

***Patterns of Cooperation, Collaboration and Betrayal:
Jews, Germans and Poles in Occupied Poland during World War II¹***

Mark Paul

Collaboration with the Germans in occupied Poland is a topic that has not been adequately explored by historians.² Holocaust literature has dwelled almost exclusively on the conduct of Poles toward Jews and has often arrived at sweeping and unjustified conclusions. At the same time, with a few notable exceptions such as Isaiah Trunk³ and Raul Hilberg,⁴ whose findings confirmed what Hannah Arendt had written about

¹ This is a much expanded work in progress which builds on a brief overview that appeared in the collective work *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyski: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II* (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), Part Two, 231–40. The examples cited are far from exhaustive and represent only a selection of documentary sources in the author's possession.

² Tadeusz Piotrowski has done some pioneering work in this area in his *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces, and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1998). Chapters 3 and 4 of this important study deal with Jewish and Polish collaboration respectively. Piotrowski's methodology, which looks at the behaviour of the various nationalities inhabiting interwar Poland, rather than focusing on just one of them of the isolation, provides context that is sorely lacking in other works. For an earlier treatment see Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation, 1939–1944* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), chapter 4. For a popular, but somewhat shoddy and uneven, overview of some Polish sources see Jacek Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza: Zdrada i kolaboracja. Konfidenci niemieckich władz bezpieczeństwa w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza CB Andrzej Zasieczny, 2004). Wilamowski canvasses some of the older literature on this topic such as Włodzimierz Borodziej, *Terror i polityka: Policja niemiecka a polski ruch oporu w GG 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Pax, 1985), chapter 3; Józef Bratko, *Gestapowcy: Kontrwywiad–konfidenci–konspiratorzy*, Second expanded edition (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1990); Leszek Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945: Polski podziemny wymiar sprawiedliwości w okresie okupacji niemieckiej* (Warsaw: Pax, 1988); Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski: Rzec o policji "granatowej" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990). For more recent literature see: Tomasz Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna: Społeczeństwo polskie a państwo podziemne 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Krupski i S-ka, 2000); Tomasz Szarota, *U progu Zagłady: Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie* (Warsaw: Sic!, 2000); Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955: Współistnienie, Zagłada, komunizm* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2000); Barbara Engelking, "Szanowny Panie Gistapo": *Donosy do władz niemieckich w Warszawie i okolicach w latach 1940–1941* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2003); Jan Grabowski, "Ja tego Żyda znam!": *Szantażowanie Żydów w Warszawie, 1939–1943* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004); Teresa Baluk-Ulewiczowa, *Wyzwolić się z błędnego koła: Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit w świetle dokumentów Armii Krajowej i materiałów zachowanych w Polsce* (Kraków: Arcana, 2004); Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006). On the so-called reptile press and behaviour of some literary figures see Krzysztof Woźniakowski, *W kręgu jawnego piśmiennictwa literackiego Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (1939–1945)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1997); Krzysztof Woźniakowski, *Polskojęzyczna prasa gazdinowa w tzw. Starej Rzeszy (1939–1945)* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2001). One of the emerging "experts" on the subject of Polish "collaboration" in the West is German historian Karl-Peter Friedrich, whose blatantly biased writings have, not surprisingly, attracted followers among some German historians (such as Dieter Pohl) and, fortunately, also some harsh critics. Friedrich's dubious claims were given undue publicity in the Winter 2005 issue (vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 711–46) of *Slavic Review*, albeit with some effort by other historians (notably John Connelly, "Why the Poles Collaborated So Little—And Why That Is No Reason for Nationalist Hubris", pp. 771–81) to distance themselves from his sweeping and ill-founded conclusions, if not his "facts." Friedrich's skewed focus has served to validate the comparative and contextual approach advocated by Tadeusz Piotrowski.

³ Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

⁴ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,

the Jewish Councils (*Judenräte*—*Judenrat* in the singular),⁵ Holocaust historians have shied away from the topic of Jewish collaboration with the Germans. With few exceptions, Holocaust survivors are also in denial about this phenomenon.⁶ This dark chapter of the wartime history of Jews is one that merits closer scrutiny.

In this study the author has compiled examples illustrating the various forms of cooperation, collaboration and betrayal that turned Jews into a source of danger for fellow Jews, and less often for Poles, and facilitated the machinery of the Holocaust. By and large, it makes little sense to speak of economic collaboration in the context of occupied Poland, since that very term implies at least some degree of mutual profit, and that possibility was excluded for both Poles and Jews from the outset. This compilation, which is far from comprehensive, is not intended to demonstrate that such behaviour was somehow representative of the Jewish population, or that Jews (or Poles for that matter) had a particular propensity for such conduct. Rather it is meant to show that the actions of a tiny minority of the Jewish population were instrumental in inflicting significant, perhaps enormous, losses on the Jewish population.

The actions of these individuals, often carried out in extreme conditions and under duress, facilitated the Holocaust much more than the activities of their Polish counterparts, which are all too frequently blown out of proportion, while the former are glossed over. Jews played an incomparably larger role than Poles in the

2003), 3 volumes. Hilberg arrives at the following conclusions about the detrimental role of the Jewish Councils: "From now on, their activities were going to be supplemented by another, quite different function: the transmission of German directives and orders to the Jewish population, the use of Jewish police (styled *Ordnungsdienst*) to enforce German will, the delivery of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the German enemy. The Jewish councils, in the exercise of their historic function, continued until the end to make desperate attempts to alleviate the suffering and to stop the mass dying in the ghettos. But, at the same time, the councils responded to German demands with automatic compliance and invoked German authority to compel the community's obedience. Thus the Jewish leadership both saved and destroyed its people, saving some Jews and destroying others, saving Jews at one moment and destroying them at the next. ... As time passed, the Jewish councils became increasingly impotent in their efforts to cope with the welfare portion of their task, but they made themselves felt all the more in their implementation of Nazi decrees. With the growth of the destructive function of the *Judenräte*, many Jewish leaders felt an almost irresistible urge to look like their German masters. ... In short, the Jewish councils were assisting the Germans with their good qualities as well as their bad, and the very best accomplishments of a Jewish bureaucracy were ultimately appropriated by the Germans for the all-consuming destruction process. ... The Jews did not always have to be deceived, they were capable of deceiving themselves. ... The Jewish repressive mechanism was largely self-administered, and it could operate automatically, without any misleading statements or promises by German functionaries or their non-German auxiliaries." Ibid., vol. 1, 219 and vol. 3, 1112–15. Hilberg describes the sordid reality of ghetto life in these terms: "Patronage, favoritism, and outright corruption became inviting possibilities and soon enough were commonplace. ... The Warsaw Ghetto, for example, had a formidable upper class composed of bureaucrats, traders, and speculators. These privileged groups were large enough to be conspicuous. They frequented nightclubs, ate in expensive restaurants, and rode in man-drawn rikshas." Ibid., vol. 1, 232, 262. Hilberg also notes that, seeking salvation through labour, Jews became an important, dependable, and even irreplaceable labour reserve for the German war effort: "Gradually, however, the army emerged as the most important purchaser of ghetto products, crowding out other buyers. The ghettos thus became an integral part of the war economy, and this development was to cause considerable difficulty during the deportations. The Germans came to depend on the output of the Jewish labor force. ... The zeal with which the Jews applied themselves to the German war effort accentuated the differences of interests industry and armament inspectorates against the SS and Police, but the Germans were resolving their conflicts to the detriment of the Jews." Ibid., vol. 1, 263 and vol. 3, 1109.

⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Revised and enlarged edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1977).

⁶ Alexander J. Groth, *Holocaust Voices: An Attitudinal Survey of Survivors* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books/Prometheus Books, 2003), 38, 146, 147.

ghettoization of the Jews, the day-to-day functioning of the ghettos, and their liquidation.⁷ The role of Jewish collaborators (police, councils) in the actual liquidation of the ghettos, however, was probably smaller than that of collaborators from among the neighbouring, non-Polish population, primarily Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, operating in the lands of occupied Polish. On the other hand, Poles, in particular the Polish police, did not take part in the liquidation of any of the larger ghettos on prewar Polish territories (such as Warsaw, Łódź, Lwów, Wilno, Białystok, Lublin, Sosnowiec, Kraków, Kielce, Piotrków Trybunalski, and many others), nor did Poles work as guards at the infamous death and concentration camps.

The Poles did not play a pivotal, or even significant, role in the Holocaust of the Jews. (This is in stark contrast to the situation that existed in almost every other occupied country, for example the Baltic States, Holland, Norway, France, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, where the Germans relied very heavily on local collaborators to carry out round-ups of Jews, deportations, and even mass executions.) Many, if not most Polish Jews, were readily distinguishable from Poles, even to Germans, by reason of their distinctive dress, beards, physical appearance, and lack of knowledge of the Polish language. Jews tended to live among fellow Jews and their homes bore mezuzahs so there was no particular need for Poles to point them out. The creation of ghettos and deportation of Jews to death camps were not dependent on Polish collaboration. These tasks were assigned for the most part to the German-appointed Jewish councils (*Judenräte*) and the Jewish ghetto police (the so-called order police or *Ordnungsdienst—OD*).⁸ Jewish officials compiled accurate and detailed list of Jews in a particular town, carefully noting such matters as their wealth, residency status, age, sex, and occupation, with changes of residency being reported monthly.⁹ The liquidation of the ghettos was overseen by the Germans who employed numerous German forces, the Jewish police, and auxiliaries of various nationalities (Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian) brought in

⁷ During the massive deportation of some 265,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, “Jewish police delivered 7,000 victims for transport to Treblinka [on July 25] and from then on delivered them at a minimum daily rate of 10,000. The average Jewish policeman in the Warsaw ghetto sent two thousand Jews to their death, in order to save his own life.” See Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland: A Documentary History* (New York: Hippocrene, 1993; Revised edition—1998), 115. The Jewish police, whose numbers had swollen from 1,600 in December 1941 to nearly 2,200, made itself notorious by its cooperation with the Germans in rounding up Jews. Emanuel Ringelblum wrote (in December 1942): “The Jewish police had a bad reputation even before the deportation. Unlike the Polish police, which did not take part in the abduction for the labour camps [from spring 1941], the Jewish police did engage in this dirty work. The police were also notorious for their shocking corruption and demoralization.” See Abraham Lewin, *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Oxford and New York: Basil Black in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford, 1988), 17, 19.

⁸ Yehuda Bauer has recently acknowledged that in the larger ghettos, it was the *Judenräte* who provided the Germans with lists and cooperated in the handing over of victims. According to that historian, the Jewish police played a “major role” in the deportation of the Warsaw Jews to Treblinka in the summer of 1942, with similar roles being played by the Jewish police forces in Łódź, Kraków, and elsewhere. See Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 143–44, 154. The ghetto in Grodno followed a typical pattern: “The *Judenrat* was compelled to prepare lists of names, transfer Jews from one ghetto to another, and declare that the deportees were, supposedly, being sent to places of work. ... Very severe criticism of the Jewish police was lodged by the survivors of the Grodno ghetto for their attempt to save themselves by fulfilling their duties in a most meticulous manner. Only a few policemen refrained from collaborating with the Germans ... even during the February [1942] *Aktion* some policemen uncovered hiding places and turned in Jews to the Germans.” See Shmuel Spector, ed., *Lost Jewish Worlds: The Communities of Grodno, Lida, Olkieniki, Vishay* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), 161–62.

⁹ Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), 74.

for this purpose. The involvement of the Polish “blue” police was, in the assessment of leading Jewish historians such as Szymon Datner and Raul Hilberg, marginal.¹⁰ Paradoxically, it was in Poland, where the Germans built their largest death and concentration camps for purely logistical reasons, that Jewish collaboration became most visible and lethal.

There is no question that, on the whole, Jews had to contend with Jewish collaborators far more frequently than with Polish ones, and that those Jews who did not venture out of the ghettos—and the vast majority did not—would likely have never encountered a Polish collaborator or denouncer. Generally speaking, there were four large internal sources of danger for the Jews: the Jewish councils, the Jewish auxiliary police, Jewish agents and informants, and miscellaneous Jewish betrayers. The moral choices and dilemmas that individual Jews who cooperated, collaborated or betrayed, faced in these circumstances is a topic that falls outside the scope of this study.¹¹ From the victims’ perspective it mattered little whether collaboration or denunciation was forced or voluntary, or something in between. Without a recognition of this phenomenon, any treatment of wartime Polish-Jewish relations is seriously flawed.

The fate of Polish Jews was not dependent on the Poles, nor were Polish attitudes something that the Germans troubled themselves with. As Raul Hilberg notes, “There was no imperative to be mindful of the welfare of Poles,” and thus “no need for precautions whenever anti-Jewish measures could have painful

¹⁰ Szymon Datner, a long-time director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, has stated that the Holocaust “cannot be charged against the Poles. It was German work and it was carried out by German hands. The Polish police were employed in a very marginal way, in what I would call keeping order. I must state with all decisiveness that more than 90% of that terrifying, murderous work was carried out by the Germans, with no Polish participation whatsoever.” See Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 247. According to Raul Hilberg, one of the foremost Holocaust historians, “Of all the native police forces in occupied Eastern Europe [and to this we could readily add the French and Dutch police], those of Poland were least involved in anti-Jewish actions. ... The Germans could not view them as collaborators, for in German eyes they were not even worthy of that role. They in turn could not join the Germans in major operations against Jews or Polish resistors, lest they be considered traitors by virtually every Polish onlooker. Their task in the destruction of the Jews was therefore limited.” See Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/Harper Collins, 1992), 92–93. As Hilberg points out, the SS and German Police employed Ukrainian forces in ghetto-clearing operations not only in the Galician District but also in such places as Warsaw and Lublin. See Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 545. The most important monograph on the Polish police, or “blue” police (*police granatowa*) as they were popularly known because of the navy blue colour of their uniforms, is the aforementioned study by Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski: Rzecz o policji “granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990). The “blue” police was formed by the Germans, as a continuation of the prewar Polish criminal police force. Participation was compulsory under threat of arrest of their family for desertion. It performed such duties as enforcing the curfew, patrolling the streets, etc. By mid-1943, its composition was only 70 percent Polish. The remainder was 20 percent Ukrainian and Belorussian, and 10 percent Volksdeutsche. The latter were used by the Germans in an enforcer role. Unlike the Ukrainian police, the “blue” police’s cooperation with the Germans was administrative, not political. Individually, however, some of its members did wilfully serve the Germans for personal gain, and the Germans sometimes formed police battalions from these degenerates. About one in forty policemen in Warsaw took part in the search for fugitive Jews in 1943, and turned them over to the Germans. Some policemen blackmailed Jews, while others, as described later, helped them. In 1941, the police commandant of Warsaw, Oberleutnant Jarke complained that the German police was forced into armed action in the ghetto because the “blue” police remained passive.

¹¹ Like most Polish collaborators, who became entangled with the Germans because they were blackmailed after being caught in compromising situations, few Jewish collaborators were actually ideological supporters of Nazi Germany. Florian Majewski (Moshe Lajbcygier), who survived the war as a member of the Home Army where he served in a unit that pursued collaborators, describes several operations directed at Poles who had been “recruited” into service in this manner, yet the Polish underground did not hesitate to order their execution. That author does not record any activities by the Home Army or Polish collaborators directed at Jews. See Florian Mayevski with Spencer Bright, *Flame without Smoke: The Memoirs of a Polish Partisan* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 91–109.

repercussions for the non-Jewish population.”¹² Contrary to what is often claimed, the Polish population was not supportive of German policies towards the Jews. General Johannes Blaskowitz, commander of the Eighth German Army during the September 1939 campaign and subsequently Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Territories, wrote to Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, in his report of February 6, 1940: “The acts of violence carried out in public against Jews are arousing in religious Poles [literally, “in the Polish population, which is fundamentally pious (or God-fearing)”) not only the deepest disgust but also a great sense of pity for the Jewish population.”¹³

The Germans played a large part in encouraging and exploiting friction between the conquered peoples, and in pitting them against each other. In Piotrków Trybunalski,

On September 6, [1939] the Germans set fire to a few streets in the Jewish quarter and hot Jews trying to escape from their burning houses. ... Those still hiding in their homes soon noticed that the Germans were interested primarily in their property. Both individually and in groups, the latter had invaded the Jewish community and confiscated virtually everything they could—clothes, linen, furs, carpets, valuable books, etc. They often invited the Poles in the streets to take part in the looting, after which they would fire bullets into the air in order to give the impression that they were driving away the Polish “thieves”. These scenes were photographed by the Germans to demonstrate that they were protecting Jewish property from Polish criminals.¹⁴

Historians Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski write:

The Nazis contrived in every way possible to provoke resentment and animosity between the national groups. For example, in February 1941 the warders for a Jewish labour camp were recruited from among Poles and Ukrainians, while early the same year the occupation authorities in Będzin employed Jews in compiling the registers of Poles liable to deportation from the town. Again, in the spring of 1942, five Jews were assigned for wholly clerical duties to the Treblinka I labour camp for Poles. Expedients like these all made for a continuous embitterment and vitiation of relations between Poles and Jews.¹⁵

These examples could be multiplied. For instance, in the hard-labour camp for Poles in Płaszów, many functions—including hanging Polish inmates—were assigned to Jewish prisoners from the adjoining

¹² Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 1, 189.

¹³ Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Reiss, *‘Those Were the Days’: The Holocaust through the Eyes of the Perpetrators and Bystanders* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), 4; Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919–1945: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, vol. II: *Foreign Policy, War and Racial Extermination* (New York: Schocken, 1988), 939.

¹⁴ Jacob Birnbaum, “Piotrkow Trybunalski: the Last Chapter,” in Roman Mogilanski, comp. and ed., *The Ghetto Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland* ((Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration camps and Nazi Victims of Piotrkow Trybunalski, 1985), 8.

¹⁵ Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963), 19.

concentration camp.¹⁶ In Auschwitz, Polish inmates were processed by Jews and vice versa.¹⁷ Berenstein and Rutkowski comment on another divisive tactic employed by the Germans:

In support of their policy of persecution of the Jews in Poland the Nazi authorities mounted a vast propaganda campaign of ferocious virulence which preyed on the lowest instincts of the unenlightened sections of the population. The Nazi Polish-language gutter press ... strove unremittingly to whip up the Poles against the Jews. New posters continually appeared on the walls, in trams, in railway stations and other public places vilifying the Jews.¹⁸

According to one Jewish survivor, “We also did not think about *why* they [the Germans] wanted to kill us. We knew that we were like rats. Their propaganda not only influenced the Gentiles, it also influenced us Jews. It took away from us our human dignity.”¹⁹ The German-sponsored Polish press claimed that the closure of ghetto in Warsaw “was the wish of the majority of inhabitants of Warsaw.”²⁰ Jews played into this strategy by spreading anti-Polish propaganda inside the ghettos, going so far as to claim that the Poles were inciting the Germans. A wartime report from the Warsaw ghetto spoke of the author’s efforts to convince Jews “about the feelings in Polish society towards the Jews. They are inciting the occupier against the Jews, in order to save themselves by this stratagem.” He also questioned the sincerity of the Polish democratic opposition and preached about the “abject baseness of behavior among the Poles.”²¹ Not surprisingly, Emanuel Ringelblum notes, in his wartime journal, that hatred towards Polish Christians grew in the Warsaw ghetto because it was widely believed that they were responsible for the economic restrictions that befell the Jews.²² Many Jews could not comprehend why it was they, rather than the Poles, who were suffering the brunt of the German brutality.

Of course, the Germans played it both ways, and while disseminating anti-Polish propaganda among the Jews, they claimed to be their protectors. One Jew recalls:

I remembered the order to assemble on the lawn in front of the Judenrat headquarters in Grabowiec, the announcement that all the Jews of Grabowiec would be ‘resettled’ in Hrubieszow [Hrubieszów], where the SS officer had told us, the Jews would live and work together in a

¹⁶ Franciszek J. Proch, *Poland’s Way of the Cross, 1939–1945* (New York: Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi and Soviet Concentration Camps, 1987), 50.

¹⁷ Jacob Celemenski, *Elegy For My People: Memoirs of an Underground Courier of the Jewish Labor Bund in Nazi-Occupied Poland, 1939–45* (Melbourne: The Jacob Celemenski Memorial Trust, 2000), 225.

¹⁸ Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 19.

¹⁹ Jacob Shepetinski, *Jacob’s Ladder* (London: Minerva Press, 1966), 45.

²⁰ Andrzej Żbikowski, “Antysemityzm, szmalcownictwo, współpraca z Niemcami a sosisunki polsko-żydowskie pod okupacją niemiecką,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 446.

²¹ Marian Małowist, “Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto,” in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” [“Oneg Shabbath”]* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), 619–34, at 631, 633.

²² Emanuel Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego: Wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), 118.

miniature 'Jewish state,' protected by the kindly German authorities from the wrath of the local Gentile populace.²³

In Slonim,

As soon as the Jews were enclosed in the ghetto, the head of the German gendarmerie ... and his deputy ... called all the Jews to a meeting, where they were assured there would be no more *Aktionen*. They said the previous *Aktion* had been a Polish provocation, and that as long as Jews worked hard, they would survive the war.²⁴

In view of this constant bombardment of propaganda it is not surprising that some Poles repeated such diatribes, just as some Jews resorted to anti-Polish barbs.²⁵

One of the risks faced by Jews on the "Aryan" side was that of blackmailers, known as "szmalcowniki", who operated for the most part in Warsaw. Even more dangerous were Gestapo agents and informers of various nationalities including Jews. As was the case in Berlin,²⁶ Jewish *Greifers* or "catchers" played an ignominious role in hunting down and betraying Jews who endeavoured to pass as Poles or hide. These phenomena will be discussed in detail.

The Polish underground reacted by condemning acts of collaboration including betrayals of Jews, whether committed by Poles or others, and also by punishing the transgressors by death. The repeated warnings issued by the underground authorities against assisting the Germans in persecuting Jews, as well as the severe punishment imposed by those authorities, made it clear that such conduct was outside the acceptable norms of behaviour and was so viewed by a significant majority of Polish society. There is no record of any political backlash against these measures taken by the underground authorities.²⁷ Although the underground passed a number of death sentences against informers and suspected Gestapo agents, they did not manage to carry all of them out because many practical difficulties stood in the way, such as collecting evidence and actually carrying out the executions. One of the most famous collaborators the Polish underground did manage to execute was Igo Sym, a popular interwar actor of German origin (he was born in Innsbruck, Austria).

²³ Michael Temchin, *The Witch Doctor: Memoirs of a Jewish Partisan* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1983), 54–55.

²⁴ Account of Mordechaj Jonisz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 302, testimony 141.

²⁵ A Polish woman from Chmielnik recalled one popular Jewish saying: "Gdy przyjdzie Ruski zabraknie na was powrózki," which translates roughly as "When the Russians arrive there won't be enough rope [to hang the Poles]" or "When the Russians come, they will run out of halters for all of you." See Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika* (Kielce: F.P.H.U. XYZ, 2006), 194; Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik* (Kielce: XYZ and Town and Municipality Office in Chmielnik, 2007), 190.

²⁶ The Germans employed at least twenty Jewish *Greifers*, or "catchers," to hunt down and betray Jews in Berlin. For accounts of how effectively that network functioned, see Peter Wyden, *Stella: One Woman's True Tale of Evil, Betrayal, and Survival in Hitler's Germany* ([New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992]; Erica Fischer, *Aimée & Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

²⁷ For examples of some of the warnings and codes of conduct issued by the Polish underground authorities, see Stefan Korboński, *The Polish Underground State: A Guide to the Underground, 1939–1945* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Quarterly, 1978; New York: Hippocrene, 1981), 72, 125–26; Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945* (London: EarlsCourt Publications, 1969),

The Polish underground authorities set up a special, accelerated investigative and legal apparatus in 1943 to deal with those who preyed on Jews and others. It is estimated that about 30 percent of the 70 death sentences passed against confidants and collaborators by the Special Civilian Court in Warsaw in 1943–1944 were directed at persons who primarily harmed Jews.²⁸ Many of these sentences were not carried out, however, because of the attendant risks and complications. Often the informers or blackmailers were elusive Gestapo agents (actually these agents or confidants, commonly referred to as “Gestapo agents”, were employed by various agencies such as the Kripo or Criminal Police, by other branches of the Sicherheitspolizei such as the Gestapo, as well as by the Abwehr and Bahnschutz²⁹) or part of the criminal underworld, and even the most carefully executed sentence exposed underground members to personal danger and retaliations. Moreover, the Germans introduced severe retaliations, executing ten Poles for every informant eliminated by the underground, which led to lesser forms of punishment being meted out to collaborators. Therefore, accounts were to be settled in full after the war.³⁰

Stefan Korboński, who, as chief of Civil Resistance in occupied Poland from 1941 organized underground courts to try collaborators, and others have identified a number of Poles executed by the Polish underground for betraying or persecuting Jews as well as their Polish benefactors.³¹ Often these

646–89.

²⁸ Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), 294; Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945*, 61–63, 123. See also Gondek’s essay on this topic in *Polskie podziemie polityczne wobec zagłady Żydów w czasie okupacji niemieckiej*, Conference Papers, Warsaw, April 22, 1987 (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej; and Polskie Towarzystwo “Sprawiedliwych wśród narodów świata,” 1988). For additional statistics see Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 65–67.

²⁹ Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna*, 107–108. Strzembosz points out that Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews were often employed in these functions, and that Jewish agents also worked outside the ghettos.

³⁰ Szymon Datner, *Las sprawiedliwych: Karta z dziejów ratownictwa Żydów w okupowanej Polsce* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1968), 30; Tadeusz Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta: Warszawskie getto i ludzie (1939–1945 i dalej)* (Warsaw: Ojczyzna, 1995), 220–21.

³¹ Stefan Korboński, *Fighting Warsaw: The Story of the Polish Underground State, 1939–1945* (New York: Minerva Press/Funk & Wagnalls, 1968), 115–44; Stefan Korboński, *The Jews and the Poles in World War II* (New York: Hippocrene, 1989), 50–51; and his *The Polish Underground State*, 126. For additional examples of measures taken against police officers, agents, denouncers, and blackmailers in various localities, see Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej: Polacy z pomocą Żydom 1939–1945*, Second expanded edition (Kraków: Znak, 1969), 280–81 (Podlasie); Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 168 (Warsaw), 682 (Kraków), 683 (Warsaw), 684 (Warsaw), 687 (Grębków), 687 (Warsaw), 689 (Warsaw); Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945*, 276–95, and the French translation of a revised version of this book published as *Zegota: Commission d’aide aux Juifs* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 228–54; Marek Arczyński and Wiesław Balcerak, *Kryptonim “Żegota”: Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939–1945*, Second revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), 100–104; Waław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust*, Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), entries 536 (Warsaw), 589 (Warsaw) and 612 (Warsaw); Eugeniusz Fafara, *Gehenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), 538 (Czerniewice near Rawa Mazowiecka); Włodzimierz Bonusiak, ed., *Łańcut: Studia i szkice z dziejów miasta* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1997), 273 (Markowa near Łańcut); Emanuela Cunge, *Uciec przed Holocaustem* (Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 1997), 274 (near Oszmiana); Stanisław Taubenschlag (Stanley Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland: Cracow, Auschwitz, Buchenwald* (Oświęcim: Frap Books, 1998), 37 (Kraków); Celemenski, *Elegy For My People*, 185 (the liquidation by the Polish underground of a Kripo agent named Jacek Gonczarek who extorted money from Jews, together with a number of his colleagues); Michał Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, comp. and eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945: Relacje świadków* (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2003), 259 (Skierniewice); Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2004), 154–55; Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), 875 (Otwock); Chaim Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do*

same people, usually from the criminal elements of Polish society, would prey on Christian Poles as well, including members of the underground. As we shall see, on occasion Jews were also executed for such transgressions by the Polish underground. According to historian Eliyahu Yones, who described conditions in Lwów,

Informers were often prosecuted before a Polish underground tribunal. In one such instance, two Polish women—one of whom was a Gestapo agent—were indicted for handing Jews to the Gestapo. The underground sentenced them to death and carried out the sentence.³²

These measures did not, of course, eliminate all or even most of the collaborators and informers, whether Poles or Jews, nor did they put an end to the many risks from various sources that threatened the safety of Jews in hiding. The threat of betrayal—sometimes motivated simply by a desire for self-preservation (Poles were punished collectively for helping Jews)—was an ever-present fear for many Jews. Holocaust historians attribute the source of such lurking danger almost exclusively to the conduct of Poles and Polish anti-Semitism, and some Jews have claimed after the war that they feared Poles more than the Germans. However, the testimonies from those times gathered here present a different, much more complex picture.

The conclusion that such statements naturally imply is that very few Poles, indeed perhaps only those who actually extended assistance, sympathized with the plight of the Jews. Marek Edelman, the last surviving leader of the Warsaw ghetto revolt, attempted to put these charges into their proper perspective by offering the following illustration:

Near the ghetto one always found a crowd of Poles looking at the Jews who were going to work. After leaving the ghetto gate one of the Jews might leave the work column, remove his armband, and steal away. Among the crowd of several hundred Poles there would always be one, two, perhaps three betrayers who would apprehend the Jew ... The entire crowd, however, did not act

Erec Israel: Przez Kotlas, Buzuluk, Ural, Polskę, Niemcy i Francję, Second revised and expanded edition (Lublin: Akko, 2004), 203 (Maciejów Stary near Krasnystaw); Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 122; in Dariusz Libionka, “Polska ludność chrześcijańska wobec eksterminacji Żydów—dystrykt lubelski,” in Dariusz Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2004), 328–29 (Lublin region); Janusz Gmitruk, Arkadiusz Indraszczyk, and Adam Koseski, eds., *Pro Memoria (1941–1944): Raporty Departamentu Informacji Delegatury Rządu RP na Kraj o zbrodniach na narodzie polskim* (Warszawa and Pułtusk: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego w Warszawie and Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2004/2005), 455, 481, 532–33; Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 87 (several cases). In Zwierzyniec, the Home Army tried and executed Ignacy Kulik and his wife, who accompanied the Germans during a round-up of Jews and pointed out Jewish houses. For a monograph dealing with events in a single county (*powiat*) in southern Poland, see Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Krwawe upiory: Dzieje powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Tarnów: Karat, 1993), 32–69, where the author identifies several Poles executed by the Polish underground (Home Army) in the county of Dąbrowa Tarnowska for denouncing or persecuting Jews. In November 1943, the Home Army executed Józef Suchan, the German-appointed mayor of Staszów, for collaborating in the round-up of Jews and other measures directed against Poles, after he was tried and sentenced by the Underground State court. In some cases, it was enough for the Polish resistance to issue a stern warning to amateur szmalcowniks in order to “neutralize” them. See Celemski, *Elegy For My People*, 149.

³² Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939–1944* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2004), 227.

that way. I didn't know who among the crowd was a betrayer ... One has to remember that there were not a thousand or five hundred betrayers; there were maybe five of them. It was the same way with neighbours; one didn't know if the neighbour was upright. We lived on Leszno Street and across from us there was a suspicious dwelling. Ours was also suspect. After the uprising [of August 1944] broke out, it turned out that that dwelling was an AK [Home Army] station. The mistress of the house had been afraid of us and we of her.³³

Fear of the unknown was pervasive, but very often misplaced. Luba Lis, who was sheltered by a Polish woman in Przemyśl, was fearful of the neighbours in the tenement building. Only after the war did she learn that another Polish family who shared the same staircase was hiding Jews.³⁴ Another Jewish account speaks of an entire street in that city being aware of a Jewish hideout, but not betraying it.³⁵

Another source of constant danger—one virtually unknown in Western European countries—were the massive door-to-door hunts organized by the Germans to apprehend Jews in hiding. A Jewish boy who was sheltered by a Polish family on Muranowska Street in Warsaw recalled one such raid in April 1943, when the story spread that a group of Jewish fighters had managed to escape during the revolt in the ghetto:

Our block was surrounded by SS and other Nazi units. ... The search started in another house on our block. Some Jews were found and dragged away. They were not necessarily the escapees, but a Jew was a Jew. ... The Nazis were not searching all the apartments systematically, they just entered homes at random. But once in the [small] apartment, they conducted a thorough search, opening closets and other potential hiding places.³⁶

A Jewish woman sheltered in the Żoliborz district of Warsaw recalled a door-to-door hunt conducted by the Germans looking for Jews and arms.³⁷ In another sweep in Warsaw on April 6, 1944, 3,000 Germans were deployed from four in the morning to nine in the evening in a search for Jews in hiding in Warsaw. In all, seventy “non-Aryan” men and thirty-one “non Aryan” women were seized: all of them were executed five days later.³⁸ All this in just one day and in one city. By way of comparison, the entire German occupation forces, including administration, needed to keep Denmark in line amounted only to a few hundred, and in France there were only 3,000 German occupation troops stationed in the entire country.

Germans organized intensive hunts for Jews and members of the underground throughout Poland. A young Jewish woman who lived in Kraków recalled: “One morning, the Germans surrounded the streets around the block where I lived with Grandma, demanding to see everyone’s documents. ... there were so many SS soldiers everywhere that it was impossible to do anything but comply. ... ‘What do they want?’ a

³³ “To się dzieje dzisiaj,” (a conversation with Marek Edelman), *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Kraków), April 18, 1993.

³⁴ Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce a latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001), 172.

³⁵ Stanisław Wroński and Maria Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), 306–7.

³⁶ Dov Weissberg, *I Remember...* (London and Tel Aviv: Freund Publishing House, 1998), 84.

³⁷ Elżbieta Isakiewicz, *Harmonica: Jews Relate How Poles Saved Them from the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna, 2001), 176.

³⁸ Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1986), 667.

woman asked. ... 'They are trying to catch Jews,' someone answered."³⁹ Another Jew who passed as a Pole in Kraków recalled:

In May, when I was able for the first time to take a walk in the market place, I became aware that the round-ups had intensified. What were these round-ups? Why were they doing them? Who were they after? The Germans sealed off the roads, ordered all gates to be shut and then checked the identities of all the people in the street. Those who were without papers or whose documents appeared suspect were arrested and sent to the Gestapo.

I was caught in several such round-ups and miraculously emerged unscathed. The first of these took me by surprise in the market square, next to the Maurizia patisserie. ... This round-up, together with the inspections, lasted for almost two hours. ...

Barely one week later I experienced another round-up. I was sitting in a café in Jan Street. ... The café was already surrounded. Mme Herfort led me to a hiding-place where I concealed myself, whilst the Germans checked everyone in the café, closely inspecting papers and arresting suspects.⁴⁰

There are abundant examples of Jews being implicated in tragic events that led to the betrayal of hundreds of fellow Jews and their Polish benefactors. Often these Jews acted out of fear or under duress, latching on to the faintest hope, however unrealistic, that they might save their own skins at the expense of others. While not necessarily constituting collaboration in the true sense of the word, the outcome of their deeds was the same: it was lethal.

A fear of fellow Jews was something that constantly accompanied Jews in hiding, and thus unnecessary contacts with Jews were avoided at all costs. As one Jew who lived in the Aryan part of Warsaw recalled, "We knew that [the empty room] would eventually be rented by a Jew ... We prayed that it would be someone with 'good looks'. Only after the war did we learn that one of the people who had contemplated renting that very room was a pretty blond girl from my class at school, Irka H. When she caught a glimpse of me and Jerzyk, she hurriedly withdrew."⁴¹

Zosia Goldberg, who was passing as a Pole in "Aryan" Warsaw, recalled:

Then one day I met my old history teacher, Mrs. Dinces, who was also the wife of the director of my *gymnasium*. Mr. Dinces had changed his faith and become a Catholic, but that wouldn't keep his wife safe. She spoke Polish, not Yiddish, and her Polish was so beautiful it was like music, yet now she was running away with her daughter. She had blond hair with very thick braids in the back. When she saw me I almost went over to her to say hello, but she got so scared that she

³⁹ Elsa Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction: Memories, 1939–1945* (Hamilton, Ontario: Mekler & Deahl, 1997), 74–75.

⁴⁰ Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 30–31.

⁴¹ Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 246.

crossed the street and ran away from me. I don't blame her—she was afraid of me, she didn't know who I was.⁴²

Solidarity among Jews in hiding was in short supply. When a Jewish teenager was sent back to Warsaw from the countryside by her mother, her escort avoided her as much as he could:

My mother told me to follow Mr. Lautenberg, but did not like the idea for he was afraid that I might be recognized as a Jewess. He did not wait for me and I had to run all the way to the [train] station, trying not to lose sight of him. When we arrived and for a moment stood close to each other, Józef Lautenberg was visibly disturbed. ... We entered two separate compartments. I was now totally on my own, making the perilous journey ...⁴³

A Jewish youth who was thinking of jumping off the train headed for Majdanek turned to her cousin:

She was much older than I and physically could not jump from the train. ... I asked her, if she could tell me where she hid some valuables so that I would have some money, if my leap for freedom succeeded. Her husband had been a rich jeweler and had hidden or entrusted many valuables to Polish families for safekeeping. She rejected my request.⁴⁴

A Jew who hid with Poles in several villages near Łosice recalled:

As I returned from the Szczebuńskis' home another evening, I ran into three Jews whom I had known in the small ghetto. ... I was glad they did not ask me where I was hiding. People were afraid of one another in those days. No one was a hero. The Germans' methods for breaking people under interrogation and forcing them to talk were well known. When I returned "home," I usually ran about half a mile in the opposite direction, looking over my shoulder all the while, to make sure I was not being followed.

And again in that same source:

Berl encountered a young woman with a girl of about eight. The woman told him that she was part of a group of thirteen Jews who were living in a small forest ... Berl and the woman set up a rendezvous in the forest the next night. ... All of them were starving and in poor health. Without disclosing the location of his own hideout, Berl set up a third meeting with the woman the next week.⁴⁵

⁴² Zosia Goldberg, as told to Hilton Obenzinger, *Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House 2004), 75.

⁴³ Irena Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost: A Young Woman's Memoir, 1939–1946* (Kingston, Ontario: Karijan, 1998), 153.

⁴⁴ Joseph Schupack, *The Dead Years* ([New York]: Holocaust Library, 1986), 119–20.

⁴⁵ Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002), 116, 119.

A Jewish family from Chodecz who was banished to the Łódź ghetto recalled their ordeal at the hands of a relative:

‘But do you know what Eva [the author’s half-brother’s wife] did to us in the Lodz [Łódź] ghetto?’ I asked. ‘Mother and Father and I were starving and so were Sala and her children. Mother took a small packet of sugar cubes out of the box Eva kept under the bed. Then Eva brought along a huge man and he beat Mother up and wanted to strangle us both.’⁴⁶

Sonia Games, who passed as a Christian in Częstochowa, recalled: “People with false papers were caught all the time, often because someone from the Ghetto, in desperation, sought them out, hoping for shelter.” Jews were to be avoided at all costs. Sonia Games described how, at the train station in Częstochowa, she desperately wanted to remove herself from the company of a person who sat down next to her just minutes before he was apprehended by the SS during a routine inspection of travellers:

Suddenly, I knew in a flash. The man was a Jew on the run. He was nervous, too chatty and eager. He must think that I am a Polish girl and would feel safer sitting next to me. ... He couldn’t have made a worse choice. I needed to get rid of him somehow and began to get up from my seat and move away.⁴⁷

Emanuel Tanay recorded:

While I was still at the monastery of Mogiła, it was my duty to take the mail to the local post office ... Once a group of Jews was being marched through the village from a nearby camp. One of the Jews, a young boy a year or two older than I was, was from my hometown. When he saw me, he instinctively yelled out, “Hello, Emek,” I responded with some obscenity and walked on. There were other occasions when I was in Kraków and someone from my hometown recognized me and addressed me by my real name. Many times, under such circumstances, I jumped off a moving streetcar or a train. Such close calls were very common.⁴⁸

When Stanisław Różycki left Lwów in September 1941 to return to Warsaw, the “first danger” he encountered were Jewish acquaintances.⁴⁹ Stanley Bors, who hails from Sosnowiec but found shelter with Poles in Grodzisk outside Warsaw, recalled:

One day the Germans were going house to house looking for somebody and we hid in the garden behind the house. To our surprise we found the people living next door also hiding. We

⁴⁶ Roman Halter, *Roman’s Journey* (London: Portobello Books, 2007), 264.

⁴⁷ Sonia Games, *Escape Into Darkness: The True Story of a Young Woman’s Extraordinary Survival During World War II* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1991), 93, 107.

⁴⁸ His testimony is recorded in Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 53.

⁴⁹ Account of Stanisław Różycki in Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta*

immediately recognized each other as Jews and became friends. Mostly Jews didn't want to know each other. Everyone had false papers and changed names. It was better not to know in case the Gestapo came looking. I once jumped off a running streetcar because I spotted somebody I knew in school. He was a Jew but I didn't know if he worked for the Gestapo. Later, after the war, I met him in Warsaw and he told me he jumped off too because he was afraid of me. That was how it was. Some people didn't want even their family to know where they were.⁵⁰

A Jewish woman passing as a Pole in Kraków did not dare take a job in a factory where many Jews were employed in key positions for fear of being betrayed: "the factory was an outpost of the small ghetto in Kraków ... The secretary at the desk, the foreman, the office manager, and all the other workers were Jewish. The only Poles were the teenagers out front. When I saw this, I knew I didn't dare take that job. No one can spot a Jew faster than another Jew."⁵¹ A Jewish woman in the Płaszów camp outside Kraków begged her daughter's benefactors not to bring her child to visit her in the camp "because people were jealous" that the child was still alive and she feared someone might denounce the child.⁵² Artur Diamant recalled that ghetto dwellers in Zawiercie, Silesia, were afraid of admitting to the help they received from Poles because of their Jewish neighbours who might leak this information to German agents.⁵³

Tragically, the fears often turned into disasters. A Jew from Lwów who posed as a Christian in Kraków recalled:

I am sure that some of my [Polish] office co-workers and neighbors must have thought at times that I was Jewish. ... But no one of them ever reported me to the German authorities and that, in large measure, helped me survive the war. ... At my job at Schenker's there was a pretty young woman working at the switchboard. I sensed that she was Jewish, too, but we avoided admitting it to each other out of fear of being betrayed under torture, should one of us ever be arrested by the Germans.

...

There was also an older lady working there, an invalid, limping with one club foot. She was Oriental looking and she claimed to be an Arab. She avoided everyone. One day the older lady disappeared and a few days later the young woman was arrested as a Jewess. I never saw her again. Much later I found out that the older lady had been Jewish herself and had denounced the young woman as a Jewess under interrogation. She had done this to save her own life. The Germans had promised to let her go free if she denounced another Jew. Later, she also denounced me to the Germans. The Germans had obviously used her as bait.⁵⁴

Balbina Synalewicz, a young Jewish woman from Pruszków who was passing in Kraków as Elżbieta Orlańska, recalled:

Warszawy, vol. 3: *Relacje z Kresów* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000), 562.

⁵⁰ Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: New American Library, 1981), 225–26.

⁵¹ Rose Zar, *In the Mouth of the Wolf* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), 108.

⁵² Testimony of Janina Ekier in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 247.

⁵³ Ariel Yahalomi, *Przeżyłem...* (Będzin: n.p., 2007).

⁵⁴ Irene and Carl Horowitz, *Of Human Agony* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1992), 127, 142.

Niedzwiecki [Niedźwiecki] had a friend named Szwarzenberg-Czerny who often visited him. At one point he disappeared, and stayed away from the studio for a long time, until one day he came in with a clean-shaven head. ...

The rest of the story Alina told me after the war: he had been thrown in jail, then released on the condition that he denounce more Jews in hiding in the city. Niedzwiecki was one of his intermediate informers. When the war ended, Szwarzenberg-Czerny was caught by a couple whose daughter he had denounced; she had been killed on the spot. They handed him over to be tried in Krakow. Alina had been in the court.⁵⁵

A Jew from Przemyśl who took refuge in Kraków recalled:

I was ... in the Cracow Ghetto. I was not there a long time because my husband's two sisters had a friend, a Jewish girl, who reported us to the Gestapo. She was living with a Gestapo officer at the time. So they sent all of us to Auschwitz and I was in Birkenau. I survived there three years until the war was over. How I survived I don't know. It was a miracle.⁵⁶

According to a Jewish testimony from Przemyśl,

There was a certain Luśka Lette who lived in the Legionów Square and was a "Polonia" sports club fan. Bolek Czernastek, who was a goalkeeper in "Polonia," and knew her well ... one day she asked him to 'do something about' her paralyzed mother who was not fit to live in the Ghetto. Two labor brigade men carried her downstairs in her chair. There, in the gateway, Bolek approached a German soldier and asked him to shoot her. In this way they didn't need to take her to the Ghetto and Luśka went there by herself. ... It once happened that a Jew took his mother out of the basement and denounced her, saying that he was not going to lose his life because of "the old witch."⁵⁷

After attacking a Gestapo man named Reisner, Majer Krebs and his two accomplices fled from the ghetto in Przemyśl. The Germans seized fifty hostages and threatened to kill them unless the Jewish fugitives surrendered. Two of the three Jews were caught. The wife of one of the hostages learned of Krebs' hiding place and betrayed it to the Judenrat. The Jewish police surrounded the building, apprehended Krebs, and gave him a severe beating. The three assailants were hanged publicly by the ghetto police, while the

⁵⁵ Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction*, 58.

⁵⁶ Testimony of Zonka (Sophie) Wahl in John J. Hartman and Jacek Krochmal, eds., *I Remember Every Day...: The Fates of the Jews of Przemyśl during World War II* (Przemyśl: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Przemyślu and Remembrance & Reconciliation Inc, Ann Arbor, 2002), 61.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

Germans filmed the ordeal. Afterwards, twenty-five of the hostages were executed in the Jewish cemetery.⁵⁸

A Jew was seized by the Jewish committee in Warta near Sieradz for labour after being duped by a ghetto policeman.

In November 1940, the “Jewish Committee” of the ghetto put together a transport of 100 Jews to be sent away as laborers. I was working in the ghetto for the Germans then at repairing watches. I was deceived and included in the transport even though I’d been given work and the only ones being sent away were those for whom there was no function in the ghetto. A ghetto policeman, A—Z—today he’s in Israel—came over to me and told me to report to the “Jewish Committee” to fix the large wall clock there. I walked into the committee room where the other Jews of the transport were already detained and there was no way of getting free. German prison personnel took us “off the hands” of the “Jewish Committee” and tied us all up—100 young Jews bound one to the other by rope to prevent escape.⁵⁹

A young Jewish woman from Międzyrzec Podlaski who fled to the forest recalled:

Everyone tried to save himself. No one wanted anyone else to run along with them for fear that they would be discovered. I saw a thing I will never, ever forget. I don’t understand this to this day. One daughter left her parents to stay alone in the thickness of the forest and ran away all by herself, leaving them alone. She ran away with her boyfriend and she told her parents that she will return shortly. We never saw her again. In doing this she thought that she would be saving her own life.⁶⁰

Ronnie Fuchs, whose mother Zophia Schalet hails from Lwów, recounted:

One day the police stopped them. The professor [who accompanied her mother] was arrested as a Jew and the policeman asked my mother, who had her false documents, what she was doing with this woman. My mother quickly replied that she did not know her—the woman had asked her for directions, and my mother was trying to take her where she wanted to go. The professor was taken away, but my mother was spared.⁶¹

Later, when Zophia Schalet’s older brother was hidden by farmers near Trembowla, she

⁵⁸ Betti Ajzensztajn, ed., *Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach: Materiały i dokumenty* (Warszawa, Łódź and Kraków: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, 1946), 54–55; Marcin Janowski, “Polityka niemiecka władz okupacyjnych wobec ludności polskiej i żydowskiej w Przemyślu w latach 1939–1944,” in *Kresy Południowo-Wschodnie: Rocznik Przemyskiego Centrum Kultury i Nauki Zamek*, vol. 3/4, no. 1 (Przemyśl 2005–2006): 219–20.

⁵⁹ Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 101.

⁶⁰ Rywka Rybak, *A Survivor of the Holocaust: 49620* (Cleveland: Tricycle Press, 1993), 4.

⁶¹ Her account is recorded in Carole Garbuny Vogel, ed., *We Shall Not Forget!: Memories of the Holocaust*, Second edition (Lexington, Massachusetts: Temple Isaiah, 1995), 258.

received a chilling letter delivered by one of the children of the family hiding my uncle. The letter said, “We know there are Jews hiding here. If they do not leave at once, they will all be killed.” The letter was signed by Ukrainian partisans. ... What my mother learned after the war was that the threatening letter had actually been written by another Jew who was also being hidden by the farmer. This Jewish man had learned that my uncle was hiding in the barn. He wrote the letter hoping to scare my uncle away. He feared that if my uncle was found in the barn, he and his family would also be discovered.⁶²

Lala Weintraub (later Fishman) kept her plan to remain outside the enclosed Jewish area in Lwów a secret. She explains her decision as follows:

I certainly did not talk about it with my friends and coworkers at the underwear factory. They could not be trusted, even if they were Jews. A Jew could sell you out to the Nazis just as easily as a Pole or a Ukrainian. People were desperate, afraid of their own shadows, and in their desperation and fear they were liable to turn on you in an instant if by doing so they thought they could increase their own chances for survival.

The Jewish police were, I thought, proof of this. Although nominally charged with maintaining order in the Jewish community, they were also employed as instruments of repression. In this capacity they were usually involved in the actions, helping SS troops and Ukrainian militiamen in their efforts to round up Jews for deportation to the labor camps and, later, to the death camps as well.

... there were actions that were undertaken for the sole purpose of harassing, tormenting, and killing Jews.

Sometimes, when I was coming home from work, I came across an action in progress. SS troops, aided by their minions in the Ukrainian militia and the Jewish police, would be seizing people on the street and sidewalks, demanding to see their papers, roughing them up, punching them with their fists and hitting them with truncheons, and shoving and dragging them to trucks, then kicking them as they climbed aboard for transport to a prison or a labor camp.⁶³

Ignacy Goldwasser recalled that the leader (Lubianekier) of one of the forest bunkers near Borysław was captured by the Germans and, under torture, betrayed several bunkers. Jews who scattered were refused admission into other bunkers. Another Jew (Szaler) who left a bunker was also apprehended by the Gestapo and betrayed its whereabouts. When the Gestapo came to raid the bunker they were accompanied by the head of the police, commander Eisenstein, and a Jewish engineer named Weintraub.⁶⁴ Another survivor, Frieda Koch, confirmed that the Jewish police in Borysław

⁶² Ibid., 260.

⁶³ Lala Fishman and Steven Weingartner, *Lala's Story: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 137–38.

⁶⁴ Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 80–81.

harassed us a lot. I remember Max Steinberg, from whom I received blows to the head with his baton, but the worst of all was Walek Eisenstein who turned in [Jews] that were hiding.⁶⁵

Gina Wieser recalled how an elaborate bunker built in the ruins of an electric plant in Borysław was betrayed by one of the Jews who ventured out. The German police who came for the sixty Jews who had taken shelter there knew the secret password.⁶⁶

A Jew who was held in the Limanowa camp in Borysław described conditions as follows:

These 1,200 people were held inside the camp until August 1944. Random executions and roundups went on regularly. The camp was run by SS men ... It is impossible to describe their cruelty. They were joined in their sadistic acts by the Jewish head of the *Ordnungsdienst*, Wolek Eiznsztajn [Eisenstein], and his second, Max Heinberg [Steinberg], who profited from what the Nazis left over. ...

On March 28, 1944, when the Soviet army had stopped outside of Stanisławów, the Germans began liquidating the camp. The Jews had managed to dig a few bunkers in the forests and they broke out and headed there. ... Wolek Eiznsztajn began “agitating” for us to come out of the woods and return to the camp, because no one was in any danger now. Life in the bunkers had been very hard and the people let themselves be talked into coming back. Soon, the Germans had deceived about 600 Jews this way and carted them off to the camp in Płaszów, Cracow. Wolek Eiznsztajn started “doing his job” again, and tried getting out the Jews the Germans had missed. They captured fifty to sixty people every day and by June 22, 1944, they again had a transport of 600 Jews ready for Płaszów. For the month starting on June 22 and ending on July 22, 1944, the Germans and Eiznsztajn had forced out another 700 Jews and sent them to Auschwitz.⁶⁷

Helene Kaplan recalled that her father had been seized in the ghetto in Borysław, because “Someone reported that we had money abroad as well as valuables and cash at home.”⁶⁸ A large bribe had to be paid through a German friend of the family to have him released. Hiding places both outside and inside the ghetto were hard to come by and exposed to peril.

Some families who paid Poles or Ukrainians for hiding places did not want to allow Jews who did not pay into their hiding places. The spaces were usually small, making crowds too difficult to control. ...

A young girl in Borysław was not permitted into an elaborate hiding place prepared by the Judenrat for their families. When she was caught by the Gestapo she led them right to this place, and all the wives and children of the Judenrat members were deported. They all died.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Testimony of Frieda Koch in *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 178.

⁶⁶ Ajzensztajn, *Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach*, 23.

⁶⁷ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 80.

⁶⁸ Helene C. Kaplan, *I Never Left Janowska* ... (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), 59–60.

Later, when Helene Kaplan and her mother were living in Lwów under assumed identities with a Polish woman,

One night when all three of us were already in bed, we heard a knock at the door. A Ukrainian and Jewish policemen were there. As they entered the room I threw the covers over my mother's head and jumped out of bed ... The two policemen examined my passport. ... We learned what caused the search much later. The husband of my first roommate, Lusia [a Jewish woman], had been caught by the Gestapo. When beaten, he revealed the previous address of his wife. The police were therefore looking for her and not me. It was a miracle that they did not subject me to interrogation.⁷⁰

When Helene Kaplan enlisted for work in Germany, in the waiting room she was harassed and nearly exposed by another young Jewish woman posing as a Pole.⁷¹

Eva Hoffman, whose family hails from this part of Poland, acknowledged:

my parents were also repeatedly helped by people who gave them food and temporary shelter, and by a peasant who hid them for nearly two years, with the full knowledge that he was thereby risking death for himself and his two sons. The other awful aspect of my family story was that two relatives died because of an act of betrayal committed by a fellow Jew—a man who, in the hope of ensuring his own survival, led the Germans to a hiding place.⁷²

David Landau's escape from the Warsaw ghetto to the Aryan side proved to be precarious because of Jewish collaborators he encountered:

From the conversation between the Germans and the Jewish policeman, I realised that the bribe I had given him, a substantial one, was for the three of them.

This policeman knew that they had been waiting in the entrance to the first house outside the ghetto, and had been prepared to send me to my death for a small part of the bribe.⁷³

Across the street from us lived a man who was completely paralysed from the neck down. Every morning as soon as the curfew hour was over the caretaker was seen pushing this man out in his wheelchair into the street near the entrance of the building. The paralysed man was always well dressed, with a quilt covering the lower part of his body. There, in front of the building, he sat the whole day long ...

Once, returning from a forced outing close to the curfew hour I noticed a passing Gestapo officer turning the wheelchair around and wheeling it back into the building. ...

⁶⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 69–70.

⁷¹ Ibid., 83.

⁷² Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 6.

From that day on I was sure that my suspicion was correct, and that as well as being a Jew he was also a spy.⁷⁴

Often the Polish benefactors would be caught in the web. When a Polish family by the name of Drobnicki in the village of Posuchów near Brzeżany told their Jewish charges, Roza Goldman and her daughter Bela, that they could not keep them anymore, the Goldman women threatened to turn them in to the Germans if they had to leave. The Drobnicki family later took in two Jewish men during the final months of the German occupation, which caused a lot of bickering as the two Jewish women were against the idea of keeping these men.⁷⁵

Irena Bakowska, who was sheltered by Christians in Warsaw, recalled what her benefactor had told her: “Elterman had come to see her husband and offered him a substantial amount of money if he got rid of me and took her mother and her instead. Zofia was outraged and promised that she would never let me go, no matter how much money Mrs. Elterman was willing to pay her husband.”⁷⁶

Blackmailing Polish rescuers was not an infrequent occurrence. A Polish rescuer from Stanisławów, in Eastern Galicia, who is credited with saving 32 Jews, reported: “I even took in some Jews who had threatened to denounce me and their kinsmen whom I was hiding if I didn’t help them.”⁷⁷ Two Jewish charges from well-to-do families found shelter with an impoverished Polish family in the village of Brzozdowce near Chodorów, in the province of Lwów. They threatened to turn in their benefactors, who could barely make ends meet, unless they provided them with more food.⁷⁸

A Polish Christian from Warsaw recalled:

As a young girl, I participated in my family’s efforts to help the Jews ... Several Jews were temporarily sheltered in our home, then taken to other locations. Five lived with us until the Warsaw uprising in August, 1944. When the uprising was crushed, we all went into hiding, anticipating the arrival of the Soviet Army. In November, 1944, one of the Jewish women we saved argued with a group of Jews and brought the Germans who then killed 18 people, including her nephew and her elderly sister. One man survived. He came at night to the place where I and 10 others were hiding, informed us of the tragedy and warned us of our own imminent danger, probably saving our lives. For us, and the Jews who passed through our home, the greatest fear was that someone from the ghetto would betray.⁷⁹

⁷³ David J. Landau, alias Dudek, Janek and Jan, *Caged: A Story of Jewish Resistance* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2000), 115.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 285–86.

⁷⁵ Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 128.

⁷⁶ Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost*, 181.

⁷⁷ Testimony of Stanisław (Staszek) Jackowski in Richard C. Lukas, ed., *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 77.

⁷⁸ Anita Koszałkowska, “Czas, który nie leczy ran,” *Nowa Trybuna Opolska*, October 27, 2000.

⁷⁹ Dana I. Alvi, letter, *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1994.

Stefania Podgórska, who rescued 13 Jews in Przemyśl, faced threats from a Jew who wanted admission into her home: “No sooner had they [i.e., the Jews] settled in than a note arrived from a friend of the dentist’s, a widow still in the ghetto. She wanted to join them with her son and daughter—hinting that if she were turned down, she might report them. Angrily Stefania accepted her.”⁸⁰ A Jewish family in Drohobycz accepted another Jew into their hideout because they were fearful he would denounce them.⁸¹

A Jew in the hiding in the forests in the vicinity of Sokoly near Białystok urged two brothers to separate from their group to increase their chances of receiving help from local farmers.

The Todras boys did not want to listen to what I said. They threatened that if I would not allow them to come with me, they would cause such a scandal that my son would be driven out and his hiding place exposed to everyone.⁸²

A group of Jews broke out of the labour camp in Kolbuszowa after receiving a warning from a Polish policemen about its imminent liquidation. Unexpectedly, two Jews arrived at the small, overcrowded hiding place some of the Jewish escapees had pre-arranged and demanded to be let in.

...the Stub brothers announced that they had no place to go and they intended to remain right where they were in Vichta’s house. “If you force us to leave, and we are caught, we will inform the Germans that you are here, and they will catch you as well.”

Vichta and Leibush had no choice. The Stubs would remain, but that raised the number to eight ... Eight Jews, six of whom had no money, in a tiny cottage attic near the main road. Impossible. ... After three weeks. Leibush and I were forced to leave Vichta’s home and joined a group living in the forest. Froim and the Stub brothers remained at Vichta’s house until the liberation. ... The Stub brothers behaved brutishly, bullying their way into the security of Vichta’s home.⁸³

Some Jews were hostile to the idea of accepting into their places of refuge other Jews who might put them at risk,⁸⁴ and Jews were often taken in by Polish benefactors over the protest of their Jewish charges. Bella Bronstein, an orphan from Drohiczyn, recalled the reception she received when she arrived in a strange village: the church warden “suggested that we go in to see the priest who might take me in as help to his housekeeper. It turned out later that the priest’s housekeeper was also a refugee Jewish woman who was not too anxious to have another Jewess around ... (not unusual in those terrible days).”⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Thomas Fleming, “Stefania’s Choice,” *Reader’s Digest*, February 1996, 39.

⁸¹ Testimony of Stella Kreshes in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 57.

⁸² Michael Maik, *Deliverance: The Diary of Michael Maik. A True Story* (Kedumim, Israel: Keterpress Enterprises, 2004), 127.

⁸³ Norman Salsitz with Stanley Kaish, *Three Homelands: Memories of a Jewish Life in Poland, Israel, and America* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 134–35.

⁸⁴ Testimony of Braha Bergman and David Efrati in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 174, 219; Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1999, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁸⁵ David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 26 ff. (English section).

Issur Wondolowicz, who was hiding in the forests near Sokoły, recalled: “There was a struggle among our group. Simply, they did not agree that the girl and I would join them.”⁸⁶ Jews hiding in a bunker in the Garbów forest northwest of Lublin refused to take in even one additional, wounded Jewish partisan on the run.⁸⁷ A Jewish woman from Lublin who went to Warsaw to obtain false identity documents ran into a Jewish friend of her father’s who was already installed on the Aryan side: “He tried to seduce my wife, at that time not my wife yet. Tell [sic] her he would help her only if she would stay with him. Of course, she rejected the whole thing and she left him.”⁸⁸

Luba Bat was hiding with a former teacher of hers, when a friend knocked on the door and asked to stay. Luba Bat confronted him: “For heaven’s sake, how can you say such a thing?” “But I have no place where to go and I’m not going to move,” the friend retorted. Luba Bat replied: “For heaven’s sake, do you realize that it’s terribly unethical what you’re doing?” Her landlady let the friend stay for a few days while she made other arrangements for him.⁸⁹

Nelli Rotbart, who together with her family hid in a bunker under a pigsty on a farm in a village near Kałuszyn, recalls the sudden and unexpected arrival of a Jewish acquaintance:

As though we didn’t have enough problems, a new calamity befell us. Aside from all the torture, discomfort and hunger, we now had to make room for another person—Mojshe. How he was able to trace us, we would never know, but one day he came to [their host] Michalina’s and blackmailed her and us; if we wouldn’t take him in, he would tell the Germans. The parasite was with us for an entire month, and our portions of bread were smaller because of him. One night, father caught him stealing our bread ...⁹⁰

Regina Biesam recalled her experience, and the attitude of her Polish benefactor, in Sosnowiec:

Stanisława Cicha ... at the risk of her own life gave shelter to sixteen Jews in her home. I myself was among those she concealed. It was 1943. ... When I found myself in her home I discovered that I was not the only one she was rescuing. Anyone who came at night to tap at the window of her house was sure to find shelter. Some of the Jews rebelled and grumbled that too many people were there already, which might lead to discovery. Mrs. Cicha replied that everybody wants to live.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Issur Wondolowicz, “Between the German Hammer and the Polish anvil,” in Shmuel Kalisher, ed., *Sokoły: B’maavak l’haim* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Sokoły Emigrés in Israel, 1975), 208ff., translated as *Sokoły: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>>.

⁸⁷ Samuel Gruber, as told to Gertrude Hirschler, *I Chose Life* (New York: Shengold, 1978), 74.

⁸⁸ Interview with Felix Horn, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, dated July 19, 1994, 12 74.

⁸⁹ Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 157–58.

⁹⁰ Nelli Rotbart, *A Long Journey: A Holocaust Memoir and After: Poland, Soviet Union, Canada* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2002), 56–57.

⁹¹ Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), 128. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 441.

Another such case is recorded by a rescuer from Brzeżany, in the Tarnopol region, whose decision to bring in more Jews met with anger on the part of her Jewish charges. Previously, these charges had insisted adamantly that no other Jews were to be brought to the hideout.⁹² A similar story from the Lublin region is recorded by survivor Thomas Toivi Blatt.⁹³ A Polish rescuer from Miechów faced stern protests from two of his Jewish charges when more Jews arrived.⁹⁴ Jews hidden by the Beck family in Żółkiew protested the arrival of two young children:

During this period, 16 fugitives were concealed in the hideout. In April 1943, during the final liquidation of the ghetto, seven-year-old Zygmund Orlender and his four-year-old sister also sought refuge in the Becks' home, and despite the opposition of those already hiding in the bunker, who protested against the increased overcrowding, the Becks stood firm and took in the children.⁹⁵

Marcus David Leuchter recalled his experiences in Warsaw:

I remembered the Polish name of a friend of mine who had escaped from the Ghetto before we did. ... We walked over to his place at curfew time. He greeted us very cordially, but then his Jewish girlfriend showed up; she was a personification of fury, and wanted us to leave immediately. Without her knowledge, the [gentile] landlady allowed us to stay a couple of days, until mother found a room in the apartment of Mrs. Eugenia Sawicki. ... The Sawicki family suffered with us for two years, risking their lives for us without any financial advantages.⁹⁶

A group of Jews who were given shelter at the convent of the Benedictine nuns in Wilno had to be persuaded by the Sister Maria Mikulska, the Mother Superior, to allow more Jews to come into their hideout. According to Samuel Bak,

It was Maria who convinced the group in hiding to take in a woman and a child. She exclaimed to them our state of total despair. Sending us back would have meant our death. The nine people had a hard choice to make, and they vacillated, as clearly we would take up a part of their space as well as some of the very limited portions of available food. Moreover, a few of them were afraid our presence could increase their chance of being detected. But Maria made it clear how much she cared about us. The group could not afford to alienate her.⁹⁷

⁹² Account of Janina Drobnicka Oleksyn, dated 1990 (in the author's possession).

⁹³ Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 218.

⁹⁴ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 712.

⁹⁵ Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 83. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 443–44.

⁹⁶ Marcus David Leuchter, "Reflections on the Holocaust," *The Sarmatian Review* (Houston, Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000).

⁹⁷ Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), 80.

Leon Kahn (then Leib Kaganowicz) and his father sought refuge in the countryside near their hometown of Ejszyski. An acquaintance of the family, named Rukowicz, gave them a warm welcome, but seemed somehow uneasy. “We were poised ready to flee when the reason for his uneasiness became evident: another Jewish family—Sholem Levo, his wife, two sons and a niece!” While Rukowicz invited the Kahns to share the Levo family’s quarters (an unfinished wing of the house), the Levos were not very enthusiastic about the arrangement and asked Kahn’s father to look for some other place to hide.⁹⁸

Some Jews contrast their treatment at the hands of fellow Jews with the kindness they experienced from Poles. A young Jewish woman recalled that she and her brother survived begging food from Polish villagers in the Lublin area after several bad encounters with fellow Jews.⁹⁹ Then in her early teens, Dwojra Woszczyn, from the village of Korost near Stepań in Volhynia, managed to escape from a death squad and wandered through the countryside begging for food. One night she happened to encounter a Jewish doctor from Stepań hiding in the forest. When she awoke the next morning he had left taking her food provision.¹⁰⁰

Dwojra Frymet, from Włodzimierz Wołyński, often sneaked out of the ghetto to obtain food from Poles and worked on a farm herding cows, even though everyone in the village knew her to be Jewish. In the ghetto, a rich Jew had refused to give her any food and threw her out the door, and the Jewish police chased and beat her as she tried to sneak in and out of the ghetto through the wire fence.¹⁰¹ There are other accounts authored by Jews who turned to Poles for assistance after being turned down by fellow Jews.¹⁰²

Jewish indiscretion was also a source of danger. The cover of Bruno Shatyn, a Jew who had been hired to work as an administrator of a Polish estate (and acquired the reputation of an anti-Semite even among Poles), was exposed by a Jewish girl, herself in hiding among Poles who knew her true identity. This Jewish girl could not resist gossiping even when other lives depended on her discretion. The employees, however, agreed to keep him on as their administrator, fully aware that in doing so they were endangering their own lives.¹⁰³ Shatyn noted the following precautions taken by Jews who decided to pass as Christians:

Most important, other Jews should be avoided. By this time all Jews had been officially relegated to ghettos or concentration camps. Those we saw on the outside either were living on false papers like us—and so would also try to avoid running into friends from the past—or were working for the Gestapo as informers on other Jews.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Leon Kahn, *No Time To Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter* (Vancouver: Laurelton Press, 1978), 111–12, 114.

⁹⁹ Sara Kraus-Kolkowicz, *Dziewczynka z ulicy Miłej: Albo świadectwo czasu Holokaustu* (Lublin: Agencja Wydawniczo-Handlowa AD, 1995), especially 36–37, 70. See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 573.

¹⁰⁰ Stanisław Siekierski, ed., *Żyli wśród nas...: Wspomnienia Polaków i Żydów nadesłane na konkurs pamięci polsko-żydowskiej o nagrodę imienia Dawida Ben Guriona* (Płońsk: Zarząd Miasta Płońsk, Miejskie Centrum Kultury w Płońsku, and Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Płońskiej, 2001), 118.

¹⁰¹ Account of Dworja Frymet in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 608.

¹⁰² See, for example, Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 307 (Radzymin, Jadów), 329 (Jedlicz).

¹⁰³ Bruno Shatyn, *A Private War: Surviving in Poland on False Papers, 1941–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), xx, 48–49.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

So, too, the cover a Jewish dentist who posed as a Pole in Piszczac, a small town near the Bug River, was exposed by a young Jewish woman soon after he arrived in town with his family. However, despite widespread rumours and suspicions among the Polish population, no one betrayed them.¹⁰⁵ The unexpected arrival of a relative of this family from Kraków caused more turmoil: “‘When your father heard that I’d given Izio our address and that he was coming to stay with us, he could have killed me,’ my mother recalls. ‘How could you endanger us like that? How could you tell him where we were, when we agreed that nobody must know? He’ll be the death of us!’ Henek reproached her.”¹⁰⁶

A Polish carpenter by the name of Piotr Morawski and his family gave shelter to Lilka Goldberg, a young Jewish woman with Semitic features, on his farm in the Lublin region. Her frequent forays into town resulted in a warning from the local Polish police commander that her reckless behaviour would lead to a raid and their execution. Terrified, the carpenter asked the Jewish woman to leave, which she refused to do saying that if she perishes they all should. She finally agreed to leave after extorting 70,000 zlotys from the Polish family as well as taking the valuables of Mrs. Morawska.¹⁰⁷ A Jew from Opatów carefully recorded the names of all his Polish benefactors in case he should be caught, so that they too would be brought down with him.¹⁰⁸

A forest bunker near the village of Wola Przybysławska northwest of Lublin

wasn’t found out until the *Shohet* went out by chance and was caught. He led the Germans to the entrances of the cave. The military police didn’t have to shoot a single shot. They merely stuffed the entrances with straw and set it afire. All the Jews were strangled by the smoke. Only one little remained alive.¹⁰⁹

A Jewish woman who had converted to Catholicism before the war was captured by the Germans and taken to the ghetto in Rzeszów. One night some Jews tried to persuade a tipsy Ukrainian guard to shoot her: “The Jews told him: ‘She is a convert! She has to be killed and shot!’ They said so in my presence. They didn’t care at all.” But the Ukrainian soldier told the Jews that he had not received an order to shoot her. Instead he beat her in order to appease the Jewish mob.¹¹⁰

Hatred and vengeance inspired a rabbi to denounce a Jew by the name of Jakubowicz who had converted to Catholicism and lived unmolested in Siedliska near Tuchów, south of Tarnów. The Gestapo arrested the Jakubowicz family because one grandparent was a Jew.¹¹¹ As many accounts confirm, the general

¹⁰⁵ Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* (Milsons Point, New South Wales: Random House, 1998), 287, 576–81.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹⁰⁷ Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 308.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁰⁹ Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 166.

¹¹⁰ Rosa Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence: Poles and Jews in a Small Galician Town* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 119.

¹¹¹ Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, “Przykra prawda historyczna,” *Nasz Dziennik*, February 3, 2005.

sentiment toward Jewish converts to Christianity living in the ghettos was one of loathing and hostility.¹¹²

A snitch of Jewish origin in the Warsaw office of the Main Welfare Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńcza*),

¹¹² According to one source, there were fewer than 1,600 Christian converts in the Warsaw ghetto; according to other sources, there may have been as many as 2,000 or even 5,000. See, respectively, Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 59; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie: Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2001), 620; Peter F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame Indiana: Notre Dame University, 2005), 66–68. The Orthodox members of the Jewish council attempted to deny Christian Jews the rights and help given to Jews in the ghetto. See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 70. The converts were detested for every conceivable reason: their betrayal of Judaism, their use of the Polish language, their education and social advances, their alleged wealth, their alleged air of superiority and anti-Semitism, the positions that some of them held in the ghetto, and the assistance they received from Caritas, a Catholic charitable organization. Soon malicious, but false, stories spread that they had taken over the senior positions in the ghetto administration and controlled the Jewish police force. See Havi Ben-Sasson, “Christians in the Ghetto: All Saints’ Church, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, and the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto,” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, volume 31 (2003): 153–73. This was so even though, according to one prominent researcher, many if not most of the converts continued to consider themselves Jews, few of them sustained any connection with their new religion, and “virtually all continued to donate to Jewish religious charities.” See Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton, 1983), 78. See also Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 93; Marian Małowist, “Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto,” in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” [“Oneg Shabbath”]* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), 619–34. The memoir of Halina Gorcewicz, whose father ostensibly converted to Catholicism when he married her mother, illustrates that even Jews who had fully assimilated linguistically and culturally maintained a strong tribal-like attachment to fellow Jews—perhaps an embodiment of the lingering notion of oneness with “the chosen people” that they had inherited from Judaism. Gorcewicz’s memoir, *See Why, Oh God, Why?*, is posted online at <<http://www.treko.net.au/~jerry/why/whytoc.html>>. Emanuel Ringelblum labelled the converts as “bigots.” See Jacek Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction: Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto Reconsidered* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2004), 217–18. The blatant hostility and humiliations faced by Christian converts in the Warsaw ghetto are described in many accounts from that period. Italian journalist Alceo Valcini, the wartime Warsaw correspondent of the Milan *Corriere della Sera*, wrote that they were repeatedly harassed when they left church after mass and, on occasion, even the German police had to intervene to protect them from enraged Orthodox Jews. Converts who did not figure in community lists were denied food rations and material assistance. See Alceo Valcini, *Golgota Warszawy, 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1973), 235–36. Valcini’s portrayal is fully supported by a report filed by a Jewish Gestapo informer: Crowds of Jews would gather in front of the Christian churches on Sunday to take in the spectacle of the converts attending mass. At Easter in 1942, the crowd of onlookers was so large at the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Leszno Street that the *Ordnungsdienst* stationed a special squad there to maintain order and protect the converts. Cited in Christopher R. Browning and Israel Gutman, “The Reports of a Jewish ‘Informer’ in the Warsaw Ghetto—Selected Documents,” *Yad Vashem* 17 (1986): 263. A Jew who was not a convert describes in her memoirs how Jewish scum in the Warsaw ghetto harassed Jewish Christians who attended church services. On the other hand, “Mischlingen” “were tolerated in the Gentile quarter.” See Ruth Altbeker Cyprys, *A Jump For Life: A Survivor’s Journal from Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 32. This is confirmed by another Jew who observed Jewish youths loitering in the street as converts walked to church services and calling “Good Yontiff!” See Gary A. Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition* ([United States]: n.p., 1985), 86. Hostilities also occurred during the Sunday mass at All Saints’ Church, where a large mob of Hasids gathered with sticks to beat up the converted Jews as they left church. The Jewish order police was called in to disperse the Hasidic pogromists. This incident is described in the memoirs of Stanisław Gajewski, which are found in the Yad Vashem archives. See Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 622; Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 85. A Pole who entered the ghetto recalled the caustic remarks made by onlookers about Jews who attended religious services at All Saints’ Church. See Waclaw Sledzinski, *Governor Frank’s Dark Harvest* (Newtown, Montgomeryshire, Mid-Wales: Montgomerys, 1946), 120. A Jewish memoir describes how children who did not speak Yiddish, which was a German-based language, were ostracized by Yiddish-speaking children in the Warsaw ghetto: they were disparaged as “Poles” and “converts” and were even pelted with rocks. See Małgorzata-Maria Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz: Wspomnienia ocalałej z warszawskiego getta* (Częstochowa: Święty Paweł, 2001), 48. A Jewish woman who turned to a bearded Jew in Polish, since she did not speak Yiddish, recalled his hostile reaction: “I think he understood me, but he got very angry that I did not speak Yiddish, so he spat at me, “*Du solst starben zwischem goyim!*” I did not understand exactly what he said, so I went back to my apartment and repeated it to my mother. “What does ‘*Du solst starben zwischem goyim*’ mean?” She said, “Who cursed you like this?” She explained to me that he had said, “May you die amongst the *goyim*!” He said this because if you do not speak Yiddish, you were an outcast.” See Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 39. Some Jewish nationalists simply did not permit the use of the Polish language in their homes. See

by the name of Stefan Idzikowski, is believed to have handed over to the Gestapo a list of Jewish Christians who remained outside the Warsaw ghetto.¹¹³

Jews trying to escape from ghettos were often apprehended by the Jewish police, as was the case of Herman Herling's wife, who was caught by a Jewish policeman while she was climbing the wall of the

Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), 46; Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004). That author also attests to the fact that converts were generally detested in the Warsaw ghetto (p. 47), and to the pro-German attitudes of some Jews in the ghetto (pp. 66–67, 190). When Ludwik Hirsztfeld, a renowned specialist and convert, started to give lectures for medical practitioners in the Warsaw ghetto, he was boycotted by Jewish nationalists. See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 122. Rabbi Chaim Aron Kaplan expressed tremendous rancor toward Jewish converts, to whom he attributed the vilest of motives, and rejoiced at their misfortune: "I shall, however, have revenge on our 'converts.' I will laugh aloud at the sight of their tragedy. ... Conversion brought them but small deliverance. ... This is the first time in my life that a feeling of vengeance has given me pleasure." See Abraham I. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York: Macmillan; and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 78–79, 250 (Kaplan suggests that Jewish informers may have been behind their betrayal to the Germans). Traditionally, Jews viewed converts as particularly virulent "enemies of Israel." See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 101. Even Jewish atheists openly declared their disdain toward converts. See Grace Caporino and Dianne Isaacs, "Testimonies from the 'Aryan' Side: 'Jewish Catholics' in the Warsaw Ghetto," in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), vol. 1, 194. A similar situation prevailed in Kraków: when priests and nuns would enter the ghetto to tend to the spiritual needs of converts, they were spat on and cursed by indignant Jews. "Converts were not popular in the ghetto. ... We're foreigners and they hate us." See Roman Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 84, 89–90. In his chronicle Emanuel Ringelblum notes that Jewish nationalists were delighted that the Jews were finally separated from the Poles, albeit in ghettos, seeing in this the beginnings of a separate Jewish state on Polish territory. Moreover, many of them embarked on a battle against the use of the Polish language in the ghetto, especially in Jewish agencies and education, and were opposed to Jewish converts occupying positions of authority. See Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, 214–15, 531ff.

The fate of the downtrodden Gypsies, who were rounded up and sent to Jewish ghettos, was even harsher since they had no communal welfare organizations. They were universally regarded as intruders and thieves. See, for example, Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 294–95 ("they occupy themselves by stealing from the Jews"). There is no record of Jews displaying solidarity with or offering assistance to Gypsies, and it appears that most of the Gypsies in the Warsaw ghetto, who were beggars and forced to wear distinctive armbands, were rounded up and deported to the death camps in the summer of 1942. Gypsies apprehended in "Aryan" Warsaw were taken to the prison on Gęsia Street where they were guarded by functionaries of the Jewish police. See Institute of National Memory, Warsaw Regional Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, file no. S 5/20/Zn. Within the confines of the large Jewish ghetto in Łódź, the Germans built a smaller, isolated ghetto for some 5,000 Gypsies. Conditions there were even worse than those of the Jews and, without connections or any outside assistance (such as almost all Jewish ghettos received from the surrounding Polish community), the Gypsies were soon decimated by hunger and disease. A Jewish doctor from Łódź admits candidly: "There was no pity in the ghetto for Gypsies." See Arnold Mostowicz, *Żółta gwiazda i czerwony krzyż* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988), 25–27. In Głębokie, "In the fall of 1941, Gypsy wagons were brought into the Gendarmerie yard. The Gypsies were brought with their women and children. ... A rumor spread that they were to be put in the second ghetto with the Jews. To prevent this, the Judenrat asked for another bribe quota for the Germans. It turned out that the Gypsies were shot with their women and children before dawn." Dov Katzovitch (Petach Tikva), "With the Partisans and in the Red Army," in David Shtokfish, ed., *Book in Memory of Dokshitz-Parafianow [Dokshytze-Parafianowo Memorial Book]*, (Israel: Organization of Dokshitz-Parafianow Veterans in Israel and the Diaspora, 1990), Chapter 4, Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dokshitsy/>. These attitudes were steeped in tradition: "Generally, Gypsies were treated with suspicion and disdain. My parents would never have permitted me to talk to them under ordinary circumstances. Bielsko's mothers warned their children that a Gypsy woman could cast a spell on their souls; its fathers watched their wallets when Gypsies were nearby, it being common knowledge that they were born pickpockets. ... Decent folk kept away from them." See Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 277–78. However, sociologist Nechama Tec blames the Gypsies for the conflict. See Nechama Tec, "Resistance in Eastern Europe," in Walter Laqueur, ed., *The Holocaust Encyclopedia* (New Haven and Yale: Yale University Press, 2001), 544. One survivor of Auschwitz charges that, unlike the Jews, "If the Gypsies thought of anything besides food, however, it was certainly not of resistance or escape." See Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 279. On the other hand, many prisoners—Poles and Jews alike—suffered homosexual rape at the hands of the Gestapo. See, for example, David Gilbert, as told to Tim Shortbridge and Michael D. Frounfelter, *No Place to Run: A True Story* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002), 76.

¹¹³ Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 48.

ghetto in Warsaw. (Her husband and daughter managed to escape.)¹¹⁴ Jakob Friedmann, a native of Włodawa, recalls:

Once I was caught by a Jewish policeman whose name was Matthias. He was an exceptional brute. When there was an *Aktion* against the Jews sending them for extermination to Sobibor [Sobibór death camp], he went up to the house where his family lived and called to his parents: ‘Dad, mum, please come down, it’s time for you to go.’ He called to them, and they came down. He knew they were going to Sobibor to be cremated. That’s the kind of man he was.

One night he caught me as I was getting ready to cross the barbed-wire fence back into the work camp ... He bashed me nearly to death, saying: ‘Next time you will be dead.’¹¹⁵

Although historian Lucy Dawidowicz has stated that the Poles have only themselves to blame for the fact that the Germans executed so many Polish benefactors and their Jewish charges,¹¹⁶ examples of betrayals by Jews (and others, such as Gestapo agents¹¹⁷ and Ukrainians¹¹⁸), often with fatal consequences for the rescuers, are plentiful.

A Jew, illegally outside the ghetto in Warsaw, was caught by a German gendarme; in exchange for his own life, he offered to denounce other Jews on the “Aryan” side—scores of Jews were tracked down and executed in the Jewish cemetery as a result.¹¹⁹ A young Jewish woman by the name of Celina who was captured by the Gestapo disclosed the hiding place of another Jewish woman, Wanda, who had helped her find a placement in Warsaw. Both women were executed in Pawiak prison.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 424.

¹¹⁵ Jakob Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier: A Jewish Partisan’s Story* (Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2005), 22.

¹¹⁶ See Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Havard University Press, 1981), 117: “Indeed, it can be shown that many of the Poles whom the Germans murdered because they were protecting Jews had been betrayed by their bounty-hunting fellow Poles.” Dawidowicz apparently cannot fathom that Jews could also be a source of danger for fellow Jews and also Poles; in the case of the latter, she doubtless considers the phenomenon to be irrelevant, given the strident hostility toward Poles that permeates her “moralistic” writings.

¹¹⁷ For example, 16 Poles were executed in Przewrotne in May 1943 for helping Jews, after the village was infiltrated by a Gestapo agent posing as a beggar. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 846–47.

¹¹⁸ A prominent example is the betrayal by a Ukrainian policeman of a bunker built by the Józefek family in Lwów. As a result all 36 Jews sheltered there were killed, as well as three members of the Józefek family. See Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), 224–25; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, 177 (entries 281 and 283). A Ukrainian police inspector in Kolbuszowa was responsible for the execution of 38 Jews. See Naftali Salsitz, “The Holocaust in Kolbuszowa,” in I.M. Biderman, ed., *Pinkas Kolbushov* (New York: United Kolbushover, 1971), 55ff. (English section). For additional examples of denunciations of Polish rescuers and their Jewish charges by Ukrainians and Polish rescuers who were killed by members of the Ukrainian nationalist underground for sheltering Jews, see Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, entry 395 (Potok Górny near Tomaszów Lubelski); (Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 475 (Korolówka near Borszczów); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 861 (Zawóz near Wołkowyja), 868–69 (Lwów); Henryk Komański and Szczepan Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946* (Wrocław: Nortom, 2004), 744 (Busk); *Na Rubieży* (Wrocław), no. 90 (2007): 44 (Chłaniów near Krasnystaw) .

¹¹⁹ Lucyna Paszkowska-Brown, “‘Syjonizm’ i ‘antysemityzm,’” *Dziennik Polski* (London), May 15, 1968.

¹²⁰ Hanna Wehr, *Ze wspomnień* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2001).

A Jew, who was seized during a Gestapo raid on an apartment in Warsaw where he was sheltered by a Pole, broke down under torture and betrayed another apartment where Jews were hiding.¹²¹ Another Jew, by the name of Natek, succumbed to torture and revealed to the Gestapo several apartment hiding places in Warsaw.¹²² That same author recalled that, when he joined a group of Jews returning from work on the Aryan side to the Warsaw ghetto,

The Jews suspected I wasn't Jewish, that I had been planted among them as a provocateur. They whispered among themselves about turning me over to the German [guard]. I begged them to believe that I was a Jew, and to prove it I started speaking in Yiddish and muttering prayers. Finally, they gave in ...¹²³

Roman Kierszniewski, a Polish rescuer, recalled the fate of one of his charges:

I helped a Jewish man, Mieczysław Prozański, who concealed himself in a mechanic's workshop on Leszno Street in Wola, next to the Warsaw ghetto. He hid in the garret, where he did the bookkeeping for the shop. Working in the same shop as a watchman, I often gave Prozański food or clothes. Once I even participated in an action to ransom him from the Jewish militia, which had seized him after he was denounced by another Jew in the ghetto. Prozański was seized and shot by the Germans on the second day of the Warsaw Uprising.¹²⁴

Franciszek Antczak built a bunker on his farm in the village of Boguszyn where he hid two Jewish men, Mosze Kuperman and Józef Lewin. Antczak was assisted by his sister-in-law Zofia Szkop and her children. Kuperman was captured by the Germans in March 1944 when he left the bunker and, under torture, led the Gestapo to Antczak's farm. Kuperman was executed and the two Polish rescuers were sent to a concentration camp which only Zofia Szkop survived.¹²⁵

A group of Jews dug pits and bunkers connected by tunnels deep in the field belonging to a peasant woman by the name of Smoleski(?), near the village of Jastków northwest of Lublin. The woman, who had two sons, brought food to the Jews. A Jewish girl by the name of Slawa, said to be insane from typhus, left the bunker and ran to the Germans and disclosed the hideout. The Lublin military police was dispatched and killed the peasant woman and one of her sons (the other wasn't at home) and burned down her house. The Jews managed to escape.¹²⁶

A Jewish escapee from the Płońsk ghetto who found shelter with a Polish family in the nearby village of Naruszewo was caught by the Germans when he ventured out to inquire about his family. After betraying

¹²¹ Simha Rotem ("Kazik"), *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 81.

¹²² Ibid., 105.

¹²³ Ibid., 17.

¹²⁴ Lukas, *Out of the Inferno*, 90.

¹²⁵ "Uroczystość wręczenia dyplomu i medalu 'Sprawiedliwy wśród narodów świata'—Warszawa, 9 września 2004 r.," <www.ipn.gov.pl> (September 9, 2004).

¹²⁶ Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 164–66.

his benefactors the Gestapo descended on their home and seized the husband and father of four young children. He was sent to Mauthausen where he was killed two weeks before the end of the war.¹²⁷

A Jewish woman imprisoned in the Łacki Street prison in Lwów recalled some of her fellow prisoners:

A Polish and a Ukrainian woman were in for hiding Jews. The Polish woman had hidden a father and daughter in a crate, and three Jews in a space behind a wall. The police discovered the ones inside the wall, and then those Jews betrayed the father and daughter hidden in the crate. The Polish and the Ukrainian woman were jailed. The Pole took all the blame, i.e., accepted responsibility and was sent to Majdanek, and the Ukrainian was freed.¹²⁸

When a Jew by the name of Mensch was caught in a village outside Żółkiew, under torture he disclosed the hiding places of three other Jews; all four Jews were executed.¹²⁹ Some Jews apprehended by the Germans in Łąki Strzyżowskie near Frysztak drew sketches showing the location of Jewish hideouts in the forests during their interrogation.¹³⁰

Witold Fomienko, a Polish barber in Łuck, Volhynia, and his many Jewish charges were more fortunate. When Esther Milner, one of his charges, was identified by a Ukrainian nationalist and interrogated, her connection with Fomienko was discovered. Fomienko was tortured by the Gestapo, and it was only thanks to a German officer who was a client of his that he was released.¹³¹

Nine escapees from trains headed for Treblinka were sheltered by Józef Gondrowicz and his wife in the village of Drochlin near Wodzisław. Carelessness on the part of one of the Jewish children led to the discovery of the hiding place in December 1944. David Braun and Shmuel and Alek Rubinek were killed on the spot while the remaining refugees managed to escape to a new hiding place arranged for them by Gondrowicz in a nearby village. Fearing arrest, the entire Gondrowicz family also went into hiding, until they felt it was safe to return.¹³² Escapees from Treblinka also had to contend with being stripped of their money by unscrupulous fellow Jews.¹³³

A Jewish woman from Międzyrzec who fell into the hands of the Gestapo disclosed an underground organization spiriting Jews to Warsaw:

The Kamienietzki sisters had given Aryan papers and their underground address in Warsaw to Miss Tisch of Międzyrzec ... She was dark-haired and looked very Jewish. She was arrested on the train to Warsaw and taken to the Gestapo in Międzyrzec. Under torture she revealed everything. A few days later the Gestapo man ... arrived at the Kamienietzki's apartment instead of Miss Tisch's

¹²⁷ Jolanta Chodorska, ed., *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny: Świadczenia nadesłane na apel Radia Maryja* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek, 2002), Part One, 34–35.

¹²⁸ Account of Erna Klinger, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 1096.

¹²⁹ Gerszon Taffet, *Zagłada Żydów żółkiewskich* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946), 65.

¹³⁰ Stanisław Zabierowski, *Rzeszowskie pod okupacją hitlerowską* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1975), 198, 200.

¹³¹ Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 219.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 246.

¹³³ Alexander Donat, ed., *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary History* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 141–42.

[sic]. He reminded the sisters of his warning. ... he said he would not shoot them as he did Miss Tisch. He arrested them and sent them to the Pawiak prison in Warsaw. In the end it was the same. All the Jews in Pawiak were killed.¹³⁴

The parents of Janeczka Kapral, a young Jewish girl who was sheltered by Polish nuns in Olsztyn near Częstochowa, were caught by the Germans and betrayed the whereabouts of their daughter and the Polish woman, a school teacher by the name of Kita, who had brought her to the convent. The young girl was seized by the Gestapo and the teacher was also arrested and killed. The nuns dispersed to avoid arrest.¹³⁵

A Jew who was sheltered by a Polish family in Sambor ventured out of the home against the wishes of his benefactors, an elderly Polish couple. When he was caught by the Germans he betrayed the hideout causing the execution of the Polish couple as well as another Jewish couple whom they were hiding.¹³⁶ The carelessness of a friend taken in by Noemi K. of Lwów led to the friend's arrest by the Gestapo and the loss of a safe place of residence for Noemi K.¹³⁷

A 7-year-old Jewish boy hidden by Polish family in Przemyśl carelessly revealed that he was Jewish and the Germans took him away. Following the boy's arrest, the Germans discovered his parents' hiding place and murdered them all.¹³⁸ Some Jewish children hidden in a convent in Przemyśl were more fortunate. A Jewish boy who, together with other Jewish children, was sheltered by the Salesian Fathers recalled the arrival of the Germans who came looking for Jewish children. The Germans were accompanied by a Jew dressed as a priest. Fortunately, the children passed the religious test they underwent.¹³⁹

A Jewish woman from Stanisławów, posing as a Pole, was apprehended together with her Polish benefactor when they arrived at the train station in Warsaw. They were taken to the police station where they were questioned by two police interrogators:

One of them wanted to finish, but the other was determined to destroy me. They examined each of us in minute religious matters, and went over all our documents. They spoke only Yiddish during all of this, and even sang some Yiddish songs. Then they started arguing: the first one wanted to let us go and the other to turn us over to the Germans.

We were finally freed after two hours of interrogation ...¹⁴⁰

A large group of Jews hidden on a farm in Zamienie, in Polesia, was betrayed by a 13-year-old Jewish boy whom the group was reluctant to take in because he was poor. The Jewish teenager reported the hiding

¹³⁴ Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 132.

¹³⁵ Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 178–79.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 228. The young daughter of the executed Jewish couple, Anna Henrietta Kretz, managed to escape from the German executioners who killed her parents and took shelter in a local orphanage run by the Sisters of the Family of Mary. See Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," *Nasz Dziennik*, April 4, 2008.

¹³⁷ Małgorzata Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość: Polscy Żydzi ocaleni "na aryjskich papierach"*. *Analiza doświadczenia biograficznego* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004), 153.

¹³⁸ Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 546.

¹³⁹ Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 204.

¹⁴⁰ Account of F.I. in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 305.

place to the SS stationed in Lubieszów. The Jews and their Polish benefactors were executed and the farmstead was burned to the ground. The young Jew became a servant for the Germans until he was himself executed in April 1943, when the unit was transferred to Luboml.¹⁴¹ Jewish escapees apprehended by the Germans near Lubień, south of Piotrków Trybunalski, betrayed many farmers and gamekeepers who had assisted them, thus causing the execution of more than a dozen Poles.¹⁴²

Józef Rydzewski built a hiding place for the seven-member family of Abram Malczak on his farm in Budy Stawiskie near Łomża. One day Abram Malczak's young son recklessly left the hiding place and was apprehended by German gendarmes patrolling the area. After a beating he led the Germans to the hiding place. Rydzewski and the entire Jewish family were executed.¹⁴³ For this same reason several Polish farmers were also seized by the Germans in a neighbouring village and never heard of again.¹⁴⁴

Władysław Łopatowski, who was active in the Council for Aid to Jews ("Żegota") in Kraków, was arrested by the Gestapo after his betrayal by a Jewish woman for whom he had obtained forged identity papers. The woman was caught by the Gestapo and under torture revealed his name, and was then shot herself. After a 10-month incarceration, Łopatowski was hanged in public on June 24, 1944, along with 49 other Poles.¹⁴⁵ There were cases when Jews caught by the Germans while escaping from the ghetto in Rzeszów betrayed those who had helped them escape.¹⁴⁶

Antoni Burek was executed in Gutanów near Grabów, after a Jew who was apprehended by the Germans betrayed his Polish benefactors.¹⁴⁷ Rev. Edward Tabaczkowski, who sheltered and provided various forms of assistance to Jews, was executed after his betrayal to the Gestapo by a Jewess from Tłumacz.¹⁴⁸ A Polish couple, Maria and Bronisław Jarosiński, were arrested by the Gestapo and Ukrainian police in Stryj after being betrayed by a Jew whom they didn't accept because of a lack of room (they were already sheltering a Jewish family consisting of five members). They rescuers were soon executed, as doubtless the Jewish charges.¹⁴⁹

A 14-year-old Jewish boy from Modryń near Hrubieszów, who was apprehended during an excursion from his forest dugout, led a German search party to apprehend his Polish protector after beatings and false promises that he and his sister would be spared.¹⁵⁰ A Jewish woman by the name of Boruch was

¹⁴¹ Account of Zbigniew Maływczycki, dated November 23, 1997 (in the author's possession).

¹⁴² Antoni Heda, *Wspomnienia "Szarego"* (Warsaw: Interim, 1991), 43–44; Marian Langer, *Lasy i ludzie: Wspomnienia z lasów starachowickich 1939–1945* (Warsaw: n.p., 1993), 91; Pilarska, *Those Who Helped*, Part Three, 89–90 (entries 336–343 [Łodej family]).

¹⁴³ Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem w okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Adam Dobroński and Waldemar Monkiewicz, eds., *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2 (Białystok: Instytut Historii Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Białymstoku, 1997), 170.

¹⁴⁴ Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, 156–57.

¹⁴⁵ Henry Armin Herzog, *...And Heaven Shed No Tears* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1995), 268–69.

¹⁴⁶ Franciszek Kotula, *Losy Żydów rzeszowskich 1939–1944: Kronika tamtych dni* (Rzeszów: Społeczny Komitet Wydania Dziel Franciszka Kotuli w Rzeszowie, 1999), 189, 193.

¹⁴⁷ Stanisław Kaniewski and Bożenna Roguska-Gajewska, "Gdy stawką w walce o życie było inne życie," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 192.

¹⁴⁸ Lesław Jeżowski, "Ks. Edward Tabaczkowski," *Semper Fidelis* (Wrocław), no. 3 (16) 1993: 10.

¹⁴⁹ Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 164–65.

¹⁵⁰ Waldemar Lotnik with Julian Preece, *Nine Lives: Ethnic Conflict in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderlands* (London: Serif, 1999), 24.

apprehended and beaten by the German military police. Given a promise that her life would be spared, she revealed the names of the Poles who had sheltered and helped her. As a result seven Poles were executed in Majdan Nowy near Księżopol together with the Jewish woman.¹⁵¹

Józef Dybka, a member of the Home Army and employee of the municipal office in Nisko, provided false documents to the underground and those in need. He was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and executed the following year after a Jewish woman who had been apprehended by the Germans produced a document provided to her by Dybka.¹⁵² Jadwiga Wiśniewska, a Polish woman who acted as a courier for the Jewish underground, was captured by the Gestapo in June 1941, after she was fingered by a Jewish woman, who was falsely accused of being the owner of a suitcase containing underground publications which actually belonged to Wiśniewska. Luckily, Wiśniewska concocted an alibi and was able to deceive her captors with the help of the Polish Socialist underground, and thus miraculously survived the close call.¹⁵³

Roman Blum, a member of the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe), obtained false documents from underground sources in the name of Jagusch or Jagusz for a Jewish woman, who was later stopped by the police. She disclosed the name of the person who provided her with the document. Roman Blum was arrested in Kraków in December 1943, but betrayed no one. He was deported to the Gross-Rosen concentration camps, and later to Flossenburg where perished in March 1945.¹⁵⁴

When a frightened Polish farmer near Łosice asked his four Jewish charges to leave their hideout under his pigsty, one of the Jews who was expelled went to the German police to report the farmer: “they led him back to the farm, killed the peasant and Aryeh’s cousin, and set the house ablaze.”¹⁵⁵ Twenty-eight Poles were executed by the Germans in the villages of Jagodne and Zastawie near Siedlce, after a Jew by the name of Gdala caught by the Germans pointed out those who had helped him.¹⁵⁶

Near Sokołów Podlaski, a Jew by the name of Lejzor who was apprehended by the Germans betrayed those Poles who had offered him food and shelter.¹⁵⁷ A Jew from Łuków betrayed his son, Lajbele Bomstein, his girlfriend, and other Jews hidden. All of these Jews and the Polish family who sheltered them were killed by the Germans.¹⁵⁸ A Polish Home Army liaison officer in Lwów was betrayed by a Jewish

¹⁵¹ Maria Pilarska, ed., *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*, Part Three (Warsaw: The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation–The Institute of National Memory and The Polish Society For the Righteous Among Nations, 1997), 69 (entry 147).

¹⁵² Bolesław Chmara, Dionizy Garbacz, Tadeusz Michalewicz, Zbigniew Paszkiewicz, and Stanisław Puchalski, eds., *Słownik poległych członków Armii Krajowej Obwodu Nisko–Stalowa Wola 1939–1944–1956* (Stalowa Wola: n.p., 1990), 22–23.

¹⁵³ Celemski, *Elegy For My People*, 100–103.

¹⁵⁴ Ireneusz T. Lisiak, “Roman Blum oddał życie,” *Mysł Polska*, April 13, 2008.

¹⁵⁵ Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 144.

¹⁵⁶ Edward Kopówka, *Żydzi siedleccy* (Siedlce: n.p., 2001), 68; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 65–66.

¹⁵⁷ Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 123.

¹⁵⁸ Mojsze Szejser, as told to Jakub Rajchman, “Robiłem buty, odmawiałem kadzisz,” *Rzeczpospolita*, January 29–30, 2005.

charge.¹⁵⁹ Rev. Romuald Świrkowski, the pastor of the parish of the Holy Spirit in Wilno, was betrayed by Jews whom he sheltered. He was arrested in January 1942 and executed in Ponary.¹⁶⁰

Eleonora Prokopek and her husband, members of the underground, concealed several Jews in their home, among them a baby and a 17-year-old youth. Her husband was killed in a shoot-out when the Gestapo burst into their home, but she herself managed to get away. But the 17-year old was arrested and gave away information to the Gestapo about the rescuers and those they were sheltering and even helped in the hunt for them. Prokopek stated:

I would add that Mardeks (the Jewish 17-year old) must have known that death awaited him whatever he did, but all the same he accompanied the Germans by motorbike to the forest and gave away his own people. Once they [the Gestapo] no longer needed him, the same fate befell him.¹⁶¹

Many examples of betrayal by Jews of Polish rescuers and their Jewish charges can be found in Waław Zajączkowski's chronicle *Martyrs of Charity*.¹⁶² Chmielnik (entry 98)¹⁶³; Częstochowa (entry 124); Grzegorzówka (entry 173); Hadle Szklarskie (entry 176); Kowel (entry 238)—according to another source, a Polish train conductor was seized by the German police after the Jewish police in Chełm Lubelski informed them that this Pole had sheltered and transported a Jew¹⁶⁴; a Jewish woman being smuggled from Lwów to Kraków lost her nerve during a random railroad search and betrayed herself and her Polish courier from the Żegota organization (entry 248); Lipowiec Duży (entry 268)¹⁶⁵; Miechów (entry 317)¹⁶⁶; Modryń (entry 327); Mszadla Dolna (entry 333); Mystków (entry 336); Nowy Sącz (entry 343); Pantalowice (entries 361, 362); Piaseczno (entry 370); Różan (entry 427); Rzeszów (entry 437); Sadowne (entry 440); Siedlce (entry 451); Siedliska (entry 452)¹⁶⁷; Sokołów Małopolski (entry 469); Sterdyń (entry 479—this incident is described below); Stryj (entry 483—this incident is described above); Studzieniec (entry 484); Treblinka (entries 508, 512); Warsaw (entries 536, 537, 539, 567, 580, 582,¹⁶⁸ 596, 607,¹⁶⁹ 614); Ossów

¹⁵⁹ Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 103.

¹⁶⁰ Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945: Metropolie wileńska i lwowska, zakony* (Katowice: Unia, 1992), 52.

¹⁶¹ Emuna Nachmany-Gafny, "The Fortunate Few," *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 127–28.

¹⁶² Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One.

¹⁶³ Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik*, 168–70, 182–83.

¹⁶⁴ Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 359.

¹⁶⁵ For an account of the betrayal by a Jewish woman of a Home Army member in Miechów who provided her and many other Jews with identity documents, his arrest and deportation to Auschwitz, and the execution of a Polish family of rescuers in Siedliska, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 855–59.

¹⁶⁶ For an account of the betrayal of a Polish family by their Jewish charge who wandered off and was apprehended by the Germans, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 867.

¹⁶⁷ For an account of the betrayal by a Jewish woman of a Home Army member in Miechów who provided her and many other Jews with identity documents, his arrest and deportation to Auschwitz, and the execution of a Polish family of rescuers in Siedliska, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 855–59.

¹⁶⁸ Emanuel Ringelblum's hideout, a "bunker" in which 34 Jews were hidden, built by a Polish gardener (Władysław Marczak) under his greenhouse on Grójecka Street in Warsaw, was discovered on March 7, 1944. The Jews sheltered there, along with six of their Polish rescuers, were executed in the ruins of the ghetto. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 23–26, 35. Teresa Prekerowa maintains that the denunciation was the work of Jan Lakiński, an 18-year-old informer who had also betrayed members of the Home Army. This latter version seems doubtful,

near Warsaw (entry 572); Wierzbica (entries 625,¹⁷⁰ 626, 627, 628); and Zarzетка (entry 683—this incident is described below). Betrayals also occurred in Marchaty and Czortków,¹⁷¹ and near Izbica¹⁷² and Tarnów.¹⁷³

Two Jews, possibly *agents provocateurs*—one a refugee from Warsaw, the other a local Jew named Helman—came with a punitive detachment of the SS and German gendarmerie to identify the Poles who had helped them in Sterdyń, near Sokołów Podlaski, and on an estate in nearby Paulinów. Scores of Poles perished in the ensuing pacification. A Jew from Wołomin named Rubin, who was captured by the Germans after joining up with a band of fugitive Soviet soldiers, betrayed numerous farmers who helped the Soviet partisans in that area. As a result, more than a score of Poles were executed in the villages of Brzóza and Zarzетка near Łochów. Some of the Polish victims were beaten and shot by Rubin himself.¹⁷⁴

however, since Lakiński had already been executed by the Polish underground in February 1944, which was before Ringelblum's hideout was discovered. See Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945*, 286; Prekerowa, *Zegota*, 247. Tadeusz Bednarczyk attributes the betrayal of the hideout to a Jewish woman, possibly a Gestapo agent, who was refused shelter in that overcrowded place. See his *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 237; and his *Obowiązek silniejszy od śmierci: Wspomnienia z lat 1939–1944 o polskiej pomocy dla Żydów w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Grunwald, 1986), 147. It may be that Bednarczyk has confused this event with another involving a rescuer with a similar name (Marczak). See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, 254 (entry 580), 255 (entry 582). According to another unverified version, the landlord had had a fight with his mistress, who took revenge by betraying the hideout to the Germans. See Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 210; Samuel Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 170; Celemski, *Elegy For My People*, 191. (Meed does not record the fate of the Polish rescuers.) Still another, thoroughly discredited, Jewish version has Mrs. Marczak reporting her husband and the Jews to SS General Franz Kutschera, the police leader in Warsaw, who had them all executed, including Mrs. Marczak. See Roman Grunspan, *The Uprising of the Death Box of Warsaw* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978), 172. Grunspan's fictitious accounts parade around under the deceptive subtitle: "A documentary book about Jewish and Christian lives under Nazi rule in the Warsaw ghetto and in the non-Jewish region of Warsaw." The author, an obvious charlatan, claims to have been part of a three-member hit squad called "Parasol" (Umbrella) which assassinated General Franz Kutschera, the head of the SS and police for the District of Warsaw, on "Aleja sucha" (sic—Szucha) in Warsaw. The book even contains a photograph showing a crude superimposition of a hand holding a machine gun with the following caption: "To the right you can see the punishing hand of the author with the machine gun that gunned down the Nazi lunatic." (Ibid., 172, 177.) However, that well-known operation was carried out by the Home Army and bears little resemblance to the tale Grunspan has spun, and in fact preceded the execution of Ringelblum by more than a month. Historian Richard Lukas describes that famous event as follows: "On February 1, 1944, after weeks of planning, a platoon of Pegasus [Pegaz], commanded by twenty-year old Bronisław Pietraszkiewicz, attacked Kutschera's car on Ujazdowskie Avenue. In an operation lasting scarcely a minute, Kutschera and several other Germans were killed, but four of the attackers, including, Pietraszkiewicz, were killed." See Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust*, 92.

¹⁶⁹ Yitzhak Zuckerman ("Antek"), *A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 424–25.

¹⁷⁰ For an account of the betrayal of two Polish families by their Jewish charge who wandered off and was apprehended by German gendarmes, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 853–54.

¹⁷¹ Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), 39, 64 (Marchaty), 72 (Czortków).

¹⁷² Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 201.

¹⁷³ Piotr Woźniak, *Zapluty karzeł reakcji: Wspomnienia AK-owca z więzień w PRL* (Warsaw: no publisher, 1985), 51–52.

¹⁷⁴ Paweł Szapiro, ed., *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka: Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943–1944 o powstaniu w getcie Warszawy* (London: Aneks, 1992), 163; Waław Piekarski, *Obwód Armii Krajowej Sokołów Podlaski "Sep", "Proso" 1939–1944* (Warsaw: n.p., 1991), 25–27; Wojciech Gozdawa-Gołębiowski, "Powiat węgrowski w latach okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1944," in Arkadiusz Kołodziejczyk and Tadeusz Swat, eds. *Węgrów: Dzieje miasta i okolic w latach 1941–1944* (Węgrów: Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Węgrowskiej, 1991), 357–58; Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, *W walce o Wielką Polskę: Propaganda zaplecza politycznego Narodowych Sił Zbrojnych (1939–1945)* (Biała Podlaska: Rekonkwista, and Warsaw: Rachocki i S-ka, 2000), 294–95; Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, ed. *Polacy–Żydzi, Polen–Juden, Poles–Jews, 1939–1945: Wybór Źródeł, Quellenauswahl, Selection of Documents* (Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, Instytut Dziedzictwa Narodowego, and Rytm, 2001), 267–68.

In a few cases Jews were killed before they could bring ruination to their benefactors and their families. After his capture in Polichna near Brzozówka, a Jew by the name of Icek Wagman identified various peasants who had sheltered him. A sergeant at the police station killed Wagman before the arrival of the German gendarmes. Another Polish policeman reacted similarly when a weary Jew appeared at an outpost near Tarnów and incriminated many Poles who had assisted him. The Jew was executed before the return of the German commander. After the war, the Polish policeman was sentenced to death for his misdeed.¹⁷⁵

In Zdziebórz near Wyszaków, two Jewish young men were sheltered by various villagers. They were eventually accepted into the Home Army where one of them perished in an armed confrontation with the Germans. Believing it to be the work of the Home Army, the surviving Jew went to the German outpost in Pniewo to report the Polish partisans. Tipped off by a Polish policeman of an impending raid, the Home Army dispatched a small group to execute their betrayer as he left the outpost.¹⁷⁶

Some cases are more complicated still. A Jew, who was betrayed by a Belorussian peasant by the name of Petruk in the village of Zarichka (Zarzeczka?) near Drohiczyn, decided in turn to betray Petruk by claiming that he was hidden by Petruk in his barn. The Germans arrested Petruk and his family of seven, and prepared seven gallows in the middle of the market square. They assembled the peasants in the area and hanged Petruk and his family as an example.¹⁷⁷

The following example from Zaklików near Kraśnik is particularly perplexing,

Dana Szapia and her mother were hidden by a Polish farmer. They survived, living inside a cubby hole in his cowshed. One day the farmer heard a knock on the door: it was a Jew, holding in his arms his teenage son. 'I have been hiding in the woods for months,' the Jew told the farmer. 'My son has gangrene. Please get a doctor.'

The farmer went to the Gestapo and told them about the two Jews. ... 'They were taken away and shot.'¹⁷⁸

David Gushee explores the possible scenarios that may have given rise to this tragedy and their implications:

How could the same Polish farmer save two Jews and betray two others? Perhaps he was morally splitting the difference, attempting to do right by his conscience by saving some Jews and to do right by the authorities by turning others in. Or it could be that the farmer could not think of a doctor he could trust to care for the gangrenous son and did not want a dying Jew to care for and later bury. Possibly he thought that four people, rather than two, were too many for him to accommodate, especially with one sick with gangrene. Maybe he feared that the Nazis (or snooping

¹⁷⁵ Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955*, 197–98; Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, 153.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Rev. Zdzisław Król by Krystian Brodacki, "Musimy ich uszanować!" *Tygodnik Solidarność*, December 17, 2004.

¹⁷⁷ Account of Rachel Kravetz in Dov B. Warshawsky, ed., *Drohiczyn: Five Hundred Years of Jewish Life*, Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Drohiczyn/Drogichin.html>; translation of *Drohitchin: Finf hundert yor yidish lebn* (Chicago: Book Committee Drohichyn, 1958), 316.

neighbors) would discover the two Jews in his cowshed and decided that the best way to avoid being raided was ... by turning these new Jews in. ... The story illuminates the limits of any typology, for this farmer was both an informant and a rescuer. The tale also reveals the complexity of human behavior, particularly in such severe moral crisis, and indicates the importance of withholding facile moral judgments about Gentile behaviour during the Holocaust.¹⁷⁹

Jews faced the same dilemmas: whether to save one's one life at the expense of others, even close family. After being fingered by a Jewish informer, Roman Frister was apprehended in the streets of Kraków by the German police. He led them to the apartment he shared with his parents, who were also passing as Christians. On his way Frister pondered his predicament, and whether he should take his own life to save theirs.

The street was like a deep canyon. No feelings could penetrate its high walls. The shutters on the windows were closed. This was a way for those behind them to turn their backs on their occupiers ... I looked up at them. What would you do, you good people, I wondered, if I suddenly knocked on one of your shelters and asked to be hid? I didn't need to ask. I knew the answer. I would hear the bolt slide shut on the door. And what right did I have to condemn them? Why should they risk themselves and their families for a Jewish boy they didn't know? Would I have behaved any differently? I knew the answer to that, too. I wouldn't have lifted a finger. Everyone was equally intimidated. ...

Did I have a choice? Of course I did. I could have been sprawled on a distant pavement, my spilled blood cleansing my conscience. And yet what good was a clean conscience when you were dead?

'It's here,' I repeated.

'Very good,' said a policeman.

We climbed to the second floor. I said again:

'It's here.'

'Good.'

The policeman drew his pistol. ...

'Ring the doorbell,' his companion ordered.

I tried imagining the moment my father opened the door. What would I say to him? How could I explain what had happened? Would he understand? Could one comprehend the incomprehensible? Forgive the unforgivable?

A metallic sound came from inside. It was followed by the shuffle of my father's slippers. The door opened. His glance slid from me to my two escorts and lingered there. I could see the blood

¹⁷⁸ Cited in Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 492.

¹⁷⁹ David P. Gushee, *The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust: A Christian Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 66. Sometimes Polish rescuers simply refused to take in additional charges, as was the case with a Polish policeman by the name of Czesiek, who rescued from the ghetto in Chełm and sheltered Bella Peretz and her young daughter Sarah. He did not agree to take in, and simply turned away, three of Sarah's cousins who appeared unexpectedly at his door "because it was too dangerous for him." See the Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

drain from his cheeks. ‘Oh, no,’ he murmured, taking a backward step. My mother was looking over his shoulder. ... A policeman pushed me through the doorway. We entered. His companion shut the door. The trap was sprung.¹⁸⁰

While Roman Frister survived deportation, his parents perished.

In this context, it is also worth noting that Jews in hiding routinely killed their infants and newborn babies fearing that they might give them away or imperil their chance of survival.¹⁸¹ Mentally unstable Jews also suffered a similar fate.¹⁸²

It is not surprising, therefore, that Polish rescuers—when this was feasible—too the precaution of concealing from their Jewish charges the fact that they were helping other Jews.¹⁸³ The fewer people who knew, the less likely the chance of being found out. Jews often concealed their assumed identities and hiding places from fellow Jews for that same reason.¹⁸⁴ Two Jewish women who were taken in by the Kłosowski family of Kocmyrzów near Kraków, one as a servant, the other as charge (the latter had been directed there by a priest), “deduced that they were both Jewish, but they did not give it away to one another. They were both ready to deny it, because you couldn’t be sure who was a spy and who wasn’t. They did not tell each other the truth until after the war.”¹⁸⁵

There was also the constant danger flowing from noisy, quarrelsome, and even hysterical Jewish charges, who could bring on disaster for all concerned and their Polish benefactors to the end of their tether.¹⁸⁶ A

¹⁸⁰ Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 193–94, 195–97.

¹⁸¹ Yaffa Eliach describes how a group of Jews hiding in the attic of a barn in Raduń refused to accept her family into the hiding place because they had young children. They were finally allowed when her father threatened to reveal the hiding place to the Germans, but only on condition that the children be held as hostages: “If any of them made a noise, they would be silenced. ... Fearing [the baby] might cry loudly enough to be heard [by passing Germans] from the outside, the people who held him, smothered him.” See André Stein, *Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Viking/Penguin, 1993), 59. See also Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., *Zelva Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), 80; Lyn Smith, ed., *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* (London: Ebury Press/Random House, 2005), 191; Rivka and Israel Teyer, eds., *The Red Forest: As Narrated by Izhak Shumowitz* (Raanana, Israel: Docostory, 2005?), 129; Miriam Brysk, *Amidst the Shadows of Trees* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Yellow Star Press, 2007), 91.

¹⁸² Celemski, *Elegy For My People*, 194. Celemski describes how he administered a poison pill to an unbalanced Jewish woman in a Warsaw hide-out who would scream hysterically, aloud, and in Yiddish. He justifies the deed thus: “If anyone in the building were to hear Yiddish screams, the Gestapo would be called to investigate.”

¹⁸³ See the following examples: Arie L. Bauminger, *Roll of Honour*, 2nd edition (Tel Aviv: Hamenora Publishing House, 1971), 69; Esther Bas-Melcer, *In the Claws of Destruction* (Toronto: Aron Horowitz Publications, 1986), 44; Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1986), 253; Alan Levy, *The Wiesenthal File* (London: Constable, 1993), 49; account of Joseph S. Kutrzeba, dated May 1994 (in the author’s possession); the account of Sylvia Richter in Maxine B. Rosenberg, ed., *Hiding to Survive: Stories of Jewish Children Rescued from the Holocaust* (New York: Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 83; Helena Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997), 292–377; Miriam Kuperhand and Saul Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 64; Thomas T. Hecht, *Life Death Memories* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Leopold Press, 2002), 175.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 91.

¹⁸⁵ Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 77.

¹⁸⁶ See, for example: the account of Zbigniew Małyszczycycki, dated November 23, 1997 (in the author’s possession); Józef Seeman, “Dziennik Partyzanta (1943–1944), *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 61 (1967): 131; Mina Rosner, *I Am a Witness* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1990), 79–80; Agata Tuszyńska, “Uczniowie Schulza,” *Kultura* (Paris), no. 4 (1993): 42; Irene Tomaszewski and Tecz Werbowski, *Zegota: The Rescue of Jews in Wartime Poland* (Montreal: Price-Paterson, 1994), 139, and the revised edition titled *Zegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942–1945* (Montreal: Price-Paterson, 1999), 129 (a Jewish charge even threatened to kill a Jewish

Jew who was sheltered by the Home Army in Lublin recalled a scene at the apartment to which he was taken after leaving the ghetto:

And we arrived to a house, to an apartment house which one of—not headquarters but one apartments where the home army was meeting ...

I was surprised. We found maybe 10 or 12 Jewish people there, hiding. I found out that he is helping lot of Jewish people. ... He took me [to] another room. Now listen to it. And I listened. There were noises over the wall, people talking in Yiddish, arguing and fighting with each other. He said, what kind of people are you? I'm risking my life and here they start fighting about ... stupid things and the neighbors they hear those things. ... They're old orthodox people. For some reason they felt they should continue their orthodoxy, their sacred needs. They want kosher food. You know, where you going to get kosher food there? One of the men died, older man died, but he was very religious. What the Home Army did, they put him in an orthodox kind of canvas sack. That's how Jews are buried you know. Not in the coffins. And they threw him over the wall in[to] the Jewish cemetery. And I think this was more than anybody could expect. But this was just one [of] the examples what those people did for us.¹⁸⁷

A rescuer in Stryj whose family sheltered Juliusz Greibach and his wife recalled the quarrels that ensued when his brother Wilhelm Greibach arrived with his fiancée. This hazardous behaviour brought attention to their presence in the neighbourhood and eventually led to their having to move to the homes of other Poles. On their departure, Wilhelm Greibach's fiancée threatened: "Don't think that if we're caught only we will perish! We'll tell the Germans where we've hidden until now."¹⁸⁸

Rescuer Jerzy Koźmiński of Warsaw, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, recalled the boisterous quarrels that erupted among his family's charges, especially the full-blow rage of one of the charges who hurled invectives in Yiddish at the top of his voice. The rescuer credits their survival in these perilous circumstances to the decency of his neighbours who turned a blind eye to these frequent incidents.¹⁸⁹

Jan Galas, the caretaker of a tenement house on Ogrodowa Street in Warsaw, was sheltering six Jews and a small child in the cellar of the building. Another charge, Dawid Efrati, was willing to stay there only for a few days because of the frequent quarrelling among the Jews. Efrati soon returned to the home of the caretaker's son, Stanisław, which he had left because, in his nightmares, Efrati used to scream in Yiddish and attracted attention. Within days of his departure, the Germans conducted a door-to-door search after a German official had been shot in the vicinity of the tenement house on Ogrodowa Street and discovered the

couple who would fight in the hideout); Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 151–53 (Jews did not allow a Jewish straggler to stay in their bunker because of his lack of caution), 163 (a Polish benefactor warned his charges for arguing and screaming); Naomi Samson, *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 71 (quarrelsome children led their own mother to believe she had no chance of surviving with them); the account of Miriam Banker, who was sheltered in Dubiecko, in Hartman and Krochmal, *I Remember Every Day...*, 105.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Felix Horn, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, July 19, 1994, 19.

¹⁸⁸ Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 20–23.

¹⁸⁹ Jerzy Koźmiński, "Wspomnienia sprawiedliwego," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 11 (November 2005): 86–103, here at 94.

hiding place of the Jews. All of them were executed including the caretaker, whom they had betrayed. Despite this tragedy, Efrati was not asked to leave the son's home.¹⁹⁰

As could be expected, living in close quarters under extreme conditions could lead to flare-ups between charges and their rescuers. Insolent behaviour toward their Polish hosts did not facilitate harmonious relations. The stereotype of the "stupid" Pole, widely held by Jews, surfaced even when Poles put their lives at risk to shelter Jews during the war. Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in the Żegota organization, recalls: "It was often that Jews told Poles, 'We are more intelligent than you,' and it made the Poles crazy. It was a very difficult situation."¹⁹¹ Although such remarks tested the patience of Poles, there is no evidence that it caused any Jew to be expelled from their hiding-place.

Sometimes imprudence led to the downfall of Jews in hiding and their Polish benefactors, as was the case in Ciepeliów Stary and Rekówka near Lipsko, where several Polish families and their Jewish charges who became notorious in the vicinity for their thievery were burned to death when word got back to the Germans. In retaliation, Polish partisans killed some German gendarmes and a local man who had betrayed the Jews.¹⁹²

Poles fighting the Nazis outside of Poland were also put at risk because of and the irresponsible conduct of Jewish charges. A Polish underground guide, known by the code name of "Władysław," who was part of a group based in Marseilles which secretly smuggled Jews out of France, was exposed on what was to be his final crossing into Switzerland. Accompanied by his pregnant wife, he had brought a group of fifteen Jews to within arm's reach of the Swiss border where they awaited an opportune moment to cross over. Defying his instructions, three young Jews left the hiding place to look for food (grapes) and were spotted by gendarmes patrolling the area. The entire group was apprehended, never to be heard of again.¹⁹³

It appears, however, that the ones most often victimized by acts of betrayal by Jews were fellow Jews.

In Warsaw, hundreds of Jews in hiding were suddenly at risk when one of the surviving liaison men of the Jewish Fighting Organization [ŻOB] was caught and tortured. Under torture, he broke; many of those in hiding were then rounded up and killed.¹⁹⁴

After some Jews who tried to escape from the ghetto in Lwów were arrested, widespread arrests ensued in the ghetto.¹⁹⁵ About 300 Jews managed to escape during an *Aktion* carried out by the Germans in Trojanówka, in Volhynia, and set up a camp in the nearby forests with the assistance of Polish partisans. About half of them were persuaded to return to Trojanówka by the rabbi, who headed that town's Jewish

¹⁹⁰ Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 223–24.

¹⁹¹ Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, The Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 261.

¹⁹² Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych*, 231–34; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, entries 110, 418.

¹⁹³ Marian Para, *Los polacos y los judíos a través de los siglos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Estudio, 1986), 171–72. The author, who was also a guide in the south of France, recalled that many of the Jews he brought to Switzerland in safety promised profusely to show their gratitude in the future; however, none of these promises ever materialized. *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁹⁴ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 654; this is based on Tuvia Borzykowski's diary entry for January 28, 1944.

¹⁹⁵ Eliyahu Jones [Yones], *Żydzi Lwowa w okresie okupacji 1939–1945* (Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 1999), 190.

Council, on a promise of clemency. However, they were soon executed. The rabbi and one of the survivors then led the Germans to the partisan base which, fortunately, had been abandoned by that time.¹⁹⁶ Thousands of Jews had fled from the ghetto Głębokie to the forest. When the Germans announced that they had the “right” to return to the ghetto, the Judenrat chairman Lederman was sent out to entice them back. Hundreds of unsuspecting Jews returned in response to this false promise.¹⁹⁷

A Jew working as a Gestapo agent was apprehended by a Jewish partisan near the Poniatowa labour camp.

He admitted he was a Jew, and he began to tell me a story about how he was working for the Gestapo on a false name, as a Pole. His mission was to find Jews on false papers or hiding as Christians. When the Germans had shot the Jews in the camp of Poniatov [Poniatowa], a father and two daughters had escaped, he told me, but he had caught them and handed them over to the Gestapo, who immediately shot them. When I heard this I felt enormous contempt for him. ... I suggested that he join the partisans, knowing that he would be handed over and interrogated for information. ... I delivered them to my commander and they were taken to a barn. ... The secret agent got the worst of it, I was told.¹⁹⁸

The Jews who were on kitchen duty in Poniatowa plotted to poison the camp commandant, but were betrayed by a Jewish informer. The entire kitchen crew was executed.¹⁹⁹

In the spring of 1943, Jewish partisans helped about 100 Jews to escape from a work camp in Adampol near Włodawa. One of the Jews, however, denounced the partisans’ plans for further escapes and, as a result, about 800 Jews were executed.²⁰⁰ A group of Jews in the ghetto in Włodawa betrayed the renowned Rabbi Zajzer of Radzyń, who tried to protect some escapees from Sobibór who had brought back news of the death camp. All those betrayed were rounded up and executed.²⁰¹ The Jews from Mielec who were deported to Parczew where held in a synagogue. “From there, with the help of local Jews, they were marched off to Włodawa [Włodawa] ... 3 miles from the extermination camp Sobibor [Sobibór] ... They had to wait 7 months for their destruction ...”²⁰² Leon Gongola (Lejba Goldsztajn) from Sierpc was betrayed by a fellow Jew and was eventually deported to Auschwitz.²⁰³ Examples can be multiplied.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁶ Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 262.

¹⁹⁷ Shalom Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorrussia during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 163–64.

¹⁹⁸ Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 56–57.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Kuwałek, “Żydowski ruch oporu,” *Strona o Żydach lubelskich*, Internet: <<http://www.jews-lublin.net>>.

²⁰⁰ Harold Werner, *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 140.

²⁰¹ Account of Motel Rabinowicz in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 130–31.

²⁰² Statement of Chana Lind (née Reiss), in *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Mielec: Sipur hashmadat ha-kehila ha-yehudit* (New York: Mielec Yizkor Book Committee, 1979), translated as *Remembering Mielec: The Destruction of the Jewish Community*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mielec/mielec.html>>.

²⁰³ Interview with Leon Gagola (Lejba Gongola), *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Mazowsze edition), November 20, 1995, Internet: <www.sierpc.com.pl/czytelnia/gagola/zyje_dzieki_polakom.html>.

²⁰⁴ See the following betrayals in Warsaw: Mary Berg, *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary* (New York: L.B. Fischer, 1945), 155 (Warsaw); Włodzimierz Kopczuk and Jacek Wilamowski, *Tajemnicze wyspy: Polsko-niemiecka wojna na tajnym*

Polish Jews deported to Germany as Poles also faced risks there because of betrayals by fellow Jews. A young Jewish woman who volunteered for foreign labour in Germany recalled that another Jewish girl on the train who tried to pass as a Pole started to talk in Yiddish in her sleep, yet she was not betrayed by the passengers. Later, however, when that same girl was arrested by the Gestapo as a Jew inside Germany, she promptly betrayed her Jewish acquaintance.²⁰⁵ Bronka Nowakowska, a professional Jewish prostitute, posed a serious threat to Jewish women from Poland who worked in an ammunition factory in Germany posing as Christians: “Her identification as a Polish prostitute eliminated suspicions about her Jewish origin. Bronka knew which of the women was Jewish. She engaged in reckless behavior, returning very late from illegal escapades and then forcing the Jewish women to cover up for her, threatening to denounce them. Bronka argued that the authorities would believe her and not them.”²⁰⁶

Zosia Goldberg was caught in a German street dragnet in “Aryan” Warsaw and deported for hard labour to the Reich as a Pole. She recalled many friendly Poles with whom she worked in Germany:

The Polish, when they were nice, they were really nice. They pretended they did not know. They did not ask questions.²⁰⁷

One day I met a fellow from Warsaw, from the Old Town. So many of those Warsaw Gentiles were fantastic, helping Jews wherever they were. The smugglers also came from that same part of town. The workers in the towns, especially from Warsaw, were far from ignorant. ... They did not have that hatred of the Jews and saw the Jews more as fellow citizens.²⁰⁸

She soon noticed the marked difference in attitude of Polish and Russian workers, who engaged in extensive sabotage at the plant, and that of the Ukrainian workers: “The Ukrainians, however, were traitors. They were working against the Russians, against the Poles, against everybody, denouncing all the time.”²⁰⁹ “The Russians had hateful eyes when they looked at the Germans. Ukrainians were always charmingly sweet and sang, ‘Heil Hitler!’”²¹⁰ “You were not allowed to travel from one village to another. Only Ukrainians had this right because they were pro-German.”²¹¹ When Zosia Goldberg was arrested, a Pole who worked as an interpreter, who suspected she was Jewish, counseled her on her appearance and the “story” she should give to her German interrogators.²¹² She also encountered several Jews (and a Ukrainian interpreter) who would betray her, and several other Poles who helped her.

froncie (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Związków Zawodowych, 1990), 77–79; Eugenia Szajn Lewin, *W getcie warszawskim: Lipiec 1942–kwiecień 1943* (Poznań: a5, 1989), 52; Henryk Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego: Październik 1940–styczeń 1943* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 36–38.

²⁰⁵ Rose Toren, *A New Beginning* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1997), 27–28.

²⁰⁶ Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 237.

²⁰⁷ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 88.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 129.

We were always brought back by truck for interrogation. ... One time, those two German Jewish girls saw me in the truck on the way to the Gestapo.

The one that was not pretty told the policeman, “She is Jewish. She’s from Warsaw, I know. I recognize her. She is from Warsaw. She is Jewish!” ...

The policeman was not paying much attention, but he reported it to the Gestapo anyway. Now they had a lead.

One day, I was sitting, waiting to be interrogated. They brought in a Jewish woman with a yellow star who was also being questioned. An older woman. She had been caught on the train. A German Jewess, she was married to a Gentile man. ...

We each understood who the other was without asking. She spoke into my ear. “You know I have this star that I took off. I have to sew it back on. Do you have a needle and thread?”

I happened to have it and gave it to her. They saw. They had purposely put me with a Jewish woman to see how I would act toward her ... They observed and saw that I gave her a needle and thread and that I ate the sandwich she gave me.

When they called me in for questioning, they asked, “Why did you eat food from that Jewish woman? Aren’t you disgusted?” ...

The next time they tried to trick me into admitting I was Jewish we were cleaning the offices. ... there was some Jewish fellow who was working with us. I was sorry for him and gave him a bunch of *shtumels* [cigarette butts] for a smoke. I made contact without realizing that this Jew was a damn traitor. He was working for the Gestapo.

He came over to me. “What is your name?” he asked. “I am from Wilno. What is your father’s name?” He was talking so softly, and with a Jewish accent. ...

I found out that he sewed suits for the Gestapo men. He was a tailor. He sewed their clothing, and he translated whenever they needed it. He was a denouncer.²¹³

Jews could also be conscripted, often through coercion, to take part in German punitive measures directed at Poles. Father Roman Pawłowski, the 70-year-old vicar of Chocz, was publicly shot in Kalisz in November 1939, in front of the local inhabitants who were driven to the public square to watch the spectacle. “Agents of the Gestapo forced local Jews to tie Fr. Pawłowski to the post, after which he was shot in front of the assembled multitude. The Jews were made to kiss the feet of the corpse, unbind it, put it on a cart, and take it to the Jewish cemetery and bury it according to the Jewish rite.”²¹⁴ After being “fingered” by Polish Jews who served in the German militia, Jan Dudziński and two of his friends were picked up by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz where only Dudziński survived.²¹⁵ The Jewish police were utilized to carry out executions of Jews, and less often Poles. In Bełchatów, they were ordered to hang a

²¹³ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 132–34. Zosia Goldberg describes how she was helped, during her interrogation, by a Pole who was employed by the Germans as an interpreter. Ibid., 129.

²¹⁴ *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in German-Occupied Poland: Reports Presented by H.E. Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, to Pope Pius XII, Vatican Broadcasts and Other Reliable Evidence* (London: Burns Oates, 1941), 58, 105–106, and the American edition (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1941).

²¹⁵ Patricia Treece, *A Man For Others: Maximilian Kolbe Saint of Auschwitz (In the Words of Those Who Knew Him)* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana), 128.

group of Jews and Poles.²¹⁶ In Starachowice, two Jewish prisoners were ordered to hang five Polish prisoners from Kielce.²¹⁷ The Germans ordered Jews to hang a group of Polish prisoners in Mława on February 4, 1944. Afterwards, the Germans executed the Jewish executioners.²¹⁸

Jewish policemen were ordered to dig two large pits in a forest on the outskirts of the town of Kołbiel near Otwock. After the Germans shot the Jews who had been ordered to undress and climb into the pits, the ghetto policemen then covered the dead and the wounded with the earth piled up beside the pits.²¹⁹ Groups of prisoners—Jews and Poles—were taken by the Gestapo from Auschwitz. After being ordered to dig a pit, the Jewish prisoners were told to lay in it and the Polish prisoners to cover the Jews with earth. The Poles refused, so the Germans ordered the Jews out of the pit and reversed the roles, commanding the Jews to bury the Poles alive. The Jewish prisoners obliged and quickly started shovelling earth into the pit containing the Poles. However, the Germans soon tired of the whole charade and started to fire at both the Polish victims and the Jewish lackeys.²²⁰ Additional examples from Kraków are described later.

There are many accounts of Jews betraying Poles in other contexts. In the village of Jagiełła near Przeworsk, Polish army officers who hid with their families were betrayed by two Jewish women. The officers were arrested by the Gestapo and their families were executed on the spot.²²¹ In Lwów, a Jew betrayed a Pole who was sought afterwards by the Germans.²²² A betrayal by a Ukrainian and a Jewish woman in Złoczów led to the arrest and disappearance of two Poles.²²³ Siudek Meryl, a sergeant in the ghetto police in Rzeszów, informed on Poles who had helped Jews; he was executed after the “liberation” by a Polish underground organization.²²⁴ A Jew from Łuków by the name of Telman is believed to have denounced the gamekeeper Antoni Piećko.²²⁵

A gang of Jews was apprehended in Lida after robbing Jewish property left for safekeeping with a local Orthodox priest, a trusted friend of the Jews. The priest was badly wounded with brass knuckles administered to his head. When the Judenrat refused to intercede to obtain their release from prison, they informed the German authorities of the residence permits the Judenrat had procured for Jewish fugitives from Wilno by paying off Polish municipal clerks, thereby endangering the lives of all involved. Local Jews were then coopted to identify the refugees. As a result, 75 to 80 Jews were arrested and executed by the Germans together with the members of the Jewish council. Avidan, the head of the gang, was released by the Germans as a reward for his tale-bearing and returned to Wilno. Believed likely to carry information

²¹⁶ Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 462–63, 466–67.

²¹⁷ Kister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 259–60.

²¹⁸ Ryszard Juskiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-ej wojny światowej* (Mława: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ziemi Mławskiej, 1994), 79–80.

²¹⁹ Gitel Hopfeld, *At the Mercy of Strangers: Survival in Nazi Occupied Poland* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2005), 55.

²²⁰ Stanisław Stanek, “Moje wspomnienia (6),” *Goniec* (Mississauga), March 10–16, 2006.

²²¹ Maria Szczepańska, “Wspomnienie z Jarosławia,” *Gazeta Polska* (Warsaw), February 10, 1994.

²²² Barbara Męcarska-Kozłowska, *Burza nad Lwowem: Reportaż z lat wojennych 1939–1945 we Lwowie. Kартki z pamiętnika* (London: Polish Cultural Foundation, 1992), 311.

²²³ I. M. Lask, ed., *The City of Zloczow* (Tel Aviv: Zloczower Relief Verband of America, 1967), columns 140–41.

²²⁴ Herzog, *...And Heaven Shed No Tears*, 301.

²²⁵ Mariusz Bechta, *Rewolucja, mit, bandytyzm: Komuniści na Podlasiu w latach 1939–1941* (Warsaw and Biała

to the German authorities on illegal activities in the ghetto, Avidan was liquidated by the Judenrat and ghetto police.²²⁶

Smuggling food and other items into ghettos proved to be a source of unexpected danger. Poles, who in defiance of German decrees smuggled food or traded with Jews, also faced their share of problems. In the newly created ghettos Jewish police were under orders to arrest non-Jews who made purchases in stores exclusively designated for Jews, and Poles arrested for such transgressions were turned over to the Germans for execution.²²⁷ In the Warsaw ghetto there was an extensive network of Jewish *szmalcowniki*—made up of smugglers, porters and Jewish policemen—who staked out strategic points in the ghetto such as entrances in order to accost Poles who entered the ghetto illegally, usually to trade but sometimes to bring help. These Jews would demand bribes, failing which, the Poles would be roughed up or even handed over to the Germans.²²⁸

Jan Konstański and his mother Władysława, both of whom were recognized as “Righteous Gentiles” by Yad Vashem, were involved in smuggling food. In 1941, Jan was arrested inside the ghetto. For six days, he was interrogated and beaten. He was released thanks to a bribe paid by his mother.²²⁹ A similar fate met Jan Nowakowski, who smuggled underground publications, food, and even weapons into the ghetto at the behest of his father, a member of the Polish Workers’ Party. Nowakowski was apprehended by the Jewish police at the beginning of April 1943 and handed over to the Germans. Fortunately, the German gendarme into whose hands 14-year-old Jan Nowakowski was delivered had more compassion than his Jewish counterparts: after receiving a stern lecture and a kick, he was thrown out of the ghetto.²³⁰

Lech Hałko, a member of the Żegota organization who was charged with the task of smuggling a package of false identity documents into the Warsaw ghetto and bringing back fresh photographs of Jews to be smuggled out at a later date, ran afoul of Jewish policemen when he surreptitiously entered the ghetto with the Jewish work crew he had joined: they beat him mercilessly because he did not have a bribe in the form of smuggled food. “They preyed on people coming into the ghetto,” Hałko recalled. “They were brutal.” Had he not been rescued by a member of the Jewish underground, Hałko would have been pummelled to death. He spent three days in the ghetto recovering from his wounds.²³¹

Sometimes Poles who ventured inside the ghetto simply fell at the hands of ordinary criminals. That was the fate of a Polish policeman who was shot and killed by a Jewish thief in November 1939. The Pole’s

Podlaska: Rachocki and Rekonkwista, 2000), 73.

²²⁶ Yitzhak Arad, *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, and Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Brith New York, 1980), 292–93; Spector, *Lost Jewish Worlds*, 212; Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven and London: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Yale University Press, 2002), 235–36, 610.

²²⁷ Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland*, 99.

²²⁸ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 501–502.

²²⁹ Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 865.

²³⁰ Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 230.

²³¹ Sheldon Kirshner, “Polish Catholics helped Warsaw Jews,” *The Canadian Jewish News*, August 26, 1993.

colleague was wounded in that altercation.²³² Even child smugglers were not out of reach as potential victims:

Sometimes the child was successful in his mission and in one way or another obtained a loaf of bread from a kindly Pole, only to be attacked by another hungry child or even adult upon his return into the Ghetto. Such fights were frequent in the Ghetto streets, and often nearly to death.²³³

A similar situation prevailed in Wilno where Jews who worked outside the ghetto had to face the brutality of the Jewish police on their return to the ghetto:

The behavior of the Jewish police at the gate—the searches and the beatings—made them and their commander, [Meir] Levas, the most hated group among the Jews of the ghetto. These blows and searches were inflicted directly by the policemen themselves, and became the rule when Murer or another German was on the spot. Many Jews saw the Jewish gatemen as the oppressors who prevented them from bringing in food. The gate police more than once exceeded the necessary norm and abused their position to impound food for their own consumption and enrichment.²³⁴

Internal rivalries and jealousy often led to quarrels among Jews involved in illicit trade with farmers, as was the case in Izbica near Zamość, where a Jewish trader summoned the authorities to complain about a rival Jewish trader. Luckily, the Polish “Blue” police responded and the farmer was let off with a warning after paying a bribe. Had the German authorities intervened, however, harsh reprisals would have ensued.²³⁵ There were Jews who smuggled other Jews out of ghettos for hefty sums, and numerous Jewish black marketeers who bought up Jewish goods for a pittance only to resell them outside the ghetto for considerably more and who made huge profits from the sale of goods smuggled into the ghetto.²³⁶

Criminal elements among the Jews also preyed on fellow Jews. Jewish informers in Lwów extorted large sums of money from Jews to avoid being denounced,²³⁷ and helped secure well-appointed apartments for German officials at the expense of well-to-do Jews.²³⁸ Jews from Wilno ghetto fell victim to fellow Jews who agreed to transport them to other, presumably safer localities for large sums of money, but abandoned them outside the city.²³⁹ Conditions inside ghettos were often unsafe because of gangs of criminals. In Wilno,

²³² Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 80; Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 102. The murderer was one Jakub Pinchas Zylbring; in retaliation, the Germans shot 53 Jews.

²³³ David Wdowinski, *And We Are Not Saved* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1985), 46.

²³⁴ Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, 305.

²³⁵ Account in the author's possession.

²³⁶ Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych*, 17; Szajn Lewin, *W getcie warszawskim*, 50; Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, 40.

²³⁷ Testimony of Mrs. O., recorded January 1958, Archives of the Wiener Library in *Testaments to the Holocaust* (Woodbridge, Connecticut, and Reading, England: Primary Source Microfilm, 1998), reel 50.

²³⁸ Henryk Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynnę...: Wspomnienia polskiego Żyda* (Warszawa: Polonia, 1993), 76; Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 556.

²³⁹ Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 415.

there was a murder in the ghetto in June 1942. The motive was robbery. The underworld gang of 5 who committed the murder consisted of two brothers, Isaac and Eliahu Geiwusz, Leib Grodzenski, Yankel Polianski and Hirszt Wituchowski. They attacked a former Yeshiva student, Josef Gersztejn, with the object of robbing him of money ... They lured him into a cellar ... and there murdered him.

Later it turned out that this same gang had also killed a ghetto Jew by the name of Herzl Lides with the aim of robbing him. They buried him in a cellar ...

According to a verdict issued by a ghetto court another name was added to the five gangsters. It was the name of Jankel Avidon. He was confined to the ghetto jail for an attempt to stab Jankel Grienfeld, a ghetto policeman. This Avidon was a squealer to the Gestapo and worked behind the backs of the Jewish police. Therefore, the Jewish police wanted to get rid of him.²⁴⁰

Looting, a hazard of war and civil strife, was carried out by members of all national and religious groups when the Germans and Soviets entered Poland in September 1939.²⁴¹ When the Germans set up temporary holding camps for Jews in 1939–1940, there was no shortage of scavengers. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded that Polish Jews were quick to appropriate valuables which German Jews had discarded because the latter were afraid that their possession might lead to serious repercussions at the hands of the Germans.²⁴² Later on, after the great deportation in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, the Jews who remained in the ghetto looted property left behind by the deported Jews.²⁴³

Jews also turned on one another after the Germans invaded Poland, a phenomenon that is not widely publicized. Jewish eyewitnesses from Warsaw report the following incidents:

The local mob usually guided the Germans to the rich Jewish houses and stores. With the deepest shame I must admit that there were some Jews among the scum. The fact that a Mojsze Zylberszejn had hidden some cloth, gold or jewels was usually known to another Jew, either his friend or relation. Prompted by greed or vindictiveness they would betray the person to a German who then robbed the victim of everything. Such things were done not only by a professional 'Muser' (blackmailer) but, unfortunately, also by an embittered wife or mistress, a quarrelling business partner, dissatisfied employee or competitor in trade.

A 'poem' was even composed to this effect:

Mummy, Daddy, listen do
With a German the Gestapo came two by two
What shame, what a disgrace
The first was a Pole, the second a Jew!

²⁴⁰ Isaac Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe: The Story of a Jewish United Partisan Organization* (New York: Central Guide Publishers, 1969), 133–34.

²⁴¹ See, for example, Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 327.

²⁴² Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, 69.

²⁴³ Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 472, 706; Joanna Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams: A Story of*

Mummy, Daddy, listen do
Here come the Gestapo, do you know who?
What a shame, the worst disgrace
The first is a Jew, and the second is too!²⁴⁴

Many highly-placed occupation authorities ... were officially and unofficially involved in looting. So were some Jewish criminals who tipped Germans off about the best places to plunder, or threatened Jews that they would do so in order to blackmail them.²⁴⁵

Along with the [German] looters came porters from among our Jewish brethren; these are regular porters who serve the Nazis regularly for pay. ... [the Germans] take regularly hired porters who ride from place to place together with the robbers.²⁴⁶

In the Warsaw ghetto the Germans employed Jewish agents to inform about the location of hideouts, the identity of smugglers and black marketers, the location of valuables. Shop owners sometimes cooperated with the SS or helped in the round-up of those who had no work permits. The Jewish police extorted bribes. Emanuel Ringelblum wrote, in April 1941: "There is a terrible moral breakdown between even the closest [people in the ghetto]. There are times when [the authorities] come to confiscate a particular picture, or because they know there is foreign currency or gold hidden on the premises."²⁴⁷ In an article that opened with the words "The Jewish ghetto is flooded with masses of informers, blackmailers and thieves," Shimon Huberband mentions the widespread phenomenon of informing, mainly about hiding places for valuables, in Warsaw. He went on to explain that although the phenomenon was tied to the starvation and suffering that was the ghetto population's lot, "This is nothing more than an excuse." Jewish communities always had their traitors, Huberband explained, "But they were nothing close to what is happening in the ghetto." He continued:

Jewish porters were the first of the Warsaw ghetto informers. They were the ones who pointed out to the Germans homes of rich Jews and places where Jews hid their wares. In time, there was significant advancement. If they saw a Jew carrying a package of some sort, they approached him, demanded payment or they would call the Germans, or a Polish policeman, detective or just any Gentile. [It is difficult to appreciate how an ordinary Pole could be of any assistance to a burly Jewish porter.—*M.P.*] This is still going on today. The underground flour mills, secret abattoirs, light industries, all pay off the porters regularly. Otherwise, the "factory" will be handed over to the authorities immediately. In most cases, the porters informed on "factories" that couldn't reach an understanding about how much weekly "tax" they had to pay.

a Certain Loneliness (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 53.

²⁴⁴ Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 26.

²⁴⁵ Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom: A Memoir* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1963, 1978), 9.

²⁴⁶ Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 187 (diary entry for August 25, 1940).

²⁴⁷ Cited in Itamar Levin, *Walls Around: The Plunder of Warsaw Jewry during World War II and Its Aftermath* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2004), 77.

In addition to the money given by the Germans and Poles in payment for their services, the porters also steal a significant amount of property as it is taken from houses and loaded onto trucks. In many cases, these thefts cost the informant porters their lives. ...

Aside from porters, there are informers to be found among craftsmen. There were cases where Jews called in craftsmen they knew, such as carpenters, builders, etc. These Jews wished to safeguard their jewelry and asked these artisans to hide the jewels inside their kitchens or ovens. They paid the workers handsomely for their labor. But very often, one of these artisans would inform on the rich Jews. Someone would appear in their apartments and immediately go to the hiding place, and it was clear that the Jewish craftsman was the one who told.²⁴⁸

A Jewish refugee from Łódź recalled:

One Sunday, I was surprised to see a German SS officer come into the courtyard, whistle and shout, "Max!" A window opened from that same apartment on the third floor. And a young man looked out—he was one of the children who used to play in the yard. He answered in German, "I'll be right down!" A few minutes later, the young man appeared in the yard and left with the German, the two of them laughing. Afterward, I found out that he was one of the most dangerous informers in the neighborhood and that everyone was afraid of him. In Lodz, I had heard stories of Jewish informers who worked for the Germans, but now, when I actually saw a young Jewish man collaborating with a German—it was said that he helped the Germans plan their robberies—I was in a state of shock. I couldn't understand how his family could let him cooperate with the Germans. Every time I saw him after that, I used to pray that he would be killed.²⁴⁹

Informing often resulted in death. Huberband told of a Jewish craftsman who, in 1940, informed on the person who commissioned his services, a wealthy Jew who wanted a hiding place for his valuables. The Germans came to the building but went to the neighboring apartment, belonging to the Kaddishson family, by accident and began breaking down the door. When the lady of the house went to open the door, she was shot and killed. "They stormed into the house over her corpse, turned it inside out, especially the area where the 'treasure' was supposed to be, but found nothing. Later on, they discovered that they had the wrong address."²⁵⁰

Another incident occurred to a well-off Jewish family who were banished from their village near Warsaw and were now living in a small apartment on Gęsia Street in the Warsaw ghetto. They called in a Jewish plasterer to remove a brick from the oven and hammer a nail in the recess, so they could hang up a purse containing jewelry. The next day—as quick as that!—several German policemen arrived, walked over to the oven, and began pulling out bricks, but could not find the right one. "They got very angry, beat

²⁴⁸ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 91.

²⁴⁹ Dov Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2007), 93–94.

²⁵⁰ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 91.

everyone cruelly. They threw heavy Talmud volumes at the head of one tenant, Mrs. Yudkowsky, until she was covered in blood.”²⁵¹

In July 1941, on the eve of the Jewish holiday the Ninth of Av, a fast day and a day of mourning for the destruction of the Second Temple, Huberband was abducted and forced to work in furniture removal from Jewish homes. He was pushed into a truck, along with other kidnapped victims. Next to the German driver sat a young man wearing a Star of David armband. Huberband was convinced he was a German pretender, but in any case, the young man had a list with addresses of Jewish households—information passed on by other Jews. The truck drove from stop to stop, while Huberband and his comrades were forced to take furniture down from the apartments.²⁵²

Merchants, craftsmen, and businessmen left in the ghetto were also informed on. The widow of a well-known thief shot by the Germans turned many neighbours over to the Germans. One neighbor was “a poor, depressed Jew, dying of starvation along with his wife and children,” who made a meagre living grinding flour in an underground mill. Despite the tip-off, the man got off lightly with a 100 zloty fine that he begged from his neighbours. Another Jew, who tried to sell a couple of watches to make a living, had his profits of 135 marks and 200 zloty confiscated by the Germans, due to the woman’s slander. A third Jew had to pay 500 zloty to stop his children’s clothes from being confiscated. A fourth, an artist, was accused of dealing in cotton wool and made a 200 zloty payoff. The Germans then moved to a fifth, neighbouring apartment, where they demanded—and got—150 zloty. All of this activity was the product of one woman.²⁵³

A man from Łódź who came to Warsaw was threatened at gunpoint to hand over the address of a wealthy Jew. He justified his action by saying: “all I had was the 200 zloty in my pocket—and it would have been terrible for me if the Germans took that.” Luckily, the Jewish merchant’s name he wrote on a slip of paper had already left Warsaw.²⁵⁴

Some Jews in the Warsaw ghetto directed Germans to well-stocked shops and purchased the stolen goods later on. Chaim Kaplan noted cynically: “The Führer has issued an edict forbidding [Aryans] coupling with Jewish women because it is ‘an insult to the race’ and his soldiers heed the censure. But he has never forbade them stealing and robbing and thieving from Jews, and that is why you catch them together with Jewish collaborators.” Kaplan also noted that there were informants among Jewish porters and that “they know what’s going on inside and out, when it comes to hidden restricted goods and other trade secrets.” When they weren’t informing porters took hush money from merchants, after having moved their merchandise to hiding places. According to Kaplan, the most vile sort of informants were “those who put Jewish souls into the murderer’s hands, and because of this, are given benefits and breaks, and keep steady

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid., 92.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 92.

company with the Gestapo. These types are the most dangerous of all, and woe betide the man they pursue.”²⁵⁵

Jewish memoirs describe the fate of some porters and others who were killed in the Warsaw ghetto in unclear circumstances in July 1942:

It seems that most of the victims come from circles of the porters, who were occupied in not very savory businesses. They worked with the Gestapo, pointed out where goods were to be found in the possession of Jews, and took extortion money. Now, it is said, they are being liquidated by the Gestapo itself, because new people are supposed to be arriving and they don't want any surviving witnesses of their machinations in businesses like these. That's one version. Others say that the porters are split into two that are fighting one another, and that each side blames the other. The latest murders are supposed to be the result of their informing on one another.²⁵⁶

Informers received 10 percent of all loot collected by the Germans resulting from the information received, Emanuel Ringelblum said. The phenomenon was so widespread (400 informers were recorded in May 1942), that there was a ghetto joke that ran: “Two Jews happen to meet. One asks the other ‘How are you?’ The other one says: ‘Listen, one of us has to be an informer, so I’d better not tell you.’” Ringelblum also pointed out another widespread phenomenon: extortion on the part of Judenrat employees. Given his description, this was clearly commonplace. “The gall of bribe-takers among the Jewish community workers has reached such heights that a post office clerk who knew of a family that had received many packages, came with his wife to the family, and demanded they sell him goods for cheap.”²⁵⁷

Another damaging phenomenon noted by Chaim Kaplan in January 1941: Jews who refused to pay rent to their Jewish landlords, who then turned their tenants over to the authorities. He said cynically that “Warsaw’s residents don’t like paying debts, even when they truly owe them,” and that this was doubly the case when no legal threat hung over their heads. Landlords were in trouble; they asked for rent and no one paid. This could have been solved by legal means, but the process was long and complicated. The Germans, said Kaplan, taught us another way: bring in a *Volksdeutsche* to explain the situation to the tenants, that if they did not pay—tomorrow they would be thrown into the streets. Landlords also figure in another unflattering context—trafficking in ration cards. Ringelblum tells of “bloodsucking” landlords and shop owners who took advantage of the fact that many poor people could not afford even the miniscule rations allowed to them. They would buy the sugar ration card from the poor and sell them for a nice profit.²⁵⁸

The Judenrat was also involved in its own schemes to extort money from tenants. Chaim Kaplan describes the following incident that befell him.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 92.

²⁵⁶ Havi Ben-Sasson and Lea Preiss, “Twilight Days: Missing Pages from Avraham Lewin’s Warsaw Ghetto Diary, May–July 1942,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, 2005): 40–41.

²⁵⁷ Levin, *Walls Around*, 93.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 97–98.

Once an entire delegation from the *Judenrat* entered my apartment (of three rooms and a kitchen) to requisition one of the rooms for a family of refugees. ... while we were still arguing, the refugee signaled that he wanted a word with me, and in private he bared his soul. ... This whole matter cost him money. If I will reimburse him for his expenses, he will backtrack and inform the delegation that he will forgo this apartment.

When I heard his proposal my eyes lit up. But I bargained with him. The refugee demanded 100 zloty; I offered 20. In the end he agreed to accept 20. Right away the delegation found an excuse to make light of the whole affair. They drafted a protocol that the apartment was full and their requisition nullified. Later on I found out that I need not have been so afraid. This is the way the delegation acts with all of its creatures. They hadn't come to confiscate, but rather to receive 20 zloty. The "refugee" was hired for the occasion.²⁵⁹

Wealthy Jews got out of labour duty by sending the poor and Jews who came from other ghettos in their place. The practice was sanctioned by the Jewish councils who took large payments in exchange.²⁶⁰

The plight of the poor and starving did not elicit considerable sympathy among ghetto dwellers:

Extremes of luxury and poverty were to be seen. A smartly dressed woman walked alongside a man in rags. A restaurant in Leszno Street displayed a roasted goose and at its door a boy was starving. People leaving a theatre in Leszno Street passed a poor, emaciated child shivering from cold and begging in the doorway. ...

When someone died of exhaustion on the streets, passers-would cover the corpse with newspapers, lay some stones on it and life rolled on. Some laughed, others cried.²⁶¹

But a social differentiation arose in the ghetto, setting apart substantial groups who had the means even under those infernal conditions to lead a comparatively full, well-fed life and enjoy some kinds of pleasures. On the same streets where daily you could see scenes of horror, amid the swarms of tubercular children dying like flies, alongside the corpses waiting for the scavenger wagons, you would come upon stores full of fine foods, restaurants and cafés which served the most expensive dishes and drinks. At 2 Leshno [Leszno] Street, where the Gertner's restaurant had been, there was a café called Sztuka, complete with floor show. There was another at 13 Tlomatzka [Tłomackie] Street, once the Metropole Restaurant. These establishments were run in partnership with members of the Gestapo by outcast Jews, the most important of whom was the dancer Madame Machno. There were also the well-known Schultz Restaurant at Karmelitzka [Karmelicka] and Nowolipya [Nowolipie] Streets, A La Fourchette at 18 Leshno Street, Britannia at 20 Nowolipya Street.

The clientele of these places consisted principally of Jewish Gestapo agents, Jewish police officials, rich merchants who did business with the Germans, smugglers, dealers in foreign exchange, and similar kinds of people. The worst nest of drunkenness and vice was the Britannia.

²⁵⁹ Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 277–78.

²⁶⁰ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 92.

²⁶¹ Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 34–35.

The curfew did not apply to the habitués of this establishment. They made merry all night. Feasting, drinking, and carousing went on to the rhythm of a jazz band. At dawn, when the revelers left, the streets were already strewn with naked paper-covered corpses. The drunkards paid little attention, tripping unsteadily over the obstacles in their path. Around the restaurants and cafés hovered human shadows, swollen from hunger, who trailed after the well-fed drunks, begging for scraps; they were usually angrily pushed aside for disturbing the mirage of luxury and well-being.

The Nazi made moving pictures of such festive orgies to show the “world” how well the Jews lived in the ghetto.²⁶²

Numerous accounts testify to robbery and thefts which were every-day occurrences in the ghetto, even in broad daylight. The street urchins who carried out these assaults did not elicit much sympathy despite their dire predicament.

The so-called ‘chapers’ (snatchers) appeared on the streets of the ghetto. A chaper was usually a strong and ragged beggar who assaulted people carrying a loaf of bread or a parcel containing food. The chaper took his victim unawares, snatching whatever he was carrying. The unfortunate victim would have no hope of chasing the beggar and recovering the loss, for the booty was usually consumed during his flight.²⁶³

Suddenly there was a movement in the crowd. Someone shouted, “Catch him!” A barefoot, ragged boy, his legs blackened with dirt, splashed through the mud, tripped over a corpse, fell. In his hand was a small loaf of bread, gripped tightly with all his strength. The owner of the bread pounced on him and tried to tear the treasure out of his hands. ...

These young food-snatchers were a special category of criminal. Their hunger gave them the desperation and strength to break the holy law of ownership over a piece of bread. They were savagely beaten by the people they robbed and by the police, but extirpating the snatchers was no more possible than extirpating the hunger.²⁶⁴

Teenage girls were particularly vulnerable: “Girls 14–15 years of age lived together with men who were old enough to be their grandfathers. We called them ‘Za Chala’ (which means ‘loaf of bread’). They were playthings for a chala.”²⁶⁵

Also worthy of mention are the activities of the Jewish grave robbers, mentioned in the diary of Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Judenrat, already on January 4, 1940: “Yesterday for a second time [our] workers were beaten up at the Praga cemetery [by a gang] which was searching for diamonds.” Ringelblum also noted the same phenomenon several times in September 1941. The first time his record was dry: “Undertakers open graves, take out the jewels and gold teeth.” The second time his reaction was highly emotional: “Unspeakably baseless acts are happening at the cemetery. Mass graves [and] defilement of the

²⁶² Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), 91.

²⁶³ Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 35.

²⁶⁴ Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, 80–81.

dead by the lower orders, who throw them into the graves like dogs. That is not all. It turns out that they open graves at night, pull out gold teeth and steel the shrouds. Recently, there was a serious investigation of Jewish policemen participating in these acts. In one word: the lowest of the low.” In April 1942, author and social worker Rachel Auerbach wrote in her diary: “It turns out that a large percentage of items available today for trade come from looting dead bodies. Specialized companies, who make a living from this, strip the clothes from dead bodies lying in the street. By morning, the people are completely naked, covered at most by a sheet of paper, or a poster pulled off the wall.”²⁶⁶

Abraham Lewin said bribery in the *Ordnungsdienst* (the ghetto Jewish police force) was a daily event. In May 1942, the Jewish police began arresting Jews aged forty and under whose work permits were not in order. In doing so, Lewin said, “whole new areas of corruption opened up before the Jewish police. Anyone who could give them a few zloty could get away. Again, the poor suffered, just as they suffered a year and two years ago.” Yet during the mass deportation in the summer of 1942 (discussed later), their dissolution reached a new low: “The Jewish policemen participated in this travesty. They broke into apartments, emptied closets, shattered dishes and destroyed property just for fun.”²⁶⁷

Abductions for forced labour provided Jewish policemen with another opportunity for extortion. Ringelblum spoke at uncharacteristically great length about a wave of kidnappings that took place in April 1941, which began after fifty Jews showed up for transport to forced labour camps, instead of the 1,500 that were promised. House searches turned up only 130 more persons; it was clear that the remaining inductees were in hiding. Ringelblum stressed that Jews were trying to avoid the labor camps after having seen their compatriots come back broken in body and spirit, while the community did nothing to assist their families. Another reason was that the rich managed to save themselves by buying fake sick leave documents, meaning only the poor went to the camps. The nights of April 19 and 20, Ringelblum continued, were waking nightmares

where the Jewish police earned the title ‘gangsters.’ ... The *Ordnungsdienst*, together with [some] Polish police, took over entire buildings and demanded ransom money in lieu of searching for the people who were in hiding that night. They say one [apparently Jewish] policeman made 4,000 zloty that same night. They went up to people aged 40 and over, and demanded a pay-off. Clearly, the people who went with them were those unable to ransom themselves, people who had originally been released because they were sick or because they were sole wage-earners. Among those abducted was a father of seven children, the youngest of which was two weeks old. In particular, they searched through refugee shelters and took starving, suffering men.

These scenes repeated themselves over the next two days. Ringelblum summed up: “Those hateful days branded a mark of shame on the community.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Abraham Albert, *A Spark of Life* (n.p., n.p., 1981), 32

²⁶⁶ Levin, *Walls Around*, 98.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

Adolf (Abraham) Berman confirmed the accuracy of these descriptions in his memoirs. Kidnapping for forced labour, he said, cruelly revealed the difference between classes among Jews: the rich were able to pay off and redeem themselves, while the poor bore the brunt of suffering. This was “a source of corruption and moral degeneration among *Judenrat* clerks, the Jewish police in charge of work gangs and, in time, and to a greater extent, the *Ordnungsdienst*.”²⁶⁹ There were also minor cases of extortion. Ringelblum told of

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 94. A careful reading of Holocaust literature reveals a disturbing lack of solidarity and compassion among the Jews themselves. Many Jewish sources, as well as non-Jewish witnesses, comment extensively on the great chasm that separated the wealthy and poor inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto, and eventually all of its residents. Władysław Szpilman described the stark contrast between the existence of the well-to-do and the poor in the ghetto. Large crowds of beggars would converge on restaurants and cafés begging for food only to find themselves chased away by porters with sticks, as at the *Nowoczesna*. Wealthy passengers riding in rickshaws would also chase beggars away with canes. See Władysław Szpilman, *Śmierć miasta* (Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza, 1946), 71–72, as cited in Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 564. The memoirs of Władysław Szpilman were translated into English as *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939–45* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1999); large portions of the 1946 Polish edition, which is significantly different, is cited in Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life*, 41–42. See also: Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, 207, where the author speaks of the “complete breakdown of Jewish society”; Lewin, *A Cup of Tears*, 127, which describes the enormous disparities in the main midday meal; Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz*, 48, which describes daily street robberies and the lack of sharing with the more misfortunate. Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, at p. 163, citing the memoir of Chaim Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony*, notes that widespread tax evasion by the well-off residents of the ghetto seriously exacerbated starvation among the ghetto poor. One of the most poignant contrasts in the Warsaw ghetto was penned by Shimon Huberband (cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 127–28):

During the harsh, frozen winter of 1941–1942, with every step one saw half-naked children on the streets of the Jewish quarter. Thousands of Jewish women, finely dressed, made-up and perfumed, would walk by them with equanimity, and only occasionally did one stop for a moment to throw a poor child a penny, and generally this was a mature woman, from the older generation. ... seldom do Jews open their wallets to another Jew who is starving to death.

Moreover, I've personally witnessed—and this isn't a made-up horror story—the body of a 30-year-old Jewish man who starved to death against a large shop window filled with baked goods, wines, grapes and other delicacies. The corpse was completely nude, and it was, and at the same time, wasn't ironic that elegant women had to step over it to enter the shop, then exit holding bags filled with good things; if only a portion had been given to the hungry, that Jew wouldn't have died on the doorstep.

Also, as I walked down the street one freezing day in December 1941, I personally witnessed a 16-year-old lad lying on the sidewalk at the corner of Karmelicka and Nowolipki. Next to him lay three little children, each one smaller than the next. The three were almost completely naked. Dozens of people passed by, but only occasionally did someone hand them a donation. My attention was captured by a young student walking in arm with two girls. ... The young people stopped alongside the miserable children. I was convinced that they would pull out their wallets, along with the bundles of goodies they held in their hands, and give something to the children. But these young people dallied for a bit, while one of the girls gave the boy an occasional shake; they then burst out in laughter and continued on their way.

... in times like these, when Jewish women waste hundreds and thousands of zloty in nightclubs, never giving a penny to charity, [it indicates] an endless decline in morals.

Moreover, these nightclubs even host dance contests, like the good old days, where Jewish women and girls, Jewish men, dance in these competitions and even win prizes ... And so, the myth of the “united, merciful Jewry” had been destroyed. There is no more to say.

Alceo Valcini, wartime Warsaw correspondent of the Milan *Corriere della Sera*, specifically comments on the lack of a sense of solidarity among the ghetto dwellers in their common misfortune. See Valcini, *Golgota Warszawy*, 233–34. A similar state of affairs prevailed in other ghettos which were plagued by corruption, thievery (especially of food supplies), and black marketeering (stolen goods were sold at exorbitant prices). Ties with the Gestapo greatly facilitated the success of these ventures. This assumed massive proportions in Łódź, the second largest ghetto in German-occupied Poland, and impacted adversely on the survival of lowly Jews with no connections. The wealthy hid away their belongings; milk destined for children was watered down; the sick were deprived of their food ration cards; people were known to kill off family members to get their ration cards. See Icchak (Henryk) Rubin, *Żydzi w Łodzi pod niemiecką okupacją 1939–1945* (London: Kontra, 1988), 236, 243–47, 318, 319–23. Leon Kahn, whose family took refuge in the well-fed ghetto of Grodno in October 1942 after the annihilation of his shtetl, recalled that the Grodno

some policemen who stationed themselves at Sienna and Śliska Streets and “made money from adjusting the clock. At 15 or 20 minutes to 9:00 p.m. [when curfew began], they would stop passers-by, claiming that it was already past none o’clock. In return for 10 or 20 złoty, a ring or something else, [the victim] was set free.”²⁷⁰

According to another diary from Warsaw, in July 1942:

Up to now they left Jewish women alone. ... It is said that the labor office wants to have 20,000 Jewish women for work in the fields. Kidnapping on the street, with the help of the Jewish police, is systematically taking place. Last night they seized [people] from their beds, and this morning they grabbed [Jews] in the streets. Always new victims for the German Moloch, and new opportunities for extortion for the Jewish police.²⁷¹

David Landau describes another phenomenon in the Warsaw ghetto that led to abuse and pilfering of Jewish property.

Another request, for soap, had unfortunate consequences. The Warsaw Health Department, Jewish Section, came back with a strict order from the German command to establish ‘hygiene units’ to delouse ‘the dirty Jewish population’ ... The Jews were to be deloused in communal disinfecting baths. ...

During the spring and summer of 1941, these units became the new scourge of the ghetto. The ‘disinfectors’ would appear at a given street, seal off a building with police help, then go from apartment to apartment, forcing the people out and marching them under guard to the disinfecting bath. While the inhabitants were away, the disinfectors or the police, or both, would rob the dwellings while disinfecting them. The deloused inhabitants would come back from the ‘bath’ stinking of one kind of disinfectant, to apartments stinking of another and robbed of most of their belongings. The people feared the police and the disinfectors more than the plagues of typhus or

Jews “were cold and inhospitable, and never even offered us a place to sleep, though many had extra room.” After the synagogue service one Friday evening, the shames announced that “there were strangers in the midst of the congregation who were homeless and had lost all their possessions. Would someone take these unfortunates home to share the Sabbath meal with them?” Kahn recalled their reaction: “We went to stand by the door so the congregation could see us easily as they filed out. Family by family left, carefully avoiding our eyes until at last our little group stood there alone.” See Kahn, *No Time To Mourn*, 94–96. In Goniądz, “The Jewish population ... consisted of three classes. The first were the rich who were merchants before the War and also of manufacturers of such items as goods and shoes. They didn’t have to work for a living. Most of them had hidden their goods in bunkers or among peasants they knew in the villages. From time-to-time, they would sell off a bit of goods, which were high-priced then, and buy food and other necessities. They could have existed like this for years.” See Tuvia Ivri (Yevraiski), “The Destruction of Goniądz,” Part 14, in J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky) and A.L. Fayans, eds., *Our Hometown Goniądz* (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniądz Association in U.S.A. and in Israel, 1960), Internet: <www.jewish.gen.org/yizkor/goniadz/>. Just as some Poles did, Jews who procured or manufactured forged documents generally did so for a handsome, sometimes exorbitant, profit. See, for example, Edward Stankiewicz, *My War: Memoir of a Young Jewish Poet* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 59; Grabowski, “*Ja tego Żyda znam!*”, 101, 102. One resident of the Warsaw ghetto writes: “Prices of those very documents were considerably higher in the ghetto because of the large number of Jewish go-betweens who profiteered on this business. See Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 114.

²⁷⁰ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 94.

²⁷¹ Havi Ben-Sasson and Lea Preiss, “Twilight Days: Missing Pages from Avraham Lewin’s Warsaw Ghetto Diary, May–July 1942,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (2005): 53.

typhoid themselves. And there was no authority to which they could turn. The targets of the disinfectors were mostly larger buildings, where there were many tenants and more to steal.²⁷²

Chaim Kaplan confirms the rampant corruption in the health department, among other officials, and in various occupations.

The entire ghetto is a huge dunghill. The Jewish janitors do as they please, and there is no one to reprimand them. There is no limit to their impudence. ...

However, if anyone thinks that only the janitors are corrupt, he is greatly mistaken. ... Everyone who holds a responsible position in the *Judenrat* is openly or secretly prepared to do your bidding—for a price. A perfect example of this is the health department established under the auspices of the *Judenrat* to maintain standards of sanitation, cleanliness, and health. In this instance you are not dealing with vulgar, dull-witted janitors, but with apparently highly intelligent, cultured doctors. Yet even here money purifies all filth and covers all iniquities. ...

Outwardly no one is more zealous than the officials of the health department in enforcing sanitation. ... After a few days the courtyard committee receives notification from the health department that due to below-standard conditions of sanitation in the following apartments, disinfection is necessary. What does disinfection entail? ... It entails the complete ruin of all your possessions with the sharp disinfectant they use. ...

In my courtyard the following incident once took place: A disinfection was announced and the disinfectors came with their paraphernalia, not to disinfect but to haggle over the size of the bribe. For a full hour they stood on their price. During that time the bargaining would stop and start periodically, not secretly but publicly. In the presence of all the residents of the courtyard, the disinfectors negotiated their deal. Finally they agreed on 400 zloty [złoty]. Every apartment that was supposed to have been disinfected paid its share. Once the money was handed over the courtyard was out of danger, as far as sanitation was concerned, since the health department would receive a duly signed report that everything had been carried out according to plan.²⁷³

Conditions outside Warsaw were no better.

Sometimes the greedy Nazis conspire with some worthless Jew. They share one pocket; both lie in wait for the loot of innocents and for their blood; both fill their houses with the wealth they have stolen and robbed. But robbing doesn't last forever, and when the partnership breaks up it is not convenient for the thieving Nazi to have a Jew know his secrets. The remedy for this is to get rid of him. ...

Thus Perlmutter, the president of the *Judenrat* of Mława [Mława], was killed by his German overseer, whose hand had never left his while both of them looted and robbed and grew rich.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Landau, *Caged*, 78.

²⁷³ Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 282–83.

²⁷⁴ Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 279.

A Jewish eyewitness from Działoszyce, a small town northeast of Kraków, recalled that soon after the Germans arrived,

Some Jews, unfortunately, became collaborators with the Germans. They pointed out where Jews had hidden goods or farm animals, which remained the only source for feeding their families. Initially, these people were given coats the same color as German uniforms, but once all the secrets had been revealed, the coats were taken away and the traitors were shot.²⁷⁵

Another eyewitness from Działoszyce, whose family of shopkeepers carefully hid away goods with Jews in various places in town, recalled: “When informers told the Germans where our merchandise was hidden, it was carted away.”²⁷⁶ With time conditions got only worse:

As conditions worsened, people took bigger risks to survive, and ethical standards deteriorated. ...

There was Moshke with his jaundiced thoughts, one of three or four informers from our town who denounced people to the Nazis and who exposed anyone who did things forbidden by German decree. Moshke must have been paid or received some benefit for his treachery. Unfortunately, we were not careful enough to keep all our secrets because we could not imagine anything as disgraceful as Jewish collaborators.

Another bad person was Mottel Platkiewicz (not a close relative), who was having an affair with a non-Jewish prostitute. Together, they denounced Jews and Poles. The Germans ensured the anonymity of the informers—at least while they were still useful. Once their utility expired, the Germans shot them and dumped their bodies on the outskirts of town. Then rumors would circulate about who the informers were. ...

One small act of deceit I witnessed haunts me to this day. We had hidden a few rolls of bulky material behind a closet at Reb Moshe Chiel’s house. When we needed to sell the fabric, I went to collect it, but the rabbi, who had been held in high regard, said he did not remember whether we had put goods there. After his first lie, he tried to convince me that I had already taken the merchandise and forgotten that I did. I knew for sure that neither I nor anyone else from my family had retrieved it. Reb Moshe Chiel never returned the fabric.

How could a trustworthy, virtuous person with a reputation for being a pious Jew act in such a way? The rabbi lied, committed theft, and cast aspersions on my family and me. ...

One day during the war, my father noticed two peddlers selling suits, shawls, and kerchiefs in the marketplace that looked just like the merchandise we had hidden in Black Laya’s attic. Slowly, quietly, we investigated the matter without making any accusations. The two men selling the merchandise were Hartzke and Herskowitz (who used to be called “Einlatch”). They were selling our stock gradually, two suits one day, another suit the next. We checked with the customers and established that their merchandise was definitely ours. Somehow, it had been stolen and was now

²⁷⁵ Testimony of Selig Schwitzer in Jacob Biber, ed., *A Triumph of the Spirit: Ten Stories of Holocaust Survivors* (San Bernardino, California: The Borgo Press, 1994), 92.

²⁷⁶ Joseph E. Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption: A Life Renewed* (Washington, D.C.: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and The Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2005), 90.

being sold. We suspected that Black Laya's son was helping himself to our suits and that these two were his fences.

My parents decided to open the secret attic to check whether any of their merchandise was missing. When they tried to arrange an inspection, they were told that Black Laya's son was sick. The family had all kinds of excuses to prevent a visit: it is dangerous; the doctor forbids it; we would now need permission from the man next door, who owned the second floor leading to the attic; and so on. Lie followed lie. One *moytzei Shabes* a short time later, we learned that the Germans came to Black Laya's house with a truck, broke into the hiding place, and with the forced help of some Jews, took whatever was left of our merchandise and carted it away. By delaying our visit, Black Laya's son got word to informers, who were rewarded for the information. He had engineered a tidy little operation to get himself out of his tight spot at our expense.

Hershel Ries, an awkward, cynical loner, who was an underworld figure of sorts in our town, publicly announced that if he "had known that Zisme Tenenbaum had hidden merchandise, [he] would have gone through the roof and taken some of it [himself]." Ries was a well-known thief and used to brag about crimes he could have committed to make himself rich. "Why did they have to tell the Germans, so that the Germans would end up with the goods? Why wasn't I informed instead?" asked Ries. ...

Informers also guided Nazis to our house to search for hidden valuables. I was at home, sick, when Nazis led by the *Stadtkommandant* (city commander) barged in and violently opened the book closets and searched between the pages of our holy books for paper currency. These antisemites hated Jewish books in the process threw the books to the floor. ... Our house was searched from the attic to the basement, but the Nazis found nothing.²⁷⁷

The following testimony is from Kolbuszowa:

Enemies there were also within our own ranks—not many, mind you, but ... betrayal by fellow Jews was all the more devastating. ... Two of them were not originally from Kolbuszowa, and the third, though a longtime resident, had always been a disreputable and marginal character. ...

Naturally the Germans were willing to listen to him, interested in whatever information he might have to pass on. And when we saw him speaking to German police and going in and out of military headquarters, we understood that he enjoyed a privileged position. Naturally he was not shy about playing it to his advantage. He would look the other way, he said, when Jews violated German instructions—for a price. When, for example, the ritual slaughterers in defiance of orders continued to provide kosher meat to Jews in town, they had first to satisfy this man's demands for fear he would report their activities to the authorities.

When bribes had to be given to German officials he served willingly as an intermediary, taking a portion of the money as his "share." He warned of upcoming raids on our houses and seizures of property and persons, but suggested how, for a sum of money, all might be averted. We paid him, suspecting that most of the time no such raids were planned, that such talk was merely a device to line his own pockets. ...

²⁷⁷ Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption*, 93–96.

Regarding a second informer in town, Shmul Czolik, no one was likely to be surprised at his actions. Czolik was one of those itinerants who traveled from town to town begging. ... It so happened that he met and married a girl from Kolbuszowa. Yet he remained a professional beggar, now supporting himself and his wife with the money given him. But Czolik's fortunes improved noticeably when the Germans came to town; however it happened, we soon discovered that he enjoyed close contacts with them. He wore no Jewish armband, and we could see him entering and leaving police headquarters on a regular basis. What a change for Czolik now, from a person who was barely tolerated to one who was suddenly courted, treated with respect. ...

Czolik was a threat, and he knew it full well. With his access to the Germans, something practically no one else had, he enjoyed the upper hand. Often he arrived with confidential information, he said, about how the Germans were about to seize a certain person or confiscate a business. But he usually assured people that "something can be done." No one misunderstood his meaning. Money put into Czolik's hands usually meant an end to that "threat." He would then return and assure the intended victims, "It's settled." I don't know how many times he spoke of imminent "threats," but few dared question his inside information. That he terrorized the town for a time is certainly no understatement.

Then there was Pearlman, a thoroughly contemptible creature who also joined the ranks of the informers in town. Like Czolik, Pearlman came from some other place, but unlike him he dressed most stylishly and spoke only German; though Jewish, he identified his fortunes with those of the Germans. Many a time the story of how Pearlman exulted in public when the Germans conquered France: "Good news! We took Paris without firing a shot!"

The success enjoyed by all three informers was fortunately cut short when they overstepped boundaries and their bribe-taking and bribe-giving was uncovered by the Gestapo. ... Each of the three was at some point caught in a compromising position. Their past services to the Germans counted for little, could not save them from being executed. Their deaths freed us from a form of terror we had come to despise; but with all the other horrors about, their elimination brought no dramatic change in our condition.²⁷⁸

In a small town near Zduńska Wola named Łask,

The Germans had ordered the Jews in Łask to depart from their gold and money in "Valuta" [currency], their jewels and precious stones ... (The Christian population was not spared either from that decree.) ... There were in Łask, some "Jews" who helped the Germans to check the list [to ensure that] the 'Robbery' was done lawfully. Those informers knew how to point [to] many of the rich people in town who were missing from the list of the "Robbery", or had not given enough from their fortune. The informers also pointed at Rabbi Leibel, saying that he had also hidden a part of his fortune and of the holy Kelims of the synagogue.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Norman Salsitz, as told to Richard Skolnik, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 261–64.

²⁷⁹ Z. Tzurnamal, ed., *Łask: sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Łask in Israel, 1968), 27.

In Szczepieszyn, “The Gestapo arrived from Zamość with its Jewish helpers who led them [the Gestapo] to the homes of rich Jews demanding money and that they turn over their gold.”²⁸⁰

In Chrzanów, Jews accompanied and assisted German soldiers in removing goods from the few Polish commercial establishments in that town in September 1939.²⁸¹ A Jew in Rzeszów was easily duped into believing that the German invaders were potential benefactors. According to one Jew witness:

I recall to this day how one of our neighbors, Bielfeld, came to our home and told us with excitement how good the Germans are, in that they distribute sugar and other such products, which we had not been able to obtain for some time. He explained how they honored him with a meal fit for a king—in return for some small matter, such as the giving of information about the address of the Jewish communal organization and other such organizations.

The same Bielfeld appeared the next day embarrassed and crushed, with half of his beard and one of his payos shaved off.²⁸²

A Jewish woman who tried to escape to the Soviet zone in December 1939 recalled:

Crossing from the German side [near Przemyśl] was nerve-wracking because gimlet-eyed soldiers scrutinised every traveller, searching for Jews who might be travelling without armbands or carrying money or valuables. Any pretext was sufficient to beat, arrest or shoot. ... A small group of Jews just ahead of her were taking a long time to go through. The guards were examining documents and shaking their heads, finally they motioned for them to step aside. ... Just as my mother stepped resolutely towards the sentry, a voice shouted ‘*Jude! Jude!*’ It was the man who’d been stopped from crossing; he must have realised that she was Jewish and was trying to stop her out of spite.²⁸³

In many ghettos the Jewish polices waged a lucrative war against individual smugglers before becoming tools for the liquidation of the ghettos themselves. In Otwock outside Warsaw, the Jewish police became the scourge of Jews who tried to eke out a living by engaging in trade with the local population. They also carried out with model efficiency and rigour all German orders to round up Jews for various tasks.

The members and staff of the Judenrat, too, were among the privileged; they were provided with higher bread rations and other necessities. And above all were the Jewish policemen, around a hundred young men, who became the real rulers in the ghetto. They robbed the single smugglers of their products, took bribes from the organized smuggling gangs, and allowed the rich to buy

²⁸⁰ Account of Efraim Farber in Dov Shuval, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Shebreshin* (Haifa: Association of Former Inhabitants of Shebreshin in Israel and the Diaspora, 1984), posted on the Internet in Polish translation at: <<http://horajec.republika.pl/okup6.html>>.

²⁸¹ Account of Roman Wawrzonek, dated February 2002 (submitted to Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance).

²⁸² Klara Ma’ayan Munzberg, “During the Nazi Occupation,” in *Rzeszow Community Memorial Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rzeszow/rzeszow.html>>, translation of M. Yari-Wold, *Kehilat Raysha: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rzeszow in Israel and the USA, 1967), 322ff.

²⁸³ Armstrong, *Mosaic*, 216.

themselves out from being sent away to work camps. Instead, they dragged the young men from the poor homes and families, often beating them mercilessly with the rubber batos they wielded. ...

After Passover I continued to venture outside the ghetto, to the same and other villages, and thus I earned my livelihood and even helped feed my sister's family. ...

Worse than these were the Jewish ghetto policemen who sniffed out and chased after the smugglers to rob them of their hard-won products or demand from them a hefty share. Several times I had to pay them off, and once I was brought to the police station where I was beaten and threatened to be sent to a labour camp. ...

In mid-January [1942], the Germans demanded two hundred young men for construction work at an unspecified site. ... Soon the Otwock ghetto police went into action and dragged the men from homes, cellars and attics. They were all transported by trucks to a place named Treblinka ... For a time, nothing was heard from any of them. Suddenly one from the group returned with the dreadful news that nearly all of the Otwock detainees were beaten to death by the Ukrainian guards soon after their arrival. Only about twelve or fifteen people, mostly good carpenters, plumbers and iron workers, were spared. They all worked together with other prisoners on the construction of a large death camp to which Jews from all over would be brought to their doom. Large pits, he told, were being dug at the edge of the camp for the burning and burial of the bodies gassed in special gas chambers. ...

Here [in the ghetto], too, he remained in hiding, afraid he would be snatched by the police and sent back from where he came. However, his story circulated from mouth to mouth, and sowed dread in the hearts of the ghetto inhabitants. Still, there were those who disregarded his report as a tale of a braggart. But more evidence of the truth soon became available. ...

Now that the Germans demanded another four hundred men to be sent away, nobody was willing to go. The streets of the main ghetto became empty; young and middle-aged men hid wherever they could. Soon [Bernard] Kronenberg, [the head of the ghetto police], with his ghetto policemen, went into action. They broke into houses by day and night, dragging and beating the men and leading them to a wired enclosure beside the ghetto police station. Outside the station, mothers, wives and children gathered, refusing to leave their dear ones. Their cries and pleadings did not move the policemen, most of them relatives and former friends of the interned. The policemen moved briskly, clicking with their leather boots, giving out orders and cracking jokes.

The quota was filled and the next day several Germans arrived and ordered the assembled to form into columns, four abreast. Surrounded by the ghetto policemen and armed [German] gendarmes, the captives were led outside.

Suddenly several trucks with Ukrainian militia-men entered the ghetto ... As they moved, roaring and shouting, rifle shots were heard and cries of the dying and wounded pierced the air. People panicked and ran for shelter into the houses, stores and courtyards. The Ukrainian detachments reached the Judenrat and the ghetto police station. Right away they cordoned off the assembled Jews and led them to the square behind the railway ramp, which had been fenced in with barbed

wire some time ago. Groups of Ukrainian soldiers, accompanied by Jewish policemen, began to move into the ghetto streets and lanes, driving out the people from their homes and hiding places. Many of the people came out by themselves, scared and dumbfounded by the shrieking Ukrainians and the whistling ghetto policemen. Although obeyed the orders and marched silently to the gathering place, the soldiers continued to beat mercilessly whomever they could reach with their rifle butts. From time to time they began shooting straight into the crowd.²⁸⁴

When the Germans invaded Eastern Poland in the summer of 1941, similar events occurred there. In Bielsk Podlaski,

Jewish policemen, however, all non-locals, reported on and turned in Jews ... Jewish policemen took the Nazis to the hiding places of foodgoods, which had been taken from the abandoned Soviet storehouses and hidden in the ghetto. The goods were confiscated, and the Jews in whose houses they were found, were beaten.²⁸⁵

In Buczacz, a Czech Jew by the name of Dr. Bronfeld, who was appointed to head the Judenrat, is believed to have supplied the Germans with the list of intellectuals, among them Poles and Ukrainians, who were murdered in August 1941. During the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans and Ukrainians, with the aid of the Jewish police, drove out, brutalized, and murdered the Jewish victims: "The Jewish scoundrels did not lag behind the murderers. They pounced on the Jewish hiding places, on Jews hiding in the forests and stripped them naked."²⁸⁶ Fearful of being executed by the Germans in a collective act of punishment, a young Jew in Jeziornica near Slonim falsely fingered an older Jew, thereby sparing his own life.²⁸⁷ A group of seven wounded Jews who escaped from an *Aktion* and took shelter in a Jewish hospital in Slonim were betrayed by a Jewish doctor, after the Germans threatened to burn down the hospital. The victims were driven to the Jewish cemetery and shot.²⁸⁸

In time, cooperation with the Germans became organized and entrenched through the creation of Jewish councils and the Jewish police forces which were established in every ghetto. The new authorities were also assisted by freelance informers and agents recruited for that purpose. Kalmen Wewryk of Chełm recalled:

The Jewish police went to each house after the *Aktion* and made new lists of the remaining population—those who had survived. The Germans then ordered the survivors to live closer together, in a more narrowly restricted area. Two families, with 4 children, were sent to live in my

²⁸⁴ Hopfeld, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 27, 35–36, 38–39, 40, 50–51. For a memoir of a Polish policeman from Otwock who dispatched his own wife and daughter to Treblinka, see Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?: Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996).

²⁸⁵ "Bielsk," in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas Hakehillot: Polin*, vol. 8 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 170–75; English translation: *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Vol. VIII, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol8_11170.html>.

²⁸⁶ Yehuda Bauer, "Buczacz and Krzemieniec: The Story of Two Towns During the Holocaust," in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (2005), 264 n.34, 270, 286–87.

²⁸⁷ Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 355.

²⁸⁸ Account of Mordechaj Jonisz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 141.

home. ... My new neighbors resented my presence—they would have preferred to have the house all to themselves.

... I was completely dejected, totally depressed. In my house there were strangers now who dressed in my wife's clothes; their children wore my little one's clothes. ... When I saw them in those clothes I just couldn't control my tears. They slept in my bed and I no longer had a bed to sleep in. I kept a bit of merchandise in a chest, so I slept on the lid of that chest. I had lost my bed because I was outnumbered by them; they simply took over the bed and that was that. ...

A big camp, using the military barracks of Chelm as a nucleus, was built. All the Jews from Chelm and the surrounding *shtetlach* were "invited" to report there. ... Then a new order was issued: all Jews *had* to report to the barracks. ...

I didn't report to that camp. Some of my neighbors in my flat also didn't report. Because of them I could no longer use my false-beam hiding place. Anyhow, they wanted to get rid of me. With me gone, there would be one less body in the crowded room. And they could 'help themselves' to my meager possessions. One woman in the flat lost her husband so she wanted all Jewish husbands everywhere to die. Another had lost 2 brothers who were my age, so she looked at me and her eyes seemed to say: "Why are you alive and they're not?" Somebody in my house squealed on me. One day the Gestapo burst into the flat, ran right over to me and told me to tell them where I had hidden my merchandise. ... I showed them where all the merchandise was. They brought a truck and I had to load all the merchandise on it. ... I had to go with the Gestapo men there and unload the merchandise. When I finished they beat me and drove me straight to the big new military barracks camp and shoved me in. I was no longer a free man.²⁸⁹

Leon Cymlel, who had escaped from a death march and returned to his native Chelm with the help of Poles, found himself pursued by Jewish policemen when he did not report for work. He was chased by one Bocheński in the streets of the city, but fortunately escaped.²⁹⁰

In Szydłowiec,

several weeks after the outbreak of the war, a young Jew suddenly appeared in Szydłowiec driving a German army truck with military license plates. ... a few months later he was back, this time in the service of the Price Control Police. He rode around in a droshky [horse-drawn carriage], stopped at certain addresses, broke open a brick wall or a padlock and removed hidden stores of goods such as leather, textiles, etc. He would write down the name of the owner in a notebook, and several weeks later the Jews whose name he had written down would be arrested and no one would be able to learn what happened to them. The resultant panic among the Jews in Szydłowiec was completely understandable, because most of them now lived on what they had managed to hide before the Germans came in. ... the "raids" by this man became more and more frequent ...

²⁸⁹ Kalmen Wewryk, *To Sobibor and Back: An Eyewitness Account* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 25–27.

²⁹⁰ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 694.

... Meanwhile, the number of local Jewish informers who joined the driver increased. It was clear to us that without these local informers the driver, a stranger in town, would have been unable to find the hiding-places.

The Judenrat then called the young man in and offered to give him a weekly stipend if he would stop ... He agreed, and also asked for a stipend for his “assistants.” This too was granted. One day later, the droshky reappeared on the street and resumed its old business. The stranger had informed the Price Control Police about the “deal” the Judenrat had offered him. The Police immediately ordered the Judenrat to come to Radom. ... The Gestapo had arrested several Jews who were found with hidden goods.

Jewish informers have also sprung forth out of the earth. Early in the summer [1940] the district police appeared and conducted mass inspections, acting on “leads” supplied by Jewish informers. One of these characters, a refugee from Kalish [Kalisz], takes part in these inspections personally. They are usually done at night, when people are asleep. The police beat the Jews unmercifully, rip up floors, dig up the ground, test the walls for hiding-places. If they find hidden goods they arrest the owner and send him to a place from where he never returns. These inspections have been going on for weeks.²⁹¹

In Chmielnik,

Once three Germans, accompanied by a Jewish informant, burst into Kalman’s store. Just as they exploited the Judenrat, the Nazi employed Jewish collaborators and Jewish police to maintain order and to carry out unpleasant tasks. ...

Bela Nozyce Strauch did not have a favourable or sympathetic impression of Chmielnik’s Jewish informant, who raided her home with the Germans. While they ransacked the house, their dogs ripped out her father’s beard.

Saul Zernie, the 17, walked to the square with his father, still a young man at age 38. The urge to escape was so overpowering, Zernie bolted. A Jewish policeman pursued and caught him, just as he entered a building. Zernie was forced back to the square. He felt like a hunted animal. “We were all surrounded by German and Jewish police,” Zernie said. “They started lining up the people, picking the healthy ones and the younger ones.”²⁹²

Often members of the Jewish council and police simply acted like scoundrels and became the scourge of the ghetto, as was the case in Busk:

²⁹¹ Abraham Finkler, “A Ghetto Without Barbed Wire” and Motl Eisenberg, “Running From Death” in Berl Kagan, ed., *Szydlowiec Memorial Book* (New York: Shildowtzer Benevolent Association in New York, 1989), 157–59, 172.

²⁹² Suzan E. Hagstrom, *Sara’s Children and the Destruction of Chmielnik* (Spotsylvania, Virginia: Sergeant Kirkland’s Press, 2001), 98, 108.

While it lasted, the Judenrat officials and the all-Jewish Ghetto police took care of their cronies. They used what power they had, or exploited the powerlessness of those under them, to settle old scores where being Jewish counted for nothing.

Those who became the Ghetto police were usually the local scum. One of our neighbors was especially mean, and he wielded his club without provocation. His name was Laybele. ... He turned out to be the meanest of all the Ghetto police in Busk.²⁹³

In Sandomierz, a Jew confided in a Jewish policeman, telling him where his family had hidden money and gold in the nearby town of Opatów. The Jewish policeman went there with some Germans and retrieved the valuables, but refused to share any with the rightful owner who was in need.²⁹⁴ In Biłgoraj, Efraim Farber avoided registration with the assistance of a Polish clerk only to be sent back to register by a member of the Judenrat who acted as a strict enforcer of German decrees.²⁹⁵ People who clandestinely tried to organize a religious life in the Kielce ghetto were reported to the Germans by fellow Jews.²⁹⁶

German Jews enjoyed a particularly bad reputation as lackeys of the German authorities. The Kielce memorial book mentions Johann Spiegel, an expellee from Düsseldorf, as well as other ghetto policemen such as Proszowski, Bialobroda, Strawczynski, “who harassed the Jewish population very much and their behavior was like that of the Nazis themselves.”²⁹⁷ Two young men who were among the first to be deported to Treblinka managed to escape from Treblinka, made their way back to Kielce and started to tell stories of what they had seen in the camp. The reaction was swift:

A certain Spiegel, a German Jew who was the *Älteste* of the Jewish police in the Kielce Ghetto, expelled these two young escapees from Treblinka out of the ghetto, saying that they were spreading panic among the Jews of Kielce.²⁹⁸

Meanwhile,

To ensure that their orders and decrees were fulfilled exactly, the Nazi authorities set up a Jewish council in the ghetto with a Jewish police alongside it, who had to ensure that the entire Jewish population followed every decree and command. Thus, for example, a command was given to hand over hundreds of strong young men, suitable for backbreaking work for forced labor. The council with the aid of the police fulfilled this command precisely. ...

The Ukrainian guards, the Gestapo and several of the Jewish police, who had been recruited from the underworld joined forces to wreak havoc on the inhabitants of the ghetto.²⁹⁹

²⁹³ Hecht, *Life Death Memories*, 81.

²⁹⁴ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 99.

²⁹⁵ Account of Efraim Farber in Shuval, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Shebreshin*, posted on the Internet in Polish translation at: <<http://horajec.republika.pl/okup6.html>>.

²⁹⁶ “Kielce Ghetto,” Internet: <<http://www.deathcamps.org/occupation/kielce%20ghetto.html>>.

²⁹⁷ Pinchas Cytron (Zitron), ed., *Sefer Kielce: Toldot Kehilat Kielce. Miyom Hivsudah V’ad Churbanah* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kielce in Israel, 1957), 240; translated as *Book of Kielce: History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Founding Until Its Destruction*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kielce/kielce.html#TOC>>.

²⁹⁸ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 123.

As in many other cities, the round-up and deportation of the Jewish population of Kielce proceeded smoothly with the Jewish authorities (council) and police performing the bulk of the tasks under German supervision. The Germans also employed some Ukrainian policemen but not the local Polish police.

In Chrzanów, “Although their living conditions were better than those of the native Jews, later on many of these German Jews caused trouble. Unfortunately among them there were traitors who ruined many families.”³⁰⁰ In Tyszowce, “As new leader of the Judenrat the Germans appointed a German Jew called Fiszleber, who was known for his cruelty to his fellow-Jews.”³⁰¹

In Parczew,

Then a new figure arrived on the scene: Rudi Kresh, a German Jew in his mid-thirties, who dressed like a German, always in a long leather coat. ... Somehow, he became an intermediary between the Gestapo, or the local gendarmerie, and the *Judenrat*. His way of communicating with the *Judenrat* was official, German-like.³⁰²

According to reports of the Home Army, who ordered and carried out (Chaim) Kreusch’s liquidation in November 1943, he was a Gestapo confidant originally from Lublin or Łódź who was permitted to live outside the confines of the ghetto. He played an active role in liquidating the ghetto in Parczew and collected valuables from Jews via the ghetto police. Afterwards he created a network of Jewish confidants charged with establishing contacts with Poles. Small groups of young Jews were dispatched into the forest to join the Polish partisans and then relay information about their activities back to Kreusch.³⁰³

Corruption, favouritism, and servility flourished in ghettos. Jekuthiel Zwillich provides the following description of conditions in the ghetto in Zamość in the Lublin district:

it was possible to buy everything in the ghetto in the *Neustadt*—but understand, at exorbitant prices. In the ghetto there was a woman named Goldhammer. This was the wife of that Goldhammer who initially was the ‘liaison’ with the Gestapo, and whom the Gestapo subsequently shot. She had a restaurant in her house. It was possible to obtain the best of everything there; fried and roasted meat; fish and a variety of beverages. The members of the Judenrat would come to her, and other ‘Big Shots’ with their loved ones. Each of these people had their own ‘food servant’ (the

²⁹⁹ Cytron (Zitron), *Sefer Kielce*, 239, 240; translated as *Book of Kielce: History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Founding Until Its Destruction*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kielce/kielce.html#TOC>>.

³⁰⁰ Mordechai Bochner, ed., *Sefer Chrzanow: Lebn un umkum fun a yidish shtetl* (Roslyn Harbor, New York: Solomon Gross, 1989), 1ff., translated (by Jonathan Boyarin) as *Chrzanow: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Chrzanow/Chrzanow.html>>.

³⁰¹ “Tyszowce,” *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00244.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 244–47.

³⁰² Benjamin Mandelkern with Mark Czarnecki, *Escape from the Nazis* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), 41–42:

³⁰³ Czesław Bardzik, “Rejon II Obwodu AK Radzyń Podlaski (Placówka Parczew),” in Tomasz Strzembosz, ed., *Armia Krajowa na środkowej i południowej Lubelszczyźnie i Podlasiu: Materiały sesji naukowej KUL, 24–25 IX 1985 r.* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1993), 375–76:

title was appropriate). The wildest orgies took place in her house. ... the *Judenrat* would often conduct its sessions in her restaurant.

In Zamość, there was a family from Krakow [Kraków], a mother with two daughters and one son. They were named Lieberman. One of the daughters was the 'friend' of Memek Garfinkel. The city referred to her as 'The Blonde Beast.' She had a considerable influence with the *Judenrat*. If someone wanted a favor, or couldn't get something done by ordinary [sic: legal] means, they would go to her at home, and she already got it arranged. Understand though, that one had to pay quite well for this. ...

The mission of the police was to collect the monthly payment from the populace, who had not turned it in by themselves to the *Judenrat*. ...

The *Judenrat* represented that it is strictly forbidden for people to gather in one house in the *Neustadt*. However, in the ghetto, no great mind was paid to this order. Jews would come together and pray in a congregation. So the police would come, and detain the Jews, and it was then necessary to pay a fine. ...

Lejzor Schultz, and a certain Blonde Jonah, from the 'Hayfl' had the reputation in the ghetto of being informers. ...

Czech Jews were brought to Zamość. All of the Czech Jews looked well. All were dressed well ... these newcomers held themselves at a distance from the Zamość Jews, it didn't displease them that they had been brought to Zamość, but rather why was it that they had been mixed in together with Polish Jews ... they were assimilated Jews—we called them *Jaeckes*. Many went to church on Sunday to pray. They were settled in the houses of Jews, that had undergone 'evacuation.' A number of them immediately became policemen for the *Judenrat*. ...

On May 17, 1942, a notice appeared at the *Judenrat* in German and Polish: 'To all older people' and the names were listed. Within 2 days, those listed were required to present themselves at the *Judenrat* with the purpose of being forcibly taken from Zamość. ...

The Jewish police went around during the day, and night, and looked for older Jews, which were on their list for 'evacuation' and wherever they did not find these people, they arrested the children. ...

However, the *Judenrat* and the police applied themselves vigorously to find my parents, and they gave one of our neighbors a bribe to disclose the hideout. Police came, and indeed, did discover my hidden parents. The joy of the *Judenrat* knew no bounds.

As in the case of the neighboring villages, the Jewish police took a rather significant role in the 'evacuation' in Izbica, which consisted mostly of Czech Jews. They conducted their work with German punctiliousness. They took a direct part in driving and shouting at the Jews, that they should get into the wagons more quickly. A few minutes, however, before the wagons were locked, the Gestapo man Engels ordered the police that they should also get into the wagons. ³⁰⁴

Gary Keins describes how German Jews deported to Zamość and the nearby town of Izbica took advantage of the poorer Polish Jews and even betrayed them to the Germans: "The small-town ghettos now

³⁰⁴ Jekuthiel Zwillich, "The Extermination of the Jews of Zamość," in Mordechai V. Bernstein, ed., *The Zamosc Memorial Book: A Memorial Book of a Center of Jewish Life Destroyed by the Nazis* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob

became overcrowded and the newcomers forced the remaining native Jews out of their shacks; talked deprecatingly about the ‘filth’ in those Polish Jewish shanties. I found their behavior, sorry to say, despicable. ... Some of them even pointed out hidden Jews to the Nazis.”³⁰⁵ Jewish ghetto police would hand over to the Germans non-local Jews who managed to sneak into the ghettos. Shlomo Kandlik from Brześć, who served in the Polish army, escaped from a prison camp near Berlin and smuggled himself into the Zamość ghetto. “He was recognized as a stranger by the Jewish ghetto police who handed him over to the Germans. They sent him to Lublin. From there together with other Polish prisoners they were sent to Majdanek ...”³⁰⁶ Another time, Jews who had returned to Zamość from Lwów were seized. The Jewish police “seized 18 Jews, brought them to the offices of the Judenrat, who immediately handed them over to the Gestapo. They were then taken outside the town and shot.”³⁰⁷ Jewish policeman and council members often exacted exorbitant amounts for special favours:

In Izbica, there was a Jewish policeman who for 1000 zlotys, in the course of 2 days made an Aryan passport with a photograph. ...

For such dwellings, one had to pay a goodly sum of money. A Zamość baker lived in Izbica, Sholom Hantwerker, who was a member of the Izbica *Judenrat*, and it was he who allocated dwellings. For a good house, he took between 500 and 1000 zlotys.³⁰⁸

In Bielsk Podlaski,

A Jewish police force was founded, headed by a contemptible individual from Orla ... If I had been told that such vile beasts, capable of losing all vestige of humanity, existed among the Jewish people, I would not have believed it. ... They revealed secrets, endangering the very lives of their fellow Jews ...

The police dragged people physically to forced labor. Sometimes they added the old and the weak to the work details, despite the fact that these people had not been designated by the Judenrat. ...

I shall never forget the most despicable act these irresponsible police committed. ... when the Russians fled the town they left, in their great haste, storehouses filled with merchandise and foodstuffs. The Jews took from these storehouses various items for the hard times ... Upon moving to the Ghetto we attempted to bring as much as we could of these abandoned supplies. ... So what did these ‘police’ do? Somehow they found out about the goods, and immediately they squealed to the Germans. ...

Solomon Berger, 2004), 559–70.

³⁰⁵ Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition*, 130–31.

³⁰⁶ S. Winograd, “The Days of Destruction,” in E. Steinman, ed., *Brisk de-Lita* (Jerusalem: The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora, 1958), vol. 2, 575ff., translated as *Brest Lit(owsk)*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Brest2/Brest2.html>>.

³⁰⁷ “Zamosc,” *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00203.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 203–12.

³⁰⁸ Jekuthiel Zwillich, “The Extermination of the Jews of Zamość,” in Bernstein, ed., *The Zamosc Memorial Book*, 570.

[A Polish woman assisted in securing the escape of three Jewish prisoners of war.] The three young men were concealed by their families, until the fact was discovered by the “Drovitchin boys” [Jewish police from Drohiczyn], who squealed to the Germans. ... the three young men were held in the Bielsk jail and forced to work as grave diggers. ... When the three had finished their task, they too were shot by the Germans.

... Someone informed on Shlomo Epstein and another Jew whom I had taught something of the trade ... I don’t mention his name for personal reasons. A similar case was that of Aron Glachinsky whom we had all liked and had taken in to live with us.³⁰⁹

In Rzeszów,

Living conditions were horrible. ... But worst of all were the Jewish police. They were to be dreaded more than the Germans. Markuse, the Commander of the Jewish police, and Hirshborn, the second in command, were two of the most brutal murderers in the world. Their hands were covered with the blood of many Jews. It was as if they had to outdo the Gestapo in bestiality if they wanted to stay alive. ...

Other Jewish policemen arrived ... They grabbed me. I knew that anyone who got into the hands of the Jewish police, whether guilty or not, was severely beaten ...

During my incarceration a lad of about eighteen years of age, Isaac Silver, came to me and told me that I would not live much longer. Later on I learned that Silver was a Gestapo informer. His visit seemed to portend the last hour of my life.

In the meantime, I was beaten continually, day after day. The climax came when an officer named Repun struck me so violently with a hose that I passed out. I lay on the ground as though dead. ...

I barely survived one dangerous situation before another one appeared. An eighteen-year-old boy by the name of Eisenberg was caught by the Gestapo in Krosno. The Gestapo promised not to harm him in exchange for information concerning other Jews who were in hiding.

He told the Gestapo that I, Jakob Breitowicz, had sent my wife with false papers to Germany. He also said that I had papers permitting me to leave and that I was now in the Reishof [Rzeszów] Ghetto.

The Gestapo men immediately came to the ghetto and contacted the Jewish police. Luckily, I had one friend, Weisenfeld, on the Jewish police force, and he warned me about what had happened. I didn’t waste a moment. I climbed over the fence and fled into the west side of the ghetto. ...

One day while I was at work stacking furniture, a Jewish policeman named Med caught me smoking a cigarette. He took me to see Szupke, the Commander of the Gestapo. I was told to empty my pockets. I took out cigarettes among other things. Szupke told Med to take me back to the Jewish police, who were to hold me until the Gestapo decided what my punishment would be. Med suggested that they would be better off getting rid of me because I was a trouble maker and

³⁰⁹ Meir Peker, “In the Bielsk Ghetto & Camps,” in Haim Rabin, ed. *Bielsk-Podliask: Book in the Holy Memory of the Bielsk Podliask Jews Whose Lives Were Taken During the Holocaust Between 1939 and 1941* (Tel Aviv: Bielsk Immigrants’ Association of Israel and the United States of America, 1975), 29–30, 33.

detrimental to the morale of others. But Szupke said that the Gestapo would be the ones to determine my fate and told Med to take me away.

The night in the police station was pure hell, full of pain and terror. At 11:00 p.m. they stopped beating me and let the chief's dog into the area where I was held. They left me alone with the dog.³¹⁰

Of the Jewish police in Głębokie, one observer writes: "Who could better accomplish the looting of Jewish wealth, either willingly or with force, than Jews themselves? Who could know better than other Jews where Jewish treasures were hidden?" After carrying out German instructions to strip the Jews of their wealth, the ghetto police then proceeded to meet German quotas by rounding up and handing over Jews as required until the ghetto was virtually empty. During the final stages of the liquidation, they scoured the ghetto and dragged Jews out of their hideouts.³¹¹ A similar role was played by the Jewish police in Niemirów³¹² and countless other towns.

Denunciations and counter-denunciations flowed freely and resulted in brutal retaliations by the Germans. In the Ciechanów-Płock district (Zichenau-Schröttersburg),

The bulk of operational information from inside the ghettos of the region seem to have been gathered from confidential reports delivered to the police or the Gestapo. ... frequent references [in the Gestapo files] stress the importance of "confidential" sources for the investigations. One of the few surviving reports illustrates the sequence of events leading to a brutal repression in Mława in early 1942. On November 20, 1941, Lejzor Perelmutter, miller, merchant, and finally chief of the Mława Jewish Council (*Judenrat*), sent a letter to the German mayor of the city complaining that some ghetto residents under the leadership of one Szulim Gutman had been subverting German orders, in part by trying to unseat Perelmutter from the *Judenrat*. Having listed the crimes of those opposing him, Perelmutter added that "if the Gestapo has received any accusations against me, they undoubtedly must have originated with the very same people, who are completely untrustworthy." Perelmutter asked the mayor to convey his message to the Gestapo.

The Gestapo reacted swiftly. Several prominent Mława Jews were interrogated. Forty-year-old Menachem Davidson, chief of the "Jewish police," had to answer for the "appalling lack of security in the ghetto." But Perelmutter was himself arrested, and killed in prison sometime in January 1942. Worse, the Gestapo learned that the Jews were still able to communicate with the outside, in particular buying provisions. Dallüge, the Gestapo official responsible for the investigation, noted, "all these things demonstrate that, despite the [closing of the ghetto] the Jews continue to corrupt Germans through illegal exchange." Dallüge requested permission to conduct a punitive action ... Needless to say, the Berlin head office readily authorized a *Sonderaktion* against the Mława Jews. In mid-January 1942 several dozen were arrested, to be killed in a subsequent mass execution.³¹³

³¹⁰ Jakob Breitowicz, *Through Hell To Life* (New York: Shengold, 1983), 43, 45–46, 48, 60.

³¹¹ M. and Z. Rajak, *Memorial Book of Gluboke* (Canton, New York, 1994), 40, 77; translation of *Khurbn Glubok...Koziany* (Buenos Aires: Former Residents' Association in Argentina, 1956).

³¹² Sandra Brand, *I Dared To Live* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1978), 50.

³¹³ Jan Grabowski, "The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia (Poland) in the Light of the Archive of the Ciechanów

Not only did traitors and spies plague the ghetto in Brześć, but also no Germans were required to hold the gates: “Jewish police shared watch over the gates with Ukrainian collaborators. ... The Germans could rely on Ukrainian and Jewish policemen to aid them in starving out the Jewish population.”³¹⁴ A Jew from Warsaw assisted the Germans in capturing Jews outside the ghetto and turning them over to the Gestapo.³¹⁵ During the liquidation of the ghetto in October 1942, the Germans, probably tipped off by informers, surrounded the hiding place of the printing press and radio and blew them up, along with the people there.³¹⁶ In Kamień Koszyrski in Polesia, “the Germans set up a new Ukrainian police watch, which included a Jew. ... Even more distressing was the discovery that there were traitors in our midst, who reported to the Germans on events in the ghetto.”³¹⁷

In Lublin, “The SS was looking for returnees from Russia. The Judenrat informed the SS about any such arrival.”³¹⁸ A young Jewish woman who worked as a nurse in a Jewish hospital in Lublin realized that its director, Dr. Salomon Bromberg, soon became an agent for the Gestapo; when the SS arrived for an inspection of the premises, they were readily able to identify specific items that the staff had hidden away.³¹⁹ The head of the Jewish Hospital at Czyste in the Warsaw ghetto decried “the intrigues, the informing” and “the atmosphere of intrigues and denunciations by anonymous informers,” while “stressing that such qualities could never be met with in the Polish medical world.”³²⁰

Sometimes, the role of informer, confidant, and agent merged with that of ghetto functionary and policeman, as exemplified in Międzyrzec Podlaski where there was no shortage of people ready to step in to fill positions of power and to abuse their power:

Germans had spies everywhere. ... Lazar was a furrier by trade, working in a factory making coats. In fact, he had ten to fifteen men working for him who would break into shops and warehouses, then steal furs, pelts, bristles, and anything else of value. They would either sell their booty on the black market or ransom it back to its original owner. Lazar also ran a protection racket, making sure police didn't bother people who were running a business without a license. He suited the Germans' purpose perfectly. They had sought him out to make him head of the Jewish Council because he was the local underworld king ... But if Lazar hadn't done the job, somebody else would have. ...

Group,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 460–76, at p. 463.

³¹⁴ Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 154.

³¹⁵ Ajzensztajn, *Ruch podziemny w ghektach i obozach*, 89.

³¹⁶ “Brest” in Shmuel Spector, ed., *Pinkas Hakehillot: Polin*, vol. 5 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), 226–37; English translation: *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Vol. V, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol5_00226.html>.

³¹⁷ Shlomo Kogan, “The Long Walk,” in Leo W. Schwarz, ed., *The Root and the Bough: The Epic of an Enduring People* (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Company, 1949), 101, 106.

³¹⁸ Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 112.

³¹⁹ Krystyna Modrzewska, “Pamiętnik z okresu okupacji,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 31 (1959): 60, 63.

³²⁰ Marian Małowist, “Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto,” in Kermish, *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...*, 630. See also Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 95.

Lazar was particularly useful to the Gestapo ... Lazar would tell them whatever they wanted to know: who had a lot of money, who worked in the government, who was politically active. He would pinpoint who was part of the intelligentsia: teachers, doctors, lawyers, rich manufacturers, politicians. In short, anybody who was wealthy or prominent. To the Germans, these people were particularly suspect. Lazar also would tell who belonged to Zionist or Communist organizations.

... the Germans formed a Jewish police squad. The ones who joined were in their late teens and early twenties. They all were from rich homes, so they were accepted because their parents had enough money to bribe the Germans. ... The Jewish police turned out to be worse than I imagined. Lazar was in charge of them as well, and he made sure they did the Germans' bidding. In fact, the Jewish police later became spies for the Germans, turning in many people who were going into hiding. ...

Despite our precautions, the Jewish police came to our house a couple of times and carted away new clothes, coats, furs, a half dozen pairs of my father's new shoes. The Jewish police lived among us. They knew what we had and where we had it. If they hadn't known, a snitch likely had told them. ...

[Lazar] now occasionally would extort money from people by threatening to have them sent to the camps unless they paid him.³²¹

A new chief [of the Jewish], Srulejski, was installed by the Gestapo. He was a tall, strong, handsome man in his mid-thirties, a native of Miedzyrzec, who as a young boy had been arrested for petty theft. He stole from the peasants anything he could get his hands on. His criminal record was known to the Polish police and subsequently to the Gestapo.

Srulejski was a shameless tool of the Germans, one of their collaborators. He recruited agents from the underworld to spy on people. It was no surprise when the Germans made him leader of the Jewish police. The Gestapo, however, harboured a certain distrust toward the man. ...

The following Saturday at noon they [the Gestapo] brought him, shackled, into the ghetto. There was talk that when the homes of the deported Jews had been abandoned, he had rummaged through them to plunder the valuables. The Gestapo took him to the yard where he resided, and ordered him to show them where he had buried the gold and jewellery which he had amassed. They took the valuables for themselves and led him back to jail.

As chief of police Srulejski had become influential and bold. He went out with an educated woman named Hela Rubinstein. Hers was one of the most respected and wealthy families in pre-war Miedzyrzec. After he became police chief, somehow his affair with Hela became known to his wife, an attractive woman from the same background as he was. She sought revenge by betraying him to the Gestapo. ...

A week later, on a Friday, two Gestapo agents, Dieter and Bock, brought him into the ghetto once again. Srulejski knew that the Gestapo had him trapped. But he was aware that they were looking for the employment officer, Mr. Finkelstein. Hoping to regain some of his lost influence, he directed the Gestapo to a wall in the house where Finkelstein was hiding. While they were breaking

³²¹ Joe Rosenblum with David Kohn, *Defy the Darkness: A Tale of Courage in the Shadow of Mengele* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Praeger, 2001), 18–29, 108.

down the wall, Srulejski inconspicuously slipped away. The Gestapo searched, but could not find him. However, Mr. Finkelstein was taken away and never seen again. Soon the news spread through the ghetto that Srulejski had escaped. The Gestapo issued an ultimatum that unless Srulejski was brought forth, five hundred people would be shot. That caused great panic. The Jewish police announced that whoever knew the whereabouts of Srulejski must report it immediately.

The next day a woman revealed that Srulejski was hiding in her attic. ... Hauled down, he was shot by the Gestapo.

On a Saturday evening several weeks later a Jewish policeman named Goldman was shot in the back while walking to the store across from the Jewish police station. The people in the ghetto fell into an uproar. The shooting added to our horror because it indicated to the Gestapo that there were weapons in the ghetto. It was rumoured that Goldman was a traitor and that someone had shot him in revenge.³²²

Jews in small towns, especially those who ventured out of the ghetto, knew that the Jewish police and informers would soon be on their trail. As the following accounts show, it was above all fellow Jews whom they feared. The diary entries of a 13-year-old Jewish boy from Bodzentyn, a small town in the Kielce region, record the following experiences:

[May 10, 1942] The Jewish police has received the order that 50 men are still required. Immediately on receiving the order, they began picking people up. ...

[May 11] The Jewish police have also been picking up people today. I stayed almost the whole day at a Polish boy's house, I was frightened of staying at home.

[May 12] During the night the Jewish police were in our yard. They were looking for our cousins, but they weren't there.³²³

A Jewish woman describes conditions in Raków near Staszów. In defiance of regulations, she remained outside the ghetto living with Poles and was relentlessly pursued by Jews:

At that time the head of the Judenrat in Rakow was Zielony. Not one person in the village could stand this Jew. His actions irritated everybody. He was feared more that [sic] the agents of the S.S.

Many German Jewish refugees who were cruelly driven from their homes arrived at this village. Zielony used to treat them very rudely and impose upon them all sorts of taxes and payments ... those who could not ransom themselves through bribery and could not withstand the load of the various taxes, were forced to appease him with their daughters in order that he could satisfy his lust through his continual debaucheries. ...

³²² Gitel Donath, *My Bones Don't Rest in Auschwitz: A Lonely Battle to Survive German Tyranny* (Montreal: Kaplan Publishing, 1999), 115–17.

³²³ *The Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz* (Edmonds, Washington: Creative Options, 1982), 73, 75.

... [Zielony] said that if he saw me one more time without an armband on my sleeve, he would order my arrest, for he was in charge of everybody there. ...

At that time I moved from Forsyiowa's house to that of Zacharski ... All the residents of the village, old and young, Jews and Poles, praised me for my courage and for the caustic words that I said to Zielony. ...

I believe that it was in the middle of 1942. One day a big roundup took place ... Precisely then I arrived at Rakow. ...

Stach Zacharski and his wife came up to me, frightened, and said that they had heard from reliable sources that Zielony intended to have his revenge upon me now. They asked me to dress like a farm woman and to go to the field and pretend to be working. I was about to do this, but at that point some of my friends arrived and forcefully took me and hid me in a safe place. ...

Meanwhile, Zielony declared that whoever caught me would be rewarded, and the family that turned me over would be saved from the roundup. The Zacharskis were in despair. ... My companions and I succeeded in finding a hiding place ...

Suddenly, a girl unfamiliar to us arrived and was surprised to see us. She was sent by Zielony to look for us ... At that moment Jewish police arrived on the run with members of the S.S. ... Meanwhile another member of our group, Krysztal, was caught, and both of us were brought to the synagogue, which served as a collection point for those who were captured. ... the two of us were led through the village like two criminals. I marched in front, with an S.S. man on each side, Jewish policemen behind me, and in the back of them came Krysztal, escorted by two S.S. men, and finally, Jewish policemen together with S.S. men. They brought me to the synagogue ... [This woman managed to escape from the synagogue.]

After three days I returned to Rakow, to Forsyiowa, for she lived practically at the edge of the village ... On the second day at dusk I went to Zacharski ... He told me that all the people of the village took an interest in my fate ... In Zacharski's house I felt at home.

Suddenly ... a knock on the door was heard. Zacharski's daughter opened the door, and in the doorway there were two Jewish policemen. ... Mr. Zacharski asked them the purpose of their visit, and they replied that Mr. Zielony wanted me to appear at his office. Zacharski told them that I was sick and if I was so vital to Mr. Zielony he could bother himself to come and see me. Having thus spoken, he slammed the door in their faces. Fifteen minutes had barely passed when three policemen arrived, and this time asked that I accompany them to the chairman of the Jewish community. Hearing this, Zacharski snatched an axe and threatened to kill them if they did not immediately get out. I, fearing big trouble, calmed Mr. Zacharski down and asked him to let me go with them, since there was nothing to fear now that the Germans had gone ...

With considerable effort I persuaded Mr. Zacharski that my reasoning was sound, and he let me go with the policemen on the condition that they would be responsible for me and my well-being, and if, God forbid, even one hair of mine were touched, he would take revenge upon them and slaughter them like pigs in cold blood. Of course he did not trust them and their promises and accompanied us. ... After all of this I returned to the Ghetto exhausted ...³²⁴

³²⁴ Rachel (Roza) Majerfeld, *Nightmare Days* (Tel Aviv: I.L. Peretz, 1988), 25–31.

The Germans relied on Jews to fulfill various functions, as the following diary of a resident of the Staszów ghetto shows:

At about noon on the same Saturday [November 7, 1942], a Jew arrived in Staszow from Ostrowiec [Ostrowiec]. His name was Abraham Itshe Kerbel. He was accompanied by a German S.S. man, and offered to take Jews on to work at the Bodzichow [Bodzechów] labour camp near Ostrowiec for the payment of a thousand zlotys [złoty] each.

Jews paid the sum demanded in the hope of saving themselves, although the entire transaction was afterwards found to be a miserable swindle.

While we were in the shop we learnt that at 2 a.m. [on November 8, 1942] a number of the Polish intellectuals like Dr. Koslowski [Kozłowski] and Dr. Lemiescewski [?] had been arrested and handed over to be guarded by the Jewish police.

[After the liquidation of the ghetto]: For this purpose they [the Germans] took the Jewish police with them when they went looking for all the remaining Jews.³²⁵

An analogous role was played by Jewish collaborators, Gestapo agents and informers outside the ghetto. It was not at all uncommon for Jews to encounter them when passing as Christians in larger centres. A Jew hiding in “Aryan” Kraków listened to his friend speak of the dangers he feared should his family leave the ghetto:

You know, there are people in the ghetto who are now in the Gestapo’s service; they go out into the town every day and look for Jews hiding on false papers because they think that they will save their own skins that way. Even one of my colleagues at the bank, a man I have worked with for many years, broke down and now works for the Gestapo. He turns in *everyone*, even members of his own family. Not long ago he whispered to me that he knew that Basia was living on false papers somewhere in the vicinity of Cracow. He doesn’t know you personally, and doesn’t know your name or where you live, but he is looking for you and is convinced that sooner or later he will find you. When he does, he will turn you in. I had always thought him a man of honor, but the times have changed.³²⁶

A Jew from Lwów recalled:

In November [1941] ... a German edict hit those Jews who lived in the Gentile part of the city. They were ordered to relocate immediately ...

³²⁵ Joseph Goldstein, “Extracts from a Ghetto Diary,” in *The Staszów Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/staszow/staszow.html>>, translated from Elhanan Erlich, ed., *Sefer Staszow* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Staszów in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), xxv ff.

³²⁶ Shatyn, *A Private War*, 195.

On a gloomy morning, we heard the first sounds of the Umsiedlung. Police kicked at our door and pounded it with rifle butts. ... I ordered mother and the younger children, Wilo and Rozia, to slip under the covers of the feather bed. I told Abo to cram into a corner of the balcony. Then I shoved the heavy wooden wardrobe over the entrance to it, so that a stranger to the apartment might not guess what was behind it.

The intruders, meanwhile, pushed their way in and confronted me as I was about to open the door for them. A German Schupo man, or policeman, slapped my face sharply.

"You son of a bitch!" he howled. "Why didn't you open up immediately? Where are the other Jewish swine hiding?"

He held me against the wall, as three of his men, one German, one Ukrainian, and one Jewish policeman, searched the apartment. Within seconds, they found our father in the dining room and Abo on the balcony, the imposing wardrobe notwithstanding. Lined up against the wall, each was administered the regulation slap in the face, after which the Jewish lawman stepped forward. I knew him. He had been my teammate on the Hasmonaea, a Jewish soccer team.

"Where are your mother and the two children?" he asked in a commanding voice.

It was an unbelievable scene, something to which we weren't yet accustomed: a Jew selling out another Jew.

"You can't mean it!" I appealed desperately to the myth of brotherhood among Jews. "You know what happens to people who get deported!"

"I mean it," he repeated glacially. "Where is the old woman? Where are the children?"

"I managed to regain my composure, "I don't know," I said quietly. "Nowadays, it's everyone for himself. They must be hiding somewhere in town." ...

We were chased out to the street and into an open truck now filled to capacity with Jewish hostages.

The main [railway] terminal of Lvov [Lwów] was the first serious hurdle for any Jew intent on fleeing the city. ... I was soon concentrating on avoiding eye contact with the men in the green uniforms of the Schupo, the gray and black of the SS and the black of the Ukrainian militia. They were all there, and so were innumerable plainclothes Gestapo. There were even, God pity us, Jews posted by the Germans to point out brethren who were trying their luck at escape. ...

I was also told that a man named Altman, an officer of the Jewish Police and a Gestapo collaborator, had fallen in love with her [Nesia]. Altman's job was to discover Jews in hiding ...³²⁷

Jewish policemen and informers played a highly destructive role in most ghettos. Reliance on the Jewish Councils and the Jewish police was a cornerstone of German governance. Proportionally, more Jews served in the Jewish police than Poles did in the Polish police. There were more than 2,500 Jews recruited in Warsaw alone, and some 750 in Lwów. Emanuel Ringelblum described conditions in Warsaw as follows:

³²⁷ Uri Lichter, *In the Eye of the Storm: A Memoir of Survival Through the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 38–39, 61, 89.

In those days, during 1939, 1940, and part of 1941, people would be seized for forced labor almost every day—so the men hid out in the shops, under bench beds, in mezzanines, cubbies, cellars, garrets, etc. ... The Germans knew the location of such hideouts, thanks to their Jewish informers, who accompanied them and pointed out the hiding places. ... During the time when there were blockades, the resettlement period, hideouts assumed a new importance. People took special pains to build good hiding places, because they had become a matter of life and death. Old folks, children, and women hid out there. ... In 90 percent of the cases it was the Jewish police who uncovered the hideouts. First they found out where the hideouts were; then they passed the information along to the Ukrainians and Germans. Hundreds and thousands of people are on those scoundrel's conscience.³²⁸

The involvement of the Jewish councils and police became pivotal to the success of the great deportation of the summer of 1942, when 250,000 Jews from Warsaw were seized and sent to the death camps. During the first weeks of this operation the task of rounding up six to seven thousand Jews daily was given over entirely to the Jewish police, who managed to accomplish this without any help from the Germans. (Later, German gendarmes reinforced by Ukrainian and Baltic auxiliaries were brought in to finish the task, without any Polish participation.³²⁹) Many Jewish policemen used force and brutality and were quick to use deportation as a source of easy money. Reuben Ainsztein notes:

... the majority [of the Jewish ghetto police], according to Ringelblum 'carried out with the greatest eagerness the orders of the Germans. It is a fact that on most days the Jewish police supplied more victims than the quota demanded by the Germans. That was done to have a reserve for the following day. ... Many a hideout was discovered by the Jewish police, who always wanted to prove themselves *plus catholique que le pape* and thus curry favour with the Germans. The victims who escaped the eye of the German were seized by Jewish policemen. For two hours I watched the march of victims to the trains in the Umschlagplatz and I saw groups exempted from deportation being forcibly driven back to the trains by the Jewish policemen. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of Jews were sent to their deaths during those two hours by the Jewish policemen.' Szmeling, a former boxer, a giant with a little beard and the face of a killer who was in command of the Jewish police in the Umschlagplatz, did not hesitate to use his whip and took advantage of his position to extort money and jewels from wealthy victims for allowing them to escape from the point of departure for Treblinka. His subordinates, acting in partnership with the Sonderdienst composed of Polish Volksdeutsche [i.e., ethnic Germans] and the Ukrainian and Latvian cutthroats, demanded from 1,000 to 10,000 zloties from their victims to allow them to escape. 'There were cases when the police demanded from their victims, apart from money, also payment in kind: women had to submit to their lust.' The police plumbed the depths of their baseness in the final weeks of the Great Liquidation, when thousands of survivors refused to obey orders to surrender for deportation, even if it meant dying in hideouts. Each policeman was then ordered to supply seven victims daily or

³²⁸ Jacob Sloan, ed., *The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum* (New York: Schocken, 1974), 339–41. This edition is a significantly truncated version of Ringelblum's diary.

³²⁹ Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland*, 115.

share with his family the fate of the other Jews. Having already sold their souls to the Nazi devil, the policemen did their best to carry out the order. This did not stop the Nazis from killing over 1,700 policemen and their families at the end of the Great Liquidation.³³⁰

The descriptions of the round-ups and deportations penned by first-hand witnesses of those events is horrific. Small wonder that Ringelblum writes that the hatred towards the *Ordnungsdienst* “exceeds the hatred of Germans.”³³¹ Chaim Kaplan penned the following entries in his wartime diary:

At the beginning ... a directive was issued to the *Judenrat* to deport 6,000 a day; in point of fact they are now deporting close to 10,000. The Jewish police, whose cruelty is no less than that of the Nazis, deliver to the “transfer point” on Stawki Street more than the quota to which the *Judenrat* obligated itself. Sometimes there are several thousand people waiting a day or two to be transported because of a shortage of railroad cars. Word has gotten around that the Nazis are satisfied that the extermination of the Jews is being carried out with all requisite efficiency. This deed is being done by the Jewish slaughterers.³³²

[July 28, 1942]: Anyone who could see the expulsion from Warsaw with his own eyes would have his heart broken. The ghetto has turned into an inferno. Men have become beasts. Everyone is but a step away from deportation; people are being hunted down in the streets like animals in the forest. It is the Jewish police who are cruelest toward the condemned. Sometimes a blockade is made of a particular house, sometimes of a whole block of houses. In every building earmarked for destruction they begin to make the rounds of the apartments and to demand documents. Whoever has neither documents that entitle him to remain in the ghetto nor money for bribes is told to make a bundle weighing 15 kilos—and on to the transport which stands near the gate. Whenever a house is blockaded a panic arises that is beyond the imagination. Residents who have neither documents nor money hide in nooks and crannies, in the cellars and in the attics. When there is a means of passage between one courtyard and another the fugitives begin jumping over the roofs and fences at the risk of their lives ... But all these methods only delay the inevitable, and in the end the police take men, women, and children. The destitute and impoverished are the first to be deported. In an instant the truck becomes crowded. ... Their cries and wails tear the heart out.

The children, in particular, rend the heavens with their cries. The old people and the middle-aged deportees accept the judgment in silent submission and stand with their small parcels under their arms. But there is no limit to the sorrow and tears of the young women; sometimes one of them makes an attempt to slip out of grasp of her captors, and then a terrible battle begins. At such times the horrible scene reaches its peak. The two sides fight, wrestle. On one side a woman with wild hair and a torn blouse rages with the last of her strength at the Jewish thieves, trying to escape from their hands. Anger flows from her mouth and she is like a lioness ready for the kill. And on the

³³⁰ Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 583.

³³¹ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 151.

³³² Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 324.

other side the two policemen, her “brothers in misfortune,” who pull her back to her death. It is obvious that the police win. ...

But isolated incidents don’t hold up the operation. The police do what is incumbent upon them. After the completion of the arrests in one house, they move on to another. The *Judenrat* prepares a daily list of houses in which blockades will be made that day. And here a new source of income is opened for the graft-chasing police. The wealthy and the middle class have yet to be brought to the transports. For those who have no documents, banknotes turn into documents. There is almost a fixed price for ransom, but for some it is cheaper, all according to the class of the ransomed one and the number of people in his household.³³³

[July 29, 1942]: The expulsion is reaching its peak. It increases from day to day. The Nazis are satisfied with the work of the Jewish police, the plague of the Jewish organism, and the police too are satisfied: the Nazis, because through industry and cruelty the police have succeeded in supplying exiles above and beyond the daily quota originally specified, and close to 70,000 people have already gone into exile; the police, because they are lining their pockets. This income is fortuitous and apparently not dangerous. The Nazis don’t bother about details. ... In any event, the respite that the bribe creates is only temporary. A house which is blockaded today can be blockaded tomorrow too, and the next day, and so on ad infinitum. A man who was released once can be caught again—even by the same policeman who set let him go the first time—especially since the police have nearly 2,400 dogs. The wiles of the policemen know no bounds. Besides taking bribes, they also steal and rob. How? They order the inhabitants of the house to go down, while they themselves remain in the unguarded apartment. Thus they profit from all that is abandoned.

This criminal police force is the child of the *Judenrat*. Like mother, like daughter. With their misdeeds they besmirch the name of Polish Jewry which was stained even without this. At the transfer point where the exiles are collected, the policemen traffic in bread. Those loaves of bread, which the police force gets in abundance free of charge, are sold to the hungry and oppressed captives at 80 zloty [zloty] a loaf. For delivering a letter, ten zloty. They are growing rich on these profits, and for the time being they are experiencing the eternal reward in this life—until the Nazis take pity on them as well. Their day will come, and they too will be destroyed, but they will be the last. ...

Immediately a great movement arose to set up factories to work for the good of the German army, and the German commandant invited German firms to establish branches in the General Government. The Jewish shop-factories received raw materials from these firms and began to manufacture for each one what was required to meet their obligations to the commandant. In this way factories for various trades were opened which employed tens of thousands of people. ... Henceforward, only one who is enrolled as a worker in one of the factories under the protection of some German firm has the right to remain in the ghetto. A certificate (*Ausweis*) granted by a firm of the Reich has the power to save its bearer from expulsion ... Within a week, tens of thousands of tradesmen, peddlers, unemployed men, idlers, spreaders of false rumors, and bums have been

³³³ Ibid., 325–27.

turned into creative workers, into a productive element; they sit hunched over a needle, sewing buttons on a pair of army pants.

The entire ghetto is a mammoth factory producing for the good of the German army. We have become a laughingstock!³³⁴

[July 30, 1942]: There is one category among those “insured” against expulsion whose eyes reflect fear, who despite the documents in their pockets, never go out of the doors of their houses ... These are “officials” of the Jewish Self-Aid Society, who numbered over two thousand at the outbreak of the catastrophe. ... Before the expulsion, the Self-Aid employed about four hundred people who were registered with the labor office ... Thousands of people were left without legal protection and doomed to exile. Accordingly, the directors of the society, with the consent of the *Judenrat*, decided to provide their friends with a legal haven in the form of “legitimizations,” documents stating that So-and-so was an official of the society. ... A veritable factory for legitimizations was set up. Anyone who had had any connection whatever with the activities of the society ... received certification as one of its officials.

Within three days, over two thousand certificates were prepared and distributed ... In point of fact it did save many people. They were seized and later released.³³⁵

[July 31, 1942]: The hunting goes on full force. ... The Jewish police are fulfilling their humane duty in the best possible manner, and the Nazis are so pleased with their work that some of them are being sent to Radom and Kielce, where expulsions have now been ordered as well. ...

More factories are established every day. This is the only source of salvation now ... Many people scurry to register for the factories. ... Everyone is pushing his way into a “shop” and is prepared to sell all his possessions and give away his last cent, if only to be considered productive.

...

None of the newly erected factories has any validity or future unless they are incorporated into the network of factories of some German firm; and this privilege too must be bought with cash from the Germans, who demand immense sums in return for the right to work for the German army.³³⁶

Vladka Meed wrote the following account:

The Jewish police were now very important people in the Warsaw ghetto. The Nazis relied on them to carry out their roundups, to control employment cards, and to load unemployed Jews into the wagons and transport them to the waiting railway cars. Obviously, no one was very fond of the police; even in better days they had been known to badger and harass people in their daily lives by insisting on rigid adherence to the Nazi regulations. Now they had become even more hostile and aggressive. They were feared, but at the same time they were the objects of envy. For one thing, the

³³⁴ Ibid., 329–31.

³³⁵ Ibid., 332–33.

³³⁶ Ibid., 333–34.

Jewish police were secure; even the Germans thus far had left their relatives alone. They were never threatened with “resettlement.”

One afternoon, during the first week of the deportation, I happened to be at home with my mother when a column of police suddenly sealed off our building. All residents were ordered to go down and assemble in the courtyard. In their alarm, people tried to snatch up a few belongings, but the raiders, some wearing white armbands reading “*Judenrat*,” told them, “You’ll have time to pick up your things when the wagons get here.” So, it was no longer only police, but also functionaries of the *Judenrat*, who had been delegated to assist in the task of “resettlement.”

The luckless residents of the building submitted to the orders of these men. Without protest, they were herded roughly down the stairs. With the callous arrogance of the privileged, the Jewish police dragged children, the elderly and the ailing down to the courtyard. Although a number of the residents had employment cards, the faces of all were pale with fear. Families clung together for whatever comfort they might be in closeness.

The elderly were pushed to the rear, while the young were lined up in front. Children snuggled up close to the adults. Hearts pounding, the distraught residents prepared for the inspection. Several women brushed past rudely and walked up to the police, flaunting their employment cards.

“These women are going to be released immediately,” one of the bystanders muttered. “Their husbands are in the police force.” And, indeed, as the troopers saw these cards, their arrogance softened; they smiled and motioned to the women to return to their homes. Envious glances followed them as they hastened off.

Three men approached the police. Someone behind me whispered that they were the richest Jews of our building. It was easy to guess their intention was bribery. The police never objected to having their palms greased. ...

But the Jews who were about to be deported did not move. Ashen white with fear, they begged the police for mercy. ...

It was no use. The men in the uniform ignored their anguish. A few of the less hardened, visible distressed by the scene, walked out of the courtyard.

We stood as though turned to stone. Near me someone muttered, “Dear God! Put an end to this misery!” Yet not one of the hundred and fifty-odd Jews who had been spared many any effort to help. They did not want to jeopardize their own good fortunes. One group gave thanks to the Lord for His Mercy; the other, defeated and resigned to their fate, handed over their sacks and baskets, and climbed slowly into the waiting wagons. From there, they stared out at the remaining crowd. Some of them broke into cries of despair. What grief was reflected in their eyes! What mute reproach! We stood there, stunned, silent and conscience-stricken. ...

But why had no one helped the others? Why hadn’t somebody—why hadn’t I—pleaded for them? Flinching, I tried to silence these questions, to justify my cowardice, saying to myself, “Our own chances of being allowed to stay in the ghetto were slim enough. We could not afford to stick our necks out for others.”

Shortly thereafter, the police threw up a roadblock at the corner of Zamenhof and Nowolipki Streets, where the cards of all passersby were subjected to inspection. Any Jew without the proper documents was immediately forced into a waiting wagon. I showed my card and was waved on.³³⁷

David Landau described the round-ups in the ghetto as follows:

From the first day of the deportations, a routine was established ... A block of streets would be closed off in the morning; the Jewish police would call out that the street had been surrounded and no one was to leave their dwelling; the caretakers of the buildings would immediately close the building gates and anybody found in the street would be either shot on the spot or handed over to the police. The Germans and their assistants would then go from building to building and the Jewish police would call to the trapped inhabitants: '*Alles herunter!*' (All to come down.) Pressure was applied to hurry: '*Schnell, schnell!*' It was the duty of the Jewish police to go in first to check the apartments in case anybody had disobeyed the order. Walls would be tapped, wardrobes opened; they would look under the beds. The cellars and attics were searched for anyone who failed to obey the German order. The police would drag out those found hiding to be dealt with by the Germans or their helpers. ...

When all tenants were assembled in the yard the selection started. ... Those selected for deportation were handed over to the Jewish police. Together with their Aryan colleagues the police led the victims to the *Umschlagplatz* on foot or in carts.³³⁸

Landau wondered also about the continued collaboration of the Jewish police after the deportation of the summer of 1942:

The Germans had to enter the houses to remove the people they wanted for deportation yet they were still assisted by the Jewish police. I often ask myself what evil force made the Jewish police co-operate in January 1943, when they themselves had been decimated after the great deportation?³³⁹

Ruth Altbeker Cyprys provides the following description of the round-ups in the ghetto:

Immediately after the publication of the 'Resettlement Order' the manhunts started. Ordinary large carts, accompanied by a few Jewish policemen, appeared in the streets. All those with inadequate documents, or with none, were forcibly pushed on to the carriages. ...

I witnessed the expulsion of the Korczak Orphanage. ... On the day that they left the ghetto they made a strange procession as they walked along Sliska [Śliska] Street led by an elderly, dignified man, and accompanied only by a few policemen. ... Mr. Korczak would not leave his children. And

³³⁷ Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, 26–28.

³³⁸ Landau, *Caged*, 133–34.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 204–205.

I learned, later, that he gave the same answer to his Aryan friends when they tried several times to take him to the Aryan side.

In the first weeks after the expulsion order the Germans did not show up in the ghetto. Jews themselves, as for example the Jewish militia, were entrusted with the job. They carried out the checking of identity papers in the streets and even on the Umschlagplatz where the Germans were present; the loading and forcing of Jews into the railway carriages was left to the militiamen. After all 'points' and other places of collective Jewish misery had been cleared out, street catching was carried out ceaselessly. ...

The institution of the blockades carried out by the Jewish militia became a daily routine. During a blockade, which as a rule took place in the early hours of the morning, a strong detachment of militia men would cordon off a whole street or a part of big road, and begin sweeping the blocks. There would be a shrill whistle and shouts of 'All down, all to the courtyard' which would announce the beginning of the blockade. After a while the militia men would enter the flats, chasing the inhabitants out. They were very efficient in their searches, even too meticulous, for they looked into the night tables and drawers, they climbed into the attics and descended to the cellars. The courtyards were swarming with militia men and when all the tenants were gathered, an officer would begin the checking. The lucky owners of good Ausweis passes were placed on one side of the yard, all the others on the other side. They were then chased out into the street and loaded into the waiting carts. ...

On 6 August [1942] I was resting at home after my night shift when I suddenly heard a terrible noise in the street, loud cries, shots and shouts of 'Alles runter' (all downstairs). I knew what this meant. The street was already full of Germans, Ukrainians and Jewish militia. A normal blockade had started. We all had to go out into the street guarded by Germans, Ukrainians and Shaulis (Lithuanians), while the militia searched the rooms and hideouts, forever dragging somebody out. ...

Alas, they checked no papers. Only the families of the militia men were released on the spot. The rest, formed in fives, were hurried to the Umschlagplatz. The way was strewn with horrific sights. ...

... During all this time the Jewish militia loaded the freight wagons with struggling people, sealed them in, while new trains pulled in to the station ... ³⁴⁰

Zosia Goldberg describes the round-ups in the ghetto as follows:

One day the Germans encircled the house at Leszno 42, and they called everybody down. I was with my mother and we were sleeping on the floor with my aunts and we were supposed to go down with them. Instead, I ran upstairs to Bolek, a young fellow who was a friend of mine. He knew many of the Jewish police and he spoke Russian, so I said to him, "Go down and see what you can do." Along with the German Nazis, there were Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Jewish police.

³⁴⁰ Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 49–50, 54–57.

“Try to get all the family out,” I told Bolek. They were already forming lines to march to the trains at the *Umschlagplatz*. So he came back and said, “I saw Marian. He’s in the police. I’ll see what he can do.” But Marian, my ex-husband, the one I had married and divorced before the war, simply washed his hands of us and turned away. ... He did not lift a finger to help. ...

Then Bolek tried to talk to a Ukrainian who understood his Russian. He made up a story that my mother was his mother and I was his sister. He said our family was dead. Maybe because Bolek spoke Russian to him, which is close to Ukrainian, he felt sympathetic. I don’t know why, maybe it was just luck, but the Ukrainian said you can take out your mother and sister from the line, but nobody else. Everybody else had to stay.³⁴¹

Calel Perechodnik, himself a policeman in the outlying Orwock ghetto, provide the following damning verdict:

There is no justification for the Jewish policeman in Warsaw. They cannot defend themselves by explaining that they had a mental blackout. This might be done in the course of one day, but not for three long months. Their hearts turned to stone; all human feelings became foreign to them. They grabbed people, they carried down in their arms infants from the apartments, they robbed if there was opportunity. So it was not surprising that Jews hated their own police more than they did the Germans, more than the Ukrainians. There is nothing like setting a brother against a brother.³⁴²

Looting was a significant component of the overall tragedy that befell the ghetto. The Jewish police looted vacated apartments on a massive scale often amassing for themselves considerable fortunes, about which there was considerable boasting within the ghetto.³⁴³ Emanuel Ringelblum noted the “wholehearted cooperation,” as he put it, between the assisting forces and the *Ornungsdienst*: “They loot together. The entire Jewish police force is awash in money and jewelry.” Chaim Kaplan determined that the Jewish police was actually pleased with the deportation order, delivering 10,000 persons per day, and not only the 6,000 requested by the Germans, “because it fills their pockets with gold.” Abraham Lewin described several times the manner in which Jewish policemen took their brothers’ property, even as they were being sent on their final journey. “People talk about terrible robbing and looting during deportation. They cast out the people, then steal and plunder all of the tenants’ property. Shops are also opened forcibly, so they can take out merchandise. The participants: *Ordnungsdienst*, plain ordinary Jewish neighbors, and the Germans.” Ten days later Lewin wrote: “Jewish policemen are participating in looting. They break into apartments, empty closets, break dishes and destroy property just for fun.” A week later he wrote: “Yesterday evening, at around six o’clock, the *Ordnungsdienst* raided homes and made the tenants vacate them. They threw tenants out by force, broke into empty apartments, looted and robbed anything they got

³⁴¹ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 34–35.

³⁴² Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*, 104.

³⁴³ Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, 62.

their hands on, while at the same time arresting women, mainly those without papers. How did Jews come to be pillagers?”³⁴⁴

After the deportation, the Germans reactivated the *Werterfassung* department (the “collection of valuables detail”), which had been previously active in stealing furniture from apartments before the ghetto was established. The Warsaw division employed 4,000 Jews who always managed to rob from the robbers and take something for themselves out of the stolen and confiscated items being transported outside the ghetto. Operating alongside this official unit were those the ghetto residents called *shabbers*—Jews who looted empty apartments. Initially, they took only money, jewelry, or other items that could be exchanged for cash. Later on, everything was up for grabs, wrote Rachel Auerbach. Rolling down the ghetto streets were “armchair-beds and folding sofa-beds. New metal bed-frames that quickly rusted, old fashioned mattresses ... giant piles of all sorts of bed linens, children’s coverlets, pillows, sofa cushions, straw mattresses, field beds. ... There were pots, pans, kettles, Sabbath candlesticks and Passover *Seder* plates, undergarments and outerwear, dominos and chess sets, soccer balls and playing cards, baby clothes and toys, and many family photos.” Soon the Jews remaining in the ghetto were engaged in dealing in abandoned Jewish property with buyers from outside the ghetto on a massive scale.³⁴⁵

Before the Jewish underground could carry out their planned resistance to future German deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, they had to get liquidate Jewish Gestapo agents and informers in their midst and collect money to arm themselves. Bernard Goldstein, a Bund activist, records:

In further preparation for the events ahead, the Jewish fighting organization took steps to clear the ghetto of all Jewish servants of the Gestapo. Special counterespionage groups tracked down every Jewish Gestapo agent and liquidated him. For example, there was Alfred Nossig, a Jewish intellectual from Galicia. He had been a contributor of articles in Jewish, Hebrew, and German to various journals. He had served as an informer on Jewish matters for the German government even before Hitler. His specialty was the Polish Jewry. After the First World War, when Poland became independent, he used to visit Warsaw from time to time. Now he appeared in the ghetto on special work for the Gestapo. One of our comrades discovered his apartment and searched it. An identity card showed that Nossig had served the Gestapo since 1933, the year Hitler came to power. The fighting organization passed sentence of death, and he was shot.

Fuerst, one-time director of the prewar Jewish Students’ Home in Praga [a suburb of Warsaw], and a Gestapo informer, was shot by order of the fighting organization. Lolek Kokosovsky, a Maccabre leader from Zgerzh [Zgierz], was a Gestapo agent whose specialty was political information about the ghetto and the members of the underground organizations. At first he escaped our agents only with a bad wound. His friends took him from the ghetto, and he recovered. Later, however, he was shot and killed on the Aryan side as he walked out of a restaurant.

Sherinsky [Szeryński], an apostate Jew, already has been mentioned as the commissioner of the Jewish police. Our attempted execution of him failed, though he was seriously wounded. Afterward

³⁴⁴ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 149–51.

³⁴⁵ Cited in Levin, *Walls Around*, 153–56.

he took his own life. Laikin, who had been a lawyer before the war, was Sherinsky's assistant. After Sherinsky's death he assumed the position of Jewish police commissioner. Greatly hated in the ghetto, he was sentenced to death and shot.

These executions further strengthened the morale of the fighting groups and increased the prestige of the Jewish fighting organization. It felt sufficiently powerful now to levy a tax on the entire ghetto to buy arms; it even taxed the Judenrat. Some of the wealthy who refused to pay the tax were arrested. The authority of the fighting organization began to be felt throughout the ghetto. Its influence and power grew with every passing day.³⁴⁶

David Landau, a member of the Jewish Military Union, writes:

From a speech by ŻZW leader Paweł Frenkel: '... both the ŻOB and the ŻZW have been collecting large sums of money from the rich Jews in the ghetto and from the departments of the Eldest to pay for the arms some of you are buying. Up to a few weeks ago we had mutually agreed to report to each other where collections had been made, in order not to duplicate our work. Of course, here and there, we used force, but in general even those who were approached knew that once they had paid up and the collectors gave them their receipts they would be in the clear. However, in the last few days it appears that some clever individuals have been going around making collections for their own pockets in our name or in the name of the ŻOB. ... we have confiscated the collected money from the individuals who believed they were clever and have warned them that their game is very dangerous. ...

A man we sent to execute a Jew who was an informer to the Gestapo, did his duty; he killed the traitor ... The woman was Anna Milewicz, who previously belonged to the Hashomer Hatsair. She was removed from it. The Hashomer Hatsair was in full agreement with what we did, because it was proved that she worked for the Gestapo.'³⁴⁷

When the Germans embarked on the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943, among the collaborators that marched into the ghetto on April 19 were the Jewish ghetto police, who headed the column of collaborators, a small group of Polish police (who were withdrawn once fighting erupted), and Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian troops.³⁴⁸ The insurgency (street fighting) was soon over. Some of the fighters and many other Jews took cover in numerous bunkers which had been prepared in advance. Most of the bunkers were closed and hostile to outsiders. One bunker occupant recalls:

³⁴⁶ Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, 178–79.

³⁴⁷ Landau, *Caged*, 189–91.

³⁴⁸ Many sources confirm the participation of the remnants of the Jewish police, who then numbered probably no more than one hundred men. Some of them were killed in action. See Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, 624; Landau, *Caged*, 221; Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 218; Władysław Bartoszewski, "The Martyrdom and Struggle of the Jews in Warsaw under German Occupation 1939–43," in Władysław Bartoszewski and Antony Polonsky, eds., *The Jews in Warsaw: A History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1991), 338–39; Leon Najberg, *Ostatni powstańcy getta* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1993), 45; Moshe Arens, "The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Reappraisal," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (2005): 101–42, especially 114.

One morning we heard some knocking. The voice of a woman called my name and begged to be allowed in with her children. It was Mrs. Windman, with two children, her mother, and the brothers Kopchuk. It was clear to me we had no choice but to let them in, yet the others were staunchly opposed. The arguments continued all day; we almost came to blows. Those most adamantly opposed to accepting outsiders were those who still had some provisions. Softly, we, who were in agreement to let them in, instructed them when to come back and to use the entrance on Zamenhof Street.

We waited in vain. They never came. If, as we feared, the Germans had caught them, we were also lost. We learned later, that, indeed they had been picked up by the Germans and taken to the Umschlagplatz but they had not given us away. ...

Yet to our astonishment, a group of Jews appeared in the opening, ... who had made their way through ruins and dug passages to the Aryan side to enable them to escape. ... They were in the same position as we, without means of livelihood, without room for the hundreds of survivors of other burnt-out bunkers, seeking a place of refuge.

Among them I saw many who had worked in the vegetable storeroom. Rabbi Meir whispered to one who knew my brother-in-law, Ackereisen, that I still had some alcohol on me. He did this to detract the attention from himself and the provisions he still had, which he wanted to share with no one, not even with the young children. He had taken over a section of the cellar and there closed himself off with his provisions. I bartered with one of the newcomers, agreeing to exchange some of my alcohol for dry biscuits for my son. I gave him the alcohol but never received the biscuits.

The new arrivals asked us to take in another thirty survivors. The arguments broke out again. ...

We were all very worried. Only Reb Meir believed he would survive and refused to share any of his supplies.³⁴⁹

The Germans relied on Jewish policemen and Jewish informers to ferret out those in hiding both during the revolt and afterwards.³⁵⁰

Along with us, neighbors from our stairwell and employees of the hospital were hiding in the attic. We heard shooting all the time—machine guns from the German side and solitary shots from the Jewish. ...

Once—perhaps on the third or fourth day—I fell asleep in the attic. I was tired. Suddenly, something woke me up. I opened my eyes, moved a bit. ... No one said a word. ...

At one point I heard a loud *ein, zwei, drei* (one, two, three) behind the wall, then a pistol shot. Somebody was removing the loose bricks from the outside. It was a Jewish policeman. We had been discovered. ...

We crawled out one by one. It was funny: a few Jewish policemen, one German, and a whole bunch of us. We could have just killed that German!³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ David Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds: The Testimony & the Testament* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2004), 31–32.

³⁵⁰ Paulsson, *Secret City*, 91.

³⁵¹ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 70.

The Germans now proceeded to demolish these [bunkers], on the strength of the lists furnished by Brandt [a Jewish agent]. ... As soon as a bunker was discovered, some of the occupants would be shot in full sight of the rest. A German officer would then offer a reprieve to anyone who would disclose the location of other bunkers. This would sometimes produce the psychological effect of breaking down the resistance of one or other of the survivors, who would then lead the Germans to any hide-outs they knew of. A new plague of informers now infested the ghetto. The Germans, as a rule, would keep these informers alive only until they had squeezed them out of every bit of information, and then shoot them out of hand. The average life-expectancy of such an informer, therefore, was no more than a few days, and the Jews continued living in the ghetto.³⁵²

Jack Klajman was one of the many Jews who was captured in this way: “Clearly, the most effective method for the Germans was the use of Jewish informers—and that is how my hideout was uncovered on 21 April.”³⁵³ Israel Mittelberg’s hideout was also betrayed by Jews:

The Germans had come from the same opening as our guests of two days earlier; quite clearly they had denounced us. ... Outside, we caught sight of the two young men who had denounced us—one was eighteen, the other in his early twenties. They tried to deceive us, further assisting the Germans in their treacherous work. ... The informers were often put to death before their victims.

A selection took place. About one hundred and sixty of us stood for an hour in the yard. Those prepared to talk were told to move to the right. Out of our ranks, no one volunteered except for a couple be the name of Shuster—he had served as a Jewish policeman. We turned away from them in contempt.³⁵⁴

The most famous bunker to be betrayed was the one on 18 Miła Street, which served as the headquarters of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ŻOB*). In actual fact, it belonged to Shmuel Isser, a prominent figure in the Jewish criminal underworld, and was one of the best equipped and largest in the ghetto, holding about 200 persons.³⁵⁵

Leon Najberg, who held out in the bunkers of the Warsaw ghetto until the end of September 1943, witnessed the use of Jewish informers by in the service of the Befehlstelle, the local SS command headquarters, repeatedly throughout this period.³⁵⁶ The Jewish police also proved useful by throwing grenades into the entrances to subterranean shelters.³⁵⁷ All of this led to universal suspicions among the survivors toward all Jews: “the residents saw in every unfamiliar Jew who did not live in the hideout an

³⁵² Chaim Lazar Litai, *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* (Tel Aviv: Massada-P.E.C. Press, 1966), 269.

³⁵³ Jack Klajman with Ed Klajman, *Out of the Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), 71.

³⁵⁴ Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds*, 33.

³⁵⁵ Kobi Ben-Simhon, “World of our (god)fathers,” *Ha’aretz*, October 21, 2004; Cezary Gmyz, “Zdrada przy Miłej,” *Wprost*, May 1, 2005.

³⁵⁶ Najberg, *Ostatni powstańcy getta*, 89, 110, 115, 120, 132 (Tyszler), 142–43 (Tyszler).

³⁵⁷ Stefan Ernest, *O wojnie wielich Niemiec z Żydami w Warszawie, 1939–1943* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2003), 74.

informer in the service of the Germans or at best a suspect person.”³⁵⁸ As a precaution Jewish survivors in the ruins of the ghetto would not reveal their hideouts to fellow Jews.³⁵⁹

Many Jews went into hiding again after the general uprising of August 1944 was crushed by the Germans, and the Poles were ordered to evacuate Warsaw. Jews awaiting the arrival of the Soviet army in the ruins of Warsaw often had to be leery of those with whom they hid. David Landau recalls:

Under the ground, Jews inhabited caverns and bunkers, like moles, eking out a wait which stretched into three and a half months. A few hundred Jews were daring to defy the fury of the Germans. ...

But when we finished and went in to the next room attached to the basement it all became worthwhile. The place had belonged to a jeweller. We found a safe with the key in the lock. Inside it was a small box containing gold coins, a gold-covered cigar box, ladies' watches with wristbands and on chains, and a considerable number of smaller pieces of jewellery. In ordinary times such a safe would have made one very comfortable.

... we had five women and thirteen other men on our hands ... The contents of the safe were later divided more or less equally between us, but we soon discovered we had a thief among us.³⁶⁰

A Jewish woman who hid in cellar with a group of more than thirty Jews stated:

On another night, Sukharevitch came upon someone else again, this time a woman with a five-year-old child, who were lying in the ruins not far from our bunker. It turned out the woman had been wandering around through the ruins for weeks and found nowhere to hide. We took them in with us. They stayed down here even though the second group, which had come in later, objected.

And still another time, we ran into a very religious Jew and a *mishimed* staying together. They'd also been wandering over the ruins. They found a bunker, but the Germans uncovered it and they only got away at the last minute. We took them in with us, but this time, a violent argument broke out. The violent people refused to keep them. They even talked about taking them outside to be shot. After a long quarrel, they finally agreed to let them stay with us.

Not far from where we were, there was a second Jewish bunker and when they discovered ours, they attacked us and it almost came to bloodshed. To this day, I have no idea what made them do it, but in the end, they realized their mistake and we united. ...

For a month, a silence hung over everything as if we were in a cemetery. ... Finally, for several nights without stop, we heard heavy artillery barrages. This gave us hope. ... We couldn't stop arguing among ourselves in the bunker. Our "enforcers" even thought of ways to keep all the

³⁵⁸ Najberg, *Ostatni powstańcy getta*, 68.

³⁵⁹ Najberg, *Ostatni powstańcy getta*, 137.

³⁶⁰ Landau, *Caged*, 325, 329–30.

valuables we'd gotten for themselves. But most of us only thought of surviving these last few days.³⁶¹

The situation was much the same in most ghettos in occupied Poland, and the combination of Jewish police and informers was particularly lethal during the liquidation of the ghettos. For example, in Szczepieszyn the Germans relied on four Jewish youths who were adept at locating hideouts of Jews.³⁶² In many localities, when the remnants of the ghetto population were being mopped up, the Jewish councils and Jewish police played a key role in detecting Jews who tried to escape or hide. From among hundreds of horrific accounts, the conditions described in the Lwów ghetto are representative:

The Jewish police force was patterned on the Nazi police: *Schutzpolizei*, *Sonderdienst*, and *Kriminalpolizei* (Kripo). It grew to a force of approximately 500 officers.

In the beginning the police were well-regulated, acknowledging the authority of the *Judenrat*. ... However, most joined for personal reasons, having in mind the privileges which went along with the job, such as larger food rations and exemption from forced labor and resettlement, as promised by the Gestapo. Some, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, lost their ability to differentiate right from wrong, and any human feelings. In time they acquired the mentality of the SS and fully cooperated with these murderers.

The worst were the members of the *Sonderdienst* ... Golligier-Schapiro, Krumholz, Ruppert, Scherz, Vogelfaenger, and others fell into this category. The *Sonderdienst* assisted the Germans and actively participated in the so-called resettlement of Jews. They helped search for hiding places. Living in the ghetto they knew where to look for a bunker. They carried Jews from their hiding places and handed them over to the SS slaughterers. During an *Aktion* each was given a quota of Jews to be delivered to the SS. Anyone whose operation showed a shortage had to join the detainees himself.

Once one of these "catchers," who previously had deliberately overlooked a bunker where his sister-in-law was hiding, failed to fulfill his quota. He then rushed back to the bunker, pulled out his sister-in-law, as well as the other Jews who were with her, and delivered them to the SS for deportation.

Morally corrupt, they accumulated large sums of cash and valuables by accepting bribes, blackmailing people, and extorting ransom money for excluding from deportation those who could pay.

They assisted the Germans in confiscating Jewish possessions. Although they were supposed to combat smuggling, they worked hand in glove with corrupt German officers, sharing the spoils with them. They participated with their German principals in drinking and sexual orgies, and in their stupor no longer differed from the SS hangmen. Some Jewish policemen once accompanied the SS to Jaworze and Złoczów to assist their masters in an *Aktion*.

³⁶¹ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 308–10.

³⁶² Zygmunt Klukowski, *Dziennik z lat okupacji Zamojszczyzny (1939–)* (Lublin: Lubelska Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1958), 294 (entry for October 31, 1942).

The authority of the *Sonderdienst* increased with each *Aktion*. From August 1942 on, they slowly gained the upper hand over the *Judenrat*. In 1943 they achieved total superiority, functioning exclusively as agents of the SS, and became the paramount authority over the remnants of the ghetto, replacing the *Judenrat* entirely. The Gestapo had complete confidence in them. This went so far as to hand over any Jew caught outside the ghetto to the Jewish *Sonderdienst*. The *Sonderdienst* kept these Jews in the jail at Weyssenhof [Weyssenhoff] Street. At the earliest opportunity they were delivered on time to join the others on their way to the gas chambers. They did their jobs well.³⁶³

Historian Eliyahu Yones fully supports this account of the Jewish “Order Service” (*Jüdische Ordnungsdienst*), as it was officially known.

Functionally, the Jewish police were divided into four main units:

- a. *Ordnungsdienst* (Order Service)—the largest unit in terms of number of members.
- b. *Kripo* (an abbreviation for the German word *Kriminalpolizei*), the Jewish criminal police.
- c. *Sonderdienst* or *Spezialabteilung*, the special service. This unit dealt with problems defined as “political,” including manhunts for Jews who were suspected of belonging to leftist circles and sympathizing with the Soviet Union.
- d. The Jewish gendarmerie.

The three last-mentioned units reported directly to the Gestapo, not to the *Judenrat*, and attracted members of the underworld. The difference among them was not clear-cut and self-evident. ...

The Jewish criminal police was headed by Max Guliger-Szapira of Lvov [Lwów], the scion of a family of grain merchants and members of the Jewish sports association Hashomonea before the war. Guliger-Szapira excelled in exposing Jews’ hideouts and handing many Jews over to the Germans. In 1943, the Germans deposed him and replaced him with Rupert. His deputy was a refugee from Kraków named Krumholtz. The two of them competed for primacy with abusive and obscene behavior. The gendarmerie was commanded by Janek Scherz ... Other “officers” in the Jewish police force were Barch Roisen, Dr. Abraham Rosenmann, Narcisfeld, and Dr. Tunis. The de facto commander of the Jewish police was Guliger-Szapira. These men inflicted severe damage on the Jewish community of Lvov. ...

As the Germans’ policy toward Jews in the *Generalgouvernement* became tougher, the duties of the Jewish police changed in ways that affected their relations with the *Judenrat* and caused the

³⁶³ Joachim Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs: Jews in the Lwów Ghetto, the Janowski Concentration Camp, and as Deportees in Siberia* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1985), 80–82. For another damning account from Lwów see Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 283. The Jewish police from Lwów were also employed outside the ghetto. For example, the concentration of 512 Jews in a school on Sobieski Street on March 25, 1942, was accomplished by 10 German, 20 Ukrainian, and 40 Jewish policemen. See Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 2, 506. The Jewish police from Lwów also took part in the liquidation of ghettos in outlying communities. In Stryj and Rawa Ruska, they helped the German and Ukrainian police round up Jews for deportation to Belżec, and were particularly adept at discovering and destroying hideouts. See Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 356; Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 2, 506. In Busk, in addition to the SS, Wehrmacht, SD, German gendarmes, armed local Volksdeutsche, and Ukrainian police, the Germans brought in over a dozen Jewish policemen from Lwów. The terrorized Polish population, appalled by what was happening, locked itself up in their homes. See A. Shayari, ed., *Busk: In Memory of Our Community* (Haifa: The Busker Organization in Israel, 1965), xlv.

Jewish population to view them differently. These matters led to changes in the human makeup of the force. When the function of the police as an instrument of persecution against the Jews became strongly emphasized, men of public sensitivity resigned from the force and were succeeded by riffraff, thugs, brutes, and seekers of illicit lucre—all of whom were willing to obey the Germans' orders dispassionately, unflinchingly, and mercilessly.

... When compulsory forced labor was introduced, and forced-labor camps were established, the Jewish police was instructed to deal with recalcitrants and to flush out and turn over people in order to meet the labor quota that the Germans had given the *Judenrat*. Policemen accompanied officials of the Supply Department to expropriate belongings from Jewish homes in accordance with "orders" placed by Germans. This action usually entailed the use of force. In the later summer of 1941. When the Germans established the first slave-labor camps in the Galicia District and ordered the Jewish community to meet the quota of Jewish workers that it required, the Jewish police abducted those marked for labor and turned them over to the Germans. ...

Dr. Adolf Rotfeld collaborated with the Germans from the start; during his tenure as chairman of the *Judenrat*, the Jewish police performed every mission they were assigned. In the autumn of 1941, the Germans began to establish slave-labor camps across Eastern Galicia and presented the *Judenrat* with new demands for workers who would toil there. Armed with lists from the *Judenrat*, the Jewish police fanned out in the ghetto. Since most of the targeted persons evaded the dragnet, the Jewish police met the Germans' quota by circulating in the streets and arresting every Jew they encountered. Their eagerness to carry out the mission, their ambition, and the necessity of filling the quota were stronger than any permit. Thus, they often disregarded labor permits that those abducted possessed ...

Jews who could afford to bribe the kidnappers did so and were released on the spot. Indigent and refugee Jews fell prey to the policemen and were taken away, first to the Jewish labor bureau and thence to slave labor camps.

In November 1941, as SS and Ukrainian police perpetrated the "*Aktion* under the trestle," the Jewish police—who continued to abduct Jews in the city streets—also took possession of the battered Jews who had been taken to the labor bureau. There, members of the *Ordnungsdienst* handed them over to the SS, who then sent them to the camps. ...

At this time [1942], the Jewish police were given additional duties and their numbers grew to 750. ... The expanded units were the criminal police (the *Kripo*) and the special service (the *Sonderdienst*), which were tasked with monitoring Jews who belonged to left-wing circles, keeping track of suspected collaborators with the Soviet regime in 1939–41, and dealing with Jews who traded on the black market. Ordinarily, there was no need for evidence to demonstrate someone's guilt. A denunciation was all it took to have someone arrested, and the detained person would then come under extortionist pressure. These units of the Jewish police had their own prison where they "interrogated" these miseries, whom they handed over to the Germans only after they had squeezed them dry.

A week after the March 1942 *Aktion*, the Gestapo ordered the Jewish policemen to report to the front of the *Judenrat* building. *Hauptsturmführer* Erich Engels, head of the Jewish Affairs Department of the Gestapo in Lvov, came to this location, escorted by a company of SS men, and informed the commander of the Jewish police that since the ghetto population had contracted by

30,000, there was no longer a need for so many policemen. Accordingly, their population would be trimmed by 200, starting with those who had failed to meet their quota during the *Aktion*. They were ordered to step out of line and turn in their caps, armbands, and billy clubs; a short time later, they were loaded aboard trucks. Thus the men who several days earlier had helped dispatch Jews to extermination were now banished to labor camps. In several cases, the destination was Janowska. The Germans promised the *Judenrat* that the deportation of the wayward policemen would be followed by a resumption of calm. As time passed, the ranks of the Jewish police swelled again—to 500 or, according to another source, to 750. Again, the newcomers were coarser than their predecessors ...

The Jewish police had various duties in 1943: maintaining hygiene, taking morning roll-call, and escorting workers their jobs. They also hunted for “illegals” who were hiding in the camp and helped the Germans perform selections, in the aftermath of which many Jews were deported for extermination. The Jewish police in Lvov were also sent to nearby towns to take part in *Aktionen*, because Jewish policemen in those localities usually preferred to escape than to participate in the reviled task of turning over their brethren to the Germans. ...

The misdeeds of the Jewish police left such a deep impression in the memories of the survivors of the Lvov ghetto that all testimonies mention them. The worst of all, according to the witnesses, were the *Sonderdienst* men, who believed that their total obeisance to the SS would save their lives. Members of this group, such as Guliger-Szapira, Krumholtz, Rupert, Scherc and Vogelwanger, aided the Germans by participating actively in deportations and in searches for hideouts. As inhabitants of the ghetto, they knew where to search. They dragged people out of their hiding places and unhesitatingly handed them over to the SS hangmen. They were corrupt; they amassed fortunes from bribes that they charged people to spare them from deportation. They also shamelessly participated in the Germans’ drinking parties and merrymaking.³⁶⁴

With the approach of Passover, the Germans launched an *Aktion* against “asocial” elements. It began on March 19, 1942. To carry it out, the Jewish police were mobilized. The first group consigned to deportation was the poorest, located on the basis of a list of welfare recipients. Several days later, all Jews who lacked labor permits were gathered in the school on Sobieski Street. When the Germans found the roundup too small, they decided to complete the job themselves with the help of Ukrainian police. ... On Passover eve, as the Jews seated themselves at the Seder table, policemen raided their homes, tore them away, and brutally led them to trains. The day after the festival, it transpired that the previous day’s eve had been the last and bleakest day of the “March *Aktion*,” in which 15,000 Jews were removed from their homes and murdered. ...

Before long, the Gestapo embarked on a purge among Jews who had collaborated with it. One by one, various agents and liaisons vanished and were murdered. The Germans began to eliminate anyone who seemed unnecessary to them or who knew too much. Thus, Reiss, the former soap-factory owner who had brokered between Engels and the *Judenrat* disappeared. So did the *Kripo* agent Oskar Halperin.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 118–25.

³⁶⁵ Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 164–65.

On December 5, 1942 ... A new *Aktion* had begun. ... The ghetto was totally surrounded.

The Germans and Ukrainians—aided by members of the Jewish police—tossed grenades into the cellars and set afire the wretched wooden dwellings that lined Kleparów Square on all sides. The blaze spread quickly to adjacent buildings. Where Jews were suspected of hiding, the hovels were doused with large quantities of gasoline and then torched. ... The dense smoke drove the Jews out of their hideouts. The Germans chased them down and murdered them. Infants were vivisected with bayonets, thrown into the fire, or smashed against the walls. ...

After the *Aktion*, the Jewish police abducted Jews to bury the many corpses that remained in the streets. The “gravedigger unit,” as this group was called, interred the bodies in the trenches across from Pilichowska Street.³⁶⁶

In the middle of 1943, SS officer Warzog, having finished his assignment with the liquidation of the Złoczów camp, replaced Willhaus as the commander of Janowska. The new commander ... brought several Jews with him; they mingled among the prisoners, gathered information, and kept him abreast of the prisoners’ doings. By means of deception and dissimulation, Warzog tried to create the impression that the regimen had become more humane. His purpose was to mislead the prisoners in order to obviate the possibility of an uprising.³⁶⁷

Ada Kessler-Pawlak was one of many Jews who recorded what she witnessed in the Lwów ghetto:

Maks Goligier was in the Jewish police. He walked around the ghetto with his head raised and hit Jews with his rubber truncheon. He had friends among the Gestapo men ... He was the right-hand man of the cannibals ... He drank with them. His office was in a separate room in the Gestapo building on Pełczyńska Street, which Jews and Poles avoided from a distance. He pointed out former friends, and he knew everyone who wanted to pass as Aryans and did not wear their armbands.³⁶⁸

Goliger was also employed at the train station where he fingered Jews to the Germans.

Other Jewish survivors from Lwów confirm this picture and acknowledge that the ghetto was “full of informers,” thus paralyzing any underground activities. The *Sonderdienst* was also known to ferret out people with pro-Soviet sympathies and those who belonged to leftist organizations.³⁶⁹ Helene Kaplan, who was imprisoned in the Janowska camp in Lwów, stated:

The Jewish policemen were also known for their lack of compassion towards their fellow Jews. If the lives of their own wives, husbands or children were in danger, all the others would be sacrificed. That was how they operated and how they earned their awful reputation. ...

³⁶⁶ Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 171–72.

³⁶⁷ Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 208.

³⁶⁸ Ada Kessler-Pawlak, *Nie chcę nocy: Dziewczyna i kanibale*, 2nd expanded edition (Warsaw: CB, 2002), 52–53, 99.

³⁶⁹ Jones, *Żydzi Lwowa w okresie okupacji 1939–1945*, 190 (Rywka Kuper), 227–28.

Of course, some of the Jews were rank opportunists, people without scruples and with no soul. One of these was a cook in Janowska. He was killed by the inmates after they learned that he was selling food for money and diamonds while the rest were starving. Unfortunately there were quite a few like him.³⁷⁰

William Ungar, who lived in the ghetto in Lwów, recalled the Jewish ghetto policemen as being “cruel and unscrupulous”:

But many acted more like devoted servants in the hope of ingratiating themselves with the Gestapo. Others were just callous, brutal people, untouched by any of the nobler sentiments when it came to hunting down their fellows.

While at the Janowska labour camp, Ungar was denounced to the Gestapo by *oberjude* Tenenbaum, the German appointed chief of the Jewish workers.³⁷¹

A handful Jews from the Lwów ghetto managed to escape and join work crews in Kiev where they posed as Christians. The Jewish intermediaries made a small fortune transporting those desperate to save their lives.

Marek was fascinated with the Lvov-Kiev escape path that we uncovered. He felt that a lot of Jews could be shipped through it out of Lvov. He was getting friendly with Romek and was trying to get involved in the transports. Was he motivated by the desire to help our compatriots? This was undoubtedly important to him, but what really fascinated Marek was the business opportunity. A safe escape from the Ghetto was worth a lot of money. Marek felt that if he made contact with the Ghetto, he could get a thousand gold dollars per escapee. In a few trips he could make a fortune.³⁷²

Throughout occupied Poland, the Jewish police played a pivotal role in the round-ups for deportation to death camps and the killing fields. Since those who participated believed that their cooperation might save them from a similar fate, recruits were not hard to find. In Łódź,

Once, before one of the most dramatic *shpera* (curfew) in the Lodz ghetto, the Jewish police needed more helpers for their horrible task of selecting all the children for deportation to the death camps. They also tried to mobilize the ghetto firefighters ... Everyone who agreed to participate in this criminal action would receive a big loaf of bread ... Some firefighters accepted the bread and participated.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Kaplan, *I Never Left Janowska* ..., 126.

³⁷¹ William Ungar and David Chanoff, *Destined to Live* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), 171–72, 253, 276, 277.

³⁷² Edwin Langberg with Julia M. Langberg, *Sara's Blessing* (Lumberton, New Jersey: Emethas Publishers, 2003), 70.

³⁷³ Michael Moshe Checinski, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism: From Polish Counterintelligence to the German/American Marshall Center* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2004), 38.

Dr. Leopold Lustig points out that those who joined the Order Police in Drohobycz tended to come from well-off families, rarely from the social margins, and often were prominent members of the Jewish community.

After work, I stopped by to see Salek Welzer ... His mother says, "Salek has hidden because they're looking for him to unload potatoes." In comes Wilek Ornstein, an *ordner*, former hockey-player for "Betar." ... Where's Salek?" "I don't know," says Mrs. Welzer, and he hits her in the face, and raises his fist again, but I grabbed his arm from behind and twisted it. People came running so he went off. The next morning, Schönbach comes to the *appellplatz*. ... Wilek points at me. Schönbach hits me with that signet ring and crushes my nose. That amused him. He ordered a *lauspromenade*, louse road, to be shaved down the middle of my scalp, so that they could keep an eye on me ...

Fredzio W. went to secondary school with me. His mother died before the war. His father, a pipe-fitter by trade, muscular as a bull and incapable of speaking in a human way in any language, became one of the most dreaded *ordners*. When the Germans had taken away most of the Jews and didn't need so many *ordners*, they led them in a formation to the cemetery and said, "We swore to you that, in recognition of your good services, you wouldn't be taken away, so we are going to kill you on the spot." Later the *ordners'* new commandant brought Fredzio his father's cap. "If you want to, you can put it on." And Fredzio put it on and became an *ordner*. Alek Madfes, also from my gymnasium, talented, from a well-to-do family, his father was in the oil business, became an *ordner* after they had taken his parents away. And Mićko R.—the best soccer player in "Betar"—they took his wife, he turned his own relatives in. And Leonek Felsen, the goal-keeper ... All strong, fit, in athletic condition.

There were specialists among them. Bross and Baustein knew how to find children who had been hidden and blackmail their parents. Bross had a furniture store before the war; Baustein had been a sergeant in the Austrian army in the previous war. Handsome Bronek Dauerman, black hair and blue eyes, a butcher who knew his trade, hit where it hurt the most. Poliwka, a snitch with watery eyes, watched where someone was hiding and informed Mensinger, brought in from Lwów by Hildebrand. Meszko Weiss, a pre-war street urchin, headed the *Raubkommando* and searched wealthy homes. They killed Imek Grunfeld's parents and he went around bloated with hunger, so he joined Weiss.

And the intelligentsia. Yoel Holzman, an attorney, he took our Yetka to *Sammelstelle*. Nemlich, a refugee from the west, who taught us geography in the Soviet school. A first-rate young violinist, Galotti, whose father was an Italian Jew and mother a Polish Gentile, became the first commandant of the ghetto police. ... Maciek Ruhrberg, a young lawyer, unsuccessful before the war because there were too many lawyers in Drohobycz. His father-in-law, Doctor Rosenblatt, became chairman of the Judenrat and Maciek handled extortions. Educated, speaking good Polish and German, they had better access and took more. After he had robbed enough, Maciek bought himself Aryan papers and fled to Warsaw. He sported a beard and paraded there, elegant as an English lord. But the Gestapo, who had their snitches from Drohobycz in Warsaw, brought him back, beat him until he returned everything, and shot him by the fence.

Nobody else, though, enriched himself as much as Engineer Weintraub. He prepared the lists for Hildebrand—who was indispensable and who wasn't—and he was the lord over life and death. He had his experts who knew who had dollars and valuables, because he wasn't from Drohobycz himself, he had drifted to us. Small piggy eyes, fat face, he ate and drank with Hildebrand and Mensinger. ...

Baumgarten, Weintraub's main confidant and supplier, drank with him and the SS men. He supplied them with gold and the best boots from the artisan bootmaker, Freilich. Baumgarten had a lover, Giza Bachman, former secretary to an attorney. She knew how to blackmail people, and his son specialized in servicing beautiful married women. They believed that the world belonged to sons-of-bitches, and, indeed, it did. One of the Wiesenthal brothers—they owned a perfumery on Mickiewicz Street—was with us on Boryslawska with his wife and little son. They had money. During a selection in the court, Minkus pulled their boy out. "Herr Scharführer, we need this Jew, could you make an exception?" Minkus, with his red, drunkard's face, foamed at the mouth and put the barrel of the gun to Baumgarten's temple, "*Saujude du sollst nicht frech werden!*" And afterwards they drank together again.³⁷⁴

The ghetto police in Wilno, who became a privileged class dominated by right-wing Zionists, participated zealously in rounding up Jews during various German operations, especially during the mass killings of autumn 1941 and during the deportations to Estonia in the fall of 1943.³⁷⁵ They robbed evacuated Jewish apartments and delivered to the Lithuanian police hundreds of Jews whom they had found in hiding places.³⁷⁶ In September 1943, a brigade of 100 fighters of the United Partisan Organization was surrounded and killed as a result of treachery by the Jewish police and a Jewish informant.³⁷⁷ The Jewish council in Wilno also dispatched their police to carry out the liquidation of ghettos in small, outlying towns.³⁷⁸ On October 23, 1942, a total of 406 old and sick people from the Oszmiana ghetto were handed over to the Germans and Lithuanians by Jewish policemen from Wilno.³⁷⁹ A Jewish policeman from Wilno named Drezin, who "betrayed melinas [hideouts] freely," was put in charge of the ghetto in Oszmiana.³⁸⁰ Two other Jewish policemen from Wilno who participated in the liquidation of the small ghettos in the Wilno area in March 1943 were Bernshtein and Natan Ring.³⁸¹

³⁷⁴ Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 28–30.

³⁷⁵ Arūnas Bubnys, "Kauno ir Vilniaus getų žydų policija (1941–1944 m.)" [The Jewish Police in the Kaunas and Vilnius Ghettos (1941–1944)], *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (17), 2005.

³⁷⁶ Daniel Blatman, *En direct du ghetto: La presse clandestine juive dans le ghetto de Varsovie (1940–1943)* (Paris: Cerf; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), 423.

³⁷⁷ James M. Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust: Moral Uses of Violence and Will* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 50.

³⁷⁸ M. Gelbart, ed., *Sefer Zikaron le-kehilat Oshmana* (Tel Aviv: Oshmaner Organization and the Oshmaner Society in the U.S.A., 1969), 25–31, English translation on Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Oshmyany/Oshmyany.html>>, 115; Rich Cohen, *The Avengers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 70–73.

³⁷⁹ Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, 342.

³⁸⁰ Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania*, 411.

³⁸¹ Nathan Cohen, "The Last Days of the Vilna Ghetto—Pages from a Diary," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 31 (2003): 36, 42.

Jewish police from Będzin and Sosnowiec were dispatched to the nearby town of Olkusz in June 1942 to assist the Germans in the liquidation of the ghetto. According to a Jewish witness, their treatment of the Jews was more brutal than the Gestapo's. Afterwards the Jewish police ferreted out scores of Jews in well-concealed hideouts the Germans had failed to detect, and brought them to assembly points from whence they were deported to Auschwitz.³⁸²

Similarly, in Chrzanów, in addition to local Jews, the Germans dispatched Jews from Sosnowiec to assist in the liquidation of the ghetto.

The last member of the Judenrat in Chrzanow [Chrzanów], whom the Germans left behind to carry out the “technical” liquidation of the Judenrat after all the Jews of Chrzanow had been taken away to the gas chambers—this person, who watched his brothers and sisters being led away to the slaughter, followed the Germans’ command two days after the final “transfer” and demanded that the few Jews who were still hiding in attics and basements come out of their hiding places and report voluntarily to the police. He himself personally went through all the empty Jewish houses, shouting that the Jews should come out of their bunkers, that nothing would be done to them. And the few Jews who still believed him this time fell into the bestial hands of the Germans.

[Major] Lindner and his Jewish helper Moniek Merin understood this, and therefore recruited the Jewish militia to help carry out the last labor action. They didn't even rely solely on the local Jewish militia from Chrzanow, instead bringing along some Jewish police from Sosnowiec for the purpose. In November 1941 a detachment from Sosnowiec arrived, and with true devotion to the German hangmen, they carried out their vile task. Although officially only those girls who had been assigned by the Judenrat to be taken to the labor camp were to be seized, the roundup by the Sosnowiec police turned into a general hunt for young women. The Sosnowiec militia, or “Merin's Bodyguards” as they were called, were the equal of their German supervisors in many respects. Without second thoughts, with cynical cruelty, nearly all of them burst into Jewish homes, searching for terrified Jewish girls, dragging them out of their hiding places, and taking them to Sosnowiec and thence to the local transit camp. Afterward the young women, along with similar victims from other towns, were transported to various labor camps.³⁸³

During the liquidation of the ghetto in Brańsk, a Jewish policeman pointed out escaping Jews and the head of the Jewish council tracked down and divulged the hideouts of 70 Jews who had tried to avoid deportation. These Jews were apprehended and executed by the Germans.³⁸⁴ According to Isaiah Trunk, the trial in Israel of David Neiman, a policeman from the Ostowiec ghetto, “gives an idea of the deplorable role the Jewish police played during the ‘resettlement’ in some of the ghettos and of the attitudes of the inmates

³⁸² Account of Marian Auerhahn (Głuszecki) in Krzysztof Kocjan, *Zagłada Żydów olkuskich* (Olkusz: OSK Brama, 2002).

³⁸³ Bochner, *Sefer Chrzanow*, 80ff., 99ff.

³⁸⁴ Zbigniew Romaniuk, “Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events,” in *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyski: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II*, Part One (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), 27, 78, 144; Hoffman,

towards them: the mere fact that a bunker became known to a Jewish policeman was enough to scare the hidden Jews and to compel them to scatter.”³⁸⁵ After the liquidation of the ghetto in Złoczów, as in many other towns, a Jewish policeman by the name of Schapira led the Germans to Jewish hideouts to capture the remaining Jews.³⁸⁶

A number of Jews, among them a painter named Brethmelt, helped the Gestapo to locate hiding places during the the deportation of Jews from the ghetto in Przemyśl.³⁸⁷ A bunker in which several hundred Jews took shelter was betrayed; only two Jews managed to hide and avoid detection.³⁸⁸ According to another account from that city,

There was a bunker in the Ghetto that involved lifting the top of a stove and there was a staircase to go down. People were ingenious the way they built these bunkers in the Ghetto. When they discovered one, they [i.e., the Germans] would promise the people they would spare their lives if they would tell of others. They would spare their lives for a couple of hours, that was all.

So they gave away where my aunt and uncle were hidden with their children. The Germans were afraid to go down the stairs and the people would not come up. So they threw Molotov cocktails down the stairs and burned them alive.³⁸⁹

After the liquidation of the ghetto in Wilno, in September 1943, Jews found hiding in the ruins of the ghetto were known to reveal the hiding places of other Jews, in exchange for a “promise” that their would be spared. Even after their arrival in the killing fields of Ponary, outside the city, Jews continued to reveal hiding places of other Jews. Hundreds of Jews are betrayed and murdered.

... the Lithuanians have proven good psychologists of the Jews sentenced to death with their tactic of searching for Judases who, for the doubtful possibility of saving their own lives, have betrayed their brethren’s well-concealed hiding places.

Now the Lithuanians confirm the effectiveness of their tactic when they bring a [new] group. They separate 3–4 Jewish men and women and shoot the rest before their eyes. When it is the turn of these 3 or 4 they tell them “you will live,” but they must reveal hiding places. When one of them reveals one, he goes to the city, to the ghetto, but immediately returns and dies. At the same time a new “troika” of Judases is chosen, as in a cycle, with excellent results for the executioners and a fatal ending for the Judases.³⁹⁰

Shtetl, 224–25.

³⁸⁵ Trunk, *Judenrat*, 558.

³⁸⁶ Ephraim F. Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four* (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin, 2006), 26–27.

³⁸⁷ Based on account no. 301/691 in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, cited in Marcin Janowski, “Polityka niemiecka władz okupacyjnych wobec ludności polskiej i żydowskiej w Przemyślu w latach 1939–1944,” in *Kresy Południowo-Wschodnie: Rocznik Przemyskiego Centrum Kultury i Nauki Zamek*, vol. 3/4, no. 1 (Przemyśl 2005–2006): 217–18.

³⁸⁸ Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 173.

³⁸⁹ Account of Teodora (Cesia) Zimmerman Miller in Hartman and Krochmal, *I Remember Every Day...*, 49.

³⁹⁰ Kazimierz Sakowicz, *Ponary Diary, 1941–1943: A Bystander’s Account of a Mass Murder* (New Haven and Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), 122–23, 127–28, 144.

The Judenrat in Thuste near Stanisławów, was notorious for its thievery and misappropriated property collected for various purposes (as bribes for the Germans, for the relief of the poor). When one of its few honest members protested, he was harassed and denounced to the Germans as an NKVD confidant.³⁹¹ As Baruch Milch explains, the Jewish council worked hand in glove with the Jewish police and other collaborators:

I agreed to sit on the Judenrat before I knew what this would entail ... At first I cooperated and delivered anything I could find, even wedding rings. However, after I observed some Judenrat officials cheating and pilfering, I quarreled with them and resigned. My act backfired; from that moment on they made my life was miserable. The head of the Judenrat was an acquaintance, a doctor, who retaliated at the professional level. ...

My place on the Judenrat was taken by one Dr. Aberman, a quiet, polite man who showed his true colors later, during the Aktionen. Dr. Aberman aided the Jewish and the Ukrainian police in their Jew hunting, and was named the Judenälteste (chairman of the Judenrat), and exercised great cruelty. Disregarding medical ethics and his kinship with the persecuted Jewish community, he acted in ways that, he believed, would help him and his family to survive unscathed.

To command the Jewish police, the authorities appointed a vicious and mentally disturbed Jew who was an epileptic. He caused the community great suffering and with his own hands dragged his parents out of hiding at the climax of a sudden Aktion and delivered them to the killing ground in the cemetery.³⁹²

The Jewish police in Tarnopol was indispensable in uncovering hideouts built by the Jews. According to one Jewish witness, “if not for the treacherous Jewish militia, it would have taken the Germans ten years to discover these hideouts.” The Jewish police “throughout the night ... plundered [evacuated Jewish] homes” and was also “rewarded for its efficient service with monetary bonuses of 50 złotych ... and those with stars received boots, pants, etc.” from the booty that had been gathered from the victims.³⁹³

The Jewish police from Tarnopol gained notoriety in surrounding towns where they were deployed on various assignments. A survivor from Rohatyn writes: “Jewish police from Tarnopol came to Rohatyn and behaved as badly as the Germans.”³⁹⁴ An account from Skalat states:

The town of Skalat [Skalat] was to have been declared *Judenfrei* following the mass murder during the “Sobbing Graves” ‘action’ in April 1943. However, since a sufficiently large number had managed to hide, an order came from Tarnopol permitting the surviving Jews to return to the

³⁹¹ Baruch Milch, *Testament: Z Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2001), 108; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, 72–74.

³⁹² Baruch Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 76–78.

³⁹³ Żaneta Margules, “Moje przeżycia w Tarnopolu podczas wojny,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 36 (1960): 78.

³⁹⁴ Regina Hader Rock, “From Hiding Place to Hiding Place,” in M. Amihai, David Stockfish, and Shmuel Bari, eds., *The Community of Rohatyn and Environs*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/rogatin/rohatyn.html>>;

ghetto. Again they were told that they would be permitted to live there peacefully. Most importantly, they were to maintain their strength and sanitation, as they would still be needed as laborers. To encourage them further to believe that they would not be killed, the Tarnopol Gestapo sent down ten Jewish policemen, led by one Aba Tennenbaum, assigned to maintain Law and Order and, at the same time, to serve as tools in the execution of the Germans' plan.

The Jewish police from Tarnopol exerted themselves to instill calm and to persuade the people that as long as *they* were around there would be no new slaughters. This time, however, no one believed them. Every evening, an exodus would begin. As night came on, people sought out lodgings among the Gentiles or crept stealthily into barns and stables to spend the night. At dawn, learning that all was quiet in the town; they would return to the ghetto, only to roam again the next night. ...

The ghetto was emptied of many people every night. ... The police searched the empty houses during the nights, taking whatever they liked of the furnishings, and also taking the opportunity to note down suspected hiding places or bunkers.

Generally, the Jewish police from Tarnopol behaved abominably. In addition to maintaining close relations with the officials of the local camp and with the Germans, they engaged in drunken revelry, robbery and rape.³⁹⁵

A Jewish witness recalled conditions in the ghetto in Zbaraż near Tarnopol shortly before its liquidation:

The better nourished Jewish militia members suddenly acquired a maximum of 130 new recruits. This event reinforced our fear that mass executions would soon be implemented. Mr. Gruenfeld, the despicable collaborator, knew precisely what the Nazi masters expected him to achieve. The local Jews feared his presence as much as that of the SS overlords. ... German SS soldiers, Ukrainian militiamen, and the Jewish auxiliary police made sure that we poor devils would not succeed in escaping our predetermined destiny.³⁹⁶

A survivor from Mikulińce near Tarnopol recalled:

The Germans kept rounding up and sending us away to hard labor. ... There was also a Jewish *Militz* [militia] which used to escort us to and from the labor sites, and also to our execution. Some Jewish militiamen were worse than the Germans. Not one of them survived.³⁹⁷

According to an account from Radzyń Podlaski,

translated from *Kehilat Rohatyn ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rohatyn in Israel, 1962), 250 ff.

³⁹⁵ Abraham Weissbrod, "Death of a Shtetl," Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skalat1/Skalat.html>>, translation of Abraham Weissbrod, *Es shtarbt a shtetl: Megiles Skalat* (Munich: Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany, 1948), 41.

³⁹⁶ Kurt Grüber, *Journey Through the Night: Jakob Littner's Holocaust Memoir* (New York and London: Continuum, 2000), 55.

³⁹⁷ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 113.

The most inhuman order of all consisted of providing a number of Jewish people for extermination before a certain date. For Lichtenstein and Gruenblatt [who stood at the head of the Judenrat] in Radzyn—and others in other cities—their punishment was the task of deciding who would die sooner, and who later. ... Money, kinship, friendships and other relationships with these two men were the decisive factor for one's resettlement. Some judgments were postponed, but more were annulled.

It is no wonder that these two men who had the absolute power of life and death over the Jews of Radzyn were feared and hated by everyone. ...³⁹⁸

In the nearby town of Międzyrzec Podlaski, the Jewish police and informers struck fear into the hearts of those Jews who still survived.

Międzyrzec was a collecting point for Jews for the whole area. ... At this time there was no Judenrat, no administration, only a brutal Jewish police force which was known to cooperate with the Gestapo. ...

Every few weeks people were deported from Międzyrzec, usually to Treblinka. The first task for arriving Jews was, therefore, to build bunkers and underground hide-outs. ...

The Jewish police, including its agents and informers, distinguished itself by its brutality. ...

An Aktion against the Jews ... It was like hunting wild animals. The police were the beaters and the SS the hunters. ...

About 25 men, women and children were in our bunker. ... We were in the bunker for two days and two nights when we heard a new wave of attacks on our house. ...

Just when we thought that the search was over, the Nazis reappeared, this time at the toilet entrance to our bunker which we had considered absolutely safe. Later we learned that they had discovered a neighboring bunker and were given the location of our hide-out by a young man who knew something about it. Under the threat of smoking us out with grenades, they ordered us to leave the bunker immediately. ...

We crept out of the bunker with raised hands. ... In 1947, in Marburg and [sic] der Lahn, I recognized the man who had revealed our hiding place. I found no reason to reproach him at this time, but I did not want to talk to him either.³⁹⁹

Survivor accounts illustrate a number of factors at play in the destruction of the Jewish community of Bełchatów, a small town near Łódź, including denunciations and intrigues among the Jews themselves. The assault on the Jews was led by the local ethnic Germans (or *Volksdeutschen*) and the German military, with the Jewish council and Jewish police being coopted as needed, including for the final liquidation of the Jewish community.

While marching in, they [the German military] lit fire to a portion of the town, especially the Jewish part. ... The German baker's son ... was giving signals to the German military.

³⁹⁸ Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 56–57.

Immediately, as he was doing this, the Germans began to throw firebombs on the Jewish part of the town, and was later said that this was organized by the local Germans ... The robbing of the Jewish homes was carried out by the local Germans ... unashamedly in the open.

The local Germans took a great part in these sadistic actions. Especially prominent were the Belchatow Germans, Willer and Bretkreitz, and Dolke from Zelow [Zelów]. ... The Germans considered it their patriotic duty to every day to find Jews whom they could “honor” with beatings. ... And anyone who wanted to [could] beat the Jews; 10-11 year old little German boys, tugged at elderly Jews and beat them.

In the beginning, when the Germans first arrived in Belchatow, all the positions were filled with Folks-Germans, [*Volks-Deutschen*, ethnic Germans living outside of Germany] ... They filled the positions in the city administration, in the police force, and as commissars over Jewish fortunes. In time, however, Reich-Germans [*Reichs-Deutschen*] took their places.

Smuggling and illegal dealings grew, because between Belchatow and Piotrkow [Piotrków Trybunalski] was the border between the German Reich and the General Gouvernement. Textiles were smuggled out of Belchatow, and leather and other articles were brought in. The persons engaged in this knew that their lives were in danger, but they had no other choice. Starvation forced them into it. The majority of their earning they had to give to the bribed gendarmes. They were dealing with all kinds of extortionists and blackmailers. They too had to be cut in. The Jewish police, Shmuel Jakubowicz's gang, also had to be bribed. Then a battle started between the richer and the poorer smugglers. The wealthier smugglers, who had the greater wherewithal with which to bribe the gendarmes, helped to liquidate the poorer ones. The smuggling took place only at night after police hours. They took a sack or a backpack on their shoulders and, with careful steps, slipped through the fields and meadows to the border. Others would be waiting to get the merchandise from them, Jews or Christians from Piotrkow and surrounding areas. Also waiting for them were German border guards with bloodhounds.

The role that the Judenrat played in Belchatow during the German occupation was the same in all the cities of Poland: they obediently fulfilled all the German commands and even, in certain cases, collaborated. Often, they voluntarily told the German officials and the Gestapo what was going on among the Jews. The majority of those in the Judenrat and the Jewish police were people with no integrity, who sought a way to make a living by selling out the impoverished masses.

The Judenrat aided the German government in a series of actions against the Belchatow Jews. This was in the effort to deport Jews to the camps in Poznan [Poznań] in August 1941, as well as creating a list of very sick people, who were also deported.

³⁹⁹ Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 105–106, 115–17.

The other members of the Judenrat, who remained until the end, assisted the Germans in the liquidation of the Jews of Belchatow.

The role of the Jewish police in Belchatow was absolutely no different than the role of the police in other occupied cities. The Jewish police obediently fulfilled all the German orders.

The Jewish Police in Belchatow was created and confirmed by the German government on the 15th of October 1940. A young criminal element found its way into the Jewish police, which blackmailed the smugglers, and squeezed sums of money out of the Jews by beatings, persecution, and the like. Also to be found in the Jewish police were young citizens, who had the money to bribe the individual members of the Jewish police. From [others'] misfortunes, they made an easy living for themselves and wangled their way out of forced labor camps. These were people with weak moral resistance and who, of course, did everything precisely as the German government told them to. Among the Jewish policemen, there were almost no proletarian elements, except for someone like Note Szpigelman, who, even before the war, had been thrown out of the proletarian ranks for embezzlement. The Jewish police in Belchatow consisted of 33 persons. These are their names: Yisroel Baum; Avraham Bogdanski; Hershl Bram; Yakov Galetski; Yechiel Fishl Dichtwald; Leybish Zuchowski; Szame Grinberg (who for a certain time was also on the Judenrat); Avraham Meyer Goldberg (*khmal*[?]); Moshe Goldblum; Shimon; Josef Goldberg; Hershel Jakubowicz; Moshe Klug (who was also a member in the Judenrat); Yankel Lipszyc; Moshe Mendel Lipman; Fishl Levi; Kive Lipmanowicz; Yakov-Mendel Lejb; Tuvia Machabanski; Yitzhak Miller; Wolf Przemyslawski; Lejb Rozenwajg; Itzik Sztrauch; Note Szpigelman; Moshe Wielniwicz; Itik Wishniewski; Henoch Zuchowski; Ber Markowicz; Melech Galster (also a member of the Judenrat); and Berish Grinberg. The latter was the wagon worker in the Poznan Camp and distinguished himself by beating the Jews and taking their food away from them. In addition there were: Jakob Sztern, Mendel Dzialowski, and Berish Piula. The latter, along with his brother, played a shameful part in the Poznan Camps. He was a camp "*kapo*" and beat [the Jews] black and blue. Many Jews became crippled because of him. He was responsible for the deaths of many people, who were sent to the crematoria because of him. The Belchatow police distinguished itself by assisting the Germans in the rounding up of Jews in the *aktsion* [action] of April, 1942. Together with the Germans, they went down into the cellars and up into the attics to search for hidden Jews. At that time, they succeeded in dragging another 400 Jews out of their hiding places. These Jews were sent out to be liquidated.

The Judenrat also helped in this evacuation.

In the beginning of 1942 the Germans arrested 16 Belchatow Jews, as so called "plotters". Ten of them were hung ... the Jewish police, in the accompaniment of the gendarmes, brought the 10 Jews who had been designated to be hung. They all were with bound hands.

At the beginning of June 1942, Jews were once again required to gather in the courtyard of Klug's factory. Having learned from the previous "resettlements," the Jews were not as quick to report. They hid in cellars, in attics, in the woods. The Germans wreaked havoc: they shot a woman named Gliksman; they shot Lewkowicz, Zerach Cymberknep, all to no avail. The Jews did not come out of

hiding. If it hadn't been for the Jewish police, who were assisting the *gendarmarie* [German police] in their search and pointing out the hiding places, the Germans would not have accomplished much on their own. At that time, the Germans succeeded in dragging 400 Belchatow Jews to the Poznan camps. It was seldom that anyone taken away ever returned home. In the rare case that someone did succeed in escaping and returning [home], Jewish informants collaborating with the Gestapo turned him in.

In fact this matter presented itself differently: the abovementioned Yechezkel Zwierszynski escaped from the Poznan Camps, returned home and hid in various places. On the evening that he was shot, he was actually at home. Someone let the Germans know, and they came right into his house. He was not shot in the German cemetery, but while he was trying to jump out of the window.

In the Poznan Camps, the Germans utilized a group of Belchatow criminal youths. They were installed as “*kapos*” [inmates in charge of work teams in a camp] and “*stube-dienst*” [“chamber-service”—inmates in charge of a chamber]. Because of their cruelty, these underworld people were absolutely no different than the German beasts. The Belchatow hairdresser, Szwarcberg, worked as a “*feldsher*” [an old-time barber-surgeon] in the Nekla Camp. He was the expert on all illnesses. He has hundreds of deaths on his conscience. He is guilty in the death of Fradl Wolfowicz's youngest son, who died at work. He is also guilty in the death of old Szjtnicki and his son Moshe. He sent people to work with broken ribs, with bones broken in two by beatings. A second *kapo*, Berish Fila, beat people violently. He broke people's hands and feet and then turned his victims over to the Germans to be sent to Auschwitz. He himself survived the war and wound up in Germany in the American Zone ... [The following] distinguished themselves as murderers: Mayorek Nus, Melech Krawitski, Berish Grinberg, and Avraham Pila. They took everything that they owned away from the Jews of Belchatow, every package of produce that came from home. The unfortunate camp prisoners had to share every bite with them. They were the masters of the inmates' lives and deaths. Whoever tried to oppose them was reported and recommended for transportation to Auschwitz as having sabotaged the work effort. These louts broke the bones of Avraham Lipsycz and Asher Jakubowicz, because they didn't want to give away their food. Asher Jakubowicz died of these wounds while at work; Avraham Lipsycz was turned over for transportation to Auschwitz. The starvation in the camps was so impossible to endure that, ignoring the fact that people in the camps knew that stealing was punishable by shooting or hanging, they nevertheless tried to steal whatever they could and at least once be sated. For stealing a few potatoes in the Poznan-Wronczyn Camp, Yerachmil Szwarcberg, Welwel Walder, and two other Belchatow Jews, whose names are uncertain, were hanged. One of the four hanged succeeded in extricating himself from the noose on the gallows and was still alive, but the Germans shot him. Also hanged for trying to escape was Avraham Liszczanowski.

The liquidation of the rest of the Jews who remained in Belchatow began on the 11th of August 1942, at 6 o'clock in the morning. The whole town was locked in and surrounded by newly arrived killing squads and the local German gendarmes and police force. All of those who had tried the previous night to escape to Piotrkow were, for the most part, shot. The women, Zuchowski and Pilakowicz, were killed as they tried to escape into the woods. Hans Biebow, the hangman of the

Lodz [Łódź] Ghetto, led the liquidation. He brought with him a division of the Lodz Jewish “Special Police” [*SonderPolizei*]. The local Jewish Belchatow police also helped. First thing in the morning, Itche Winter came into the tailor’s factory and removed the Jewish policemen, who guarded the factory, and gave them the job of gathering all the old and sick people together on Zelower Road. There cars with Gestapo were already waiting for them and took them immediately to the Chelmno [Chelmno] death camp. These were the first victims. Thus started the final liquidation of the Jews in Belchatow.

After work, there was a repeat of everything that occurred yesterday. Once again we had to undress naked while being beaten. The second night we were sent to sleep in Machel Piotrkowski’s house. On the first floor the brutes were sleeping, the Jewish Police from Lodz.

[In August 1942] ... a group of police from the Lodz Ghetto, that Biebow had brought with him to liquidate the Jews of Belchatow. A lot of Jewish policemen also helped to rob for themselves. ... The Germans required 25 benches to be brought and all 25 men had to lie down upon them. The Jewish police from the Lodz Ghetto lashed out upon them for so long, until the Germans told them to cease.⁴⁰⁰

Groups of rich smugglers established themselves, and they competed, fought, and informed on one another. The Jewish merchants and workers paid dearly to the German police, to the Jewish smugglers, and to extortionists. ... A number of cases against groups of smugglers were adjudicated in the special court that was established in Lodz. In July 1941, based on the testimony of a Jewish detective, six Jews from Belchatow, who wanted to cross General Government border, were arrested in the fields of Dobrzelow [Dobrzelów]. The aforementioned court sentenced them to 1½ years of hard labor (read: death).

In August 1941 the deportations to labor camps commenced. Approximately 2000 men assembled in the yard. Jewish and German police guarded the fence and gate. ... This time also, the wealthy Jews redeemed themselves with money.

The Belchatow Judenrat’s goings-on were tumultuous. The continuous interference of the German authorities with regards to the Judenrat’s composition, the number of members, caused the constant substitution of persons, imprisonment, and even the death of a number of the Judenrat chairmen. The source of this interference—as was the source also in other settlements, for example in Pabianice—was jealousy and conflict in the Jewish community, between groups and cliques, and, understandably, also informing to the German authorities as a result of these relationships. The opponents and the Judenrat members, that since they could not attain any standing in the pre-war Kehilla, now they were making careers. They also accused them of laziness, passivity, corruption,

⁴⁰⁰ Accounts of Leib Pudlowski and Zaken Liberman in Mark Tarkov and Abraham Mittleberg, eds., *Belchatow Memorial Book*, Internet: <<http://jewishgen.org/yizkor/Belchatow/belchatow.html>>, a translation of *Belchatow yizker-bukh* (Buenos Aires: Association of Polish Jews in Argentina, 1951), 391–462.

and gaining wealth at the expense of the community, by tattling to the Nazis and by cooperating with them to the detriment of the Jews.

A Jewish police force was established in Belchatow. ... About 30 men served in the Jewish police ... The pre-war Left argued that the police were underworld persons and licentious petty bourgeois that obtained their positions by bribing the Judenrat. There were members of the proletariat among the Jewish police. The public accused them of Jewish persecution, of accepting smugglers' bribes, of taking ransom from persons that were freed from being sent to work, of aiding the Germans during the destruction of the settlement, of capturing hidden Jews and sending them off to their deaths. Some say that, in the Poznan [Poznań] camps, some of these Jewish police served as Kapos.

On Purim (March 18, 1942), a public hanging of ten Jews took place by the order of the Gestapo, with the official reason given: in order that the smugglers should see and fear. ... All the Jews were brought to the courtyard near the synagogue, were lined-up in fives, and were brought to the hanging place. The German policemen, with readied machine guns at hand, surrounded the masses of people. ... At ten o'clock German and Jewish police brought the condemned, handcuffed.

The final destruction of the Jewish settlement in Belchatow started on August 11, 1942. ... By German orders, the entire Jewish police force was mobilized. They were ordered to gather to Zelow street all of the elderly, children, and sick, and from there they were transported by wagon to the Chelmno [Chełmno] death camp. ... To these deportees were added also hidden Jews, who were uncovered in the interim. During these three days, those Jews that were chosen to clean up the quarter and to gather the Jewish possessions returned to the synagogue, and there they were strip-searched and their bags were searched. This work was done by the Jewish policemen that were sent from the Lodz [Łódź] ghetto. This work continued for a number of days, and thereafter these men were deported ...⁴⁰¹

As we can see from these accounts, Poles played no role in these events. The Germans utilized the Jewish leadership and police to carry out the "Final Solution" in Bełchatów. Some Jews were able to live relatively well during those times because of their lucrative black market activities, and others were able to survive at the expense of fellow Jews. Groups of smugglers took goods from Bełchatów, which was incorporated into the Reich, to the city of Piotrków, which was "across the border" in the *Generalgouvernement*, where they could be sold at a very high profit.

Despite ghettoization and a climate of dark despair, "the Hafta found themselves prospering as never before." The "smuggling ring" of Harry's older brother, Aria, supplied the family "with more money than they could ever spend. Their small house was filled with food ... not just bread and

⁴⁰¹ "Belchatow," *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00070.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), 70–77.

potatoes, but meats and fruits and candies ...” Harry’s girlfriend, Leah, was the daughter of another local family prominent in the black market. ...

Harry was first transported by bus to Poznan [Poznań], where the Nazis immediately sought to recruit a group of Jews who would help them maintain discipline. “The local Jewish criminals and bullies,” Haft writes, “saw an opportunity to save their own skins.” Later, Harry noticed that he “knew most of the Jewish cops as petty thieves from Belchatow.” Ironically, Harry’s lot improved in Poznan where he regularly engaged in burglary “in exchange for food and some protection.”⁴⁰²

The same held true for other ghettos in the territories incorporated into the Reich such as Piotrków Trybunalski, where the Germans relied on the Jews themselves to help run and then liquidate the ghetto:

The newly established Jewish Militia (“Order-Keeping Police,” or Ordnungsdienst, OD for short) was relentless in its attempts to implement the rules laid down by the German authorities. The militia’s duties included the task of supplying workers for the Nazi war machine, most of the time forcibly. Also, a new breed of informers laid the foundation for distrust and fear among families and the best of friends. ... the informers delivered “violators” to the Seventh Bureau.

My grandfather’s second cousin on his mother’s side, Josele Lazar, was a man of considerable influence at the Gestapo headquarters. ... Many Jews who were in the servitude of the Nazis adopted the latter’s mannerisms in their attempt to please their masters. Thus, most of the OD members made every effort to dress and carry themselves with the arrogance characteristic of their masters.

... we huddled behind curtained windows each night as we watched our neighbors and friends being driven away from their homes. The Gestapo officer’s voice could be heard throughout the neighborhood as he announced, “You are being resettled! Come out into the street immediately! ...”

People filed out of their homes onto the street. ... Neighbors were quickly rounded up and herded through the streets in orderly columns. The Jewish Militia was on its exemplary behavior as it aided the SS mercenaries in completing their task.

The remaining ghetto population of some six thousand, save those performing forced labor at the two glass factories, assembled on the streets of the ghetto. The Nazis planned the *Aktion* to the minutest detail. Aided by the surrogate Lithuanian and Ukrainian SS as well as by the Jewish OD, they combed all of the abandoned dwellings. Anyone found inside was summarily shot, their bodies dumped unceremoniously on the sidewalks.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² From a review by Michael Berkowitz of Alan Scott Haft, *Harry Haft: Auschwitz Survivor, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 20–22, 32–33, 39, in *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 3 (December 2007): 400.

⁴⁰³ William Samelson, “Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home,” in Eric J. Sterling, ed., *Life in the Ghettos During the Holocaust* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 5, 8–9, 12, 14.

Another witness from Piotrków recalled:

The ugliest part of our predicament was that we had some informers in our midst. There was Josek Szwartz from Litewska Street, who would denounce rich Jews to the Gestapo. They, in turn, usually liquidated the informers after their information was exhausted. The worst stool pigeon of them all was Joine Lewi. Before the war, he was a furrier and used to partake in amateur theatres. What was happening to some of our people? He associated himself with William of the *Schutzpolizei*. William was the “phantom” of the ghetto. He would come in with his big German shepherd dog and terrorize the ghetto population. Aside from robbing people at will, he would say to his dog: “Man, get that dog.” (meaning the Jew). His dog, trained to attack, would hunt Jewish man or child, bite the victims and tear their clothing. We had informers—beside our own—refugees from other towns. We had to be careful and watch out for them.⁴⁰⁴

It is not surprising therefore that many Jews recall times in the ghetto when they feared Jewish police and informers more than the Germans. Fanny Solomian-Loc states that that was the case in Pińsk, especially during the round-up of Jews. There, as in other towns, the Judenrat held drunken orgies with young girls.⁴⁰⁵ Chaim Rumkowski, the leader of the Judenrat in Łódź, was known to coerce young Jewish women whom he sexually exploited.⁴⁰⁶ A Jew who witnessed the abuses of the Jewish police in the ghetto in Stolpce also stated that a stronger aversion had grown toward them and the Judenrat than the Germans.⁴⁰⁷ Mojżesz Bahn of Kielce recalled that the Jewish police were feared more than the Germans, since the latter were more likely to accept a bribe and allow one to escape.⁴⁰⁸ In Chęciny, despite the fact that there was no permanent German outpost, the 30-member Jewish police were known for their brutality which surpassed that of the Germans.⁴⁰⁹ A survivor of the Warsaw ghetto had nothing favourable to say about the corrupt and servile Jewish police: “I hated them. Everybody hated them. ... Had I possessed a gun, I would have murdered Jewish policemen and even tortured them! My hatred toward them was simply eating me up.”⁴¹⁰

The loathing that most Jews had toward the ghetto police is noted in many early memorial books, as the following selection illustrates:

The ghetto police were generally an affliction in all ghettos. This point is attested to by all of the books of the Holocaust period that were written about the ghetto police in other ghettos. Shneur Vaserman writes the following about Chelm [Chełm]: “For the murderers (the Nazis), it wasn’t enough that they alone murdered. For their sadistic pleasure, they instituted that Jewish extermination was also carried out by Jewish hands. That, incidentally, was the devilish tactic in all

⁴⁰⁴ Charles Kotkowsky, *Remnants: Memoirs of a Survivor* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, 2000), Internet: <<http://migs.concordia.ca/memoirs/kotkowsky/kotkowsky.html>>.

⁴⁰⁵ Fanny Solomian-Loc, *Getto i gwiazdy* (Wasaw: Czytelnik, 1993), 68–69, 71, 82. This book is also available in English translation as Fanny Solomian-Loc, *Woman Facing the Gallows* (Amherst, Massachusetts: Wordpro, 1981).

⁴⁰⁶ Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: The Nazis & “The Final Solution”*, BBC documentary (2005).

⁴⁰⁷ Anatol Wertheim, “Żydowska partyzantka na Białorusi,” *Zeszyty Historyczne*, no. 86 (1988): 127.

⁴⁰⁸ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 96.

⁴⁰⁹ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 98.

of Poland, and everywhere their bloody paws reached. The Jewish police were recruited from the dregs of society.” (*Yizkor Bukh* [Memorial Book], Chelm,” Johannesburg, 1954, pages 90–91).

Melech Neishtadt declares: “Between the broad Jewish masses and the ghetto policemen, a thick wall was set up. The entire population of the Jewish quarter had an attitude of deep hatred to the servants of the Germans.” (*Khurbn un Vidershtand fun di Yidn in Varshe* [Destruction and Resistance of the Jews in Warsaw], New York, 1948, page 84). ...

Dr. Mark Dvorzhetski writes: “The ghetto population in Vilna [Wilno] related to the Jewish ghetto police with distrust and hatred. Many policemen were people without scruples, without shame, and without ethics. During Actions, they more than once opened hiding places and betrayed hidden Jews.” (*Yerushalayim D’Lite in Kamfun Umkum* [The Jerusalem of Lithuania in Battle and Holocaust], Paris, 1948, page 302).

In *Pinkas Mlave* [The Record Book of Mlave (Mława)], we read: “As commandant of the Jewish police, the authorities nominated Shalom Gutman who became the terror of the ghetto. With body and soul, he collaborated with the Germans and created great miseries for Jews. He informed on all that was taking place in the ghetto. He murdered and beat. He carried out the German decrees with pleasure.” (*Pinkas Mlave*” under the editorship of Dr. Yakov Shatzki, New York, 1950, page 406).⁴¹¹

Jews were also conscripted to dig grave pits and to transport fellow Jews to the sites of their massacre. In Rabka, the Germans organized a Jewish grave kommando who worked under the watchful eye of Jewish *kapos*.⁴¹² When the Germans took the first half of the Jewish community to their place of execution in Brona Góra forest near Bereza Kartuska, 25 wagons driven by Jews transported the victims.⁴¹³ When thousands of Jews were massacred in Załuż near Sanok, Jewish policemen loaded the guns for the Gestapo executioners who shot the Jews as they fell into a large pit.⁴¹⁴ In one case, a Jew by the name of Siegal from Sokal took on the identity of a Ukrainian (Kyryl Syholenko) and became the commander of the Ukrainian police in the Dąbrowica region in Volhynia, where he took part in the annihilation of the Jewish population. (This fact came to light in a Soviet trial held in 1952.)⁴¹⁵ Curiously, two Jews from the village of Kluwińce near Tarnopol had joined up with the pro-German Ukrainian Insurgent Army and took part in a murder expedition directed at local Poles.⁴¹⁶ In one case, a Soviet prisoner of war who was half Jewish, became the orderly of the commandant of the hard labour camp in Treblinka.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁰ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 47, 63.

⁴¹¹ Binyamin Orenstajn (Orenstein), “Czestochowa Jews in the Nazi Era (1939–1945),” *Czestochov: A New Supplement to the Book “Czenstochover Yidn”*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Czestochowa/Czestochowa.html>>, translation of S.D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhover: Naye tsugob-material tsum bukh “Tshenstokhover Yidn”* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 39ff.

⁴¹² Robin O’Neil, *Rabka Police School*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/galicia2galicia2.html>>.

⁴¹³ Warszawsky, *Drohiczyn*, 316.

⁴¹⁴ Jan Radożycki, “Nasze się skończyło,” *Nasz Dziennik* (Warsaw), August 18, 2001.

⁴¹⁵ Wiktor Poliszczuk, *Dowody zbrodni OUN i UPA: Integralny nacjonalizm ukraiński jako odmiana faszyzmu tom drugi. Działalność ukraińskich struktur nacjonalistycznych w latach 1920–1940* (Toronto: n.p., 2000), 266–67, 416.

⁴¹⁶ “Eksterminacja ludności polskiej dokonana przez bojówki OUN-UPA w powiecie Kopyczyńce, woj. Tarnopolskie w latach 1939–1945. Część 1,” *Na rubieży* (Wrocław), no. 1 (20) 1997: 17; Daria Nałęcz and Hennadii Boriak, eds.,

An eyewitness recalls the following scene he witnessed in Warsaw: “That same evening, sixteen skilled labourers marched in fours, led by a rabbi’s son in an S.S. uniform.”⁴¹⁸ Gypsies apprehended in “Aryan” Warsaw were taken to the prison on Gęsia Street where they were guarded by functionaries of the Jewish police.⁴¹⁹

A similar situation prevailed in German prisons and camps where the immediate perils faced by Jewish inmates often stemmed from fellow Jews who acted as kapos (chiefs of work detachments) and informants. Stasia Alapin, who was thrown in a cell full of Jews at the Gestapo premises in Warsaw, recalled that “one of the women had been put in the cell as an informer.”⁴²⁰ In Kraśnik, “Jewish supervisors, afraid for their lives, regularly handed over to the Gestapo Jews whom they thought were ‘thinking about escape.’ Like the Stein brothers.”⁴²¹

A Jew who was imprisoned in the SS camp in Oleine, Latvia, recalled:

And then there were the Jewish kapos, among whom Danziger ‘distinguished’ himself with his brutality. Any Jew who happened to cross his path he beat up mercilessly. One day my mother Rachel-Leah was his luckless victim. He kept beating her until she fell down in a faint. She died the next day.⁴²²

A Jew who arrived in Majdanek recalled: “We got out of the [railroad] car. No Germans awaited us on the ramp, only Jews with horsewhips. They were brutal. They yelled ‘son of a bitch’ at everybody.”⁴²³ In the camp, “SS men with whips and dogs, aided by Ukrainians and former Jewish POWs (*yentzes*), were pushing, whipping, and kicking the Jews. ... The SS, it seemed, were giving the orders. The Ukrainians and *yentzes* were carrying them out.”⁴²⁴ “The Czech and Slovak Jews in camp aren’t much better than the Germans. When it came to the Jews, every one of them was armed with a club and ready to beat up any victim.”⁴²⁵

Israel Mittelberg recalled that

Wołyń, Galicja Wschodnia, 1943–1944: Przewodnik po polskich i ukraińskich źródłach archiwalnych, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych and Kiev: Derzhavnyi Komitet Arkhiviv Ukrainy, 2003), Polish appendix, Document 12 (page 5).

⁴¹⁷ Peter Black, “Prosty żołnierz ‘akcji Reinhardt’: Oddziały z Trawniki i eksterminacja polskich Żydów,” in Libionka, *Akcja Reinhardt*, 107.

⁴¹⁸ Amnon Ajetsztadt, *Endurance: Chronicles of Jewish Resistance* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987), 40.

⁴¹⁹ Institute of National Memory, Warsaw Regional Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, file no. S 5/20/Zn.

⁴²⁰ Heather Laskey, *Night Voices: Heard in the Shadow of Hitler and Stalin* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 70.

⁴²¹ Nachemia Wurman with Margaret Russell, *Nachemia: German and Jew in the Holocaust* (Far Hills, New Jersey: New Horizon Press, 1988), 81.

⁴²² Ariel Machnes and Rina Klinov, eds., *Darkness and Desolation: In Memory of the Communities of Braslaw, Dubene, Jaisi, Jod, Kisłowszczyzna, Okmienic, Opsa, Plusy, Rimszan, Slobodka, Zamosz, Zaracz* (Tel Aviv: Association of Braslaw and Surroundings in Israel and America, and Ghetto Fighters House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1986), 591.

⁴²³ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 76.

⁴²⁴ Jack Eisner, *The Survivor* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980), 208.

⁴²⁵ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 204.

We were subjected to a horrible examination [on arrival]; even our anuses were checked. Nor did the Czech Jewish barbers return our valuables. Moreover, on one occasion, when I attempted to win one of them over, he yelled at me so much that a German guard came and gave me a violent beating. Those who had swallowed the gold coins later had to take the block-elders into their confidence, and that was fresh cause for torture and blackmail. ...

In the yard, we met many inmates we knew. Many were working in the registration offices. They served loyally, sometimes a little too loyally, at the expense of their own brother Jews, in whose place they might easily have been. ...

On that very first day in Majdanek, we began a search for those who had denounced the whereabouts of the bunkers [in the Warsaw ghetto], or those who had collaborated with the Germans. There were a few inmates in Majdanek—the block-elders of barracks six and seven—who executed retribution, bloodily settling accounts with the informers. The one in charge of my block was a character by the name of Heniek Kulik, the son-in-law of a reputable family in Warsaw, the tailor Nissan, who in turn was the Mendzickis' son-in-law. That scoundrel addressed us in language fit for the gutter, cursed us with the crudest Russian expressions to prepare us for camp life. ...

... the name Kulik was familiar to me. ... We discussed his family whom I knew well ... For the promise of a little soup, he found informers who would eavesdrop on conversations and denounce anyone who had any money. The barrack supervisor insisted that the money be given to him. When anyone refused he was given fifty lashes.

One of the Kapos, Bobi, was a particularly well-known looter of money and a blackguard. He was only fifteen but looked like a grown man. That scoundrel ... had come to Majdanek with his parents and, in order to find favor with the Germans, personally hanged them at the Germans' request. His methods of torturing could lead one to his death in just a few minutes. Bobi beat me, but I had no money. He then left me alone. He would always visit the camp elders, looking for people to persecute. ...

And now, a new spate of ordeals was beginning for me. A new supervisor by the name of Osfiss, another of Kulik's brother-in-laws, joined us, who even surpassed the other two in vulgarity and callousness. He dispatched any inmate without money to do the heaviest jobs and subjected them to agonizing hardships. He confiscated our bread rations and demanded cigarettes in exchange. He would serve us one-half liter instead of three quarters and sell the leftovers. We were completely at the mercy of these three brother-in-laws.

We reported the soup scoundrel to the kitchen. Osfiss was given a bloody flogging, and lived to take revenge on us. He organized night searches, embittered our already miserable lives. The three flogged us until their arms ached. ...

... Jews in position of power saw to it that no one should go short of beatings, our daily bread.

... our own Jewish Hitlerite servants exhibited their skills: Kulik, Osfiss and Nissan. They woke us in the middle of the night and listed the crimes each one of us had committed. This one had relieved himself incorrectly, (pardon my vulgarity); that one had spat; that one had sewn on his number wrongly—and other crimes of this sort. For these wrongdoings each received ten, fifteen,

and even twenty lashes. The Germans did not perform all the torture themselves; they also trained their servants.⁴²⁶

Another inmate of Majdanek recalled:

the elder of our block, Moshe, called Poer, who was known for his crudity and brutality. He had been a porter in Warsaw ... He hit us in the morning and in the evening during roll calls using the excuse that we were not in a straight line. In reality, he wanted to become the pet of the kapos and the SS. I often saw Moshe Poer kicking Jewish prisoners in the face or stomach so hard until they were half-dead and some actually died later. Naftali Gaslen, known as the “killer”, was of the same caliber. He had been a thug in Warsaw. They knew each other well. These two brutal underworld types were especially at home in Maidanek.

One character who was unique even in Maidanek was a 15-year-old Jewish boy, called “Bubi”. He was small, fat, well-dressed, and moved among the kapos, the prominent prisoners and even close to the SS. ... The 10,000 prisoners of Field 4 were under his command, sometimes for hours. They were forced to carry out all of his orders: “Attention! Caps on! Caps off! Right! Left! Keep in step! Double time, Line march! March!” With club in hand and his childish voice, he ridiculed and taunted us to the full satisfaction of the SS. We found out that this boy was a “pupil” (dependent and accommodating in every way) of the head kapo. He had earned his reputation with the SS by putting the nooses around the necks of his father and mother in Maidanek.⁴²⁷

There are many such accounts attesting to the cruelty of the Jewish kapos.⁴²⁸ According to Shiye Goldberg, “The Kapos beat the inmates just to find favor with their German masters.” A Jewish inmate recalls:

Who can forget the pump, with the water trough around it, in which a Jewish *Kapo* (I think a murderer from Lemberg [Lwów]) would on each night, grab a Jew by the beard, and turn him with his face down, and hold him in the water, until a Jew would expire. The longer the Jew flailed with his feet, the higher the Nazi murderers would carry on and laugh.⁴²⁹

As in other camps, “There was a black market in [Majdanek]. Those who bought from the Poles now sold the food to camp inmates at a good price.”⁴³⁰ Shamay Gaier, the head of the Judenrat in Lublin, took part in the liquidation of the camp:

⁴²⁶ Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds*, 48–58.

⁴²⁷ Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 126. For additional confirmation of the exploits of Bubi, who went around the camp with a whip, beating everybody who he did not like, preferably old people, see Jerzy Kwiatkowski, *485 dni na Majdanku* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1968), 55.

⁴²⁸ Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom*, 193.

⁴²⁹ Moshe Schliam, “Zamość Without Jews,” in Bernstein, ed., *The Zamosc Memorial Book*, 754.

⁴³⁰ Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 140, 141–42. Goldberg states: “The Poles came every morning for an eight-hour working day. They were fairly decent people.” *Ibid.*, 140.

He was with the SS commandant when the latter ordered all the Jews to prostrate themselves. He then poked each one after the other, saying “You go”, “You stay”, “You go”, “You stay”. Those ordered to go were taken to their death, and this game went on until the camp was vacant.⁴³¹

The Jewish *kapos* in the labour camp in Chelm treated fellow Jews with cruelty, but partied hard. According to Kalmen Wewryk,

There was a *kapo* there named Scherer, who used to live on my street in Chelm. ... He had been our friend, and yet this tall *kapo* used to beat me mercilessly in the camp. ... I saw a man I knew, Tishler, a carpenter. He had had a wife and 4 children all shipped to their deaths. And yet Tishler was dancing and singing and partying with the other kitchen *kapos*. He looked well because he ate well.”

Wewryk witnessed even more atrocious behaviour in the Sobibór death camp where Jewish *kapos* led Jews to the gas chambers, where well-fed train commando Jews insulted their starving co-religionists and refused to share their food with them, where Jews betrayed other Jews to the Germans, and where *kapos* would party with attractive Jewish women prisoners and rape pretty young girls in front of their mothers. In his memoir we read:

Some of the women ... [to] please “their” *kapo*, would change clothes 3 or 4 times a day. Sobibor had no shortage of clothes, all taken from the incoming transports.

... the ordinary Jewish prisoners were terrified of the *kapos*. If a Jew didn’t obey a *kapo*, that Jew was reported to the Germans who took him away to his death. ... most [*kapos*] had become brutalized. ... I was afraid of my *kapo* as he was of the SS. He carried a big whip, was well-dressed, had his own room and a private life.” “The train *kommando* prisoners ... were terrific squealers. There was one *Oberkapo* from Berlin (we called him ‘Berliner’) who spoke an excellent, refined German. ... When *Oberst* Franzl went on a furlough, this *kapo* thought that his chance had come—he would show Franzl how devoted he was, how efficient! If he saw a straw in the wrong place, he beat the nearest Jew mercilessly. He caused many Jews to be sent to the gas chambers. He was so bad and so sadistic that ... the other *kapos* got together and jumped him ... he was beaten to death.” “There was a one-eyed *kapo* from Warsaw—Porzycki ... He was a brutal *kapo* with murderous instincts. ... I remember Bunyem, a short, stocky *kapo*. He used to beat people terribly.⁴³²

Another survivor of Sobibór writes:

⁴³¹ Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 134.

⁴³² Wewryk, *To Sobibor and Back*, 27, 32, 40, 41, 43–44, 48–49, 53.

We were informed of this by the Jewish “*Kommandant*” who ... was worse than a German. He was later killed too.

Another time again, a tunnel leading out beyond the wires was discovered. ... Right at the last minute, the Jewish “*Kommandant*,” *yimaksh shemoy*, found out about it and gave the all away. As soon as the Germans were informed, they massacred another 200 people in the third camp, so that everything we tried was betrayed, every attempt failed. ...

Our most active member was Yosif Pelts ... he succeeded in escaping ... The next day, Moyshe “*Kommandant*” ran to tell the Germans that two were missing from the first barrack. We were fortunate, because the *Oberschaarführer* wasn’t there, only the *Unterschaarführer*, who was less sadistic and selected ted men, instead of hundreds, to be shot. ...

Now this Moyshe “*Kommandant*” ... decided then to escape with us—about twenty people. ... He saw that this group was now too large, so he put it off for another day. A German Jew learned of all this and informed the *Unterschaarführer* that Moyshe “*Kommandant*” was behind it. The German immediately summoned Moyshe “*Kommandant*” along with three others ... and shot them all.⁴³³

There are numerous testimonies regarding Auschwitz. Roman Frister tells of having been raped by a Jewish prisoner who “liked young boys” and of losing his forage cap, a capital crime. He steals someone else’s and stands by when the innocent victim is shot.⁴³⁴ Konrad Charmatz describes kapos he encountered from the moment he arrived at Auschwitz:

Soon after that the head *Kapo*, the notorious “Pinkus,” delivered a speech to us, each word striking us like a hammer blow. Pinkus was a Polish Jew who had lived in France. When he spotted Dr. Suchodolsky ... he scorned and insulted him, telling him that not only was he going up the chimney, but he was going to torture him slowly first. ...

Then we were assigned to blocks at Birkenau ... He [another house elder] made sure the “animals are properly settled in their stalls.” Those who did not please him or who complained about their crowded bunks, he pulled down on a long bench. There he beat and kicked them to death. Later his victims were tossed out of the barracks like old rags. In the morning a cart collected all the dead and took them to be incinerated. ...

Pinkus, the elder of the “Zonder Block,” who led the gang that received and sorted out the new arrivals. To this task brutes were assigned, men without feelings. Pinkus (if I am not mistaken, his last name was Chmelnitsky) was the most notorious of all the block elders. ... a true sadist who enjoyed brutalizing his victims and drawing their blood. ... His helper, a certain Ziduna, a Jew from Lodz [Łódź], also excelled in cruelty. ...

The camp commander, an SS storm trooper named Schilinger, stood and watched how hard his Jewish servants were working. Pinkus strutted through the crowds of new arrivals, always looking

⁴³³ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 279–81.

⁴³⁴ Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 240–43.

for another victim to beat with his truncheon, all the while looking up at his patron to see if he was pleased.⁴³⁵

David Faber recalls a kapo he met in the subcamp of Birkenau, a death camp for Jews:

A barrack leader, a *Kapo*, stamped in and stood just inside the door.

"Listen!" he shouted. "My name is Potok, and I'll make you wish you'd never come here. You'll wish you'd never met me." ...

He walked along the bunks, grabbed the foot of a man on the middle row right under me, and yanked him onto the floor. No one spoke as the man lay sprawled on his stomach.

The *Kapo* bent over, his face close to the prisoner's.

"You look like you hid something," he said. "I'll bet you've got a fortune in your body. Give it to me!"

The man rolled onto his back, his hands held out palms up.

"No, sir." I could scarcely hear him. "I don't have anything, sir."

"You don't?"

The man spoke louder. "No. Nothing, sir! Nothing!"

Potok smiled. "I'll find out."

He took a long, thin knife from a scabbard on his belt. "Give it to me, or I'll cut you open."

"Please don't!" The man tried to get up, but Potok pushed him down with his foot.

"Turn over!" he yelled and kicked the man in the head.

Crying, the prisoner turned to lie face down on the floor. Potok cut open the man's pants, the jabbed the knife into his anus and cut away pieces of flesh.

Screams rang through my head, and I covered my ears.

The screams stopped, and the *Kapo* laughed. "You know," he said, "he didn't have anything."

He pulled other people from the bunks, made them lie on their backs, and crushed their windpipes with his heavy boot. The he'd turn them over and butcher them the way he had the first man.

The rest of us lay in our bunks, some watching, some with eyes closed.⁴³⁶

Shavti Perelmuter contrasts a Polish block commander with some Jewish kapos he encountered as a prisoner at Auschwitz:

⁴³⁵ Konrad Charmatz, *Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 84–88. Charmatz also describes the "sadistic" and corrupt kapos he later encountered at a labour camp for Jews on Gęsia Street in Warsaw, where he was transferred. Ibid., 117–19: "One of the most sadistic of all the *Kapos* was a little fat man, power-drunk, with bloodshot eyes. Once, while running through a labyrinthine cellar, I ran into him just as he was raping one of us slaves, a young Belgian boy with blond hair." Similarly, the block elders are described as "mostly criminals, sadists, homosexuals and underworld scum." Ibid., 127. It appears that most kapos were or became homosexuals in camps and preyed on young men who became their servile "pipls," in addition to their enforcers who spied on the prisoners. Ibid., 117. When Charmatz arrived at a labour camp in Mühldorf, about 80 kilometres from Munich, he found that "Many of the Greek *Kapos* [Jews] were especially false and brutal." Ibid., 184.

⁴³⁶ David Faber, *Because of Romek: A Holocaust Survivor's Memoir* (El Cajon, California: Granite Hill Press, 1997), 130–31. When one of Potok's brothers was transferred to a satellite camp in Jawiszowice, he was quietly killed by the

I became sick with typhus and I lay in a terrible condition ... it is only thanks to my block commander, the Pole, Ludwig [Ludwik], that I was able to stay alive. ... he had been thrown into Auschwitz as a political prisoner. I have no idea what it was that I did, or for what reason he showed me so much sympathy ...

My medical crisis lasted for 12 days, there was one occasion when Ludwig didn't allow me to go to work, but he hid me under some straw in the barracks so that I wouldn't be discovered in an inspection. ...

In Auschwitz camp I had the opportunity to be exposed to see and to really hear and know the behavior of the block commanders and their helpers. The commander of Block 27 was a certain Greenboim, and he was from Warsaw. He distinguished himself with his brutality towards Jews. There was another one from Warsaw, Yosela and Laibeshel from Radom.⁴³⁷

Judith Strick Dribben describes the conduct of women kapos when she was taken to a shower room in Auschwitz along with a group of Polish women:

A plump girl entered. She wore good clothes, a sweater with a red yellow Star of David, and an armband embroidered "Sauna Kapo."

Jewish inmates who remembered him from Birkenau. Ibid., 149–50.

⁴³⁷ Shavti Perelmutter, "Jewish Resistance in the Ghetto and the Camp," in *Deblin-Modzjitz Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Deblin.html>>, translation of D. Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Deblin-Modzjitz [Dęblin-Modrzyc]* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Demblin-Modzjitz, 1969), 501ff. There are a number of memoirs describing Polish prisoners of Auschwitz very favourably. Halina Nelken, a Jewish woman from Kraków, writes of the solidarity of Polish and Jewish prisoners in the Płaszów concentration camps, the assistance shown by Polish inmates of Auschwitz, the camp's first inmates, to later transports of prisoners, including Jews. These anonymous benefactors, who may well not have been the "norm," were known by the name of "kochany" ("darling"). While they did not have much to offer—perhaps some scraps of food or clothing—their attitude had a great impact on the new arrivals. Nelken relates similar displays of solidarity she was shown by Polish women inmates at Ravensbrück. See Halina Nelken, *And Yet, I Am Here!* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 232, 248, 272. Sigmund Gerson and Eddie Gastfriend, young Jews imprisoned in Auschwitz, speak of the "loving" attitude of Father Maximilian Kolbe and all the Polish priests toward the Jews in the camp. Eddie Gastfriend said: "There were many priests in Auschwitz. They wore no collars, but you knew they were priests by their manner and their attitude, especially toward Jews. They were so gentle, so loving." See Patricia Treece, *A Man for Others: Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana, 1982), 138, 152–53. Ada Omieljanczuk, a Jewish woman, attributes her survival to Polish fellow prisoners of Auschwitz who shared their food parcels with her. See Tadeusz Andrzejewski, "Wileńscy strażnicy oświęcimskiej pamięci," *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny* (Vilnius), February 3–9, 2005. Jerzy Radwanek, a member of the Polish underground in Auschwitz, used his position as camp electrician to provide widespread assistance to Jewish prisoners, and came to be known by them as the "Jewish uncle" of Auschwitz. See the profile of Jerzy Radwanek under "Poland" in the web site of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <<http://www.jfr.org>>. Another inmate mentions a Polish kapo in Auschwitz who agreed to Jewish inmates holding a service and guarded the entrance to the barracks to watch out for the SS. See Judy Weissenberg Cohen, "The Kol Nidre I always remember," *The Canadian Jewish News*, September 24, 1998. Yet another prisoner remembers with gratitude how her Polish "block trusty" tried to protect Jewish prisoners from being sent to the ovens. See the account of Anna (Chana) Kovitzka, posted at <http://voices.iit.edu/frames.asp?path=Interviews/&page=kovit&ext_t.html>. Assistance by Polish inmates at Auschwitz has been documented by Yad Vashem: Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, 256 (Stanisława Sierzputowska); Part 2, 638 (Jerzy Pozimski), 658 (Jerzy Radwanek). Other accounts that mention kind deeds by Polish kapos and block elders in Auschwitz can be found in Donald L. Niewyk ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15, 205, 210; and Konrad Charmatz, *Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 101–102. Another tribute to Polish prisoners, among them doctors, in various concentration camps was authored by Zofia Hauswirth—see Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 311–12.

She demanded in German, “Who is ready for the next room?”

The women started crowding around the door. Suddenly the girl produced a big belt. She began beating the naked bodies and heads, leaving red welts.

“Keep in line,” the girl yelled. ...

Not far from us stood a tall, white-haired Italian woman. For some reason, she had attracted the attention of the *Sauna Kapo*, who hit her with the belt on the face, neck, and breasts. The woman became furious.

“*Disgraziata putana* (‘disgraceful whore’),” she shouted.

Before we could grasp what had happened, the *kapo*, helped by two other well-dressed girls, dragged her down and kicked her until she lay bloody and silent on the floor.⁴³⁸

Irene Shapiro recollects her experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

We promptly line up in front of two barracks overlooking the railway ramp where we left our train just a while ago. We are about to get the first taste of crazy Sally, our *Block Aelteste* (barrack elder), and her adjutant, the *Stubendienst* (barrack orderly) Mela.

Sally is a toothless Polish-Jewish blonde who screams at us in garbled German and who kicks and hits us more often than she screams. With each reprimand, she points to the distant smokestacks and foretells that we will all go there if we don’t change the nonchalant way in which we obey the rules of the camp. ...

Cruelty of punishment is in evidence everywhere and at all times. ... Ever *Capo* (Camp Policewoman) feels free to kick and punch her subservients, and so does every *block*-Elder or other camp official in a striped uniform. Since many of these officials in the women’s camp happen to be Hungarian, we soon learn some of the Hungarian orders that are barked at us, such as “*Nem lekhets* (it isn’t allowed),” “*Kifele* (get out)” and “*Diorshan* (hurry up).” All these Hungarian phrases will remain with us for a long time.⁴³⁹

Sara Plager Zyskind attests to the cruelty of the kapos in Auschwitz, especially a Jewish one from Slovakia:

After a large group of girls had been gathered together, our *Kapo* began arranging us into rows of five abreast. She was now joined by several other guards, stout like herself, their hair short and stubbed as if it, too, had been cropped not long ago. These women’s dresses were so short that they barely covered their hefty thighs. ...

... All three *Kapos* ran wildly about, wielding their truncheons and striking blows on the heads of anyone near them. The red-head flailed her victims with almost ecstatic fury. ...

During the day, I had heard it whispered that these women were Jews ... This made their cruelty all the worse. ...

⁴³⁸ Judith Strick Dribben, *A Girl Called Judith Strick* (New York: Cowles, 1970), 181.

⁴³⁹ Irene Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty* (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), 231–32, 236.

“If you’re Jewish, why do you help the Germans torture us? Why do you beat your own sisters? Haven’t you any feeling of pity? ...”

The *Kapo* didn’t move. Leaning on her truncheon, she seemed to be listening patiently to every word I said. When I stopped talking, she said in heavily accented Polish, “Finished?”

“Yes, I replied.

“Turn around,” she commanded. I did and immediately found myself in a pitch black world with stars twirling about my head. ... Suddenly I felt water on my face. I opened my eye and realized that I was lying on the floor, with the enormous *Kapo* standing over me and dousing me with a strong jet of water from a hose. ...

“Get up!” she commanded. I got to my feet wearily. ... “Climb onto the oven and get down on your knees!”

The *Kapo* took four large bricks, placed two in each of my hands, and ordered me to raise the bricks above my head. I couldn’t do it—they were too heavy. Blows fell on my back until, with a stupendous effort, I managed to raise my arms. I felt as if every bone in my body was broken. I don’t know how long I was kept there holding the bricks above my head. ...

I dragged myself back and either passed out or fell into a deep sleep. ...

Like a pack of hounds after their game, a large number of *Kapos* stormed into our midst, stepped all over us, and brought down their cubs with full force upon our heads. ...

It was a horrible spectacle watched with demonic glee by the German officers, while the *Kapos*, who seemed to have been waiting for this opportunity, assaulted us again furiously under the pretext of restoring order.⁴⁴⁰

Other Jewish prisoners of Auschwitz and Birkenau recall:

The saddest part of all this, and something I can never forget, is the way the *Blockälteste* [block elder] and her helpers treated us. Though they were Jewish women, they acted more like wild beasts from the forests, beating us and kicking us all the time, and showing us no pity at all. They, themselves, lacked nothing, though. They were mostly veteran inmates ...⁴⁴¹

I was brought with the group into Birkenau ... This is how we were processed: I was pushed in front of a table. I had to stretch my arm out and have a camp number tattooed on it. A *Kapo*, a French Jew, stood on the table and made sure everyone kept order. When the needle was stuck in, I jumped from pain, and the *Kapo* kicked me right in the mouth so hard, a tooth flew out and blood ran all over my chin. And the *Kapo* screamed with laughter like an animal at the way I doubled over.

Birkenau was like hell. ... Every *Älteste* [elder] beat us. We were whipped for the smallest “sin.” They beat me day and night. Our lives became cheap—which was what the killers wanted.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ Sara Zyskind, *Stolen Years* (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1981; reprinted by Signet, New York, 1983), 153, 156–59, 161.

⁴⁴¹ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 109.

⁴⁴² Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 189.

Ester Löwi described the treatment meted out to Hungarians Jews in Auschwitz: “From 2 o’clock in the morning there was a roll call. It lasted until 7 o’clock. They would have to stand for 5 hours. Jewish women from Slovakia, block elders, oversaw this, and would beat people.”⁴⁴³ Jewish women prisoners pretending to be skilled labourers to survive in Auschwitz had to guard their secret from fellow Jews: “One lies more convincingly than another; they are afraid to tell the truth because there are many spies around. The worst are the German Jewish girls.”⁴⁴⁴ A Jewish survivor who lived through Birkenau recalled her first block elder, a 15-year-old Jewish girl named Cilli, but known as the “Little Devil”. Cilli was too weak to beat the prisoners, but at least she slapped their faces left and right.⁴⁴⁵

Sometimes the victims of choice were Poles: “The head of the interrogation block [Block 11] was the Jewish prisoner Jakob Kozolczik—a mountain of a man, all muscle. Before the war, Kozolczik had made a name for himself as ‘Schimschon Eisen’ (‘Samson the Mighty’), displaying his feats of strength the length and breadth of Poland. ... he endeavored to be lenient towards Jews, while tightening the screw principally upon the Poles, whom he heartily detested ...”⁴⁴⁶ According to reliable sources, the mass murder of Jews in Birkenau could not have been accomplished without the help of Jewish prisoners: on average four SS-men and 100 Jews from the Sonderkommando were needed to operate a crematorium.⁴⁴⁷

The Germans brought to Treblinka a group of 60 young Jews from Stoczek near Węgrów who served as auxiliaries in policing the camp. Armed with sticks, they shoved, jostled and struck the prisoners. They also seized money and other valuables from new arrivals.⁴⁴⁸ Jews imprisoned in Treblinka recalled:

Another amazing characteristic of the Germans is their ability to discover, among other peoples, hundreds of depraved types like themselves, and to use them for their own ends. In camps for Jews, there is a need for Jewish executioners, spies, stool pigeons. The Germans managed to find them, to find such vile creatures as Moshko from the vicinity of Slonim [Słonim], Itzig Kobyla from Warsaw, Chaskel the thief, and Kuba, a thief and a pimp, both Warsaw born and bred.⁴⁴⁹

One of the workers was a young Warsaw Jew whose nickname was ‘the Gypsy.’ ... His job was to ransack the victims’ suitcases and collect delicacies ... Once, when the Gypsy spotted a worker secreting a piece of candy in his clothes, he jumped down from the cart and demanded that he put it back. The worker, a newcomer in Treblinka, saw no reason to obey the orders of another Jew, even one who held an official position. The Gypsy began hitting him with his riding whip but the

⁴⁴³ Account of Ester Löwi, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 113.

⁴⁴⁴ Sheldon Schwartz, ed., *Never Far Away: The Auschwitz Chronicles of Anna Heilman* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001), 94.

⁴⁴⁵ Stanisława Gogołowska, *W Brzezince nie umierało się samotnie* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1973), 22–23.

⁴⁴⁶ Avraham Har’Shalom (Friedberg), “Jakob the Kapo,” *Alive from the Ashes*, Internet: <http://www.purs.org/yzkor_pruz hany/alive_jacob.htm>, in *Pruz hany Yz kor Book*, Internet: <http://www.purs.org/yzkor_pruz hany/pyb.htm>.

⁴⁴⁷ Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: The Nazis & “The Final Solution”*, BBC documentary (2005).

⁴⁴⁸ Blatman, *En direct du ghetto*, 477, 479–80.

⁴⁴⁹ Jankiel Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka: An Inmate Who Escaped Tells the Day-to-Day Facts of One Year of His Torturous Experience* (New York: American Representation of the General Jewish Workers’ Union of Poland, 1944), 17–18.

worker, undeterred, pushed the Gypsy ... At this, the Gypsy, the murderers' lackey, struck and killed the helpless Jew.⁴⁵⁰

One of the many Jewish informers denounced the "very humane" camp elder Rakowski, who was planning to stage a revolt of the Jewish prisoners. Blau was a particularly dangerous kapo who

had many people on his conscience. He and his wife had reached Treblinka from their place of residence, Kielce, where he had collaborated with the Gestapo. ... Blau enjoyed certain privileges: he was first appointed *Oberkapo* and then kitchen commandant. He surrounded himself with a gang of criminals of the worst kind, who kept him informed of everything in the huts—prisoners' discussions, plans, and so on. Blau handed out double portions of the best kinds of food to his cronies, at the expense of the rest of us ...⁴⁵¹

Other prisoners provide equally damning testimony about Jewish camp officials who behaved cruelly toward their fellow Jewish prisoners, both in the hard labour camp, which also held Polish prisoners, and in the death camp for Jews.

But the conduct of the Jewish block or barrack heads was truly beneath contempt. They were worse than the guards, and infinitely worse than the Polish heads.⁴⁵²

The place [Transport Square] is packed with people. On one side are women with small children; on the opposite side, men, forced to kneel. In the middle there are SS men, Ukrainians with weapons in their hands, as well as a group of about 40 men with red armbands. These are Jews, the detachment of "Reds." In Treblinka slang, they are called the "*Hevra Kadisha*" [Burial Society].

Kapo Jurek, the leader of the "Reds," had been a Warsaw rickshaw driver so corrupt and debauched, no deed was too foul for him. This brute would not hesitate to take aside a girl, already naked, on her march to the "bath." Promising to save her life, he would do the worst, and then push her back into the line. He is dressed elegantly, as that sort of person could easily afford to be in Treblinka. He works his whip on Jewish heads frequently and with gusto. As foul and corrupt as he was, his language was even worse. ... Most of the "Reds" were recruited from the Warsaw underworld and did not fall short of their Kapo.⁴⁵³

The slightest suspicion was enough to put away prisoners singly and in groups. It became a field day for the worst elements—the informers, the administrative helper Chaskiel, and block elder Kuba were at the fore. Not only the prisoners, but even the Kapos and some Germans were afraid of Chaskiel, a sleazy, vile creature from the Warsaw underworld, a stupid and conceited youth. All day he would run around in the square and in the workshops like a wild animal in search of prey,

⁴⁵⁰ Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 59–60.

⁴⁵¹ Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*, 120–21.

⁴⁵² Israel Cymlich and Oscar Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2007), 38.

peering into every corner. He even searched bread-bags and pockets. Woe to anyone who he caught with something not “kosher,” or cooking or napping on the job! (We dreaded him more than we did the Germans.) Nothing would help—neither tears, nor the intervention of his own “comrades.” ... The matter was sure to be brought to the attention of the administration. ... Chaskiel enjoyed the complete confidence of the administration. He was the custodian of the keys to the storehouses and gorged himself on the best of everything. He claimed that the Germans had even promised to take him along to Berlin after the war. ...

The other extremely active informer was block elder Kuba, an “intellectual” from Lodz [Łódź]. He would constantly run around in an attempt to please and serve the Germans at the expense of single prisoners as well as groups; he was never satisfied that he had done enough. Here’s an example: When there were no more transports, and the goods had all been sorted and sent off, the groups of “Reds,” “Blues” and others were transferred to work inside the ghetto. A group of “Reds” was assigned to do the resurfacing of our square yard. As the first shovelfuls of earth were lifted, the usual Treblinka garbage pit was uncovered. Among the garbage and shit are piles of photographs and documents, treasures in gold and jewelry, as well as human corpses. We beg the workers: “cover it up and keep quiet, let’s try to preserve at least these remains of the slaughtered Jewish people.” Kapo Jurek, another “fine” man, finally relents, but Kuba would not stand for it. He runs around searching until he finds the *Oberscharführer*. A detachment of garbage-sorters is set up. Each photo and document is carefully exhumed and burned. Money, gold and valuables are cleaned and set aside in strongboxes. ...

Kuba also excelled in the fight against “speculation.” It became virtually impossible to get money out and to bring food in. Workers were searched upon leaving the camp and returning. ...

Kuba, Chaskiel and their agents had everyone under surveillance. They would constantly search around and under the bunks and in the bread-bags, and were often successful. The traitor Kuba also organized a special guard around our wire fence, through which some guards used to trade and hand over parcels to their Jews. Nevertheless, despite all these difficulties, the trade did not stop.

In time, three levels of society were established—similar to life outside. The upper class, the aristocracy, was composed of the commandants, the Kapos, the warehouse supervisors and the doctors. They lived in luxury, indulged in wild parties, got drunk, and sank ever deeper into debauchery. There were about 30 women in Treblinka. Most of them were employed in the German, Ukrainian and Jewish laundries. Some sewed underwear; one was a dentist; another was a doctor; and yet another was a nurse in the Ukrainian infirmary. A few of the women were employed at various handicrafts such as knitting or crocheting. The women did not work hard; they dressed luxuriously and behaved disgracefully.

Five of the women had husbands in the camp and their behavior was irreproachable. The rest, without exception, the young ones as well as the old ones, had “admirers” selected from the Treblinka aristocracy. These rich admirers supplied them with the best of everything. The women went to the parties, got drunk, and enjoyed themselves to the utmost. Not only did they behave in a despicable manner, but they also used the most lewd and obscene language. They, our Treblinka women, were not squeamish even about Germans or Ukrainians! They were not subject to any

⁴⁵³ Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, in *ibid.*, 131–32.

physical punishment. Generally, they were punished with housework; they were forced to remain in their barracks during their free time. They were not allowed to meet with their lovers or to attend the wild parties. Indeed, this punishment was very hard to bear! ...

The middle class in Treblinka consisted of tradesmen in the workshops as well as some of the more ingenious “speculators.” ... Because the tradesmen would do all kinds of jobs for the guards, they often received bread, meat, cigarettes, and occasionally even whiskey. As so, in the workshops, even at the worst times, we did not suffer too severely.⁴⁵⁴

Betrayal foiled many escape plans and led to numerous executions of inmates in Treblinka.

Our first earlier attempt [to escape] was unsuccessful and twelve—who had been betrayed by a prisoner, a man from Częstochowa who used to make wire mesh for a living—paid for it with their lives.⁴⁵⁵

It was found out later that two Jews, one of them a blacksmith, Szymon from Kosów and someone from Ryki, whose name I cannot remember, were the ones who betrayed us. The SS men selected 30 workers and killed them.⁴⁵⁶

... a group of six Jewish capos from Poland agreed to organize an escape. ... They were already supposed to carry it out one night, but that time it did not work out, either, because there was a provocateur, a Jew from Germany, Berliner, who said that the Germans had promised they would kill off everyone, but would leave him. He went to the Germans, told them about the plan and the next day the Germans hanged all six of them on the second square in front of everyone.⁴⁵⁷

The Germans were also known to stage the escape of Jewish kapos turned Gestapo agents, as was the case with a Stanisław Dorosiewicz, who subsequently infiltrated a Peasant Battalions unit near Staszów and was responsible for the death of a number of Jews.⁴⁵⁸

One did not have to be a kapo or informer to turn on fellow prisoners. After his liberation from Buchenwald, an inmate provided the following riveting testimony:

In spring of 1944, our column—Poles and Jews—were employed in earth moving ... The SS construction officer supervised us personally. Even for strong men the work was very difficult ... One wanted so badly to rest for a moment, but the constant blows and kicks, the unceasing shouts forced our tired arms to keep shoveling on and on.

Then the gaze of the construction officer fell upon two Jews whose strength had given out. He ordered a Pole named Strzaska to bury the two men, who could hardly stand on their feet. Strzaska

⁴⁵⁴ Testimony of Oskar Strawczyński, in *ibid.*, 152–54.

⁴⁵⁵ Account of Izrael Bramson, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 106.

⁴⁵⁶ Account of Szymon Grynszpan, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 1185.

⁴⁵⁷ Account of Icek Lichtman, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 1204.

⁴⁵⁸ Mieczysław Korczak, *Życie na włosku—bis* (Staszów: Staszowskie Towarzystwo Kulturalne, 1997).

froze with horror and refused. The construction officer took the shovel and beat him with it. He ordered him, “Lie down in the trench immediately!” Thereupon he forced the two Jews to cover with dirt the prisoner lying in the trench. These two men then did it out of fear for their lives, hoping to escape the same gruesome fate themselves. When only Strzaska’s head still peered out, the construction officer called “Halt!” and had him pulled out again.

Now the two Jews had to lie in the trench, and the construction officer again gave Strzaska the order to cover the two with dirt. Slowly the trench filled with dirt; one shovelful after another was dumped in. The face of the Polish comrade was contorted with terror; drops of sweat fell from his forehead. But the construction officer stood next to him with the look of a wild animal that hypnotizes its victims. The trench was now completely covered. The inhuman SS executioner stamped the dirt smooth himself and laughed while doing it.⁴⁵⁹

In the labour camp of Budzyń near Kraśnik, German personnel was characteristically scarce and the authorities relied on Jewish inmates to basically run day-to-day operations.

Only a few Germans ran the camp. All the administrative jobs were performed by Jewish functionaries (there were about two hundred of them), and they constituted the most privileged group of prisoners. They had a better barrack, a better kitchenette, and they received a lot of food.⁴⁶⁰

The chief kapos at Budzyń were also Jews.⁴⁶¹ An inmate of that camp wrote:

These were Jewish POWs who were put to work to prepare the camps and were responsible for camp discipline. ... The Kapos laid open valises in front of us and started yelling: ‘Hand it over. He means it. This is no game.’ This was said in Yiddish, which Felix [the commandant] understood and enjoyed. ... The kitchen was under the supervision of former Jewish military prisoners ...⁴⁶²

Jewish prisoners were known to harass Jews who spoke Polish, as one inmate recalls: “the simple people around me ... so often scolded me—‘Red Yiddish! Speak Yiddish! Don’t speak Polish! That’s not our language!’”⁴⁶³

Jewish kapos also facilitated the smooth operation of the camp at Starachowice.

From now on, it was announced, several prisoners would be executed for each escapee. The idea came from Wilczek, the chief kapo whose title was ‘The Jewish Elder’. ...

⁴⁵⁹ David A. Hackett, ed., *The Buchenwald Report* (Boulder, Colorado, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 194–95.

⁴⁶⁰ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 81.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 245. Idel Bekerman reported that the Judenrat in Kielce managed to send Jewish blackmailers and denouncers to Auschwitz. See her account in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 191.

⁴⁶² Morris Wyszogrod, *A Brush with Death: An Artist in the Death Camps* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 127–29.

⁴⁶³ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 85.

Among these privileges was being allowed to live with his wife and sons in a separate, well-furnished, well-equipped shack and to move freely about the camp at all hours. Sometimes, under the pretext of visiting the steelworks, Wilczek even left the camp without an escort. He was in charge of distributing the food, of which his lackeys had plenty while the other prisoners went hungry, and he was responsible for the work shifts, deciding whom to send to hard labour and whom to assign to easier jobs in camp/ This power was reinforced by a network of informers who strengthened his position among the Germans, too. The dozen or so hand-picked prisoners who worked for him as kapos while taking advantage of the rest of us were completely loyal. They knew that on a whim they could be sent to work at the blast ovens. Hated and feared, these Jewish policemen obeyed all German orders. It would have been impossible to enforce discipline at Starachowice without them. Wilczek's son was their direct boss. ...

It was Wilczek Junior who approached the Germans with his father's idea of dividing us into pairs to patrol the inner fences in shifts, each pair equipped with a whistle and white smocks that would enable the tower guards to identify us in the glare of the searchlights. Any attempt to approach the fences would be instantly punished. Each thwarted escape would earn the patrol a loaf of bread. Each successful one would cost it its lives.⁴⁶⁴

Like many labour camps, Skarżysko-Kamienna was virtually run by Jews and had its privileged—the camp “aristocracy”: the Jewish commandant of the camp, the Jewish police commander, and the so-called skilled workers: tailors, shoemakers, and other craftsmen. They lived in separate barracks and received better food rations which they exchanged for various services, including sexual favours.⁴⁶⁵ Childhood friendship was no shield from abuse, as Adam Neuman recalled:

This time, my persecutor was a Jew from my hometown! He belonged to the camp “aristocracy” and had a permanent job in the German cooperative of the Camp. ... He noticed that a kidney was gone and he ordered us to confess which one of us had stolen it ... He had known me from childhood and he was my senior colleague on the Maccabee Sports Club team, so, of course, I expected that he would act compassionately and overlook the incident. How wrong I was! When my turn came to be searched, he pulled out the kidney from under my shirt and, in front of everyone, he slapped me across the face. ... I was totally humiliated—but this time by one of my own people!⁴⁶⁶

Another Jew who was sent to the Hasag (i.e., Hugo Schneider Aktiengesellschaft, a privately owned German armaments company that used camp inmates as forced labour) labour camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna recalled, “We also had a Jewish foreman named Nathan who fit right in with the gang of murderers—a Jewish sadist.”⁴⁶⁷ Josef Morgenstern recalled the Jewish kapos as “refined in cruelty and

⁴⁶⁴ Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 260–61.

⁴⁶⁵ Adam Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 48–49.

⁴⁶⁶ Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland*, 50.

⁴⁶⁷ Kagan, ed., *Szydlowiec Memorial Book*, 279.

more feared than their masters.” According to Morgenstern, “fawning and informing to the authorities were the order of the day.”⁴⁶⁸ Elsa Thon (Balbina Synalewicz) recalled her encounters with the Jewish police during her stay in Skarżysko-Kamienna:

The police counted us, then ordered us to enter the barracks, yelling and swearing at us to make us hurry up. ...

Suddenly, a policeman turned to me, and ordered me to make a list of the people in the barracks. He was short and bad-tempered. ...

The next morning, as the bad-tempered policeman entered the barracks, he shouted, as if to remind us of who was in charge. Wanting us to fear him, he treated us to a display of what could happen if we didn’t obey.

A woman, tall, maybe fifty, approached him to ask for a blanket, because she was cold. He kicked her viciously in the belly. As she doubled over from pain and burst into tears, I thrust myself between them to protect her from a further blow, pleading, “Do you have a mother? Why are you doing this?”

His brutality was entirely unnecessary, as far as I could see—there wasn’t a single German around. ...

Each morning we were awakened by a policeman with this song:

Wake up! Your mothers are whores!

I’ve been calling for half an hour!

You are still sleeping!

You are sons of bitches!

Remembering this still brings tears to my eyes. We had been oppressed and humiliated by the Nazis. Was it necessary for these policemen to add pain to our degraded existence? Or was it supposed to be a kind of entertaining diversion for us? ...

One day, the bread was delivered at the same time as the soup was being distributed outside the barracks. The man pouring the soup into the dishes was also an orderly in the infirmary. I asked him to serve me first so I could get back and divide the bread before it was stolen.

“Stay in line!” he yelled at me.

“If the bread is stolen, the others will kill me!” I pleaded. He got furious with me. “You whore!” he shouted, slapping my face so hard that I couldn’t speak for days. I threw away my dish, went into the barracks and divided the bread, then threw myself down on my bunk. I lay there unable even to cry. My face twisted. I felt hatred, for him, for the rest of the police, for all the oppressors who imagined themselves the lords of our lives. Who could imagine that such low instincts could emerge in other human beings?

Especially, I felt rage against the orderly who had hit me. ... He could have poured the soup into my dish with no problem; everyone standing in the line agreed. He had plenty of time. It was well known that no one left the infirmary alive. ...

⁴⁶⁸ Alvin Abram, *The Light After Dark II: Six More Stories of Triumph After All Hope Had Gone...* (Toronto: AMA Graphics Incorporated, 2000), 100.

Not all the policemen were as bad as this one. Some were even worse. Remembering the bad ones still brings back the anger. ...

But that sort of thing [i.e., taking advantage of women prisoners] was routine there. Even the chief of police was a philanderer. He had a wife and a lover; what's more his wife had her own lover, and that lover was having other casual affairs, and so on ...

The chief used to invent ways to amuse himself by humiliating us. He would order the girls to stand naked outside the barracks at night. Some of the staff would then take them away, supposedly to protect them from further shame, and would rape them. There was no such thing as consent. These women were trapped. What made it worse was that so many of these atrocities were committed by our own people. ...

I was sent one day with a small group to gather spent bullets at a place where the Nazis practised target shooting, very near the forest. Near the range was a small mechanic's shop where two Poles worked. ... We worked near them. The older man talked to me when the policeman and the SS weren't around.

After a few days, the older man started bringing me sandwiches from home, cigarettes, or a few zloty [zloty]. He told me he had a daughter my age and was sad about what happened to us. ...

Every day, the older man tried to convince me to keep looking for a chance to break away from the group. He told me how to find his house. ... He also made me a beautiful aluminum soup-dish with a handle. ... But one day the policeman who took us to and from work saw me talking to the old man. On the way back, he grabbed my cigarettes and money, and walked very close to me. I couldn't even think of escaping. ...

The next day, I told the Polish man that I was afraid to accept anything further from him. But he still brought me hairpins and wooden clogs, with leather straps for shoes. He did what he could to help me. I remember him with affection.

I was sent back to the munitions factory, and then came winter. My shoes were worn out ... The soles of my feet touched the ice and snow on the ground with every step. I had asked for shoes at the warehouse, but had been refused. ...

So one morning when we were marshalled for work, the head count was one short. One of the policemen came into the barracks, where I was sitting on my bunk. "Come out, they will kill you," he yelled.

"I've had enough," I said, staying put.

"Get down, you can't stay here."

"I'm not going anywhere until I get shoes."

They went off to the factory without me. An hour later, a German foreman came in, asking me why I refused to get to work. Without a word, I showed him my broken shoes. He smiled. "Come with me, you will get shoes."

I walked with him to the factory. ... As we passed by the office window, he stopped to ask for a piece of paper, then he wrote out an order that I should be given shoes. ... After work, I went to the warehouse and got a pair of clogs.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction*, 103–109.

Israel Mittelberg described conditions at Skarżysko-Kamienna, after his transfer there from Majdanek, and his subsequent peregrinations.

At night, when we walked into the barrack, we found a group of Jews with a Jewish camp commandant, Jewish police, some Jewish supervisors, and Jewish quartermasters. ... In exchange for a piece of bread we gave away our clothing. ...

A great deal of difference existed between those of us who had just arrived from Warsaw and those who had come from the nearby small towns. ... the others had come directly from their homes, still in possession of valuable items they were hiding. ... Also, the Gentiles with whom they had left their belongings used to help them from time to time. It was, therefore, much more difficult for us. The inmates resorted to stealing hunks of bread from each other, or an additional bowl of soup in the kitchen ...

The Jews who had arrived from the provinces ahead of us held all the service posts. Therefore a kind of antagonism grew up between them and those from Warsaw; among us, many refugees from Lodz [Łódź]. ... The commandant Mordechai, a butcher by trade, had bought off the chief, thus achieving complete jurisdiction over us, which he knew exactly how to exercise. He released whoever had money from the drudgery of work. When I asked him for an exemption, he simply laughed. He disliked us intensely. He did not care whether someone was really ill. For money, he let his good friends go home and we had to work on their behalf. Wagons of shoes would arrive from Treblinka for distribution. Mordechai would then order the shoemakers to take the shoes apart looking for hidden wealth. They would keep the shoes that were in better condition, and pass the rubbish on to us.

The doctor also would issue an exemption for money; without money, one was obliged to go to work, regardless of the state of his health. After fifteen months of loading shells, I fell ill. On my way from work to camp, I had a very painful attack and could not walk. My friends supported me. Lenczner, a Jewish policeman from Volbram [Wolbrom], noticed it and admonished me for not walking in the ranks. My complaints simply went unheard. He continued to kick me in the spine with his heavy boot in the very spot which was causing me the most pain. He tortured me the whole way. He survived the war. ...

After much haggling Dr. Rotbalsam came and, for money of course, gave me some ointment. All he wanted was money. He also survived. Mordechai had an assistant in our barrack by the name of Bakalasz. He refused to help anyone with anything. When I made a request of him, he would reply, "Ah, you'll die soon, so many people are dying, you'll also be among them." Mordechai had several other assistants, among them the brothers Avram and Hershel Band of the same town, Volbram ... There were also the brothers Moishe and Kalman Gastfreund, tailors by trade. They were bad people. ...

There were other thugs such as Dafner and Heinak. For spilling a little coffee they beat me so, that I was swollen for two weeks. They could have taught the SS officers a thing or two about how to perform beatings. There was a man from Crakow [Kraków], Gershon Lesman; he and his two brothers had a lot of money, so they lived well. For five hundred zlotys [złotys] he became a policeman.

When I worked at passing turf over the wire fence, I once opened the gate for the people of my group to come into the camp. Lesman punished me for that by kicking me with the tip of his boot, inflicting excruciating pain in my back. I suffered another attack. Lesman is still alive and became very rich after the war. ...

So strong was the antagonism that the “veteran” inmates informed on the newcomers, refused to work with us, and so on. They used to talk of seven people and twenty newcomers having died on any given day. However, there was such a discrepancy between the death rate of the old timers and the later arrivals that soon the antagonism petered out. Every day forty people died. Of our group, which had numbered eighty, only seven remained at the end.

When the Germans realized that the mortality rate was threatening the numbers for work, they doubled our bread ration. ...

Dr. Zaks, a native of Crakow [Kraków] whom we had the misfortune of knowing in the Skarzisker Workshop A, followed us to this new camp [in Sulejów near Piotrków, where the Jews obtained food from the Polish inmates until the Germans put a stop to it] and also here he applied the same methods as he had in the workshop. He declared all the sick, the elderly and the weak as being fit for work, thereby contributing to their death, for, as they could not carry out the work satisfactorily, the Ukrainians and Germans wore them out and beat them to death. ...

[Later, when he was transported to Buchenwald:] There was a policeman in our wagon by the name of Korn, who had already harassed us in Silev [Sulejów] and continued to beat us with his spurs here in the train. I resented his behavior deeply and interfered in the fight for which, of course, I got my share of blows. That fellow, who had tormented us so, received his due in Buchenwald.⁴⁷⁰

Harry Haft was taken to Jaworzno where there was a working coal mine that served as a slave labour camp. German soldiers and Jewish kapos would march the workers to the job site and back.

On his first day of work, as Harry was being shackled, he looked into the face of the Jewish cop locking him to the chain, and he knew the man’s face. It was Mischa, a hoodlum from Belchatow [Bełchatów]. He was the type of guy who would profess to be your friend and then steal from you. Their eyes locked. ...

Mischa spotted the disruption and ran toward Harry. With the guards watching, he planted himself directly next to Harry’s face and screamed: “Left, right ...” in his ears. He kicked Harry and hit him hard in the back with a baton. ...

From that day on, Mischa took a personal interest in Harry. With the guards’ permission, he would beat Harry daily on the way to the mineshaft. Those first days of work in the Jaworzno coal mine began with a beating from his Jewish neighbor.

There were days when Harry would beg Mischa to leave him alone. Mischa seemed to enjoy showing the guards how he kicked and struck Harry with his stick.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰ Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds*, 60–68.

⁴⁷¹ Haft, *Harry Haft*, 52–53.

Conditions in other labour camps were equally as bad, as the following testimony from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki near Warsaw illustrates.

As a result of the humiliating and degrading conditions, the demoralization planned by the Germans set in among certain elements of the Jewish community, and the Germans knew well how to use local Jewish trash for their devilish schemes. The lowest characters and scum of the Jewish underworld could hardly resist the nomination conferred upon them by the Gestapo henchmen. They became the leaders and policemen. Thus, in the camp Pomyekhov [Pomiechowo], a Jewish degenerate named Maylekhel played the role of the leading oppressor. He helped put an end to the harrowed Jewish inmates. But Meylekhel's sway did not last. Jews of Plonsk [Płońsk], who together with the Jews of Novy-Dvor experienced his brutal rule, did away with him.⁴⁷²

Even children were enlisted as tormentors of fellow Jewish prisoners.

I learned that this place was Huta Komorowska, a hard-labor work camp from which few were known to come out alive. ... It was not long after I was let out of the truck that two Jewish policemen took me away and searched me from top to bottom. ...

The foreman of our group, Cheskel Rybner, was a Jew and a sadist. He called us criminals, accused us of not wanting to work and beat us with a wooden stick. ...

Three of the trucks from Huta Komorowska, including the one I was on, had traveled to Mielec. ... It was about ten o'clock at night when we arrived in Mielec. We were unloaded from the trucks by Jewish police. ...

Brutal punishments were a way of life in Mielec.

One of the members of the Jewish police, David Rosenwasser, had a habit of repeating, "Do you know who I am? I am David Rosenwasser, O.D. (Officer in Charge). He would then look at everyone meanly.

David Rosenwasser got a devilish pleasure out of tormenting people. One day he walked quietly into my barracks and started yelling, "Get up, Get up."

Then he closed the door and left. Five minutes later, he was back in the barracks swinging a rubber truncheon and shouting. Anyone who was still in bed—whether ill or injured—was beaten until he was unconscious. Rosenwasser had a habit of walking by the barracks at night to listen to anything we were saying. Unlucky was the person who said anything, for he was pulled out of bed and beaten unmercifully. ...

At the camp in Wielicka [Wieliczka near Kraków] was a small nine-year-old Jewish boy. The Germans had dressed him in an SS uniform and instructed him in the beating of Jews. Each day he

⁴⁷² Aryeh Shamri and Dov First, eds., *Pinkas Novi-Devor (Pinkas Novy-Dvor)* (Tel Aviv: The Organizations of Former Novy-Dvor Jews in Israel, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay and France, 1965), xvii. This source points out that it was the town's ethnic Germans who were the directors of the German extermination program: "Two underworld gangsters of the Novy-Dvor Volksdeutschen [Volksdeuteschen], the brothers Wendt, assumed leading positions in town in order to annihilate the Jewish population."

appeared in the yard and hit every Jew who came his way with a stick. When someone told him that he himself was a Jew, he would say there was nothing he could do about it.⁴⁷³

One of the most shocking testimonies concerns a camp in Skalat near Tarnopol, in southeastern Poland.

The Skalat [Skalat] Camp was opened on 11 November 1942. Within a month it held over three hundred inmates, including about fifty lonely women, most of whom were from outside Skalat ...

Several workshops were set up, all laboring exclusively for the Germans. The *Obersturmbannführer* [Obersturmbannführer] had assigned a certain Jew, Heniek Zukerman, formerly the *Kommandant* of the Kamionka Camp, to organize the Skalat installation. ...

The actual work during the twelve-hour day was not as awful and unbearable as the “camp discipline” and the attitudes of the officials. ... Although the camp was directed by Jews themselves, all went in a similar fashion as in other concentration camps: conducted with the precision and savagery prevalent in concentration camps.

One specific case at a typical roll-call will serve to show the cruelty with which the camp leaders treated their own brothers. One day the camp leader, Zukerman, chose some of the stronger inmates for the heavy labor at the quarry. Among them was Saul Friedman, the shoemaker, a man of about 56. He asked to be excused because of his age and weakness, begging to be assigned, instead, to the ‘Shit Brigade.’ “What audacity!” Zukerman shouted in Polish, the official language of the camp, and began to hit the man mercilessly until he fell to the ground in a pool of blood. After the beating, Shol-the-cobbler was truly incapable of heavy labor and was detailed, as a cripple, to peeling potatoes in the kitchen.

Zukerman soon chose as his assistant Bumek Rus, a former law student, and previously a member of the Grzimalow [Grzymałów] *Judenrat*, whose behavior filled with terror all the Jews who came into contact with him. A month after Zukerman had successfully established the camp, he was ordered by the central camp authorities in Kamionka to organize a similar labor camp in Podwołoczyska [Podwołoczyska], and Rus took over command of the Skalat Camp. *Obersturmbannführer* Rebel, or his aide, Sharführer Maler, would come by every few days to make sure that all was in order. ... The Germans would shout insults and curse wildly, while issuing commands which the Jewish *Kommandants* would accept servilely, intoning the obedient compliance: “*Befehl Herr Obersturmbannführer!*”

Camp visits by Germans were usually the occasion for a lavish reception where pastries and beverages were served and where eggnog and wine flowed like water. The Skalat *Schupo* rarely ever missed these celebrations. Often they would go on until late at night, ending with female entertainment provided by the camp management. The Germans would leave, carrying expensive gifts, cheered in spirit and with favorable opinions of their loyal servants. ...

Life in the Skalat Camp was moving towards extermination. As in all concentration camps, after several weeks people were hardly recognizable: spiritually broken and physically exhausted, with no will or reason to live. The fetid camp atmosphere eroded one’s humanity and people’s behavior at times was wild, almost beastly. ... To avoid a beating was to experience a miracle. ...

⁴⁷³ Breitowicz, *Through Hell To Life*, 61–62, 70, 73, 76.

In the camps, the population was separated into two groups: the oppressors and the oppressed. The first included the camp leaders, the brigade leaders and other oppressors. In other camps, membership in that 'upper stratum' was the privilege of the Gentiles: either of the SS-men or of Gentile inmates. In the case of the Skalat Camp, the conditions were different. All of the authorities here were Jewish. The SS-men, as indicated, only came to check up every few days. That was sufficient, however, to last until the next visit.

The authorities of the Skalat Camp earned their infamy by the brutality toward their own brothers. Here, most of the people in the upper stratum came from the corrupt *Judenrat*, which the German machine had converted into an institution of demoralization and betrayal. Within the framework of a locked labor camp, they had a fruitful ground for their vile and beastly acts. They became appropriate tools in the hands of the Germans for the execution of their plans and wishes. Robbery, extortion and womanizing made up their days. Usually drunk, or exhausted by their carousing, as well as tense, unruly and violent, they brandished whips over the heads and backs of fellow Jews, while berating and cursing them. The clothing of the camp official gave him the appearance of an underworld dandy or pimp: grey-green riding breeches, shiny black new-looking boots, a brown leather jacket with a stiff collar, like that of a *boulevardier*, smelling of *eau de cologne*, with a cigarette between his lips. The camp people trembled in fear before such 'big shots.' In their after-hours, they ate and drank the best available. They would stay up to all hours, often until dawn, playing cards and drinking. Money had lost all value to them. They used bank notes to light their cigarettes and the amounts they wagered were staggering. They obtained sexual favors from the women and girls in the camp, who were terrorized into acceding to the slightest whim of these rulers. All the authorities lived in the camp building, together with the inmates, and it was under the same roof that the orgies and festivities took place.

The administrators and oppressors of the camp were a specific type of person. If everything was lost, then one should savor that which life yet had to offer. Trapped in a diabolic snare, one could live befitting the devil; beyond the corpses, beyond the abyss of sin and crime, beyond filth and self-loathing. They eked out the last bit of life, even at the cost of other lives. "A few Jews will have the right to remain alive under Hitler and I intend to be one of them," *Kommandant* Rus would say – and he did survive.

After the "Sobbing Graves" 'action,' the entire *Judenrat* fell apart. The main leaders, Nirler, Zimmer, Lempert and Schoenberg, had managed to escape along with their families. All of them were now in the camp, from which they continued to direct the lives of the last remnants of the hopeless Jews who still wandered among the ruins of the ghetto. This handful of Jews knew quite well that the end was near and inevitable. It seemed to them that now the danger of death would be less in the camp, therefore everyone strived to get into the camp. This privilege came at a high price. The camp management explained that the money was needed to bribe the Gestapo. Actually, most of the money disappeared into the deep pockets of the camp officials. The corrupt life of the camp gentry grew ever more expensive. Those Jews who had no money were not accepted into the camp. It was ironic that while previously people had to pay to be saved from the camp, now they had to pay to be admitted.

In this way, the camp population grew by a few dozen, including women and children. These dealings for places in the 'Life Saving Skalat Camp' went on until the final liquidation of the ghetto. With the liquidation of the ghetto, there was no longer a *Judenrat*.

Nirler, having lost his kingdom now became the 'prime minister' to the camp-leader, Rus. Now it was Nirler who, every morning at 5:00, would call the roll of the inmates. He too, like his superior, was dressed in pajamas and carried a riding crop. In so brief a time, he managed to create around himself an aura of fear and 'respect.' All who entered the camp office had to stand and take off their caps. If some newcomer failed to follow this custom, even if out of ignorance, he was brutally beaten and confined for several days. Other former leaders of the ghetto (Zimmer, Lempert, Schoenberg, Dr. Brif, etc.) gained infamy by their evil acts. They took charge of the work details and, following the German example, lorded over everyone. Decency and justice simply did not exist for them, even with reference to former friends and acquaintances. The Jewish ghetto police, which had been transferred to the service of the camp authorities, also wrote a bloody page in the painful history of the Skalat Camp.⁴⁷⁴

An inmate of a camp for Jewish prisoners of war located at 7 Lipowa Street in Lublin recalls:

Here was the camp of Polish army prisoners—all Jews. At the time there were 7,000 of them, headed by a man named Fisher. (today he resides with his wife Tsesha in Tel-Aviv). The prisoners hated the Jews of Lublin ...

The 7,000 inmates of the prison camp worked as a detail of the sanitation unit. They cleaned the houses vacated by the Jewish deportees, street by street. They pounded on the walls, tore up floor tiles, looking for—and finding—treasures which the luckless Jews had before leaving, in the hope of returning. These prisoners garnered millions. They dressed like princes. Their stores, shops and markets carried every kind of delicacy: ham and bacon, honey cookies, pastries, fine sausages, whiskey, beer, oranges. The penniless prisoners hung about the wealthy ones, hoping to find bones in the garbage. The wealthy ones ate better than the Poles.⁴⁷⁵

Two German Jews who acted as kapos in the camp on 7 Lipowa Street were particularly known for their cruelty.⁴⁷⁶

Jewish OD (order police) men and kapos in Płaszów were known for treating the inmates with cruelty, extorting valuables, dutifully enforcing harsh measures, and betraying planned escapes.⁴⁷⁷ Memoirs

⁴⁷⁴ Abraham Weissbrod, "Death of a Shtetl," Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skalat1/Skalat.html>>, translation of Abraham Weissbrod, *Es shtarbt a shtetl: Megiles Skalat* (Munich: Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany, 1948), 48–51.

⁴⁷⁵ Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 123–24.

⁴⁷⁶ Gruber, *I Chose Life*, 26.

⁴⁷⁷ Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, eds., *The Children Accuse* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), 101; Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 254, 260; testimony of Giza Landau, *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 182–83; David M. Crowe, *Oskar Schindler: The Untold Account of His Life, Wartime Activities and the Story Behind the List* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Westview Press, 2004), 320–22, 337–48. The names most often mentioned are: Wilek or Wilhelm Chilowicz, the head Jewish administrator, and his wife Maria, Chilowicz's assistant Mietek Finkelstein, Marcel Goldberg, Maier Kerner, Wilhelm or Wilek Schnitzer, Romek Faeber, and Schoenfeld.

recorded shortly after the war were, it seems more open about such incidents. Donald Niewyk's anthology, *Fresh Wounds*,⁴⁷⁸ contains frequent references to betrayals by fellow Jews and mistreatment, sometimes quite savage, at the hands of Jewish kapos (capos) and block seniors in Nazi camps. Indeed, as one Jewish scholar points out, "the cruelty of many Jewish *kapos* in the concentration camps is well attested by countless survivors."⁴⁷⁹ Many additional examples are mentioned later. One can also find examples of Christian Poles suffering mistreatment and betrayal at the hands of Jewish kapos and inmates in Nazi camps.⁴⁸⁰

As among other nationalities, Jewish collaborators ran the entire gamut and included men and women who maintained friendly, sometimes intimate, relations with the SS and Gestapo, with whom they even partied. Some Jewish women worked as prostitutes and strippers for the Germans,⁴⁸¹ and a number of them became lovers or mistresses to German officers.⁴⁸² (This phenomenon was by no means unique to Jews. Such behaviour was far more widespread among the French, Norwegians, and others.⁴⁸³) Jewish community leaders in Brześć on the River Bug "decided to send some expensive 'gifts' to Major Rade. Four beautiful girls who had some idea of the importance of their mission delivered these gifts. They spent the whole night with the Germans and when they appeared on the streets the next day, every Jew looked

⁴⁷⁸ Donald L. Niewyk, ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15, 33–41, 45, 47, 52, 53, 113, 118, 119, 126, 127, 129, 176, 251–52.

⁴⁷⁹ Jonathan Webber, "Jewish Identities in the Holocaust: Martyrdom as a Representative Category," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13: *Focusing on the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (London and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000), 141. An example is given on p. 140.

⁴⁸⁰ Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945*, 460 (Auschwitz); Richard C. Lukas, comp. and ed., *Forgotten Survivors: Polish Christians Remember the Nazi Occupation* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 26 (Neuengamme), 181 (Auschwitz).

⁴⁸¹ See, for example: Hersch Gotthelf, "A Few Words," in *Memorial Book of Sochaczew*, translation of A. Sh. Stein and G. Weissman, eds., *Pinkas Sochaczew* (Jerusalem: Former Residents of Sochaczew in Israel, 1962); Howard Roiter, comp. and ed., *Voices from the Holocaust*, vol. 1 (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1975), 108 (Warsaw); Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 44–45 (Radzyń Podlaski); Peter Silverman, David Smuschkowitz, and Peter Smuszkowicz, *From Victims to Victors* (Concord, Ontario: The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 1992), 246 (Głębokie); Joanna Wiszniewicz, *A jednak czasem mieszkam sny* (Warsaw: Tu, 1996), 77–78 (Warsaw), translated as *And I Still Have My Dreams: A Story of Certain Loneliness* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004); Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twarych*, 106, 195–96 (Warsaw); Ernest, *O wojnie wielkich Niemiec z Żydami Warszawy, 1939–1943*, 82 (Warsaw); Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 23 (a number of attractive girls in Chełm). It appears that the ban on sexual relations with Jews, an issue that raised considerable concern with state security when German gendarmes came across more than a dozen high ranking German officers spending the night with Jewish women in Warsaw's Bristol Hotel in October 1939, continued to be transgressed rather frequently. The Bristol Hotel incident was mentioned in the 2004 documentary film *Frauen als Beute: Wehrmacht und Prostitution* by Thomas Gaever and Martin Hilbert.

⁴⁸² A Jewish woman from Łódź became the mistress of a senior Gestapo officer and divulged to the Germans the hiding place of her Jewish lover. See Checinski, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism*, 33. The following examples are from Drohobycz: Maria Steczkowska was SS Sergeant Karl Günther's lover, Irka Jakubowicz was SS Second Lieutenant Lukas Heckel's, and Feld was Gestapo chief Walter Kutschmann's. See Wiesław Budzyński, *Miasto Schulza* (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2005), 192, 194, 200. See also Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 22 (Irka Jankiewlecz). Many high-ranking Nazis also had Jewish mistresses: SS brigade commander Oskar Dirlewanger, Rudolf Höss while commander at Auschwitz, and Amon Goeth while commander at the Płaszów concentration camp. See Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 464–65. For examples from Radzyń see Yitzhak Zigelman (I. Siegelman), ed., *Sefer Radzin* (Tel Aviv: Council of Former Residents of Radzyń (Podlaski) in Israel, 1957), 227ff.

⁴⁸³ On France see, for example, Patrick Buisson, *1940–1945: Années érotiques. Vichy ou les infortunes de la vertu* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008).

upon them as Biblical heroines, who sacrificed themselves for the greater good of the community of Israel.”⁴⁸⁴ Sometimes Jews succeeded in joining the local German “high life,” as was the case in Złoczów:

The liaison between the Judenrat in Zloczow [Złoczów] and [Hauptsturmführer] Warzok was an individual named Zwerdling. ... Every few days he presented the Judenrat with new demands, allegedly from Warzok. Nobody in the Judenrat dared to question these demands. Aside from the devastating draft of new workers, he insisted on and received expensive gifts which were supposed to lower the quota of humans. A lavishly furnished apartment was set up for Herr Hauptsturmführer where he entertained his women drawn mostly from the secretarial pool in the Kreishauptmannschaft and also partly supplied by the Judenrat. The finest wines and liquors, as well as the best food, was provided, as the price for leaving us alone. Diamonds and precious jewelry were delivered, much of it remaining in Zwerdling's pockets. He soon started to behave like a German. His wife and daughters strutted around in new outfits and high boots, aping the style of the German women. Zwerdling became the most feared Jew in Zloczow, feared almost as much as Warzok himself.⁴⁸⁵

Cooperation sometimes simply entailed performing tasks for the German overlords with model diligence and reporting back to them in a servile manner. According to Emanuel Ringelblum, Jewish prisoners-of-war earned the respect of the Germans precisely for their servility.⁴⁸⁶ Another controversial passtime was the holding of gala concerts in the ghettos, attended by large audiences dressed in their best attire including tuxedos and ball dresses.⁴⁸⁷

Moreover, in spite of the apparent incongruity, in the early years of the German occupation Jews often had better contacts and interaction with local German authorities than the Poles did. Fraternization was not unusual, especially in the early years of the occupation, when the opportunity arose. A Jew from Krosno recalls:

I remember occasions when we even socialized with a German police officer. At the time there were Jewish refugees from Łódź who had been resettled to Krosno. ... There was one family that consisted of a father, mother, and two beautiful daughters. A German officer liked these girls and protected them. We used to go to their home and have parties when this German officer, who allowed us to have a good time, was present. We would sing, tell jokes and stories, and read books together. There was also another very pretty girl from Łódź who had a number of German admirers. She spent many nights in the homes of German officers, who lavished her with gifts, even though it was a capital offense for Jews and Germans to have sexual relations with each other. Yet the Germans disobeyed their own laws. It always amazed me how they could be fond of some of our Jewish girls and yet want to abuse or kill the rest of us.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ L. Gluzman, “Memories of an Escapee from Brest,” in Steinman, *Brisk de-Lita*, vol. 2, 549ff.

⁴⁸⁵ Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir*, 198.

⁴⁸⁶ Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, 116.

⁴⁸⁷ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim* 111 (Kielce, Radomsko).

⁴⁸⁸ Testimony of Michael Berger in Ronald J. Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust: A Life*

In Radom, the Jewish Council maintained extensive connections with the Gestapo.⁴⁸⁹ Under the supervision of the Gestapo, members of the Jewish Council prepared lists of Poles for arrest or forced labour in the Reich. Despite the increasing poverty in the ghetto, the Judenrat and Jewish police partied, drank and kept a harem of prostitutes.⁴⁹⁰ In Bełchatów, local trade remained entrenched in the hands of the Jews, among them smugglers of foreign currency, gold and jewels, who worked closely with the German police, and even partied with them, and denounced Poles.⁴⁹¹ (Polish accounts are thus consistent with Jewish accounts cited earlier.) Elsewhere,

A commandant came to Kielce who began drawing the Jews to him and giving them economic positions. Thus he gave Jechezkel Lemberg the export of eggs. He and his assistants were given the task of buying eggs in the Kielce region and turning them over to the economic committee for export to Germany. Jakob Kohen of Checiny [Chęciny] was given such a role for the export of leather, and others were given similar positions with regard to grain, feathers etc. For a while these Jews were busy with their tasks, and they didn't just profit themselves, but found jobs for other Jews. The word went out that the Jews of Kielce had found relief and reached even the Jews who had fled eastwards and many of those began to return to their place of origin.⁴⁹²

In Chrzanów, where there were no Polish police during the war,

Contacts between the Judenrat and the local German officials were carried out on more than the official level. The Judenrat had close relations with some of the German officials, thanks to various gifts and bribes. However, the Judenrat's closest contacts were with the police, headed by Oberleutenant [Oberleutnant] Schindler. ...

The liaison between the police and the Judenrat during the entire [early] period was Fasek Weber. After Weber was sent to Auschwitz, the job was taken over by Zelig Grajower. Fasek Weber exploited his situation in base and brutal ways, growing rich on Jewish trouble and pain.

It is not surprising, therefore, that local Jews reputedly played a sinister role in the arrest 41 Poles in Chrzanów in the early morning hours of April 23, 1940, in the so-called *Aktion AB* directed at the Polish

History of Two Brothers' Survival (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 40–41.

⁴⁸⁹ Theodor Frank, *By His Magnificent Guidance* (Winfield, British Columbia: Wood Lake Books, 1985), 36–39.

⁴⁹⁰ Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 73.

⁴⁹¹ See the Home Army report in Maria Tyszkowa, "Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943 (Dokumenty Biura Informacji i Propagandy Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej ze zbiorów oddziału rękopisów Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego)," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, nos. 162–163 (1992): 45. For accounts from Bełchatów, see *ibid.*, 41–42; and Roman Peska, *Skazani na zagładę: Żydzi w Pabianicach 1794–1998* (Pabianice: Pamięć, 1999), 66–68. Similar charges were also made in relation to Jews in Pabianice, where Jews were still able to purchase luxury goods in the ghetto towards the end of 1941. *Ibid.*, 69–72.

⁴⁹² Cytron (Zitron), *Sefer Kielce*, 238; translated as *Book of Kielce: History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Founding Until Its Destruction*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kielce/kielce.html#TOC>>. When that particular commandant was transferred out, his replacement reportedly took revenge on the Jews who enjoyed his predecessor's protection by arresting those involved in exporting goods to Germany and charging them with

intelligentsia. When family members converged on the headquarters of the German police that morning to inquire into the fate of their loved ones, they found the premises full of Jewish policemen dressed in black uniforms. One of the Jewish policemen, a man in his early twenties, came out and ordered the Poles to disperse. It is believed that the Jewish authorities helped the Germans draw up the list of Poles who were arrested for deportation to concentration camps.⁴⁹³ Tellingly, according to Szapse (Shepsl) Rotholc, a member of the ghetto police in Warsaw, “Quite a few [German] gendarmes said that the battle with the Jews is only politics but they hate the Poles from the heart.”⁴⁹⁴

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers, whose activities have been mentioned in passing, were a significant source of danger. Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer has recently acknowledged that they caused “tremendous damage.”⁴⁹⁵ What he does not mention is that these Jewish collaborators were active throughout German-occupied Poland, both inside and outside the ghettos, and endangered Poles as well as Jews. Emanuel Ringelblum noted the case of Josek Erlich, a Jewish Gestapo agent who betrayed a Pole by the name of Witold, a tireless benefactor of the Jews, who endured nine months in Pawiak prison.⁴⁹⁶ Another Jewish Gestapo informer in Warsaw who actively denounced members of the Communist underground was Józef or Josek Mitzenmacher, who had already been on the German payroll before the war.⁴⁹⁷ Józef Staszauer, a Jewish Gestapo agent, managed to infiltrate the Home Army in Warsaw and betrayed many of its members until he was finally liquidated in October 1943.⁴⁹⁸ Another Jewish Gestapo agent who penetrated Home Army intelligence operations, where he caused considerable damage, was Józef Hammer-Baczewski. He too was executed by the Home Army in November 1942.⁴⁹⁹ The Polish underground eliminated yet another Jewish Gestapo agent in Warsaw named Haman.⁵⁰⁰ A Jew by the name of Mazur living in the Mokotów district who betrayed many Jews to the Gestapo escaped execution by the Home Army because the Warsaw Uprising broke out.⁵⁰¹

On February 19, 1944, a Home Army cell consisting of more than a dozen people was discovered by the Gestapo on Bracka Street in Warsaw after being betrayed by two Jewish women who had infiltrated the

embezzlement.

⁴⁹³ Leszek A. Lechowicz, “Ironia losu,” *Dziennik Zwiazkowy* (Chicago), September 5–7, 2003, based on the testimony of Roman Wawrzonek. Roman Wawrzonek’s father, Tadeusz Wawrzonek, was one of the Poles arrested that day. He was imprisoned in Dachau and later transferred to Mauthause-Gusen where he perished in August 1941.

⁴⁹⁴ Paulsson, *Secret City*, 65. This phenomenon is confirmed by the testimony of a young German woman, a member of the Hitler Youth who volunteered to work in Nazi-occupied Poland (that part incorporated into the Reich): “We had political lectures every night, but they were never anti-Jewish, just anti-Polish. We were not allowed to associate with the Poles—that was made quite clear. They were ‘inferior’—that was also made quite clear.” See Pearl M. Oliner, *Saving the Forsaken: Religious Culture and the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 110.

⁴⁹⁵ Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 148.

⁴⁹⁶ Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 31.

⁴⁹⁷ Bordziej, *Terror i Polityka*, 90–92; Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 28–34, 40. A biography of Mitzenmacher is forthcoming from the latter publisher.

⁴⁹⁸ Wacław Zagórski, *Wolność w niewoli* (London: n.p., 1971), 195–99, 376, 398–402, 433–48; Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 117–20.

⁴⁹⁹ Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 37–38.

⁵⁰⁰ Janusz Marszałec, *Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1999), 369.

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Stanisław Milczyński (Home Army Lieutenant “Gryf”) by Andrzej Kumor and Jerzy Rosa, “Skąd

unit posing as escapees from the Warsaw ghetto. In actual fact, the women were Gestapo agents working with a 40-member group of Jewish agents headed by Leon (or Lolek) Skosowski⁵⁰² of the notorious “Thirteen” (about which there is more later). Some of the Poles who were apprehended were executed.⁵⁰³ Reports prepared by the Polish Government Delegate’s office mention the following Jewish agents operating in Warsaw: Stekier (pseudonym “Wilson”), who was active in the Żoliborz district; Stanisława Lepianka, a 19-year-old woman who believed to have contacts with the Communist underground; Władysław Fijałkowski, a fictitious name, employed in Gestapo headquarters, room no. 386; Rajchman, originally from Łódź, who was transferred from the Gestapo headquarters to become a streetcar controller, where he used the name Romanowski.⁵⁰⁴ Józef Garliński, a prominent member of the underground (he was head of the security department of the Home Army headquarters in Warsaw), was arrested by Gestapo agents after being betrayed by his former schoolmate, a Jew in their service.⁵⁰⁵

A Jewish confidant of the German gendarmes established himself in Skierniewice before the ghetto was built.⁵⁰⁶ Szaje Fastak, a Jewish Gestapo agent in Chmielnik, became notorious for betraying Poles who helped Jews as well as Jews in hiding. He shot a Polish woman named Domagała. Fastak was eventually executed by the Polish underground.⁵⁰⁷ Another Jewish confidant lurking in the vicinity of Chmielnik who met a similar fate was Dawid Dołz.⁵⁰⁸ Jerzy Ripper, who served as chief of the *Sicherheitsdienst* intelligence service in Lida, was responsible for the arrest of many members of the Home Army.⁵⁰⁹ A Jew from Łódź by the name of Jan Rogacki, a Gestapo agent who posed as a doctor, organized an underground group in Jarosław composed primarily of Polish students; they were soon apprehended by the Gestapo and shipped to Auschwitz.⁵¹⁰ In Gorlice, a Jewish Gestapo agent by the name of Keller, who was also the commander of the Jewish police, was employed to spy on the Polish underground and created a cell composed of Jews for this purpose. This led to the arrest of Paweł Bielakiewicz (*nom de guerre* “Ernest”),

wiesz, który Bóg ją ocalił...,” *Goniec* (Mississauga), May 5–11, 2006.

⁵⁰² On Skosowski see Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, “Lonek Skosowski: Koniec żydowskich kolaborantów Gestapo,” *Glaukopis: Pismo społeczno-historyczne*, no. 9–10 (2007–2008): 325–33.

⁵⁰³ [Wiesław Chrzanowski], *Pół wieku polityki, czyli rzecz o obronie czynnej: Z Wiesławem Chrzanowski rozmawiali Piotr Mierecki i Bogusław Kiernicki* (Warsaw: ad Astra, 1997), 140.

⁵⁰⁴ Report dated July 26, 1942, Archiwum Akt Nowych, AK, 203/III–138, k. 53–55; Archiwum Akt Nowych, AL, 192/XII/2, k. 143.

⁵⁰⁵ Józef Garliński, *Niezapomniane lata: Dzieje Wywiadu Więziennego i Wywiadu Bezpieczeństwa Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej* (London: Odnova, 1987), 109. The abridged English version of this book, *The Survival of Love: Memoir of a Resistance Officer* (New York: Blackwell, 1991), conceals the nationality of the betrayer and the fact that there were many Jewish Gestapo agents in Warsaw. Ibid., 3, 93.

⁵⁰⁶ Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 254.

⁵⁰⁷ Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 136 (entry 98); Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik*, 168–70, 182–83.

⁵⁰⁸ Maciągowski and Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik*, 171.

⁵⁰⁹ Cezary Chlebowski, *Cztery z tysiąca* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1983), 186–92; Cezary Chlebowski, *Gdy las był domem* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1972), 173–79; Kazimierz Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej: “Nów”–Nowogródzki Okręg Armii Krajowej* (Warsaw: Pax, 1997), 89, 239. According to another source, Ripper’s father was Austrian. Ripper fortuitously escaped death at the hands of a Home Army execution squad but was seriously wounded; he resurfaced after the war as an employee of the security office in Elk before fleeing to West Germany. See Władysław Naruszewicz, *Wspomnienia lidzianina* (Warsaw: Bellona, 2001), 63.

⁵¹⁰ Maria Szczepańska, “Wspomnienie z Jarosławia,” *Gazeta Polska* (Warsaw), February 10, 1994; Maria Szczepańska, “Nieco o doktorze Janie Rogackim,” *Kwartalnik Armii Krajowej*, no. 2 (1994); Wiesław Kielar, *I nasze*

the leader of the Home Army outpost in Łuzna, who was deported to Auschwitz.⁵¹¹ Jan Woźniak, a military man who joined the Polish underground, was shot by a Jewish Gestapo agent in Przysusucha near Radom in 1942.⁵¹² A Jewish doctor named Spiegel, a Gestapo confidant in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, was responsible for nearly all the arrests of Poles for more than a year prior to his detection and execution by the Home Army in the spring of 1941.⁵¹³ A Jewish woman from Czechoslovakia, a Gestapo agent, was sent to infiltrate an autonomous “partisan” group composed of Poles, Jews and Ukrainians under the command of Stanisław Babij operating near Dolina in Stanisławów voivodship (southeastern Poland); her treachery resulted in the execution of 48 local Poles and Ukrainians who assisted the group and the murder of more than 20 Jewish partisans.⁵¹⁴ In July 1943, the Gestapo and German gendarmes in Kraśnik released a group of Jews to gather information about the Polish underground organizations operating in the area. Another Jew sheltered by Poles in the nearby village of Borów was also suspected of spying for the Germans.⁵¹⁵ Stanisław Strzałkowski, a member of the Home Army who was imprisoned in Auschwitz, recalls that a Jew he met in the main camp (this Jew had served under his command in the prewar Polish army) warned him, shortly after his arrival there in September 1943, about a Jewish inmate who was a spy for the Gestapo.⁵¹⁶ There are other such cases on record.⁵¹⁷

Poles were also at risk from Jewish Gestapo agents operating outside Poland. A Polish underground organization in Bulgaria was infiltrated by Jan Złotkowski, representative of the Polish airlines LOT in Sofia. Złotkowski, of Jewish origin, turned out to be a Gestapo agent who received sums of money for every Pole he betrayed. Most of the members of the organization were arrested and many of them were sent to Auschwitz where they perished. The Bulgarians tried and convicted Złotkowski after the war, but when he was released shortly after his return to Poland in 1948.⁵¹⁸

But far more often, it was Jews who felt the detrimental activities of fellow Jews who had ties with the Gestapo and other German agencies. Sometimes connections backfired or were designed to lure unsuspecting Jews into traps, as was the case in Krosno:

Simon Fres was a Jew who had connections with the Krosno Gestapo. He had made arrangements with the Gestapo to get trucks to transport some of the wealthiest Jews of the town to safety. He was well paid by them in advance when these trucks were loaded and driven away. The people in them were taken to a woods nearby the town of Dukla, where a huge trench had been dug. They

młode lata (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1987), 303–09.

⁵¹¹ Władysław Boczoń, *Żydzi gorliccy* (Gorlice: n.p., 1998), 145.

⁵¹² Marek Garbacz, “Po prostu major Hubal, *Nasz Dziennik*, April 30–May 1, 2005.

⁵¹³ Witold Sagajllo [Sagajłło], *Man In the Middle: A Story of the Polish Resistance, 1940–45* (London: Leo Cooper in Association with Secker & Warburg, 1984), 10, 12, 38–39; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim*, 101.

⁵¹⁴ Grzegorz Mazur, *Pokucie w latach Drugiej wojny światowej: Położenie ludności, polityka okupantów, działalność podziemia* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1994), 132–33.

⁵¹⁵ Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne: “Żab” przeciw dwu wrogom*, Revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Fronda, 1999), 113–15. The Polish underground had to take steps to eliminate these spies.

⁵¹⁶ “Krzyż powinien pozostać tam, gdzie jest,” *Gazeta* (Ontario edition), August 21–27, 1998.

⁵¹⁷ Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 232–34, 238.

⁵¹⁸ Adam Cyra, “Z Bułgarii do KL Auschwitz,” *polskiejutro.com*, no. 290 (November 26, 2007), Internet: <<http://www.polskiejutro.com/art.php?p=13095>>.

were lined up beside it and machinegunned, realizing only at the last moment that the arrangement had been a trap.⁵¹⁹

Another Jew from Krosno, Shlomo Berger, recalled a miadventure that nearly cost him his life:

I went to the city of Tarnów to buy American dollars from a dollar dealer. There on the street I met a friend whom I knew from an Irgun training camp. He asked me what I was doing in Tarnów, and I told him I was buying dollars. He asked when I was leaving to go home and said he would like to see me off at the railway station. I told him that I was going back on the afternoon train. When I arrived at the station, he was there to greet me. After we said good-bye to each other, he left, and a plainclothes Gestapo officer walked over and arrested me. I suspected that this so-called friend was an informer and that he had pointed me out to the Gestapo, for there was no other reason for them to stop me.

I was searched for American dollars, but I had been careful not to carry any with me. The dealer had sent his twelve-year-old daughter with me, and she was carrying the money.⁵²⁰

Jewish informers and Gestapo agents were particularly effective in eliminating fledgling Jewish underground organizations inside the ghettos. Contrary to what is often claimed in Holocaust literature, there is no evidence that a planned revolt failed to materialize in any ghetto because of a lack of Polish aid. In fact, many ghettos that did acquire arms nonetheless did not stage a revolt. Often this was often due to internal opposition spearheaded by the Jewish Council. Chava Kwinta describes the situation in Sosnowiec:

Under the leadership of Zvi Dunsky, Lipa Mintz, Heller Schnitzer, and Joseph Kosak, the Sosnowiec [underground] group aimed at a genuine resistance, maintaining communications with Warsaw. They printed circulars ... and posted on walls, manifestos against the regime and the Judenrat. They even plotted to kill [its president] Moshe Merin. Merin was busy too. He set up a network of spies, who infiltrated the organization and reported back to him. As soon as he had enough names, he made his move. He rounded up all the resistance people and had them transferred to camps in Germany. Thus our first attempt to organize an uprising locally was shattered in its inception. Now the Jews were too numb to care.⁵²¹

According to another Jewish source,

At the end of 1942 a sharp dispute broke out between the “*Judenrat*” and 10 underground activists of “*Hashomer Hatzair*” and their 21 year old leader Cwi Dunski. People in the underground were subject to shadowing by the Jewish police and one of them, Romek Szlezinger, even passed on information to the police about the underground organization. ... In January 1943 the Jewish

⁵¹⁹ Breitowicz, *Through Hell To Life*, 26–27.

⁵²⁰ Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust*, 43–44.

⁵²¹ Chava Kwinta, *I'm Still Living* (Toronto: Simon & Pierre Publishing Company, 1974), 136.

police arrested Dunki and Lipek Minc, who was also from “*Hashomer Hatzair*”. They were released after an interrogation of several weeks.

Meryn [Moshe Merin], who saw the existence of the underground as a danger to all the Jews, wanted to return and arrests its members, but they hid out and hence he placed pressure on family members so that they would turn themselves in. ... Members of “*Hashomer Hatzair*” decided to smuggle Dunki out of the city and hide him in a nearby village, but a night before he was to leave the Jewish police arrested all the members of “*Hashomer Hatzair*” including Lipek Minc, Ina Gelbard and Fela Katz. Chaim Meryn [Moshe’s brother] and Police Commander Goldminc himself, interrogated Chana Wirnik but she did not reveal the hideout. However, the police managed to track down Dunki and brought him to the police headquarters dripping blood and chained up as a criminal. Dunki and Minc were interned in the detention center in the orphanage in Bedzin [Będzin]. Later they were turned over to the Germans, interned in a jail in Myslowice [Mysłowice] and in the spring of 1943 they were sent to Auschwitz and murdered there by hanging. Meryn turned in a further underground group to the Germans that was suspected of communist activities, and 8 of its members were executed in April 1943.⁵²²

As Jewish accounts show, the various phases of the liquidation of the large ghetto in Sosnowiec was carried out without any Polish participation.

The Nazis could not have succeeded without the cooperation of some Jews, and some Jews did indeed allow themselves to get drawn into the net. The Nazis established the Judenrat and a Jewish militia, both of which would help them carry out their plans for the liquidation.

First, they demanded that contingents of young people be turned over to them for the slave labor camps. ... Later the Nazis ordered the older people to give themselves up, and to bring with them the children and the sick. ... Still later, the Nazis liquidated everyone else. Throughout all this, they were aided by the Judenrat and the Jewish militia. ...

For the Judenrat Merin [Moishe Merin was the head of the Judenrat in the Zagłębie district in Polish Silesia] chose people who were ready to do whatever he directed. He preferred intelligent people with a good reputation in the community. He also enlisted a number of informers who knew the city well—that is, who knew which people had hidden away money and other valuables. Other informers had connections with various streets and provided him with intelligence about underground movements and various other events. A young man from Bedzin [Będzin], a handsome and popular fellow, had found a good position with Merin: “officer of the women.” For the “king of the Jews” he recruited the most beautiful women. ... If a husband was in the way, he could be quickly dispatched with the next group to forced labor.

Strange as it sounds, there was a Jewish café in the Sosnowiec ghetto, on Mandzever Street. It belonged to two partners, Yechiel Landau and the wife of the *kommandant* of the Jewish police, Kleiner, who were good friends of Merin. People outside were starving for a crust of bread, yet in the café one could get coffee, tea, and freshly baked bread. This was the meeting place for the

⁵²² “Sosnowiec,” *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00327.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7

ghetto's informers, for its smugglers, for the high functionaries of the Judenrat, for anyone with influence. All kinds of shady deals took place there. Valuables were bought and sold, foreign currencies were exchanged, work cards were traded. The German police rarely appeared there, nor did the SS troops. It was a thieves' den, and anyone who habituated it had to be up to no good. Simply to be sitting there during work hours eating unrationed food was *treif* (nonkosher). Obviously the Judenrat was protecting this café, and this had to do with the Gestapo's permission. The system required a meeting place where illegal transactions could be carried out.

By doing everything they demanded, Merin had forged links with the Gestapo, with the leaders of the slave labor camps, and with SS men ... From time to time he saved a few Jews by delaying their deportation. For allowing this the SS received large bribes in the form of money and valuables. ... The Germans had made a good deal with Merin. Why should they have to do all the work when there were Jews willing to do it for them?

... With the help of the Judenrat and the Jewish militia, the Nazis stole from us everything we possessed. Had the Germans themselves done the thieving, they would not have gotten even half, because Jews would have burnt, buried, or destroyed what they owned to avoid handing it over to the bloody enemy. Merin persuaded the Jews that if they handed over their possessions voluntarily they would not be harmed but would be allowed to live in peace. ...

The Judenrat had as many as fifteen hundred people on its payroll. This included a great many guards, as well as spies whose job it was to ensure that no underground revolt broke out. There were also women on the payroll who were simply concubines of Judenrat officials.

... The Judenrat was constantly perfecting its apparatus, always giving the Germans exact information about the Jewish population. In return for this, it received a food ration from the German authorities. ... The Jewish militia was well organized and was fully backed by the KRIPO (Kriminal Polizei Amt) and the Gestapo as it carried out their orders conscientiously, so the Judenrat could do with the Jews whatever it wanted. ...

There were actually Jewish boys and girls working in the *Dienststelle* [placement office for the selection for forced labour camps]; the Judenrat had supplied them! When the *Dienststelle* gave an order to the Judenrat to supply a few thousand slave laborers, it immediately prepared a list of names and ordered those listed to join the slave labor force. Those who did not present themselves, the Jewish militia sought out and forcefully brought to the transport. No resistance was allowed to take root, no underground organizations were ever allowed to stir people to revolt. The Judenrat left little for the Germans to do. ...

The Hebrew high school at Skladowa [Skladowa] Street 5 was used as the Dulag (transport assembly point). ... For a huge bribe, some were able to rescue themselves. ... Here at the high school were also kept all those suspected of underground activities. From there they were sent away with the next transport. ...

In March 1942, exactly at Purim, Jews were forced to witness the hanging of Marek Lieberman and Mangel in a garden on Mandzever 32. They had been accused of falsifying documents. On the same spot a few days later, another four Jews were hanged for illegal trading: Nachum Lon and his son, Yehudah Vorman and Feffer. The Judenrat prepared the gallows. ...

This same night [May 10, 1942] the Gestapo, aided by the Jewish militia and the Judenrat, led by Merin himself, invaded the heavily populated buildings at Mandzever 32, Dekerta 14, and Targowa 2 and 11, from which they took away all the Jewish residents, men, women, and children. ... While I was at work around eleven the next morning, I saw the Jewish militia, accompanied by the Gestapo and police dogs, running through the street. They surrounded the same houses again and dragged out all the people they found ... All were packed into wagons and taken to the transport. Approximately 1500 people were sent to Auschwitz that day with the transport. ...

In the second half of June 1942, the second large transfer of the Jews from Sosnowiec took place. At night the Gestapo, with the help of the militia, encircled Panska [Pańska] and Ostroguska Streets and dragged out nearly all the inhabitants. In this district there lived mainly poor, hard-working folk who had struggled all their lives. ...

That same night, the Jewish hospital was encircled and all the sick were taken away. The sick who could walk tried to flee over the fences. They were caught like mice by the SS and their Jewish helpers. ... The sick were thrown onto the platform like sacks, the next atop the last. Those who could not move were tossed onto the train cars like garbage. To our great disgrace, even this work was done by Merin's militia. ...

In Landau's café the "prominent" Jews were still sipping their coffee and eating their pastries. ... The Judenrat officials and the privileged Jews began behaving as if the end was in sight. They sold everything they had, bought themselves liquor and lost their inhibitions. Morality vanished. They gathered in private homes and staged orgies. The women shed all their shame and began cavorting like prostitutes, surrendering to every man before every other man's eyes. ...

The 12th of August 1942 will go down as the most diabolic of all the days in the destruction of the Jews of Zagłębie. ... Merin had decided to hand over all Jews to the Nazi devil for the sake of saving his own life and the lives of all his relatives, and everyone knew it, so no one believed him any more. ... So he decided that the Judenrat would organize clarification meetings. ... One of the rebbes who was present spoke in support of this, declaring that Merin was "our savior, our leader."

... In Sosnowiec alone around twenty-six thousand Jews assembled voluntarily. Only a very few stayed away. People came in their holiday clothes, as if to a festival. ...

Only in the afternoon did SS officers appear, along with leaders of the *Arbeitseinsatz* [forced labor unit], accompanied by leaders of the Judenrat. Tables were set up and document inspection began. The commission that examined the documents divided the Jews into four categories. ... All of this lasted until August 18, when approximately eight thousand Jews were loaded onto train cars and carried to the Auschwitz gas chambers. ...

In January 1943 the Nazis decreed that all remaining Jews in the ghetto of Sosnowiec must leave the city for a smaller ghetto in the suburb of Szradula [Środula] ... The Judenrat and the Jewish militia were also installed in Szradula. The crowding was horrible. ... Merin's last act was to collect all the remaining gold and silver from those who still had any. ...

Merin and his servants had done all that had been demanded of them. But once they had nothing more to offer, they were useless to the Germans, and potentially disruptive, so they were liquidated. ... Then [they] immediately appointed a replacement. ...

On August 1, 1943, the last phase of the liquidation of the Zagłębie Jews took place. In the middle of the night the ghettoes [sic] of Sosnowiec and Bedzin were encircled. SS and Gestapo

storm troops entered, and they and Ukrainian bands of murderers started shooting left and right. Many Jews had hidden in underground shelters ... The Gestapo called forward the new “kings” of the Jews and warned them that any Jews found hiding in bunkers would be shot on the spot. The rest would be transferred, with their belongings, to Birkenau, where they would be able to work unhindered. ...⁵²³

Another Jew from Sosnowiec writes:

SS-men, Gestapo, and the few remaining Jewish orderlies combed the Gentile neighborhoods to hunt down Jewish runaways. I was eventually arrested. ... A Jewish militiaman from Sosnowiec recognized me, grabbed me by my hair and pulled it, and cursed at me in Polish and German. I insisted that I was not Jewish. The chief of the militia, Mr. Langer, a big and fat man, had me taken to the Jewish police station inside of what was left of the Śródula ghetto. I kept protesting, ‘You made a mistake! I am not Jewish!’ But Mr. Langer ... was unimpressed. He and his companions forced me on a table, held my arms and legs, and pulled down my pants. They laughed and spit on my privacy, hollering: ‘Hey, you are not Jewish? Who chopped off your wee-wee?’ They saw that I was circumcised and ridiculed me in foul language. Then Mr. Langer became serious and slapped my face with his large, powerful hands. ‘Either you agree to go on a transport to a labor camp,’ he shouted, ‘or I will turn you over to the Gestapo.’ I continued to claim that I was not Jewish. ... He walked over to me and looked at me without uttering a word, when suddenly I felt a punch in my stomach that knocked me down. The few men from the Jewish militia were ordered to do some of the dirty work for the Gestapo. The ghetto was already liquidated, but they were still flushing out Jews hidden in bunkers. ... they also found Jews in other hiding places.⁵²⁴

The situation was much the same in other towns. In Częstochowa,

Shortly before the resettlement of the ghetto, the [Jewish] police numbered 250. ... The police ... received a monthly salary and consisted of unscrupulous people. Many of the received favored treatment from the German authorities. This favored treatment by the German authorities was reserved for “suppliers of information,” that is, informers and denouncers and they, above all, pursued material interests.

The police were a plague for the Jewish population. It is clear that there were no willing volunteers to go for unpaid forced labor. There were also no volunteers who would allow themselves to be sent away to the camps to be overworked, tortured, beaten, and to bear various afflictions or willing volunteers to pay various bribes. There were also no volunteers for donating

⁵²³ Charmatz, *Nightmares*, 18, 22, 26–32, 35–36, 38–39, 41–44, 46, 50–53. According to Konrad Charmatz, Moishe (Manyek) Merin even tried to become the leader of all the Jewish councils in the German Reich and the conquered territories. The Gestapo allowed him to travel to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków, and other cities, and at each of these cities he urged the Jewish communities to unite under a central committee, under his leadership. Ibid., 20–21. Merin’s sexual exploitation of Jewish women and girls is referred to again at p. 76.

⁵²⁴ Edward Gastfriend, *My Father’s Testament: Memoir of a Jewish Teenager, 1938–1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 87–88.

their merchandise to the Nazis. This the police carried out with coercion, through house searches, both by day and night, arresting, beating with rubber sticks, and through other irksome actions.

The attitude toward the police was bitter, full of hatred and rage. ...

The forced laborers belonged to the poor strata of Czeŝtchowa Jews. The well-to-do Jews ransomed themselves with money, and the poor, not having with what to live, suffering from hunger and want, had, in addition, to toil at forced labor, be vexed, terrorized, tormented and beaten by masters, foremen, and *kapos* [short for *kameradenpolizei*, Jewish prisoners who served as overseers].⁵²⁵

The Workers' Council afterwards became an elected administrative body selected by the over five thousand slave laborers. ...

The Workers' Council led a constant battle against the *Judenrat* for bettering the economic conditions of the slave laborers. The battle consisted of hunger strikes and mass demonstrations in the offices of the *Judenrat*.

Many times were the leaders of the Workers' Council arrested and put into the ghetto prison (9 Avenue) by the Jewish police on the orders of the members of the *Judenrat*.⁵²⁶

The Germans had a retinue of helpers who searched for bunkers where Jews hid and misappropriated Jewish property. These ghetto leeches led their high life at the expense of fellow Jews. When members of the underground began to gather arms, they were betrayed by a Jewish policeman. He also furnished the Germans with a list of plotters and the location of their bunkers. (That policeman was eventually killed by the underground.) In June 1943, Dr. Adam Wolberg, the leader of the resistance group "Fighting Group 66" (based on 66 Nadrzeczna Street) was denounced to the Gestapo and killed. A young Jew caught with underground documents outside the ghetto also betrayed members of the underground.⁵²⁷ The ghetto was plagued with crime (theft, burglary, seizure of other people's property, brawls, assaults), and Jewish "informers and secret agents all waited for opportunities ... either for bribery or seizing the [illegally traded] goods."⁵²⁸

The Jewish underground in Kraków established contact with the Polish underground and was thus able to procure weapons, yet there too the possibility of revolt was thwarted. Shlomo Schein explains the obstacle they faced:

⁵²⁵ Binyamin Orenstajn (Orenstein), "Czeŝtchowa Jews in the Nazi Era (1939–1945)," *Czeŝtchov: A New Supplement to the Book "Czeŝtchover Yidn"*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Czeŝtchowa/Czeŝtchowa.html>>, translation of S.D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhover: Naye tsugob-material tsum bukh "Tshenstokhover Yidn"* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 39ff.

⁵²⁶ Tzvi Rozenvayn, "Concerning the Workers' Council in Czeŝtchowa," *Czeŝtchov: A New Supplement to the Book "Czeŝtchover Yidn"*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Czeŝtchowa/Czeŝtchowa.html>>, translation of S.D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhover: Naye tsugob-material tsum bukh "Tshenstokhover Yidn"* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 49ff.

⁵²⁷ Account of Herta Lustiger in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 181, 185, 187; Aktion Reinhard Camps, Czeŝtchowa Ghetto, Internet: <<http://www.deathcamps.org/czeŝtchowa%20ghetto.html>>.

⁵²⁸ William Glicksman, "Daily Record Sheet of the Jewish Police (District I) in the Czeŝtchowa Ghetto 1941–1942," *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*, vol. 6 (1967): 331–57, at pp. 348–49.

Our boys were falling into the hands of the Gestapo one by one ... The Jewish policemen sniffed after us, fearing that they would be blamed for aiding the fighters ... and also in order to buy themselves time before they themselves would be annihilated. One day, one of our boys was arrested. The Gestapo arrested his father as well, and by threats and promises to free his father got his cooperation. Several friends were arrested following his revelation, myself among them.

When a group of five members of an underground organization that included two Poles attempted to get out of the city to the forest, they were apprehended and killed except for Mietek Bierger, who was taken by the Gestapo. Under torture, he revealed secrets of the organization including the hiding place of Hershek Bauminger. Following these disclosures, the weapon caches on Bonarka Street (in Podgórze) and Słowacki Avenue were found and captured, and the underground printing press was seized.⁵²⁹

One of the critical reasons for the “scanty” Jewish underground organization Lwów, according to historian Eliyahu Yones, was:

The Jewish “order police” in Lvov collaborated with the Germans, thwarting any possibility of illegal organization and uprising in the ghetto. “Any action would have required total secrecy. The ghetto swarmed with informers and Gestapo agents who believed they could save their lives by denouncing their brethren,” an eyewitness wrote. Furthermore, one of the Jewish police units (the *Sonderdienst*) was specifically tasked with dealing with “political” problems, including manhunts for members of leftist circles and Soviet sympathizers. Any attempt to organize resistance actions or flight to the forest was, as stated, perceived as an expression of pro-Soviet sympathies, and the policemen conscientiously reported suspects to the Gestapo.⁵³⁰

Before any uprising could take place in the ghetto, therefore, the most important task for the Jewish underground was to eliminate Jews who acted as agents and informers for the Gestapo. This was accomplished effectively in the case of Białystok⁵³¹ where there was a group of Gestapo agents headed by Grysza Żelkowicz. Among the collaborators eliminated in Białystok were the Judkowski brothers, Ćwiklicz, Zbar, Fenigstein, and many others.⁵³² But for the most part, planned revolts did not materialize because of internal rather than external factors. A revolt in the Złoczów ghetto was stifled from within, even though arms had been procured with the assistance of Poles: “In spite of the secrecy and precaution,

⁵²⁹ Arie L. Bauminger, *The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1986), 85–87.

⁵³⁰ Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 216.

⁵³¹ “Białystok,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Macmillan, 1971), column 809; account of Kalman Barakin in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 392.

⁵³² Memoirs of Marian Buch “Marek” in Adam Dobroński, ed., *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 1 (Białystok: Instytut Historii Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Białymstoku, 1993), 71; S.S. Berkner, “Notatki więźnia getta”, Part One in Adam Dobroński and Waldemar Monkiewicz, eds., in *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2 (Białystok: Instytut Historii Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Białymstoku, 1997), 44, 50. The latter volume contains information about various forms of assistance provided by the Polish Home Army to the ghetto underground movement in Białystok. See Waldemar Monkiewicz, “Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem w okresie okupacji niemieckiej,” in *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2 (1997), 152–54. For more information about Jewish collaborators in Białystok see Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak zgnać, to razem* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 39, 60–61 (Nissel).

there had been somebody spying on the planners who betrayed the five leaders on the eve of the enterprise. The informer was a boy from Lwow [Lwów] ... The five leaders were arrested.”⁵³³

A similar situation transpired in Mir where a planned escape of Jews to the forest was foiled

by a Jew from the Mir *zamek* [castle] ghetto named Stanislawski. ... If [Oswald] Rufeisen had not been betrayed [by him] ... Our ambush would have been a unique event ... Perhaps the life of the Mir ghetto itself could have been prolonged by wiping out the gendarmerie stationed in the town. But instead, the traitor Stanislawski brought ruin upon himself and the entire ghetto.⁵³⁴

A Jew named Stanislawski [Stanisławski] worked with horses at the gendarmerie. The chief promised to let him live and give him special privileges if he informed him from where the Jews had gotten the guns, and who told them about the planned roundup. Stanislawski, believing he could save himself through this betrayal, agreed to the *Kommandant's* conditions. He told him he heard say “Oswald” [Rufeisen] had given the guns to the Jews and had planned their dispersal with them.⁵³⁵

The Germans became aware of the existence of an underground in the ghetto in Baranowicze and “were employing Jewish spies to acquire information about it.” The planned revolt in the ghetto was foiled even though a huge amount of weapons was amassed.⁵³⁶ In many cases, as in Krasne near Mołodeczno, it was the Jewish Council who dispatched the Jewish police to investigate and break up an underground organization that smuggled men and arms to the forest.⁵³⁷ In Kurzeniec, the Judenrat warned the parents of underground members who were collecting weapons of the threat these activities posed to all of the town’s Jews. “When we heard about it,” one Jew recalled, “we stormed into the meeting with two drawn guns. We threatened to kill whoever threaten [sic] our families.”⁵³⁸ A similar situation existed in Iwie (Iwje) where the Judenrat warned the brother of an underground member who started to procure arms that this “activity was liable to bring about the handing over [of] my family to the gendarme.”⁵³⁹ In Głębokie, after some Jews managed to procure weapons from Poles outside the ghetto,

⁵³³ I. M. Lask, ed., *The City of Zloczow* (Tel Aviv: Zloczower Relief Verband of America, 1967), column 133.

⁵³⁴ Jack Sutin and Rochelle Sutin, *Jack and Rochelle: A Holocaust Story of Love and Resistance* (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1995), 59–60.

⁵³⁵ Account of B.A. in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 295; and the account of Szlomo Charchas (Szlomo Charches) in Ajzensztajn, *Euch podziemny w ghettach i obozach*, 116, and in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 514.

⁵³⁶ Yehuda Bauer, “Jewish Baranowicze in the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 31 (2003): 136.

⁵³⁷ Isaac Kowalski, comp. and ed., *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, New York: Jewish Combatants Publishing House, 1991), 473.

⁵³⁸ See the account of Zalman Uri Gurevitz in Meyerowitz, ed., *The Scroll of Kurzeniac*, Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kurenets/kurenets.html>, translation of *Megilat Kurenits: Ayara be-hayeha u-ve-mota* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kurzeniec in Israel and the U.S.A., 1956).

⁵³⁹ See the account of Meyshe Kaganovitsh in *In Memory of the Jewish Community of Iwie*, Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/ivye/>, translation of M. [Moshe] Kaganovich, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Iwie* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Iwie in Israel and United Ivier Relief in America, 1968).

In the Jewish police it was decided to quietly confiscate the weapons and to, somehow, get rid of us ... Once, while my brother was sleeping, two Jewish policemen came, took him to the Judenrat cellar, beat him and demanded he give the weapons. ... I was called to present myself. I let it be known that I would not come and that if, indeed, they tried to arrest me, I have in my possession a hand grenade ... The Judenrat men were scared the Germans would find out about the weapons and backed off. So, except for the Germans, the Judenrat and the Jewish police also became our enemies. They interfered and threatened at any attempt to revolt or escape from the ghetto.⁵⁴⁰

Of the Jews who had escaped to the forests from the ghetto in Głębokie we learn: “When the deceitful call came from the Judenrat, that the remnant of survivors come to the Gluboke Ghetto, most of the Jews obeyed.”⁵⁴¹

In Grodno, when a small group of refugees from a nearby town (where the ghetto had already been liquidated) detected signs of an eventual massacre of the ghetto population, they were accused of spreading rumours to create panic and of being Communists, who deserved to be punished by the Germans. They were ordered by the Judenrat to be silent or face being turned over to the Germans.⁵⁴² Near the town of Zambrów, Jewish partisans conducted a trial of a Jewish informer, “a certain Mote of Mishnitz, who used to inform the Gestapo about everything that was going on in the Ghetto. That vile person was executed by the Partisan Tribunal.”⁵⁴³ In Kopyczyńce, near Tarnopol, a Jew informed the authorities about the contacts Mrs. Katz, the wife of a local lawyer, had with an underground organization. The entire Katz family was tortured and murdered by the Gestapo.⁵⁴⁴ Jewish agents and informers of the Gestapo also presented a danger in Radzyń Podlaski,⁵⁴⁵ and virtually every other ghetto.

Warsaw was infested with Jews in the service of the Gestapo and German Criminal Police. Some of their exploits are detailed by Jonas Turkow (Turkov), who refers to this as one of the most “shameful” episodes of the history of the Warsaw ghetto.⁵⁴⁶ Collaborators of various ilk were plentiful both inside and outside the ghetto, though their precise number is difficult, if not impossible, to specify. Emanuel Ringelblum, in his chronicle entry for May 18, 1942, speaks of an estimated 400 Gestapo informers in the Warsaw ghetto alone. Some estimates run as high as 800.⁵⁴⁷ One source places the number of Jewish Gestapo agents at more than one thousand.⁵⁴⁸ At one point, the *Delegatura*, the Delegate’s Office of the Polish government-

⁵⁴⁰ Dov Katzovitch, “With the Partisans and in the Red Army,” in David Shtokfish, ed., *Book in Memory of Dokshitz-Parafianow* (Israel: Organization of Dokshitz-Parafianow Veterans in Israel and the Diaspora, 1990), Chapter 4.

⁵⁴¹ Rajak, *Memorial Book of Gluboke*, iii.

⁵⁴² Kahn, *No Time To Mourn*, 94–95.

⁵⁴³ Yom-Tov Lewinsky, ed., *The Book of Zambrov: Memories of Our Town Which Had Been Annihilated by the Nazis and Does Not Exist Any More* (Tel Aviv: The Zembrover Societies in U.S.A., Argentine and Israel, 1963), 27.

⁵⁴⁴ Account of Isydor Diener in Jerzy Julian Szewczyński, *Nasze Kopyczyńce* (Malbork: Heldruk, 1995), 125–26.

⁵⁴⁵ Schupack, *The Dead Years*, 44, 71 See also Ziegelman, ed., *Sefer Radzin*, 227ff.: “One of the actions carried out by the Germans were house to house searches. Two or three Gestapo members were enough to turn the house upside down. It must be admitted that in most cases they knew where to search as the result of information garnered from informers.”

⁵⁴⁶ Jonas Turkov, *C’était ainsi: 1939–1943 la vie dans le ghetto de Varsovie* (Paris: Austral, 1995), 131–49.

⁵⁴⁷ Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, 375. Ringelblum goes on to describe the shameful activities of many of these collaborators.

⁵⁴⁸ Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 231.

in-exile, compiled an incomplete list of 1,378 Jewish Gestapo collaborators.⁵⁴⁹ An archival source indicates that the Sonderkommando AS, which worked closely with the German Abwehr (intelligence service), employed some 820 Jewish agents in the Generalgouvernement.⁵⁵⁰ The honorary counsel of Chile in Warsaw, Samson Mikiciński, turned out to be working secretly for German intelligence, informing them of the activities of the Polish underground and its contacts abroad. (He was eventually lured to Palestine, interrogated and executed by the Polish underground.)⁵⁵¹ The *szmalcownik* Jefim Pironer was also believed to have ties to German intelligence.⁵⁵²

A survivor from the Warsaw ghetto recorded the following occurrences, including the so-called “night courts” in the spring of 1942, when the Gestapo targeted those suspected of smuggling and being underground activists, based on lists prepared with the assistance of Jewish informers.⁵⁵³

Two SS men entered the building and broke into the apartment of our neighbors, the Orensteins... It seemed that a Jewish collaborator had reported to the Gestapo that her husband still had in his apartment some leather from his store. ... one of the SS men shot Mr. Orenstein and [his 8-year-old] child from the balcony. ...

That night, for the first time, the German ‘death car’ had made the rounds of the ghetto streets. The ‘death car’ was a shiny black limousine with a skull and crossbones painted on the door. ... The Gestapo had compiled a list of names and addresses of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto [obviously with the help of Jewish informers] who had been wealthy or socially prominent before the war.

Between four and five o’clock each morning, the ‘death car’ would pull up at addresses chosen at random from this Gestapo list. The heads of the wanted families would be pulled from their beds and, still in their night clothes, would be dragged out into the street. There in front of their apartment buildings, they would be shot in the back of the head at such close range that they were mutilated beyond recognition.

...a Jewish informer who was known in the ghetto as Yossele Kapote [Erlich]. ... Yossele was a big shot, proudly sporting an official-looking cap adorned with four stars. ...everyone knew that Yossele Kapote had become very popular with the Gestapo. ... Yossele lived on our street with a Jewish prostitute whom he had taken as his mistress. He had made a good living as a Gestapo stool pigeon, but at the same time, rumor had it, he could be persuaded to use his privileged status to help get Jews out of trouble—provided it brought him enough cash.

... Yossele was not in, but his girl friend was there, lunching on such delicacies as scrambled eggs, sardines, chocolate milk and cake. While decent, innocent people round about her were starving to death, this scum, this traitor to her own people, was living off the fat of the land.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 241 n.12.

⁵⁵⁰ Leszek Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej (Michnik i Cichy o Powstaniu Warszawskim)* (Warsaw: Burchard Edition, 1995), 94–95.

⁵⁵¹ Piotr Matusak, *Wywiad Związku Walki Zbrojnej–Armii Krajowej 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza and Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2002), 643, 667.

⁵⁵² Jacek Wilamowski, *Pętla zdrady: Konspiracja–wróg–polityka. Za kulisami Polski Podziemnej 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza CB Andrzej Zasieczny 2003), 102.

⁵⁵³ Ernest, *O wojnie wielkich Niemiec z Żydami Warszawy, 1939–1943*, 93, 138–41.

⁵⁵⁴ Adam Starkopf, *There Is Always Time To Die* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1981), 88–89, 92, 93–94.

There are numerous accounts of Jews acting as agents and informers for the Gestapo and the German police outside the ghetto. They relentlessly tracked down and betrayed countless Jews in hiding. Little is known about the so-called Hotel Polski affair in which some 3,000 well-to-do Jews on the “Aryan” side were lured out of hiding by Jewish Gestapo agents (among them Adam Żurawin) on false promises of passage out of Nazi Europe on foreign passports.⁵⁵⁵ Jewish Gestapo agents were also involved in other schemes to extract money from fellow Jews and spread false hopes, as the following report (from November 1943) of the Bund’s Central Committee in Warsaw describes.

Unfortunately, the power of illusion has continued to hold sway over the Jews even after the mass tragedies of the Jews themselves. A glaring example is the question of the camps for foreign Jews in Vitelle, or in Hannover. Many of the letters sent by the Paraguayan consulate in Switzerland to Jews living in the ghettos in Poland under German occupation, letters containing the promise of granting them Paraguayan citizenship, did not reach the addresses because they had been executed during the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. These letters have thus entered the black market, the matter being in the hands of those wicked people among the Jews who work for the Gestapo, who demand and obtain vast sums for the letters. In certain incorrigible Jewish circles these letters were treated as a way to liberation, as a means of rescue from mortal danger, and as a writ of safe conduct. ... The psychosis spreading among the despairing and doomed Jews was deliberately fostered by the Jewish informers of the Gestapo.⁵⁵⁶

Moreover, ghettos had to contend with common criminals and criminal gangs which also undermined Jewish survival and resistance. There are numerous memoirs that attest to the widespread practice of corruption, extortion and common thievery inside the Warsaw ghetto, often by Jews who exercised positions of influence.⁵⁵⁷ There are also many descriptions of extortion from recalcitrant, wealthy Jews of “contributions” for arms acquisitions by the Jewish underground,⁵⁵⁸ described by one historian as follows:

Compulsory levies—called “Exxes” (“Expropriations”)—were sometimes collected in combat-like operations, whereby a group of fighters would take over a building and demand that the tax be paid on the spot. The Ż.O.B. [*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (Jewish Fighting Organization)] even

⁵⁵⁵ Abraham Shulman, *The Case of Hotel Polski: An Account of One of the Most Enigmatic Episodes of World War II* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1982), passim; Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 441–45; Paulsson, *Secret City*, 138–40; Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych*, 23, 26–27; Teresa Prekerowa, “Sprawa Hotelu Polskiego,” *Polityka* (Warsaw), no. 20 (1987); Agnieszka Haska, “Adam Żurawin—bohater o tysiącu twarzy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, vol. 2 (2006): 177–201.

⁵⁵⁶ Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 751.

⁵⁵⁷ See, for example, Irena Birnbaum, *Non omnis moriar: Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1982), 86–87, 90, 112, 114, 116, 124, 148–49; Alicja Zawadzka-Katz, *Refleksje pewnego życia* (Paris: Institut Littéraire, 1967), chapter 2.

⁵⁵⁸ See, for example, the account of Pnina Grynspan-Frymer in Anka Grupińska, *Po kole: Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami* (Warsaw: Alfa, 1991), 92. An expanded version of this book was published under the title *Ciągle po kole: Rozmowy z żołnierzami getta warszawskiego* (Warsaw: Twój Styl, 2000), where the reference is found on page 96. This collection of interviews with survivors from the Warsaw ghetto is also available in German translation as *Im Kreis: Gespräche mit jüdischen Kämpfern* (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 1993).

maintained improvised prisons where the relatives of those who refused to pay could be held until the account had been settled.⁵⁵⁹

However, that practice opened an opportunity for

deception and embezzlement also flourish. Armed gangsters still operate in the Ghetto. They, too, visit apartments ostensibly to collect money for the resistance, but the money they steal goes into their own pockets. They burgle at night and take all the clothes first—knowing that the Ghetto Jews usually sew money and valuables into their clothes to conceal them from the Nazis.⁵⁶⁰

According to another source:

At first it was necessary to make [well-to-do] people pay up the point of a gun and even keep them locked up in one of the organization's secret detention cells in the ghetto or in the factory area. ... There were even times when the Z.Z.W. [*Żydowski Związek Walki* (Jewish Military Union)] had more money than it could immediately use to buy arms. ...

Once the underground organizations' fund-raising activities became common knowledge in the ghetto, various gangs of tricksters began resorting to similar methods of obtaining money under false pretences ...⁵⁶¹

Members of the Jewish underground also posed as Christians when carrying out expropriations in the ghetto, and thus Poles are often blamed for these deeds in Jewish memoirs. Simha "Kazik" Rotem recalls:

At Hanoch's order, we went on "exes" (short for expropriations) to "raise" money from rich Jews. We kept watch at the home of one man, collected information, and set a date for the operation. The apartment was on the second floor. One of us knocked on the door and when it opened we burst in, identified the man of the house, stood facing him in a "persuasive" movement, and announced, "We've come to get your contribution for the ZOB." The Jew refused. I put the barrel of my revolver near him; he froze and didn't utter a sound. Then Hanoch ordered, "Kazik, kill him!" When he called me "Kazik," I was to understand that I had to appear as Kazik, that is, as a Pole. I assumed a strange expression, rolled my eyes, puffed up my chest, grabbed the Jew by the collar, and dragged him into a corner of the room. "Listen, with me you don't play games!" I told him. When he heard the name "Kazik," he understood he was dealing with a Gentile, and you didn't get smart with a Gentile, especially not in those days. He broke down, asked for a brief delay, went to a hiding place, pulled out some money, and reluctantly gave us his "contribution." ...

⁵⁵⁹ Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1945*, 344.

⁵⁶⁰ Hillel Seidman, *The Warsaw Ghetto Diaries* (Southfield, Michigan and Nanuet, New York: Targum/Feldheim, 1997), 231. The author, chief archivist of the Warsaw Kehillah, kept a faithful journal of ghetto life. Reportedly, the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) ambushed and captured a group, posing as an underground group, in the act of committing a robbery. See Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1945*, 350.

⁵⁶¹ Litai, *Muranowska* 7, 162–64.

The “sniffers”—our intelligence people—identified a very rich Jew in the Brushmakers’ Area. We considered how to get money out of him after he refused to contribute willingly. At headquarters it was decided to take his beautiful daughter hostage. ... We took the girl to a locked room in an attic in the Brushmakers’ Area. ... This girl was to write a letter to her father, which we dictated to her and delivered to her house by messenger. ... Once again I played a Christian, a representative of the Polish Underground, supposedly cooperating with the ZOB in the Ghetto.

Soon after, the father was brought to the jailhouse. ... after the man was brought into the locked room, the three of us had to try to squeeze out of him a sum of money which, according to our information, he was capable of paying. He was a real character. Despite our threats of execution, he claimed he couldn’t give us such a large sum. In fact, at first he demanded that we release him and his daughter for nothing. This went on for two or three days. ...

As a last resort, my commanders decided to include me in an attempt to “convince” him, so he would know he wasn’t dealing with “compassionate Jews” but with real Gentiles, for whom killing a man, not to mention a Jew, was not a problem to hesitate about. ... we had agreed from the start that, at a certain stage, we’d begin to play the role of “murderer,” that is, we’d put him up against the wall, cock our weapons, count to three, according to all the rules of executions, hoping the man would finally break. Hence, when I didn’t succeed in convincing him with the carrot, I was forced to use the stick of execution. I cocked the weapon in my hand. My finger was on the trigger. I said, “I’ll shoot you if you don’t respond.” The man broke down and for the first time started negotiating the amount. ... The man believed a Gentile was standing in front of him, a pure Aryan.⁵⁶²

The Germans sponsored an organization of collaborators known cryptically as Żagiew (“Die Fackel”—“The Torch”), the so-called Jewish Freedom Guard or *Żydowska Gwardia Wolności*, whose task it was to infiltrate all aspects of life in the Warsaw ghetto. Not only did they spy on, track down and hand fellow Jews over to the Germans, but they also carefully monitored the sources of outside assistance for the ghetto in order to expose Polish conspiratorial organizations. (The counterintelligence of the Home Army Chief Command eventually cracked this organization.⁵⁶³) Less visible, but quite harmful, were censors at the post office building at 5 Leszno Street, such as the rabbis Blumenfeld and Glincensztajn, who collaborated with the Germans.⁵⁶⁴

The most notorious concentration of Jewish collaborators in Warsaw was “The Thirteen” (*Trzynastka*—or “number thirteen”), a name derived from their premises on 13 Leszno Street. Ostensibly this was the Office for Combatting Usury and Profiteering (*Preisüberwachungsstelle*) in the Jewish District, established by the Gestapo shortly after the creation of the ghetto in November 1940 to fight the black market. Its staff comprised about 300–400 persons (perhaps even as many as 500, according to Raul Hilberg). “The Thirteen” furnished information to the Germans while also providing a range of welfare services. In this way, it aimed to supplant both the Jewish police and even the Judenrat itself. It provided to the Germans

⁵⁶² Rotem, *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter*, 28–31.

⁵⁶³ Matusak, *Wywiad Związku Walki Zbrojnej–Armii Krajowej 1939–1945*, 538.

⁵⁶⁴ Halina Gorcewicz, “Ghetto, end of August, 1942,” *Why, Oh God, Why?*, Internet: <www.books-reborn.org/klinger/why/>.

detailed reports about the internal life of the ghetto, especially the underground and illegal activities. The tentacles of that organization reached every aspect of ghetto life and it even achieved a certain degree of popularity because of its promotion of Jewish culture and other aspects of Jewish life. “The Thirteen” created an atmosphere that encouraged informant activity, which became the scourge of the ghetto. Some historians even called them “The Jewish Gestapo.”

“The Thirteen” was headed by Abraham Gancwajch (Ganzweich), a former teacher and Zionist journalist who became a gangster-like figure. He entertained rabbis, artists and the culturally prominent at lavish feasts, while at the same time engaging in a wide array of extortion inside the ghetto (such as bullying people into paying fines and blackmail). The staff of “The Thirteen” began extorting more and more money. In December 1941, Ringelblum noted that they had begun taking a 25 percent cut of the goods stored in underground warehouses, plus 25 percent for soup kitchens, leaving the owners with the remaining 50 percent. A few days later, Ringelblum wrote that in confiscating Jewish property, on the Aryan side of Warsaw, “The Thirteen” took one-third for itself, handed one-third to the Germans, and left only one-third with the owners. By March 1941, their corruption was entirely out in the open, sending people out to bakeries to forcibly take bread for themselves and standing at the ghetto’s exit points and taking bribes. Gancwajch was also an ideological ally of the Nazis who called on Jews to cooperate, as the Germans were going to win the war. Gancwajch collected hefty sums in exchange for promising to lobby for releasing Jews from prison (although his success rate was moderate), obtaining permits and other favours. He lived a privileged life; the ghetto buzzed with talk about his son’s lavish bar mitzvah in May 1941, held during Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) when other Jewish children lay starving in the streets. On the other hand, he handed out free bread to the poor and supported cultural and literary activities.

“The Thirteen” formed their own 300 to 400 member strong police, headed by Dawid Sternfeld, formerly of the Łódź underworld, whose activities were separate from those of the *Ordnungsdienst*. Sternfeld’s closest associate was Gojcherman. Those policemen, says Jonas Turkow, “Were fat fellows, debauched, mostly from the lowest low of the underworld.” In return for a sizable amount of money, policemen cast a blind eye toward smugglers, and at times even cooperated with them. If other smugglers were arrested, these policemen would charge a fee—often thousands of zloty—for not handing them over to the Germans. They extorted hush money from various ghetto craftsmen. They arrested Jews and released them in return for thousands of zloty in ransom money. The upper echelons of “The Thirteen” and its police force were patrons of expensive restaurants and coffee-houses of the ghetto. Ringelblum related:

At the “Britania” hotel at 18 Nowolipie Street they’ve opened a club in the basement that is little more than a whorehouse. It’s open until 7:00 in the morning, and the owners are Leszno 13 folks. They make merry there without limits. On Sunday, they took in 10,000 zloty, on Monday—2,000. A kilo of grapes costs 25 zlotys. They write out bills for 500 zloty and more.

“The Thirteen” would often appear with Germans and Jewish policemen, who were partners in their transactions. One Jewish policeman, who was on friendly terms with both “The Thirteen” and SS, frequented their parties in the ghetto:

I remember walking with Jędrus in the street once, when a fellow waved at him and said: “Hello, Jędrus!” “Hello, Jaś,” Jędrus replied. “Who was it?” I asked because I was intrigued that they greeted each other like friends. “Oh, it’s an SS man I know, but in plain clothes.” ...

It’s interesting that at those parties of theirs—so I was told by Jędrus—occasionally SS men appeared as acquaintances of the young people. They socialized with the Jewish youths.⁵⁶⁵

In addition, Gancwajch also set up a smaller but equally suspect “Ambulance Service” (First Aid Station). Headed by Cantor Gershon Sirota and his doctor son, it too became a tool for “The Thirteen’s” corrupt employees, who used the ambulances (called “Marys” after Gancwajch’s wife) for smuggling goods. In mid-1941, there was a split in “The Thirteen’s” leadership. Gancwajch’s partners, Morris (Moryc) Kohn and Zelig (Zelik) Heller, broke with him in a battle for control and financial competition and established another agency at 14 Leszno Street. Kohn and Heller, both traders from Łódź who had come to Warsaw along with Gancwajch, were considered by all to be German agents. They soon exceeded their “teacher” Gancwajch in terms of ostentatious wastefulness. The two owned most of the carriages that carried both people and property within the ghetto. By July 1941, the Germans had tired of “The Thirteen” and closed down its office. Half of its police force was incorporated into the *Ordnungsdienst*, while Gancwajch and his comrades co-opted the Ambulance Service, which from then on was little more than a front for their smuggling activities. “The Thirteen” was later reopened, only to be shut down permanently in April 1942, when the Gestapo systematically eliminated its heads and employees, and even Jewish Gestapo agents. Gancwajch and Sternfeld (the commander of “The Thirteen’s” police force), who apparently received an early warning, managed to escape and live on the Aryan side under false identities. Rumor has it that during the mass deportation of August 1942, Gancwajch suddenly surfaced as an informer. After that, he tried rebuilding his power base in the ghetto. What became of him and what was his end is unknown.⁵⁶⁶

Gancwajch’s closest collaborators were the aforementioned Moryc Kohn and Zelik Heller from Łódź; Zachariasz and B. Szymonowicz, from Radomsko; the lawyer Herbert Stahrer from Gdańsk (Danzig), who acted as Gancwajch’s legal adviser and secretary general; and the writer Jehuda Warszawiak, his press secretary. Other collaborators of “The Thirteen,” which included many Jews from Łódź and some from Germany, included: Gonsiorowicz, from Radomsko; Stanisław Boraks, a lawyer from Warsaw; Lewin, a

⁵⁶⁵ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 66.

⁵⁶⁶ A. Rozenberg, “Trzynastka,” *Bleter far Geszichte* (Warsaw), vol. 5, nos. 1–2 (1952): 187–225, xxxiv–xxxv (English summary), and vol. 5, no. 3 (1952); A. [Adam] Rutkowski, “O agenturze gestapowskiej w getcie warszawskim,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (Warsaw), no. 19–20 (1956): 38–59 (this study also refers to the Gestapo connections of the Jewish Ambulance Service [Żydowskie Pogotowie Ratunkowe]); Lewin, *A Cup of Tears*, 18; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 145–46; Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 220–33, 714, 729–30; Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 1, 236; Ernest, *O wojnie wielkich Niemiec z Żydami*

lawyer from Wilno; Lewin, a lawyer from Warsaw; Mandel, an engineer; Margules, a sock manufacturer from Łódź; Gurwicz (Górowicz), from Wilno; Koenigl (Kenigel), from Lwów; Reichman (Rajchman), from Łódź; the Prużański (Próżański) brothers, from Warsaw; Leon Skosowski, from Łódź; Hendel; Kaner; the Erlich brothers; Wolf Szymonowicz, from Radomsko; Stroter, a lawyer; M. Lejzerowicz; Dr. Feldszuh; Kleinweksler, a lawyer; Bramson, a lawyer; Reszal, a lawyer; Dr. Sirota; Katz; Bialer. According to historian Adam Rutkowski, there were “many, many others.”⁵⁶⁷

As mentioned, many of these people maintained close contacts with the Gestapo, and were indeed its agents. The agents Kohn and Heller, for instance, did not hesitate to draw up lists of people to be eliminated by the Gestapo. Both Gancwajch and Dawid Szternfeld are believed to have blackmailed and betrayed Jews hiding on the “Aryan” side.⁵⁶⁸ As Jonas Turkow points out, “The Thirteen” targeted both Jews and Poles:

Leon Skosowski and Kenigl were very officially collaborators of the SD [*Sicherheitsdienst*, i.e., the security service unit of the SS] and were more often on the ‘Aryan’ side than in the ghetto. Their task consisted in denouncing Jews who found themselves on the ‘Aryan’ side and denouncing Poles who engaged in political [underground] activities.⁵⁶⁹

Skosowski was one of fourteen Gestapo agents liquidated by the Home Army in November 1943.⁵⁷⁰ (An earlier attempt undertaken jointly with the Jewish Military Union had failed.) Interestingly, he as well as other Jewish Gestapo agents reportedly maintained links with the Communist underground, perhaps as a safeguard in the event of a change in the political situation. The Communist People’s Guard (Gwardia Ludowa) also prided itself on eliminating Jewish Gestapo agents, among them a ghetto resident named Neuman and three Jews who lived on Chmielna Street in the Aryan part of Warsaw.⁵⁷¹

Bernard Goldstein, a Bund leader and political activist in the ghetto, described the constant fear of Jewish collaborators that ordinary ghetto dwellers, but particularly political activists, faced in their day-to-day lives.

Soon after the organization of the Jewish police, a new figure appeared in the ghetto, a man named Ganzweich, a journalist and one-time Zionist, originally from Lodz [Łódź]. ...

After the Germans announced the formation of the ghetto, Ganzweich set up a bureau for distributing favors and concessions like jobs as house janitors or rent collectors. He seemed to have great influence with the authorities. People stood in line at his office, bribe in hand, hoping to enlist Ganzweich’s aid to free an arrested member of the family, to get a better apartment, to procure a

Warszawy, 1939–1943, 114–21; Levin, *Walls Around*, 94–97.

⁵⁶⁷ A. [Adam] Rutkowski, “O agenturze gestapowskiej w getcie warszawskim,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 19–20 (1956): 41.

⁵⁶⁸ Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 229.

⁵⁶⁹ Turkov, *C’était ainsi*, 140.

⁵⁷⁰ Trunk, *Judenrat*, 552–53.

⁵⁷¹ Statement of Jerzy Teodor Duracz in Wiera Gran, *Sztafeta oszczerców: Autobiografia śpiewaczki* (Paris: n.p., 1980), 198.

vital legal document. His carefully constructed network of connections and acquaintances kept his finger on every pulse of ghetto life, supplying him with information invaluable to the occupation authorities. ...

Everyone knew that this creature was working for the Germans; that it was for them he was organizing this supposed campaign against exorbitant prices and smuggling. Nevertheless people joined his group for the same reason that others had joined the Jewish police. His “anti-profiteering” police numbered several hundred. Because their headquarters were at 13 Leshno [Leszno] Street, they soon became known as the “Thirteeners.” They wore the same uniform as the other Jewish police.

The Thirteeners spread fear throughout the ghetto. They conducted raids, descending on entire blocks of houses, supposedly hunting for smuggled goods, speculators, and black marketeers. Actually they were on the scent of political material, illegal literature, and active workers in the underground. They fulfilled the function of the Gestapo in the ghetto. In time, Ganzweich and his Thirteeners became the authority on Jewish matters for the Gestapo and had its complete confidence. Before the rupture of the Stalin-Hitler pact, Ganzweich even enlisted Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to filter into the Russian zone to bring back information for the German authorities.

At first the Judenrat carried on a quiet fight against Ganzweich. ... But all efforts to eliminate Ganzweich as competition for police control in the ghetto failed. His connections with the Gestapo were too strong. His Thirteeners continued to function as a police unit, parallel to the Judenrat police but more closely identified with the specific features of Gestapo policy toward the Jews.

Aside from Ganzweich’s Thirteeners, the Gestapo included some Jews in its own apparatus. One of them, Kokosoffsky, had been before the war a leader of the Maccabee, a Jewish sport organization, in Pabyanitza [Pabianice]. Another agent, Andes by name, had previously been a boxer in the Zionist Maccabee. He now specialized in searching out illegal flour mills. Later he was sent by the Germans to the Oswiecim [Oświęcim—Auschwitz] camp. Rumor had it that the millers paid substantial bribes to engineer this coup. At least one Jewish woman was on the Gestapo payroll—Madame Machno, a former Warsaw actress and dancer.

Through the hands of these creatures flowed tremendous sums as bribes for the Gestapo. They used to “arrange” passes for the ghetto gates, business licenses, exemptions from forced labor, and other privileges. A travel permit between Warsaw and Lodz cost thousands of zlotys; exemption from forced labor, tens of thousands. The scale of prices varied with the importance of the service.

These leeches attached themselves firmly and sucked, for themselves and the Gestapo, the last drop of blood from the Jewish population, spreading what they bred upon—complete demoralization and licentiousness without limit.

The Jewish police found their strongest and most capable opponent in Morizi Orzech.

Orzech’s hatred of the Jewish police once led him into serious difficulty. Encountering a police captain attempting to arrest an old Jewish woman for illegally selling vegetables in the street, he intervened. In the course of the argument, he struck the officer. Orzech was arrested to be handed over to the Germans. It took a lot of work and money to save him ...⁵⁷²

⁵⁷² Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, 68–71.

One morning the janitor of 12 Nowolipya [Nowolipie] burst in to tell me that he had just been visited by two Gestapo agents, apparently Jews, who had gone through his registry book. They had paid particular attention to the G's. He was sure that they were after me. ...

Ten minutes later a Gestapo car pulled up in front of 12 Nowolipya, and agents swarmed into the building. They ransacked my apartment, questioned my family and neighbors. They left a written order that I must report the following morning at the headquarters of the Gestapo at Allee Shucha [Szucha].

The following day they returned to find out why I had not appeared. My brother was not at home, so they took young Jacob as a hostage. ...

Jacob was a Bundist and, living in my apartment, had seem comrades come and go on underground business. The Gestapo tortured him in an attempt to get information, but they were finally defeated when death brought an end to his agonies.⁵⁷³

Dark as usual was the spring night of April 17, 1942. ... During that night, the Gestapo had visited scores of houses in various parts of the ghetto, had dragged people out and shot them on the spot. The bodies were left where they fell. Jewish police had accompanied the SS and Gestapo men, carrying a list of names and addresses, and leading he murderers directly to their victims.

In the morning, under order from the police, the bodies were cleaned off the streets by wagons of the Chesed Shel Emmeth Burial Society and by other undertakers. The police drove the neighbors of the murdered men into the streets and forced them to wash away the blood.

That night we lost, among others, the following comrades: ...

Especially tragic was the death of our comrade, Moishe Sklar, a typesetter. He had been a member of the executive committee of the Printers' Union, and continued his Bund activity in the ghetto. He was arrested that night but not shot immediately as were the others. For two weeks he was held in Paviak [Pawiak] prison and horribly tortured. He was asked for the names of those active in printing illegal literature. He knew them all, but he endured the terrible pain and said nothing. At five o'clock in the morning, two weeks after his arrest, he was taken to the corner of Djelna [Dzielna] and Motcha [Smocza], where he was shot.

Neighbors heard the shots and ran out. They saw a man lying in a pool of blood and a Jewish policeman leaning over the corpse, removing its shoes. ... Later we identified the Jewish policeman who had done the ghoulisn looting. He was dealt with appropriately.⁵⁷⁴

Now the terror in the ghetto entered a new and bloodier phase. Almost every night the Nazis would break into a tenement, drag scores of people into the street, and shoot them. People were brought into the ghetto from the Aryan side at night and shot. We did not know who they were or why they were murdered.⁵⁷⁵

The feeling of expectancy, of nervous waiting for an unknown but certain catastrophe, grew when the Germans began a new campaign of terror. From time to time in the past they had seized people

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 94–95.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 100–102.

on the streets and shipped them away into forced labor. After April 17, [1942], such abductions took place much more often and with much greater ferocity. The Jewish police, led by SS men and [German] gendarmes, would descend on a ghetto area like a band of wild animals, grabbing every adult man and throwing him into a circle of armed guards in the center of the street. Ringed by the police, numbed by fear and bewilderment, the condemned would huddle there, waiting to be escorted to the nearest police commissariat and then to the freight cars for forced labor. ...

From the window of my hiding place at 13 Gensha [Gęsia] I once witnessed a horrifying scene. A Jewish policeman held a thin young man, with matted black hair, who fought with insane fury to break loose from his captor's grasp. There was a mad look in the victim's eyes as he punched and kicked and pulled. With a rubber truncheon the policeman beat his hands, his legs, his entire body and then half pushed, half dragged him toward the square where the armed ring was waiting.⁵⁷⁶

This atmosphere of gloom, demoralization and terror is reinforced by the memoirs of apolitical residents of the ghetto who just tried to get by. One common thread in these memoirs is that Poles did not play a role in the day-to-day oppression of the half million Jewish residents of the Warsaw ghetto.

Unfortunately, there were many traitors amongst the Jews who formed a secret police working with the Gestapo. None of them was from Warsaw, I'm happy to say. They were all from Lodz [Łódź], which the Germans called Litzmannstadt. They were all intelligentsia—doctors, engineers, police—none of them uneducated or from the lower classes. They were all professionals—and disgustingly mean. We were afraid of them like fire. Their headquarters were on the same street as Café Sztuka, but on the other side. The building was Number Thirteen Leszno Street. Because of that, they were called Number Thirteens.

This was the Jewish Gestapo against the Jews. They had green bands on their caps. The regular Jewish police had blue bands. The Jewish Gestapo would come into the café, but we did not like to serve them. They did a lot of dirty work. Let's say some Jews had hidden in their apartments dollars or money or gold that they could sell to buy food. The Jewish Gestapo would give away all these secrets to the Germans. And the Germans would come shooting and killing. There was not mass killing yet. It was just bad treatment, very awful treatment, but not mass exterminations. ...

Some German Jews were given jobs outside the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto. ... One day these German Jews were marching off to work past the SS men on guard. These German Jews were all raising their hands, hollering, "*Heil Hitler!*" and the SS men did not even answer them, did not look at them, did not even spit at them. In Warsaw, we just laughed when these German Jews screamed, "*Heil Hitler!*"—as if Hitler would help them—this was the funniest part. ...

Jews were starving, even though food was being smuggled in. We did not have food, but we could get smuggled-in strawberries on the street. I remember one day I bought myself all kinds of goodies. I was walking on the street and a man came and he grabbed all the food and ran away. ...

The conditions in the ghetto were so terrible ... People hated each other. You understand, they were starving. They could kill each other for food. We had a family from Lodz in our apartment.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 104.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 106.

My mother cooked. The wife of this man came and ate up my mother's soup, so my mother complained to me. The man did not like my mother complaining, so he pushed her around and beat her up. When I came home from work that day I hit him on the head with an iron pot. I got even for my mother. He got no pity from me. He never touched her anymore.

I did not see any resistance leaflets or newspapers in the ghetto. If I ever saw any resistance, any writing on the walls, it was in the Aryan section. There they would write on the walls things like "Only pigs go to the movies," because going to the movies helped the Germans by making people forget about the war, forget about resisting. But in the ghetto we were only worried about food, the cold, the sickness and the lice. We were completely demoralized.

We were so demoralized that people became disrespectful of each other.⁵⁷⁷

I did not ask anybody what to do. I was all on my own. Whenever I did something, I never asked anybody. ... Besides you couldn't talk to anybody. You did not know who was a traitor. I was too afraid.⁵⁷⁸

The Jewish underground occasionally liquidated Jewish informers and Gestapo agents inside the ghetto. Jacob Celemenski, for example, relates how he was tracked down in his hiding place in the Warsaw ghetto by a young Jewish informer sent by Jewish Gestapo agents. The Jewish underground assigned a clandestine cell of five comrades to execute him, but were outdone by the informer's own bosses, who shot him themselves.⁵⁷⁹ Among those reportedly executed by the ŻZW [*Zydowski Związek Walki*—Jewish Military Union] were: two Gestapo agents shot dead near the entrance to Schultz's restaurant on Karmelicka St. (spring 1942); Adolf Borensztein (known as the "13th man"), shot dead in Elektoralna St. (March 1942); a police lieutenant of the Leszno St. police station, shot near one of the ŻZW tunnel entrances (summer 1942); a nest of eleven Gestapo spies (eight men and three women), executed in the cellar of Kosieradzki's house on Karmelicka St. after a "trial" (June 1942); two female Gestapo agents, one of them Haya Blumberg; Jacob Leikin, the deputy commander of the Jewish police, shot in Gęsia St. (October 29, 1942); Israel Firszt or Izrael First, the head of the Judenrat's Economic Department (November 29, 1942); Leon (Lolek) Skosowski (who, seriously wounded, escaped to the Aryan side where he was later executed by the Polish Home Army), Paweł Bludarski, Arik Waintraub (had in his possession a detailed list of bunkers for the Gestapo), H. Mangiel, Lydia (Anya) Radziszewska, all shot in the brush-factory compound at 38 Świętojerska St. (February 21, 1943); Jerzy Firstenberg, a high-ranking officer in the Jewish ghetto police (February 1943); Moniek Prozanski and his son Anders, shot as they were about to escape to the Aryan side; Zinger, shot in a restaurant on Nowolipie St.; two porters called Pinya and Elia ("Małpa") on Nowolipki St.; Nosek, shot dead in the brush-factory area (he too was in possession of a detailed list of bunkers).⁵⁸⁰ According to Józef Grynblatt, a member of the ŻZW, after the failed ghetto revolt, the hideout

⁵⁷⁷ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 23–25.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵⁷⁹ Celemenski, *Elegy For My People*, 106.

⁵⁸⁰ Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 615–17, 904 n.14. Ainsztein states that Revisionist historians wrongly ascribe the execution of First to the ŻZW. According to

of the ŻZW contingent on Grzybowska Street was betrayed to the Gestapo by Dawid Guzik, a Jew who was involved in the Hotel Polski affair, and not by the radical Polish underground group “Miecz i Plug,” as claimed by Bernard Mark and Marek Edelman.⁵⁸¹

When the great deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto began in the summer of 1942, the families of Jewish Gestapo agents were ushered to safety on the “Aryan” side. Jonas Turkow mentions a large number of Jews who worked as Gestapo agents on the “Aryan” side, such as the dancer Franciszka Manówna (Rozenberg), the lyricist Józef Lipski, the lyricist Andrzej Włast (Gustaw Baumritter), a German Jew named Sachsenhaus, who threw Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Judenrat, down the stairs, the Weintraub brothers, the boxer Anders, Manheimer, the brother of Franciszka Manówna, a German Jew named Fostel, Josef Włodawski, the boxer Fred Bobi, Milek the “redhead,” Edek Ast, Szeps, the inspector Erlich (Josl Kapote), “and others.” Franciszka Manówna, who was exposed by double agents working for the Polish underground, frequented nightclubs in the company of German Gestapo officers. Turkow mentions a Jew from Lublin by the name of Geier (Szama Grajer), who had assisted in the liquidation of the Jews in that city. Ignacy Lubowiecki and Dawid Gertler were other well-known Jewish Gestapo agents in Warsaw.⁵⁸² Polish underground sources record additional Jewish Gestapo agents such as Tadeusz and Waleria Rębowski (assumed identities) from Anin, Matia Goldman (the wife of Włodawski), Hermanowski and his wife Wanda Mostowicz (the wife of Jerzy Weisberg), Weintraub, Eryk Lipiński, Zuzanna Ginczanka, and many others.⁵⁸³

Some Jews worked, at various times, for the Communists as well as the Gestapo, for example, Mieczysław Walczak and Jerzy Sawicki (Izydor Reisler).⁵⁸⁴ Izydor Reisler, who under the assumed name of Jerzy Sawicki was an influential figure on the Lawyers’ Council in Soviet Lwów and persecuted its Polish members, turned agent for the Gestapo in the Lwów ghetto. This did not prevent him from rising to the position of prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal and Supreme Court in Stalinist Poland, where he was charged with prosecuting war criminals. Another example of a Jew who served many masters was described by Stanisław Taubenschlag, a scion of a prominent Jewish family from Kraków (his father was Professor Rafał Taubenschlag, dean of the Jagiellonian University). Stanisław Taubenschlag was pursued by Danek Redlich, the son of a Jewish official from Kraków, who denounced him to the Gestapo while on a mission for the Polish underground in Warsaw. Taubenschlag managed to extricate himself and survived this trap, but his pursuer was now a wanted man.

historian Dariusz Libionka, First was executed by Dawid Szulman, a member of ŻOB.

⁵⁸¹ Anka Grupańska, “Rozmowa z Józefem Grynblattem, członkiem Betaru i Żydowskiego Związku Wojskowego w czasie powstania w getcie warszawskim,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, vol. 3 (2007): 329–30.

⁵⁸² Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem*, 81; Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 26.

⁵⁸³ Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, 348 n.175. Jerzy Weisberg, who went by the name of Mostowicz, maintained contacts with the Communist underground. He was liquidated by the Polish underground on February 10, 1943. See Marek J. Chodakiewicz, Piotr Gontarczyk, and Leszek Żebrowski, *Tajne oblicze GL–AL i PPR: Dokumenty*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Burchard, 1997), 213–14.

⁵⁸⁴ Zbigniew Błażyński, *Mówi Józef Światło: Za kulisami bezpieki i partii 1940–1955*, Third revised edition (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1986), 138, 228; *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, Second revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1993), vol. 3 (Jerzy Sawicki).

The news of my tribulations in Warsaw quickly spread in the circles of young people. The hunt was now on for Danek Redlich who, it transpired, had been in the employ of the Bolsheviks in Lvov [Lwów] and had betrayed several people there. When Lvov was occupied by the Germans, this professional agent, entered the service of the Gestapo. After the war he worked in the security service (UB [*Urząd Bezpieki*]). In the 1950s he went to Venezuela where he met his death in a car accident in Caracas.⁵⁸⁵

Another Jewish collaborator who changed sides was Teresa Bryk, the wife of a Polish airman who was killed in the Battle of Britain. During the German occupation she maintained liaisons with the Gestapo in Wyszaków and Ostrów Mazowiecka. After the arrival of the Soviet army she began to work for the NKVD. She then made a career in the Communist political structures in the Pułtusk district.⁵⁸⁶

On May 9, 1942, leaders of the leftist underground in the Warsaw ghetto were arrested after a denunciation, thereby paralyzing the so-called Anti-Fascist Block.⁵⁸⁷ The use of Jewish confidants by the Gestapo was officially discontinued in September 1943.⁵⁸⁸ However, well after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, according to one report, the Gestapo continued to employ some 300 Jewish agents, remnants of the Żagiew organization and others, to ferret out Jews who were hiding among Christians in Warsaw. It was likely because of those agents that so many Jews passing as Poles and in hiding were captured. A Jew named Henning directed a 70-member team at the Gestapo premises on Szucha Avenue charged with the task of gathering information about Polish underground organizations, performing physical examinations on suspected Jews, and interrogating them about their knowledge of the Catholic faith. These agents not only combed Warsaw looking for Jews, but also were sent into the countryside where they were known to infiltrate partisan units and seek assistance from Polish villagers posing as Jews on the run.⁵⁸⁹ After the failed uprising of August–October 1944, Jews refugees in the transit camp at Pruszków continued to be ferreted out by the “Heaven Brigade,” composed of Gestapo agents whose ethnic composition is not known.⁵⁹⁰ The high figures for Jewish Gestapo agents operating in Warsaw do not appear to be exaggerated given—as mentioned—that the Germans employed at least twenty Jewish *Greifers*, or “catchers,” to hunt down and betray Jews in Berlin where far fewer Jews were hiding. Some illustrations of this phenomenon are cited later.

A similar situation prevailed in Lublin where the Germans were well-informed about the internal affairs of the ghetto thanks to their network of Jewish agents and informers, among them their ringleader Szama

⁵⁸⁵ Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 49–57, here at 57.

⁵⁸⁶ Jan Garbarczyk, “W Narodowej Organizacji Wojskowej na Ziemi Wyszakowskiej,” *Glaukopis: Pismo społeczno-historyczne*, no. 9–10 (2007–2008): 67–68.

⁵⁸⁷ Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 648.

⁵⁸⁸ Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 26.

⁵⁸⁹ Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 233, 234, 235, 241 n.11; Bednarczyk, *Obowiązek silniejszy od śmierci*, 156–57. In the latter book, Bednarczyk details many other cases of collaboration at 26, 28, 32, 35–36, 43, 75, 78, 94, 103, 121.

⁵⁹⁰ Michael Zylberberg, *A Warsaw Diary, 1939–1945* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1969), 179, 188. Otherwise, as historian Gunnar Paulsson notes, few if any Jews were actually betrayed by Poles during the exodus from Warsaw or inside the camp at Pruszków. See Paulsson, *Secret City*, 191–92.

Grajer, Lejb (“Maska”), Abram Gemare, Sz. Mandelbojm, Szulim (“Babe”), and Matys Kurnik. In December 1941, several months before the mass deportations to the death camps, the Germans set up an agency, known as the Office of Disinfection and Delousing, which was headed by Bolesław Tenenbaum, an experienced operative brought in from Warsaw where he had worked under the notorious Gancwajch. Tenenbaum and his colleagues Sztokfish, who was in charge of the sanitary section, and Dawid Kuperminc, who was in charge of the disinfection section, organized a team of 190 people in a military-like structure. These two groups (Grajer and Tenenbaum’s), together with the Judenrat, later played an important role in preparing for and executing the deportation of Lublin’s Jews and various other liquidation actions as part of Operation “Reinhard.” As elsewhere, the search for Jewish hiding places was carried out by the Jewish police and Jewish agents, who often took bribes from Jews before betraying them to the SS.⁵⁹¹ When the need arose, Jewish Gestapo agents from Lublin reciprocated by helping out in Warsaw:

Later, in August [1942], when the truth [about the destination of the deportees, namely Treblinka] became widely known, there was the psychological difficulty of accepting it. ... Moreover, the Nazis saw to it that their victims should still be able to reject the truth by providing them with false hope. Hoefle [SS Major Hermann Höfle] had brought with him from Lublin a gang of Jewish Gestapo agents who were ready to do anything to stay alive a little longer. They were installed in number 101, Żelazna Street, next to number 103 where Hoefle had his own headquarters, and there, assisted by Jewish Gestapo agents from the Warsaw ghetto, they fabricated letters, which were supposedly written by the ‘resettled’ from labour camps in Russia and elsewhere.⁵⁹²

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers operating outside the ghetto were a significant peril for Jews who passed as Poles or tried to hide. Indeed, Aleksander Biberstein, the eminent chronicler of the Kraków ghetto, whose testimony is cited later, considered them to have been a greater source of danger for Jews than Polish denouncers. This was a factor of their familiarity with the Jewish community and the “professional” pressures stemming from their duties: if they did not turn in fellow Jews in considerable numbers, their usefulness to the Germans was spent and their very existence in jeopardy. Most Jewish historians, however, are reluctant to admit to the existence of the numerous Jewish collaborators agents operating on the “Aryan” side, preferring instead to leave the impression that the enemy the Jews feared were not so much the Germans as the Poles, whose favourite pastime was allegedly to hunt down Jews.⁵⁹³

Antoni Marianowicz, who hid in and near Warsaw, concurs with that assessment: “Danger lurked not only from the Germans and Polish scoundrels—there were also Jewish scoundrels. I feared them no less,

⁵⁹¹ T. [Tamara] Berenstein, “Martyrologia, opór i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie lubelskim,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 21 (1957): 33–37. Marek Urban states that Szaja (Szama) Grajer was an underworld figure who established contact with the German occupiers and made a fortune from Jews for whom he arranged preferential treatment. See Marek Urban, *Polska... Polska...* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 1998), 96.

⁵⁹² Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 581.

⁵⁹³ The latter charge was shamelessly levelled by Jewish American historian Lucy Dawidowicz, who wrote about “the widespread Polish sport of bounty hunting.” See Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians*, 106.

and maybe even more than the former. The conditions encouraged human baseness, regardless of race.”⁵⁹⁴ In his published memoirs, in addition to a Jew by the name of Włodek S. working with a ring of *szmalcowniki*, a phenomenon that will be discussed in more detail, Marianowicz mentions a Jewish woman by the name of Zarembka, who denounced him to the director of the foundry in Wołomin where he worked, and another Jewish co-worker, who fled to Israel after the war in order to escape punishment for his role in assisting the Germans to plunder Polish property.⁵⁹⁵ In her memoirs, Sandra Brand mentions a Jew who was captured during a German raid on the apartment of an extortionist in Warsaw and a young Jewish woman who betrayed the hideout of several Jews after being captured by the police.⁵⁹⁶

Simha Rotem, who himself “dressed like a Gestapo agent” on his missions into the countryside, acknowledged that “Germans weren’t the only ones who served in the Gestapo, whose ranks included members of other nationalities, including Jews.”⁵⁹⁷ Another Jewish underground leader, Yitzhak Zuckerman (“Antek”), also documents the activities of numerous Jewish collaborators in Warsaw. He points out that Abraham Gancwajch, the head of the notorious “Thirteen,” worked for some time on the “Aryan” side against the Polish underground and that Adam Żurawin, one of the many Jewish Gestapo agents he mentions, moved to the United States where he became a millionaire and summoned a rabbinical court to acquit him. Zuckerman openly acknowledges that he was accosted by as many Jewish blackmailers as Polish ones, and that it was a Jewish blackmailer who almost cost him his life:

And if I consider the treason carried out against me by individuals, there were just as many Jews among them as Poles. For example, when I was condemned to be executed on April 18, 1942, it was because of a Jewish denunciation.⁵⁹⁸

Encounters with Jewish Gestapo agents were almost invariably fatal. Although a relatively small group, German archival documents confirm that agents were the Gestapo’s chief source of reliable information, accounting for about a third of all successful “hits”.⁵⁹⁹ Only a small number of accounts, albeit important ones, speak to direct experience with this source of danger; most memoirists don’t care to recall such episodes which they undoubtedly witnessed or heard about. The magnitude of the phenomenon is thus underreported.

Zbigniew Ryszard Grabowski (then Abrahamer), whose family passed as Christians in Warsaw, states that his father was fingered in a streetcar by a Jewish Gestapo agent. “Jews in the service of the Gestapo,” he writes, “were best at recognizing other Jews.”⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁴ Jolanta Wrońska, “Strażnik niewygodnej pamięci” (an interview with Antoni Marianowicz), *Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw), August 19, 2000.

⁵⁹⁵ Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione*, 115, 163–65.

⁵⁹⁶ Brand, *I Dared To Live*, 110, 113.

⁵⁹⁷ Rotem, *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter*, 70–71.

⁵⁹⁸ Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 63, 441–45, 493.

⁵⁹⁹ Borodziej, *Terror i polityka*, 84–85.

⁶⁰⁰ Zbigniew Ryszard Grabowski, “W skorodowanym zwierciadle pamięci: Szkic autobiograficzny,” *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, vol. 50, no. 2 (2005): 7–202.

Ruth Altbeker Cyprys describes a familiar scene she witnessed after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto in May 1943. She personally observed Jewish Gestapo agents shouting Jewish slogans or singing Jewish songs in order to provoke a telltale reaction in fugitive Jews among the pedestrians in the streets of Warsaw.

The Jewish Gestapo men who remained alive were very dangerous. Their eyes were penetrating and Jews pointed out by them were lost without hope. A little car often seen passing slowly along Marszałkowska [Marszałkowska] Street, always keeping close to the pavement, became notorious. Once I was walking along this street when suddenly I heard the shout 'Szma Israel', followed by the sight of a man dragged struggling into the car. It transpired that the cry had come from the slowly driven vehicle, causing an elderly gentleman passing by to stop and look back instinctively. It was final proof for the manhunters. They must have been observing their prey for some time and, having reckoned that only a Jew would react to these words, had successfully used their subterfuge. A friend told me that the most unexpected shouts could be heard from this car.

Another time, while walking in the street, I heard behind me a low humming of the *Hatykva*. For a moment I wanted to look back but I overcame this desire. The singing individual overtook me. He was a young fellow in a little round hat with a feather. This hat meant the same as a Gestapo uniform as we learned at the end of the war. Unfortunately under this hat was the cheeky, carefree face of one of my university colleagues—a Jew. The degradation of some people had plumbed such depths.⁶⁰¹

Alexander Bronowski recounts his arrest in Warsaw by the *Sicherheitspolizei* (security police) after one of their informers, a Jew from his native Lublin, recognized him.⁶⁰² Ironically, the Polish “Blue” police, to whom Bronowski was handed over by the Sipo for temporary safekeeping, proved to be his saviours. Staff sergeant Waclaw Nowiński not only rescued Bronowski, but Nowiński and his family also selflessly assisted and sheltered other Jews. Yet Mordecai Paldiel, a historian at the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, repeatedly covers up the fact that it was a Jew who betrayed Alexander Bronowski, even though Paldiel finds time to describe Bronowski’s fate in various publications.⁶⁰³

There are numerous recorded cases of Polish policemen—members of the “Blue police” in the *Generalgouvernement* (so known because the navy blue colour of their uniforms), the railroad police, the criminal police, and the local police forces in the so-called Ostland (Poland’s prewar northeastern territories)—who used their positions to help Jews. Several of them have been recognized as “Righteous Gentiles” by Yad Vashem. This fact is not surprising when one considers that the “Blue” police were

⁶⁰¹ Cyprys, *A Jump for Life*, 39, 165–66.

⁶⁰² Alexander Bronowski, *They Were Few* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 30–33. See also his account in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Gentiles*, 142–44.

⁶⁰³ Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 289–90; *Sheltering the Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 53, 153 (twice). Paldiel is so preoccupied with railing at Christian Poles that, in connection with Bronowski’s betrayal, he lays the blame on “local anti-Semites” and for good measure adds: “Spotting a Jew on the street had become a sort of sport in Warsaw.”

heavily infiltrated by the Polish underground, who provided extensive assistance to Jews.⁶⁰⁴ On the other hand, an act of kindness by a Jewish policeman was rare and almost always came with a hefty price, as the following witness from Lublin testifies:

⁶⁰⁴ Polish policemen awarded by Yad Vashem include: Franciszek Banaś of Kraków; Władysław Cieśla of Jarocin near Tarnobrzeg, who enlisted the Home Army to liberate some imprisoned Jews; Piotr Czechoński of Tomaszów Lubelski; Jan Fakler of Warsaw; Jan Kubicki of Międzyzlesie near Warsaw; Bronisław Marchlewicz, the commander of the Otwock police commissariat, a Home Army member who released Jews caught in round-ups, foiled denunciations, warned persons hiding Jews of dangers, and extended his protection to the convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth which sheltered a number of Jewish children; Waław Nowiński of Warsaw; Władysław Szalek of Kraków. For these and many other examples of assistance provided to Jews by Polish policemen see: Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 137–40 (Eliasz Pietruszka, Warsaw), 141–42 (Jan Kubicki), 142–44 (Waław Nowiński), 145–46 (Łęczna), 163 (Zygmunt Okuń, a sergeant in the Warsaw police, and his wife Janina and Waław Mila, clerks with the Criminal Police), 292–95 (the evidence relating to some policemen in two villages near Siedlce is ambiguous: one of them, who was known as a “Jew-catcher,” warned a Jewish girl whom he recognized to leave the village and assisted her with an alibi; another policeman did not seize that same girl out of pity, and his commander recommended her to a good farmer for pasturing cows); 335 (Warsaw), 400–401 (Warsaw), 449 (Wiesław Malanowicz, a *Kripo* policeman in Warsaw who was secretly a Home Army member), 603 (Michał Kliś, a member of the Home Army counter-intelligence who joined the “Blue” police in Kraków, was arrested and executed by the Germans for procuring forged documents and sheltering Jews); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 566 (Warsaw), 586 (Warszawa), 704 (Markuszów), 1028 (Boguchwała near Rzeszów); Ewa Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine: How Polish Nuns Saved Hundreds of Jewish Children in German-occupied Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), 220 (Bronisław Marchlewicz, Otwock); “Izrael uhonorował granatowego policjanta,” *Rzeczpospolita*, July 25, 2005 (Bronisław Marchlewicz); Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), Part 1, 69 (Kraków—Franciszek Banaś), 71 (Rzeszów), 88 (near Siedlce), 149 (Jarocin near Tarnobrzeg—Władysław Cieśla), 157 (Tomaszów Lubelski—Piotr Czechoński), 200 (Jarocin near Tarnobrzeg), 210 (Warsaw—Jan Fakler), 371 (Sokołów Podlaski), 413 (Międzyzlesie near Warsaw—Jan Kubicki), 477 (Łaskarzew); Part 2, 556 (Warsaw—Waław Nowiński); 777 (Kraków—Władysław Szalek); Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945*, 135, 177, 207–208 (the “Blue” police extended their protection to the Father Boduen Home in Warsaw, an orphanage where some 200 Jewish children were sheltered), 271; Ludwik Hirsfeld, *Historia jednego życia* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1946), 284, 293–94, 312 (Warsaw); Schwarz, *The Root and the Bough*, 287 (Warsaw); H. Rabin, ed., *Szumsk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshai Szumsk* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Szumsk in Israel, 1968), 21ff., translated as *Szumsk: Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Szumsk*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/szumsk/szumsk.html>>; *Sefer yizkor shel kehilat Działoszyce ve-ha-sevivah* [Yizkor Book of the Jewish Community in Działoszyce and Surroundings] (Tel Aviv: Hamenora Publishing House, 1973), 43 (Działoszyce); Tzurnamal, ed., *Lask: sefer zikaron (Izcor-Book)*, 125; Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Łowicz: A Town in Mazovia—Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Lowitcher Landsmanschaften in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, 1966), xvi (Łowicz); Wolf Zeev Rabinowitsch, ed., *Pinsk—Historical Volume: The Story of the Jews of Pinsk 1506–1942*, Part Two (Tel Aviv: The Association of the Jews of Pinsk in Israel, 1977), 133 (Pińsk); account of Johanan Kalfus, dated September 18, 1967, Yad Vashem archives no. 03/3284 (2777/232-F), Internet: <<http://yizkor.virtualave.net/testimonies/kalfus.htm>> (the head of the Polish police in Wiśnicz); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 135 (a policeman allowed a young woman to escape after she was caught during a raid on an estate near Warsaw); Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, 159 (Warsaw); Jakob Breitowicz, *Though Hell To Life* (New York: Shengold, 1983), 22–24 (Krosno); Josef Chrast and Matityahu Bar-Razon, eds., *Eternal Flame: In Memory of Dolhinow*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dolginovo/Dolginovo.html>>, translation of *Esh tamid-yizkor le-Dolhoinow; Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Dolhinow ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Society of Dolhinow Emigrants in Israel, 1984), 525 ff. (three or four Polish members of the small Polish-Belorussian police force in Dolhinów assisted Jews in various ways including escaping from the ghetto and providing shelter outside the ghetto); Bauminger, *The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto*, 55 (Kraków); Starkopf, *There Is Always Time to Die*, 84–86 (Warsaw); Lewin, *A Cup of Tears*, 38, 143 (Warsaw); Norman Salsitz and Amalie Petranker Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1990), 253 (the head of the Polish police in Kolbuszowa gave a warning of the impending liquidation of the ghetto and many Jews escaped); Oscar Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, Revised Edition (Schenectady, New York: Union College Press, 1990), 89–91, 139, 142 (policemen in Łosice helped some Jews escape from the ghetto and a policeman sheltered a Jewish girl); Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (a Polish policeman by the name of Czesiek assisted the family of Isaac Peretz in the ghetto in Chełm and took Bella Peretz and her young daughter Sarah from the ghetto and sheltered them for two years in his home on the outskirts of the town); Salsitz, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland*, 295 (two Polish policemen in Kolbuszowa allowed two Jews to flee); Andrzej Wróblewski, *Być Żydem...: Rozmowa z Dagiem Halvorsenem o Żydach i antysemityzmie Polaków* (Warsaw: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1992), 126 (Warsaw); Ewa Kurek,

Żydzi, Polacy, czy po prostu ludzie... (Lublin: Takt, 1992), 51–52 (Otwock); Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 345 (a Polish policeman in Warsaw arranged for the release of a Jewish woman and destroyed the arrest report), 458 (a Polish policeman warned a rescuer in Warsaw that her house was under surveillance); Nechama Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 192 (Koldyszewo); Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?: Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996), 118 (Legionowo near Warsaw); Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival under False Identity, 1941–45* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 118, 172 (Warsaw); testimony of Golda Shwartz, Yad Vashem archives 03/6922, July 25, 1993, Internet: <<http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Lida-District/yv-shwarz.htm>> (Szczuczyn); Marian Turski, ed., *Łosy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatanów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1996), 207, 209, 216 (Warsaw); Doba-Necha Cukierman, *A Guardian Angel: Memories of Lublin* (East Bentleigh, Victoria: Ester Csaky, 1997), 105, 148, 153, 170 (a policeman named Lutek Melski stationed in Firlej near Lublin); Wiktor Śliwowska, ed., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 8 (Kraków), 12, 94, 125, 145 (Warsaw); Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 111–12, 160 (Warsaw), and the revised edition *Żegota*, 105, 148 (Warsaw); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 111, 166, 183 (Kraków); Benjamin Bender, *Glimpses Through Holocaust and Liberation* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 1995), 87–88 (Częstochowa); Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 147 (Kraków), 151 (Bochnia), 152 (Tarnów), 153 (Tarnopol), 161 (Łabunie near Zamość), 220 (Otwock); Doba-Necha Cukierman, *A Guardian Angel: Memories of Lublin* (East Bentleigh, Victoria, Australia: E. Csaky, 1997), 148; Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 10, 155 (a Polish railway guard found a letter from a child addressed to his mother in the Warsaw ghetto which he entrusted to a Polish policeman to deliver to the mother); Donald L. Niewyk, ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 94, 96 (near Łuków); Cholański, *The Jews of Białoruś during World War II*, 136 (Kurzeniec); Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 33 (the author enlisted the help of two Polish friends, who continued to work in the police force after the German invasion, to attempt to track down a denouncer); Allan Levine, *Fugitives of the Forest* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998), 105 (Żołudek); Yaffa Eliach, *There Once Was a World: A Nine-Hundred-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 598, 601, 606 (Raduń); Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 219 (a policeman in Warsaw freed a teenaged boy picked up for smuggling); Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 248–49 (assistance to Siedlce ghetto residents by Home Army members who infiltrated the criminal police); Paulsson, *Secret City*, 89 (a policeman named Elias Pietruszka arranged Irma Morgenstern's escape from the Warsaw ghetto), 147 and 264 n.31 (several examples in Warsaw); Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, 123 (a Polish policeman warned a Jewish family of the impending deportation in Skała, thus giving them a chance to escape from the ghetto), 141 (Franciszek Banaś, a member of the Home Army who has been awarded by Yad Vashem, was directed to work as a policeman in the Kraków ghetto, from which he smuggled out Jews), 183–84 (a policeman in Piotrowice near Lublin warned a Polish family to get rid of their Jewish charges); Michał Grynberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 323, (Warsaw), 330–32 (a Warsaw policeman named Rysiek); Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 33 (Major Franciszek Erhardt, the police commander of Kraków who was executed by the Germans for collaborating with the Home Army); Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 197–98 (a Jew was released from a police-station in Praga with the words: “Get out of here, change your address, and if you survive, remember from time to time that there were decent people here, even among those who worked for the police”); Sylwia Szymańska, *Ludność żydowska w Otwocku podczas Drugiej wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2002), 86 (Otwock), 90 (Karczew); Liokadia [Leokadia] Jeromirska, “Bogushia,” *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 1 (Winter 2003): 98 (Białoleka); Norman Davies, *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw* (London: Macmillan, 2003), 110 (a “Blue” policeman in Warsaw tipped off a family living outside the ghetto that an anonymous informer had given their address to the Gestapo and a raid could be expected); Laskey, *Night Voices*, 69–70 (after her arrest, a Jewish woman was assisted by a Polish policeman, who fed her, counselled her what to say and do at the Gestapo office, and even attempted to vouch for her), 129 (a Jewish woman who escaped from the Łódź ghetto enlisted the help of a Polish policeman, who had joined the police force as a cover for his resistance activities, to escort her in safety to Warsaw); Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, 174 (the Polish policeman Zdzisław Flaszecki saved Nuchim Rozenel of Kraśnik from deportation to the Bełżec death camp); Martin Dean, “Microcosm: Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust in the Mir Rayon of Belarus, 1941–1944,” in David Gaunt, Paul A. Levine, and Laura Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance During the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 226 n.12 (Krawczenko, the Polish head of police Mir, saved the life of a Jew); Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 61–62 (a Polish policeman in Warsaw took in a young Jewish child for payment); Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 10, 109, 226, 349 (Warsaw); Avraham Aviel, *A Village Named Dowgalishok: The Massacre at Radun and Eishishok* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), 25–26, 127, 183–84, 262–63 (Raduń); Martin Ira Glassner and Robert Krell, eds., *And Life Is Changed Forever: Holocaust Childhoods Remembered* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 167–70, (a Polish policeman in Łosice sheltered a Jewish girl; other policemen took bribes to help Jews escape from the town

during a German raid); Sebastian Piątkowski, *Dni życia, dni śmierci: Ludność żydowska w Radomiu w latach 1918–1950* (Warsaw: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2006), 246 (Jews came forward after the war in defence of Franciszek Troll, the commander of the First Commissariat of the Polish police in Radom, for helping Jews in the ghetto and rescuing the large Den family during its liquidation); Tomasz Kowski, *Kujawsko-dobrzyński Żydzi w latach 1918–1950* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2006), 263 (Polish policeman saved the life of Samek Izrael after his escape from a German camp); Marian Skwara, *Pruszkowscy Żydzi: Sześć dekad zamkniętych zagładą* (Pruszków: Powiatowa i Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Pruszkowie, 2007), 218 (the policeman Józef Malinowski rescued several Jews with false identity documents passing as Poles; when he was charged with collaboration after the war, one of those he rescued testified on his behalf); Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 150 (a policeman in Przemyśl helped obtain a false identity card), 153 (a policeman commander named Kolarczyk helped a Jewish family to escape from detention in Szerzyny near Jasło), 260–61 (a policeman named Władysław Cieśla from Jarocin near Nisko).

Yitzhak Zuckerman, a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization, reported that the ghetto fighters in Warsaw received accurate intelligence information from the “Blue” police, via the Polish underground, through nightly telephone calls. See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 370. Another member describes how a Polish policeman named Adamczyk smuggled Jews out of the ghetto (he helped rescue a group of about twenty Jews hidden in the debris of the Warsaw ghetto in August or September 1943), acted as a courier for the Jewish underground, and delivered weapons to the ghetto in Częstochowa. See Rotem, *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter*, 63, 68, 71–72. Hena Kuczer, who went by the assumed name of Krystyna Budnicka, describes how she and other members of her family hiding in a bunker in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto were rescued in September 1939 by some Poles who included “Blue” policemen. See the testimony of Krystyna Budnicka, August 2003, posted on the Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>>. Adolf Berman, another survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, was assisted by a Pole he knew from before the war who had become a policeman in Warsaw. See Michał Grynberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 329–33. A member of the Jewish underground described how a blue policeman worked with the underground group by conveying Jewish children to the Boduen orphanage in Warsaw, where they were accepted as “Aryan” foundlings. See Adina Blady-Szwajger, *I więcej nic nie pamiętam*, 2nd expanded edition (Warsaw: Volumen, 1994), 109; translated as *I Remember Nothing More: The Warsaw Children's Hospital and the Jewish Resistance* (London: Collins-Havrill, 1990). A Jew from Kraków employed a Polish policeman by the name of Mazurkiewicz to transport his fiancée from a ghetto outside the city to the one in Kraków, which he described as a very risky and complicated venture. See Marcus David Leuchter, “Reflections on the Holocaust,” *The Sarmatian Review* (Houston, Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000). A Jewish girl from Kraków recalled: “I was very familiar with the Polish policeman and his uniform. I had never had reason to be afraid of him. Slipping in and out of the Cracow Ghetto was quite simple; one did not even have to have an official pass—I never did have one. One just had to know the individual policemen. Most of them were decent, kindly men. I already knew them, at least by sight, and if there happened to be a hard-liner on duty—and there were one or two amongst them—at the nearest, most convenient gate, I only had to wait for him to be relieved. His successor was bound to be reasonable and approachable, or make for a more distant gate. I slipped in and out of the Ghetto during its entire two-year existence—except of course during SS conducted *aktywności* when it was hermetically sealed—almost at will.” See Janina Fischler-Martinho, *Have You Seen My Little Sister?* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 56. An American Methodist missionary who lived in occupied Warsaw wrote that, in September 1941, “driven by hunger, small Jewish children went begging daily outside the ghetto for anything they could get. One day I was passing the ruins of Graniczna Street, when ahead of me appeared a group of Jewish children, each carrying a small sack of garnered booty. I watched them sneak towards a gap in the incomplete ghetto wall. Before it stood a Polish policeman; behind it, on the inside, a Jewish one. Simultaneously, the two walked away, and in a flash most of the children had disappeared through the gap into the ghetto. The policemen returned. The few little ones who were still outside receded waiting for the next opportunity. A man who had stopped beside me said, ‘This goes on night and day. The policemen do what they can.’” See Hania and Gaither Warfield, *Call Us to Witness: A Polish Chronicle* (New York and Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1945), 321. Indeed, on August 25, 1941, the Schupo commander for the Warsaw District, Colonel Alfred Jarke, rebuked the Polish police for remaining “passive and inactive” when the German police resorted to shooting at Jews to maintain order. Jarke threatened the Polish police with punishment “with all the means” at his disposal if they did not initiate action before the German police did. See Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, 208–209; Paulsson, *Secret City*, 146. In Warsaw, as well as other localities such as Opole Lubelskie and Komarówka near Radzyń, the “Blue” police refused to take part in executions of Jews; some of them were even executed by the Germans because of their insubordination. See Zbigniew Zaniewicki, *Pięć groźnych lat (1939–1941)* (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1982), 110; “Żydzi zwracali się ku kościołowi,” *Opoka* (London), no. 11 (July 1975): 83 (Opole Lubelskie); Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 157; Grynberg, *Words To Outlive Us*, 320 (Warsaw). Mary Berg records in her diary entry of June 3, 1942, that the Polish police were ordered to shoot 110 Jews in the prison on Gęsia Street in Warsaw, but refused. They were forced to watch the execution. “One of the eyewitnesses told me that several Polish policemen wept,” she noted, and “some of them averted their eyes during the execution.” See Berg, *Warsaw Ghetto*, 154. During the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943, scores of Polish police failed to report for duty to guard the ghetto wall. See Dariusz Libionka, “ZWZ-AK i Delegatura Rządu RP

wobec eksterminacji Żydów polskich,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 90–91. In the Tarnów region, “Blue” policemen assisted Polish priests who were pursued by the Germans for sheltering Jews; they allowed the priests to escape (in Luszowice) or warned them of their impending arrest (Czermna, Przydonica). See Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 345, 349; Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* (Gliwice: n.p., 2002). In Brańsk, “On instructions from the Home Army, Józef Falkowski (in the underground he used the name Szymborski) and Jan Sukowski joined the Brańsk Schutzpolizei. They actually saved the lives of many people. In my possession are testimonies of persons whom they helped, among them Jews.” See Romaniuk, “Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events,” in *The Story of Two Shtetls*, Part One, 83. A Pole by the name of Grabowski, who had been instructed by the Home Army to join the German police, assisted in the escape of Rachela Finkelsztejn from the ghetto in Radziłów. See Andrzej Kaczyński, “Nie zabijaj,” *Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw), July 10, 2000. In Gorlice, the fact that some of the “Blue” police were members of the Home Army unit greatly facilitated the clandestine provision of food to the ghetto. See Boczoń, *Żydzi gorliccy*, 144, 147. One Jewish survivor counts Major Mieczysław Tarwid, chief of the “Blue” police in the northern part of Warsaw where the ghetto was located, as his and his wife’s principle benefactors. See Benjamin Mandelkern, *Escape from the Nazis* (Toronto: Lorimer & Company, 1988), xi, 91 ff. (Tarwid had ties to the Polish underground—see Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 151.) Emanuel Ringelblum describes how large numbers of Jews were successfully smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto via the sewers that led to Krasiński Square; the guide had at his disposal some Polish policemen. See Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, 1992), 99. Franciszek Górski, chief of police in Hrubieszów, was eventually imprisoned and killed in the Gusen concentration camp for sheltering Jews and helping the Polish underground. See Michael Korenblit and Kathleen Janger, *Until We Meet Again: A True Story of Love and War, Separation and Reunion* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1983), 20 ff., 293. A Jew who survived the war in the village of Jabłoń near Parczew said: “The family with whom I lived knew everything about me—in fact, two families knew. After the war it came out that more families knew, and also the chief of the navy-blue police, a Pole, a very decent person. Juliusz Kleiner was hiding in the neighbourhood; in the next village there was a Jewess; in that area many were hiding.” See “Marian Małowist on History and Historians,” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000), 328. In Kraśnik, the Polish policeman Zdzisław Flaszecki helped saved Nuchim Rozenel from deportation to the Bełżec death camp in April 1942. See Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955*, 200. That author points out that in the early years of the war, the Polish police arrested criminals who preyed on Jews as well as on Poles; in some cases the Polish criminals were even killed; four specific examples are cited at pp. 196–97. Stefania Podgórska, who rescued 13 Jews in Przemyśl, recalled that a Polish policeman she befriended allowed her to enter the ghetto and that Polish policemen gave bread to the Jews. Her account is posted online at: <<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/text/x00/xr0040.html>>. Another policeman from Przemyśl who helped to save Jews was Sochacki. See “Volunteer Auxiliaries,” Internet: <<http://www.deathcamps.org/reinhard/hiwis.html>>. Yakov Segalchick states that the Polish mayor of Dołhinów “treated the Jewish people decently” and “the head of police, Anton Krosovsky, was a decent Christian man. For a little bit of alcohol you could gain his favor and he would do anything for you.” See Yakov Segalchick, *Eternal Testament: Memoirs of a Partisan*, Internet: <www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Myadel/eternal_testament.htm>. Many additional examples of assistance by members of the Polish police can be found in Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 262–69. Hempel also notes that the German authorities berated the Polish police for their passivity and that professional blackmailers were more likely to work with the Germans than with the Polish police. Leokadia Schmidt and her husband were caught smuggling sugar outside Warsaw in January 1945 by Gestapo agents and detained in a German outpost. They were then delivered to Polish military police with an order to execute them, however, the police released the Schmidts. See Ludwika Schmidt, *Cudem przeżyliśmy czas zagłady* (Kraków and Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983). Polish jail guards in Warsaw’s Mokotów prison for criminals are also fondly remembered by a Jewish inmate, as is the medical staff: “The prison was managed by a Polish administration, and overseen by three Germans. ... The Polish guards, including the commanders and even the officers, usually treated the prisoners well. Throughout my stay in the prison, I never encountered a single case of cruel treatment extended specifically toward Jews. ... Usually, the guards joined forces with the prisoners in various scams, but in many cases they also helped poor prisoners without any hopes of profit, and saved them from transports. ... I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the beneficial activities of the prison doctors: Dr. Waczyński, Dr. Mrozek, and the paramedic Szczypiński. They did a great deal on behalf of many prisoners ... They did this very often without seeking any profit, especially in the case of the political prisoners—often at personal risk. Thus, for example, they helped with the escape of two Jewish officers by transferring them, as suspected typhus patients, to the hospital outside the prison, from which they of course escaped. The two men would have been sentenced to death—a mandatory sentence for failure to register as officers.” See Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 17–18, 22.

Contrary to the claims made by some survivors, that “the people were more afraid of the blue [police] than of the Germans ... in general the men in navy-blue were without mercy”—see Miriam Peleg-Mariańska and Mordecai Peleg, *Witnesses: Life in Occupied Kraków* (London: Routledge, 1991), 149, in fact the Polish “Blue” police were notorious for taking bribes and looking the other way, especially in smuggling operations of all nature, and had a far better reputation than the Jewish police. Janina Fischler, who smuggled goods into the Kraków ghetto, recalled: “So we lived in the ghetto as a family from December 1941 until June 1942. It was normally surrounded by Polish policemen. There

were four pedestrian gates and four large traffic gates. By each traffic gate there was a small pedestrian gate with a Polish policeman on duty. I knew almost every one. They were, on the whole, decent chaps. They even gave credit. One always greased their palms, of course, but one didn't always have cash, so they gave credit. Except for one or two hard-liners, they were decent, and a small girl like me, so Aryan in appearance, could slip in and out. But during the *Aktion* the ghetto was surrounded by the SS and the whole ghetto was cordoned off. At the pedestrian gates the Polish policeman would still stand there, but now with two soldiers next to him. During an *Aktion*, nobody, not a pin, was able to get out. At night carts of food came into the ghetto and the Polish policeman made absolute fortunes, but they were decent and they played ball. People who had means lived very well ... During an *Aktion*, prices rocketed and it was very hard to buy food. The restaurants and cafés [in the ghetto] stopped functioning." See Kerry Buglass, ed., *Hidden from the Holocaust: Stories of resilient Children Who Survived and Thrived* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2003), 86. When a woman in Warsaw went to the police to report that Jews were living in her tenement house, "She was not prepared for the answer she received: 'So what? They're people, too. Go report them to the Gestapo on Sucha Boulevard.'" See Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?*, 219. Even among Jews themselves, as Emanuel Ringelblum concedes, the reputation of the "Blue" police was considerably better than that of the Jewish police, who were generally ruthless in obeying German orders. See Lewin, *A Cup of Tears*, 19; Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłeski*, 172–74, 264; Manuel Ferreras-Tascón, "Policja Granatowa," *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2004), vol. 14, 192–95. For a critical view of the activities of the "Blue" police in the Warsaw ghetto see Levin, *Walls Around*, 89. For additional examples of Polish police being bought off, giving warnings to Jews of impending danger, releasing Jews from detention and allowing them to escape, see (among many other sources): Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 229 (Warsaw); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 468–69, 612, 615, 750 (Warsaw); Bronowski, *They Were Few*, 34 (Warsaw); Joseph Goldstein, "Extracts from a Ghetto Diary," and Dovid Schnipper, "My Town, Plontch" in *The Staszów Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/staszow/staszow.html>>, translated from Elhanan Erlich, ed., *Sefer Staszow* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Staszów in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), xxv ff. (Staszów), 633 ff. (Połaniec); Zylberberg, *A Warsaw Diary, 1939–1945*, 89–90, 152, 157 (Warsaw); H. Rabin, ed., *Lizhensk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshai Lizhensk she-nispu be-shoat ha-natsim* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Leżajsk in Israel, 1970), 46 ff., translated as *Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Leżajsk Who Perished in the Holocaust*, Internet: <www2.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Lezajsk/Lezajsk.html> (Tarnogród); Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn*, 29 ff. (English section) (a policeman from Drohiczyn); Nachum Boneh, ed., *Pinsk sefer edut ve-zikaron le-kehilat Pinsk-Karlin*, 3 volumes (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Pinsk-Karlin in Israel, 1966–1977), translated as *History of the Jews of Pinsk*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Pinsk/Pinsk.html>>, Part One, Chapter 10 (a Polish policeman who by chance found a Jewish woman hiding in the home of a Pole in Pińsk advised her to move to a village); Paul Trepman, *Among Men and Beasts* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1978), 96–98; Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, 96, 100, 109, 115, 124, 130–32, 168–70 (Warsaw); Sarah Blattberg-Cooper, "My Memories from the Bloodiest Era of My People's History," in *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Mielec: Sipur hashmadat ha-kehila ha-yehudit* (New York: Mielec Yizkor Book Committee, 1979), translated as *Remembering Mielec: The Destruction of the Jewish Community*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mielec/Mielec.html>> (Połaniec); Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 183 (Warsaw); Breitowicz, *Through Hell To Life*, 54, 56 (Rzeszów); Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir*, 238 (Jelechowice near Złoczów); Chaika Grossman, *The Underground Army: Fighters of the Bialystok Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 105; Kagan, *Szydlowiec Memorial Book*, 234 (Warsaw), 328 (near Radom); Hersh Gotthelf, "A Few Words," in Shtein, ed., *Memorial Book of Sochaczew*, 478 ff. (Warsaw); Horowitz, *Of Human Agony*, 139; Najberg, *Ostatni powstańcy getta*, 161 (Warsaw); Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 278, 326, 410 (all in Warsaw); Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynnę...*, 140–41 (policeman in Skierniewice took a bribe to release a Jewish woman); Alina Margolis-Edelman, *Ala z elementarza* (London: Aneks, 1994), 110–11 (Warsaw); Grupińska, *Po kole*, 155 (Warsaw); Mark Verstanding, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), 166–67 (Warsaw); Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last*, 122 (Warsaw); Vladimir Levin and David Meltser, *Chernaia kniga z krasnymi stranitsami: Tragediia i geroizm evreev Belorussii* (Baltimore: Vestnik Information Agency, 1996), 315 (Lida); George Sten, *Memoirs of a Survivor* (Bondi Junction, New South Wales: n.p., 1996), 15 (Warsaw); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 113 (Kraków); Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945*, 226, 259–60, 267–68 (Warsaw); Adam Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 117 (Warsaw), 118 (Busko-Zdrój); Alina Margolis-Edelman, *Tego, co mówili, nie powtórzę...* (Wrocław, 1999), 113–14 (Warsaw); Klajman, *Out of the Ghetto*, 20 (Warsaw); John Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielnicki* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2000), 122 (Prużana); Sabina Rachel Kałowska, *Uciekać, aby żyć* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2000), 88–92 (Jędrzejów); Ungar and Chanoff, *Destined to Live*, 217 (railroad police); Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 220 (Warsaw), 250 (Kraków); Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 193 (Warsaw—while Polish police officers kept their word, the author notes at p. 192 that a Jewish police officer cheated him); Siekierski, *Żyli wśród nas...*, 108 ("Blue" policemen in Warsaw took bribes to allow Jews to leave the ghetto and avoid apprehension by the Gestapo), as confirmed in Jerzy Krupinski, *My Four Lives* (St. Kilda, Victoria: Vista, 2001); Joseph Rosenberg, *My Name is Józef Nowak: The Life and Times of Joseph Rosenberg* (Toronto: Lifestories, 2001), 36–37 (Warsaw); Grynberg, *Words To Outlive Us*, 323 (Warsaw); Kruk, *The Last Days of*

I went to a Jewish policeman and asked him to accompany me along the streets forbidden to Jews, up to the factory [where a Polish friend was employed]. He wanted a thousand zlotys [złotys] for his services. I asked another policeman; he asked eight hundred zlotys. It was permissible to walk along those streets when escorted by a policeman, but the sidewalks were forbidden. A third policeman asked six hundred ...

Arriving at the factory, I rang the bell at the gate. ...

The guard went to the telephone. I gave the policeman one hundred zlotys. (I borrowed the money from my sister—one hundred and no more! ...) I handed the policeman the hundred zlotys, promising to pay the rest if and when we survived the war. The policeman grabbed my arm and began pulling me back to town, but Pawlowsky [Pawłowski, the friend] wrested me from his grip, saying:

“You have no authority! He belongs to me.”⁶⁰⁵

Andrzej Jezierski recalls how he was stopped in Warsaw in the summer of 1943 by a “Blue” policeman, together with his uncle Jan Kreczmar, an actor, and his wife Justyna Kreczmar, after being fingered by a Jewish spy. The policeman proved to be less rigorous than his informant because he let them go when he discovered that the men were not circumcised.⁶⁰⁶

A Jew by the name of Kalinowski, who was sheltered first by the Humięcki family and later the Tembler family in Warsaw, ventured outside his hiding place and was spotted by a Jewish policeman working with the Gestapo who demanded a bribe. Kalinowski ran back to the apartment where he was staying with his

the Jerusalem of Lithuania, 289 (Woronów); Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 21 (Jurczak, a Polish Kripo agent in Drohobycz), 169 (Warsaw); Peter Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers: The True Story of Three Men Who Defied the Nazis, Saved 1,200 Jews, and Built a Village in the Forest* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 196 (Lida); account of Perla Liebeskind and Rajzla Działowska in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 219 (Piotrków Trybunalski); Laskey, *Night Voices*, 59, 68 (Warsaw); Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 170 (in two cases policemen relented and did not take in Jews whom they had apprehended when confronted by the bluntness or passivity of the victims); Gutman and Bender, *Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 173 (a “Blue” policeman in Warsaw released a Jew after accepting a bribe), Part Two, 863 (a “Blue” policeman in Warsaw brought some Jews out of the ghetto after accepting a bribe); Entry for Irena Schultz, *Polish Righteous: Those Who Risked Their Lives*, Internet: <<http://www.savingjews.org/righteous/>>; Skwara, *Pruszkowscy Żydzi*, 194 (Blue policemen allowed a group of Jews to flee from the Warsaw ghetto after taking a bribe). Felicja Czerniaków, the wife of the head of the Jewish Council in the Warsaw ghetto, was released after being apprehended on the Aryan side with false documents once the “Blue” police established her true identity. (The police retained her jewelry and some papers belonging to her husband which she recovered after the war.) See Joanna Szczęsna, “Reduta Adama Czerniakowa,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, September 21–22, 2002. Margaret Acher, who was sheltered at a Catholic orphanage run by the Sisters of the Family of Mary in Pludy outside Warsaw recalls that, when a “Blue” policeman arrived one day demanding the mother superior denounce her many Jewish charges, she answered him: “Why don’t you do it yourself?” The policeman replied: “No, I can’t. I am a Catholic, I was baptized here. I don’t want to go to Hell ...” The mother superior retorted: “Why would you want *me* to go to Hell in your place?” The policeman never dared to denounce the convent to the Germans. See Marek Halter, *Stories of Deliverance: Speaking with Men and Women Who Rescued Jews from the Holocaust* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1997), 17. Historian Raul Hilberg cites this example of a Polish policeman who confronted a German woman: “A Polish policeman did not wrestle for words. Talking to an ethnic German woman about Jewish children whose heads had been trampled, he asked her whether she was not ashamed. The woman, disturbed by what she had heard, recapitulated this conversation in an anonymous letter that reached the Reich Chancellery in Berlin.” See Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 111; Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 519.

⁶⁰⁵ Goldberg, *The Undeclared*, 120–21.

⁶⁰⁶ Antoni Zambrowski, “Niczym rozmowa głuchych,” *Antysocjalistyczne Mazowsze*, June 9, 2005, posted at

child. The Gestapo followed him there, seized his child and threw it out the fourth storey window and shot Kalinowski on the spot. They arrested the Tembler family, consisting of parents and two sons, and deported them to Auschwitz. Only Mrs. Tembler and her son Jan survived.⁶⁰⁷

Herman Fleiszer, who passed as a Christian in Warsaw using the name Henryk Repa, was betrayed on the street by a Jewish acquaintance from his student days in Lwów, who apparently was promised the freedom of his wife in exchange for his collaboration with the German police.⁶⁰⁸ A Jewish actor from Lwów who went by the name of Witold Kledzki became a Gestapo agent and worked in a Warsaw casino posing as a Pole. At least two of the Jews he denounced and turned over to the Gestapo were executed in the Pawiak prison.⁶⁰⁹

Maciek Rosenblatt, a young Jewish lawyer who fled from his native Drohobycz after gouging ghetto residents with the help of his uncle Dr. Rosenblatt, head of the Jewish Council, took up residence in Warsaw under an assumed identity only to be tracked down by a Gestapo agent from his home town operating in Warsaw.⁶¹⁰ (This latter source also details other examples of Jewish collaborators in Drohobycz, including one who informed on Jews who had dollars and valuables—something only other Jews would generally be aware of.⁶¹¹ Betrayals of hiding places were also known to have occurred.⁶¹²)

A Jewish woman from Warsaw recorded the following cases:

Jewish Gestapo men often went [to the sanatorium in nearby Otwock]. They were called the 'Thirteens', because their headquarters was at 13 Leszno Street. They all wore high boots in the German manner. High boots and a rubber truncheon. And they had beautiful girl-friends. The Thirteens didn't wear armbands with a blue star.⁶¹³

Two Jewish Gestapo women in the other [room in a flat in Marszałkowska Street]. ... Who were they? They were attractive young Jews who were destined to die, but the Germans had spared their lives on condition that they worked for them by denouncing Jews in hiding. The Germans paid them and they dressed smartly.⁶¹⁴

Another young Jewish girl who had become the mistress of the Gestapo Colonel Von Korta, and her brother the colonel's chauffeur-valet, had both been plucked from the Warsaw ghetto, and eventually

<<http://mazowsze.k-raj.com.pl/111834969449210.shtml>>.

⁶⁰⁷ Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, 29–30.

⁶⁰⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 379. The account in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 838, fails to mention that the denouncer was a Jew.

⁶⁰⁹ Testimony of Aleksander Bardini, dated September 18, 1947, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, no. 301/3114, cited in *Relacje z czasów zagłady: Inwentarz. Archiwum ŻIH IN-B, zespół 301 / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 2005), vol. 4 (no. 3001–4000), 54.

⁶¹⁰ Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobyc, and Other Stories*, 42.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 40–43. On p. 51, a survivor recounts the hatred, rivalry and in-fighting among Jews in Nazi camps.

⁶¹² Budzyński, *Miasto Schulza*, 217, 338.

⁶¹³ Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945*, 214.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 332, 337.

accompanied the colonel to Germany.⁶¹⁵ That same memoir mentions a German dentist in Warsaw, a Nazi, who had taken a young Jewish mistress, and a young Jew from Lwów who became the lover of a homosexual German civilian. (The German had rented a room from the Jew's parents in Lwów, and that is probably when the relationship started. Rumor had it that he had the boy's parents killed by the Gestapo to maintain the relationship and eventually brought him to Warsaw.)⁶¹⁶ Fanny Sołomian-Łoc mentions a harmful collaborator residing in the same building her family occupied in the Warsaw ghetto.⁶¹⁷ Maximilian T. describes the activities of an engineer from Lwów by the name of Koenigl, who worked with the Gestapo in Warsaw "in the department of combating communism."⁶¹⁸

In some cases, the activities of Jewish Gestapo agents and informers struck at both Jews and their Polish benefactors, as in the case of Professor Czarny, a provocateur who betrayed the premises of Stefan Prokopek, a People's Army contact. Prokopek's home on Waszyngtona Street served as a base for the Jewish Fighting Organization on the Aryan side. Tadek Szejngut, a Jewish resistance fighter, as well as Prokopek were killed in the Gestapo ambush. After the war, Czarny found refuge in Sweden.⁶¹⁹

Zosia Goldberg, who passed as a Pole in "Aryan" Warsaw, recalled her precarious encounters with "unintentional" betrayers and an active informant.

I was almost exposed three times when I was on the street. Several times I saw the trucks with the *placowka* [*placówka*—labor platoons from the ghetto], the Jews who worked outside the ghetto, and many times they would holler, "Zosia, how are you?" I made believe I didn't know them when they yelled from the trucks because ... They were not doing it on purpose to give me away, they were just hollering hello, happy to see someone they knew.

Another time there was one fellow by the name of Lifszitz whom I had known from before the war. He was tall and skinny, with curly, kinky, blond hair, and he worked for the Germans. I was told that he would go into the Aryan section and he would look for Jews to denounce. One day I saw Lifszitz on the street, and he was heading in my direction. So I went up to him, right up to him, and I said, "You know, I have a knife. I will stab you if you try to give me away. Get away!" He ran away from me; otherwise I would have been in big trouble.⁶²⁰

One survivor, who moved to Warsaw with her parents during the occupation, described three encounters with Jews who were extorting money from fellow Jews or helping the Germans hunt them down. According to Halina Zylberman, her mother was identified by a Jewish woman from Lwów, her father was accosted by a fellow Jew from Kraków in the services of the Gestapo, and after the failed Warsaw uprising of 1944, she witnessed a Jewish Gestapo agent spotting Jews among the evacuees from the city.

⁶¹⁵ Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 234–35.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112, 129.

⁶¹⁷ Sołomian-Łoc, *Getto i gwiazdy*, 38.

⁶¹⁸ Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, 245–47.

⁶¹⁹ Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 424–25; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, 260 (entry 607).

At last I heard heavy steps on the stairs, followed by lighter ones I recognized as my mother's. She came in accompanied by a Polish policeman. "I'm sorry I'm so late Halinka, but I had a misunderstanding with the authorities. Everything's all right now."

From her flushed cheeks and the unnaturally high-pitched tone of her voice I knew something was very wrong, but Mama gave the policeman a glass of tea and sat down and chatted with him about things in general. He mentioned he would like to take me to the country to visit a close friend of his, a farmer. He would like to make up for inconveniencing her by buying us fresh dairy products. I could see by Mama's expression that she didn't like the idea, but she kept on smiling and acting friendly. "I'll let you know," she replied.

When at length the man left, she collapsed on the sofa, exhausted. "You've no idea what I went through today, Halinka." I went over and hugged her as the words poured out: "I was just walking in the street when I was stopped by that policeman. He asked for my identification papers, then without even looking at them, he put them in his pocket 'I'm afraid,' he said, 'You'll have to come to the police station with me.' 'On what charges?' I asked. 'I've been told that you are a Jewess,' he said. Halinka, I thought I was going to faint. How could he know? 'You're making a terrible mistake,' I told him. 'It's no use pretending that you're not, because I know for sure. There's a lady sitting in the café over there who knows you from Lwow [Lwów] as a Jewess.' I glanced over and sure enough, I saw a woman I knew from Lwow. But she was also Jewish. Why should she have turned informer? I almost panicked, but then I thought of you waiting at home and I knew I had to do everything possible to get out of this mess. I asked him, 'Do you have any children?' 'Yes' he said, 'I have a daughter.' 'So have I,' I said. 'She's waiting for me at home right now. She's very young and needs me. I'm not a Jewess,' I told him, 'but I have black market connections and I wouldn't like to be interrogated by the police. Please let me go home to my little girl.' I was crying by now, and I looked him straight in the eyes. I could see he was trying to decide what [to] do so I took off my wedding ring and watch, and my golden cross, and pushed them into his hand. Thank God he accepted the bribe. He said, 'I have a daughter waiting at home for me too, and I can't imagine how she would manage without me. But the informant is watching, so I can't just let you go. I'll have to take you home to check on your story.'⁶²¹

My father was warned that a Jewish acquaintance, originally from Krakow [Kraków], had turned 'Jew-spotter' for the Gestapo. Soon after, they met in the street and although my father's blood froze, he greeted him warmly and invited him to a nearby café for a cup of tea. The informer suggested that they exchange addresses and my father readily agreed, and gave him a different pseudonym and address. He wandered the streets for some hours till he was sure he was not being followed, till he dared to go home. Fortunately, their paths never crossed again, but we were shocked to think that someone who was so well-educated and well-liked could have fallen so low.⁶²²

⁶²⁰ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 74–75.

⁶²¹ Halina Zylberman, *Swimming Under Water* (Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001), 30–31.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, 71–72.

There was one man standing close by the Germans who attracted my attention. He was the only civilian amongst them and was well dressed and well nourished. I thought I must be dreaming because he looked so obviously Jewish to me. “What is a Jew doing here amongst the German soldiers?” I thought. But when I heard him talking to the Germans saying, “I can’t see any of them in this lot,” shivers went down my spine. He was clearly in the service of the Gestapo—another Jewish ‘Jew-spotter’. Suddenly I was very self-conscious and I felt a touch of ice in my heart. Would he recognise me as a Jew?

But we stayed standing there for about fifteen minutes and then two soldiers of the Wehrmacht approached us and ordered us to follow them.⁶²³

The topic of Polish blackmailers or *szmalcowniki* has received much attention in Jewish memoirs and from Holocaust historians. However, there is virtually no recognition in mainstream literature that these same blackmailers, usually from the dregs of society, were not always ethnic Poles and that they also preyed on Poles, including members of the Polish underground.⁶²⁴ Moreover, very little publicity is given to their Jewish counterparts either operating on their own or in mixed gangs. The latter phenomenon is described in greater detail below.

Polish *szmalcowniki* were generally either members of extortion rings, which were usually made up of professional criminals with ties to German officials and the Polish police, or amateurs, generally young ruffians interested above all in extorting money and not actually in denouncing Jews. As one Jew hiding in Warsaw attests,

Did these young ruffians, or ‘Shmaltsovniki’ as they were known in the Occupation jargon, really want to hand over their victims to the German authorities? No, they were not particularly interested in that. Instead they wanted to rob the Jews, relieve them of their money, jewellery and other valuables, or at least of a jacket or winter coat.⁶²⁵

Furthermore, since the German authorities had little use for freelance blackmailers, despite threats of turning the Jews in by the latter, these rarely materialized. Even Blue policemen who turned to blackmailing Jews could turn out to be more interested in procuring small payments, rather than turning in their victims.⁶²⁶ Members of the Communist underground were also active in extorting and robbing Jews, often with lethal consequences.⁶²⁷

Most Jews survived their encounters with the amateur *szmalcowniki*, even several of them in a short span; hence the abundance of references to such incidents in Jewish accounts. For the most part amateur

⁶²³ Ibid., 86–87.

⁶²⁴ See, for example, Józef Garliński, *Świat mojej pamięci* (Warsaw: Volumen, 1992), 305–306. Garliński describes extortion directed at stores which served as drop-off points for the Polish underground in Warsaw.

⁶²⁵ Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 194. For a description of a “timid” *szmalcownik* see Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 197.

⁶²⁶ Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 197.

⁶²⁷ Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, 212 n.43. Members of the Communist underground were also caught robbing Jews during the final stages of the Warsaw ghetto. See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 304.

szmalcowniki had their sights set on relatively small amounts of money or jewelry, and could often be bargained down. Dov Weissberg describes one unfortunate Jew who was robbed in Warsaw three times in a row; by the time the third blackmailer appeared on the scene he had no money to offer him: “The bum let him go. After all, he was only interested in the money, not in bringing a Jew to the police station.”⁶²⁸ Some blackmailers were careful not to take all of the victim’s money and even gave tips on how to conduct oneself and dress to avoid future encounters with blackmailers.⁶²⁹ One Jewish apartment in Warsaw was visited several times by a blackmailer who contented himself with taking small amounts of money and valuables and provided “practical hints about better and safer ways of hiding their identity.” The two women never ended up moving.⁶³⁰ Amateur *szmalcowniki* were afraid of actual contact with the police, because extortion was a punishable offence, and Jews who were extorted could sometimes get the *szmalcowniki* to back down with bravado denials that they were Jews and threats of reporting the *szmalcowniki* to the police.⁶³¹ Even policemen who extorted money from Jews are known to have backed away from harming those who had no money to hand over.⁶³² Encounters with gangs of professional blackmailers, who were generally much more ruthless and usually included Jews and policemen among their members, were far more precarious. But such encounters were not routinely lethal, and the blackmailers could also be bargained down or, on occasion, even befriended.⁶³³ Samuel Willenberg describes a Warsaw gang headed by Antoś, who obtained counterfeit identity documents for the author.⁶³⁴ Another source indicates that even the “king” of the Warsaw *szmalcowniki* was recruited, albeit for payment, to help Jewish insurgents escape from the ghetto after the failed revolt of April 1943.⁶³⁵

As mentioned earlier, mixed gangs of *szmalcowniki* which counted Jews among their members were already visible in the fall of 1939. Under the date November 4, 1939, Chaim Kaplan recorded the following entry:

The conqueror has surrounded himself with spies, traitors, and talebearers, some of whom are found even among our Jewish brethren. The Jews fill a triple role here. First, they are “informers”

⁶²⁸ Weissberg, *I Remember...*, 70. For other examples from Warsaw see Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 441; Bronisława Alland, *Memoirs of a Hidden Child During the Holocaust: My Life During the War* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 21 (the companions of a female *szmalcownik* did allow her to leave her victim without a coat); Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynną...*, 110; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 194–97; Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last*, 122 (a crooked policeman).

⁶²⁹ Natan Gross, *Kim Pan jest, Panie Grymek?* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1991), 257. Translated into English as Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001). See also Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 170.

⁶³⁰ Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 140. Although there was no real risk of denunciation, the author explains: “Nonetheless the danger lay elsewhere. During his numerous drinking bouts he might blurt out to the more ruthless type and sooner or later the Jew would be done for.”

⁶³¹ Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynną...*, 122–23.

⁶³² Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 194.

⁶³³ For examples of bargaining with *szmalcowniki* see Janina Bauman, *Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl’s Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939–1945* (London: Virago, 1986), 111–12, 118; Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost*, 173. For examples of *szmalcowniki* who befriended the Jews they extorted see Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, 245–47; Kaplan, *I Never Left Janowska...*, 74–80; Cyprys, *A Jump for Life*, 140; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 195–96.

⁶³⁴ Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*, 151–55.

⁶³⁵ Grupańska, *Po kole*, 220.

pointing out the way for the thieves. Visits are made to one place and then another, and each visit ends in a loss of money and life. Valuables are brazenly stolen, accompanied by threats and most often by blows and injuries. ...

The second role filled by the Jews is to serve as sacrificial victims. As a result of our sacrifices, they take nothing from the Christians except in unusual cases. A third role is, to our shame, filled by those Jews who buy the stolen goods from the robbers.⁶³⁶

The topic of *szmalcowniki* is dealt with extensively in a recent study by historian Jan Grabowski which is based on court records from Warsaw relating to trials of persons charged by the German authorities with extorting Jews. It is now beyond dispute that this phenomenon was not an exclusively Polish undertaking, but one in which persons of other nationalities, including Jews, played a prominent role. Of the more than 240 persons charged in 1940–1943, Poles accounted for about two thirds (159 in total), 45 were Germans (almost 20 percent), and more than 30 were Jews (there were also a few others such as Ukrainians). Organized gangs targeted well-off Jews, usually included Jews among their members (some of these Jews were Gestapo agents), worked hand in hand with German officials, and often had connections with the Polish “Blue” police. Jewish scum were indispensable for extortion operations within the ghetto itself.⁶³⁷

Jan Grabowski’s study is also important for another reason: The Polish underground is often taken to task for delaying, until mid-1942, to take measures against *szmalcowniki*. However, since the Germans were actively prosecuting *szmalcowniki* until that time, there was no need to engage the complicated procedures of the underground state: it was far easier for someone, even the Jewish victims themselves, to simply report the *szmalcowniki* to the German authorities.⁶³⁸ Until 1942, Jews could also obtain justice through Polish criminal courts which continued to operate for transgressions not involving Germans. Another recent study by Jan Grabowski of the court records from the environs of Warsaw yielded the following conclusions:

⁶³⁶ Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 63.

⁶³⁷ Jan Grabowski, “Szmalcownicy warszawscy, 1939–1942,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris), no. 143 (2003): 85–117; Jan Grabowski, “*Ja tego Żyda znam!*”: *Szantażowanie Żydów w Warszawie, 1939–1943* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004), especially 45–47, 86. See also Dorota Siepracka, “Mordercy Żydów przed nazistowski Sądem Specjalnym,” *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, no. 2 (6), 2004: 233–46. In his important commentary on Jan Grabowski’s study, Marek Wierzbicki points out that the gangs operating prior to 1942 targeted Jews and other victims not primarily because of their race, but because they were easy targets. Thus they were thus not classic *szmalcowniki* who threatened the Jews with denunciation to the Germans, but rather common bandits who could be punished under German law. See Marek Wierzbicki, “W kwestii szmalcownictwa w Warszawie w czasie II wojny światowej,” *Zeszyty Historyczne*, no. 148 (2004): 120–26. For an example of a hold-up ring in Warsaw consisting of German soldiers who were eventually apprehended by the German criminal police, see Brand, *I Dared To Live*, 20–27, 30–31. For an example of a group of German criminal police involved in a home invasion, see Sten, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, 25–26. Another case, based on the memoir of Helena Szereszewska, strongly suggests that Polish hooligans worked in the Warsaw ghetto in cooperation with Jews. See Levin, *Walls Around*, 76–77. Two well-known known rings of denouncers in Lwów also had ties to German officials and could, for payment, secure the release of persons arrested by the Germans. See Jones, *Żydzi Lwowa w okresie okupacji 1939–1945*, 185. For an account which suggests that a Ukrainian from Lwów was working in cahoots with *szmalcowniki* in Warsaw, see Christine Winecki, *The Girl in the Check Coat: Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland and a New Life in Australia* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 69.

⁶³⁸ Jewish police records in Częstochowa reveal that the Polish police was also frequently enlisted to curb crimes committed by Poles against Jews. See William Glicksman, “Daily Record Sheet of the Jewish Police (District I) in the Częstochowa Ghetto 1941–1942,” *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*, vol. 6 (1967): 331–57, at pp. 352–57.

Once in the Polish court, proceedings involving Jews advanced along the lines prescribed by the Polish pre-war criminal code. Although the criminal law remained in force, the social context changed dramatically, and the magistrates seem to have been aware of the new reality and were ready to make certain allowances. In some cases ... the judges quite clearly commiserated with the Jews and, while weighing their decisions, took into consideration the particularly dramatic plight of the “non-Aryan population.”

When Mendel Don and Izaak Butliński, both severely beaten by a group of hooligans, abruptly changed their testimony, the court “aware of the important discrepancies between the earlier testimonies of the victims and those given more recently,” decided to pay heed to the original statements. “The last testimony,” declared the judge, “must have been given under pressure, which could have been easily applied (especially in the case of the Jews) by Kaliński [one of the accused] who works in the mayor’s office.” [The accused, local peasants who assaulted and wounded a Jewish artisan, were sentenced (on appeal) to eight months in prison.] In another case, the court in Siedlce sentenced Chaim Lewin to three months in jail for charging black-market prices. The sentence was successfully appealed. The Warsaw Court of Appeals stated in its April 1941 decision that, “the accused Lewin is a poor artisan, and a sole provider for a family of six. In the present, tough times, he faces extreme financial hardship, and this speaks in his favour. In this context, the arguments of the prosecution are irrelevant.”

The Polish judges were also aware of the problems facing Jewish victims and witnesses summoned to court. In most cases, in order to appear before the bench, the Jews had to apply to police authorities for special travel permits. Such permissions were usually denied, and the witnesses’ absence could have been used to cut the proceedings short. The judges would have none of it, and refused to dismiss cases based on testimonies of absent Jewish witnesses or victims. The trials went ahead, and some Poles were even sentenced, although the Jewish victims had already been sent away to the death camps. [Several examples are cited of Poles being fined and sentenced to jail terms for stealing from or assaulting Jews.]

In all criminal cases heard by the Siedlce District Court, which involved Jewish victims and Polish accused, the trials went ahead even when the former were unable to testify. What may seem more surprising, in most cases the defense went along with the prosecutors’ requests to have testimonies of absent Jews admitted in court. [Examples are provided.] In all sentences that were appealed in the Warsaw Court of Appeals, the higher court upheld the decisions of the Siedlce court. The fact that the victims were Jewish, and the witnesses were unable to attend the hearings, seemed to have played no role in the judges’ deliberations.

The phenomenon of relative judicial impartiality as demonstrated in the Siedlce District Court and in the Warsaw Court of Appeals is corroborated by evidence from the Municipal Court in Otwock. There, the sentences imposed on Jewish defendants differed little from those imposed on Polish culprits. A comparison of fifty-four cases involving Jews with an equal sample of “Polish” cases reveals that the ethnic origin of the accused played no visible role in the court decisions. The cases heard by the court during the 1940–1942 period dealt mostly with theft and assault, and the judges were more preoccupied with the pre-war record of the accused than with their racial features. Repeat offenders were given harsh treatment regardless of their origins. Overall, the

judges strayed on the side of leniency, often explaining in their decisions that the times were difficult and prison conditions were appalling. ...

Although ultimately unsuccessful, the accused and their lawyers often appealed to the “racial solidarity” of the judges. ...

A lawyer tried to link the Jews to “smugglers, thieves and Bolsheviks” who threatened the villagers east of Warsaw. Another accused peasant justified the assault on one Szwarcberg, “because the Jew pretended to be a Pole.” ... these exhortations seem to have carried little or no weight with the judges ...⁶³⁹

Survivor and rescuer accounts confirm that Jews were frequently involved in blackmailing fellow Jews. Maximilian T., a Jew from Lwów passing in Warsaw, describes how Jews from his native Lwów worked hand in glove with a gang of Polish blackmailers in Warsaw by compiling detailed lists of Jews in hiding. After his arrival in Warsaw, Maximilian T. gave his address to a Jewish friend he recognized from his home town of Lwów, also living in Warsaw under an assumed identity. Soon after, he was visited by blackmailers who demanded a payoff, but with whom, curiously, he developed amicable relations. They even urged him to change his address.

When I asked him who had given them my name, he said that I was not the only one on their list of Jews living in Warsaw under Polish names. ... I was beside myself when I saw the list. It contained quite a number of Jews, among them about ten from my hometown, all registered by their assumed Polish names, their addresses in Warsaw, their real names, and also their means, the size of their families, their profession before the war, and finally, the place where they were working in Warsaw, if one held a job. Although I had my suspicions about who the author of the list was, I still was not sure and asked my friend to tell me who he was. My friend, the ‘szmalcownik’, gave me a few names of Jews who belonged to their gang. I was stunned to learn that, among others, there were the two colleagues of mine whom I mentioned earlier. They both came from so-called good Jewish families, and who would have believed that they could have been the source of information given to the blackmailers, by which they betrayed a fellow Jew, their former class-mate?⁶⁴⁰

Maximilian T. acknowledges the wartime complexity as follows: “And to this question I would only add, and what about the Jews? Have we all been saints? Have there not been any rotten apples in our barrel? Based on my experiences during the Holocaust, I have come to the conclusion that a generalization in this matter [i.e., about the behaviour of Poles] would be unfair.”⁶⁴¹ Henryk Reiss, who took refuge in Warsaw, was warned by his aunt, a native of Lwów, of Jews in the service of the Gestapo: “Refugees from Lwów were exposed by others from Lwów, usually members of the so-called golden youth. She mentioned the

⁶³⁹ Jan Grabowski, “Jewish Defendants in German and Polish Court in the Warsaw District, 1939–1941,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 35 (1) (2007): 49–80, here at 68–70.

⁶⁴⁰ Maximilian T.’s account appears in Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, at 240–42.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

name of the son of a known pharmacist E.”⁶⁴² Another Jew from Lwów who found refuge in Warsaw, where he personally encountered Jewish blackmailers, was Marion Andre (Marian Andrzej Tenenbaum aka Czerniecki), who later became a theatre director in Toronto.⁶⁴³

Joseph Rosenberg of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, who was passing as a Christian in Warsaw, described his family’s misfortunes (a robbery) at the hands of group of *szmalcowniki* with whom Józef Goncho, a Jewish acquaintance from Wolbrom, worked.⁶⁴⁴ A Jew named Włodek S. got entangled with a Warsaw policeman and his wife, a prostitute; the Jews on whom he informed were then blackmailed by *szmalcowniki*.⁶⁴⁵ A Jewish woman who was offered an opportunity to work together with *szmalcowniki* on Warsaw’s “Aryan” side after being unable to pay a ransom was Luba Gawisar.⁶⁴⁶

A Jewish woman named Stefania K. recalled how a young Jew living in a tenement house in Warsaw she moved to, lured those he suspected of being Jewish to other premises on the pretext that they would be safe there from denouncers. In fact, it turned out this person worked together with the Gestapo, and the “safe” premises were soon visited by Germans to extort money from the Jews who fell into the trap and relocated.⁶⁴⁷

Zosia Goldberg, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother, described how her “friend” Franka, in whom she had confided, betrayed the fact that she had jewelry to a Volksdeutch plainclothes policeman, who then staged a robbery in her home, forcing her and her mother to relocate.⁶⁴⁸

Another account tells of a Jewish woman confiding in a Jewish friend about family members passing as Poles in Warsaw: “And at parting, she even gave them our address and telephone number.” Soon the blackmailers came and, when the author’s father refused to give anything, he was arrested by the police. Fortunately, the Pole who interrogated his father had pity on him and released him. However, the father’s mother was suspicious of the policeman’s motives so, in a bizarre twist, she turned her son in to the police for trading in dollars. Although his fellow prisoners learned he was Jewish, a certain criminal protected him and he was eventually released in exchange for a large bribe. The aunt who had triggered this series of events had an affair with an informer, and when his wife learned of this she denounced the author’s mother, who she mistakenly believed was having the affair.⁶⁴⁹

A Jewish family passing as Christians in Warsaw faced extortion by a mixed gang of *szmalcowniki*, possibly with police connections, after a young Jewish woman from their native Białystok sought their assistance to pay a bribe to the Kripo. Within days a gang of three men, including two Germans, who knew all about their circumstances, descended on their residence. The Jewish woman had obviously been used as

⁶⁴² Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynnę...*, 106.

⁶⁴³ Marion Andre’s account in the author’s possession.

⁶⁴⁴ See Rosenberg, *My Name is Józef Nowak*, 34–36.

⁶⁴⁵ Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione*, 115. That author confirms that Jews in hiding managed to establish good connections with various German agencies. Ibid., 116.

⁶⁴⁶ Her account is found in Grupińska, *Po kole*, 152–54, and Grupińska, *Ciągle po kole*, 160.

⁶⁴⁷ Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 168.

⁶⁴⁸ Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 62–63.

⁶⁴⁹ Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 197–202.

a decoy. The Jews spotted one of the *szmalcowniks* on the street a few weeks later and he offered to return the bracelet he had taken from them in exchange for cooperating with the group by finding other victims.⁶⁵⁰

Gary Keins describes several encounters in Warsaw with a Jewish woman, a Mrs. Salc, whom he had met in Zamość, where she first revealed his cover. Originally from Lwów, Mrs. Salc eventually moved to Warsaw where she worked together with a gang of *szmalcowniks*, tailing Jews passing as Poles. But that wasn't the author's only worry: "If Mrs. Salc only speculated about my origin, there was at least one other person who could finger me—a young man and former member of the Ghetto police who suddenly showed up on the Polish side."⁶⁵¹ The author recalls that the Nazis had their agents, including Jewish ones, all over Warsaw and "used Jewish cowards to track down their co-religionists hiding on the Polish side. We heard that they made dozens of denunciations every day to the Gestapo. The numbers were so numerous that the Nazis fell behind in their frenzied Jew-killing, so much so that betrayals from December, 1942, were not yet disposed of in March of 1943, according to the information of the underground." He had heard that "about one hundred fifty Ghetto dwellers had pledged themselves as agents to the Gestapo. ... about one hundred and fifty Jewish escapees were caught every day with the help of those betrayers and various other headhunters."⁶⁵²

Rescuer Kazimiera Żuławska recalls a number of raids on her Warsaw apartment whose purpose was to extort large sums of money. The Gestapo was accompanied by spies or denouncers who were Jews, *Volksdeutsche* or Poles.⁶⁵³ Another rescuer recalls an extortion by a Polish policeman. The Jewish woman in question was denounced by a Jew, and the extortion money had to be shared with the Germans.⁶⁵⁴

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers on Warsaw's Aryan side were involved in blackmailing as an important sideline, in addition to their assigned tasks of ferreting out Jews in hiding, searching for Jewish goods hidden with Poles, gathering intelligence about the rescue network and infiltrating underground organizations.⁶⁵⁵ Henryk Grabowski, a legendary Home Army liaison between the Polish and Jewish underground, who smuggled scores of Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto, recalled that there were Jewish, as well as Polish *szmalcowniks* he had to watch out for.⁶⁵⁶ Ludwik Hirszfeld, a Jew who converted to Christianity and also had to hide to survive, confirms, albeit with some exaggeration, the same state of affairs: "In the city [of Warsaw] there moved about thousands [sic] of spies—*Volksdeutsche*, Poles and Jews ..."⁶⁵⁷

Irena Tarłowska (Szenberg), who survived passing as a Christian in Warsaw, after recounting her experiences with Polish blackmailers, concludes: "What is so surprising about this? Robbing Jews was such an easy way to make a profit. In every nation one can find rogues. There were after all Jewish blackmailers

⁶⁵⁰ Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 84–85.

⁶⁵¹ Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition*, 131–32, 151, 179.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 145, 151, 154.

⁶⁵³ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 461–62.

⁶⁵⁴ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 568.

⁶⁵⁵ Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 179.

⁶⁵⁶ Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardech*, 92. Grabowski also described how he tried in vain to find Jews in the Białystok and Wilno ghettos who were willing to run the risks involved in conspiratorial activities. Ibid., 92–94.

⁶⁵⁷ Hirszfeld, *Historia jednego życia*, 286.

too.”⁶⁵⁸ Miriam Peleg-Mariańska, a Jew who worked closely with Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, writes: “In spite of the fact that the streets of Warsaw were swarming with many informers, collaborators and stool-pigeons, both Polish and Jewish ones, the city always awakened in me feelings of admiration with regard to its general attitude to the occupiers.”⁶⁵⁹

Israel Shahak, a Jew from Warsaw, has stated:

Of course there were Polish policemen who rounded up Jews and Poles, who blackmailed Jews whom they recognized as such. ... But who of the Jewish survivors does not know ... that there were also Jewish blackmailers, some of them even quite famous by name, outside the Ghetto, who were neither better nor worse than the Polish ones, and also Jewish policemen in the Ghetto whose duty in the first weeks of the extermination of summer 1942 was to deliver, each of them a specified number, of Jewish victims to ‘be sent’ to extermination. *Now*, I hold that both kinds of murderers or accessories to murder are fully equal and that the abhorrence in which one should hold them does not depend on nationality, but my memories (and memories of all the survivors who are honestly ‘talking among themselves’) tell me that at the time we Jews hated the Jewish policemen, or the Jewish spies for the Nazis in the Ghetto, much more than we hated anybody else.⁶⁶⁰

Of this tragic and complex phenomenon Władysław Bartoszewski, an active member of Żegota, writes:

The struggle against the blackmailers was exceedingly difficult. It was nevertheless carried out systematically as far as possible by the Polish underground organizations during 1943 and 1944. If, however—as events would show in several cases—the memory of the wrongs and the personal tragedies suffered as a consequence of denunciation was stronger and more lasting in those who were rescued than the memory of the incomparably more numerous cases of proffered assistance, this has to be regarded as a characteristic, but also understandable, trait of human nature. In general, tragic and negative experiences leave a deeper and more lasting impression on the human psyche than do good and positive ones. Aside from the German police and the informers and extortionists, who were recruited from the dregs of the Christian Polish and Ukrainian population, it was the Jewish confidence men who represented the greatest threat to Jews living in hiding. Seduced by false hopes and promises, they frequently helped the Germans to track down fellow Jews who were hiding in the ‘Aryan’ sector.⁶⁶¹

Elsewhere Bartoszewski wrote that confidants, renegades and betrayers constituted a greater plague, and were much more visible, inside the ghettos than the parallel phenomenon on the Polish side.⁶⁶² It is also worth noting that the Germans employed many non-Polish agents and informers not only in Warsaw, but

⁶⁵⁸ Barbara Engelking, *Na łące popiołów: Ocaleni z Holocaustu* (Warsaw: Cyklady, 1993), 157.

⁶⁵⁹ Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, *Witnesses*, 150–51.

⁶⁶⁰ Israel Shahak, “The ‘Life of Death’: An Exchange,” *New York Review of Books*, January 29, 1987, 46.

⁶⁶¹ Władysław Bartoszewski, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Christian’s Testimony* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 89.

⁶⁶² Władysław Bartoszewski, “Losy Żydów Warszawy 1939–1943,” in Władysław Bartoszewski and Marek Edelman,

throughout occupied Poland,⁶⁶³ even in areas where those ethnic minorities did not live. According to historian Jan Pietrzykowski, the city of Częstochowa was plagued by both Ukrainian and Lithuanian Gestapo agents.⁶⁶⁴ Other Polish historians note that Ukrainians, Belorussians and Russians were employed not only in Warsaw, but also in a small town like Augustów.⁶⁶⁵ Jewish memoirs also confirm that Ukrainian Gestapo agents and informers were plentiful in Warsaw.⁶⁶⁶

However, despite the existence of such copious evidence, historian Gunnar Paulsson, who has recently published an important study about Jews in wartime Warsaw, insists that the supposition that blackmailers included substantial numbers of Jewish turncoats is “quite mistaken.”⁶⁶⁷ Moreover, he maintains that he has not encountered in his research a single “concrete example” of a Jew betraying his Polish benefactor,⁶⁶⁸ even though such cases were already reported during the war and confirmed afterwards.⁶⁶⁹

Conditions were much the same outside Warsaw. A Jew from Radom, who was passing as a Pole, was drawn into an extortion ring consisting of a policeman and a prostitute who tracked him down and made him reveal the identities of other Jews hiding in Lwów. This group was eventually broken up by the Polish underground who provided the Jew with a safe shelter.⁶⁷⁰

Historians Józef Bratko and Witold Mędykowski deal extensively with the activities of Gestapo agents of various nationalities in Kraków, where a group of about thirty Jews worked under Maurycy Diamand (Diamant) and Julian Appel and another smaller group under Aleksander Förster.⁶⁷¹ There was a special division for Jewish affairs—Department No. 3—at the Gestapo headquarters on 2 Pomorska Street in Kraków, which consisted of a large network of agents drawn mainly from the Jewish ghetto police. Fearing being blamed for aiding resisters inside the ghetto, with the assistance of the confidante Stefania (Stefa) Brandstätter (née Rottenberger), Jewish policemen (among them Julian Appel, Wilek Giemski and Weiss) tracked down members of the Jewish underground on the “Aryan” side.⁶⁷² Stefania Brandstätter also

Żydzi Warszawy 1939–1943 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1993), 12.

⁶⁶³ A counterintelligence report of the Home Army Command for the Lwów District for the period March 1 to September 1, 1942, refers to 3,172 informers broken down as follows: 1,365 Volksdeutsche, 83 Reichsdeutsche, 463 Ukrainians, 278 Communists, 91 NKVD agents, 104 Gestapo agents, 23 Soviet intelligence agents, 307 Poles, and 91 Jews. The Jewish informers would only include those active outside the ghettos. See *Polska-Ukraina: Trudne pytania*, vol. 9 (Warsaw: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej and Karta, 2002), 270.

⁶⁶⁴ Jan Pietrzykowski, *Cień swastyki nad Jasną Górą: Częstochowa w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji 1939–1945* (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985).

⁶⁶⁵ Tomasz Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna: Społeczeństwo polskie a państwo podziemne 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Krupski i S-ka, 2000), 107; Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza*, 23, 111, 116 (Warsaw).

⁶⁶⁶ Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition*, 116, 219–20; Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last*, 117; Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 64; Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 196–97.

⁶⁶⁷ Paulsson, *Secret City*, 150.

⁶⁶⁸ Gunnar S. Paulsson, “Ringelblum Revisted: Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945,” in Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed., *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 185.

⁶⁶⁹ Szapiro, *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka*, 163. These two rather well-known and well-documented cases are described earlier.

⁶⁷⁰ Elias Bialski, *Patrząc prosto w oczy* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2002), 114, 139–47.

⁶⁷¹ Bratko, *Gestapowcy*, especially at 86–99; Witold Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 202–220.

⁶⁷² Bauminger, *The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto*, 26, 85–86; Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 204, 206.

betrayed two Polish colleagues, Anna Maria Heydel and Izabela Czeecz, who were deported to Auschwitz.⁶⁷³ (One of the most active German Gestapo agents in Kraków was Rudolf Körner, originally from the Sudetenland, who was responsible for the capture of hundreds of Jews on the Aryan side.⁶⁷⁴)

The Jewish underground had little success in eliminating Jewish Gestapo agents (some were eventually executed by the Polish underground, others like Diamand, who had personal Jewish bodyguards protecting him, avoided his death sentence). According to members of the Jewish underground, these Gestapo agents succeeded in destroying almost completely the Jewish underground in the ghetto and its members, liaison officers, supply depots and printing shops on the Aryan side. When the ghetto was liquidated on March 13, 1943, most of the remaining underground members perished when a Jewish informer betrayed their bunker.⁶⁷⁵ Not only did the Germans employ groups of Jewish Gestapo agents to ferret out Jews in hiding, but also to spread propaganda, particularly for the benefit of the West, by creating Jewish organizations dedicated to the “welfare” of fellow Jews.⁶⁷⁶

Aleksander Biberstein, the chronicler of Kraków Jewry, describes at great length the activities of numerous members of the Jewish police—the *Ordnungsdienst* (OD or Order Service), and various other Jewish agents active both inside and outside the ghetto.

During the entire period of the occupation the *Ordnungsdienst* was a tool in the hands of the Gestapo. On its instructions the OD-men carried out without reservation the basest activities, frequently surpassing the Germans in their ruthlessness. They were the ones who pulled Jews out of homes to their deportation, pressing them on with screams and often with beatings. They were the ones who filled up the jail cells on the basis of lists of names drawn up with their help and the help of other denouncers. They convoyed the transports of deportees and, on their own initiative, carried out searches of homes to look for those who were staying there “illegally.” ...

The OD had three sections: political, currency, and criminal. The *Zivilabteilung* was a special section that reported directly to the Gestapo and received its instructions from them. That unit struck terror [in the ghetto]...

Only a few members of the *Ordnungsdienst* did not have shameful deeds on their conscience. ...

Over and above the uniformed portion of the *Ordnungsdienst*, who openly assisted the occupier, there existed during the occupation a broad network of confidants, commonly called informers, who were connected to individual German bureaus such as *Zollfahndungsstelle*, the Gestapo, *Wirtschaftsamt*. These confidants spied on Jews in hiding especially members of the Jewish Fighting Organization, searched for hidden Jewish property and that given over [to Poles] for safekeeping, and listened in on conversations. Often the denunciations were trumped up and were

⁶⁷³ Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 204, 209.

⁶⁷⁴ One of the most active German Gestapo agents was Rudolf Körner, originally from the Sudetenland, who was responsible for the capture of hundreds of Jews on the Aryan side. See Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 23–24. Interestingly, Taubenschlag also befriended Eduard Schubert, the head of two sections of the criminal police (Kripo) in Kraków, who took a bribe to transfer Taubenschlag’s mother from Lwów to Kraków.

⁶⁷⁵ See the testimony of Cesia Frymer and Pola Warszawska in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i Zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 7–9.

⁶⁷⁶ Arczyński and Balcerak, *Kryptonim “Żegota”*, 173–74.

the result of personal conflicts. Because of these denunciations hundreds of people were imprisoned or deported to Auschwitz where they died in gas chambers. ...

... The number of confidants was elusive, although it probably exceeded significantly the number of official OD workers. ...

On instructions from the Gestapo Spira organized the so-called *Zivilabteilung*, the most ominous part of the OD, which reported directly to the Gestapo. Its workers were: Julian Appel, Blodek, Michał Pacanower, Ignacy Pacanower, Artur Löffler, Natan Schleifer and Wertal. These persons handed over to the Germans, without scruples, Jews who had displeased them for whatever reason. ... Artur Löffler ... made up lists of Jews for deportation, and denounced Jews who hid. Natan Schleifer searched for hideouts of Jews, informed about political conversations, and thought nothing of blackmailing people for bribes. ...

The confidants were commonly called informers. This was the most dangerous element, bereft of all scruples and human feelings. ... Depending on their assignment they tracked down Jews in hiding, members of the Jewish Fighting Organization, hidden Jewish property, people with party affiliation, etc. The confidants blackmailed their victims and extorted money from them, and once deprived of their money and valuables, they handed them over without the slightest scruple. There were many confidants living both inside and outside the ghetto who were not known at all and consequently were very dangerous.⁶⁷⁷

The activities of a Jewish policeman in Kraków are described by Bertha Ferderber-Salz:

One of the ghetto policemen was a low creature who had been friendly with one of the leaders of the underground during their university days. The police had prepared a satanic plan. This man met his friend frequently and gained his confidence through lies and hypocrisy. The member of the underground movement would rebuke him for serving the Germans. The policeman gradually convinced him that he was in the force not by choice, that he wanted to help the underground, and that in effect they both desired the same end. In order to prove his good intentions he would supply the underground with items of information from time to time, until he was trusted by them. Then, when he knew where the leaders of the underground met he arrived with a group of policemen, surrounded the building, and attempted to arrest its occupants. The policemen, however, were unarmed, whereas the members of the underground had arms in their possession. With their arms at the ready, they prevented the traitors from implementing their foul plan and made their way through the ghetto's alleys and streets to the "Aryan" side. But the game was up. The traitor knew the addresses of the members of the underground inside the ghetto and outside it. Some of the fighters managed to escape to Warsaw, where they continued the battle. Others fled to the forests, but most of them were caught and flung into the infamous Cracow prison, Montelupich. They were executed after being tortured sadistically.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁷ Aleksander Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 164–74; Aleksander Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Second edition (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001), 188–200.

⁶⁷⁸ Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...*, 35.

The ghetto walls were not a barrier for Jewish collaborators, whose activities were directed at both Jews and the Polish underground. Jews escaping from the ghetto by way of the sewers were betrayed by Jewish informers.⁶⁷⁹ There were also cases of Poles who agreed to take in Jewish property for safekeeping being arrested and sent to concentration camps because of betrayals by Jewish agents.⁶⁸⁰ As one Jewish witness noted,

Most of them did not conclude their dirty work with the annihilation of the ghetto but continued collaborating with the Germans on the “Aryan” side, helping them to expose Jews who had tried to save themselves through “Aryan” certificates.⁶⁸¹

Some of the numerous collaborators active in Kraków (many of whom were members of the Jewish order police or Judenrat) have been identified by name:⁶⁸² Julian Appel, the boxer Anders, Behavier, Białobroda, Leopold Blodek, Stefania (Stefa) Brandstätter, Samuel Brodman (who worked for the Foreign Exchange Control Office and informed on Jews who traded illegally in currency), Brzeziński (executed by the Home Army on February 26, 1943), Solomon Desler, Maurycy Diamand (or Diamant), Esterowicz, Erlich (code name “Josele Kapota”), Feiler, Israel First, Albin Fleischman, Förster or Forster, Szuje Fastak, who betrayed both Poles (such as Home Army members Antoni Szczygielski and Witold Jernik) as well as Jews to the Gestapo (Fastak was executed by the Home Army), Wilek Giemski, Marcel Goldberg, Zamek Grajek, Marcel Grüner (who tracked down Jews in hiding and members of the Jewish Fighting Organization), David Gutter (executed by the Home Army), Gurman, the Hand brothers, Heller, Marian Handel or Händel (originally from Lwów, after the war he lived in Caracas, Venezuela, under the name of Klinowski but disappeared when detected by fellow Jews), Hochwald (who informed the Germans about wealthy Jews and, after the liquidation of the ghetto, denounced those still in hiding), Regina Judt (a cabaret owner and prostitute), Katz, Meir Kerner, Kohn, Leser or Lejzer Landau, Leinberger, Willi Leitgeber (executed by the Home Army), Lejtkin, Lewin, the Lichtenbaum brothers, Lisman, Artur Löffler or Löffler, Markowicz (executed by the Home Army), Mendl, Mynis, Bobi Nebel, Alfred Nossig, Israel or Ignacy Paconower or Patzanower, Michał Pacanower or Patzanower, Peschel (executed by the Home Army), Marta Poretz, Michael Poretz or Purec, Alfred Reich (from Bochnia), Dr. Szymon Rosen (from Bochnia, who was arrested after the war and tried), Marian Rotkopf or Raskof (from Bochnia), Roth (from Rzeszów, who left a trail of arrests after each stay in Kraków), Rozencwajg, Jakob Schindler or Szindler (who milked his charges before betraying them), Natan Schleifer, Schomburg, Mojżesz Sellinger or Selinger and his wife (not only did they denounce Jews on “Aryan” papers but also Poles who accepted Jewish property for safekeeping), Silberstein, Symche Spira or Simcha Shapira (executed by the Home

⁶⁷⁹ Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Second edition, 98.

⁶⁸⁰ Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, 30 (1985 edition), 32–33 (second edition).

⁶⁸¹ Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...*, 34.

⁶⁸² Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, passim; Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 229–41; Para, *Los polacos y los judíos a través de los siglos*, 269–73; Bertha Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), 34.

Army), Szymon Spitz or Spic, Stein, Steinfeld, Professor Sterling (executed by the Home Army), Świeca, Süsser, Szejn, Szmerling, Szymanowicz, Ignacy Taubman or Traubman, Hersz Waga, Ark Wajntraub, Warszawiak (code name “Parszawiak”), Salo Weininger, Natan Weisman or Wiessmann, Weitz, Wertal, Witkowski, and many others.

The memoirs of Tadeusz Pankiewicz, a “Righteous” Pole who ran a pharmacy in the ghetto and was intimately acquainted with its affairs, provide a number of examples of the activities of Jewish collaborators who endangered both Jews and Poles:

From time to time people would disappear from the Ghetto in this fashion: a list was prepared by a Jewish Gestapo agent, Szymon Szpic, in cooperation with the OD Commander Spira; using this list the suspects were pulled from their homes, usually at night, and delivered to the OD so that they could be transported early in the morning by German cars under heavy police guard, either to Pomorska Street or in an unknown direction where all traces of them disappeared. There were many such cases. Jews disappeared and, also at the outset, some Poles who operated various enterprises in the Ghetto. Even I was included on one of those lists. ... The charge against me was that during the night many of the Ghetto inhabitants constantly gathered in my pharmacy. ...

Aside from Szpic, I should mention some other informers who carried on their activities both in the Ghetto and beyond its walls, and to whom the Germans assigned various functions. Among them were Julek Appel, ... Bialobroda, Stefania Brandstatter or Poklewska, [Wilek or Wilhelm] Chilowicz and his wife [Maria], [Mietek] Finkelstein, Forster, Marcel Gruner, Marcel Goldberg, Kleinberger, [Maier] Kerner, Michal Pacanower, Szymon Rosen, Marian Rotkopf, Ignacy Traubmann, Weininger, Weismann, and many others about whom we did not have positive proof. These informers infiltrated all the institutions of the Ghetto, including the Customs House. ... Brodman and Steinfeld were particularly useful to the Germans there. We kept the names of the informers on prescription blanks which I kept hidden during the occupation. Virtually all of them perished at the hands of the Gestapo or Polish underground organizations.

A very dangerous couple in the service of the Gestapo was the Selingers. ... They collaborated with the Obersturmführer [*Obersturmführer*], Theodore Heinemayer, who was counselor of the Gestapo for political affairs. In the cafes she would eavesdrop on the conversations of the Germans; he would not slight any task assigned to him by the Gestapo. He [Selinger] denounced Jews who had Aryan papers and Poles who were in contact with the Jews.⁶⁸³

After the liquidation of the ghetto, several groups of Jews continued to be employed by the Germans. One group consisting of about 20 (or even as many as 42 according to another report) former Jewish policemen, headed by a Jew named Leopold Blodek, became Gestapo confidants. Spread throughout the city, their primary, but not only task, was to ferret out Jews in hiding, at which they excelled. Another group consisted of about a score of Jews from the Płaszów concentration camp who, in exchange for their

⁶⁸³ Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 35, 37–38. Tadeusz Pankiewicz, a great benefactor of the Jews, was decorated by Yad Vashem. According to Stanisław Taubenschlag, Szymon Szpic’s son was also a Gestapo collaborator, who was sent to England as a spy by the Germans. See

freedom, undertook to infiltrate Polish underground organizations and to expose Jews in hiding. The leaders of these groups (Diamand and Förster, respectively), as well as some of their members (Julek Appel, Natan Weissman, Stefa Brandstätter, Szymche Spira, Mr. and Mrs. Chilowicz, and Białobroda), were eventually exposed in the Polish underground press. Having thus been rendered useless and expendable, most of them were done away with by the Gestapo.⁶⁸⁴

Havka Folman Raban, who was a courier between the different branches of the Jewish Fighting Organization and the Dror Youth Movement throughout occupied Poland, recalled how the Jewish underground in Kraków basically ceased to exist, and she ended up in prison, as a result of a betrayal after a grenade assault carried out on December 22, 1942, in cooperation with the Polish People's Party, on the Cyganeria café, a place frequented by the SS.

By nine o'clock everyone but Menachem had returned [to the secret base on the Aryan side]. ... Suddenly, there was a loud knock on the door. We knew that behind the stoves were weapons, ammunition and banners. One of the guys got up to hide them, but at the same moment a freezing call sliced the air: "Hands up?" Germans burst through the door with guns drawn. We froze on the spot. There were many people: officers, Gestapo men and civilians. They shoved us into the hallway with our hands raised. It wasn't hard to sense their exalted mood. "We caught a gang of Jews!"

The outside of the building was surrounded by tens, perhaps hundreds, of Germans. It seemed they had received information about us; it looked like an ambush. Guards were stationed beside the doors. There was no chance of escape. ... They found the supply of weapons and the banners. ...

... Two vehicles were parked in front of the gate. They pushed us inside and laid us down one on top of the other. By the light of the moon we could see Menachem. He was lying in a corner of the vehicle covered in blood. ... When we reached the prison we learned that the two informers were (Julian Appel and Natan Weissman) young men who worked with our people in Krakow.

... The vehicle stopped beside one of the buildings. I knew that one of our people lived there with the Polish gatekeeper. After a few minutes, the gatekeeper's entire family was dragged into the vehicle. On the way the car stopped a few more times, dragging in additional prisoners. Eventually there were about twenty of us. ...

We reached the Gestapo headquarters on Pomorska Street. ... There were many weeks of interrogations, beatings, pain and blood. ...

Meanwhile the Germans continued searching for the "bandits". ... They went through the city and surroundings. ... The Germans succeeded in arresting tens of underground activists, Jews and Poles. Every day prison cells were filled with additional prisoners.⁶⁸⁵

Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 33–34.

⁶⁸⁴ Arczyński and Balcerak, *Kryptonim "Żegota"*, 173–74; Muszyński, *W walce o Wielką Polskę*, 294 n.157. On the activities of Marycy Diamand's group directed at the Communist Polish People's Party organization in Kraków see Piotr Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza: Droga do władzy 1941–1944* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2003), 240–41.

⁶⁸⁵ Havka Folman Raban, *They Are Still With Me* (Western Galilee, Israel: Ghetto Fighters' Museum, 2001), 142–46.

As in Warsaw, Jewish agents played a crucial role in ferreting out Jews passing and hiding in Kraków and its vicinity after the liquidation of the ghetto. According to Aleksander Biberstein, the “greatest threat” facing Jews with “Aryan” papers, i.e., passing as Poles, was “confidants in the service of the Germans, who most often were Jewish betrayers. ... Many cases of denunciation are known to me where Polish rescuers lost their lives along with the Jews they hid.” Biberstein mentions the following victims of Jewish betrayal by way of example: Dr. Michał Schnell, Dr. Wilhelm Porański, Dr. Izydor Fischhab, Dr. Zygmunt Thur, Dr. Regina Thurowa, Dr. Maria Hirschtal, Dr. Leopold Jakobsohn, Dr. Adolf Engel, Dr. Maria Englowa, Dr. Helen Fisch.⁶⁸⁶ Sometimes fate smiled on near victims: a Polish “Blue” policeman in Kraków by the name of Pitera rescued a Jewish family from a Jewish informer named Ignacy Taubman.⁶⁸⁷

The activities of a Jewish woman identified as Stella (perhaps Stefania Brandstätter), who became the mistress of a high-ranking Gestapo officer, are described by her friend Samuel Honig:

Nobody in the ghetto knew or would ever suspect that Stella, moving freely in Krakow, would be a denouncer, nor the Jewish people hiding their identity in the free Aryan part of the city. On one occasion she met a school friend on the street. ... She whispered to him that she was also hiding on Aryan papers and she assumed so was he. ... She ... proposed to meet him in the same café the next day. ... He came on time, but Stella wasn't there. Instead two Gestapos in civilian clothes suddenly appeared and took him away. Stella did this not once, but often, denouncing friends and mothers with children. ... a person like Stella is called a “muser”, a denouncer, and people that she denounced faced certain death.⁶⁸⁸

Ada Kessler-Pawlak confirms that Jews in hiding had to be on guard constantly because of the large number of Jewish spies seeking out fellow Jews whom they often knew.⁶⁸⁹ Maria Stecko reported that the Gestapo employed Jews at the railway station to detect Jews leaving or arriving in Kraków.⁶⁹⁰ One such agent was Salo Weininger, who made travel for Jews extremely hazardous. Weininger also patrolled streetcars looking for Jews passing as Poles. One of the Jews he apprehended and brought to the police station was Leibek Haffner. Weininger was also involved in a scam, orchestrated by the German authorities, in which some 80 Jews were lured out of hiding on false promises of passage to a safe country; these Jews were taken to the former Jewish cemetery on Jerozolimska Street and shot in 1943.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁶ Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, 220 (1985 edition), 252 (second edition). Biberstein also describes how Polish labourers smuggled goods destined for Jewish inmates into the Płaszów concentration camp, as well as other forms of mutual assistance in that camp which held both Jewish and Polish prisoners. Ibid. (1985 edition), 31, 95, 134–36. Interestingly, a Gypsy was employed by the German commandant to execute Polish prisoners in Płaszów. Ibid., 137.

⁶⁸⁷ Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, 8.

⁶⁸⁸ Samuel Honig, *Reunions: Echoes of the Holocaust, Pre-War and Post-War Stories* (Windsor, Ontario: Benchmark Publishing & Design Inc., 2000), 69–70. Stella survived the war and was seen in Hungary and the United States. For similar accounts concerning Stefania Brandstätter see Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 206–207.

⁶⁸⁹ Kessler-Pawlak, *Nie chcę nocy*, 93, 102.

⁶⁹⁰ Account of Maria Stecko in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 25.

⁶⁹¹ Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 207–208.

Janina Ekier recalls that her brother, who was passing as a Christian, was denounced by a Jewish Gestapo agent at the train station in Kraków and taken to Płaszów (he later perished in Auschwitz): “Jews from the ghetto had to turn in every day ten people hiding on Aryan papers.”⁶⁹² Izydor Landesdorfer is another Jew who testifies to the activities of Jewish Gestapo agents operating in Kraków. Groups of Jews—consisting of men, women and children, who had been ferreted out of their hiding places on the Aryan side by these agents—were brought to the concentration camp at Płaszów and executed.⁶⁹³ The Jewish informers Julek Appel and Natan Weissman discovered and betrayed Jews hiding in a bunker in the nearby town of Bochnia.⁶⁹⁴

A Jew by the name of Jakob Szindler (or Schindler), who passed as a Pole, took in dozens of wealthy Jewish escapees from the Kraków ghetto for large sums. Once the charges ran out of cash, they paid their rent with valuables. After running out of any means of support the Jewish fugitives were handed over to the local police. Szindler eventually betrayed his own wife when she found out that he kept a young mistress, who was also a Gestapo collaborator.⁶⁹⁵ Marta Puretzt approached Elżbieta Jasińska, who was involved with the Polish underground, to obtain false documents. Puretzt arrived at Jasińska’s home for the documents accompanied by the Gestapo, who arrested Jasińska and deported her to Auschwitz.⁶⁹⁶ Henryk Reiss encountered Marcel Grüner, a prewar acquaintance, in the town square. Acting in a friendly manner and not wearing an armband, Grüner asked Reiss where he was staying and took Reiss to see his cousin Genia Stillman, who was surprised to see him and panicky. Reiss managed to extricate himself and left for Warsaw. Later he learned that Grüner was executed by the Polish underground for betraying Jews in hiding.⁶⁹⁷

Henryk Wachtel, who was passing as a Pole, ran into Mojżesz Sellinger, a good prewar friend turned confidante, on the street and unsuspectingly agreed to meet with him to discuss plans to escape to Hungary. Sellinger came to the meeting with two Gestapo men who arrested Wachtel. Wachtel was deported to Płaszów.⁶⁹⁸ A German Jew by the name of Förster ran a restaurant near the ghetto which was a meeting place for Jewish confidantes and their German overlords. He acted as a spy and confidante, moving around both inside and outside the ghetto without an armband.⁶⁹⁹

Roman Frister had several run-ins with Jewish Gestapo agents—professional informers—spying on Jews passing in Kraków:

⁶⁹² Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 248.

⁶⁹³ Marian Turski, ed., *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1999), 184–85.

⁶⁹⁴ Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 173.

⁶⁹⁵ Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 76–80.

⁶⁹⁶ Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 206.

⁶⁹⁷ Reiss, *Z deszczu pod rynnę...*, 108–109.

⁶⁹⁸ Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 209.

⁶⁹⁹ Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 208–209.

There was something shiftless about the way he stood, as if waiting to see what would happen next. He was about fifty, a short, thin fellow in an unfashionable grey suit and black hat. ... The connection between the strange onlooker and the police only dawned on me when the policeman holding my ID turned to look at him. The man nodded with a slow, accidental-looking movement of his head that must have been a pre-arranged signal.

That Jewish agent reappeared at the police station to provide positive identification for the German police.⁷⁰⁰ Later on another Jewish informer by the name of Diamant (likely Maurycy Diamand) betrayed Frister's parents, who were arrested in their home by the German police and perished in concentration camps.⁷⁰¹

Stanisław Taubenschlag, who passed as a Pole in Kraków, recalls:

They [i.e., the Germans] formed, at 6 Sławkowska Street, what we Jews amongst ourselves called "the Jewish Gestapo". This was a group of informers comprising several Jewish traitors. Among them were Diamant, Szpic, Branstäter, Appel. Their task was to denounce to the Gestapo Jews who were in hiding.⁷⁰²

Henryk Zvi Zimmerman provides extensive information about Jewish collaborators operating both inside and outside the ghetto in Kraków:⁷⁰³

... people from the ghetto were rounded up according to special lists. These lists had been drawn up by police informers of Jewish origin—who were generally well known to the residents—or by other secret collaborators with the mass murderers, who were all the more dangerous because no one knew how to identify them. The lists were drawn up for the most part by Spira's people [Symche Spira headed the Jewish order police], a particular sort of "elite," distinguished for their sadism and abasement, and handpicked by their chief. One of Spira's most zealous collaborators was the agent Szymon Schpitz [Szpic]. ... The lists were, of course, a way of settling personal scores as well as of fulfilling German wishes. ... Blackmail was applied against the wealthiest families, who were rounded up in the hope that they would offer monetary ransom to the Gestapo. This rounding up of people was a way of keeping the Jewish population in continual fear.

When it came to uncovering safe houses for Jews on the Aryan side, informers, searches and round-ups took an enormous toll.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 112–14, 193–94.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 193–98.

⁷⁰² Taubenschlag (Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland*, 31.

⁷⁰³ Henryk Zvi Zimmerman, *And Tell the Deeds of God* (forthcoming in English translation), especially chapters 13, 15, 17; published in Polish as *Przeżyłem, pamiętam, świadczę* (Kraków: Baran i Suszczyński, 1997). As in Warsaw, Zimmerman notes that the Jews in the Kraków ghetto refused to believe firsthand reports brought to the ghetto about the operation of the death camps. Ibid., chapter 14.

Unfortunately, Jewish informers were best at recognizing their fellow Jews! Determined criminals or desperate people of weak character often fell victim to the agents. ... Worst of all, however, were the German agents of Jewish origins. One of them was a stunningly beautiful *gimnazjum* student, Staf Branstetter [Stefania Brandstätter], who got herself mixed up in some sort of affair of the heart with Rudolf Körner, assistant chief of the Gestapo Political Department. ... She supposedly became his mistress, and if this were indeed true, then she represented a source of reliable information. Her looks, deportment and knowledge of Hebrew made her one of the most dangerous seekers-out of shelters, bunkers, and safe houses. She spied principally on wealthy Jews who had enough money and valuables to assure themselves of good living conditions in hiding. ... A second perfidious operative and informer was an acquaintance of mine, another student from the Hebrew *gimnazjum*, Artek Löffler. ... A pleasant-looking youth, he had blond hair and did not appear at first sight to be Jewish. He became especially dangerous for the young resistance fighters and the economic underground.

The Jewish informers, who turned against their own people to serve the oppressors, had become a true plague. They thought that they could save their own lives and families through servility and treason. There were others, psychopaths, who were even worse. The chance of accumulating property and tormenting their brothers gave them pleasure. They were ardent and effective collaborators in the liquidation of armed groups and the denunciation of Jews in hiding. ... it was decided by a majority vote [of the Jewish underground] that the Jewish informers would have to be liquidated as a final measure, but this should not occur inside the ghetto—so that the Germans would not be sure that Jews were responsible. Otherwise, they might be provoked to mass executions and a speeding up of the liquidation of all those who remained in the ghetto. ... We had various ways of doing this, since we were cooperating with Aryan partisan bands.

Zimmerman also describes the execution of seven men, among them one or two Jews, hanged near Wodna Street and the Jewish cemetery in the Płaszów suburb. The Germans assembled the Jewish Council and others there on June 26, 1942 to witness the spectacle, the first public execution carried out in the city. Jewish policemen brought a long rope, cut it in lengths, made nooses, fastened them around the necks of the condemned men, stood them on a board, and then, on the given signal, removed the board. The condemned men were suspended from the gallows at the same time.

The executioner was Feiler, an OD man ... He was clearly necessary to German propaganda, which wanted to show in the next day's newspapers how partisans were hanged by a Jewish executioner in the presence of dignitaries from the ghetto. Nevertheless, the Germans knew that, all their efforts at isolation notwithstanding, the contacts between the Jewish underground and Polish partisans were growing ...

The Jewish police in fact carried out further executions of Poles in Kraków at the behest of the Gestapo. A few days later, on July 1, 1942, in Wola Duchacka, they hanged 11 more Poles sentenced to death in retaliation for the liquidation, by the Polish underground, of a German confidant.⁷⁰⁴

Jewish informers, agents, and collaborators were active throughout occupied Poland. They facilitated life for those willing to pay their price, but were ruthless towards who stood in their way. Corruption flourished and small fortunes were made. Jack Werber, the son of a well-to-do merchant in Radom, wrote:

In Radom there was a man named Brenner, who had been deported from Germany a year before as an *Ostjude*. People felt sorry for him at first, and generally made him feel welcome. But he turned out to be a traitor and an informer for the Nazis. By acting friendly towards everyone he was able to get invited to many peoples' homes, including our own. In this way he was able to learn who had money and who didn't, who was politically active and who wasn't, and so on. Brenner also became a good friend of Nathan. Like many others, Nathan divulged quite a bit about his financial dealings to Brenner as well as those of the rest of the family. Nathan was flattered by Brenner's friendship and got involved in some of his schemes. What Nathan didn't know was that Brenner was also having an affair with his pretty wife.

Nathan began to ask me for loans. I gave him money on several occasions, but when I saw that he wasn't paying me back, I realized that this was simple extortion. As a result, I stopped giving him money. Unbeknownst to me, my father continued to make payments to Nathan, fearing that he would betray us to the SS. When my father finally put an end to the blackmail, Nathan became angry and told Brenner that I had hidden leather in my house. Brenner related this information to the Gestapo. However, when the Nazis came to the house and tore up the floorboards, they were unable to find the merchandise because I had already sold it.⁷⁰⁵

Joseph Freeman, a resident of Radom, recalls some of his own dealings with the Germans:

I then worked for the disinfection department ... The SS had ordered the Jewish police to disinfect the ghetto with sulfur, block by block. ... the rich came to pay the police in order to avoid the process. The police then sent them to our department where I collected the money—forty *zloty* [zloty] per apartment—with my assistant, a boy named Mietek Wiszlicky. ... As we worked, I gave the head of the typhus department, Gimpel Weintraub, the names of the rich as well and their payment which he divided among the three of us, the police, and Dr. Szwenderowicz, the hospital director. In order to make extra money, over the next few months of my work I accumulated 4,000 pounds of sulfur and sold it to Polish citizens. Money, as long as we were in Radom, opened doors.

...

⁷⁰⁴ Krystian Brodacki, "Co z tymi napisami?" *Tygodnik Solidarność*, June 22, 2001. In both cases, the inscriptions on the monuments blame only the "Nazi occupier" or "Nazi executioners" for these crimes but, as that author correctly points out, the actual perpetrators were neither Nazis nor occupiers.

⁷⁰⁵ Jack Werber, with William B. Helmreich, *Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London; Transaction Publishers, 1996), 26–27.

Some Jews who felt it would save them by collaborating had reported the wealth of my family to the police. After the first day of my imprisonment, my parents found out they would be required to pay the police a ransom of 50,000 *zloty*. ...

Upon my release I did not go back to my job ...

With money it was possible to gain work that was not too difficult. The Jewish police and individuals in the *Arbeitsamt* (employment office) knew which jobs were easier and would secure them for a price. After a while my father was able to arrange to pay a large sum of money in exchange for a position for me at the Kromolowsky Palace factory.

Knowing that in the ghetto I found ways to obtain food, a quite wealthy man by the name of Mr. Richtman approached me and asked if I could buy food for him and others, saying I would be paid for doing so. ...

I decided I had to speak with a *Volksdeutsch* named Minsky who was the gatekeeper in the small building at the factory's entrance. ... I approached Minsky the next evening ... Talking to him, I began to feel we could do business. ...

It took a lot of courage to go to him the next evening and ask him to help me buy food. I said I would pay him. ... Later that evening I spoke with Richtman to tell him to have the money ready.

The next evening I returned to see Minsky. I paid him for the basket of food he had ready and took the food back to my room, where I divided it into small packages, then brought them to Richtman. This was the first time I made money selling food. ...

Pulling my little cart full of food, I returned to Minsky, paid him fifty *zloty*, then went to my room, as I had the night before divided the food into small packages, and brought them to Richtman. That night there were people waiting in his room to buy food. Shortly I sold all of it. I made my first 400 *zloty* profit and I had some free food, too.⁷⁰⁶

However, most Jews were not so fortunate and enterprising. Dr. Lejbuś Dymant and his wife from Szydłowiec had moved to Radom with the help of Polish friends and lived under false identities there. They were soon denounced to the Gestapo by a Jewish policeman and arrested. Although tortured, Dymant did not betray his Polish benefactors and committed suicide in prison; his wife was deported to Auschwitz.⁷⁰⁷

In the Łódź ghetto,

On 7 June 1944, our enthusiasm was suddenly dampened. In the preceding days, round-ups and arrests of large numbers of underground radio-listeners had taken place—amongst them, my school friend's father, Yankel Weksler, his two brothers and many others. A Jewish Kripo informer, by the

⁷⁰⁶ Joseph Freeman, *Job: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 1996), 19–21, 33–35.

⁷⁰⁷ Jacek Wijaczka, ed., *Żydzi szydlowieccy: Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 22 lutego 1997 roku* (Szydłowiec: Muzeum Ludowych Instrumentów Muzycznych w Szydłowcu, 1997), 131 n.64.

name of Sankiewicz, had denounced them, and they were interrogated, tortured and taken away, never to be seen again.⁷⁰⁸

According to Jewish sources, in Opatów,

We cannot dismiss the role of informers in the ghetto. A young German Jew by the name of Mandelbaum, regularly supplied the German gendarmes with information on what went on in the ghetto—the smuggling of food or the secret slaughter of chickens or other livestock. Some of these “transgressors” were apprehended [by the Jews] and sentenced to death. One day Mandelbaum got drunk and paraded through the ghetto streets singing songs of the Germans. The Germans caught him and shot him. Another young Jew, Poznerson from Lodz [Łódź], approached Governor Frank of the General-Government requesting that his parents be brought from Ghetto Lodz. In return, he promised to reveal to the Germans names of Opatow Jews who had hidden property. Poznerson also indicated in his letter that the Opatow Judenrat had bribed local officials and security police to avoid searches where the property was hidden. When the local SD found out, they arrested Poznerson and shot him to death.⁷⁰⁹

According to Nachum Alpert, the German *Sicherheitsdienst* (security services) “kept installing agents among the Jewish population in the ghetto” of Słonim and describes the activities of a refugee from Warsaw named Mariampol.⁷¹⁰ Another informer was Sarah, the daughter of a poor old Jewish woman whom she renounced, who “gave the Germans much useful information.”⁷¹¹ Nechama Tec describes the activities of a Jewish informer in the Lida ghetto.⁷¹² The Germans employed a Jewish woman whom they had apprehended with false papers as a confidante to seek out other Jews hiding on the Aryan side in Wilno.⁷¹³ Isaac Kowalski mentions the activities of a Jewish Gestapo agent named Goldin operating among the Jewish partisans in the Wilno area.⁷¹⁴ Yehuda Bauer refers to a Jew named Schulzinger, from the town of Szczuczyn, who informed on Jews who were planning to break out of the forced labour camp in Wilejka Stara, near Mołodeczno; except for a small group who managed to flee in time, all those left in the camp were killed.⁷¹⁵ Witnesses report on “traitors and enemy agents” in the ghetto in Baranowicze.⁷¹⁶ An escape of Jews from a Luftwaffe base near that town was betrayed by a Jewish teenager from Łódź who worked

⁷⁰⁸ Abraham H. Biderman, *The World of My Past* (Sydney: Random House, 1995), 164.

⁷⁰⁹ “Opatow,” *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00058.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 58–64.

⁷¹⁰ Nachum Alpert, *The Destruction of Slonim Jewry: The Story of the Jews of Slonim During the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), 144–45, 152, 241.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 339. Sarah ended up leaving with the Germans when they retreated.

⁷¹² Tec, *Defiance*, 178.

⁷¹³ Account of Mozes Fejgenberg in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 540.

⁷¹⁴ Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 310–11.

⁷¹⁵ Yehuda Bauer, “Jewish Baranowicze in the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 31 (2003): 121.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

there and informed the German commander about the underground group.⁷¹⁷ Jack Sutin describes the betrayal of Oswald Rufeisen in Mir by a Jewish collaborator named Stanisławski.⁷¹⁸

The activities of Isser Schmidt, a special agent with the Soviet Jewish Brigade operating in the Rudniki forest south of Wilno, are described as follows:

He took to hunting Jews who collaborated with the Germans. ... In the winter of 1943, he grew suspicious of Natek Ring, a Jewish policeman from the ghetto. Ring was charged with collaborating. In the ghetto, Jews had seen him lead enemy soldiers to rooms where people were hiding. On his latest venture [to Wilno], he had moved through the city with surprising ease; some felt he was even now working for the Germans. Isser was bareheaded as he led Natek into the trees. Two shots and the birds stopped singing. Isser came back down the trail alone, wearing a fur cap and new boots.⁷¹⁹

Haim Lantzman (Lansman), a Jewish *agent provocateur* active in the Nowogródek ghetto was executed by Jewish partisans when he was sent by the German into the forest to act as an informer.⁷²⁰ It is not clear whether this is the same incident as mentioned in another source:

In the winter of 1942/43 an underground group of dissenters formed in Novogradok [Nowogródek] with plans of revolt in the ghetto and escape to the forest. ... The Germans tried to infiltrate the underground through a Jewish informer, but he was disclosed, tried by his friends and executed.⁷²¹

When a group of Jews decided to dig their way out of the ghetto in Nowogródek, they discovered that they had been infiltrated by an informer. Sonia O. recalled:

In the ghetto I was part of a small group determined to find a way out; we had been digging a tunnel. A kid dug with us, but we found out he had been hired by the Germans and [Jewish] police to inform. We later learned that he had been responsible for the deaths and capture of several families. Apparently the Germans and police paid him or told him he his family wouldn't be killed if he told them where to find Jews.

There was a barber in our group, a gentle guy; we knew him as a person who never hurt anyone. ... One night, after digging, he grabbed an ax and without a word hacked off the head of that kid. I

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., 138.

⁷¹⁸ Sutin, *Jack and Rochelle*, 59–60.

⁷¹⁹ Cohen, *The Avengers*, 121–22. Several other Jewish ghetto policemen were executed together with Natek (Natan) Ring: Lutek Zalcwasser, Schwarzbard, and Szurka Kewes. See the testimony of Abram Mieszczanski, dated June 10, 1947, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, no. 301/2536.

⁷²⁰ Allegedly his wife had been imprisoned by the Germans and he agreed to find the partisan base and betray its location. See Tec, *Defiance*, 176–77; Jack Kagan and Dov Cohen, *Surviving the Holocaust with the Russian Jewish Partisans* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 69–70; Leonid Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.* (Tel Aviv: Biblioteka Matveia Chernogo, 2000), 299–300.

⁷²¹ “Novogradok,” in Shmuel Spector and Bracha Freundlich, eds., *Pinkas Hakehillot: Polin*, vol. 8 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 430–37; English translation: *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Vol. VIII, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol8_00430.html>.

remember his eyes; how wild they were. We buried the head and body in the tunnel. No one ever spoke of it.⁷²²

Several accounts describe the activities of Yizhak Kaplan from Mielec, who was allegedly a prewar Communist, then a member of the Judenrat, and finally a full-fledged Gestapo agent.⁷²³ According to Irene Eber, Kaplan and possibly his brothers were active informers in the Cyranka-Berdechów labour camp.

They were free to come and go as they pleased, using their freedom not only to betray Jews sheltered by Poles in the vicinity of Mielec, but also to give away anyone who had come into the camp illegally. ... it was a Kaplan who informed the Germans about the three tired fugitives in the barracks. Father, Aunt Feige, and Cousin Esther were apparently shot in the camp ... The bodies of the three were left to lie where they had fallen for all to see when they returned from their day of hard labor. Later they were buried in the forest surrounding the camp. To this day somewhere in a forest near Mielec in an unmarked grave are their remains, as are the bones of many other victims of the Kaplams and the Germans.⁷²⁴

A Jew from Wasilków near Białystok, mentions a Jewish Communist from his small town who switched masters after the German invasion of that region in June 1941, and began “to serve the Nazis as a so-called ‘useful Jew.’”⁷²⁵ Another Jew describes how he had to flee from the Białystok ghetto because a Jewish policeman reported that he was smuggling cows into the ghetto and wanted to hand him over to the Germans.⁷²⁶ Afterwards, during the deportations from Białystok,

The first operation of expelling Jews on February 5th [1943], the first victims in Białystok were the Jews who had recently arrived from the forests in the area. The veteran residents of Białystok had worried about themselves a long time ago, and had prepared hiding places for times of trouble, supplied with food and arrangements for providing air to breathe. A person from outside had no possibility of joining the veteran groups. ...

One of the neighbors, a baker by profession, also requested that they accept him into our hiding place. The owner of the place refused, and then the baker threatened to inform the Germans about them. Not having a choice, they also accepted the baker.

To our dismay, after a few days, the Germans, accompanied by Jewish policemen, revealed our hiding place. Every day, from three o’clock in the morning until three o’clock in the afternoon, there were searches in the courtyards of the houses and many Jews were taken out of their safe places. ...⁷²⁷

⁷²² Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust*, 71.

⁷²³ Mark Verstandig, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), 142–43.

⁷²⁴ Irene Eber, *The Choice: Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 130.

⁷²⁵ Munro, *Białystok to Birkenau*, 82.

⁷²⁶ Testimony of Paltiel Lopata, dated October 5, 1948, Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw; Internet: <www.zabludow.com/Paltierstestimony.html>.

⁷²⁷ Chaim Yehuda Goldberg, “At the Height of the Decay,” in Kalisher, *Sokoły*, 158ff.

In the Łódź ghetto,

The group of Bundists, Zionists, and others who organized the secret radio listening met a tragic end. Betrayed by an unknown informer, all but one were arrested between July 6 and 8, 1944. The remaining member, a Zionist activist, committed suicide so that he would not fall into the hands of the Gestapo.⁷²⁸

In the Radzyń ghetto, a clandestine youth group, composed of members of the Hashomer Hatzair and other Zionist organizations, who sought to arrange for Jews to flee to the forests and set up fighting units, gained the support of the Hasidic Rabbi Shmuel Shlomo Leiner. In June 1942, the Gestapo learned of this through informers and executed the rabbi in the square in front of the synagogue. When the ghetto was liquidated in October 1942, the Jewish police were ordered to lead the Germans to possible hiding places.⁷²⁹

Edi Weinstein recalls his experiences in Siedlce:

I was to report to Moshe Huberman, a Jew from Lodz [Łódź] who had recently reappeared in the camp. Huberman was on friendly terms with the camp commander ... and commanded the Jewish police in the camp. Known as an informer and an extortionist, he harassed anyone from whom he thought he could squeeze a little money.⁷³⁰

Later, in Łosice, Weinstein recalled:

A new elite took shape, composed mainly of former policemen, most of whom were young men from well-to-do families. They were the first to move into the best apartments. They still had their parents' money, retrieved from the family strongboxes. Living for the moment, they often got together to drink and gamble at cards. Most of those who returned to the ghetto lacked the means to live that way ... Anonymous informers frequently denounced persons with concealed funds ... Sometimes the hoarders got off with a beating; in other cases they were locked up until they paid a ransom.⁷³¹

Inmates of the Płaszów concentration camp in the outskirts of Kraków recall:

Lackeys from among the Jewish prisoners helped [Goeth, the camp commander] plunder all the camps [around Cracow]. ... In our camp, Plaszow, his faithful servants were the camp eldest,

⁷²⁸ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 37.

⁷²⁹ "Radzyn," *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00543.html>, a translation of *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 543–47.

⁷³⁰ Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 74–75.

⁷³¹ Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 86.

[Wilek or Wilhelm] Chilowicz, and his wife [Maria], as well as several other souls who had sold themselves to the devil. ...

Once, as we were being made to do one of these additional tasks, the Jewish overseer imagined that I was doing my job negligently. He attacked me viciously, beating my left hand with his whip, and my hand swelled up and turned blue. ... That lackey of the murderers caused trouble for many of the prisoners, but he got his due after the war, when he returned to Cracow and was hanged.⁷³²

One day, I had worked night shift and was allowed to sleep during the day. Suddenly, out of my sleep, I heard someone yell, “Down from the bunk! Down, fast!” It was the policeman everyone feared, tall, fat, brutal, aggressive. He yelled insults: unrepeatable, unmentionable words. I didn’t get a chance to explain that I had worked all night. He hit me with a lash three times on my back. Great red welts suddenly appeared. My skin was scarred for weeks. It hurt, naturally, but no more than the pain of my humiliation. There wasn’t a single German in sight! There was nothing to justify his action but his own base nature.

Once the same policeman came into the barracks and saw a woman sitting on the edge of a table, talking to another woman. He lifted the lash and hit her so hard that she lost one eye as a result. She was a poet; her name was Ester Sztub.⁷³³

Anyone who faltered or did not work quickly was whipped by the *Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish police) appointed by the murderous [Kommandant] Mueller. *Ordnungsdienst* Chilowicz and his wife—a petite archetype of evil—and the brutish Finkelstein were the cruelest. Always dressed in uniforms, these *Kapos* beat, pushed, and mercilessly whipped their fellow inmates. I remember one woman was forced to lug large rocks up the hill, but was not fast enough for Finkelstein, so in a rage, he whipped her. ... After the war, this animal received the long jail term he deserved. ...

One day Father told me that *Ordnungsdienst* Zanger had insulted and beaten him. He had tears in his eyes when he told me the story of how Zanger caught him in *talis* and *tefillin* at the moment he called an *Appell* [roll-call]. Father was not able to put away his *talis* and *tefillin* fast enough for Zanger, so the *Kapo* cursed, shoved, and hit him. ...

Mundek Reich, the inveterate bully, was the *Ordnungsdienst* assigned to the barrack containing the tinsmithing and roofing workshop. When I commented to fellow prisoner Shloime Lefkovich that Jewish *Kapos* were terrible, he tried to curry favor by repeating my opinions to Mundek, who punched me in the face several times. Reich had been a professional boxer, and my face was swollen for days. After the war, Reich was tried in Poland for committing atrocities, and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary, a lenient sentence in my opinion.⁷³⁴

⁷³² Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...*, 100–102.

⁷³³ Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction*, 99.

⁷³⁴ Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption*, 126, 131–32, 137. Tenenbaum, later imprisoned in Melk, a small camp 100 km east of Mauthausen, recalled a German gypsy called *Zigeunerkapo*: “When he got hold of an inmate, he usually finished him off, and we were terrified of him.” *Ibid.*, 147. The Russian prisoners of war were known for “their habitual thievery” and the French inmates for their antisemitism. *Ibid.*, 148. When liberated from Ebensee, another satellite camp of Mauthausen: “The Russians were hell-bent on revenge, and those of us who could muster the strength joined them. The first *Kapo* we caught was the despicable gypsy who had tortured and killed so many of us. The gang beat him badly and kicked him to the ground. We urinated on him, and then the Russians unloaded their weapons into him. I was not proud of what happened, but under the circumstances, the *Zigeunerkapo* got what he deserved.” *Ibid.*, 160.

But the *ordners* and Kapos beat people with truncheons. Mrs. Hilewicz [Chilowicz] from Kraków, in a shapely suit and knee boots, goaded the women on with a riding whip: “Hurry on, you Venetian cunts, you’re not in Drohobycz!” “Hurry on, pricks!” shouted Mr. Hilewicz, the boss of the men’s camp. The jackals approached us before we entered the showers: “Give me what you have, I’ll give you half of it back. If not, they’ll take all of it.” The people gave, and naturally didn’t get anything back. And anyway everything went into the pockets of the Hilewicz and Finkelstein, the main Kapo. ... Kleinman, a young son-of-a-bitch, would position us by the barracks next to the ditch filled with shit. I stood in the first line of fives and shielded Father who could barely stand on his legs. Kleinman walked up and pushed him. “Straighten up, old geezer!” I pushed him off and he fell into the ditch with shit. Everybody was delighted, but Finkelstein came and dislocated my jaw with a single blow.⁷³⁵

The head of the Jewish police in Płaszów had been a suspected informer, but said he’d only been a milkman, in Cracow. His name was Chilewicz. He knew I was going by a false birth certificate, that I was still a child. His wife was the head inmate of the women’s camp. Soon, during an *Appel*, Chilewicz’s wife took me out of line and sent me to the children’s home where all the other children were being gathered for deportation. She said I was also a child and belonged there. [The author managed to escape and hide.] ...

Finally, the head of the women’s camp—Chilewicz’s wife—found out about us and informed the camp commandant, Goeth. This German said to her that if we four children had the guts to jump into the waste to save ourselves, then we should be spared and not deported like the other children. This is how we were able to remain in camp legally.⁷³⁶

Another memoir identifies Dr. Leon Gross as “the basest collaborator” in Płaszów. (Dr. Gross was another of the very few Jews brought to justice after the war in a Polish court.) That same author acknowledges: “From the beginning of the war when we lived in Cracow and later in Rzeszów, we were aware of many dangerous Jewish informers working for the Gestapo and other German authorities.” He also takes credit for detecting Moszkac Selinger, one of Kraków’s most notorious Gestapo agents, in Bratislava after the war and ensuring that he was brought to trial.⁷³⁷

A Jew from Piotrków Trybunalski who was forced to work in the Hasag factory (labour camp) in Częstochowa recalled:

The worst part was going to work and coming back. In the yard, there were always *Kapos* (*Katzet-Polizei* or Head foremen) or just “hitters”, who walked around beating up everybody in sight. The worst offender of them was a tall giant whom we called “Bulldog”. His real name was Szie Biodra

⁷³⁵ Account of Dr. Leopold Lustig in Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 33.

⁷³⁶ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 118–19.

⁷³⁷ Herzog, *...And Heaven Shed No Tears*, 306, 311–15.

from Chmielnik. He would walk around with a whip, without feeling or conscience, like a robot, and hit everyone in sight.⁷³⁸

There are numerous other accounts that attest to similar occurrences throughout German-occupied Poland,⁷³⁹ as well as in camps in Germany proper:

In Augsburg Soviet prisoners of war stole and robbed. They'd throw a blanket on your head and take away shoes, bread, whatever you had, even bowls and spoons. They had intimate relationships with German criminals for whom they served as whores. And the Gypsies sold themselves too. They worked as barbers and shaved our genitals, so as not to leave a single hair, and they cut us on purpose—"Ah, entschuldigen Jude." And we had our own sons-of-bitches as well. The Friedman brothers from the Mielec transport sliced our bread more thinly and stole like ravens. Felczer, a Kapo from Sosnowiec, dished out nothing but water from the top of the cauldron, and whoever protested got hit on the head with a ladle. The Greek Jews hated us for "Canada," the *kommando* which in Auschwitz sorted out the baggage of those sent to the gas, and gorged themselves, keeping others away. A camp was hatred. They couldn't do anything to the Germans, so they hated one another.⁷⁴⁰

As shown in the examples cited earlier, German Jews, who were known for their contempt of *Ostjuden*,⁷⁴¹ acquired a particularly servile and hostile reputation among Polish Jews. An Austrian Jew who was imprisoned in a labour camp near Landsberg recalled:

⁷³⁸ Charles Kotkowsky, *Remnants*.

⁷³⁹ See, for example: Stanisław W. Dobrowolski, *Memuary pacyfisty* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989) (Kraków); Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, 8 (Kraków), 20 (a denunciation by a Jewish collaborator in the Warsaw ghetto); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 173 (Bochnia), 183; Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, *Witnesses*, 152 (the liquidation in Warsaw of "one of the chief Jewish stool-pigeons, Lolek [Leon] Skosowski"); Szajn Lewin, *W getcie warszawskim*, 26, 52, 54 (Warsaw); Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych*, 16, 23, 24, 107 (Warsaw); Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 233 (Warsaw), 234 (Warsaw), 235 (Kraków), 236 (Warsaw), 238 (Kraków and various other localities); Rafael F. Scharf, *Poland, What Have I To Do with Thee...: Essays without Prejudice*, Bilingual edition (Kraków: Fundacja Judaica, 1996), 45–46 (Kraków); Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, Vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945*, 159, 287–88 (Kraków); Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 106 (Lwów); Katarzyna Zimmerer, *Zamordowany świat: Losy Żydów w Krakowie, 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004), 84, 158, 166–67, 179, 180, 189–90, 195, 209, 216 (Kraków). For reports regarding Kaunas, Lithuania, see: Alex Faltelson, *Heroism & Bravery in Lithuania, 1941–1945* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 1996), 235, 291–95 (Kaunas); David Ben-Dor, *The Darkest Chapter* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), 82 (Kaunas); Alex Faltelson, *The Truth and Nothing But the Truth: Jewish Resistance in Lithuania* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2006), 240–42.

⁷⁴⁰ Account of Dr. Leopold Lustig in Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 36–37. Another account in that book notes the hostile attitude of Czech Jews toward Polish Jews in a German camp in Inowrocław: "The bread was divided by Czech women who knew German well. They didn't wear stripes, they had real shoes and canes and had the right to hit. *Polské svině* ['Polish pigs'] they called us. *Polské svině, ted' zemřete!* They were Jews, but when Jews are by themselves, then this one is Polish, this one Czech, and that one Hungarian, like at no other time." Ibid., 127.

⁷⁴¹ This was not a new phenomenon. Władysław Szpilman, an accomplished Polish pianist, recalled from his days as a student in prewar Germany: "But I have never met such 'patriots' as the German Jews. During my studies in Germany I used to hear them say: 'Finally Hitler will come and will straighten out those Eastern Jews [*Ostjuden*].'" See Engelking, *Na łące popiołów*, 119. See also Hirszfeld, *Historia jednego życia*, 240, and Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), *passim*. It should come as no surprise, therefore, as reported by Hannah Arendt, that "Hitler himself is said to have known three hundred and forty 'first-rate Jews,' whom he had either altogether

The first day in Lager Eins passed with exercises. The Kapo was a Jew from Germany who made us march up and down the camp with intervals of ‘caps down—caps up’. He especially had it in for the Jews from Poland, who, in his words, were Muselmaenner [Muselmänn was a nickname for an emaciated prisoner] anyway, and every bit of food was wasted on them.⁷⁴²

Despite their own persecution by the Germans, German Jews often remained ardent German nationalists and retained loyalty to members of their families who were committed Nazis. According to one Polish Jew,

The Polish Jews considered their German coreligionists equal to the Goyim (Gentiles) and dreaded having one of their families settled in their homes. The German Jews, likewise, bore a strong dislike for the eastern Jew, the Hasid. Some blamed the Hasidim for the dismal fate they had suffered, having been rejected as rightful citizens of their beloved Germany. “Had it not been for your peculiar deportment and unmistakably Jewish appearance, the Führer might have been kinder to all of us,” some remarked.⁷⁴³

Another Polish Jew recalled a Jewish inmate in Bergen-Belsen who had married a German and converted to Christianity. Her husband became a member of the SS, while her two sons joined the Hitler Youth.

However, as far as the Nazi authorities were concerned, she was still Jewish, and, together with the other Jews of Polish nationality, she was deported to Poland, imprisoned in the ghettos, and later sent to various camps. She maintained that the Jews alone were responsible for all the disasters that had befallen her, regarding herself as the victim of a tragic misunderstanding. She would boast about the things her husband and sons had done, declaring that they would soon get her out. In the camp she cultivated the friendship of SS men ...

She was rapidly appointed supervisor of the block and would torment us as if she were a real German.⁷⁴⁴

A young Jewish man from Germany, who had been deported to Poland because of his parents’ Polish nationality, displayed a similar attitude:

His mother had been a Jewess from the Warsaw area and her surname had been Mekhlovitz, while his father had been a pure German. He had been given his mother’s name because he had been born

assimilated to the status of Germans or granted the privileges of half-Jews. Thousand of half-Jews had been exempted from all restrictions, which might explain [Reinhard] Heydrich’s role in the S.S. and Generalfeldmarschall Erhard Milch’s role in Göring’s Air Force, for it was generally known that Heydrich and Milch were half-Jews.” See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Revised and enlarged edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 133.

⁷⁴² Ben-Dor, *The Darkest Chapter*, 112.

⁷⁴³ William Samelson, “Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home,” in Sterling, *Life in the Ghettos During the Holocaust*, 8.

⁷⁴⁴ Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...*, 162.

out of wedlock. He talked about his mother with open hatred, condemning her for having placed him in a Jewish orphanage when he was a child, thus making him a Jew.

“If it hadn’t been for that Jewish w...e [whore], I wouldn’t be considered a Polish Jew.”

He spoke about his father, on the other hand, with obvious admiration. He was an important figure in the Nazi party, and his legitimate sons were members of the Hitler youth organization.⁷⁴⁵

This man too became a German lackey when he was eventually imprisoned in Płaszów.

Even among Austrian Jews transported to the Łódź ghetto, such vestiges of pro-German sentiments remained as late as 1942, as Israel U. recalls.

When we asked them why they were sent to the ghetto, they said that the Germans wanted to protect them from the bombs, because where they were [from] there were severe bombings, and here there were no bombings. You *know* the German Jews! ⁷⁴⁶

Curiously, Polish Jews who left Wrocław (formerly Breslau) after the war in transports for returning German citizens were betrayed by German Jews to the British occupation authorities on arrival in Germany. The British wanted to detain the Polish Jews and send them back to Poland.⁷⁴⁷

In almost every European country, but not among ethnic Poles in Poland, collaborators easily outnumbered the ranks of the anti-Nazi resistance. Hundreds of thousands of non-Germans—many of them from Western Europe—willingly joined the German war effort. Virtually every European national group, except for Poles, volunteered to serve in the ranks of the elite SS, which included the following nationalities: Dutch—50,000, Belgians—40,000, Hungarians—40,000, Croatians—40,000, Ukrainians—30,000 (of the 80,000 who had volunteered), Cossacks—30,000, Latvians—30,000, French—20,000, Albanians—19,000, Russians—18,000, Estonians—15,000, Belorussians—10,000, Italians—10,000, Tatars—10,000, Norwegians—8,000, Danes—6,000, Slovaks—6,000, Czechs—5,000, Romanians—5,000, Finns—4,000, Serbs—4,000, Bulgarians—3,000, Armenians—3,000, Georgians—3,000, Uzbeks—2,000, Greeks—1,000, Swiss—1,000, Swedes—300, English—100.⁷⁴⁸ Many more fought in other military formations. For example, Ukrainians fought in at least 70 of more than 150 so-called Eastern Battalions, including at least 35,000 in 58 Guard Battalions or *Schutzmannschaftsbataillons*. In total, there were nearly 250,000 Ukrainians in the units of the Eastern Troops and German auxiliary units. According to General Ernst Köstring, the Eastern Troops commander, in October 1944, over 800,000 Eastern volunteers

⁷⁴⁵ Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...*, 125.

⁷⁴⁶ Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 176.

⁷⁴⁷ Meyer Kron, *Through the Eyes of the Needle* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 115–16.

⁷⁴⁸ George H. Stein, *The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939–1945* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Kurt Georg Kliemann, *Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation* (Osnabrück: Der Freiwillige, 1965), 499–515.

(including Ukrainians) served in the German army and an additional 100,000 served in the Luftwaffe and navy.⁷⁴⁹

The phenomenon of civilian collaboration was by no means unique to Poland or endemic to Poles, although some historians have attempted to elevate it to some exceptional level. Lucy Dawidowicz, for example, contends: “In no other country in Europe did such police informing and unsolicited cooperation with the SS assume the massive proportions they took on in Poland.”⁷⁵⁰ However, Dawidowicz ignores Jewish conduct in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland, which constituted *de facto* collaboration with an ally of Nazi Germany,⁷⁵¹ nor is there any evidence that Dawidowicz carried out any serious comparative research before reaching her sweeping conclusions. Historian Philip Friedman has pointed out that a special branch of the Jewish Defence Committee in Belgium daily employed 300 persons, Jews and non-Jews, to assist post-office workers to intercept denunciations of Jews mailed to the German authorities.⁷⁵² In fact, thousands of letters denouncing Jews were sent to the occupying authorities—an enormous number given the size of that country’s Jewish community (90,000 or about one percent of that country’s population).⁷⁵³ French Jews were also confronted with the problem of collaboration and denunciation on a daily basis.⁷⁵⁴ The French wrote between 3 and 5 million signed and unsigned letters of denunciation, often sent directly to the Gestapo, and often turning in Jews and their protectors.⁷⁵⁵

In Norway, nearly half of the minuscule Jewish population of 1,600 (0.05 percent of the total population) was killed during the war and none would have died without Norwegian collaboration. Norway had only a few convinced Nazis but enough anti-Semites and law-abiding policemen and bureaucrats to make the Final Solution a near-success. During the war, many Norwegians who would otherwise not have helped the Germans, took part in registering, arresting, and handing over Jews to the German authorities. As for the

⁷⁴⁹ See the English language “Summary” in Andrii Boianovskiy, *Ukrainski viiskovi formuvannia v zbroinykh sylakh Nimechchyny (1939–1945)* (Lviv: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 2003), 569–89.

⁷⁵⁰ Dawidowicz, *Holocaust and the Historians*, 106.

⁷⁵¹ See the forthcoming study by Mark Paul, *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Relations in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939–1941* (Toronto: PEFINA Press, 2005), and the abridged Internet edition: <<http://www.kpk.org/english/toronto/sovocc.pdf>>. That book is a much expanded revision of an earlier essay by Mark Paul, “Jewish-Polish Relations in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939–1941,” in *The Story of Two Shtetls*, Part Two, 173–230.

⁷⁵² Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers’ Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 69.

⁷⁵³ Jean-Philippe Schreiber, “Belgium and the Jews Under Nazi Rule: Beyond the Myths,” in David Bankier and Israel Gutman, eds., *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority and The International Institute for Holocaust Research, 2003), 478.

⁷⁵⁴ Adam Rayski, *The Choice of the Jews under Vichy: Between Submission and Defiance* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Jean-Marc Berlière, *Les policiers français sous L’Occupation: D’après les archives inédites de l’épuration* (Paris: Perrin, 2001); Julian Jackson, ed., *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Sarah Fishman et al., *France at War: Vichy and the Historians* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000); Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular Protest in Northern France, 1940–45* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan 2000; New York: St. Martin Press, 2000); Simon Kitson, “From Enthusiasm to Disenchantment: The French Police and the Vichy Regime, 1940–1944,” *Contemporary European History*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2002): 371–90.

⁷⁵⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, “Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History,” *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, no. 4 (December 1996): 747–67; Benn Williams, “Letters of Denunciation in the Lyon Region, 1940–1944,” *Historical Social Research*, vol. 26, no. 2/3 (2001): 136–52. Some historians, like Henry Rousso, offer a more conservative estimate of “hundreds of thousands” of denunciations.

powerful Norwegian resistance movement, it resembled all the other European resistance movements in caring little about what happened to the Jews. Those Norwegian Jews who did survive the war were not sheltered in Norway for long years but smuggled into Sweden where they were out of reach of the Germans. Only a handful of Jews survived in hiding in Norway.⁷⁵⁶

According to Raul Hilberg, “In the Netherlands the Jews were destroyed with a thoroughness comparable to the relentless uprooting process in the Reich itself.” Although Holland had no puppet regime, the local bureaucracy and police played a pivotal role in the Final Solution. The various Dutch police forces—the Security Police, the Order Police, the Dutch police from Amsterdam and the Hague, the Dutch auxiliary police (not to mention the Jewish Order Police from Westerbork)—were crucial to the success of German designs. Ninety percent of the Amsterdam police reportedly cooperated with the round-ups, and a German occupation official proclaimed after the war that without the Dutch police “it would have been practically impossible to seize even ten percent of Dutch Jewry.” In the small towns and villages “both the local mayors and the police were complicit in the round-ups.” Westerbork, the transit camp where Dutch Jews were loaded onto trains for the gassing centres, was guarded by the illustrious Royal Marechaussee, comparable to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Equally accommodating and essential to the Germans were the personnel of the Dutch transport system who hauled the Jews from the localities to Westerbork and thence east, i.e., to the border where German railroad personnel took over. However, inside Westerbork, the Germans set up an elaborate Jewish camp directorate, Jewish clerks made up weekly lists of Jews for deportation, and the Jewish order police supervised the loading of Jews onto trains.⁷⁵⁷ The situation was much the same in most other countries.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁶ Samuel Abrahamsen, *Norway's Response to the Holocaust: A Historical Perspective* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1991); Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 584–89. Fortunately for Norwegian Jews, Hitler did not invade Sweden. As was revealed in February 2000, Swedish Nazis had compiled lists of Jews for liquidation and even started to gather building materials for the construction of concentration camps.

⁷⁵⁷ Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 600–32; Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945* (London: Arnold; New York: St. Martin's, 1997), passim; Suzanne D. Rutland, “A Reassessment of the Dutch Record During the Holocaust,” in Roth and Maxwell, *Remembering for the Future*, vol. 1, 527–42. According to Raul Hilberg, “In the Netherlands the Jews were destroyed with a thoroughness comparable to the relentless uprooting process in the Reich itself.” That the survival rate in Holland was as high as it was had to do in large measure with the exemption from deportation to camps created for 8,000–9,000 Jews in mixed marriages and for some 4,000 Jews in special categories. See Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 619, 622–24, 229 n139. Betrayal of Jews in Holland was an extremely frequent phenomenon, and indeed reached massive proportions, as survivor testimonies confirm. See, for example, Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 320–55; Paldiel, *Sheltering Jews*, 15, 169, 170. The so-called Henneicke column first extorted money from Jews, and then when the Germans started paying large rewards they handed over Jews to the Gestapo. As a result of pioneering research, Dutch investigative journalist Ad van Liempt exposed the activities of a committed group of volunteers who denounced Jews and concluded that about 8,000 to 9,000 Jews were turned in to the Germans for cash. This represents almost half of the Jews who attempted to hide. See Ad van Liempt, *Hitler's Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005).

⁷⁵⁸ For an overview of conditions in France, see Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 645–703 (France). Historian Michael R. Marrus wrote: “The Germans needed and received a great deal of assistance from the French to carry out their plans. ... Most of the work was done by the French police. ... it seems highly unlikely that the Germans would have been capable of deporting large numbers of Jews from France without the help provided by the French authorities. ... Unlike Poland, where there was always a heavy German police presence, there were few men to spare for France—only three battalions for the occupied zone, for example, or about three thousand men.” Thus reliance on the French police to carry out the round-up and deportation of the Jews was absolutely

Reprisals against collaborators reached massive proportions in Western Europe. The number of persons lynched or murdered during the last months of the war, or at the moment of liberation, ran into the tens of thousand. Beatings of suspected collaborators by unorganized mobs were commonplace. In France, “military operations during the Liberation were often accompanied by acts of revenge perpetrated either by individual score-settlers or by members of the resistance. The number of deaths, which is sometimes put as high as 40,000, certainly exceeded those caused by occupying German forces in 1940–44. ... Special courts of justice condoned 10,800 executions, but the spontaneous *épuration* or purging of collaborators claimed many more victims ...”⁷⁵⁹ (These figures are all the more suprising in light of recent French scholarship indicating that German terror in France was not nearly as extensive as once believed. In fact, the Germans executed only some 4,500 persons as hostages or after having been condemned to death, and not the previously claimed 80,000. In addition, at least 1,000 persons were executed in mass reprisals in places such as Oradour, Maillé, Saint-Genis-Laval, Bron, Tulle, and Asq.⁷⁶⁰) In Italy, on July 6, 1945, local

essential. See “France: The Jews and the Holocaust,” in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1990), vol. 2, 509–513; see also the entry for the infamous French assembly and detention camp in the Paris suburb of Drancy in vol. 1, 404–406. By way of comparison, there were about 150,000 SS or Waffen SS stationed in Poland in 1944. See Prekerowa, *Zegota: Commission d’aide aux Juifs* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 285. According to American historian Joseph Rothschild, “the achievements of the Polish resistance movement were indeed prodigious. It tied down approximately 500,000 German occupation troops and, according to official German figures, prevented one out of every eight *Wehrmacht* transports headed for the Russian front from reaching its destination. ... And Poland was the only Axis-occupied country in Europe without a quisling.” See Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*, Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28. (The peak strength and accomplishments of the Polish underground occurred in 1944–1945. By that time, however, the Holocaust of Polish Jews was essentially over.) A recent revelation of the extent of complicity in the Holocaust in Western Europe came in January 1993 with the release of documents implicating the English authorities on the Channel Island of Guernsey of close cooperation with the German military in identifying and tracking down that occupied island’s small Jewish community. Only one member of the eight-member cabinet categorically refused his assent to anti-Jewish edicts. As indicated earlier, the Holocaust in Poland was not dependent on such forms of collaboration. See “Guernsey officials put Jews into Nazi hands, records show,” *The Toronto Star*, January 6, 1993; Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940–1945*, Revised paperback edition (London: HarperCollins, 1996). Writing about the Holocaust in Belgium, historian Jean-Philippe Schreiber arrived at a conclusion that aptly sums up the experience of the Jewish population throughout Western Europe. The truth of the matter was that, as elsewhere, the average Belgian “does not like the Jews.” (Indeed, anti-Semitism was pervasive in Western countries where Jews constituted a microscopic minority.) Moreover, “the suggestion that there would be a direct link between democratic values and a century of emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe and a widespread readiness to help them is superficial and not substantiated by the facts revealed through a close analysis of the rescuers.” See Jean-Philippe Schreiber, “Belgium and the Jews Under Nazi Rule: Beyond the Myths,” in Bankier and Gutman, *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, 480.

⁷⁵⁹ Norman Davies, *Europe At War: No Simple Victory* (London: Macmillan, 2006), 302, 319. See also Herbert R. Lottman, *The Purge: The Purification of the French Collaborators After World War II* (New York: William Morrow, 1986); Herbert R. Lottman, *The People’s Anger: Justice and Revenge in Post-Liberation France* (New York: Hutchinson, 1986); H.R. Kedward and Nancy Wood, eds., *The Liberation of France: Image and Event* (Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1995). According to one summary, based on a review of Julian Jackson, ed., *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): “Some 9,000 collaborators, suspected collaborators, or people who had simply incurred their neighbors’ dislike were killed just before and during the Liberation; about 1,500 more were executed after trial; more than 40,000 were sentenced to prison terms; 20,000 to 30,000 public servants were sanctioned. Among these were few policemen [who had played a pivotal role in the round-up and deportation of French Jews to the death camps]. In August of 1944 the police in Paris and other cities had mutinied against the Germans with whom they had collaborated for so long, and thus qualified for resister status. From 10,000 to 20,000 women (though not Coco Chanel or Arletty) were accused of horizontal collaboration and had their heads shaved, or were subjected to other forms of public humiliation in repulsive and sexist acts. But 80,000 Frenchwomen of the occupied zone had by mid-1943 claimed children’s benefits from the German authorities and requested German nationality for their offspring.” See Eugen Weber, “France’s Downfall,” *Atlantic Monthly*, October 2001.

⁷⁶⁰ Jean-Pierre Besse and Thomas Pouty, *Les fusillés: Répression et exécutions pendant l’Occupation (1940–1944)*

Communist partisans broke into the prison at Schio in the province of Vicenza, and butchered 54 prisoners, thirteen of them women, accused of various Fascist crimes.⁷⁶¹ In Norway, out of a population of under 3 million, 90,000 people were accused of collaborating with the Germans. Some 46,000 found guilty of some degree of helping the enemy, with 600 sentenced to terms of eight years or longer, and 25 sentenced to death.⁷⁶² In the Netherlands,

Some 65,000 Dutch collaborators had already fled to Germany.

... The mass arrests of suspects by Dutch resistance forces started even before allied forces arrived, and between 120,000 and 150,000 men and women were rounded up. In part, this was to protect them from 'blitz-justice' or mass lynchings, a reaction so feared by the Dutch government-in-exile that they alerted their secret representatives in the country to deal with it. So did the Roman Catholic Church. In September 1944, ... it asked priests to open their church buildings as places of refuge for suspected collaborators.

In the event, lynching on a massive scale was largely avoided. ... In the town of Winschoten, for example, a crowd dragged the Nazi-appointed Mayor from his office, threw him into the canal, and hurled his portrait of Adolf Hitler and the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB) leader Anton Mussert into the water after him. In the nearby town of Farnum, a mob simply murdered the Mayor, a man also appointed by the Nazis. Low-level collaborators were humiliated by giving them dirty and menial tasks ...

Across the Netherlands, special 'cleansing committees' were hard at work. ... In the end, some fifty thousand collaborators were given prison sentences, and over a hundred and fifty were condemned to death. Of these, though, only forty were actually executed. ...

In and around Groningen, the arrested were held in schools, hotels, cafés, gymnasias and large barns. ... At the height of the arrest wave, the city had 18,000 internees—8,500 men, 6,500 women and 3,000 children, a proportion of the population considerably higher than the Dutch national average. Some camps were reasonably comfortable, but overall there was little and bad food, poor hygiene and plenty of dysentery and diarrhoea. ...

But after the peak in June, the numbers rapidly declined ... It was widely accepted that Dutch society had to be reformed, but in an orderly way, and this meant being more stricky about who was purged and cooling the radical mood that had developed in the resistance.⁷⁶³

On postwar retaliations historian Norman Davies writes: "Across Europe, people wanted to settle accounts with wartime collaborators. ... Proceedings were most thorough in the Netherlands, where some 200,000 suspected collaborators were detained, and in Belgium, where, of 634,000 detained, 77,000 were sentenced."⁷⁶⁴ According to another source, as many as 450,000 Dutch citizens were arrested. In Belgium, "Dossiers were opened on 405,067 individuals accused of collaboration, and 57,254 were prosecuted. Of

(Paris: Les Éditions de l'Atelier, 2006).

⁷⁶¹ David Stafford, *Endgame, 1945: Victory, Retribution, Liberation* (London: Little, Brown, 2007), 471.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, 373.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, 448–49.

⁷⁶⁴ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1060.

these, 2,940 were sentenced to death (of whom 242 were executed); 2,340 were sentenced to life imprisonment.”⁷⁶⁵ According to historian László Karsai, the ‘sentences’ of partisan courts of law and spontaneous and/or organized eruptions of popular wrath took 8,000 to 9,000 victims in France and at least 8,000 to 10,000 victims in Italy during 1944 and 1945. In France, 350,000 people were investigated, 45,000 were convicted, and 1,500 were executed. In Holland, 120,000 to 150,000 people were arrested, 50,000 were tried, and 40,000 were convicted, of whom 152 were sentenced to death. Forty of these were executed (five were Germans). Tens of thousands were fired from their jobs.⁷⁶⁶

Germany’s record was generally disappointing. The least likely to be charged and sentenced for their wartime activities were the Germans themselves. Of the 7,000 members of the SS who worked at Auschwitz, only 800 were tried.⁷⁶⁷ Despite the restraints imposed by the Allied occupation, anti-Semitism and anti-Slav sentiments continued to run high among the population:

It wasn’t just Nazis in Germany who espoused nationalist or racist ideas and attitudes. Poles, Russians and Slavs in general were still widely despised ... And, disturbingly, anti-Semitic views remained entrenched. While some Germans were genuinely horrified by Auschwitz, others continued to regard Jews as a race apart—and definitely unequal. Despite all the revelations about the Nazi death camps, such prejudices could still be found even among the ‘compassionate’ professions ...

Alongside the resolute denial of responsibility for the catastrophe, anti-Semitism continued its insidious life. In the initial shock over revelations about the death camps, anti-Jewish feeling became muted. ...

Anti-Semitic views even *rose* in Bavaria. ... Here, just twelve months after Hitler’s death, another survey revealed that almost 60 per cent of Bavarians exhibited racist, anti-Semitic or ‘intense anti-Semitic’ views. ...

But Bavaria was by no means unique. Elsewhere, those who had openly denounced the Jews under Hitler simply donned new clothes and reinvented themselves.⁷⁶⁸

Unlike virtually every other occupied country, Poland did not have a Quisling regime or organized collaborators, although a number of persons had been approached to fulfill such a role, nor did it produce national SS formations. During the course of the German occupation, Poland’s underground authorities passed approximately 5,000 death sentences against collaborators, about half of which were carried out.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁵ István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt., eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 134.

⁷⁶⁶ László Karsai, “Crime and Punishment: People’s Courts, Revolutionary Legality, and the Hungarian Holocaust,” *Intermarium*, The First Online Journal of East Central European Postwar History and Politics, vol. 4, no. 1, Internet: <www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/Regional/ece/intermar.html>. This author describes the workings of the Hungarian Communist courts in “The Hungarian Holocaust as Reflected in the People’s Court Trials in Budapest,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 32 (2004): 59–96. These courts passed 26,997 prison sentences, 14,727 persons were acquitted, 477 were sentenced to death, and 189 of them executed.

⁷⁶⁷ Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: The Nazis & “The Final Solution”*, BBC documentary (2005).

⁷⁶⁸ Stafford, *Endgame, 1945*, 467, 508.

⁷⁶⁹ Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945*, 114.

After the war, the Communist authorities used newly enacted law ostensibly targeting “Fascist-Hitlerite criminals” to strike at the anti-Communist underground who were often branded as wartime “collaborators.”⁷⁷⁰

Apart from some isolated cases of social ostracism within the community,⁷⁷¹ the Jews themselves have largely overlooked the deeds of those Jews who collaborated with the Nazis to the detriment of their own people. Polish courts prosecuted some 40 Jewish collaborators between 1944 and 1945, most of them former kapos, and convicted three quarters of them.⁷⁷² Among those prosecuted, and sentenced to death, were: Dr. Leon Gross and Meir Kerner, both kapos in the Płaszów labour camp; Max Zimmerman, an informer who had betrayed the hiding places of Jews in the Kraków ghetto; Max Heimberg; and a man named Goldtsein. Dr. Szymon Rosen of Bochnia, Pinkhas Grynszpan, Samuel Wintraub, Alfred Kannengisser, and Symcha-Binem Smolarz were also arraigned before Polish courts after the war and sentenced to prison terms. Another example comes from an inmate of the Gross Masselwitz camp who originally hailed from Oświęcim:

I had a *landsmann* in camp who came from a family of rich *Khsidim*, named Zajdband. He knew my parents, too. He was a *Kapo* in camp. When I met him, I asked him to help me. He looked me up and down with a sadistic smirk on his face, then told me to remove my hat. He suddenly struck me over the head with his rubber club and beat me again and again till I was delirious from the pain. The Khayim Zajdband was one who reached the height of sadism in the camps. He was condemned in Poland in 1947 to twenty years hard labor.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷⁰ Between 1944 and 1969, 17,845 people were convicted including 5,432 Germans; the rest were Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Jews, and others. In total over 1,500 death sentences were passed. Five of the Jews who were convicted sought clemency. See Czesław Pilichowski, ed., *Zbrodnie i sprawy: Ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980), 73–74; Zdzisław Biegański, “Kara śmierci w orzecznictwie Specjalnych Sądów Karnych w Polsce (1944–1946),” *Echa przeszłości* (Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmiński-Mazurski, 2004), vol. 5, 175, 194.

⁷⁷¹ One such case was Shepsl Rotholc, a professional boxer turned ghetto policeman. He was the first of 25 persons put on trial by the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce) during the period November 1946 through the end of 1949, of whom 18 were found guilty while seven were acquitted. (The cases of an additional 50 suspected Jewish collaborators were dropped because of a lack of incriminating evidence. In total, around 2,000 suspected collaborators were identified.) That organization’s citizens’ tribunal (*sąd społeczny*) found Rotholc guilty of reproachable behaviour for his continued service in the Jewish police after the first wave of deportations from Warsaw in the summer of 1942. He was expelled from the Jewish community for two years and his right to participate in communal activities was revoked for three years; the tribunal ordered the publication of his conviction in the Jewish press. After two years Rotholc petitioned for and received a commutation of his sentence. He then left Poland and immigrated to Canada. See Gabriel N. Finder, “The Trial of Shepsl Rotholc and the Politics of Retribution in the Aftermath of the Holocaust,” *Gal-Ed: On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry*, vol. 20 (2006): 63–89 (English section). Another case is a kapo exposed in a DP camp in Bindermichel near Linz. Although some people wanted to lynch the former kapo, his accuser intervened to say that he “only wanted people to know what kind of animal this man was and, if he had a conscience, that he should continue to live and suffer the consequences of his degradation.” Apparently, the man committed suicide some time later. See Laizer Blitt, *No Strength to Forget: Survival in the Ukraine, 1941–1944* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 177.

⁷⁷² Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1955,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 20 (2008): 122–48.

⁷⁷³ Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 178.

But it was rare for Jewish collaborators to face punishment for their wartime conduct. Michał Weichert, the head of the Jewish Relief Organization, was acquitted by the criminal courts but deemed a collaborator by a Jewish civic court.⁷⁷⁴ The brothers Bernard and Ferdynand Sperling were also acquitted. Some prosecutions, like the curious case of singer Wiera Gran (Grynberg), whose charges were dropped and who was exonerated by a Jewish civic court, may simply have been inspired by vengeful adversaries.⁷⁷⁵ However, most collaborators escaped punishment, as was the case with Zygmunt Witkowski and Lismann, who terrorized prisoners in the camp at Küstrin (Kostrzyń) and were responsible for the deaths of many Jews. Witnesses were simply not summoned for Witkowski's trial and the culprit was acquitted.⁷⁷⁶

Jerzy Lewiński, a notorious policeman who rounded up Jews in the Warsaw ghetto and brought them to Umschlagplatz from whence they were sent to their deaths in Treblinka, joined the Communist party and became a prosecutor in Łódź who passed sentence on “collaborators” and enemies of the Stalinist regime. Despite pressure and threats by co-religionists not to testify against him, Edward Reicher and the renowned pianist Władysław Szpilman refused to succumb. Although he lost his position, Lewiński never faced criminal charges and emerged a director of the state movie production enterprise, “Film Polski.”⁷⁷⁷

In early 1947 the *Ha'aretz* newspaper published the following report. While visiting Paris a Jew from Buczacz spotted a childhood friend, who during the occupation had been the head of the Jewish police in Buczacz. This former policeman had executed this young man's parents during an *Aktion* and came to take him and his brother away later on. (He escaped, his brother perished in a death camp.) The young man beat the policeman viciously in his hotel room on two occasions with heavy objects and smashed some bottles against his head. He reported the policeman to the French police but they refused to take any action. He then went to the Polish consul in Paris. After the Polish consul intervened, the French police agreed to arrest the murderer. Supposedly he was to be sent to Poland to stand trial, but there is no evidence this ever occurred.⁷⁷⁸ Eliezer Grinbaum, a Communist and brutal kapo at Auschwitz, was turned over to the French police in Paris by some survivors, but was released and left for Palestine.⁷⁷⁹ Then there was the case of Nonek Greebaum of Warsaw, who became a kapo in a concentration camp and was put on trial in France after the war (its outcome is not known), only to join the Communist Party when he immigrated to Israel.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁴ David Engel, “Who Is A Collaborator? The Trials of Michał Weichert,” in Sławomir Kapralski, ed., *The Jews in Poland*, Vol. II (Cracow: Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture, 1999), 341; Celemenski, *Elegy For My People*, 136–38.

⁷⁷⁵ Gran, *Sztafeta oszczerców*, 44–80. Gran ran into one of the Stalinist security men whom she dealt with working as a police officer when she emigrated to Israel. *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁷⁶ Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 304–306. Zygmunt Witkowski later emigrated to Israel. The author of this account, Leon Borkowski, a Jew, credits many helpful Polish labourers for his survival. See also Gebriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 20 (2007) (forthcoming).

⁷⁷⁷ Edward Reicher, *Une vie de Juif* (Paris and Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1996), 272.

⁷⁷⁸ I. Kahan (Yisrael Cohen), *Sefer Buczacz: Matsevet zikaron le-kehila kedosha* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1956), 297ff., translated as *Book of Buczacz: In Memory of a Martyred Community*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/buchach/buchach.html>>.

⁷⁷⁹ Stefan Grajek, *Po wojnie i co dalej: Żydzi w Polsce w latach 1945–1949* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2003), 65–66.

⁷⁸⁰ Moshe Prywes as told to Haim Chertok, *Prisoners of Hope* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1996), 60.

Occasionally, private “justice” was exacted. Miriam Jaszuńska, a Jewish partisan who took up residence in Wilno after the city’s liberation, stated that Jews looked for surviving policemen from the ghetto in order to settle scores. Jewish partisans shot a sergeant by the name of Bernstein and handed over a certain Ferdman to the Soviet authorities, who tried and sentenced him.⁷⁸¹ A Jew from Tarnów recalls:

While in Linz I found out that a Jewish man who had been a ranking O.D. [policeman] in our ghetto and later on a ‘Sonderkommando’ (he loaded corpses into the crematoria) lived there. Just the sound of his name Zimmet conjured up ugly memories. He was a brute of the first order; in the Ghetto, he beat a friend of mine, Srulek Fenning, to death. He committed other heinous crimes in the service of the Gestapo. I was told that the D.P. camp inmates tried to bring him to justice in Austria, but the local authorities wanted nothing to do with it. He was subsequently beaten up severely, but he stayed on in the camp, being afraid to venture elsewhere for fear of a worse fate. Some time later on, he made his way to Montreal, Canada where he was adjudicated by a ‘Bet Din’ (a Jewish court) and released. The verdict was ‘insufficient evidence’ and ‘it’s a shame before the gentiles’ to bring it out in the open.⁷⁸²

This Jew also recalled another Jew, an Austrian exile named Distler, who “fully and brutally” cooperated with the Gestapo in Tarnów.

Dr. Lopold Lustig from Drohobycz identifies several Jewish collaborators who fled to the West and were never brought to justice because of inaction on the part of the Jewish community:

At a party [in New York] to honor Helmrich, I saw Wilek Ornstein [a ghetto policeman from Drohobycz]. I wanted to inform on him. I spoke to Mrs. Laufer. She said she didn’t remember. I also spoke to Kuba Gold and Stella Wolfgang about Bross when we testified at the trial. “*S’past nisht far dee goyim*,”—it’s unseemly in front of the *goyim*. They didn’t want to. Ornstein was the main stoker of the crematorium in Mauthausen and Bercio Gutenplan was his helper. ...

Attorney Holzman, who delivered my aunt Yetka to her death, lived in Düsseldorf and sat on the supervisory board of the synagogue. No one wanted to touch his case. ... Baumgarten and Giza Bachman [confidants and extortionists] were deported to Siberia, sent there by Izio Weisberr who returned with the Soviet Army. They came back later as victims of Stalinism. [Izio Weisberr or Weissber served in the security police after returning to Poland] ... In New York, I saw Mićko R.’s brother. He said Mićko [Maciek Ruhrberg, an extortionist] got married again, lived in Toronto and was doing well. Nobody wanted to remember. Nobody wanted to tell on a Jew.

“Not one of them was ever tried?”

⁷⁸¹ Testimony of Miriam Jaszuńska, dated July 15, 1947, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, no. 301/2530.

⁷⁸² William Kornbluth, *Sentenced to Remember: My Legacy of Life in Pre-1939 Poland and Sixty-Eight Months of Nazi Occupation* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994), 67, 144.

“Only one, Bronek Dauerman, in Poland. Someone fingered him, but he had money from his robberies, so he hired good lawyers who got him out on bail and he made a getaway to Germany.”⁷⁸³

In 1987 a former kapo, Jacob Tannenbaum, faced deportation from the United States for his brutal treatment of prisoners. He was accused by fellow Jewish concentration camp survivors of ordering 300 Jews to their deaths in 1945, for raping women, and torturing and killing male prisoners, including a rabbi. “He was a nasty, nasty guy,” said a former head of the Office of Special Investigations, Martin Mendelsohn, “There were a lot of witnesses who remembered him and his bestiality.” The *Jewish Week* (February 12, 1988) reported, however, that “most [Jews] agreed, in the words of Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner, that ‘the *kapos* were victims. They were chosen by their enemies. It is true that some were very, very cruel, but even those were acting as instruments of the enemy.’” Tannenbaum was eventually stripped of his U.S. citizenship, but not deported. “This is the best solution for all concerned,” said Tannenbaum’s lawyer, Elihu Massel. “It will also avoid a truly ghastly trial in which Jews would have had to testify against Jews, none of whom really want to remember.”

Historian Piotr Wróbel has posed the following pointed questions in this regard: “But how are historians supposed to judge when such important events of the past are not resolved? How can non-Jewish bystanders be condemned for their passivity when Jewish *Kapos*, policemen, and former *Judenräte* leaders were rehabilitated? Many similar questions appear when we study the Holocaust and most of them have no satisfactory answer yet. This aspect of the Holocaust is still far from settled.”⁷⁸⁴

Exceptionally, there were incidents of revenge killings, especially in German camps. But those incidents occurred during the occupation or at the time of liberation, when Jewish informers posed a threat or were still in the midst of their victims. For example, Jewish testimonies mention that several members of the “elite” from the hard labour camp of Starachowice, such as Jeremiah Wilczek, head of the camp council, his younger son, and Rubenstein, head of the camp kitchen, were murdered in the train during the evacuation of prisoners to Auschwitz.⁷⁸⁵ A Jewish inmate of Budzyń recalled: “I remember a cruel lynching—ordered by Sztokman—of a Budzyń prisoner who had previously been a Jewish policeman and extorted huge bribes from Jews in exchange for not taking them to Umschlagplatz.”⁷⁸⁶

According to Michel Mielnicki, an inmate of Birkenau, “We killed those of our ilk who sold out others among us to the SS or their flunkies for an extra half-litre of soup.”⁷⁸⁷ Another memoir refers to the efforts of resistance members in liquidating kapos during the final weeks of the war, especially those judged to be

⁷⁸³ Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 42–43.

⁷⁸⁴ Piotr Wróbel, “The *Judenräte* Controversy: Some Polish Aspects,” *The Polish Review*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1997): 225–32, who cites numerous examples backing his thesis. For additional examples, see Trunk, *Judenrat*, 548–69; Idith Zertal, “Izrael wobec ofiar Holocaustu,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 16, 2002.

⁷⁸⁵ Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 77–80. The fate of Szaja Langsleben, a “much-hated” policeman in the camp. Is not known. Ibid., 69. According to an inmate of Starachowice, only Wilczek’s son was killed on the train to Auschwitz, but not Wilczek, who was shot in Auschwitz-Birkenau. See Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 268–71.

⁷⁸⁶ Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 81.

overly brutal toward fellow prisoners or too servile to the camp authorities: “the hated kapo would be killed, his clothes taken off him and exchanged for another set, which had the camp number of a sick prisoner sewn on. The death of the sick prisoner was marked in the file, thereby enabling the other to live.”⁷⁸⁸ One memoir describes how a young German Jew named Rudy, who had served as a kapo in several camps, was lynched and hanged by fellow Jewish prisoners after their liberation. According to his victims, “He had whipped, beaten, and even killed thousands of Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian Jews.”⁷⁸⁹

According to Israel Mittelberg, the following prisoners received “their just sentences” from fellow Jews in Buchenwald: a German Jewish policeman named Korn, Abram and a policeman Alek from workshop three, Dr. Zaks, a Jewish policeman named Tepperman, a camp leader in the munitions factory in Skarżysko named Kinneman, Shepicki, and others.⁷⁹⁰ Another Jewish survivor mentions the killing of Jewish policeman Josef Krzepicki active in the Skarżysko-Kamienna labour camp.⁷⁹¹ Godel Wroby (Wroblewski) states that he joined a group of prisoners who decided to beat to death ten Jews deemed to have abused their positions of power and betrayed their people.⁷⁹²

Jack Werber, a member of the underground in Buchenwald, recalls:

Acceptance into the Underground was certainly a factor in my survival. Their people were in key positions and, in many ways, really ran the camp, even though it was the Nazis who supervised them. ... They sent collaborators to the quarry or to slave on the railway lines.

The members of the Underground carried out a wide range of activities. Kapos who were too eager to beat prisoners for no reason, mysteriously disappeared after interrogations by Underground leaders. ...

From 1942 on, the prisoners had their own police force that enforced discipline ...

In the summer of 1944, Carlebach told us about a transport of several thousand Jews that was coming in from Skarżysko [Skarżysko], a town not too far from Radom. ... Gustav spoke with them about collaborators, saying: “If there are among you people who collaborated with the Germans, report them to us now and we will take care of them.” ...

Many witnesses testified against him [Leibel, a red-haired fellow from Kozienice] and he was found guilty of a number of charges: that he had betrayed Jews to the Germans, and that he constantly cursed, hit, and kicked women in Skarżysko. And so he was found guilty and executed by those who came into the camp with him. Justice was visited upon him by those who suffered at his hands. ...

⁷⁸⁷ Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau*, 173.

⁷⁸⁸ Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds*, 69. Mittelberg recalls one of his Gypsy kapos, who has an “outstanding talent for inflicting pain”. Ibid., 71.

⁷⁸⁹ Rosenblum, *Defy the Darkness*, 286–87.

⁷⁹⁰ Checinski, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism*, 37.

⁷⁹¹ Hagstrom, *Sara's Children and the Destruction of Chmielnik*, 131.

⁷⁹² Godel Wroby, *My Battle for Survival: From Mlynny to Melbourne* (Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004).

In another case, a former collaborator ran up to the camp gate and said to the Nazis: “I was a kapo in Skarzysko and I am ready to work for you here.” The conversation was overheard by a member of the Underground who reported it to the *blockaltester* in Block 7, which was a barrack for the insane. He, in turn, sent two nurses to the gate who said that the man had escaped from their block. He was taken away and never seen again. The Underground usually won in such matters. They had an excellent network and were highly efficient.

Very few collaborators came out alive from Buchenwald. One who did was a doctor who showed up with his two young sons. He was accused by the people who came with him to Buchenwald of being a collaborator, and they related a terrible story. Five hundred Jews had been taken in his town and quarantined in the synagogue for a month for fear of typhus. The SS called this doctor in and asked him if they were in good health and if they could be sent out to work. He replied: “They’re all shit!” Consequently, all of the Jews were pulled out of the synagogue and shot. The doctor was implicated in other killings too; *aktions* where ten, five, or three Jews were murdered. In one case it was alleged that he turned in sixteen Jews who were hiding in a Jewish hospital. To our dismay, the stories were confirmed.

... We intentionally postponed his case until we were liberated [because of his children]. Suddenly, amidst the chaos, the doctor was forgotten about.⁷⁹³

Charles Kotkowsky describes a “hit squad” in Buchenwald that took revenge against Jews who had mistreated their fellow Jews:

I noticed a few men were kicking someone lying on the ground in the snow. It was dark and I could not see very well.

The next morning, the same group of men came into our barracks and beat up the big “Bulldog” from Czestochowa [Częstochowa]. Later, when I saw him lying there on his bunk, which was situated close to the door, his face looked even larger than in Czestochowa. It was badly swollen and all bloody and his eyes were puffy and closed, and he was breathing heavily. He could not get up anymore for the evening roll call and was counted sick. This job was done by a special “hit-squad” under the leadership of an inmate called Gustaw, allegedly from Lemberg [Lwów]. He was the Block leader of No. 66. The hit-squad watched every new transport of prisoners that arrived in Buchenwald and inquired as to who had been the “bad apples” in former camps. They then sentenced the culprits.

When Gustaw was informed of a traitorous Jewish foreman named Heinrich of Berlin, he told the foreman to hang himself. The cowardly foreman did not heed Gustaw’s advice, so two days later Gustaw returned with his aides and completed the job for him.

Although I saw [Nachum] Wengliszewski once with Gustaw and his “hit-squad”, he did not keep his promise to visit me. That was the last time I saw him. (Later Kudish told me that he was killed by the same “hit-squad” he had served.) Allegedly he had defrauded another inmate.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹³ Werber, *Saving Children*, 79, 81, 84–85.

⁷⁹⁴ Kotkowsky, *Remnants*.

Later, when Kotkowsky was transferred to Flossberg, a camp near Leipzig, he witnessed similar brutality and brutal retaliations:

The next day when we left for work, he [i.e., a block leader] summoned the Jewish German *Kapo* who hated the Polish Jews with a vengeance and always cursed us as unworthy citizens of the world. “You Polish Jews are not even worthy to go to hell,” he used to say.

Otto [i.e., another block leader] beat him so badly, that we never saw him again. (We learned later that Otto hanged him).⁷⁹⁵

When Kotkowsky left Flossberg and put on a train destined for another camp, he again encountered collaborators from his hometown of Piotrków Trybunalski who had haunted him at various junctures:

I closed my eyes and half-dozed off when the door opened and Arie and Shlome Yukel Pinkusewicz came in loaded with lots of bread. They were *Kapos* in Flossberg, and when the train stopped, they had gone in the dark to “organize” bread. Everyone looked at them in silence with big hungry eyes as nobody dared jump at them. I approached them and asked for a few crumbs for my brother because I knew them well. The younger of the two brothers, Szlome Yukel, got curious and crossed over to my brother to check as to why he needed bread crumbs. As he saw him lying on the floor, talking deliriously from fever, he got angry with me and shouted, “Why don’t you let him die?” and he hit me over the head with his thick, strong hand. I did not have the strength or stamina to hit him back. I told him that if I survived, I would not forget this. He did not like that and struck me again on the forehead even harder, so that I thought I received the blow in the back of my head. I fell down from shock near my brother and lay there helpless.

Lying next to my sick brother, I was thinking, “Is this really a Piotrkover? Yes, this is a Piotrkover who stems from the *Chapuszes* (catchers), the underworld, the scum of the Staro Warszawska [Starowarszawska] Street. What could I expect of him?”⁷⁹⁶

The brothers Pinkusewicz both survived the war. One lived in Israel, the other in the United States.

When Harry Haft returned to his hometown of Bełchatów after the war, he ran into a Jewish kapo named Mischa, who had beaten Harry repeatedly in a slave labour camp in Jaworzno. Harry gave Mischa a good thrashing and almost shot him, but his gun did not fire.

Harry grabbed him and threw him into two garbage cans lined against a wall in the alley. ... He picked up a garbage can and started to beat him with it. ...

Harry started beating him again with the lid of the can. ... Mischa layed there bleeding. ...

Harry pulled out his revolver and said, “Mischa, now it is your turn to die.”

Harry enjoyed watching Mischa beg and plead for his life, but he pulled the trigger anyway.

The gun did not fire. Harry cursed and pulled the trigger again.

⁷⁹⁵ Kotkowsky, *Remnants*.

⁷⁹⁶ Kotkowsky, *Remnants*.

Again, it only clicked.

“Maybe it is not your time to die. Next time, you may not be so lucky.”⁷⁹⁷

Sonia Guss-Hornstein, who lived with her family in Łódź after the liberation, witnessed a group of men ambush and beat to death a Jew whom her father later told her was a kapo.⁷⁹⁸ A similar, perhaps the same event was witnessed by Yankel (Jack) Pomerantz in May 1945:

As we were arriving in the city, I watched a group of Jews converge on one man. He had been a collaborator with the Nazis in a concentration camp. He had overseen the killing of children, one man joining the group told us. Now in Lodz [Łódź], Jewish survivors from the camp had recognized him. They set upon him and beat him right in the street. They delivered blow upon blow until he died.⁷⁹⁹

There is no indication that the authorities took any action against the assailants.

A Jew by the name of Blat, who arrived at a Polish refugee camp in Mohács, Hungary, toward the end of the German occupation, posing as a Pole, was recognized as an informer for the Germans and killed by a group of Jews assigned to this task.⁸⁰⁰ Another Jewish confidant, Lezer Landau, who had been active in Bochnia and resurfaced in Budapest, was put on trial before a secret Jewish court but a verdict was never delivered in his case.⁸⁰¹ No such leniency was shown to non-Jewish collaborators. A Jewish family who set off from Marseilles to Australia on the *SS Derna* in August 1948 with 600 hundred other refugees recalled: “One of the Ukrainians on board boasted that he’d killed Jews during the war. One moonless night, he vanished and was never seen again.”⁸⁰²

The famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal, who recalled the exploits and fate of the aforementioned David Zimet (Zimmet), an ex-Gestapo agent who had attacked him with a knife in a DP camp near Linz, took pains to mention the “cover-up” by the Canadian authorities and the leaders of the Canadian Jewish community. His perceptive remarks on the entire topic are well worth repeating.

Zimet had been a ghetto policeman in the southern Polish city of Tarnów and, says Wiesenthal, ‘the right hand of a very known Gestapo sadist with the name of Grunov. Later, Zimet was sent to Mauthausen to work in the crematory. His famil stayed in Tarnów. When the Russians came near Tarnów ..., the Germans started more deportations of the few hundred Jews that were left ... Since there were no more trains, they sent them in trucks. In one truck of Jewish women was the wife and

⁷⁹⁷ Haft, *Harry Haft*, 89–90.

⁷⁹⁸ Sonia Guss-Hornstein, “The Wild Man,” in Julie Meadows, ed., *Memory Guide My Hand: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing by Members of the Melbourne Jewish Community*, vol. 3 (Melbourne: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004), 145–54.

⁷⁹⁹ Jack Pomerantz with Lyric Wallwork Winik, *Run East: Flight from the Holocaust* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 158.

⁸⁰⁰ Zimmerman, *And Tell the Deeds of God*, chapters 35 and 37.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Armstrong, *Mosaic*, 409.

the daughter of Zimet. And the hatred against him was so great that the Jewish women in that truck taking them all to die killed his wife and his daughter then and there.'

By 1946, Zimet was a DP in Austria and was recognized by several survivors from Tarnów. Wiesenthal was still collecting testimony about him in the DP camp when Zimet learned that Simon was, as he puts it, 'occupied with his case, so at seven o'clock in the morning he is coming to my office there with a knife. He was a big, strapping healthy man back in '46 while we were all still so thin. He had lived good in the ghetto and, in the crematorium at Mauthausen, they were all given double food ... I pick up the inkwell from my desk and throw it at his face to protect myself and I shout so loud that people come running to help me and his is arrested. Zimet was four weeks in jail for this. But then, because he had worked in the crematory, they need him for the Mauthausen trial and bring him to Germany as a witness. From Germany, he emigrates to Canada.'

Years later, Wiesenthal was looking over a confidential list of cases being investigated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, when he read:

ZIMET, David. A policeman in ghetto in Tarnów. Witnesses have attested to his brutality. 'Zimet!' Wiesenthal exclaimed. 'This is my old case!' He informed the Canadian authorities of his evidence against Zimet, but they proved unwilling to prosecute a Jew for Nazi crimes. The Canadian Jewish Committee intervened and Zimet agreed to submit to a council of arbitration established by the committee.

'Nothing ever came of it,' says Wiesenthal, 'because the Jewish community was reluctant to publicize the case since Zimet was himself Jewish.' This is so terrible! Through this false attitude that we must ignore Jewish helpers of the Nazis, we are losing credibility when we say we are acting against all people that commit crimes. If everybody could see that we are not looking only for Germans and Ukrainians, but even for our own Jewish criminals, then we would have much less opposition.'

'I first saw Jewish collaborators in the ghetto of Lwów,' Simon Wiesenthal says in his memoirs, 'and later I saw them in various concentration camps. There were some shocking cases, and when I talked about the problem after the war, many Jews were perturbed. Perhaps they had expected the Jews to be immune from corruption. Like all races, we have had our saints and our sinners, our cowards and our heroes.'

Reinhard Heydrich, who engineered the Final Solution, believed that the secret of manipulation lay in involvement and collaboration. With the appointment of Jewish councils of elders, even rabbis, to enforce Gestapo edicts, Heydrich's hatchet-man Adolf Eichmann could compel each Jewish community to co-operate in its own destruction. ...

'After the war, I not only arrested Jews who were Nazi collaborators, but, from the committees running the Displaced Persons camps and the former concentration camps, I expelled people who could not bring evidence about their activities during the Nazi time. I made a rule that was approved by the American military government authorities and became known in the camps as *Lxw Wiesenthal*: Latin for Wiesenthal's Law. It was very simple: *Whoever had a function of authority in the Nazi period could not have a function in postwar Jewish life*. I wasn't saying such a man was a criminal. I wasn't even looking into whether he was good or bad. But I needed to protect our Jewish society from more bad surprises.'

‘Don’t push it, Simon,’ a friend he describes as an ‘official Jew’ pleaded with him. ‘What you are doing will only diminish the guilt of the Nazis.’

‘No,’ said Simon, ‘this is an extension of the guilt of the Nazis. When they brought pressure on Jews to work against other Jews, when they were guilty of corrupting hundreds of Jews as well as murdering millions of us.’

Wiesenthal noted that ‘in many cases, such people after the war found jobs with Jewish organizations. ...’⁸⁰³

Finally, mention should be made of the well-hidden fact that some Jews, whose instinctive reactions to placate the enemy overtook their appreciation of events, greeted or even assisted the German invaders of Poland in September 1939. Jews built triumphal arches for the German invaders in several towns in central Poland, and a few Jews openly collaborated with them.⁸⁰⁴ A Jewish delegation in Radom, headed by a

⁸⁰³ Levy, *The Wiesenthal File*, 83–85.

⁸⁰⁴ The following sources corroborate these charges: Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 242 (Jews built triumphal arches to greet the German invaders in Łódź, Pabianice, and elsewhere; Jewish community leaders, headed by rabbis dressed in ceremonial robes, came out to greet the Germans bearing trays with bread and salt); Eugeniusz Buczyński, *Smutny wrzesień: Wspomnienia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 132 (in Przemyśl, Ukrainian nationalists and Jews jointly erected a triumphal arch for the Germans and looted Polish military buildings); Elinor J. Brecher, *Schindler’s Legacy: True Stories of the List Survivors* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 56 (Jews greeted the Germans in Kraków); Piotrowski, *Poland’s Holocaust*, 315 n.167 (Jews greeted the Germans in Janów Lubelski); Mieczysław Edward Szpyra, *Moja wojna z Hitlerem, Banderą i Stalinem* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2001), 40 (several Jews who rushed out to greet the German army in Tomaszów Lubelski were photographed by the soldiers but were promptly chased away by officers); Tomasz Strzembosz, “Zstąpienie szatana czy przyjazd gestapo,” *Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw), May 12, 2001 (a Jewish delegation headed by a rabbi greeted the Germans in Żareby Kościelne near Ostrów Mazowiecka). Confirmation of these events can also be found in the report of a left-leaning Italian diplomat who served in Poland: “in the first days of the conflict, numerous Jews greeted the entrance of the German armies into Polish cities with cries of joy.” See Eugenio Reale, *Raporty: Polska 1945–1946* (Paris: Institut Littéraire, 1968), 204. The motivation behind these actions is somewhat baffling because German designs, albeit not yet a full-blown Holocaust, were patently apparent from their widespread public mistreatment of Jews as soon as they entered Poland. Was it merely a matter of opportunism? Some behaviour may have been simply attributable to initial naïveté. A Jewish girl recall the day that the German army marched into Kraków: “My father and I were among the silent crowds in the street. Their soldiers certainly looked young, handsome and impressive in their well-cut green-grey uniforms. My father said to me, ‘They look so well-presented,’ and I heard admiration in his voice. Then an officer stepped out and called, ‘Can anyone here speak German?’ Without hesitation, my father approached him.” See Zylberman, *Swimming Under Water*, 17. In one case at least, it may have been a calculated course of action. In Oświęcim, on September 1, 1939, two Jews took in and cared for a wounded German, who had parachuted from a crashing plane, without informing the Polish authorities of his presence. When the Germans entered the town, the Jews led them to the wounded man who, it turned out, was an important Nazi officer. See Moshe Weiss, “To Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation from Auschwitz,” *The Jewish Press* (Brooklyn), January 27, 1995. Henryk Schönker presents this story in a different light. He states that the German officer was a pilot whose plane had been shot down while bombing Oświęcim. Fearful of possible future retaliation by the Germans, his father, the wartime leader of the Jewish community, decided not to hand the officer over to the Polish authorities, who, in any event, had ceased to function in that town. Leon Schönker hid the officer at his factory with the assistance of a caretaker, a Christian of German origin. Later, the grateful German officer alleviated conditions for Jews in the town, at least for a time. See Henryk Schönker, *Dotknięcie aniola* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), 22–24. But perhaps part of the answer lies in deep-seated sentiments shared, it seems, by even the élite of the Jewish community. In his wartime diary, Chaim Kaplan, a rabbi, educator and author from Warsaw, wrote on September 1, 1939: “This war will indeed bring destruction upon human civilization. But this is a civilization which merits annihilation and destruction. ... well, now the Poles themselves will receive our revenge through the hands of our cruel enemy. ... My brain is full of the chatterings of the radio from both sides. The German broadcast in the Polish language prates propaganda. Each side accuses the other of every abominable act in the world. Each side considers itself to be righteous and the other murderous, destructive, and bent on plunder. This time, as an exception to the general rule, both speak the truth. Verily it is so—both sides are murderers, destroyers, and plunderers, ready to commit any abomination in the world.” See Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 19–21. Kaplan also peppered his wartime diary with anti-Christian remarks directed at Poles

rabbi and other community leaders, marched down the flower-strewn Mikołaj Rej Street on September 8, 1939 to welcome the German army.⁸⁰⁵ In the Volhynian town of Luboml, where the Germans entered first and then retreated a few days later in deference to their then Soviet ally, Jews came forward to collaborate with the Germans (and later with the Soviets) in rounding up Polish soldiers—the only Allied army actually engaged in fighting at the time.⁸⁰⁶ In Kobryń, in Polesia, the Germans armed local Jewish Communists who then carried out diversionary assaults against the Polish army.⁸⁰⁷ The last Jewish delegation to welcome the German army was probably the one sent by the Jewish community in Międzyrzec Podlaski, on October 10, 1939, after the departure of the Red Army; its representatives symbolically carried a loaf of bread on a silver tray which they handed over to the dismissive Germans.⁸⁰⁸ Israeli historian Tom Segev brought to light the fact that as late as 1941, the Zionist group LEHI, one of whose leaders was Yitzhak Shamir, approached the Nazis, using the name of its parent organization, the Irgun (NMO), with the proposal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine bound by a treaty with the Third Reich, as a base for strengthening German power in the Near East. The NMO in Palestine offered to take an active part in the war on the side of Germany. The Nazis rejected this proposal, it is reported, because they considered LEHI's military power "negligible."⁸⁰⁹ Curiously, the members of the Jewish Councils in occupied Poland were for the most part Zionists as well.⁸¹⁰

Recently, American historian Bryan Mark Rigg has chronicled the hitherto silenced story of some 150,000 Germans of Jewish origin (mostly mixed) who served dutifully in the German war machine.⁸¹¹ Nazi racial laws were bent to allow this widespread phenomenon to occur, and these German Jews espoused completely German war aims which called for the annihilation of Poland.⁸¹² Thus the number of Jews fighting on the side of the Germans was probably greater than the number of Jews in the anti-Nazi underground movements in all of Europe. Characteristically, with the notable exception of the Poles, far more numbers of the native population in nearly every German-occupied country, including Denmark, volunteered to serve in German-sponsored formations than in the anti-Nazi underground.⁸¹³

and gave credence to German anti-Polish propaganda. Ibid., 47, 133, 161. A similar attitude was demonstrated by Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, a prominent Hasidic leader, who wrote in the Warsaw ghetto: "The Jewish people have often had to endure calamities whose sole purpose was the destruction of wicked Gentiles. At such times, Jews are imperiled through no fault of their own." See Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942* (Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2000), 294.

⁸⁰⁵ Józef Łyżwa, "Pomagalem, a potem siedziałem," *Gazeta Polska* (Warsaw), February 10, 1994.

⁸⁰⁶ Berl Kagan, ed., *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanished Shtetl* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1997), 240–41.

⁸⁰⁷ Marek Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Białorusini w zaborze sowieckim: Stosunki polsko-białoruskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2000), 181.

⁸⁰⁸ Józef Geresz, *Międzyrzec Podlaski: Dzieje miasta i okolic* ((Biała Podlaska and Międzyrzec Podlaski: Ośrodek Wschodni "Civitas Christiana", 1995), 299; Stanisław Jarmul, *Radzyński Obwód Związku Walki Zbrojnej i Armii Krajowej (1939–1944)* (Biała Podlaska: Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna, 2000), 26.

⁸⁰⁹ Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Lenni Brenner, ed., *51 Documents: Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis* (Fort Lee, New Jersey: Barricade Books, 2002).

⁸¹⁰ According to Isaiah Trunk, 77 percent of the Judenrat members were Zionists. See Trunk, *Judenrat*, 34.

⁸¹¹ Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

⁸¹² Ibid., 124, 207, 210.

⁸¹³ For some statistics see Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński and Rafał Sierchuła, "Legiony cudzoziemskie III Rzeszy," in

No nation had a monopoly on informers or collaborators during the war, although some historians try to convince us that it was otherwise. While denying that (some) Jews collaborated with the Soviets in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland 1939–1941, Jan T. Gross proffers a blanket condemnation of non-Jews during the German occupation: “it is manifest that the local non-Jewish population ... broadly engaged in collaboration with the Germans, up to and including participation in the exterminatory war against the Jews.”⁸¹⁴ Eschewing such a strident and nationalistic vision of history, a compelling starting point for serious discussion of the topic of wartime collaboration are the valuable insights of British historian Norman Davies, who wrote prophetically:

The Holocaust will be seen to have been perpetrated not by the one single, supreme evil force of European History, but by one of the two great evils whose titanic contest generated a much richer range of criminals and victims of all degrees. ...

... it will become impossible to use ethnic criteria to decide who in the maelstrom of war were the murderers, who were the bystanders and collaborators, and who were the victims and survivors.

...

Similarly, if one looks at the total experience of each of the ethnic groups, one finds that each of them provides candidates for inclusion in all compartments of the rogues and heroes galleries. ...

At all events, ethnicity offers no suitable guide to wartime conduct or misconduct. Nowhere is this truer than in the vexed question of wartime Polish-Jewish relations.⁸¹⁵

Encyklopedia “Białych Plam”, vol. 11 (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2003), 9–27.

⁸¹⁴ Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 155.

⁸¹⁵ Norman Davies, “The Jewish Strand in European History,” in Sławomir Kaprański, ed., *The Jews in Poland*, Vol. II (Kraków: Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture, 1999), 96–98.