of the population) and 704 in the entire district. Jakubowski pointed out that the ghetto in this village was created in violation of the Third Reich's law, which forbade the creation of ghettos away from urban centres. This was due to the corrupting of the local German authorities by the Judenrat and the creation of a sham typhus epidemic. The initial period of the ghetto was relatively tolerable, with the authorities not hindering contact with the so-called Aryan side. Conditions began to deteriorate as the number of inhabitants of the ghetto increased, with people being brought in from the surrounding areas, including Bieżun, Sierpc and Drobin, as well as from Pomerania.

In the summer of 1942, a real typhus epidemic had already broken out and the behaviour of the German authorities, which became very brutal from then on, also changed. Jakubowski notes that in the Strzegowo ghetto, as in other ghettos, there must have been underground organisations, mainly leftist, Zionist and communist, that were engaged in cooperating with the Poles in organising help for the lack of food and other necessities. Unfortunately, we do not have detailed data about their activities. The history of the Strzegowo ghetto ended in November 1942, exactly one year after its establishment, with the deportation of all the Jews residing there to the Treblinka extermination camp.

In his presentation, Krzysztof Andrulonis, a student of Polish Philology and Literature at the University of Warsaw, introduced the life and work of Henryka Łazowertówna, a Polish poet of Jewish origin. Born in 1909 in Warsaw, she was educated as a Polish and classical philologist. In 1930, she won a poetry competi-

tion organised by the Polish Studies Club at the University of Warsaw with her poem *Stara panna* (The Old Maid) and was a member of the Professional Union of Polish Writers (*Związku Zawodowego Literatów Polskich*). She lived on Sienna Street in Warsaw, which was incorporated into the ghetto, and despite the possibility of doing so, did not leave the ghetto because of her mother. She became involved in the Central Society for the Care of Orphans (CENTOS).[7] Around 22 July 1942, at the very beginning of the *Aktion* to destroy the ghetto, she was sent with her mother to Treblinka, where she died shortly afterwards in August. Władysław Smulski, who knew her, described Łazowertówna as very lively, witty, with a tendency for romantic exaltation, emotional and very feminine. Edward Kozikowski of the Professional Union remembered her as a very dedicated and conscientious employee. Andrulonis points out that the dominant features of her work were cordiality, lightness and simplicity of style, as well as directness, one free from pathos and far from fairy-tale fantasy with an ability to listen to herself. The poet, distrustful of the temptations of the modern world and the harmony of the classical phrase, was focused and, close-minded and faithful to reality, being focused on the detail. Today, she is best known for her poem *Mały szmugler* (The Little Smuggler), inscribed on the Memorial to Children – Victims of the Holocaust (*Pomnik Pamięci Dzieci – Ofiar Holokaust*) in the Jewish cemetery on Okopowa Street in Warsaw.

Robert Hasselbusch, an employee of the Museum of Independence in Warsaw, presented the events of the Gestapo prison at Pawiak during the *Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* and began by recalling that Pawiak was located in the middle of the ghetto and was therefore often referred to as the prison behind the double wall. Just before the outbreak of the Ghetto Uprising, in March 1943, the prison staff was increased in number, additional machine gun positions were installed and for some time no Polish workers were allowed on the premises. This was due to the crew's fear that the insurgents would capture the prison and the inmates would join them. Hasselbusch focused on the experiences of the prisoners, who heard the sounds of the nearby fighting and experienced deep anxiety. He cited the account of Dr. Anna

[7] Centralne Towarzystwo Opieki nad Sierotami (Central Union of Associations for the Care of Jewish Children and Orphans), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CENTOS_(charity) (accessed 24 October 2023).

Czuperska, a prison doctor, recalling that with the first shots, the women began to pray and sing patriotic and religious songs. Meanwhile, the German prison staff were extremely nervous and ran around the corridors, mirroring the anxiety of the prisoners. In this context, Pola Gojawiczyńska wrote about the growing hope of defeating the Germans and in the end, Pawiak did not find itself in the line of battle, although the fires in the neighbouring buildings reached it, making the air scarce and heat unbearable. After the final suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, secret executions of Pawiak prisoners took place in its ruins.

Bartłomiej Sokołowski, Museum of Independence, Warsaw, presented the work of Roman Kramsztyk (1885–1942), an artist associated with the Warsaw Ghetto. Kramsztyk was a draughtsman and painter, who showed great talent from an early age, as evidenced by his surviving sketchbook. At the age of just 13, he created extremely mature portraits of his family, cityscapes and sketches of nature. Later in his education, he was inspired by the works of the Renaissance period, particularly the Italian masters and therefore became an advocate of sanguine drawing after Leonardo da Vinci. Kramsztyk settled in Paris, but usually spent his holidays in Poland. The outbreak of war prevented him from returning from Warsaw to Paris and as a result he later found himself in the Warsaw Ghetto. In his talk, Sokolowski focused on drawings from this period of his work, which are emotionally charged because of the everyday tragedy of the people surrounding Kramsztyk. He observed the unfolding of this from the perspective of the cafés in which he loved to sit, most often on Rymarska or Elektoralna streets, next to the border wall. He created his compositions with a delicate line, but with a strong contour and chiaroscuro modelling, thus achieving the effect of Michelangelo's sculptural sketches. Here, Kramsztyk's drawings depict harrowing scenes, images of old people and children doomed to extermination. Despite his prolific output and passing his bulging sketchbooks over to the Aryan side, few drawings have survived. The best known is the drawing *Rodzina w getcie* (Family in the Ghetto). Kramsztyk's works were popularised after the war by Maria Konowa (Kowalska), who exhibited them in Sao Paulo.

In his presentation, Andrzej Kotecki introduced the Judaica in the Museum of Independence collection in Warsaw. These are broadly divided into two groups. The first includes objects from the ghettos in Warsaw and Łódź, while the second

includes objects related to the commemoration of these places. The more interesting items in the first group undoubtedly include banknotes and coins from the Łódź ghetto, which was the only one (apart from the Terezin ghetto) to issue its own means of payment. This was an additional measure to make contact with the outside world more difficult – the unfavourable conversion rate meant that Jews who were forced to buy them lost all their savings on banknotes that had no value outside the ghetto walls. Another interesting exhibit is an anonymous letter describing living conditions in the ghetto. The collection also contains, among other things, a banjo with a membrane made of parchment containing Hebrew text and weapons from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (including a Vis pistol, a loader and a petrol bottle fuse). Items commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto are mainly medals issued by the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes Museum (*Muzeum im. Bohaterów Getta Warszawskiego*) and commemorative posters.

Piotr Maroński, Museum of Independence Warsaw, tackled the problem of supplying weapons to the Warsaw Ghetto. The scholar pointed out that the main difficulty in researching this topic is estimating the number of insurgents and in this respect sources are not unanimous on this point, giving a figure of between 150 and around 1,000 fighters. Another important issue is the origin of the delivered weapons, especially as there was also a shortage of them on the Aryan side in Warsaw, which was preparing for the uprising, as indicated by the known radiograms sent to General Władysław Sikorski – the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, memoir sources say that every insurgent was equipped with a pistol and at least 10 rounds of ammunition, not to mention a dozen or so heavy machine guns and other types of weapons, such as incendiary bottles, the so-called *wańki*. The question of the money needed to buy the weapons and how they were smuggled into the ghetto also needs clarification – at a time when smuggling the smallest amount of food involved many difficulties.

Further, Maroński reports that funds for the purchase of weapons were collected by various organisations. This issue is being dealt with by a group of researchers from the Jewish Historical Institute (Żydowski Instytut Historyczny). The issue of weapons smuggling was supposed to be solved by tunnels, various people who had the right to enter the ghetto carrying individual pieces and the acquisition of a certain amount of weapons in the first days of the uprising, especially on weak

collaborationist units made up among others of Russians (who were pressured by the Germans at the beginning of the fighting to recognise the situation). Weapons were also at the disposal of criminal groups, which the insurgents tried to draw into their ranks. Maroński concluded by saying that the issue of the transfer of weapons requires further clarification.

The conference was closed by Dorota Michalec, who thanked everyone for taking part. The spectrum of topics covered shows not only the great interest of historians in Jewish topics, but also the need for further in-depth research. The papers delivered by younger researchers indicate that the next generation understands that one cannot discuss the German Occupation and later Russian, of Polish territory during the Second World War without exploring the question of Jewish communities and their tragic fate.